Chapter 5
CRITIQUE OF HUNTINGTON’S THESIS BY SCHOLARS

5.1 Introduction

Huntington’s original article in *Foreign Affairs* drew more attention and created more responses than any other article ever published in that journal. There have been many criticisms of his thesis from different perspectives, both by the Western as well as Non-Western scholars. Immediately after the publication of Huntington’s article in the *Foreign Affairs* in Summer of 1993, the next issue carried critical responses of his position by scholars like Kishore Mahbubani, Fouad Ajami, Robert Bartley, Liu Binyan, Albert L. Weeks, and Jeanne J. Kirkpatrick and opened the floodgates to criticism of Huntington’s thesis which has continued unabated till date. The list of critics is truly vast but some of the most prominent ones merit attention.

5.2 Critique by Western Scholars

The earliest critics of Huntington’s thesis set the tone and the tenor for many other critics to follow. And since then the criticisms against Huntington’s thesis have poured in unabated. Some of the most vociferous and caustic criticisms have come from the Western scholars themselves. Some of the noteworthy criticisms directed at Huntington’s ‘clash of civilisations’ thesis by scholars are considered here below:

Jeanne J. Kirkpatrick, a well known American scholar of International Relations along with Albert L. Weeks and Gerald Piel, a retired American Professor of International Relations, in a prompt response to Huntington’s thesis of clash of civilizations, attacked Huntington’s position in their individual characteristic style. (1) Kirkpatrick, for instance says that “In his essay Huntington
asserts that civilizations are real and important and predicts that ‘conflict between civilizations will support ideological and other forms of conflict in the dominant global form of conflict’. He further argues that institutions for co-operation will be more likely to develop within civilization, and conflicts will most often arise between groups in different civilizations. These strike me as interesting but dubious proportions”. (2) Kirkpatrick further states that “Huntington’s classification of contemporary civilizations in questionable.” She calls Huntington’s classification of civilization as a “strange list” and goes on to question the very basis for his classification of civilization. Then Kirkpatrick states that “It is also not clear that over the centuries differences between civilizations have led to the longest and most violent conflicts. At least in the twentieth century, the most violent conflicts have occurred within civilizations: Stalin’s purges, Pol Pot’s genocide, the Nazi holocaust and World War II.” (3) Arguing further points out that, though one can “argue that the war between United States and Japan involved a clash of civilizations, but those differences had little role in that war. The Allied and Axis sides included both Asian and European members. The liberation of Kuwait was no more clash between civilization than World War II or the Korean or Vietnamese Wars. Like Korea and Vietnam the Persian Gulf War pitted one non-Western Muslim government against another. Once aggression had occurred, the United States and other Western governments became involved for geopolitical reasons that transcended cultural differences. Saddam Hussein would like the world to believe otherwise.” (4) Here Kirkpatrick severely criticizes Huntington for projecting the first Gulf War as “West against Islam” and points out that “but few believed it. More governments of predominantly Muslim societies rallied to support Kuwait than to ‘save’ Iraq”. (5) She also points out, to the detriment of Huntington’s position, that U.S. and European countries prevented further genocide of Muslim Bosnians by Christian Serbs. Kirkpatrick, though conceding some of Huntington’s observation, such as, that global communication and stepped-up migration has exacerbated conflict by bringing
diametrically opposed values into direct contact with one another, yet refuses to accept Huntington’s clash of civilization thesis. She emphatically asserts that “….. while accepting the endless changes of modernization, our differences from one another will be preserved, and the need for not just a pluralistic society but a pluralistic world will grow ever more acute.”(6)

Albert L. Weeks points out that Huntington is raising the issue of the old debate in International Relations, of the relationship between the ‘microscopic’ and ‘macroscopic’ processes. In trying to conceptualize the propositions of Huntington, Weeks brings back the original context of the 1950s old international relations debate of the “microscope processes” signified by the basic unit or determining factor, the nation-state at the international level (advocated by scholar like Hans J. Morgenthau, John H. Hertz and Raymond Aron) and of the “macroscopic processes” signified by the more broader civilizational factor (spearheaded by Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee, Quincy Wright, F. N. Parkinson, etc). He argues that Huntington has only resurrected this old controversy and says that “his methodology is not new”. Week’s points out that, “Huntington’s classification, while different in several respects from those of his illustrious predecessors (Toynbee and Wright), also identifies determinants on a grand scale by civilizations”. (7) He then states that Huntington’s thesis of clash of civilizations “has its own fault lines”. In sharp contract to Huntington’s contention, Weeks states that “The world remains fractured along political and possibly geopolitical lines; cultural and historical determinants are a great deal less vital and virulent”. (8)

For Weeks the civilizational differences are not the prime cause of conflict in the world, “But it is willful, day-to-day, crisis-to-crisis, war-to-war political decision-making by nation-states units that remain the single most identifiable determinant of events in the international arena”. (9) Weeks points out Huntington’s admission of the weakness of Huntington’s thesis where Huntington himself talks of “one Arab state invaded another and then brought a coalition of
Arab, Western and other states”, purportedly referring to the Gulf War to liberate Kuwait. Weeks, criticizes Huntington’s thesis based on civilisational conflict, by taking recourse to the “micro” school’s view of conflict at international level, as propounded earlier by scholars like Raymond Aaron and Hans Morgenthau. In short, like Fouad Ajami, Weeks uses the nation-state argument to criticise and defeat Huntington’s thesis of clash of civilization.

Gerard Piel offers a more mild criticism by stating “In the end ‘The West and the Rest’ offers a more useful analysis. We can recognize these ghostly civilizations as the developing countries and the countries in transition. They all aspire to the western model”. For Piel, these so called non-Western civilizations are like pseudo-species “still engaged in conquest of the material” and all aspiring to the Western model”. He further says that “How long the process will take depends on how the West responds to the needs and the disorder that beset the emerging and developing nations”. (10)

Robert L. Bartley, Editor of the Wall Street Journal, in an article published in response to Huntington’s original publication expressing the thesis, has tried to paint a more optimistic and a less frightening scenario for the post Cold War period. He says “The breaching of the Berlin wall sounded the end of not merely the Cold War, but on epoch of global conflict that started with the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand on June 2, 1914.”(11) He sets out to provide a counter balance to Huntington’s pessimistic and alarmist prediction for the post Cold War period. He contends that it does not make sense to paint a gloomy picture by “the crabbed permission of today’s conventional wisdom”. He blames Huntington for inventing a horror scenario for the future generation when he says that “we now probe the dawning era for evidence not of relief but of new and even more ghastly horrors ahead”. According to Bartley this is symptomatic of loss of confidence on the part of the West “In particular, we have lost confidence in our own ability to shape the new era, and instead keeping conjuring up inexorable historical and moral forces”. (12)
Bartley mounts a scathing attack on Huntington when, in his own words, he says “Even so hard-headed a thinker as Samuel P. Huntington has concluded, “A West at the peak of its power confronts non-West that increasingly have the desire, the will and the resources to shape the world in non-Western ways”. (13) Bartley questions Huntington’s belief that “the conflicts of the future will be between the West and the rest, the West and the Muslims, the West and an Islamic – Confucian alliance or the West and a collection of other civilizations, including Hindu, Japanese, Latin American and Slavic-Orthodox”. (14) He questions Huntington’s proposition that the conflict between the West and non-West will be over fundamental and often irreconcilable values. Bartley raises serious doubts over this assertion of Huntington and actually suggests that values of the West are attractive to the non-West. Bartley tries to highlight the uniting or integrating forces at work in the world like, communication, popular culture, western education, English language democracy; economic interdependence, etc. Bartley like Fouad Ajami, reposes his faith in the power of the middle class to thwart anything like a global civilizational conflict and he bases this faith on the power of prosperity to which middle class of all nations and all civilizations and cultures in addicted to. He contends that democracy based on middle class accommodation traits are antidotes against civilizational conflicts and wars predicted by Huntington for the 21st century. Bartley thus, states that, “the dominant flow of historical forces in the 21st century could well be this; economic development leads to demands for democracy and individual (or familial) autonomy; instant world-wide communications reduces the power of oppressive governments, the spread of democratic states diminishes the potential for conflict.” (15) Bartley’s main argument against Huntington’s thesis of ‘Clash of Civilisation’ is that, “democracies do not fight each other, their spread not only fulfils our ideals but also promotes our security interests”. (16) In the final blow to Huntington’s doomsday prediction, Bartley states that though “the case for
optimism is admittedly not easy to sustain yet he states that West “needs only to believe in itself” (17)

John Esposito has been one of the sharpest critics of Huntington and this is evident when he says “From Ayatollah Khomeini to Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, from Iran to the World Trade Center, government leaders and opinion makers in the West and in the Middle East have warned of the dangers of militant Islam. If the 1980s were dominated by images of embassies under siege, American hostages, and hijackings, the 1990s bring prophecies of insurgent movements wielding nuclear weapons and employing urban terrorism. Headlines announce the possibility of a worldwide Islamic uprising and a clash of civilizations in which Islam may overwhelm the West.” (18) He says early 1990’s were characterised by alarmist writings including that of Huntington. “All fuel alarmist concerns reflected in publications and conferences with titles like "Roots of Muslim Rage," "Islam: Deadly Duel with Zealots," and "Awaiting God's Wrath: Islamic Fundamentalism and the West." (19)

In contrast to Huntington Esposito has a different view about Islam. According to him “The reality is that Islamic revivalism was not the product of the Iranian revolution but of a global reassertion of Islam that had already been under way and that extended from Libya to Malaysia”. (20) And then he asserts that “The causes of the resurgence are many and differ from country to country, but common catalysts and concerns are identifiable. Secular nationalism (whether in the form of liberal nationalism, Arab nationalism, or socialism) has not provided a sense of national identity or produced strong and prosperous societies. The governments in Muslim countries— mostly non-elected, authoritarian, and dependent on security forces—have been unable to establish their political legitimacy. They have been blamed for the failure to achieve economic self-sufficiency, to stem the widening gap between rich and poor, to halt widespread corruption, to liberate Palestine, to resist Western political and cultural hegemony. Both the political and the religious establishments have come under criticism, the
former as a westernized, secular elite overly concerned with power and privilege, and the latter (in Sunni Muslim nations) as leaders of the faithful who have been co-opted by governments that often control mosques and religious universities and other institutions”. (21)

He further adds “Islamic revivalism is in many ways the successor to failed nationalist programs. The founders of many Islamic movements were formerly participants in nationalist movements: Hasan al-Banna of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Rashid Ghannoushi of Tunisia’s Renaissance party, and Abbasi Madani of the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria. Islamic movements have offered an Islamic alternative or solution, a third way distinct from capitalism and communism. Islamists argue that secularism, a modern bias toward the West, and dependence on Western models of development have proved politically inadequate and socially corrosive, undermining the identity and moral fabric of Muslim societies. Asserting that Islam is not just a collection of beliefs and ritual actions but a comprehensive ideology embracing public as well as personal life, they call for the implementation of Sharia, or Islamic law, as a social blueprint. While the majority within the Muslim world seek to work within the system, a small but significant minority believes that the rulers in their countries are anti-Islamic and that they have a divine mandate to unseat them and impose their vision.” (22)

He points out that “Demonization of Islam proceeded throughout the 1980s, but by late in the decade a more nuanced, broad-based, diverse Islamic world was increasingly evident. Beneath the radical facade, apart from the small, marginalized extremist groups, a quiet revolution had taken place. Fear of fundamentalism, like fear of communism, has made strange bedfellows. Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt join Israel in warning of a regional and international Islamic threat in their bids to win Western aid and justify their repression of Islamists.” (23) He makes a very pertinent point when he says “Islam is often portrayed as a
triple threat: political, civilizational, and demographic.” (24) He thinks “To equate Islam and Islamic fundamentalism uncritically with extremism is to judge Islam only by those who wreak havoc—a standard not applied to Judaism and Christianity. The danger is that heinous actions may be attributed to Islam rather than to a twisted or distorted interpretation of Islam. Thus despite the track record of Christianity and Western countries when it comes to making war, developing weapons of mass destruction, and imposing their imperialist designs, Islam and Muslim culture are portrayed as somehow peculiarly and inherently expansionist and prone to violence and warfare.” (25) Pointedly he says “Treating Islamic experiences as exceptional is an invitation to long-term conflict.” (26)

Even before Huntington could put forth his theory John Esposito had taken up the question of the fears of the West of the Islam. (27) But subsequent to Huntington’s expounding of the clash of civilizations thesis, Esposito in the revised edition of his earlier work criticized the attempt of Huntington to give the issue a civilisational interpretation. (28) (In this work Esposito systematically demolished many of Huntington’s contentions and highlighted the myth of Islamic threat propagated by Huntington.

John L. Esposito, writing after the terrorist strikes in USA in September 2001 says “The terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon will be remembered as a watershed. They not only constitute a national tragedy that saw the most devastating assault against America on U.S. soil but also signal a new clash in the 21st century. This clash is not that of Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis, of civilizations between Islam and the West or America and Islam, but between the civilized world and a global terrorism that transcends a “civilizational” paradigm.” (29) He also says “The situation is compounded by the simplistic equation of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism with all Islamic movements, political and social, non-violent and violent”. (30) He adds “More importantly, both the administration and the media have often proved incapable or
unwilling to balance attention on stopping terrorists, in particular Osama Bin Laden, with an equally important focus on the core political issues that help to explain a growing anti-Americanism in the Middle East and broader Muslim world(31)

In the post 9/11 period according to Esposito “The temptation then, as now, will be to seek easy justifications to explain away anti-Americanism such as irrationality, ingratitude, a clash of civilizations, and hatred for “our American way of life.” (32) Ridiculing the thesis of Huntington, Esposito says “We sometimes seem to overlook the fact that regardless of cultural differences, most people in the world share a common civilization, one that values life, family, education, technology, peace, social justice, freedom, and political participation.” (33) Thus John Esposito holds that the Western interventions in Muslim countries like Afghanistan or Iraq is not a civilisational conflict. He cites Western involvement in Muslim Kosovo against Orthodox Christians as evidence of a ground reality at odds with Huntington’s theory. He warns against the great dangers of theses like that of Huntington’s which tend to conceal the common ground between civilisations and highlight differences among people.

In another article John Esposito takes up the critique of Huntington’s thesis. He begins by posing a question "Should the West fear a transnational Islamic threat or clash of civilisations?" (34) and then goes on to answer thus “In recent years, there are those who speak of a clash of civilisations, a clash between Islam and "our" modern secular (or Judeo-Christian), democratic values and culture or between Islamic civilization and the West. The underestimation of religion in modernization or development theory as a source of identity and a potential force in politics has led today to its overestimation. New recognition of religion’s significance in international affairs has reinforced an exaggerated belief among some in the impending clash of civilisations. The clearest, most provocative and influential articulation of this position is Samuel P. Huntington's "Clash of Civilisations" in which Huntington declared that in the post Cold War period:
"The clash of civilisations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilisations will be the battle lines of the future... The next world war, if there is one, will be a war between civilisations." Religious and cultural differences are emphasized in this position over similarities; political, economic, and cultural differences are necessarily equated with confrontation. Areas of cooperation and the fact that most countries are primarily, though not solely, driven by national and regional interests are overlooked or de-emphasized.” (35)

Noam Chomsky (36) has been one of the most dismissive critics of Huntington’s thesis especially in the post 9/11 period when the clash of civilizations thesis began to occupy the centre stage of academic and political discourse. Chomsky’s anti-US tirade which stems from his leftist beliefs has helped to understand the motivations of Huntington’s enterprise called the clash of civilisations. Though Chomsky never agreed with Huntington’s perspective on the post Cold War era, and even deprecated it, he did not say much until the Huntingtonian perspective began to unduly attain greater currency in the post 9/11 period..

Noam Chomsky's '9-11'(37) in trying to analyse the events of September 11, 2001 and its aftermath resulted in one of the most scathing attacks on Huntington’s civilisational paradigm. Chomsky has presented a thorough, rigorous and detailed insight into the causes of the September 11th attacks, but nowhere does he concede any ground for a civilisational interpretation for these attacks. According to Chomsky what was new about the attacks of September 11th was that for the first time the US was under attack in its own territory. He however, does not think that it is shocking as an attack and assault on civilians resulting in large numbers of deaths, massive destruction and suffering, because he says the history of USA is replete with many such examples, such as Western
annihilation of native Americans, US conquest of Mexico, Hawaii, Philippines, and invasion of Vietnam; and so on.

Chomsky categorically rejects the thesis of Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis, that there is a clash of civilizations between the West and Islam and considers it as a misconception. He says that there is no real basis to believe that the Muslims or Arabs do not have notions like quest for freedom, tolerance, prosperity, democracy, peaceful coexistence, etc. Though Chomsky emphatically says, "Nothing can justify crimes such as those of September 11th." (38) he refuses to attribute the attacks of 9/11 to a clash of civilizations between the West and Islam. Chomsky holds that far from being a clash of civilisations the terrorist attacks of 9/11 serve as "a gift to the harshest and most repressive elements on all sides, and sure to be exploited . . . to accelerate the agenda of militarization, regimentation, reversal of social democratic programs, transfer of wealth to narrow sectors, and undermining democracy any meaningful form." (39)

Noam Chomsky while on a tour of India during the American war in Afghanistan said in an interview “It is US propaganda that the current war against terrorism is the result of a clash of civilisations. It is complete nonsense. There is no clash of civilisations in the current war. After the fall of the Soviet Union, it was necessary for the US to invent new pretexts to carry out the same policies. And one of the pretexts, terms invented by the academic world, is the clash of civilisations. So, before, the US was fighting communism. Now it is fighting the civilisation of Islam or whatever. You know, it is all nonsense. If you look at the alignment of the world, you see that there is not simply any clash of civilisations.” (40) Noam Chomsky, in yet another interview said “There are factions that want to create a clash of civilizations. I’m sure Osama bin Laden would be delighted to have a clash of civilizations. The Bush planners are trying desperately to create a clash of civilizations. And, in fact, if you look at the rhetoric of these two groups,
it is almost identical: good against evil, line to God and all the rest of it. So, yes, they would like to have a clash of civilizations. But that has almost nothing to do with reality. I mean, there is no clash of civilizations; these are standard policies of powerful states pursuing interests.” (41)

When asked whether one can talk of the clash between two civilizations in the US war on Islamic terrorism Chomsky replied “This is fashionable talk, but it makes little sense.” And citing the US brutalities in the predominantly Catholic South America, he actually asks “Without continuing, exactly where do we find the divide between "civilizations."? Are we to conclude that there is a "clash of civilizations" with the Catholic Church on one side, and the US and the most murderous and fanatic religious fundamentalists of the Islamic world on the other side? I do not of course suggest any such absurdity. But exactly what are we to conclude, on rational grounds?” (42) Chomsky who has made critical statements against scholars like Robert Kaplan in words such as “subservient intellectual class, of which he's an illustration” and about Bernard Lewis as “we know that he's just a vulgar propagandist and not a scholar” when asked if a clash of civilizations is a taking place Chomsky said: “No, it's a fabrication”

Eric McGlinchey (Eric McGlinchey belongs to the Department of Political Science of Iowa State University) says that “Militant Islam, where it does emerge, is not a product of a clash of civilisations, but rather, is a response to local autocratic rule”. (43) He further adds “Problematically however, while these clash of civilisations and foreign intervention arguments may capture part of the cause, they nevertheless treat Islamist opposition as an undifferentiated whole. That is, they provide few insights into why some Islamist movements are more militant and why conflict between state and Islam is greater in some countries than in others.”
In responding to Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington, Richard Bulliet, a historian from Columbia makes a "Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization" and argues that there are more similarities between Christianity and the Muslims, especially of the Middle East than there are differences between them. He opines that as contacts between these two biblical religions became more intense especially during the middle ages, mutual hostility increased. He further says that even in this period of 1500 years though the two civilizations did go their separate ways, peaceful interaction was more common than violent exchange." (44)

Richard Bulliet's work is an absolute rebuttal of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis. He explains in an explicit rejection of Huntington's clash of civilizations thesis, that this clash between the two religions was more due to accidents of history than an inherent outcome of fundamentally different worldviews. Bulliet also mounts a strong critique of Bernard Lewis who had originally spoken of the clash of civilizations idea. Bulliet criticizes the negative assessment of Islam as a failed civilization given by Lewis and blames it on the misreading history by Lewis' due to his own western worldview. He blames Lewis and Huntington for failing to appreciate the reasons why Muslim world has been fighting, which was to safeguard justice by opposing tyranny and this, he says has always been the preoccupation of religious establishment.

Niall Ferguson states "And yet, for all its seductive simplicity, I have never entirely bought the theory that the future will be dominated by the clash of civilisations. For one thing, the term "civilisation" has always struck me as much too woolly. I know what a religion is. I know what an empire is. But, as Henry Kissinger might have said, who do I call when I want to speak to Western Civilisation? The really big problem with the theory, however, is right in front of our very noses. Question: Who has killed the most Muslims in the past 12 months? The answer is, of course, other Muslims." (45)
Tim Goninge, a Christian theologian, conceding to some extent civilisational clash perspective, says that "Whatever one thinks of this analysis one can see how accurate a guide it is to contemporary United States' foreign policy, in all but one respect. Huntington's solution to the problem he outlines is, first, that the West must maintain technological and military superiority over other civilizations but equally that Western intervention in the affairs of other civilizations is the single most dangerous source of instability and potential global conflict in a multicivilizational world. He calls this the abstention rule. This is the part of his analysis which has not been followed. Avoidance of a global war of civilizations depends on world leaders accepting and co-operating to maintain the multicivilizational character of global politics" (46)

But then he goes on to criticise Huntington's thesis by saying "To call this thesis sieve like is to be generous. In the first place the omission of economics from the argument is astounding. The major economic fact of our world, after all, is globalization, a process led by US corporations. According to many analysts the dominance of Western corporations, trade and media means that the whole world is being Westernized. There are arguments against that view but in many areas the evidence for homogenisation is irresistible. Fundamentalisms are only partially to be understood as reactions to modernity. In some respects, in their positivism and their eager use of technology, for example, they are forms of it. The idea of a 'clash of civilizations' therefore flies in the face of the impact of modernity on every world culture." (47)

His rejection of Huntington's thesis is evident when he says "The thesis is inherently essentialist, though in this the compliment is returned. Both Huntington and Ziauddin Sardar identify 'the West' with Christianity. But, the theologian at once responds, Christianity is no monolith, but, rather, an ongoing debate in which complete consensus is unlikely to be found." (48)
Thomas Scott challenges the idea that religion and cultural pluralism cannot co-exist or be reconciled in the international society. He argues that to view religious movements sweeping the world as a consequence of a fundamentalist driven clash of civilisations is to miss the role of religion to find alternative paths to modernity and world order. (49) In a more recent work, Scott argues that religious resurgence is a global phenomenon which represents the crisis of modernity. He considers it an attempt to reinvent or refashion politics in terms other than modern values. The argument of this author is that religious resurgence is a result of people's desire everywhere to define and practice politics in ways other than modern (secular or non-religious) He claims that followers of all religions are seeking to reshape politics using their own religious values instead of modern ones. Essentially he pitches for communal politics and not civilisational clash. (50)

Joseph S. Nye, Jr states that “Anti Americanism has increased in recent years and the United States Soft Power – its ability to attract others by legitimacy of U.S. policies and the values that underline them – is in decline as a result”. (51) He further points out that “some hard-line sceptics might counter that, whatever its merits, soft power has little importance to the current war against terrorism”. (52) Nye, while wholly endorsing the America 'war on terror' tries to explain the conflict in a different manner – “The current struggle against Islamist terrorism is not a clash of civilization; it is a contest closely tied to the civil war raging within Islamic civilization between moderates and extremists”. (53) Nye, urges that in the 'age of terror', like during Cold War, soft power, expressed through propaganda and policies, has an equal role to play, especially as this age is also the information age, where softwar(e) is an important as hardwar(e). Nye’s line of arguing is further elaborated in his subsequent book Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics (54)

Hans Kung, the well known Catholic theologian, asked “Has the controversy over the Danish cartoons finally proved Samuel Huntington's theory
of the "clash of civilizations" to be right? No, for civilizations are not players on the stage of world politics, nor do they wage wars; in many places, people of different cultures are living quite peacefully together. World politics is a matter for states and their leaders, as it always has been’(55)

Ethan Heitner says that “The "clash of civilizations" is not just a myth, it is a dangerous myth that demands that the United States and Israel use military force to humiliate and conquer Muslim countries to keep them from turning Europe into "Eurabia." (56) He further adds that “Huntington's view is as absurd as the Cold War view of the Communist monolith as an intractable foe of the West, and indeed seems to have been created by a "search and replace" function of a word processor on Cold War-era thinking” (57)

McGlinchey has therefore said “Clash critics argue that religion provides flawed justification for the thought dichotomy of Islam and the West. Indeed, Middle East scholars John Esposito and John Voll remind, lest we forget our own history, that the West’s path to democracy, a journey which is still incomplete, required a wholesale “reconceptualization of premodern traditions.” Moreover, while clash theorists argue that “civilisations are differentiated from each other by history, language, culture, tradition and, most important, religion,” political scientist Paul Corcoran observes of a perhaps not so different Western civilization: From the perspective of twenty-five hundred years of Western political thinking, almost no one, until very recently, thought democracy to be a very good way of structuring political life. Such critiques are instructive, for to preclude the possibility of political reform in Muslim societies, as clash of civilisations theories so often do, is to ignore the Western world’s own troubled and protracted experience with political liberalization. Clash of civilization theories demand we ignore the many empirical realities that challenge what, in actuality, is the blurry divide between the Western and Islamic worlds. Judeo-Christian beliefs are not a
guarantee for democracy and Islam is not everywhere a predictor of anti-democratic values." (58)

McGlinchey has correctly pointed out that "In short, although clash of civilisations hypotheses for the spread of political Islam abound both in the United States and abroad, empirical reality suggests a considerably more complex world than the simple binaries of the West and Islam. Regardless if the question is one of political liberalization or international relations (and clash theories often elude both), there is little evidence that religion is determinative of political outcomes. When geopolitically expedient, the democratic West has sided with illiberal and even fundamentalist regimes in the Middle East, Central and South Asia. And similarly problematic for clash theories, Muslims in the Middle East, Central and South Asia have expressed strong support for democratic reform and equal distaste for autocratic rule. Variation, not uniformity, defines political Islam. And although there are multiple cases of growing militant Islamist movements which seemingly conform to the clash of civilisations hypothesis, there are equal if not more cases where the West and Islam comfortably meet and where the boundary between the two is imperceptible." (59)

McGlinchey argues that "variations in the type of authoritarian rule lead to variations in the nature of domestic political opposition. Opposition movements gravitate to those strategies which they perceive as most effective. Democratic strategies are viable in authoritarian states which allow some degree of dialogue and contestation. Through dialogue and political contestation opposition movements can nurture the hope that, someday, they too may win power. In states where political control is absolute, however, opposition movements maintain no such hope. Instead, revolutionary change is seen as the only viable strategy for effecting political change. Thus, while the clash of civilisations and the intervention of foreign activists have, perhaps, provided the ideas and ideology of political Islam, the prominence of political Islam is by no means uniform across
the region, but rather, varies in response to the local nature of authoritarian rule. (60)

Stephen O’Shea, in criticising Huntington takes a historical approach and uses history of encounters between Islam and Christianity to show that the encounter between the two has not been always of conflict. He focuses on the fact that history can be misused to misguide and misinform. He says that history “provides a backdrop to much of what informs, and misinforms, public opinion on present-day conflicts.” (61) O’Shea clearly implies who he thinks is misguiding, and misinforming, public opinion. He says “A shared history should be familiar to all, especially in a day when the idea of an inevitable civilizational clash has once again gained currency.” (62) O’Shea provides an extremely balanced narrative by giving due consideration to the facts of conflict and coexistence, which clearly demolishes the popular myth of exclusive violence between Muslims and Christians. The emphasis on coexistence or "conviviencia", is targeted at Huntington and his defenders as well as those Muslims who compete with Huntington to declare the inevitability of a clash between Islam and the West. He believes that both the Christians and the Muslims have their own popular mythologies which though differ in terms of history only slightly yet both must learn from facts of history.

Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart who have undertaken intensive empirical study of Huntington's many contentions, have said “The results confirm the first claim in Huntington’s thesis: culture does matter, and indeed matters a lot, so that religious legacies leave their distinct imprint on contemporary values. But Huntington is essentially mistaken in assuming that the core clash between the West and Islamic worlds concerns democracy, as the evidence suggests striking similarities in the political values held in these societies. It remains true that Islamic nations differ from the West on issues of religious leadership, but this is not a simple dichotomous clash, as many countries around the globe display similar attitudes to Islam. Moreover the original thesis fails to identify the primary
cultural fault line between the West and Islam, concerning the social issues of gender equality and sexual liberalization. The values separating Islam and the West revolve far more centrally around Eros than Demos.” (63) They state that “Just as it would be a mistake to understand the 1995 bombing in Oklahoma City as a collective attack on the federal government by all far right Christian fundamentalists, rather than the work of a few individuals, so it may well be inappropriate to view the attack by Al-Qaeda terrorists on symbols of American capitalism and financial power as a new ‘clash of civilisation’ between Islamic and Western cultures. (64)

Reviewer David Skidmore has also criticized stating that “Huntington suggests that modernization, interdependence and democratization lead not to convergence and increased cooperation among nations but to growing divergence and civilizational conflict” (65) He contends that this is not true. Michael Novak (Michael Novak has been the George Frederick Jewett Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. He is a former US ambassador, and has authored several best-selling books) does not think that an enduring clash is inevitable because “there are so many people in Islamic countries who share our hunger and desire for liberty.” (66)

James Kurth’s contention is that “…the real clash of civilizations, the one most pregnant with significance, will not be between the West and the rest, but one that is already underway within the West itself, particularly within its central power, the United States. This is a clash between Western civilization and a different grand alliance, one composed of the multicultural and the feminist movements. It is, in short, a clash between Western and post-Western civilizations.” (67) Thus Kurth turns Huntington’s argument on itself.

Similarly, Robert Hefner has said “There is no clash of civilizations between Islam and the West. The really decisive battle is taking place within Muslim civilization, where ultraconservatives compete against moderates and
democrats for the soul of the Muslim public. The globalization so widespread in our age will never bring about a world-wide homogenization of culture and identity. What the process has done is make the interests we share with the great majority of Muslims all the clearer." (68) He also like Kurth, indicates the divided nature of civilizations, only in this case it is Islam. Thus, the two together deal a mortal blow to Huntington’s most important contention.

Many German scholars, particularly geographers, have criticised Huntington’s regions of "civilizations" as being influenced by the highly deprecated concept of the "Kulturerdeile" (culture-continents) put forward by the German geographer Albert Kolb in a theory in 1962. There have been attempts to link continents with races and racial cultures. Earlier by some and Huntington having attempted a similar exercise has attracted the ire of particularly the German scholars (69) who have a tradition of deprecating such attempts. Similarly, many other critics have viewed Huntington's thesis as creating a self-fulfilling prophecy by trying to reinforce differences between civilizations and thereby provide a theoretical basis for legitimisation of domination by West under American control. Just as Arnold J Toynbee and Carroll Quigley, who wrote on religion and civilisation, have been severely criticised, Huntington has come under flak for similar reasons and this question has been dealt with at greater length subsequently in this study.

Conclusion

Huntington’s postulation has come under scathing attack by the Western scholars and most have vociferously and stridently refuted it. From the beginning, Huntington’s thesis of clash of civilisations between Western Christianity and Islam has been categorically rejected by a large number of highly respected Western academics and statesmen as a pernicious idea. Huntington has been
criticised by Western scholars for relying mostly on anecdotal evidence, contradictory ideas and shallow arguments.

5.3 Critique by Non-Western Scholars

Like the Western scholars, most of the non-Western scholars have launched a frontal attack on Huntington's thesis of civilisational clash. It is worth noting that many of the scholars, who first rose up against the thesis of Huntington, were of Asian origin—Fouad Ajami, Kishore Mahbubani, Liu Binyan, and others. These non-Western scholars, mostly Asians from Islamic, Hindu or Buddhist backgrounds, have made it a common cause to deprecate Huntington's thesis on several grounds.

Liu Binyan, (70) one of China's leading dissidents and scholar settled in United States, in response to Huntington's thesis of clash of civilizations, categorically states that in the post Cold War era, "conflicts of economic and political interests are becoming more and more common among the major nations of the world and more and more tense. Neither civilization nor culture has become the fundamental source of conflict in this new world" (71) Liu Binyan points out that "The Cold War has ended, but hot wars rage in more than thirty countries and regions. The wave of immigrants from poor territories to rich countries and the influx of people from rural areas to cities have reached an unprecedented scale, forming what the UN Population Fund has called 'the current crisis of mankind'. We can hardly say these phenomena result from conflict between different civilizations." (72)

Binyan further says that "For most countries the task is not to demarcate civilizations but to mix and meld them". Citing the case of China, where people have been accustomed to embracing communism, Maoism and now Capitalism to gain prosperity and freedom, Binyan points out that civilization grafting is at work and attributes this to the successful experiment of Deng Xiaoping "to weld Western Capitalism with Marxism-Leninism and aspects of Confucianism". (73)
Binyan lists the Chinese attempts at civilization grafting—Chang Kai-Shek’s “The Movement of New Life” and Deng Xiaoping’s “The Movement for Higher Spiritual Civilization”. In all these instances, Binyan points out to Chinese efforts to graft their civilization with non-Chinese ideas and values and criticizes Huntington’s assertions of rise of Confucianism in China. He states “It is ironic that Samuel P. Huntington sees a resurgent Confucianism at the very time when spiritual deterioration and moral degradation are eroding China’s cultural foundation”. He further adds that “Coping with this moral and spiritual vacuum is a problem not just for China but for all civilizations”. (74)

Fouad Ajami was one of the earliest critics of Huntington’s thesis. He quotes from Joseph Conrad’s Novella ‘Youth’ to assert that “the most remote civilization had been made and remade by the West and taught new ways” and this he says is in stark constraint to the assertion that “civilization are whole and intact, watertight under an eternal sky. Buried alive, as it were, during the year of Cold War, these civilizations (Islamic, Slavic-Orthodox, Western, Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, etc) rose as soon as the stone was rolled off, dusted themselves off and, and proceeded to claim the loyalty of their adherents”. (75) Fouad Ajami contends that “civilizations have always seemed messy creatures” (76) He further says that “Furrows run across whole civilization, across individuals themselves.....” and criticizes Huntington for looking past all these facts. He also criticizes Huntington for simplistically marking out “where one civilization ends and the wilderness of the other begins”. He further critiques Huntington for playing down “the slyness of states, the unsentimental and cold-bloodedness of so much of what they do as they pick their way through chaos.” (77) He refuses to agree with Huntington’s contention that “The next World War, if there is one, will be a war between civilizations” and criticises Huntington for writing off the states and giving their place to civilizations. Fouad Ajami uses the modernity argument to critique Huntington’s thesis. He says that the power of modernity, carried forward by the large middle class will not permit such religious dominated civilisational clash
because "it knows that a detour into religious fanaticism is a fling with ruin". He argues that the Huntington's thesis stems from Huntington's frustration with apparent contradiction of hostility of the others to the West and yet their attraction of the West.

Ajami accuses Huntington of trying to simplistically understand this complexity and states that Huntington thesis arises from "his need to simply matters, to mark out the borders of civilization" (78) Citing several examples of the Islamic countries, Fouad Ajami, demolishes Huntington's argument that the Islamic countries will give up their modern statehood and join an Islamic civilisational Caliphate. He further argues against another assertion of Huntington when he says that "Huntington would have nations battle for civilisational ties and fidelities when they would rather scramble for their market shares, learn how to compete in a merciless world economy provide jobs, move out of poverty" (79) To a large extent this argument of Fouad Ajami has been borne out time and again. For instance, when Israel has ruthlessly and violently targeted the Palestinians or Lebanese Muslim, the Muslim world or Muslim civilization has not readily come to the aid of these Muslim victims of civilisational conflict as Huntington would have as believe. Fouad Ajami goes on to demolish the hollowness of Huntington's argument of so called major civilizations by explaining that there really is not merging any "second Byzantium" (an orthodox civilisational entity) under the Russians, or a united Confucian world for that matter. Ajami pushes his critique of Huntington further by asserting that "States will consort with any civilization, however alien, as long as the price is right and the goods are ready", thereby highlighting the importance of selfishness of states over their desire to strengthen their civilisational links or unity. Fouad Ajami, points out to the lack of honesty and depth in Huntington's analysis and rejects the ideas and arguments of "civilisational rallying" and "kin-country syndrome" by citing examples of Bosnia and Iran.
On Gulf War, Fouad Ajami puts forth an extremely credible arguments when he says that “In his urge to find that relentless war across Islam’s “bloody borders”, Huntington buy’s Saddam Hussein’s interpretation of the Gulf War. It was for Saddam and Huntington, a civilisational battle. But the Gulf War's verdict was entirely different. For f there was a campaign that laid bare the interest of states, the length to which they will go to restore a tolerable balance of power in a place that matters, this was it. A local depot had risen close to the wealth of the Persian Gulf, and a Great Power from afar had come to the rescue”. He says that when Iraq invaded Kuwait, instead of the Muslim would and the Muslim Ulama sanctioning such taking over of one Muslim land by another Muslim nation in the name of civilisational rallying, the Muslim countries along with outside power (US and its allies) actually battled to restore the status quo and the Ulama and Islamic religious figures either wholly backed the enterprise or kept silent. Ajami makes a very pertinent observation when he says “No tears were shed in Iran for what befell Saddam Hussein’s regime”. Fouad Ajami while rejecting Huntington’s thesis makes a very profound statement when he says that “The fight in the Gulf was seen for what it was and a bid for primac”(80)

Kishore Mahbubani (81), has argued that Huntington’s thesis stems from “a deep sense of unease about the future”. In his words “The confidence that the West would remain a dominant force in the 21st century, as it has for the past four or five centuries, is giving way to a sense of foreboding that forces, like the arrogance of fundamentalist Islam, the rise of the East Asia and the collapse of Russia and Eastern Europe could pose real threats to the West. A seize mentality is developing. Within these troubled walls Samuel P Huntington’s essay “The Clash of Civilization?” is bounded to resonate.”(82) While conceding that the idea of civilization is acceptable, Mahbubani does not agree with Huntington on several counts. For instance he says “But in all conflicts between Muslims and pro-Western forces, the Muslims are losing, losing badly, whether they be Azeris, Palestinians, Iraqis, Iranians or Russian Muslims. With so much disunity the
Islamic world is not about to coalesce into a single force.”(83) He also says that “oddly, for all this paranoia, the West seems to be almost deliberately pursing a course designed to aggravate the Islamic world”. (84) He also says that Huntington’s thesis putting forward the idea of two civilizations, Islamic and Confucian, amounts to the “conjuring up of images of two Asian hordes that Western minds fear most – two forces that invaded Europe, the Muslim and the Mongols”. (85) He believes that, it is because of this that “Huntington posits a Confucian – Islamic connection against the West” like Fouad Ajami, Mahbubani also criticizes Huntington’s thesis using the “Statist” argument when he says “American arms sales to Saudi Arabia do not suggest a natural Christian–Islamic connection. Neither should Chinese arm sales to Iran. Both are opportunistic moves, based not on natural empathy or civilizational alliances”. He also very emphatically says that “Huntington fails to ask one obvious question. If other civilizations have been around for centuries, why are they posing a challenge only now? He blames Huntington for viewing the others from within western value system and says that “Western values do not form a seamless web. Some are good. Some are bad. But one has to stand outside the West to see this clearly, and to see how the West is bringing about its relative decline by its own hand. Huntington, too, is blind to this.” (86)

One of the strongest reactions against Huntington’s hypothesis came from Edward Said (87), who, in response to Huntington’s thesis wrote an essay entitled ‘The Clash of Ignorance’ in which he argued that Huntington’s narrow categorization of the world’s “civilizations” ignored the dynamic interdependency and interaction of different cultures. He considered Huntington’s thesis as arising out of an imagined geography, trying to legitimise a certain politics which is more beneficial to the Western world. In his strong riposte to Huntington’s thesis of clash of civilisations, Edward Said argues that it has ignored the real nature of cultures.
Edward Said in ridiculing Huntington's thesis says "Most of the argument in the pages that followed relied on a vague notion of something Huntington called "civilization identity" and "the interactions among seven or eight [sic] major civilizations," of which the conflict between two of them, Islam and the West, gets the lion's share of his attention. In this belligerent kind of thought, he relies heavily on a 1990 article by the veteran Orientalist Bernard Lewis, whose ideological colours are manifest in its title, "The Roots of Muslim Rage." In both articles, the personification of enormous entities called "the West" and "Islam" is recklessly affirmed, as if hugely complicated matters like identity and culture existed in a cartoonlike world where Popeye and Bluto bash each other mercilessly, with one always more virtuous pugilist getting the upper hand over his adversary. Certainly neither Huntington nor Lewis has much time to spare for the internal dynamics and plurality of every civilization, or for the fact that the major contest in most modern cultures concerns the definition or interpretation of each culture, or for the unattractive possibility that a great deal of demagogy and downright ignorance is involved in presuming to speak for a whole religion or civilization. No, the West is the West, and Islam Islam." (88)

Said further adds, "The challenge for Western policy-makers, says Huntington, is to make sure that the West gets stronger and fends off all the others, Islam in particular. More troubling is Huntington's assumption that his perspective, which is to survey the entire world from a perch outside all ordinary attachments and hidden loyalties, is the correct one, as if everyone else were scurrying around looking for the answers that he has already found." (89) Said categorically states "In fact, Huntington is an ideologist, someone who wants to make "civilizations" and "identities" into what they are not: shut-down, sealed-off entities that have been purged of the myriad currents and countercurrents that animate human history, and that over centuries have made it possible for that history not only to contain wars of religion and imperial conquest but also to be one of exchange,
cross-fertilization and sharing. This far less visible history is ignored in the rush to highlight the ludicrously compressed and constricted warfare that "the clash of civilizations" argues is the reality. When he published his book by the same title in 1996, Huntington tried to give his argument a little more subtlety and many, many more footnotes; all he did, however, was confuse himself and demonstrate what a clumsy writer and inelegant thinker he was.”(90)

Nuzhat Khurshid has pointed out about Said's criticism of Huntington: “Said argues that Huntington's concept of 'civilization' and 'identity' are "shut-down, sealed-off entities that have been purged of the myriad currents and countercurrents that animate human history, and that over centuries have made it possible for that history not only to contain wars of religion and imperial conquest but also to be one of exchange, cross-fertilization and sharing." Huntington's dichotomous method of thinking has already seeped into popular opinion and is causing friction in international relations between the two different 'civilisations'” (91)

Nuzhat Khurshid has this to say “Huntington argues that civilization, which he portrays as distinct from culture and ideology, is “the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species.” This definition alone is problematic, for it is surely too simplistic to categorize all people into predetermined categories (“seven or eight” are mentioned). Huntington further qualifies his use of 'civilization,' defining it “both by common objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people.” This further complicates the task of discovering a concise definition of the word, because the categories he lists are closely related. Moreover, the average American or European is still more likely to identify him/herself based on gender, nationality, religion or occupation, than on a vague conception of 'civilization' such as
'Western.' Complex and intertwining identities cannot be reduced to monolithic categories. By placing the full weight of his theory on the assumption of abstract "civilizational identity," Huntington debilitates its credibility.” (92)

Khurshid further states “Furthermore, Huntington’s categorization of ‘Islam’ as a civilization is not consistent with his treatment of other civilisations. Why is Islam handpicked for prominence among civilisations while the other great world religions are subverted by other, ‘broader’ entities? Surely a Christian or Jew feels just as strongly about his/her faith as a Muslim. Perhaps that was Huntington’s intention all along - to disguise religious identities with sketchy descriptions of ‘civilisations’ so as not to cause controversy. Huntington’s parochialism and partiality are revealed through his unconditional support for the West and its imperialistic tendencies, justified by its superiority in all respects. (93)

Gilbert Achcar, (94) in his work, ‘Clash of Barbarisms’ the title of which alludes to the Huntington’s thesis on the "Clash of Civilizations" posits a counter thesis, by saying that the clashes being witnessed do not oppose civilizations, but their dark sides. According to Achcar every civilization produces a specific form of barbarism, which tries to take over in periods of crisis. He says, that the American administration does not embody the values of Western civilization nor does Islamic fanaticism of the Al-Qaeda in any way represent Islamic civilization. The clash between these two is not a clash of civilizations but a "clash of barbarisms". Gilbert Achcar, in his ‘Clash of Barbarians’ has questioned the very basis of Huntington’s thesis. (95)

Achcar, though writing in the aftermath of 9/11 his work “The Clash of Barbarisms” was clearly intended to counterpoise with Samuel Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations”. In “Clash of Barbarisms” Achcar traces the emergence of militant and anti-Western Islamic fundamentalism to its roots in the policies
followed by U.S. which are aimed at gaining control of the oil resources of the Middle East. He says “The United States is thus directly responsible for the resurgence of anti-Western Islamic fundamentalism” (96) and adds that “The resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism is not the culturally inevitable form of radicalization in Muslim countries”

Said Shirazi in putting forth a leftist critique says “The idea that most conflicts are between different civilizations is absurd and precisely the opposite of the truth; in fact, it is often easier for people of different cultures to get along because they suspend their standards of judgment. It is only too easy to blow holes in Huntington’s theory with endless examples like the Hutus and Tutsis, North and South Korea, China and Taiwan, and reaching farther back, the Falkland Islands crisis, all conflicts between groups Huntington would consider to be from the same civilization. On the opposite side, the success of NAFTA, the U.S. support of Bosnian Muslims and the admission of Russia to NATO are also events which cross “civilizational” lines.” (97)

In a scathing attack on the scholarship of Huntington Shirazi decries “Coupled with the designation of various countries as belonging to different civilizations is a total lack of interest in what precisely those civilizations are. Sifting through his mountain of statistics, Huntington shows little evidence of having opened Confucius or the Koran. He merely repeats the key term “civilizations” over and over until it empties of all meaning and you half-expect to see a trademark symbol follow it. To the policy mentality, civilization is essentially a synonym for region, but one that appropriates the legacies of humanism and multiculturalism to mask its purposes. In his introduction he offers such deadeningpseudo-insights as these: “East Asian economic success has its source in East Asian culture... Islamic culture explains in large part the failure of democracy to emerge in much of the Muslim world.” (p. 29) Add the word culture
to any stereotype and what you have got is a kind of enlightened racism that can pass inspection.” (98)

Continuing his caustic diatribe, Shirazi says “The lure of racism is cheap knowledge, even for a renowned Harvard professor. Huntington’s “civilizational” theory allows him to explain the present and predict the future. He knows what books are like without opening them; he knows what people are like without meeting them. At times one almost feels one is reading a horoscope: “With the challenger civilizations, Islam and China, the West is likely to have consistently strained and often highly antagonistic relations.” (p. 184) “Relations between groups from different civilizations however will be almost never close, usually cool, and often hostile.” (p. 207) Huntington might defend himself against the charge by pointing out that some of the civilizations he discusses, like Islam, involve people of many races, in this case not only Arabs but also Turks, Persians, Indonesians and others. In my opinion, the effect is the same. To say as he does that “Sinic” civilization includes not only the Chinese but also Koreans and Vietnamese simply means that he lumps various races together, not that he has found a deeper and more reliable criterion of classification.” (99)

Shirazi challenges Huntington’s demography argument and excessively statistical approach thus “Much of the book is spent in hand-wringing over reproductive rates in the Muslim world. The specter of population growth is a time-honored racist fear, because the concern is not simply that there will be more people around but rather that the poor and reckless countries will expand and spill out of control, while the sexually inhibited and fiscally responsible West dies out. Huntington panics over the relative growth of poorer countries without considering that it is precisely because they are so far behind that their coming up to speed produces dramatic numbers. Economists know that as infant mortality goes down and living standards go up, population growth will inevitably slow.
This might be no consolation to Huntington, for he suffers from an alarmist and cruel tendency to interpret the improvement of living conditions elsewhere in the world as a decline of the West, a loss of advantage. He sees reduced military spending the same way, as part of our decline. Again his analysis is relative and purely statistical, ignoring the question of our actual defense needs and the effect of excessive militarism on our national pursuit of happiness. Whoever he can't convince, he will bury in numbers. His book is heavily padded with reams of brain-glazing stats which make the volume bigger and seemingly more important even as the accumulation of detail inevitably makes clearer and clearer how clumsy his generalizations are." (100)

Ismael Hossein-zadeh (101) states "An obvious weakness of this theory is that it views culture as static and immutable—immune to social, economic, and historical changes. More importantly, it ignores (or denies) the role of economic, territorial and geopolitical factors in international conflicts. It is on the basis of these dubious assumptions that Huntington can argue that international conflicts erupt not because of imperialistic pursuits of economic, territorial, or geopolitical advantages but because of non-Western civilisations' reactions to Western power and values. To fend off such "threats to its civilization," Huntington concludes that the West needs to further reinforce its power." (102) Ismael Hossein-Zadeh, says in the face of the 9/11 attacks, many scholars and leaders instead of trying to uncover the factors that might have provoked these attacks or understand the real reasons behind them have put forward "Instead, the simplistic and politically expedient explanations such as "good vs. evil," or "the clash of civilizations," or the "Islamic incompatibility with the modern world" have shed more heat than light on the issue." (103)

Ismael Hossein-Zadeh, in criticizing the proponents of the clash of civilizations thesis states "It is necessary to acknowledge, once again, that the
Muslim world's earlier openness to the modern world was far from even or uniform: along with advocates of change and adaptation there existed forces of resistance and rejection. Focusing primarily on such instances of rejection, proponents of the theory of "the clash of civilizations" can certainly cite, as they frequently do, many such incidents of resistance in support of their arguments that horrific acts like those committed on 9/11 are due to inherent incompatibility of the Muslim world with Western values (Huntington 1997; Lewis 2001; Krauthammer 1994; Pipes 1995). But such selective references to historical developments in order to support a pre-determined view do not carry us very far in the way of setting historical records straight. (104) He attributes the change of that earlier receptive and respectful attitude by Muslims toward the West to the current attitude of disrespect and hatred to "the policies of the Western powers in the region than the alleged rigidity of Islam, or "the clash of civilizations." (105)

He says that contrary to Huntington's contention, the hatred among the Muslim toward the West arises from West's "imperialistic pursuits and series of humiliating policies in the region" which caused the popular masses of the Muslim world to turn to "religion and the conservative religious leaders as sources of defiance, mobilization, and self-respect. In other words, for many Muslims the... recent turn to religion often represents not so much a rejection of Western values and achievements but a way to resist and/or defy the humiliating imperialistic policies of Western powers." (106)

Kofi Annan, an African diplomat and intellectual, has critiqued in following words "This is not to say that ideas and interests do not clash. They do; and always will. But one must never confuse the clash of ideas with a clash of civilizations. Clashes of ideas can and must be conducted peacefully and politically to the benefit of all. Indeed, I believe that history should teach us that, alongside a global diversity of cultures, there exists one, world-wide civilization of knowledge within which ideas and philosophies meet and develop peacefully and productively. This is the civilization for which the United Nations labors every
day in every part of the world; it is the civilization which recognizes that true progress is based on lasting peace and prosperity; the civilization within which clashes of ideas take place peacefully and productively.” (107) Former UN Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan of Ghana, himself believes that religion is not at the root of current tensions. He has said "The problem is not the Koran or the Torah or the Bible," Mr. Annan said."The problem is never the faith, it is the faithful and how they behave towards each other." (108)

Seizaburo Sato (109) says that “Huntington is not only inaccurate or wrong in some of the historical facts he presents in his analysis, but his thesis has the potential to be extremely dangerous if taken as a prescription for making policy. If the leadership of a major power—particularly of the United States, the only remaining superpower—were to accept this world-view and systematically adopt and implement policies based upon it, countries belonging to other civilizational spheres would be forced to take counter-measures, and this would in turn cause a series of interactions that would turn Huntington's propositions into self-fulfilled reality”. (110)

Mohamed Sid Ahmed has said “Both the “end of history” and the “clash of civilisations” theories were received with great fanfare as major contributions to the field of political philosophy. That is not an assessment I share. Not only do I believe that both theories have been blown up out of all proportion, but that they proceed from premises that are shrouded in ambiguities, not to say mistakes.” (111)

Guo Jiemin avers that “First of all, it must be noted that here the concept of civilization is basically equal to the concept of culture. The two can be interchanged. For example, “Confucian civilization” can also be called “Confucian culture”. Civilization is an existential form of culture. Then to what does the “clash of civilizations” theory specifically refer? Professor Samuel Huntington of
Harvard University wrote in the article "The Clash of Civilizations?" that non-Western civilizations no longer remain objects, but have become actors. The centerpiece of international politics will become the interaction between the West and non-Western civilizations. In the near future, the focus of conflict will concentrate on relations between the West and some Islamic-Confucian countries. He means that non-Western civilizations have gone up on the international stage and stood up to the West as equals, leading to cultural conflict. In essence, this is entirely a cultural power theory that regards "He says that "world culture is moving towards diversification. There is not only conflict, but also a blending of different cultures in their exchanges and interchanges. The key lies in mutual respect and inclusiveness, which is beneficial to cultural blending and coexistence. The "clash of civilizations" theory has absolutized local ethnic and religious cultural conflicts in history and reality. It has turned a blind eye to the megatrend of peaceful coexistence, exchange and development between ethnic groups and cultures". "Marxist cultural theory, based on the fundamentals of historical materialism, fully affirms the diversity of various ethnic and social cultures and firmly opposes an absolutization of any culture" (112)

Tariq Ramadan (113) has said "We're not dealing with a clash of civilizations. We're dealing with a clash of perceptions. What we're all trying to get out of our life is inner peace - it's the universal message, and it's the same for all religions." (114) He further adds "We need to stand between the people who are prophets of a very dark tomorrow. If we end up with a clash of civilizations, we are both going to lose. If there is a dialogue of civilizations, then we are both going to win" (115) Don Hill has reported that "At an interfaith conference in Prague sponsored by former Czech president Vaclav Havel, a prominent Muslim intellectual rejected the notion that the world is on the verge of a clash of civilizations between Islam and the West. Tariq Ramadan describes himself as a "Western Muslim." He says the "clash of civilizations" idea fails to consider the
large and growing Muslim presence in the West." Hill further reports that "Tariq Ramadan says the notion of a "clash of civilizations" fails to take into account the fact that Muslims already comprise an integral part of Western civilization". (116)

In repudiation of Huntington Akihiko Tanaka says "Every classic civilization has some aspects which conflict with aspects of modern industrial civilization, and each faces the threat of disintegration caused by the relentless progress of industrialization" (117) He asserts that it is a "fact that confrontation between major powers from different civilizational backgrounds has never been purely a post-Cold War phenomenon." (118) His opinion is that "Huntington's assertion that the post-Cold War world will be the stage for confrontations among civilizations is a concept fundamentally in error" (119)

He asserts that "the progress of modernization will destroy the established forms of individual cultures and hollow them out. That in the contemporary world mankind can neither live happily within modern civilization nor return to pre-modern culture, and is therefore destined to suffer from ever-more ambiguous problems of identity, is the essence of inter-civilizational clash. It has become minutely subdivided, internalized, and fallen into a state where there is no resolution in sight. That Fukuyama's The End of History and the Last Man ends on a pessimistic note is no accident. On the other hand, Huntington's The Clash of Civilizations appears superficial, even optimistic, despite its negative predictions about the future of world politics, because it fails to recognize this most fundamental inter-civilizational conflict". (120)

In the context of clash of civilizations, Andre Azoulay, adviser to the king of Morocco and an Arab-Jew said "The price that's paid for global failure [in the Middle East] is not only in Israel or Palestine. We are all the hostages of this failure. So we can't be silent and passive, we have to speak out and be creative."
Khaled El Fadl has said "The "clash of civilizations" approach assumes, in deeply prejudiced fashion, that puritanism and terrorism are somehow authentic expressions of the predominant values of the Islamic tradition, and hence is a dangerous interpretation of the present moment." (122)

Tariq Madood has said "The idea of a 'clash of civilizations' obscures the real power relations that exist between the West and Muslim societies. Whatever is happening in the latter today is in a context of domination and powerlessness - a context in which Muslim populations suffer depredations, occupation, ethnic cleansing and massacres with little action by the civilized world or the international community." (123) He further adds "The West is perceived by many to exercise double standards and that this is a source of grievance, hate and terrorism which is perhaps the most important lesson of 11 September, not the division of the world into rival civilizations, civilized and uncivilized, good and evil." (124) He cautions that "We must be careful with the 'clash of civilizations' thesis: it furthers racist stereotyping and all attendant evils within what are attempting to be multicultural societies." (125)

Akbar Ahmed says "It isn't quite a clash of civilizations that has been going on. While there may be an element of clash, there is a larger element of synthesis, understanding and sporadic dialogue" (126) Nazeer Ahmed (127) says that "In recent years, some interested circles have pushed forward the idea of a clash of civilizations as part of a much broader agenda." He examines the issue and concludes that "For the people of the heart, there is no conflict between Christianity and Islam. Islamic civilization and Christian civilization are connected by the principle of Ihsan." (128)

Mehdi Mozaffari in (Edit) Globalization and Civilizations, (129) presents his views on how globalization is a strong force in contrast to civilisation and explains how the process of globalisation is a real protection against Huntington's idea of
clash of civilisations. Tariq Ali in *The Clash of Fundamentalisms*, tries to demolish Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' thesis by terming it as 'reductive nonsense'. In stark contrast to Huntington, he contends that civilizations, are not monolithic entities but are characterised by competing political ideologies and conflicting value systems. Ali succeeds in putting up a persuasive rebuttal of Huntington's thesis.

Nobe Peace Laureate Dr Desmond Tutu of South Africa, former Indonesian foreign minister Ali Alatas, and Andri Azoulay, an advisor to Morocco's King Muhammed VI said that political repression in the Muslim world contributes to extremism. They say "Denying peaceful opposition movements the freedom to express their views and jailing their supporters generate anger and resentment, encouraging some to join violent groups," (130) This according to them cannot be construed as a clash of civilisations. Archbishop Desmond Tutu has insisted "That is a total misnomer. There are tensions, there are even hostilities but they are not caused by religion, by culture or by civilizations. They are political causes: when people are poor, when people are hungry or humiliated. But religion is morally neutral." (131) Ali Alatas, former foreign minister of Indonesia and one of the authors of Alliance of Civilisations report has said "One of our major conclusions is that the divide is not religious or cultural but political." (132)

Several other Non-Western scholars and authors have also denounced Huntington's thesis stating that it is a motivated enterprise and not a scientific theory. Some of these scholars are Akbar Ahmed, Emran Qureshi, Khaled Diab, and so on.

**Conclusion**

Most of the Non-Western scholars, and particularly Asian and Islamic scholars, have vehemently opposed Huntington's thesis on the ground that it is dangerous and perverse theory.
5.4 Critique by Indian Scholars

Most of the Indian scholars, too, have not lagged behind in refuting Huntington's thesis, though they may have not done so through extensive scholarly writings or through publication in reputed journals of national or international standing. Ram Punyani's "Terrorism, Imperialism and War" has been one of the most serious attempts at testing the validity of Huntington's thesis in the Indian context. The findings of this study have successfully repudiated Huntington's theory. Many other Indian scholars and intellectuals have minced no words in condemning Huntington's thesis. Scholars from the minority communities in India as also those from the majority community have flayed Huntington's theory as a pernicious idea, having serious and dangerous implications, if accepted.

Asghar Ali Engineer has been one of the most prominent critics of Huntington's thesis in India. Asghar Ali Engineer has said "Huntington's thesis is a totally flawed and superficial approach, having absolutely no substance and hence to be rejected outright. It has an underlying vested interest, is motivated and written with a particular agenda in mind."(133) Like many other Indian scholars Engineer has expressed outright disapproval and condemnation of Huntington's thesis and this has been reflected in many of his writings. He has consistently questioned the very basis of Huntington's assertions. He has said "The question arises is our claim to civilisation, western or eastern justified? Is it clashing of civilisations or clash of terrors?" (133a)

Engineer affirmed his belief thus "Each religion has made a unique contribution to human culture and civilization through its own spiritual milieu, theological concepts and value-orientation. I, therefore, totally reject the theory of clash of civilizations and believe that it is not civilizations but barbarians who clash. The clash can never be civilizational but political. There can be power
struggle between those who aspire to control one or the other civilizational based institutions but there can never be clash of civilizations. This doctrine has been formulated deliberately to promote Western hegemony and should not be taken seriously. (134)

Amartya Sen (135) has rejected Huntington’s thesis squarely. He says “A remarkable use of imagined singularity can be found in Samuel Huntington’s influential 1998 book The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order. The difficulty with Huntington’s approach begins with his system of unique categorization, well before the issue of a clash-or not-is even raised. Indeed, the thesis of a civilizational clash is conceptually parasitic on the commanding power of a unique categorization along so-called civilizational lines, which closely follow religious divisions to which singular attention is paid. Huntington contrasts Western civilization with "Islamic civilization," "Hindu civilization," "Buddhist civilization," and so on. The alleged confrontations of religious differences are incorporated into a sharply carpentered vision of hardened divisiveness.” (136)

He further states “The difficulty with the clash of civilizations thesis begins with the presumption of the unique relevance of a singular classification. Indeed, the question "Do civilizations clash?" is founded on the presumption that humanity can be pre-eminently classified into distinct and discrete civilizations, and that the relations between different human beings can somehow be seen, without serious loss of understanding, in terms of relations between different civilizations. This reductionist view is typically combined, I am afraid, with a rather foggy perception of world history that overlooks, first, the extent of internal diversities within these civilizational categories, and second, the reach and influence of interactions-intellectual as well as material-that go right across the regional borders of so-called civilizations.” (137)
Sen’s central argument is that “the same person can be, without any contradiction, an American citizen, of Caribbean origin, a Christian, a liberal, a woman, a vegetarian, a long-distance runner, a historian, a feminist, a heterosexual...” (138) He further argues “The theory of an overarching "clash of civilizations" not only has to face the difficult problem of explaining so many different types of movements in the world today, it would not be able to provide much of an explanation for some of the most prominent political developments in contemporary history, such as the separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan, which happened despite the fact that they shared the same religious identity (more than 100 million Bengali Muslims supported—and fought for—the assertion of a Bengali identity in addition to their Muslim identity).” (139)

He says “Let me also consider my own country, India. Samuel Huntington describes it simply as a "Hindu civilization." That description may seem a little odd since India, with its 145 million Muslims, has more Muslims than almost any other country in the world, including those that are firmly placed by Huntington within "the Muslim civilization." But Huntington is right that the vast majority of Indians come from a Hindu background—more than 80 percent, in fact. And yet, if you look at the three principal governmental positions in India, none of them is held today by a Hindu: The president is a Muslim (Abdul Kalam), the prime minister is a Sikh (Manmohan Singh), and the leader of the ruling party (Sonia Gandhi) is a Christian of Italian ancestry. Not only is this situation the result of a democratic electoral process, you will detect no sense of the country being in a state of explosion for this reason. This despite the fact that there have been systematic attempts at cultivating the divisions of religious identity, often quoting Huntington himself”” (140)

Amartya Sen in criticising Huntington has articulated “People see themselves—and have reason to see themselves—in many different ways A person belongs to many different groups, of which a religious affiliation is only one. The
increasing tendency to overlook the many identities that any human being has and to try to classify individuals according to a single allegedly pre-eminent religious identity is an intellectual confusion that can animate dangerous divisiveness” (141) Amartya Sen says “It is absolutely necessary to explain why a thesis may look apparently plausible, even when it is incorrect. (I did far less of this in the book than I should have.) But ultimately we also have to see that despite the appearance, a rope is not a snake. (142) And through his book ‘Identity and Violence’ Sen has attempted to demolish Huntington’s thesis.

Amartya Sen says “We cannot understand relations between human beings in different countries or cultures in uni-dimensional terms, in terms of religion-based civilizational definitions. People interact with each other in many different ways - through business, through literature, through science and maths, and many others. Second, each civilization has a lot of internal diversity. India may be described as "a Hindu civilization" in Huntington's classification, and yet it has had sizeable Christian and Jewish communities for nearly two thousand years, it had been mainly Buddhist for nearly a thousand years in its history, it has Sikhs and Parsees and Jains, and it has more Muslims (145 million people) than nearly every country in Huntigton's list of countries in "the Muslim world." (143)

Chandra Muzzaffar is another Indian scholar who has taken a clear stand against Huntington’s thesis. Muzzaffar states “After all, recent events have shown as we have observed that ‘we, the peoples’ of the world are capable of transcending ethnic, religious, cultural and civilisational barriers in our quest for justice and peace. When a struggle of such monumental significance to the future of the human race awaits us, how can we allow a false inter-civilisational clash to divert our energies? Does it even make sense to talk of the ‘West’ and ‘Islam’ as two separate, distinct entities? Doesn’t the West, as a civilisational construct, exist within the Muslim world? Political institutions, economic systems and cultural
values associated with Western civilisation have become part and parcel of Muslim societies in the course of the last two centuries. Likewise, Muslims constitute an important minority in almost every country in Europe and North America today. There are at least 27 million of them in both the continents. Besides, Islamic civilisation had, in the past, played a major role in shaping the European renaissance. In fact, almost every facet of European life from aesthetics and architecture to medicine and finance was influenced to a greater or lesser degree by Islamic values and principles. The scientific method itself which was the very foundation of the renaissance and indeed of the modern world was Islam’s gift to humanity. It is true - as the distinguished Chinese philosopher, Tu Weiming has argued there would have been no renaissance without Islam! That Islam has been part of the West and the West has been part of the Muslim world, is not the only reason why we should cease to attach any credence to the ‘clash of civilisations’ thesis. In a situation where geographical borders are becoming less relevant and cultural boundaries are becoming less real, it does not serve any purpose to reinforce civilisational barriers which are non-existent in any case. To understand the evolving global scenario, it may be more useful to talk in terms of global power structures and global interests. Such an approach will shed more light upon the realities prevailing in both the West and the Muslim world and upon the relationship between the two civilisations. It is when we come face to face with these realities that we will realise that it is not the clash of civilisations which is the real issue but the struggle for a just world where all human beings can live in peace and dignity”. (144)

Pushpa Bhave, a well known activist and academician, has said “Huntington’s theory is a pernicious theory. It is a thesis invented to guide American policy and the Bush government has taken full advantage of this thesis especially after 9/11 attacks. It is made out as if the 9/11 attacks are a result of clash of civilisations, but there is no evidence to prove this. Hence even Chomsky
has refuted the theory of clash of civilisations. There is no real proof to show that
clash of the civilisations is behind the conflict between the Muslims and the West.
No serious sociologist believes in this thesis. Even the American government is all
time aware that the core of the struggle is energy, especially oil and currency
matters. The dialogue of Muslim countries with Europe to sell oil to European
countries has threatened America and it is trying to secure its hold over the oil
resources both in South America and Gulf region and is using economic espionage
to achieve this end. The primary cause of the conflict is resource grabbing by
America, and not Huntington wants us to believe” (145)

Ashok S Chousalkar has stated “Huntington's thesis is an
oversimplification of the complex sociological situation. There is nothing like a
clash of civilisations. Countries are for fighting various socio-political issues as
per their national interest. There is close cooperation between Muslim states and
USA, from Indonesia to Morrocco, barring two or three countries and most of the
Muslim states have been co-opted by USA and hence it is extreme
oversimplification to say that there is a clash of civilisations between the West and
the Muslims. If we see from the perspective of real politics, I do not think that
clash of civilisations is a possibility. After all society is much more complex and a
civilisational perspective cannot explain its complexity or conflict in it.
Huntington had proposed this thesis to make the very complex international
situation easy to interpret and was essentially a making of a bold abstraction. This
abstraction was done by Huntington by keeping in mind the fact that religious
tensions are playing an important role in international politics. After the end of
Cold War new model of interpretation was necessary and considering the
emergence of conflict situation in South Asia, West Asia, Bosnia, Chechnya and
elsewhere based on religion, Huntington thought that this could be a new
interpretation. Huntington is a great scholar who has been trying to study changing
nature of political order in transitional societies. He has studied the problems of
political integration and political institutions in developing countries. Then he has also studied rise of Democracy up to 1990 and published important papers in well known Political Science journals, but suddenly he has changed track and abandoning his field of political sociology and political development, has switched over to the issue of clash of civilisations. It is a very broad and vast abstraction which does not have empirical evidence to prove and hence Huntington has deliberately chosen it. This theory is dangerous because it tries to look at complex international situation through binary perspective. It will inject medieval element of religious hatred and narrow communalism in the minds of the people. Medieval ages were notorious for religious persecutions and massacres like inquisitions, crusades and hunting down of non-believers. Huntington’s theory will lead to the revival of the feeling of intolerance. Not only will it divide nations but also national communities. Apart from international, there will be intra-national divisions which will be very dangerous. When it is suited communal elements will always use religion to advance their own interests but the real problems are socio-economic, especially about equitable distribution of wealth between people. Religious issues are minor. Barring West Asia, in Asia and particularly, in South Asia religious conflict is not a very big problem. In Asia there is nothing like a Buddhist bloc, Hindu bloc or a Muslim bloc. They are all deeply divided. Hence Huntington’s theory is not only unreal but is dangerous if believed, as it could lead to communal polarisation as happened in Yugoslavia and it could happen in heterogenous countries like India.” (146)

Adi Homi Doctor, a mild mannered and soft spoken retired professor of International Relations gives a different perspective and through it critiques Huntington's thesis. He says “Clash of values has become pronounced due to decolonisation process. After decolonisation, which is the changeover from one third whites ruling over two thirds non-whites, Islamic and Asian values have emerged strongly. The idea of Western civilisation as the only civilisation is gone.
The assertion of ethnic values has come about quite rapidly. This has caused a clash of values. But there have always been clashes, Judaism versus Christianity, Islam versus Christianity, Buddhism versus Brahminism, and so on. These have been essentially clashes between religions or communal clashes. I don't think they can be called clashes of civilisations. If at all there is a clash it is really an ethnic clash and there is a clash of values, modern values versus the traditional values, democratic values versus non-democratic value, Western values versus Asian values and so on. Westernism and modernism are related but Westernism and modernism are not compatible with Christianity because like Islam, Christianity does not accept the rationality of the modern. For Westernism and modernism reason is supreme and from it arise democracy, rights and so on. For Islam and Christianity, faith supersedes reason. Hence it is essentially a clash of values and values of Christianity and Islam are closer to each than to modernism. In actuality values clash but is made out as a clash of civilisations. Where is power? With people? Or with faith? Is it predetermined by religion (revealed) or is it by human will? In the present, clash of values, faith versus reason issue has become more pronounced. The modernistic project was too optimistic and opportunistic. It believed that rationality is universal. It believed that everyone must have it. It was felt to be universal and hence a prerequisite. But all men cannot think alike and hence West's modernist values cannot be imposed as universal. There is no universal rationality for all and hence there are no universal rational values for all. This will always elude us. Values will differ and hence clash. People espousing different values will also clash but this clash cannot be termed a civilisational clash because civilisations are not so compact and cannot be said to have a single unified set of values" (147)

Z.U. Warudkar has termed Huntington's theory as "clearly motivated intended to serve American agenda" (148) According to J.R.Dabhole "The 'Clash of Civilisations' is a misleading theory. It states that in future conflicts will emerge
due to civilisational and cultural differences. But this is not true. In future conflicts
and wars will arise not because of cultural and civilisational differences but on
account of struggle for scarce resources. Future conflicts and wars will be fought
over resources. There will be wars, particularly 'Water Wars'. Just like the Iraq
War and other wars fought by the US in the Gulf region are not civilisational wars
but resource wars, particularly for oil, future clashes between nations and
communities will be on account of limited resources.'" (149)

Fakrudin Bennur has stated " Huntington's clash of civilisations theory is a
lie. There is no real clash of Islam and the West in civilisational terms. America
wants complete control over Islamic countries especially of the Gulf region so that
it can have access to their oil resources. So long as Saddam Hussein was
America's friend they had no problems and they even supplied arms to Iraq and
looked other way whenSaddam committed atrocities. But when Saddam turned
against them and denied them oil America wanted Saddam out. The Iraq war
vindicates the American oil interests. Americans are taking control of Iraqi oil
wells and petroleum resources. They already have direct access to oil resources of
Saudi Arabia as Saudis have sold out to America. After the defeat of Saddam
Hussein and his subsequent execution, all the rulers of Middle East are sure about
one thing. If they let America dominate America will destroy them. Some like Iran
have continued to resist America and are refusing to give into American demands
or allow American stooge governments to take power. Hence America needs an
excuse to remain in confrontation with the Muslim oil producing countries. The
clash of civilisations theory serves this purpose. America needs this theory to
show that the Islamic people are barbaric and thus to attack them and achieve
control over them and consequently over the oil resources." (150) He thus has
termed Huntington's theory as "anti-Muslim".
Lal Goel has also criticized Huntington's thesis. He declares "Huntington's argument is flawed in two ways. One, civilizations are not monolithic. They encompass a great deal of cultural and political diversity. Second, there is little likelihood of the global conflict to become a war of West versus the non-West. The non-Western world is not unified against the West." (151)

**Conclusion**

The Indian scholars are united on one point, that Huntington's thesis does not hold much water, certainly not in India, where people from different communities, cultures, religions, races, languages have generally coexisted peacefully for very long periods of time and are bound together in a common national destiny. While they concede that social competition, casteism, sectarianism, religious fundamentalism and communalism exists in India, they also point out that there is really no civilisational conflict taking place in multicultural India. Most of the Indian leaders, intellectuals and scholars have therefore deprecated Huntington's thesis. During the discussion with some of the Indian scholars, the researcher has noted that almost all these scholars have questioned the veracity and validity of Huntington's thesis, particularly in a multicultural heterogeneous society such as India.