Chapter 7
THEORY AND REALITY

The basic contentions of Huntington’s theory of ‘clash of civilizations’ and their corollaries as set out in the five parts of his major work The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the World Order have already been presented in the section on Huntington’s Position. However this study will be incomplete without a critique of some of his major arguments which is set out in this section. The methodology used to critique his contentions is by linking them to reality.

Contestion: The fundamental source of conflict in the post Cold War world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic but will be cultural because culture and cultural identities, at the broadest level are civilization identities. Civilization is the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species. Each civilization is defined by its core and enduring values, norms, institutions, and modes of thinking.

Reality: Huntington’s definition of civilization, the central concept of his thesis, has come under all round attack. For M.Shahid Alam “An examination of the central concept in The Clash—civilizations-reveals several more flaws and contradictions in Huntington’s thesis”. (1) Trying to define civilisation Christopher Vasillopulos adopts a very clear approach. He says “Let us first box in 'civilized' as something which is not barbaric, warlike or crude on the one side, and something which is sensitive, mannered or refined on the other. A civilization, then, is a sociopolitical entity which fosters civilized and discourages barbaric acts. In its most elemental, if negative, sense civilization indicates the absence of war or a Hobbesian state of nature, where life is "solitary, nasty, brutish and
short." More positively, it indicates the rudiments of civil society, including a sense of law, as the first definition in the Oxford Dictionary stipulates. Thus premised it is possible to extend the idea of civilization to cover the relationship of the necessitous to the desirable or the good, in the Aristotelian sense. It does not imply pacifism or even nonviolence. It may be good to kill in certain instances. A wolf kills a deer to feed itself and its cubs. A man kills to protect himself and his family. Here killing is both necessitous and good. But where there is an alternative to killing, when it is not necessitous, it is not good. It cannot be good in itself. Extending this idea to the societal level, war and all its killing may be necessitous and good, if the survival of the society is at stake. It cannot be good to destroy another society without this justification. Applying this idea to the "clash of civilizations" means that, notwithstanding profound differences, one civilization cannot destroy another and remain civilized. At most then the concept of the "clash of civilizations" can only indicate a competition, a rivalry more akin to the Olympics than to war. Is this not why war among the civilized attempts to apply many of the rules of sport to the most violent actions? For strictly speaking one civilization cannot destroy, or even want to destroy, another civilization without being involved in a contradiction in terms. For no civilization would engage in war except for self-preservation and no other civilization can so threaten another civilization. Civilizations therefore can only be at war with barbarism within it and with barbaric regimes without." (2)

He then adds "It accounts for the religious language which is employed when the rivalry of civilizations seems to get out of hand. This language pays tribute to the idea that a civilized society can only wage war against a barbaric regime or, to use the more colorful language of today, against the face of evil itself. Of course this is no longer a clash of civilizations but a conflict between good and evil or some other analogue of the war between the fundamentally civilized and the fundamentally barbaric. Less strictly speaking, the "clash of
civilizations" refers to a conflict between regimes or cultural ideas which are expressed through regimes which see its rivals as anathema, as essentially uncivilized, that is, uncivilizable. While this notion may fit some pre-historic tribe, and I tend to doubt it, it seems ridiculous to apply it to any organized culture today, although any culture may come under the control of a barbaric government. To apply it to Islamic societies is simply absurd, just as it is absurd for Islamic societies to apply it to non-Islamic societies. This is not to deny that there are adherents of Islam, as there are adherents of Christianity and Judaism, who believe that nonbelievers threaten the existence of the faithful and faithfulness and therefore must be destroyed.” (3)

Taking his argument further Vasilopoulos states “I would argue that the very assertion of a divine warrant for political activity amounts to a death penalty for the concept of civilization”. (4) He than argues that “Just as there cannot be a clash of civilizations to the death, there cannot be a civilized clash of absolutist worldviews. It is not that the idea of absolute truth and civilization are incompatible, although I believe they may be psychologically at odds. It is that absolute truth cannot be the basis of the public or political actions of a civilization. This is so not because to act in accordance with absolute convictions is unsophisticated or crude, although it certainly is, but because it is barbaric. It must believe that the extermination or elimination of an alternative view and its adherents is mandatory, even when it is not endangered by it” (5)

Mircea Malitza has decried Huntington’s attempt at defining civilization in polarist category. She does not believe that the civilization unit of analysis, as put forth by Huntington, carries much weight and has argued that there are far more important cultural factors that need to be examined within the civilization to explain conflict. Malitza’s claim is that there is only one civilization, but thousands of cultures. Malitza questions the very notion of civilization advocated
by Huntington. She argues that Huntington, by taking the broader civilisational basis to explain his theory of conflict, has made a serious mistake because she says it is not civilizations which clash (as they really do not exist in multiple numbers) but the many cultures that clash. Malitza goes about explaining conflicts on a cultural level, instead of civilisational, thereby undermining the broad civilization argument of Huntington. Malitza contends that Huntington has mistaken civilization for culture and that he has not explained himself sufficiently but taken shelter under an ambiguous category called civilization. According to her, Huntington has overestimated and focused on the large conflicts and has neglected the local conflicts where the real answers lie. For her the inter-civilisational conflicts are less important than the intra-civilization clashes. Her main argument is that conflict are based on differences in cultures and not on civilisational differences. Citing the case of Bosnia, she holds that the parties involved in the conflict were from the same civilization but clashed on cultural differences. (6)

Contrary to Malitza's contention, Henderson (1998), after analyzing the data from 1820-1989, concludes that cultural similarities actually increase the probability of conflict. His contention is that even if two conflicting parties are from same religious culture that does not stop them from clashing with each other. He contends that there are many other contributory factors at work which lead to conflict. These factors are mostly not cultural. According to Henderson neighbors are more likely to end up with conflicts and clashes than non neighbors, and this most often is not on account of culture but could be due to fight over natural resources, territory, and so on. (Henderson 1998, p.463-467). (7)

Russett(2000) has similarly claimed that conflicts among the neighbours would prevail whether they have similar or different culture. Thus he argues that conflicts can and do take place irrespective of cultural similarities or differences. And this is
a strong denunciation of Huntington’s contention. Like Henderson, Bruce Russett et al, analysed the data regarding the occurrence of military interstate disputes from 1950-1992 and concluded that these disputes do not follow the civilization fault line argument as suggested by Huntington. Russett’s finding is that military disputes or conflicts take place within a civilization more than across civilization fault lines and hence Russett concludes that; “Civilisations do not define the fault lines along which international conflict occurs. More relevant are the common bonds of democracy and economic interdependence that unite many states, and separate them from others.” (8) Another scholar, Chiozza(2002) after examining the data for the period 1946-97 has also found evidence to refute Huntington’s argument of civilisational fault line conflicts. He concludes that though the civilization factors affects border contiguity and regime type, they are not sufficient to create the conditions under which differences in religious, ethnic, or cultural factors are associated with greater probability of conflict. He states that; “At most, countries of different civilization are as conflict prone as countries of the same civilization” (9)

Fouad Ajami, while challenging Huntington’s idea of unified civilizations, states that” the world of Islam divides and sub-divides. The battle lines in the Caucasus, too, are not co-excessive with civilisational fault lines. The lines follow the interest of states”. He further argues that even in the post Cold War era “it is not a world where the writ of civilizations runs........civilizations do not control states, states control civilization. States avert their gaze from blood ties when they need to; they see brotherhood and faith and kin when it is in their interest to do so.” (10)

Empirical research by Jonathan Fox using the minorities at risk dataset comparing the Cold War period of 1945-1989 with the post Cold War era of 1990-1998, while confirming Huntington’s claim that Western and Islamic civilisations
do engage in a civilizational type conflicts, showed no real term increase in the post Cold War era as was predicted by Huntington's thesis. His main conclusion is that Islam versus West conflicts are a minority of civilization conflicts and conflicts between civilisations are a minority of all ethnic conflicts. (11)

Ryan Galloway, who looked at interstate disputes from 1993 to 2001, has also stated that Huntington's theory, that states will conflict with one another across civilization boundaries is established, but proof is not overwhelming enough to confirm it. But he says that "While my conclusions are in line with Russett's, I believe that we have to be careful not to infer too much. It could be that in my research I am at the beginning of a trend in Huntington's favor. We cannot forget that the hard data is on his side. Although I do not find the data to be in favor of Huntington enough to claim that his theory is supported by my research, I do believe that it demands attention" (12)

Based on empirical findings, though it can be conceded that culture has become important, it is preposterous to say that culture is the primary cause of conflict. Engin Erdem has thus said "First of all, Harvard Professor, Samuel P. Huntington is right in the sense that culture and religion considerably matter in aftermath of the Cold War. Cultural and religious elements not played considerable role during the Cold War especially because of the strict bipolar system in this time. The new era of global politics, on the other hand, allows various ethnic, religious and cultural elements come into forefront of regional and global politics. Numerous ethnic conflicts and wars after the Cold War such as in Bosnia, Kosova, Somalia, and Rwanda demonstrate the increasing importance of culture and ethnicity. However, it does not mean that civilizational differences, overlooking the struggles for power and interest, are primary sources of conflict in this period. Besides, it is hard to accept that Huntington's clash of civilizations model offers a 'new paradigm'. Premises of classical realism- 'balance of power'
'interest' and 'alliances' essentially circumscribe the clash thesis. Huntington deeply concerns with state of Western power vis-à-vis other 'civilizations' power'. (Remember, for example, his advice to empower Atlantic partnership against 'Islamic-Confucian connection')" (13)

Thus scholars and critics have time and again rubbished Huntington's definition and arguments about civilizations. While it is true that culture is important for various groups and communities, culture is not so strong a factor that it will lead to certain unity and concerted joint action by those belonging to a specific culture. Ideology, economics continue to play an important role in international relations and outbreak of conflict. Power politics among the nations and communities with all the attendant corollaries, national and group interests are still the mainstay of international and intergroup interactions, relations and conflicts. That culture will form the basis for the future conflicts has not been proved right even as we inch closer to the second decade in the post Cold War period. Rather the opinion is clearly against considering cultures and civilisations as clashing. Human experience has shown that neighbours fight and fight for all kinds of reasons. But the same neighbour also cooperate and unite when required. This is true human nature and not what Huntington says. The UN Report has put it well stating that "diversity of civilizations and cultures" is the "driving force of human progress. Civilizations and cultures reflect the great wealth and heritage of humankind; their nature is to overlap, interact and evolve in relationship to one another. ... The history of civilizations is in fact a history of mutual borrowing and constant cross-fertilization."(14)

M. Shahid Alam says "Amusingly, Huntington negates his own thesis—that most conflicts have their source in cultural differences—when he describes the genesis of civilizational conflicts. The civilizational wars, he concedes, originate in the usual sources: the anarchy of states, and conflicts over people, territory and
resources; culture enters into these conflicts only later as the rival parties mobilize support among the larger population. Isn't this a disavowal of the primacy of cultural factors in "civilizational" conflicts? (15) It can be therefore surmised that, in reality civilizations as civilizations do not clash but conflict takes place on account of many different reasons.

Seizaburo Sato adds "With respect to both culture and civilization, there are as many divergent definitions as there are cultural anthropologists and cultural sociologists, and Huntington's definition is nothing beyond what is accepted as common sense by the academic community, and largely within the limits of what is generally considered acceptable. The six major civilizations, as depicted by Huntington, are based on what have been termed the "classic civilizations," and, with two exceptions, all are associated with a major world religion." (16) Seizaburo Sato says "One serious fault of Huntington's analysis is that he ignores the possibility that while different civilizations that come into contact may clash with each other, they can also learn from each other, and may thereby revitalize themselves. Even in the case of encounters between the classic civilizations of the pre-modern era, there have been divergent outcomes and different consequences for history depending on the levels of maturity of the cultures in question as well as the intensity of the encounters". (17) and concludes "Thus, it cannot be said that encounters between different cultures inevitably result in a head-on clash." (18)

He further argues "Another of Huntington's failures is that his definition of civilization does not take into account the existence of major differences of substance and quality between pre-modern classic civilizations and modern industrial civilizations. Huntington further confuses the issue by interpreting modern industrial civilization within the framework of the classic civilization, equating it with Western civilization as a classic civilization, and limiting the concept of civilizational encounter solely to encounters between modern industrial civilizations and pre-modern classic civilizations. This confusion is closely related
to the fact that he grossly overestimates the meaning of the end of the Cold War, and in so doing, loses sight of the more fundamental changes that lay behind this historic event. Huntington asserts that such institutions as a democratic political system, checks and balances on power, and the rule of law are all products, as well as components, of Western civilization. It is true that these were first articulated in Western Europe, but today many of these values and institutions have taken root in a number of non-Western regions of the world, while many countries included in the Western bloc have not, or not until recently, incorporated these "fruits of Western civilization" into their societies. These concepts should be seen rather as the products of modern industrial civilization, not of Western civilization as a classic civilization." (19)

Advocating a different line he says "What Huntington calls the "clash of civilizations" is in fact neither a clash between classic civilizations, nor between classic civilization and modern civilization. The conflicts that exist have, rather, arisen as a result of the diffusion worldwide of industrial civilization, and can be divided into three types. The first type of conflict is competition between institutions that are characteristic of most industrialized societies but which have taken divergent forms in different societies, due partly to having different social foundations formed by diverse cultural heritages long before industrialization, and partly also to differences in the timing of industrialization. As a result of the collapse of communism, in terms of economic and political systems, the market economy, taken in a broad sense, and liberal democracy have established themselves as the only feasible models for modernization. However, in practice there are wide variations between market economies and between systems of liberal democracy, and none can claim absolute superiority. Obviously there are no grounds for placing the American model of market economy and democracy ahead of all others. These institutional differences, however, are differences that exist within the common framework of modern industrial civilization, and as such cannot be considered to represent a clash between civilizations. While it may be
exceedingly difficult for a process of mutual learning to occur when one mature
classic civilization encounters another, it is quite possible that it will occur as a
result of contacts between industrial societies with divergent institutions, and
through such encounters, these societies may find they undergo economic or
political revitalization, or both. To begin with, since modern industrial civilization
is characterized by constant technological innovation, it cannot be expected to
develop the same entrenched tendencies to preserve established ways of life that
the mature classic civilizations exhibited. The positive results such a process of
mutual learning can yield has been demonstrated most widely in relation to
methods of quality control in factories—methods first developed in the United
States were introduced into Japan, where they underwent considerable
development and improvement, and were eventually re-exported back to the
United States, where they contributed to improving the productivity of American
manufacturers. Huntington errs when he presents institutional differences among
the industrial nations as representing inter-civilizational confrontation, and thereby
intentionally seals off the possibility that a society may become revitalized
through mutual learning.” (20)

Pointing out the sudden volte face by Huntington he says “It is still fresh in
this writer's memory that until several years ago, Huntington was asserting
forcefully that the worst threat to America in the post-Cold War era was Japanese
economic power. Fortunately or not, his opinion has shifted, and today he sees the
worst enemies as being China and the Islamic world. In the book now under
review, Huntington emphasizes the need to develop links between Japan and the
West, civilizations that are very different. Such a wilful shift in the designation of
principal enemies within such a short time span is concrete evidence of the extent
of Huntington's confusion in defining what he means by "the clash of
civilizations." Further, by regarding institutional differences as the cause of
unavoidable conflict, Huntington's theory, if taken as a guide to policy-making,
has the potential to become dangerously self-fulfilling.” (21)
Hugh Fitzgerald highlights the frailty of Huntington's contention when he says "If, in the future, China and America were to go to war, it would not be because the former is "Sinic" and the latter "Christian" or "Western" or some such, but because of perceived Great-Power rivalries -- for China and America are now part of the same civilization, the shared, modern, universal civilization, with disagreements at the edges, but nothing like the clash between Islam and all Infidels. In fact, a war between China and America would be about power, and thus no different from, for example, the rivalry, ending in war, between Germany and England in the pre-1914 period." (22)

**Contestation:** The most pervasive, important, and dangerous conflicts will not be between social classes, rich and poor, or other economically defined groups, but between peoples belonging to different cultural entities.

**Reality:** This argument has been challenged by M. Shahid Alam by saying that "Huntington claims that conflicts between rich and poor countries are unlikely because the latter "lack the political unity, economic power, and military capability to challenge the rich countries." Ironically, this contradicts his own thesis about the most serious challenges to the West emanating from Islam and China. Many of the Islamic countries-including the largest-are among the world's poorest; and China too, despite two decades of rapid growth, remains quite poor." (23)

Fouad Ajami has also adopted a somewhat similar line of argument against Huntington's contention. Ajami's contention is that Huntington ignores the empirical complexities and state interests that are responsible for conflicts in and between civilizations. Ajami contends that states will remain the dominant players in the global framework and interaction. He argues that states and groups use their civilizational ties when it is in their best interest. Citing the example of the Indian
middle class Ajami argues that modernity and secularism, which they have struggled for will not disappear as Huntington has suggested. (24)

Mehdi Mozzaffari and others question the very validity of the concept of civilisation in the context of globalisation. The nature of civilisation is challenged by these scholars. Mozzaffari and others believe that the idea of inevitability of conflict based on culture and civilisation is questionable in the age of globalised economy where old barriers are crumbling and leading to integration.(25)

Guo Jiemin also points out that “One major advance in the modern cultural theory is that people universally realize that cultures are mixed, different, interrelated and interdependent. Edward Said held that the development and maintenance of each culture needs another different and competitive culture, that is, the existence of an alter ego. Undifferentiated culture is unrealistic and can be said to be lopsided. Divergence does not mean conflict, while blend does not mean the elimination of national individuality. Historically, there have existed many civilizations such as Islam, Confucianism and Buddhism on the Asian continent. Over thousands of years they have been marked by exchange and coexistence. The 21st century is an era of the globalization, of the coexistence of plural cultures and requires a corresponding “global awareness”.” (26)

Chirot (2001) believes that the underlying root causes of the present day conflicts lie in the profound disparities between rich and poor within societies, which are exacerbated by the insidious inequalities in political power among the different regimes of the Middle East and do not arise from any ‘clash of civilisations’. (27) According to Ronald Inglehart’s version of modernization theory (1997) human development generates a change in cultural attitudes in almost any society especially changes in gender roles where women coming into industry get into the paid work force and leading to reduction in their fertility rates, increase in their literacy and educational opportunities, their
enfranchisement, their participation in representative government, and ultimately toward greater gender equality. In such a modernist scenario Inglehart believes conflict goes down drastically.

According to the neo-Marxist the roots of dangerous conflicts lie in the economic disparities resulting from unbalanced modernization and economic globalization in the world. These theorists of Marxist schools of thought explain the conflict by the Muslims with others and within Muslim societies as arising out of the existence of pervasive inequalities in the world in general and among the Muslims in particular. They believe that the most important cleavage is probably between middle class, made up of more affluent, educated and professional classes such as teachers, doctors, and lawyers especially in Muslim countries and the poorer, uneducated classes made up of large unemployed youth who can be recruited to serve fundamentalist causes. This is particularly the case in poorer Muslim countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sudan, and so on from where the bulk of members are recruited. In his incisively critical style John Esposito says “The creation of an "imagined" monolithic Islam last led to a religious reductionism that views political conflicts in the Sudan, Lebanon, Bosnia, and Azerbaijan in primarily religious terms -- as "Islamic-Christian conflicts." Although the communities in these areas may be broadly identified in religious or confessional terms as Christian and Muslim communities, as is the case of Northern Ireland's Catholic and Protestant communities or Sri Lanka's Tamil (Hindu) and Buddhist communities, local disputes and civil wars have more to do with political (eg. ethnic nationalism and autonomy and independence) and socioeconomic issues/grievances than with religion. The challenge in an increasingly global, interdependent world is to recognize both competing and common interests. America's policy towards Japan or Saudi Arabia is not based upon a sense of shared culture, religion, or civilization but upon national or group interests. Cooperation can result from common religious and ethnic backgrounds;
however, more often than not it comes from the recognition of common national and strategic interests. While a clash of civilisations can become the clarion call that justifies aggression and warfare, future global threats and wars will be due less to a clash of civilisations" than a clash of interests, economic and otherwise." (28)

Ismael Hossein-Zadeh says that “historical observations refute the claim that Islam and/or the Muslim world are inherently incompatible with modernization, and that, therefore, the rise of an Islamic militancy in the last few decades, and the violent reactions such as the 9/11 attacks, are essentially manifestations of "the clash of civilizations." The claim that attributes the Islamic resurgence to the "inherently confrontational nature of Islam" tends to downplay, or overlook, specific socioeconomic factors and geopolitical policies that underlie the rage and reactions of the majority of the Muslim people.” “(He concludes by saying that “historical observations refute the claim that Islam and/or the Muslim world are inherently incompatible with modernization, and that, therefore, the rise of an Islamic militancy in the last few decades, and the violent reactions such as the 9/11 attacks, are essentially manifestations of "the clash of civilizations." The claim that attributes the Islamic resurgence to the "inherently confrontational nature of Islam" tends to downplay, or overlook, specific socioeconomic factors and geopolitical policies that underlie the rage and reactions of the majority of the Muslim people.”” (29)

**Contention:** The world is made up of eight separate contending civilizations: Western; Sinic or the Chinese; Japanese; Hindu; Islamic; Orthodox; Latin American; and African. There is a rise of single hardened civilisational identities.

**Reality:** No scholar has approved or agreed with the eight-fold classification of civilisations by Huntington. Huntington has included Israel as part of Western civilisation which even the Jewish people and scholars have refused to accept
citing that Jews have their own unique civilisation and culture which is distinct from others, especially from the West. The same would apply to many other regions and peoples of the world. The Huntingtonian classification purportedly based on the classification of anthropologists who themselves are seriously divided over the issue, is simplistic to say the least. M. Shahid Alam(2002) has pointed out rightly that some countries have been left out by Huntington from his classification of nations by civilisations, such as Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, or Tibet. He has further pointed out that “At the same time, there exists a strong correspondence between Huntington's civilizations and Western notion of races. All but one of them can be identified with a 'race': the West with Germanic, the Orthodox with Slavic, Latin American with Mestizo (though their elites are almost entirely white), the Sinic and Japanese with the 'yellow race', the Hindu with the dark Caucasians, and the African with black. Islam alone does not fit this description. This leads to a suspicion. Is it possible that Huntington's scheme simply recycles the Western division of mankind into races?” (30)

Many scholars have actually argued that the classification is either out of ignorance of the concept of civilisation or is a clearly motivated effort. There are many civilisations in the world, or rather there are many cultures in the world and within each culture there are many sub-cultures. Civilisation is not an appropriate term for classifying people as there are no single determinable numbers of compact civilisations. As for the culture, there are many cultures, with their many sub-cultures. No one has a single identity and there is no evidence that people are becoming oriented towards a single identity and abandoning their various identities which are natural part of their makeup as human beings. Human beings having many identities use their different identities at different times, some at one time, some other at another time, some for political purposes, some for other purposes. Amartya Sen (2006) has highlighted this fact very well by stating that
"Religious or civilizational classification can be a source of belligerent distortion as well" Sen argues that the very idea of identity, has been distorted by the assumption of singular affiliation, which believes that every person belongs, to only one group or collectivity. Sen is thus totally opposed to the 'solitarist' view of identity propagated by Huntington. And Sen has therefore said “Conceptual disarray, and not just nasty intentions, significantly contributes to the turmoil and barbarity we see around us.” (31)

Sen has further stated “Perhaps the worst impairment comes from the neglect-and denial-of the roles of reasoning and choice, which follow from the recognition of our plural identities. The illusion of unique identity is much more divisive than the universe of plural and diverse classifications that characterize the world in which we actually live. The descriptive weakness of choiceless singularity has the effect of momentarily impoverishing the power and reach of our social and political reasoning. The illusion of destiny exacts a remarkably heavy price.” (32) Sen's plea to recognition of multiple identities and diversity of differences among humans to increasing tolerance among various people is a laudable effort in trying to provide alternative to viewing the world in Huntingtonian terms.

A.J.Bacevich has stated “The qualities that make the book compelling also compromise its utility. Huntington's world of vying cultures is a remarkably tidy world. Each civilization occupies a discernible perimeter. Each adheres to an assigned area like a tectonic plate floating on the earth's surface. Huntington's knack for vivid phrasemaking-core states, kin countries, fault lines, cleavages, bandwagoning-reinforces this visual aspect, making his basic argument easy to grasp and almost impossible to forget. Yet this effort to depict the world in simple terms using the broadest possible categories collides with our experience of everyday life” (33) There is no evidence to uphold Huntington's classification of
civilisations. It is actually a pseudo-classification more in the service of an agenda then in furthering human knowledge or explaining the real causes of conflict.

Tim Gorringe marshals views and ideas of many other scholars to make his point about the shallowness of Huntington’s thesis. He says “The same anti essentialist point may be made about all the other civilizations, and of course it ignores the point that there are many conflicts which are intra civilizational and which are basically struggles for autonomy, around language or smaller cultural units. This was the view Hedley Bull took in his thesis that the most likely future for the world was increased balkanisation smaller states grouped in larger federations. These might of course be civilizational, but it suggests that local cultures come first. As Benedict Anderson puts it, an analysis of our contemporary world might also suggest that 'the end of the era of nationalism is not remotely in sight'.” (34)

For Gorringe the solution lies in multiculturalism. He says that even single cultures are essentially multicultural. He says “Not the clash of civilizations, then, but a multiculturaly constituted world” and critiques Huntington by saying that “As we would expect, Huntington is one of those opponents of multiculturalism who regards it as the enemy within.” (35) He further avers “Even aside from capital Edward Said believes the thesis is preposterous because all cultures are hybrid and heterogeneous, 'so interrelated and interdependent as to beggar any unitary or simply delineated description of their individuality.' It is a typical piece of Orientalism, and the question is whether one can divide human reality into clearly different cultures, histories, traditions, and societies in this way and survive the consequences humanly. The notion of distinct cultures seems always to get involved either in self-congratulation or hostility and aggression. Hans Küng agrees, pointing out that the civilizations overlap and interpenetrate, not least in the great cities of 'the West'. One can apply to Huntington the words Said applies
to another American analyst: No merely asserted generality is denied the dignity of truth; no theoretical list of Oriental attributes is without application to the behaviour of Orientals in the real world. On the one hand there are Westerners, and on the other hand there are Arab-Orientals; the former are rational peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values, without natural suspicion; the latter are none of these things. This applies particularly to the description of 'Islam's bloody borders', invoked not thirty years after the end of the Vietnam war, and within living memory of the two most destructive conflicts in history, both originating in Europe. The rhetoric of 'weapons of mass destruction' belies the fact that the possessor of most of these is the United States, and that only the West has so far used them". (36)

He states "Even if we grant civilizational difference we can arrive at a very different view of the likely outcome. One analyst concludes, for example, that 'The partial mixing of cultures, the rise of lingua franca and of wider 'Pan' nationalisms, though working sometimes in opposed directions, have created the possibilities of 'families of culture' which portend wider regional patchwork culture areas.' Not conflict, then, but cooperation." (37)

**Contention:** *People define themselves by identifying with cultural groups: tribes, ethnic groups, religious communities, nations, and, at the broadest level, civilizations.*

**Reality:** M.Shahid Alam(2002) in his critique correctly states "The psychic need for identity is better fulfilled by identifying with smaller groups-one's family, village, tribe, trade union, club, or team-rather than with larger, secondary, more distant groups, such as nations and civilizations. If we do identity with a nation or civilization, this is socially constructed, not rooted in our psyche. Similarly, if our self-definition does feed on hatred, we might derive considerably greater satisfaction in directing this hatred towards rivals at hand-in business, politics,
sports, or at the workplace-rather than to abstract distant entities such as 'other' civilizations." (38) Hence, it is a fact that each civilisation itself exhibits multiplicity and multiple values. Civilisational perspectives cannot be reconciled as one single and hence one cannot really speak of clash of civilisations. Clash of civilisations was abstracted by Huntington from the social and international context he saw. Each scholar does this abstraction based on social context. It is not even an approximation of social reality. It is a fabrication. Reality is something else. Social reality, being a construction, expresses itself into more compact and smaller units such as worldviews rather than as overarching civilisations. There are different world views each based on different sets of values. Each world view has its own place and each wants to be governed by its own views and values. But when different worldviews exist side by side they can come into competition and even clash. So there can be a clash of worldviews but not a clash of civilisations. Many of these worldviews and their values cannot be rationally criticised. Many do not acknowledge rationality but are founded on the non-rational. Each worldview dictates its own values and therefore each such worldview and its values will clash with those of others. But these worldviews are not civilisations. They are many and varied

Contention: The global politics is both multipolar and multicivilizational.

Reality: Nothing can be more untrue than this argument of Huntington. The truth is that global politics is neither multipolar nor multicivilisational. There are many strong powers and strong regional groupings in the world. And there are many cultures and many civilisations in the world. But global politics is still not carried out on the basis of multipolarism as Huntington had predicted. The world politics is still characterised by old ways with a mix of unilateralism of the strong states on one hand and multilateralism of the weak nations on the other. The global politics cannot be fitted into any clear slot or categories. It still continues to operate on the
old rules of interests and power politics. Culture and civilisation are incidental in global politics. Most scholars of international relations not only refuse to accept this argument of Huntington but have actually proved it wrong.

But this contention of Huntington also brings out the contradiction, and probably dishonesty about what Huntington truly feels about multicivilisational world. Huntington on one hand argues that the world is multicivilisational and advises that West, since it is not a universal but unique civilisation, should not aspire to universalism, but learn to live with other civilisations on equal terms or else it will be viewed in imperialistic terms. On the other hand, he denounces multiculturalism in America, in favour of Americanism, by stating 'A multicivilizational United States will not be the US, it will be the UN'.

**Contention:** Modernization is not same as Westernization and there is no universal civilization.

**Reality:** Huntington's effort to distinguish modernisation from westernisation has also come under challenge. Scholars argue that Modernisation has emerged out of the Westernisation process just like Westernisation emerged out of Christianity. If Modernisation is not same as Westernisation, than Westernisation is not same as Christianity. The argument of identifying one with the other is fundamentally flawed because these categories are not identical but are logical corollaries of the preceding stage. And various groups and peoples avowing different cultures are known to borrow from the original categories as also their corollaries. Thus non-Christian and non-western peoples and nations have borrowed from Christianity as also from its corollaries westernisation and modernisation. Borrowing from each other to overcome the inherent deficiencies or to achieve further enhancement is a natural tendency among all peoples and all groups everywhere. Therefore argument stating that Christianity, Westernism and Modernism are exclusive categories is fundamentally erroneous. Also Huntington's argument that there
cannot be a universal civilisation has been challenged by some scholars. Japanese scholar Seizabaro Sato has argued that industrial civilisation which emerged out of modernisation is a universal civilisation to which all societies and nations aspire to.

**Contention:** *The West is declining in power and the balance of power among civilizations is shifting.*

**Reality:** Far from it, West is actually becoming strong. Others maybe and are becoming strong but West is not becoming weak. The argument that West is becoming weak is a lie circulated by neoconservatives and is more to justify greater spending on military and military research than for any genuine feelings or fears of insecurity. No one outside of the West believes the argument that the West and in particular America is becoming weak. Even the economic development and military build up of the non-West is with the help of the West, is under the control of the West and finally serves the interests of the West. Also the argument that the balance of power among the civilisations is shifting does not stand to scrutiny. Balance of power may be shifting among nations as it has always done but to state that the same is happening to the civilisation is absurd. First of all civilisations are not compact categories like states to merit the same kind of treatment as nations and secondly, nowhere are civilisations operating as unified power blocks who can be said to be involved in the balance of power struggle. This is more a figment of Huntington's imagination than actual reality.

**Contention:** *Asian civilizations are affirming by expanding their economic, military, and political strength. Asian cultural affirmation is result of its economic success.*

**Reality:** This is another fickle, capricious and whimsical argument to say the least. Can anything else be expected in an age and a world where survival is of utmost
important. What Asians are doing today the Europeans and Americans did in the past. And they (West) alone do not have the monopoly to expand their economy, military and political strength. It is a survival imperative for all. If the Africans are not doing it now they will do so in future. And they have every right to do so and for that matter anyone. To assert that ‘others’ are doing it, implies that they are not entitled to do so. It implies that the others must remain weak and secondary and not challenge the West. The truth is that in human history and human society progress is the result of this dynamic process, the process of acquiring power, which is essentially an evolutionary and natural process. If nations seek power it is natural and if they seek power through economic success it is but normal because military and political power comes from economic strength. And power is essential for their survival in a world characterised by power struggle to dominate each other to ensure survival and protection of interests.

**Contention:** World is witnessing Islamic resurgence. Population of Islamic countries is growing rapidly and is becoming a serious threat and destabilizing factor.

**Reality:** Huntington wrongly gives an impression that only Islam is witnessing revival and resurgence. Many scholars have been pointing out that the religious resurgence and rise of fundamentalism is seen among all major religions in almost all nations for the last two decades. For several reasons and particularly due to the pangs of globalisation and exploitative politics as well as to gain power, elites and masses have been taking recourse to religion thereby resulting in revivalism and fundamentalism. To blame only the Muslims for fundamentalism is not only unfair but smacks of prejudice and a predetermined agenda.

That population of Islamic countries is growing and is becoming a threat is also a biased argument against the Muslims. Demographic growth has its own dynamics and demographers are well aware of it. Population is growing in India,
in China, in Africa and also in Latin America. But Huntington makes an issue out of only the growth of population in Islamic countries. Clearly the argument is motivated. If population growth in India and China can be viewed positively as giving rise to huge labour force, large markets and greater purchasing power, it is anybody's guess why Huntington views the population increase in Muslim countries in different and extremely negative terms. Huntington has forgotten that two hundred years ago when the Christian population of Europe underwent the same dynamics what they did. He has forgotten that they migrated, colonized, subjugated and even exterminated other peoples in almost all parts of the world. Huntington has forgotten how Europeans had used their extra population to wage wars, conquer innocent and peaceful people and impose their will over them. Huntington conveniently forgets that he himself is a descendant of the Huntingtons who migrated from the old world of Europe to the new world of America which was a land not belonging to the Europeans or the whites, but a land wrested from the natives of America after exterminating them. The present day Americans who hail from the European stock may argue that they went to USA because of the freedom USA offered but they forget that the so called 'Freedom' in USA is an edifice built on the graves of millions of native Americans to whom that land belonged. Today the same white Americans feel threatened by population growth of others. Glossing over history is a dangerous game and Huntington seemingly loves to play it.

Religion, its revival in an occupation context or domination context, whether colonial or neo-colonial, imperial or neo-imperial, fosters the motivation of the natives to fight back and reclaim their space, their lives and freedom. To claim this as a fight born out of civilizational differences (as does Huntington) is a bit too farfetched. And the protagonists of the statist theories, in order to explain the conflict in the world imply this agreement. Very often common interest of states compels them to come together and form alliance to defeat immediate
threats to their common national interest but once that situation is resolved, these varied nation-states, some advanced, some developing, some Western, some non-Western, revert back to status quo ante, of shaking the yoke of dominating nation-states. This has been the order of things since the nation-states system emerged and this will continue to be so in the future, implying that total resolution of conflict at global level is a myth. This fact has been proved time and again through all those conflicts and alliances in the nineteenth century, world wars period, cold war era and post cold war times (Gulf war, Afghan war, and Iraq war)

M. Shahid Alam (2002), has pointed out in the context of religion that "Although Huntington claims that religion is "a central defining characteristic" of civilizations, the correlation between his civilizations and religion is quite weak. The West, Orthodox and Latin American civilizations are all Christian. Latin America is set apart because it is mostly Catholic; but so are Spain, Portugal, Belgium, France and Italy. More importantly, if there can be three Christian civilizations, what prevents Huntington from splitting Islam along sectarian (Shiite and Sunni) or racial lines (Arab, Iranian, Turkic, African and Malay). Finally, there are two civilizations on Huntington's list-the Sinic and Japanese-which have no clear religious affiliations-at least, as the term is understood in the West." (39)

Gorringe says that "Religion plays a key part in Huntington's analysis. The crucial distinctions amongst groups, he argues, are their values, beliefs, institutions and social structures, and it is religions above all which are generators of value. Most of the great civilizations are grouped around one or other great religion." This contention of Huntington is challenged by Gorringe when he says "Of course Christianity has shaped the history of the West, but often in oppositional ways, and the two cannot be identified." (40)

He further argues "Huntington eschews such nuances. He defines 'the West' not by modernity but by Christianity, language, separation of church and state,
centrality of the rule of law, social pluralism, representative bodies, and individualism. The United States is culturally defined by 'the heritage of western civilization' and politically by the principles of the American creed on which Americans overwhelmingly agree: liberty, democracy, individualism, equality before the law, constitutionalism, and private property. Since he sees the United States as the champion of 'the West' these factors also come to be defining characteristics of that entity. But some of these things, like democracy are exceptionally late on the scene it is not yet a century since women acquired the vote, and scarcely a century since this was extended to all men. The separation of church and state had to be struggled for over a thousand years and is not everywhere complete for example in Britain. The rule of law is also central to Islam, though it is a different law in view. In general Huntington's definition of the West owes a great deal to Locke. But Marx and Lenin are also products of 'the West', Bernard of Clairvaux, Francis, Luther and Karl Barth as well as Voltaire, Rousseau, Darwin and Nietzsche. And, as US commentators have pointed out, Huntington ignores the extent of opposition within what he calls 'the West', the plight of African Americans, urban rebellions, anti capitalist movements and so forth." (41) In confronting the prejudice and deliberate misinterpretation by Huntington about the Islamic religion Ismael Hossein-Zadeh says "The view that Islam is a rigid, monolithic, and intrinsically violent religion fails to explain the multitude of interpretations and practices of Islam, both across time and space. It fails to take into account the fact that, for example, both the essence and interpretations of Islam, like those of other major religions, are not independent of the actual social needs and circumstances; and that, as such, its message is as much reactive to real social, political and economic needs as it is divine and proactive. The view of Islam as an intrinsically violent, anti-progressive religion is not only dangerous but also incapable of explaining the flexibility and maneuverability of Islam, like all religious traditions, to be both rigid and
pragmatic, revolutionary and quietist, combatant and pacifist—depending on social circumstance" (42)

Ismael Hossein-Zadeh says that to "view the recent revival of political Islam as a response to specific socio-economic issues, policies, and interests--strongly refutes the claim that the revival stems from "a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them" (Lewis 1990: 60). As John Esposito points out, the claim that attributes the resurgence to the "inherently confrontational nature of Islam" and/or a historical continuity of "the clash of civilizations" tends to "downplay or overlook specific political and socioeconomic causes for Muslim behavior, to see Muslim actions as an irrational reaction rather than a response to specific policies and actions ..." In this way, continues Esposito, "The primacy of competing political interests, policies, and issues is dismissed or eclipsed by the vision of an age-old rivalry between 'them' and 'us'" (1992: 179)" (43)

Very pertinently Ismael Hossein-Zadeh states "A number of factors tend to make Islamic fundamentalism more visible or dramatic than Christian or Jewish fundamentalism. One such factor pertains to the mode of expression or form of manifestation. While Islamic fundamentalism is usually expressed in traditional, direct, personal or, let us say, "pre-capitalist" forms of expression, Christian or Jewish fundamentalism is often masked by institutionalized, modern lobbying, and less-visible methods of market subtleties. A second factor that tends to magnify Islamic fundamentalism while minimizing or disguising Jewish and Christian fundamentalism is related to the all-powerful corporate media and the far-reaching but subtle propaganda apparatuses of political and ideological institutions and think tanks of the West. These include not only radio, television and newspapers but also journals, books, movies, art, and so on. While, for example, the establishment media, eagerly portrays every angry reaction to foreign aggression by every child anywhere in the Muslim world as a manifestation of Islamic
fundamentalism, it rarely points out the fact that powerful fundamentalist Christian and Jewish forces support the more destructive military operations or geopolitical polices that trigger such violent reactions in the first place. A third factor that makes the rise of fundamentalism in the Muslim world more dramatic is the oppressive foreign intervention. Proponents of the theory of "the clash of civilizations" attribute negative reactions in the Muslim world to the suffocating policies of the imperial powers almost exclusively to Muslims' fear of modernization. Yet, such essentially political reactions are prompted mainly by the predatory imperial policies and the unwelcome, onerous, and constant symbols of foreign presence in their lands, their markets, and their daily lives. That presence is imposed in a variety of ways: sometimes via direct military occupation, sometimes through military bases and advisors, sometimes through financial gurus of transnational corporations, sometimes through economic embargoes, and sometimes through aggressive commercialism and shabby cultural products such as violent video games or pornographic movies." (44)

Hossein Zadeh ridicules Huntington contention about Islam by saying "The concept that Islam is a notably confrontational and belligerent religion stems from either intellectual dishonesty or historical ignorance or both. It fails to consider the fact that many of the angry and humiliated people in the Muslim world resort to religion as a source of self-assertion and a force of inspiration in the face of foreign aggression. It focuses on the angry and sometimes violent responses of the Muslim people to foreign aggression as evidence of terroristic Muslim behavior but fails to acknowledge the fact that such responses are often reactions to certain imperialistic actions, or as Chalmers Johnson puts it, they are "blowbacks" from earlier foreign aggressions or imperial policies (2002: 8-9). It also fails to acknowledge the fact that Muslim people are not making any claims on other people's territory, or resources, or markets. All they want is to be respected, to be
left alone, and to be allowed to decide for themselves. Is this too much to ask?" (45)

He further says "Today many observers detect similarities between the Bush administration's war policies in the Muslim world and those that drove the Crusades; or, more importantly, between the insidious theories of "the clash of civilizations" and those that underpinned the Crusades. While the historical context, the tactics, and the means of warfare are vastly different, the drive to war, both then and now, seems to be fueled primarily by economic interests. Then, economic resources included precious metals, articles of art, and other treasures that were coveted by the popes and princes of Europe. Now, they include war-induced or war-related profits for big corporations, especially military industries, and related contractor. Not surprisingly, many people in the Muslim world—as well as in the rest of the world, including the United States—are deeply concerned about the gravity of the implications of the theory of "the clash of civilizations," and the concomitant policy of preemptive wars. Sadly, the Bush Administration's policy in the Muslim world and its rhetoric of "war on terrorism" (often couched in missionary, biblical terms such as "axis of evil, good vs. evil, day of reckoning, evil doers," and the like) tend to reinforce such fears." (46)

Thus Huntington's attempt at considering civilizations and religions as synonymous does not hold firm in the light of reality of human experience. And moreover only singling out Islam as a resurgent religion is dishonest. In reality for last three decades all religions seem to be experiencing revivalism and consequently fundamentalism, of resulting in communal conflicts. Hinduism in India, Protestantism in America, Catholicism in Europe and Latin America, Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Orthodox Christianity in Russia and Eastern Europe have been all witnessing resurgence, and not just Islam.
Contention: A world order based on civilizations is emerging and societies with similar cultures are grouping together and cooperating with each other.

Reality Almost two decades after Huntington's prediction the world order is still not based on civilisations. It continues to be based on the same old principles of power politics, economy and ideology. And societies with similar cultures far from grouping together or cooperating in the economic field are actually competing and conflicting with each other. The exclusively Muslim dominated Gulf Cooperation Council is exhibiting very little cooperation with member countries more concerned about their own interests first. Similarly the Latin American grouping or the African grouping are not making much headway though they have been around for long time now. The Muslim Turks, Arabs, Kurds and Iranians are not involved in any close cooperation. Rather, the real cooperation and progress seems to be happening in groupings which are made of nations with different cultures such as ASEAN and APEC and to a lesser extent SAARC. The only exception to this seems to be the European Union, but even EU is becoming increasingly multicultural with East Europeans joining it and Turkey likely to do so in the near future.

M.E Ahrari and Shireen Hunter and others have pointed how the animosity in Iraq and Turkey there have seen clashes and conflict between the Iraqis and Kurds on one hand and between the Turks and the Kurds on the other, all belonging to the Islamic civilisation. These scholars have thus pointed out how the treatment of Kurds by fellow Muslims instead of demonstrating civilizational unity and coherence actually indicate the divided nature of the Muslim world. The best example of intra-civilisational or intra-religious rivalry, of course has been the Iran-Iraq conflict. And rivalries and proxy conflicts among the Muslim nations such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, and others are all too well known. On the flip side there has been cooperation between countries of different civilisations such as
between USA, a Western country and Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Pakistan. This point has been forcefully made by none other than Noam Chomsky himself. Noam Chomsky has said “The most fundamentalist Islamic state in the world is Saudi Arabia. But Saudi Arabia is the favourite country of the US. The biggest Muslim state in the world is Indonesia, which is one of the most favoured nations by the US.”(47) Eqbal Amad has also noted that the U.S. has for long supported Islamic regimes or groups, now termed as ‘enemy’, and included Iraq, the Saudi Monarchy, or the Afghan Mujahadeen. Also, such cooperation between two countries that come from different civilizations, has pointed out by Shireen Hunter. This cooperation has been between Turkey and Israel. Similarly cooperation between India and Muslim countries or Israel and Sri Lanka all fall in the same category. Evidently, these instances of cross-civilisational cooperations and intra-civilisational animosities not just challenge Huntington’s thesis, they effectively refute it. Thus for most scholars and critics, neither the West nor other civilizations are monolithic and domestic conflicts and intra-civilizational clashes as well as cooperations arise more from other sources than civilizational differences.

Richard Rosecrance (1998) has pointed out that by suggesting an alliance between Islamic and Sinic civilizations which are radically different civilizations, Huntington has himself contradicted his contention that similar cultures will cooperate and clash with dissimilar. Rosecrance has shown how such a Huntingtonian formulation (Islamic-Confucian combine) would go against the civilization boundaries that Huntington has outlined and is arguing for (48)

Contention: There is a failure of civilization shifting in case of torn countries.

Reality: Extremely adept at first constructing a framework for thinking and then making people think in that mould, Huntington almost achieves his objective of making people respond to all kinds of convoluted ideas. One such convoluted idea
of Huntington is that of ‘torn countries’. He propounds the idea that there are some countries which do not fully belong to a specific civilisation or being midway between two civilisations do not belong to either of the civilisations and are torn apart due to this dilemma. Thus this problem arises only if one accepts Huntington’s paradigm and many like Noam Chomsky have never falling in this Huntingtonian quagmire because it is a flawed paradigm meritng very little attention. However, for argument sake Huntington’s contention could be considered. Huntington singles out three countries as ‘torn countries’ which have failed to achieve civilisation shifting. His argument is that countries like Turkey and Mexico in attempting to redefine their identities between two different civilisations have not succeeded in their effort. He says they end up belonging to neither. He also speaks in similar terms about Russia and Australia wherein Russia, from being an orthodox nation, is unsuccessfully trying to integrate into the Western Europe and Australia, a Western nation, is trying to become an Asian country. By wrongly focusing on the civilisational perspective and neglecting the economic perspective Huntington is unnecessarily confounding the whole issue. The fact that Mexico is aspiring towards North America, Turkey and Russia towards Western Europe, and Australia towards Asia contradicts the civilisational argument and only strengthens the economic argument. If these countries had another better alternative to economically and politically empower themselves, they would have aspired for that alternative. They do not have any other better alternative and in the circumstances it makes better political sense and economic logic to gravitate towards the stronger power and economic poles in their respective regions. There is nothing civilisational about all this. It is simple economics and politics of nations pursuing their quintessential goal of self empowerment. And the reality is that it is becoming increasingly clear that these four countries are not failing in their aspiration of achieving, what Huntington calls in his paradigmatic terminology as ‘civilisational shifting’. At the most the
integration may be slow. And a period of twenty years or so is too short to pass a judgement in such international scale tectonics.

**Contestation:** Core states of the civilization help the nations of that civilization to rally around it and this is a common phenomenon.

**Reality:** Another tortuous and forced idea of Huntington is of the 'core states'. Huntington talks of civilisations with core states (Russia, America, and China), civilisations (Islamic, Latino and African) without core states and core states coinciding with civilisations (India, and Japan). This convoluted argument fits convoluted logic of a civilisational paradigm. And of course Huntington can draw out all kinds of 'logical' arguments from such speculative hypothesis based on conjectures and assumptions. But even here Huntington’s arguments do not hold much good. Neither China nor Russia has been able to emerge as core states of their respective civilisations. The Chinese have not been able to rally the Vietnamese nor the Taiwanese on their side and the Russians have not succeeded with the Georgians or Ukrainians. And scholars have pointed how even the epitome of capitalist West, America is not a true core state of the Western civilisation evidenced by the serious differences between the USA and important European countries like France and Germany, especially in the context of Iraq war. Given the reality of the situation it is ludicrous to speak in terms of core states. The question whether the civilisational core states help to rally the members around them is as immaterial and without foundation as the idea of ‘core state rallying’ is itself irrelevant and without basis. That strong powers rally others around them to confront other strong states is an idea as old as the state itself and the activity of rallying nations has its basis more in power politics than in civilisational affinity.

Huntington however effectively uses the ruse of core states and civilisational rallying to defend one of the weakest links of his thesis, of intra-
civilisational clashes, especially within the Islamic civilisation. By citing the lack of a core state in the Islamic civilisation and by explaining the major confrontation between the Islamic countries like Iraq and Iran and strong positions by countries like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan as essentially competition for leadership in the Islamic civilisation Huntington succeeds to prop up his civilisational clash argument. From this perspective, intra-civilisational clash especially among the Muslim countries is not a threat to his civilisational clash thesis but a vindication. Contorted logic alright! But it has not fooled those who have a penetrating insight into the workings of the mind of Huntington.

**Contention:** Civilisational affinity generates kin-country rallying, which can lead to the broader escalation of conflicts.

**Reality:** Many scholars have highlighted the absolute untruth of this argument. The clash of civilisations thesis necessarily demands a world divided on civilisational lines. And from this necessity arises the logical positing of kin-country rallying. But the idea of civilisational affinity generating kin-country rallying has not really materialised in reality. As a matter of fact the very opposite has happened in reality. When Bosnian Muslims were the target of Serbian ethnic cleansing the Muslim countries did not rally around Bosnian Muslims and mount a full scale war on Serbia. Of course they did make a lot of noise and highlighted the plight and tragedy of the Bosnian Muslims. But it was the Western ‘Christian’ countries which actually rallied to help the Bosnian Muslims and targeted the Serbs. Subsequently, in the similar case of the Kosovo Muslims once again the Western alliance came to their aid and not the Muslim countries including the neighbouring ‘Muslim’ Albania. And when the Western alliance targetted ‘Orthodox’ Serbia to protect the ‘Muslim’ Kosovo, the other ‘Orthodox’ countries including ‘Orthodox’ Russia did not rally to help their kin country Serbia. And when ‘Muslim’ Iraq was attacked by a coalition of ‘Christian’ Western countries,
the neighbouring Muslim countries did not rally to fight for Iraq. In all these cases the 'civilisational kin country rallying' did not occur and hence none of these conflicts were escalated into broader conflicts as per the predictions of Huntington's thesis. Similarly, the recent 2006 Israeli incursion into Lebanon and its fight with the Hezbollah did not get much support from the respective civilizations, Western or Islamic and the conflict remained a bilateral one, without escalating into a broad civilisational one. The ongoing Darfur crisis, where Muslims are exterminating Muslims and Westerners and Christians are raising a big hue and cry about the genocide, turns out to be the biggest blow to Huntington's thesis and idea of civilisational kin country rallying.

Contention: The Western values are not universal and hence their propagation brings the West into conflict with other civilizations, particularly Islam and China.

Reality: The debate over Western values versus Asian values and Western values versus Islamic values has been raging for past many years. The whole scholastic debate is more political than anything else. That there are differences in value systems of different cultures is beyond question. But that there are some universal values is also undeniable. The various human societies all sharing in the same essential human nature are bound to have some common values. These values are neither Western or Asian or Islamic. They are basic human values and include among others values like survival and domination. Values are cultural and hence human constructs. They are invented, developed, borrowed, adopted, or adapted. Over time they are linked together to form a network called as a value system. They are learnt and passed on, often with improvements. They are also used for competition among different contending groups. In this dynamic process values circulate and become the currency of the various communities. Some values become more prominent others less. Some have wide appeal others quite limited. This is part of the social process. All peoples, Western or non Western are
involved in the value constructing exercise often with political intentions. In such a situation the debate of universal values becomes a debate for one-up-man-ship. Huntington's failure lies in presenting the question of values in the context of a solution for the clash of civilisations. He hurriedly declares that there are no universal values and that the Western values are not universal values. Western (constructed) values may not be universal, but universal values are found in all cultures and peoples. They may be expressed and articulated and named differently. Many scholars have therefore challenged Huntington's contention that there are no universal values. Huntington's notion that Western values being western are not universal is itself flawed because values cannot be called as exclusive properties of specific cultures because values circulate among different cultures and its present holder is not necessarily its only and original creator. Huntington's contention about values and their universality is presented by him out of its real context. The context of values is other than civilisational and Huntington has not explored it at all.

In an excellent critical insight Said Shirazi challenges Huntington's ideas "By dividing humanity into separate regional civilisations, Huntington does a signal disservice to the Western tradition's greatest contribution to the world, the idea of popular rule. To Huntington's modish way of thinking, it would be arrogant universalism to advocate democracy or to argue that we are all the same under the skin. "Imperialism is the necessary logical consequence of universalism," he writes (p. 310). But if our democracy is worth defending by war, then why isn't it worth celebrating as a universal good? I suspect there is a secret contempt for other races in the condescending acceptance of their non-democratic governments under the pretext of respect for their civilization, as if they don't really deserve freedom or probably couldn't handle it. Perhaps it is worse, an unacknowledged admiration for social conformity. (I will refrain from using the word "fascism.")" (49) Shirazi further avers "Individual freedom is not merely a Western value, it is
a universal good, like peace and general prosperity. If ordinary people in other countries did not want it, there would not be so much effort required to deny it to them, and if any of them sincerely wish to decline it, let them do so person by person.” (50)

Hence in view of this, asking whether Western values bring the Western civilisation in conflict with the Islamic and Chinese civilisations amounts to skirting the real issue which is, whether the conflict arises out of differences of values or something more deeper, something political. Are values so fundamentally divisive that they make conflict inevitable between different cultures? This is a doubtful proposition in view of the close cooperation among radically different cultures and nations for sake of common interests. Very often cooperation among those sharing the same value systems depends on the national interest or interest of the groups involved and if the interests of those from same culture clash, they end up in a conflict.

**Contention:** The core values and teaching of the Koran are not compatible or consistent with those of democracy

**Reality:** Research based studies by Kabuli (1994); Esposito and Voll (1996); Shadid (2001) and Norris and Inglehart (2002) have shown that this contention is not true. Actually Norris and Inglehart have concluded that “Huntington is essentially mistaken in assuming that the core ‘clash’ between the West and Islamic societies concerns political values: instead the evidence suggests that strikingly similar attitudes towards democracy are found in the West and the Islamic world. Where there are significant cross-cultural differences concerning the role of religious leaders, these attitudes divide the West from many other countries around the globe, not just Islamic nations. Moreover the original thesis erroneously assumed that the primary cultural fault line between the West and
Islam concerns government, overlooking the stronger cultural divide that does exist, around the issues of gender equality and sexual liberalization." (51)

**Contention:** Fault line wars are largely between Muslims and non-Muslims. Islam has bloody borders.

**Reality:** Many scholars have questioned this contention of Huntington on the grounds that it stems from deep prejudice about Muslims. While it is true that wars have been between Muslims and others, there have been wars among the Muslims as well. Lal; Goel has aptly pointed out that "Islam is even more fractured: Sunni versus Shia, Wahabis versus mainline Muslims, secularists versus fundamentalists, the Arab versus the Turkish. The bloodiest conflict of the second half of the 20th century is the decade long war between Iran (Shia) and Iraq (Sunni governed)" (52) And very often if different cultures have waged war with the Muslims it is not so much because of civilisational differences but for geopolitical or nationalistic reasons. Aleksa Djilas, an intellectual from Serbia, has expressed that the war in Bosnia cannot be characterised as a civilisation war, but rather as a consequence of Nationalistic ideas about a "Great Serbia", a "Great Croatia" and of a Muslim dominated Bosnia. He believes that difference in religious loyalty was not the reason behind the war. Djilas argues that the vital interests of each single state still is the main driving force behind the foreign policy and conflicts (53)

Also if one looks at the location of the most of the Muslim world it is surrounded by other cultures- Christians to the west and the south, Orthodox to the north, Buddists and Hindus to the East. Thus by a strange coincidence of history or destiny the Muslims world is in the centre and has boundaries with several different cultural communities. No other culture or civilization faces this situation of having so many different kinds of neighbour to contend with. Given this
situation a large number of wars between the Muslims and non-Muslims should not come as a surprise.

Alam says "Now consider the accusations about Islam's "bloody borders." Huntington asserts that "in the 1990s they [Muslims] have been far more involved in intergroup violence than the people of any other civilization." Again, the data tell a different story. In his survey of ethnic conflicts, Jonathan Fox found that Islam was involved in 23.2 percent of all inter-civilizational conflicts between 1945 and 1989, and 24.7 percent of these conflicts between 1990 and 1998. These shares are not too far above Islam's share in world population; nor do we observe any dramatic rise in this share since the end of the Cold War." (54)

Alam further says "In any case, we have to be careful when we talk about "bloody borders." A hard look at geography reveals that civilizational borders vary strikingly, and that Islam's share of such borders is disproportionately large. On the one hand, Islam stretches from Senegal, Morocco and Bosnia in the West to Sinjiang, Indonesia and Mindanao in the East. This geographic sweep across the Afro-Eurasian landmass brings Islam into contact-often close and extensive-with the African, Western, Orthodox, Hindu and Sinic civilizations. We must account not only for the borders between countries, but also the borders between often large pockets of majority Islam within non-Islamic countries and vice versa. It is my impression that if we were to add up all of these borders, Islam's share might well exceed the combined share of all others. Recognition of these facts might help to place observations about Islam's "bloody borders" in a less prejudicial perspective." (55)

Thus to say that these wars are on account of some civilisational characteristic is not only preposterous but highly motivated. Borders of the Islamic world have seen many battles and much blood has been spilt but this is nothing compared to the blood spilt by the Christian world, whether Europe, Russia and
America. Huntington has been extremely unfair in only singling out the Muslims for such terrible accusation. Scholars like Chomsky have pointed out to the despicable and appalling acts of violence, massacres and pogroms in America's history as a nation which is almost unparalleled.

**Contention:** The West and its survival is threatened. America is the leader of the West and so the West must be united. The greatest threat to the West and America comes from the Islamic-Confucian combine.

**Reality:** Several scholars have pointed out the untruth of these contentions. The survival of the West is not threatened. Far from declining West continues to be the strongest and America even more so. It is a deliberate Huntingtonian myth that the survival of the West is threatened. It is essentially war rhetoric. It is meant to goad the West to continue its hegemony over the rest. It is professing the American creed for the world that America is the leader of the West and leader of the world. But Huntington is aware that the world is unwilling to accept the lordship of America. America may be the Sole Superpower but is not unchallenged, knows Huntington. Hence America must not lead alone but at the head of the united West. Like all Americanists, Huntington sets the same agenda for America, of dominating the world totally. He of course perceives a threat to this American Dream from the challengers like China and Muslim nations. He therefore puts forward the bogey of Islamic-Confucian threat. The truth is neither the Muslims nor the Chinese really pose a serious military threat to USA. With its highly advanced military technology, unmatched destructive power, and a strong will to use ruthless violence, neither China nor Islamic nations are contemplating an attack either America or Europe. The terrorism of the small non state groups, Islamic or otherwise, is a part of a different dynamics, and cannot be mixed with the arguments about statist threat. Many scholars have pointed out that either the ancient fear of Eastern hordes (Mongolian and Islamic) invading the West still
pervades the Western mind including that of Huntington, or is a deliberate subterfuge and a ploy to posit a new enemy for the West in the next stage of global confrontation on the West's continuing journey to dominate and dictate to the rest of the world as it has done for last few centuries.

Conclusion

Huntington has stated that the clash of civilizations is already visible is in the Indian subcontinent and particularly in India. During the BJP's rule from 1996 onwards and especially after BJP-led government propelled India into an overt nuclear arms race with Pakistan in 1998, Huntington without any hesitation had declared that this was a clash of civilizations. But subsequently Amartya Sen has very competently challenged Huntington's thesis. He argues to the contrary "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 (56) India as a country defies Huntington's thesis. Not only is India not experiencing anything like a clash of civilizations, hardly anyone even thinks about it, and this inspite of India is one of the most heterogeneous religious"
countries in the world and a long history of communal politics and communal violence. Indian reality not only challenges but defeats Huntington’s theory of clash of civilizations.

The core components of the Huntington thesis that societal values in contemporary societies are rooted in their cultures and civilisations; that the difference in cultures will result in domestic as well as international conflict, that the important cultural division between the Western and Islamic world relates to differences over democratic values; and, almost all of Huntington’s other major contentions lie defeated. But tragically, the theory, inspite of the reality which is contrary to this theory, continues to be a subject of debate and still continues to cast an evil spell on some, particularly the gullible and the fanatics.