



FEMINIST CRITIQUE: CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS (SAMUEL HUNTINGTON)

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“ALL THESE THEORIES BUT BODIES KEEP PILING UP” (ZALEWSKI, 1996)¹

This paper talks about the structural exclusion of gendered violence and how little it affects the international system or the relations between two states. In this paper, I would specifically like to talk about the theory of clash of civilizations given by Samuel Huntington.

‘Feminism’, as a movement has turned many heads around. The fight against oppression of women begins at the family table, the coffee shops, office canteens and reaches up to the International arena. The ‘personal is political’ slogan really stretches out the movements of struggle too far beyond. All the other theories such as realism, liberalism etc. have been accused by the feminist scholars to be formulated by a man’s experience. Women have been seen as mere means to the greater political struggle. why is it that the patriarchal practices which limit the women in the houses are also the ones to neglect the role of women in International Relations? And in that what context or how do feminists theorize the underlying problems?

Feminism has various theories related to it; liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, post structural feminism, constructive feminism etc. All these theories are inspired from their respective perceptions. Every theory has on going debates with others, cultural feminists accuse liberal feminists to be west leaning while Marxist feminists judge the gender hierarchy through the Lense of class. It is said that there are more debates within feminism than feminists have with non-feminists. Although all feminist scholars agree to put on a gender Lense to view the international politics to alter the violent ways global politics continues to manifest itself.

THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS AND THE REMAKING OF WORLD ORDER (By SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON): A SUMMARY.²

The Clash of Civilizations and the Redesign of the World Order is an expansion of the 1993 Foreign News article written by Samuel Huntington that thought of a new post-Cold War system. Before the end of the Cold War, societies differed in ideology, such as the struggle between democracy and communism. Huntington's main thesis states, "The most important tribalism [no longer] is

¹ Maria Zalewski, International theory; positivism and beyond, 1996

² The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order

Book by Samuel P. Huntington

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ideological, political, or economic. It is cultural" (21). New conflicting patterns will occur near different cultural boundaries and unity patterns will be found within cultural boundaries. "We need a map," Huntington said, "both point to the truth and simplify the truth in a way that best serves our purposes" (31). Huntington is developing a new "civilization paradigm" to build a new understanding of post-World War II command, as well as to fill in the gaps of existing paradigms. First, Huntington divides the world into eight "major" civilizations.

The twentieth-century relationship between civilization extends beyond the indirect western influence of others. Instead, "various interactions between all civilizations" have been maintained (53). In other words, cultural influence depends on one another; western civilization is influenced and influenced by small, less powerful civilizations around the world.

Huntington then denies the idea of Western culture and the concept of universal civilization. He states that "international communications are governed by Western powers" and "are a major source of hatred and animosity toward non-Western peoples against the West" (59). The idea of a single, universal culture does not help to create the meaning or meaning of global political order. However, Huntington also argues that as modern civilization expands cultural connections, cultural similarities are increasing. The key to this chapter is Huntington's breakdown of the Western version. Although the world is becoming more and more sophisticated, at the same time as the West is declining sharply, the concept expands on the second part of the book.

There are different opinions about Western domination. The other side argues that the West still has a monopoly on research and technological development, military power, and economic exploitation. The other side says that the related power and influence of Western countries is declining. Huntington adopted the latest theory and describes three aspects of Western decline:

Huntington argues for the increasing role and importance of religion in world politics. Religion is a social phenomenon that closes the gap created by the loss of political ideology. Major religions around the world have "seen a new increase in commitment, compliance and working with ordinary believers" (96). Huntington goes on to say that he replaced religion with religion and that this resulted in increased social and cultural cohesion. Humans "need new sources of ownership, new forms of stable society, and a new set of values to give meaning and purpose" (97). Religion is able to meet these needs. In the concluding sections of his book, Huntington discusses with Western critics, whether external and internal challenges will weaken Western power or not. External challenges include the emergence of emerging cultural identity in non-Western countries. Internal challenges include the deterioration of morals, ethics, and beliefs among Western cultures. He also participates in dialogue between multiculturalists and mono-culturalists and says, "A multicultural country is inevitable because a global empire is impossible. The preservation of the United States and the West requires the renewal of Western identity" (318). The ability for the West to remain politically strong around the world, requires adaptation to the growing power and impact of different cultures. Without adapting, the West is destined to decline in power and authority, or it will clash with other powerful civilizations. According to Huntington, Western conflict with other civilizations "poses a serious threat to world peace, as well as to international order" (321).

Huntington's understanding of civilizations excludes the suffering of women and how women suffer in their own particular civilizations. Be it, the west sexualizing women to an extent that women need to over sexualize themselves in music of film industry in comparison to men, who can be casual and even outright sexist or the Arabic civilization that 'allowed' women to drive an year or so ago. Huntington also only talks about the relationship with man and society in general and how it affects the men of the religion. Hoe women suffer in their own religion or different cultures.

In the gender power struggle, the wars of men and women can never be the same. Men fight among themselves in relation to larger entities while women fight the society and the cultural barriers that were argued to be created by men. Basically, women fight the entities or the institutions that men fight for. Hence, the feminist slogan 'personal is political' comes into picture.

Huntington clearly understands how culture affects the core of our being and how the one-ness and the extreme connection to one's culture/civilization ore religion can lead to wars. However, this misses out on how women are very

sceptical about war not because of femineity but because of how it affects them ³while men do it for artificial honour disregarding the sufferings of women as was done in this theory.

My paper has somewhat been inspired by J. Ann Tickner's critique of Francis Fukuyama's article about women and world politics⁴. "There are very few states where women have reached a critical mass in political decision making, which makes any link between the democratic peace and the political participation of women tenuous at best. A more fruitful line of investigation is one that is illustrated by a study outlining the results of survey data collected in several Middle Eastern countries, democratic and other- wise. The data show that in the case of the Arab-Israeli dispute, women are not less militaristic than men, but both women and men who are more supportive gender equality are also more favourably disposed to compromise.⁵

Even while talking about how the Arab and western civilizations are more heated up against each other, the consideration of how both the civilization treat women of the 'other' fails to be recognised. The 'manly' urge to go to war and fight for one's own is highlighted a lot.

As Christine Sylvester said, "few realists of any ilk would have argued that states voluntarily go out of business and dismantle their territorial authorities⁶". Other feminist scholars such as Cynthia Enloe who wrote the book 'Banana, beaches, and bases.' went for a very precise and narrow analytical approach which presented women as important, emphasized how their labor also affects the global world and asked the reader to see themselves as an actor in the real world, rather than someone to be acted upon. "A FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS IS NOT ONLY COMPELLING, BUT INDISPENSABLE."⁷

In conclusion, male IR scholars need to think ahead and understand how wars and global politics affects women and they are not invisible, however their suffering is.

The normative theory that violence is gender blind needs to be questioned and it should be analyzed through the feminist perspective rather than the ongoing patriarchal perspective to truly understand how the same set of events actually affect different genders in different ways. Cynthia Cockburn argues that "Gender power shapes the dynamic of every interaction⁸" (2004, p.28)

Women fight invisible wars, the ones that are not written in war books or are not documented in the superhit action movies. Even though they shape the violence and its structure that unfolds within two nations, they are yet unheard of. "Violence is inherently linked to power and there is arguably no act of violence that does not intersect with gender⁹"

³ ,FROM WHERE WE STAND, Cynthia Cockburn

⁴ Why Women Can't Run the World: International Politics according to Francis Fukuyama Author(s): J. Ann Tickner

⁵ 1 Mark Tessler and Ina Warriner, "Gender, Feminism, and Attitudes Toward Inter- national Conflict: Exploring Relationships with Survey Data from the Middle East," World Politics 49, No. 2 (1997), pp. 25

⁶ Christine Sylvester, *Feminist International Relations; an Unfinished Journey*, 2001

⁷ Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, 1990

⁸ Cockburn, C. (2004). *The Continuum of Violence: A Gender Perspective on War and Peace*

⁹ Heyes, C. (2013). *Feminist Solidarity after Queer Theory: The Case of Transgender*