

Introduction

Towards ‘the Dignity of Difference?’
Neither ‘End of History’ nor
‘Clash of Civilizations’

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Introduction

The rise of popular social movements throughout the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and North America in 2011 has challenged hegemonic discourses of the post-Cold War era: Francis Fukuyama’s ‘The End of History’ and Samuel Huntington’s ‘The Clash of Civilizations.’ The dominant mode in the streets of Tunis, Cairo, Aden, Tehran, Madrid, New York, Athens and London is neither the End of History nor the Clash of Civilizations. People occupying Tahrir and Times Squares, Wall Street and other major symbolic institutions of the neo-liberal order want to reclaim their dignity. They demand their humanity, their rights and destiny, a genuine democracy and social justice. This is no less than a discursive paradigm shift, a new beginning to the history, a move towards new alternatives to the status quo. These new movements are laying waste to the whole discourse of neo-liberal Western-centrism.

This volume is a collection of chapters by major academics who historicize and problematize the dominant Western centric discourses as well as the impact of these discourses on, and implications for, intellectual, social and political domains. The chapters to follow sheds light on the conditions and possibilities of alternative discourses to that of Huntington and Fukuyama. This introduction to the volume is an attempt to problematize two faces of Western-centrism, or two prime examples of the revival of old assertions regarding ‘the superiority of the West’ and the concomitant ‘inferiority of the Rest’: Francis Fukuyama’s ‘The End History’ and Samuel Huntington’s ‘The Clash of Civilizations.’ These theses suggest that any resistance to Western neo-liberal values, institutions, and power is a mark of rage, irrationality, and backwardness and that the West is thus justified in globalizing its model of progress, *vi et armis*, if necessary.

We argue that neither the End of History nor the Clash of Civilizations captures the complexity of our contemporary social and political life. We then examine the extent to which a third way of dialogue and the Dignity of Difference may become a solution to both Fukuyama’s universalist paradigm and Huntington’s particularist pattern. A brief concluding remark is then followed by a short description of the

structure of the volume; introducing briefly the main arguments of the twenty-six chapters organized in four major parts of this volume.

Two Faces of Western-centrism

Western-centrism equates modernity, progress, and civilization with the superior West and it associates tradition, backwardness, and barbarism with the exotic and inferior Rest/East. It is precisely in this context that the old form of colonialism was revived in a new ideological form – that is, one of development and modernization in the post-colonial era. The former colonies would be retained within the West's orbit by ensuring that they adopt western values, goals, and institutions. The only 'legitimate' model advanced was a non-communist model of development, a Western liberal-capitalist model. The Western path to development and democracy, it was argued, would save the Third World (developing/underdeveloped countries) from the dangers of the Second World (Communist bloc headed by the Soviet Union) and, equally important, emancipate these countries from their traditional values that stood as impediments to the spread of both liberalism and capitalism.

This Western-centric approach of developmentalism/modernization was built on three central assumptions. First, the modern West was, by definition, developed (and therefore was seen as a model to be emulated), whereas the Rest was underdeveloped. Second, the causes of underdevelopment were often portrayed as rooted in the traditional cultures and institutions of the Rest. And third, the Rest had to abandon its traditions and adopt western practices; otherwise the West and the Rest would remain locked in political and intellectual conflict.

During the past two decades, Fukuyama's universalism and Huntington's particularism renewed the assumptions of this earlier form of Western-centrism. Reflecting on the collapse of Soviet-style communism, Francis Fukuyama proclaimed in his essay 'The End of History?'¹ and later in his book *The End of History and the Last Man*² that Western liberal capitalism had defeated its two major opponents – fascism and communism. According to Fukuyama, the collapse of the Soviet Union signaled nothing less than 'the end of history as such: that is the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.'³

Central to Fukuyama's thesis is the idea that Western liberal democracy had proved itself to be the best and, indeed, the only viable option for the governance of the many and diverse countries of the contemporary world. *The End of History* thus revived the old developmentalist claim that Western liberal capitalism is a universal paradigm, one that could/should be embraced by countries in both the North and

1 Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History?' *The National Interest*, (1989) 16, 3–18.

2 Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Avon Books 1992).

3 Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History?' *The National Interest*, 271.

the South. Although Fukuyama suspected that there might be lingering resistance to the liberal-capitalist model, including neo-liberal globalization, he predicted that the Rest would eventually see the error of its ways and embrace the intellectual and material value of liberal capitalism. Like the West, the Rest would come to understand that the modern world had arrived at the end of history because ‘the basic principles of the liberal democratic state could not be improved upon.’⁴

Samuel Huntington’s particularism, in contrast, warned against his former student’s overly-optimistic *pax democratia*⁵ view of history and the universality of the Western paradigm. According to Huntington, one should not expect the future to be one of peaceful coexistence across civilizations, but rather one of violent clashes and conflict between civilizations. His objection to the principle of ‘Endism’ obviously was centered on any proclamation of the superiority of the West. Instead, Huntington argues that the ‘weakness and irrationality’ of the Rest stand as an enduring obstacle to the global spread of western values and institutions. ‘The hope for the benign end of history,’ Huntington concedes, ‘is human. To expect it to happen is unrealistic. To plan on it happening is disastrous.’⁶

In developing his critique, Huntington claims that so far conflict, not cooperation, has dominated post-Cold War politics. Moreover, he asserts that ‘the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will be, not primarily ideological nor economic but, cultural,’ that is, the clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. Like Bernard Lewis before him, Huntington argues that the ‘fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.’⁷ He reasons that the world is comprised of seven or eight major civilizations – Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and possibly African civilizations.⁸ For Huntington, the domination of the West over the Rest would remain an ongoing source of conflict between the two: ‘The next world war, if there is one,’ he suggested, is likely to be triggered by ‘the conflict between ‘the West and the Rest’ and the violent responses of ‘non-Western civilizations to Western power and values.’⁹ In the post-Cold War era ‘the Velvet Curtain of culture,’ he explained, ‘has replaced the Iron Curtain of ideology.’ For Huntington, ‘this is no less than a clash of civilizations – the perhaps irrational but surely historical reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the world-wide expansion of both.’¹⁰

4 Ibid., 272.

5 See Stanley Kurtz, ‘The Future of History,’ *Policy Review*, no. 113 (1 June 2002).

6 Samuel P. Huntington, ‘No Exit; the Errors of Endism,’ *The National Interest*, (1989).

7 Samuel P. Huntington, ‘The Clash of Civilizations?’ *Foreign Affairs*, 72:3 (1993), 22–50, 22; see also Bernard Lewis, ‘The Roots of Muslim Rage: Why So Many Muslims Deeply Resent the West, and Why Their Bitterness Will Not Be Easily Mollified,’ *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 266, No. 3 (September 1990), 47–58.

8 Ibid., 25.

9 Ibid., 41.

10 Ibid., 31–32.

Thus, for Huntington, fundamental and innate differences among civilizations will necessarily lead to civilizational conflicts. Such conflicts will be exacerbated by 'The efforts of the West to promote its values of democracy and liberalism as universal values, to maintain its military predominance and to advance its economic interests engender countering responses from other civilizations.'¹¹ The hegemony of the West, he contends, promotes 'the growth of civilization-consciousness' on the part of the Rest and 'de-Westernization and indigenization' such as the rise of Asianization in Asia and (re) Islamization in the Muslim world.¹² The greatest conflict, he proffers, will be between the West and either Confucian or Islamic civilizations, or both. Given these non-negotiable facts of contemporary politics, the West, according to Huntington, has but two options. First, it should consolidate power and defend itself against the Rest. And, second, the US should strengthen its relations with Europe and Latin America, maintain friendly ties with Japan and Russia, and protect its interest against non-friendly civilizations, in particular Islamic and Confucian civilizations. In so doing, the West would be able to exploit difference among these civilizations and, in the process, maintain its economic and military superiority.¹³ In other words, Huntington's advice to contemporary western policy-makers is to take a page from the old colonial playbook of *divide and rule* over non-Western civilizations.

Although it is difficult to assess the direct impact of Huntington's work on western policy-makers, especially in the United States, it is probably no coincidence that the Bush administration frequently pulled out the 'clash of civilizations' card to justify its war on terror and its unilateral foreign policies. American neo-conservative politicians have often suggested that our enemies hate us because they hate our *values* and our *civilization*: after all, our enemies attacked the World Trade Center because it is symbolic of the center of western civilization.

Neither 'End of History' nor 'Clash of Civilizations'

While '[P]hilosophically and spiritually *The End of History* and *The Clash of Civilizations* could hardly be more different,'¹⁴ they are nonetheless two sides of the same coin, in that both theses turn the West and the Rest into two monolithic categories. *The End of History* implies that the West offers a universal paradigm of development and democracy – the West is the best and the Rest, lacking its own models of development, should and will follow the West. Similarly, *The Clash of Civilizations* suggests that the West is the best and, as such, it must prevail over cultures with different histories, values and institutions.

11 Samuel P. Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilizations?' *Foreign Affairs*, 39.

12 *Ibid.*, 26.

13 *Ibid.*, 48–49.

14 Stanley Kurtz, 'The Future of History,' *op.cit.*

However, as we argue in this volume, both theses are seriously flawed. The major flaw in *The End of History* thesis is derived from its central truth-claim which assumes that it is scientifically objective, culturally neutral and universally applicable to all societies. *The End of History* thesis assumes, incorrectly, that there is a singular path to modernity – one already tread by the West which the Rest have no choice but to follow. According to this view, the culture and tradition of non-Western societies are simply residual factors. The Rest, or the global South, is itself considered a residual category because its character, cultures, traditions, and institutions are examined in terms of Western standards, not in terms of its own values. Thus the reference point remains ‘the West.’ Put another way, the Rest is defined not in terms of what it is but what it lacks. This obvious ethnocentric view ignores the possibility that societies can modernize themselves by reinterpreting their own traditions and cultures. Moreover, The End of History thesis confidently overlooks conflicting tendencies within Western modernity itself; among them are expressions from liberty, human rights, and democracy as well as systemic violence, colonialism, and totalitarianism. The recent Occupy Wall Street movement is but just one such intra-civilizational conflict for which the Fukuyama thesis cannot account.

Rather than the ‘end of history.’ Joseph Nye argues, that ‘the post-Cold War world could be described as the *return* of history.’ Liberal capitalism has various kinds of fragmented competitors in the forms of ethnic, religious, and national communalism. ‘China and Russia use capitalism and global markets, yet neither is liberal nor fully capitalist.’ Similarly, different forms of religious fundamentalism have challenged the hegemony of liberal capitalism.¹⁵

The Clash of Civilizations thesis is also ripe with contradictions. First, the argument underlying this thesis relies on a vague, abstract, and wholesale notion of ‘civilization identity.’ Civilizational identities do have to be mobilized; they are not just ‘there, or automatically generated by culture.’¹⁶ As we have witnessed with Slobodan Milosevic, Osama bin Laden, or Kim Jong-Il, civilizational identity is mobilized through a discourse that of necessity must create a constitutive ‘other.’ Furthermore, the ‘Clash of Civilizations’ thesis discounts the fact that there is always a contest over the definition of civilization and over who gets to represent a civilization. Civilizations are not unitary entities; there are official and unofficial, current and countercurrent voices within each civilization. Each civilization is a dynamic plural entity, not a ‘shut-down, sealed-off’ unit.¹⁷

There is no single West. Western civilization is, and continues to be, an amalgam of liberalism and fascism, democracy and dictatorship, development and underdevelopment, equality and inequality, emancipation and racism. It has

15 Joseph Nye, *Understanding International Conflict: An Introduction to Theory and History* (New York: Pearson, 2007), 266.

16 John S. Dryzek, *Deliberative Global Politics: Discourse and Democracy in a Divided World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), 36.

17 Edward Said, ‘The Clash of Ignorance,’ *Nation*, 22 October 2001.

built modern civilizations while brutally destroying other civilizations. It has simultaneously created modern democratic institutions and modern techniques of torture. It has contributed greatly to democratic nation-building in the global North and launched military coups and state terrorist operations to overthrow nationalist governments in the global South. It has promoted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on the one hand, while protecting the most brutal totalitarian/authoritarian regimes. It has fought genocide in Europe, yet committed systematic violence and torture in Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay. These are but of a few of the juxtapositions that convey the idea that there is no single 'West.'

Correspondingly, there is no single Rest. Each and every non-Western civilization has a similar history of difference and contradiction. Who defines what Africa stands for: Nelson Mandela, a prophet of non-violence and a pioneer of peace, or Idi Amin, a symbol of barbaric violence? What characterizes Indian civilizations: Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence or some brutal traditions embedded in the Indian Caste system? Similarly, who and what can best represent Confucian and/or Asian values: Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore who argues that the 'Asian model' of development justifies authoritarianism, or the Japanese model of Asian democratic politics? In the same way, who or what best represents Islamic civilization: over a billion Muslim people who live peacefully in the five continents, or a tiny group of violent Muslim extremists? Saudi Arabia's autocratic King, or the democratically elected Indonesian President? Saddam Hussein, the former dictator of Iraq, or symbolic public figures of the current Green democratic movement in Iran?

Samuel Huntington argues that Western civilization/culture is unique and fundamentally different from other civilizations, especially the civilization represented by Islam. For Huntington, it is not 'Islamic fundamentalism' but the 'fundamental' essence of Islam that makes it incompatible with modernity and democracy. The inevitable fusion of religion and state is something that historically and intellectually attaches to Islam: while 'in Islam, God is Caesar,' in the West 'God and Caesar, church and state, spiritual and temporal authority, have been a prevailing dualism.'¹⁸ Huntington's essentialist argument is that the 'Islamic mind' and democracy are mutually exclusive and inalterably grounded in culture. Yet, one of Huntington's many critics, late Nasr Hamed Abu Zeid, rightfully reminds us that 'to speak about an "Islamic Mind" in abstraction from all constraints of geography and history, and in isolation from the social and cultural conditioning of Islamic societies, can only lead us into unrealistic, even metaphysical, speculations.'¹⁹

Likewise, as Fred Halliday argues: 'there is nothing specifically "Islamic" about' obstacles that hinder democracy in the Muslim societies, though some of these obstacles 'tend to be legitimized in terms of Islamic doctrine.' Any argument

18 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 70.

19 Nasr Hamed Abu Zeid, 'Heaven, Which Way?' *Al Ahrām*, 12–18 September 2002.

about incompatibility or compatibility between Islam and democracy adopts the false premise that there is one true, traditionally established “Islamic” answer to the question, and this timeless “Islam” rules social and political practices. However, there is no such answer and no such ‘Islam.’²⁰ For Halliday, Islam is so broad that ‘it is possible to catch almost any fish one wants. It is, like all the great religions, a reservoir of values, symbols and ideas ... the answer as to why this or that interpretation was put upon Islam resides ... in the contemporary needs of those articulating Islamic politics.’²¹

According to Norris and Inglehart, data and empirical evidence suggest that when political attitudes are compared, ‘far from a clash of values, there is a minimal difference between the Muslim world and the West,’ and they are ‘similar in their positive orientation toward democratic ideals.’ More importantly, ‘support for democracy is surprisingly whispered among Islamic publics, even among those who live in authoritarian societies.’ The empirical evidence urges ‘strong caution in generalizing from the type of regime to the state of public opinion.’²² Authoritarian regimes, Islamist or otherwise, do not represent the state of Muslims’ public opinion. The strategic relations of Western liberal democracies with ‘palace fundamentalism’ in the Arab Middle East is a case in point where the interests and intentions of political leaders vary from those of the people: ‘The young executives working for Boeing and McDonnell-Douglas seem more like the “cousins” and “brothers” of the Emirs than do young, unemployed Mustapha and Ali, strolling the streets of Cairo in humiliating uselessness.’²³

The second major flaw in *The Clash of Civilizations* thesis revolves around Huntington claim that civilizational difference necessarily leads to conflict. Evidence to dispute this claim is not hard to find. There are sizable minorities in each and every civilization and they generally live peacefully together: Asians and Africans in the United States; Africans, Caribbeans, and Indians in Britain; Chinese and Indians in Canada; and, North Africans in France. Two of the largest Muslim communities in the world can be found in two democracies: Indonesia and India. These countries are not entirely Muslim countries, but their Muslim and non-Muslim populations live together in relative peace. That said, we do acknowledge that politicization of cultural difference can at times lead to conflict. In the contemporary era, much of this politicization can be attributed to the failure of Western post-colonial policy toward the global south, and especially towards

20 Fred Halliday, *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation* (London: Tauris, 1996), 116.

21 Fred Halliday, ‘The Politics of Islamic Fundamentalism: Iran, Tunisia and the Challenge to the Secular State,’ in A.S. Ahmed and H. Donnan (eds), *Islam, Globalization and Postmodernity* (London: Routledge, 1994), 96.

22 Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 154–155.

23 Fatima Mernissi, ‘Palace Fundamentalism and Liberal Democracy,’ in Emran Qureshi and Michael A. Sells (eds.), *New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 51–67, 57.

the Islamic World. Under the shadow of the Cold War, progressive liberal and leftist individuals, ideas and institutions were considered to be major threats to the West. The West and pro-Western regimes in the Muslim World often exploited extremist Islamists to push back the leftist and progressive alternatives. The West protected corrupt secular authoritarian polities so long as they remained loyal to Western interests. Some Western governments launched several military coups against neutral/non-aligned democratic nationalist governments, for example, note the American-sponsored military coups in Iran (1953) and in Chile (1973). The US supported Islamist extremism so long as it was instrumental in shoring up American Cold War policy. The Islamists, for example, were instrumental in fighting Soviet Communism in Afghanistan in the 1980s; a contribution, albeit indirectly, to a US Cold War foreign policy goal.

Furthermore, history suggests that civilizations have contributed to the development of each other. Scholars agree that Islamic civilization and Muslim scholars very much contributed to the revival of modern Western civilization during the Renaissance and Enlightenment eras. The West returned to its great ancient Greek tradition through the Arabic translations of Greek scholars available in the Muslim world.²⁴ The scholarship of Medieval Islamic ‘giants’ like Al-Kindi, Al-Razi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Rushd, contributed to the reasoning and rationality that made Western science possible and provided the critical thinking which led eventually to the Reformation. Thus Islamic Civilization contributed not only to the scientific and literary revival in the West but also to the intellectual challenges to Christian theology.²⁵

It is therefore legitimate to challenge the assumption that the West and Islam, even the West and Islamism, have been in a perpetual fundamental clash. The West supported the totalitarian Ba’athist regime of Saddam Hussein during, and arguably before, the Iran–Iraq War (1980–1988). It has constantly supported the Egyptian autocratic regime under Sadat and Mubarak, after President Sadat made peace with Israel. It has had long-standing relationships with the Arab oil monarchies, in particular Saudi Arabia. We should not forget that American-sponsored ‘jihad’ against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan led, in part, to ‘the emergence of Al-Qaeda, whose leaders, including Osama bin Laden, were once favourites of the CIA.’²⁶ Since the 19th century, the West has supported, to use Fatema Mernissi’s phrase, ‘palace fundamentalism’²⁷ of the Saudi regime – a fanatic ideology known as Wahhabism taught in radical Islamist schools (*madrasas*) in Pakistan, which gave birth to the Taliban. Thus, the symbiotic relationship between Western liberal

24 Mehdi Nakosteen, *History of Islamic Origins of Western Education* (Bathesda: Ibx Publishers, 2006).

25 S.M. Ghazanfar, *The Dialogue of Civilisations: Medieval Social Thought, Latin-European Renaissance and Islamic Influences* (Manchester: Foundation for Science Technology and Civilisation, 2004).

26 M. Ayoob, 2005, 954.

27 Fatima Mernissi, ‘Palace Fundamentalism and Liberal Democracy.’

democracies and ‘palace fundamentalism’ challenges the simplified binary of the liberal democratic West versus the traditional autocratic Rest. The relationship between the West and the Rest is far more complex than ‘clash’ or ‘cooperation.’

In addition, there are several examples of clashes *within* civilizations, rather than *between* civilizations.²⁸ The Iran–Iraq war (1980–1988) and the Iraq–Kuwait war (1990) are two cases in point where two Muslim countries were engaged in intra-civilizational conflict. More important, in the 1990 and 2003 American wars against Iraq some Muslim countries (for example Turkey and Saudi Arabia) were solidly on the American side while France and Canada of the Western civilization opposed the 2003 American war against Iraq. This line of argument captures the core of the *realist* critique of *The Clash of Civilizations* thesis by suggesting that states, not civilizations, continue to be the primary actors of international politics. States act in their own best interest and will forsake their traditional civilizations in favour of political, economic, and military interests.

Several religious leaders and academics have offered alternatives to Huntington’s reductionist, deterministic, and confrontational thesis. Fethullah Gülen, a champion of moderate Islam, took issue with Huntington’s assumptions, proposing instead ‘a rapprochement between Islam and the West’ based on Gülen’s understanding of tolerance, interfaith dialogue and compassionate love.²⁹ Dieter Senghaas calls Huntington’s work little more than ‘geocultural fiction.’ Senghaas’ exploration of both non-Western (Hindu, Confucian, Islamic) and Western (Judeo-Christian) cultures led him to the conclusion that historically all civilizations have had internal differences that in some cases led to conflicts. In Europe, for instance, the idea of the Enlightenment was contested from the beginning. The author argues that no civilization has ever been an unproblematic, integrated whole, and that to meet the challenge of pluralism and difference one should adopt a dialogue inspired by intercultural philosophy – a philosophy rooted in the comparison of cultures and a good understanding of the conflict-ridden history of western (that is largely European) processes of modernization, including imperialism and colonialism, and its impact on today’s global political economy. Such an approach would force one to confront the persistent underdevelopment present in the contemporary world and the various modes of exclusion that have resulted from the processes of neo-liberal global restructuring.³⁰ For Senghaas, conflicts stemming from global socio-economic inequities are much more likely than any civilizational conflict. Some scholars in China suggest that Huntington’s work actually reveals a certain frustration and anxiety that exists among Westerners in response to the rise of Asia and the declining influence of the West in the world.

28 Dieter Senghaas, *The Clash within Civilizations: Coming to Terms with Cultural Conflicts* (London: Routledge, 2002).

29 See Fethullah Gülen’s Response to the ‘Clash of Civilizations’ thesis, found at <<http://en.fgulen.com/press-room/columns/2420-fethullah-gulens-response-to-the-clash-of-civilizations-thesis>>, accessed on 22 December 2011.

30 See Senghaas, *op.cit.*, pp. xi – xii.

While these scholars concede that there are civilizational differences, they also see it as misleading and dangerous to magnify those differences into political clashes and wars. They see Huntington's work as more of a policy recommendation to the US government on ways in which it can maintain its global power than any accurate empirical portrayal of conditions between civilizations today. These Chinese researchers stress peaceful coexistence (a pathway that is amenable to the notion of China's peaceful rise) and complementarity among different cultures, drawing on the strong points of each culture so as to promote common progress. One very important point made by these and other Asian scholars is that the global interaction between formerly disparate cultures, via neo-liberal globalization, may in fact be forging a fusion of civilizations, rather than any clash of civilizations.³¹ Other scholars who have observed this fusion trend have advanced the idea that Confucianism may serve as a force to moderate the impact of the globalization of Western culture in contemporary Asia.³² So rather than a clash between Western civilization and Confucian civilization, there could instead be a blending of the two as these civilizations continue to interact with each other.

Western scholars, like Stanley Hoffmann, assert that contemporary global instabilities are more appropriately understood as a 'Clash of Globalizations' rather than any clash of civilizations.³³ According to Hoffmann, the thaw of Cold War confrontation revealed a number of seething civil and ethnic conflicts. The dominant tension of the decade following the end of the Cold War can be characterized not as a clash of civilizations but as 'the clash between the fragmentation of states (and the state system) and the progress of economic, cultural, and political integration – in other words, globalization.'³⁴ The three forms of globalization, to which Hoffmann refers, have the seeds of actual and potential conflict that can produce a 'clash of globalizations.'

For instance, economic globalization is the cause of much of states' and the world's inequality, but the fetishism with global competitiveness has basically hindered states and other actors from addressing this problem. The end result could be a clash between haves and have-nots. Cultural globalization has encouraged homogenization and, in particular, Americanization. But it has also attracted a visceral and, in some cases, vituperative anti-US and anti-Western culture backlash. Political globalization is generally characterized by the growth of international, regional and transregional institutions and networks. Some of these

31 See Wang Jisi and Zou Sicheng, 'Civilizations: Clash or Fusion?' *Beijing Review*, vol. 39, issue 3 (15–21 January 1996), found at <<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/ipe/beijrev.htm>>, accessed on 22 December 2011. Also see Salim Rashid, *The Clash of Civilizations? Asian Response* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

32 See Daniel Bell and Hahm Chaibong (eds.), *Confucianism for the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

33 Stanley Hoffmann, 'A Clash of Globalizations,' *Foreign Affairs*, 81: 14 (July–August 2002), 104.

34 Ibid.

networks are heavily influenced by the global hyper-power, the United States. Others are led by sovereignty-free actors that are challenging the legitimacy and authority not only of the world's hegemon but also of sovereignty-bound regional and global institutions.³⁵ While globalization was supposed to usher in a period of 'Enlightenment-based utopia that is simultaneously scientific, rational, and universal,' Hoffmann puts it best when he suggests that this 'Enlightenment' stereotype of globalization has provoked 'revolt and dissatisfaction.' 'Globalization, far from spreading peace, thus seems to foster conflicts and resentments.'³⁶

Benjamin Barber offers the similar line of argument by suggesting that the twenty-first century represents an era of the collision between Jihad and McWorld. This collision is occurring between 'the forces of disintegral tribalism and reactionary fundamentalism' – Jihad – and 'the forces of integrative modernization and aggressive economic and cultural globalization' – McWorld.³⁷ More specifically, 'The Jihadist's quarrel,' Barber argues, 'is not with modernity but with the aggressive neo-liberal ideology ... they are not even particularly anti-American.' According to Barber, they do not hate us because they hate our values! They 'suspect that what Americans understand as prudent unilateralism is really a form of arrogant imperialism.' This is not therefore a clash of civilizations 'but a dialectical expression of tensions built into a single civilization' created by McWorld; this is clearly a 'war within civilization.'³⁸

In a similar vein, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue that 'Empire is the new world order.'³⁹ Empire 'is the political subject that effectively regulates [the] global exchanges, the sovereign power that governs the world.'⁴⁰ Empire is neither reducible to the United States nor any other form of imperialism.⁴¹ Unlike imperialism, Empire is not imposed on people; rather, it is a complex web of institutions and socio-political and economic relations through which people participate in the making of Empire. We participate in the construction of Empire by our active participation in the political rule (good citizen) and economic regime (good consumer). We live in a post-modern age and Empire is the dominant rule of this age; it has no foundation, no centre; 'Empire is the non-place of world

35 Stephen J. Kobrin, 'The MAI and the Clash of Globalizations,' *Foreign Policy* (Fall 1998), 97–109. On sovereignty-free and sovereignty-bound actors see James Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) and W. Andy Knight (ed.), *Adapting the United Nations to a Post-Modern Era: Lessons Learned* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

36 Stanley Hoffmann, 'Clash of Globalizations,' *Foreign Affairs*.

37 Benjamin R. Barber, 'Era of Jihad vs. McWorld,' in Kim Booth and Time Dunne (eds), *Worlds in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global order* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 245–262, 245.

38 *Ibid.*, 248–249.

39 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 3.

40 *Ibid.*, xi.

41 *Ibid.*, xiv.

production where labor is exploited.⁴² The ‘new proletariat’ is ‘multitude’ with no centre, no place; like Empire, it is, at once, everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Multitude is ‘counter-Empire’;⁴³ it is no longer a traditional working class but a joint global axis of resistance against complex networks of Empire.⁴⁴ In our post-modern age, the paradigm of the West-versus-the Rest has been transformed into the relations of ‘Empire versus Multitude.’ This line of reasoning is to some extent echoed in Tariq Ali’s chapter later on in this volume.

In sum, then, contemporary global tensions can more accurately be described not as a clash of civilizations, but, instead, as *A Clash of Fundamentalisms*,⁴⁵ a clash between two versions of political extremism, a clash between two tiny aggravated minorities who exploit religious/cultural rhetoric and discourse for political purposes. This clash can also be characterized as a clash between market fundamentalism and religious fundamentalism, rather than as a clash of civilizations per se. In either case, this amounts to little more than a ‘clash of ignorance,’⁴⁶ in which democracy and social justice are ‘caught between a clash of movements each of which for its own reasons seemed indifferent to freedom’s fate.’⁴⁷ The so-called ‘clash of civilizations’ argument is therefore an attempt at a discursive mobilization of civilizational identities which, if not seen for what it is, can become a self-fulfilling prophesy.

The sad story of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 on false pretenses, and the bitter story of the chaos and violence in post-Saddam Iraq, is an eye-opening example of world order run by the arrogance and self-delusionment of an Empire – a world essentially being run by a non-democratized global order. In February 2002 then American Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld stated:

As we know, there are known knowns. There are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns. That is to say, we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also the unknown unknowns, the ones we don’t know we don’t know.⁴⁸

But Rumsfeld, to use Slavoj Žižek’s argument, never mentioned the ‘unknown knowns,’ that is to say, ‘the disavowed beliefs, suppositions and obscene practices

42 Ibid., 210.

43 Ibid., 207.

44 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, 55.

45 Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihad and Modernity* (London: Verso, 2002).

46 Edward Said, ‘The Clash of Ignorance,’ *Nation*, 22 October 2001.

47 Benjamin R. Barber, *Era of Jihad vs. McWorld*, 245.

48 Donald Rumsfeld, *Department of Defense news briefing*, 12 February 2002, quoted in Hart Seeley, 2005.

we pretend not to know about.⁴⁹ To mention a few, the Abu Ghraib scandal, the rendition strategy, and the false accusation about WMDs in Iraq, etcetera.

A Third Way? On ‘the Dignity of Difference’⁵⁰

With the failure of imported and imposed Western theories of development and democracy, the idea of indigenous/homegrown theories of development became popular in the 1970s through the 1990s. African, Asian, Islamic, among other, models of development emerged to offer a local way of development. The experience was not totally successful because the local (comprador) elites in those areas often manipulated cultural values and consolidated authoritarian, patrimonial, racist policies. A few of them exploited traditional values to rationalize authoritarianism and to reject democracy and human rights as ‘Western values.’ The fact, however, is that democracy and freedom, social justice and respect for human beings are not exclusively Western ideas. These are universal values embedded in all cultures. Local elites need to extract and purify their cultures, investigate their traditions, and interpret their traditional values in ways that support the application of modern democratic values. The more local elites communicate with the modern world the better the chance that they will be able to find a ‘third way.’

The Third way synthesizes universal values of democracy and social justice with the particular institutions of a country/civilization. We live in a global village and must interact and learn from each other. Under such conditions, the paradigm we need now is not *The Clash of Civilizations*. As shown previously, it has been argued by some that the alternative can be a *Dialogue among Civilizations*;⁵¹ It may be through dialogue that we will be able to appreciate *The Dignity of Difference*;⁵² that is, that we realize that difference ought not to be a source of conflict but rather a source of dignity and richness. However, as the reader will see later in the volume, some authors point out the limits of dialogue as a universal solution to the problem of societal divisions. Others do not take the dignity of difference as a given but problematize that notion.

In any event, we propose that the ‘dignity of difference’ should imply the rejection of both universalist and particularist paradigms. It ought to stand for self-respect and respecting the other. It ought to imply self-critique and the critiquing of others, while at the same time promoting dialogue among us and others. It ought to require a careful critique of global and local models. This means that

49 Slavoj Žižek, *Iraq: The Borrowed Kettle* (London: Verso, 2004) quoted in Colin Moores (ed.), *The New Imperialists: Ideologies and Empire* (Oxford, 2006), 3.

50 Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations* (London and New York: Continuum, 2002).

51 Fred Dallmayr, *Dialogue Among Civilizations: Some Exemplary Voices* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002).

52 Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations*.

each culture/nation should engage in a critical dialogue with its own traditions and formulate the universal values of democracy and social justice in a local language that can be implemented through local/homegrown institutions. Nations could be rich in energy, Ali Shariati argues, but remain poor as long as their resources are not refined. They could sit upon rich resources but remain stagnant and ignorant until they extract and refine the enormous sources of society and convert the degenerating and jamming agents into energy and movement.⁵³

The dignity of difference never suggests that we should not learn from other cultures/nations, or that they have nothing new and valuable to offer to our own culture. The dignity of difference calls for ‘a third way’ and not solely ‘my way.’ Put differently, the best way to eliminate the West-versus-the Rest dichotomy is by introducing a ‘third way,’ one in which the West is not the best and the Rest can take the best of the West. Similarly, the West can and should take the best of the Rest – as the UN did when UNESCO designated 2007 as the ‘Year of Rumi’ to mark the 800th birthday of eminent Muslim mystical poet, Jalaladdin Rumi. Rumi was one of the greatest spiritual figures of all time and is known for his messages and calls for love, humanity, and peace. For Rumi, ‘our mother is love! Our father is love! We are born from love! We are love! All loves constitute a bridge leading to the divine love; to love human beings means to love GOD.’

Another approach to the embracing ‘dignity of difference’ can be found in Canada – in the Canadian approach to multiculturalism. That approach, however, is not a perfect solution to the problems faced by pluralistic societies. But despite its limits, as many are aware, Canada, through the institutionalization of multiculturalism and its various mechanisms of ethnic/cultural accommodation, has in some ways contributed to the development of a ‘third way’ – a way that respects the other and even celebrates diversity. ‘Accommodating diversity, is a Canadian way that has deep historical roots, and moreover the question of how “we” relate to “the other” as groups, as citizens or as individuals is one that is unavoidable and that each of us navigates on a daily basis in a variety of settings.’⁵⁴ At a time when controversies surround the actions, dress and symbols of Muslims in the province of Quebec, it helps that the Quebec government at least provided ‘avenues for civil dialogue and for accommodating diversity in a serious and equitable manner.’ This included the establishment of institutional mechanisms through which complaints were aired and diversity accommodated, such as the ‘Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences’ headed by historian and sociologist, Gérard Bouchard, and author and philosopher, Charles Taylor.⁵⁵ However, as some of the authors in this volume warn, accommodation in the form of toleration is certainly not enough. So whether

53 Ali Shariati, *Collected Works*, vol. 20 (Tehran: Chappakhsh, 1981/1360).

54 Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Baha Abu-Laban, ‘Reasonable Accommodation in a Global Village,’ *Policy Options*, September 2007, 33.

55 See <<http://www.accommodements.qc.ca/index.html>>, accessed on 27 May 2011.

the Canadian example of ‘dignity of difference’ can truly be considered a ‘third way’ remains a matter for debate.

One more approach to the embrace of ‘dignity of difference’ can be found in what Dryzek calls ‘discursive democracy.’⁵⁶ According to Dryzek, the key to the development of discursive democracy is the ability of a plural society to decouple ‘the deliberation and decision aspects of democracy, locating deliberation in engagement of discourses in the public sphere at a distance from any contest for sovereign authority.’⁵⁷ Drawing on the work of Chantal Mouffe, Dryzek advocates agonism as one possible means of bridging gaps within plural societies. According to Mouffe, there are times when deliberative democracy is unable to process or resolve deep differences that exist in a plural, multiethnic society. In such cases, instead of denying the passion associated with these deep differences or papering over the differences, the introduction of agonism will combine continued contestation Dryzek actually disagrees with Mouffe on some points and suggests some modifications to her thesis. One such modification is his embrace of Lijphart’s notion of ‘consociational democracy’ as a means of taking divisive issues out of the democratic debate. But it is interesting to note that some the examples of countries that Dryzek held up as successful models of consociational democracies (for example the Netherlands, Austria, and Switzerland) are now having significant problems trying to accommodate increasingly pluralism, difference and diversity within their polities. This in itself demonstrates that respect of difference must be inculcated throughout the plural society and not just be left in the hands of elites. Certainly, the recent increase in xenoracism in places like Norway, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and Britain speaks to the difficulty of governing in plural societies.⁵⁸

Another approach to the support of ‘the dignity of difference’ in foreign policy terms is a radical shift of perception on the West’s strategic thinking about its role in the global affairs. The West assumes that ‘it is the source of the solutions to the world’s key problems. In fact, however, the West is also a major source of these problems. Unless key Western policy-makers learn to understand and deal with this reality, the world is headed for an even more troubled phase.’⁵⁹

The dignity of difference paradigm can provide us with a counter-theory to the Western-centric theories of Fukuyama and Huntington. On this view, difference and diversity are not necessarily the source of tension. As Aimé Césaire argue,

56 John S. Dryzek, *Deliberative Global Politics: Discourse and Democracy in a Divided World*.

57 Ibid., 47.

58 See John S. McCoy and W, Andy Knight, ‘Europe’s “xenoracism” Spawned Norway Horror,’ *Edmonton Journal*, 28 July 2011, found at <<http://www2.canada.com/edmontonjournal/news/ideas/story.html?id=8d8029bd-b271-4cff-b83f-5b3fdd09bd02&p=2>>, accessed on 30 December 2011.

59 Kishore Mahumani, ‘The Case Against the West,’ *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2008.

‘no race possesses the monopoly of beauty, of intelligence, of force, and there is place for all at the rendez-vous of victory.’⁶⁰ Embedded in all cultures is a radical call to justice and truth, so all cultures and traditions ‘have a significant potential role in conflict resolution and not merely, as many continue to believe, in conflict creation.’⁶¹ To reach this potential, we must trust the dignity of the other. We need ‘to see in the human other a trace of the divine Other ... to see the divine presence in the face of the stranger; to heed the cry of those who are disempowered in this age of unprecedented powers.’⁶² The world must be ‘enlarged by the presence of others who think, act, and interpret reality in ways radically different from our own. We must attend to the particular, not just the universal.’

In short, ‘we must learn the art of conversation, from which truth emerges.’⁶³ More specifically, ‘the United States needs to recognize that terrorism is not the result of blind hatred of Western civilizations;’ it is instead, an extreme political response to perceived US hostile policies. Instead of such policies as regime change, isolation, sanctions, and military confrontation, the United States should formulate a ‘nuanced engagement policy’ in the Middle East. This policy would integrate Iran into the global economy and ‘will provide more fertile ground for political reform in Tehran and dilute the control of hard-liners, who thrive in isolation.’⁶⁴ The same policy of engagement must be pursued in Iraq: a new political process should bring all the Iraqi groups together ‘with the help of the United Nations, other international organizations, and Iraq’s neighbors.’ Such policy of ‘internationalization’ can succeed if ‘the United States does not interpret “internationalization” to mean pressuring other countries and international organizations to carry out and pay for policies already formulated in Washington.’⁶⁵ Likewise, concerning the Israeli–Palestinian issue, the United States must realize that President Mahmoud Abbas lacks a sufficient domestic legitimacy to conclude a peace agreement. The United States must therefore ‘convert from a policy based on severe sanctions against Hamas and the territory it controls and instead come to terms with a revival of a Palestinian national unity government like the one that existed until June 2006.’⁶⁶

Last but not least, the credibility of the American policy of democracy promotion has been seriously undermined. ‘The United States quickly recoiled when initial efforts led to results it neither anticipated nor was willing to accept,

60 Aimé Césaire, *The Collected Poetry*, trans., with an introduction and notes, Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

61 Sacks, viii.

62 Ibid., 208.

63 Ibid., 20.

64 Marina Ottaway, Nathan J. Brown, Amr Hamzawy, Karim Sadjadpour, and Paul Salem, *The New Middle East* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008), 31–32.

65 Ottaway et al., 33.

66 Ibid., 35.

such as the victory of Hamas in Palestine and the strong showing by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.’ Hence, when US allies in the Middle East – Jordan, Egypt, and Bahrain – cracked down on democratic demands, ‘the U.S. government looked at short-term security interests and kept silent.’⁶⁷ The idea of democracy promotion needs to be clearly differentiated from that of regime overthrow, not only because the conflation of the two ideas is counterproductive, but because the overthrow of even the most tyrannical regime does not necessarily lead to democracy, as Iraq shows. Separating regime overthrow from democracy promotion is not just a question of language, but also of tools used in promoting more open political regimes. Sanctions, for example, should have no part in a program of democracy promotion,⁶⁸ unless they can be employed to stop authoritarian leaders from killing their own people. Certainly, the recent phenomenon of the Arab Spring demonstrates a longing of people to come from under the repressive arms of authoritarian leaders. It also signals that democratic processes can indeed indigenously emerge from within these countries.

The ‘Other’ has become ‘Us’: Beyond Difference and Dialogue?

There are a number of excellent critiques of *The End of History* and *The Clash of Civilizations*. This volume, however, contributes to the current literature in three significant ways. First, it moves beyond the critique of this hegemonic discourse by searching for new paradigms and alternative theoretical perspectives. We suggest that there may be a ‘third way’ of addressing this issue – one which rejects both the Universalist approach of *The End of History* thesis and the particularism of *The Clash of Civilizations* discourse. This third way evokes, to use Foucault words, ‘a certain determination to throw off familiar ways of thought and to look at the same things in a different way.’⁶⁹ This does not necessarily suggest that Foucault would have endorsed this third way, but it simply posits that global questions have no uniform answers. It celebrates the *Dignity of Difference*,⁷⁰ embraces diversity, and promotes *critical* dialogue both with self and others. We challenge the dominant tendency of seeing the future as a globalizing merger of all civilizations into one, by searching out the compatibility among different values through dialogue and among coexisting cultures in a plural world.⁷¹

We acknowledge that the world needs to move beyond the discourse of the previous century to one that reflects our increasing ‘interdependence’ in four areas: ‘the deepening inequalities between the North and South’ and the growing

67 Ibid., 37.

68 Ibid., 38.

69 Michel Foucault, ‘The Masked Philosopher,’ interviewed by Christian Delacampagne, *Le Monde* (April 1980).

70 Jonathan Sacks, *Dignity of Difference*, 2000.

71 Robert Cox, ‘Consciousness and Civilization: The Inside Story,’ this volume.

crises in 'public health, climate change, and global finance.'⁷² This complex interdependence transcends borders to the point where the 'other' has become 'us.'⁷³ In this 'new' world, solutions to such trans-border problems require a concerted global effort through citizens' engagement, social movements, dialogue, and the embrace of diversity and difference.

Second, this volume aims to link the alternative theoretical approach to a practical policy guide by challenging existing policies that either 'exclude' or 'assimilate' other cultures, that wage the constructed 'global war on terror' and that impose a western neo-liberal discourse on non-western societies. We suggest that neither *The End of History* nor *The Clash of Civilizations* adequately captures the complexities of cultures, or the plural and multilayered sources of conflicts in contemporary global politics. The current conflicts in the world are not between civilizations but rather between political actors who often do not represent their civilizations. Contemporary global instability is more accurately understood as a clash of fundamentalisms, and a clash of ignorance in an age of *Empire*.

It is becoming increasingly evident that the 'Western' declared policy of exterminating extremists and terrorists is bound to fail because the efforts to understand the underlying reasons for radical extremism have been superficial at best. We suggest the necessity of deconstructing the concepts of radicalism, extremism, and terrorism by challenging the ethnocentric discourse which privileges these terms in order to serve the interest of the global oligarchy. This will require as well the conduct of an historical survey of radical and extremist thoughts and actions across civilizations. Moreover, it may be useful to embrace a 'levels of analysis' framework in order to tease out the plural root causes of radicalism, extremism, and terrorism among various civilizations.

We propose that since the root causes of radicalism, extremism, and terrorism are multiple, any public policy response should indeed also be multiple. This would allow for the development of alternative policies to the 'war on terror,' such as those that respect the dignity of difference, promote/consolidate a multicultural (or multiple socio-cultural) responses, propose a more *critical* and *inclusive* policy of multiculturalism and a *radical* approach toward accommodating difference, and embrace a deliberative, reflective, and accommodationist posture and strategy.⁷⁴ Such policy responses should facilitate economic and political inclusion of disadvantaged/minority/excluded groups (that is largely an economic and political response, as opposed to a militaristic one). It should also address the problem at both local and global levels by proposing/providing practical solutions for the democratization of political and economic institutions. Benjamin Barber suggests

72 Benjamin Barber, 'Neither "the Clash of Civilizations" nor "the End of History,"' this volume.

73 Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, *Power and Interdependence* (Little, Brown, 1977).

74 John S. Dryzek, *Deliberative Global Politics: Discourse and Democracy in a Divided World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), 39.

that policymakers, in response to the current conflict, must begin by ‘readjudication of north-south responsibilities.’⁷⁵ At the global level, we need to democratize global economic and political institutions and to democratize globalization. ‘The war against jihad will not succeed,’ Barber argues, ‘unless McWorld is also addressed.’⁷⁶

Third, this volume embraces dialogue. However, it also examines the limits of dialogue and problematizes the discourse of ‘Dialogue among Civilizations’ at two practical levels: (a) it questions the effectiveness of ‘civilizations’ as a unit of analysis by exploring the capacity for otherness in our hybrid individual identities and ‘pluri-identity societies.’⁷⁷ (b) It demonstrates the limits of ‘dialogue’ as a useful and *universal* approach for resolving conflicts, particularly in cases involving unequal power relations such as Israeli–Palestinian case, or those involving intransigent parties (the dialogue of the deaf).

So how can we reconcile the common good with diversity and peace with difference? What is to be done to achieve a more peaceful world, along the lines advocated previously? Ultimately, the initial step towards a more peaceful world is to listen to others. It is important to move beyond merely *tolerating* ‘the other’ towards actually accommodating, embracing, and *celebrating* difference. This will not be achieved unless we welcome an *epistemic shift* in our understanding of ‘us-other’ and ‘good-evil.’ We need to challenge the hegemonic concepts of good and evil and embrace the plural concept of goods. As Jean-Paul Sartre reminds us, ‘the more one is absorbed in fighting Evil, the less one is tempted to place the Good in question.’⁷⁸

* * *

Structure of the Book

This volume is organized into four major parts, twenty-seven chapters and a postscript. In part one, the first five chapters re-evaluate hegemonic discourses and historical narratives. Arshin Adib-Moghaddam in Chapter 1 explores the philosophical underpinnings of the discourse of the clash of civilizations. He problematizes structural and theoretical tenets and mechanism of Huntington’s clash regime and argues that the discourse is merely the surface effect of a larger structural constellation, a ‘regime of truth’ that perpetuates the idea that ‘Islam’ and the ‘West’ are antithetical entities. He proposes a counter-regime through an intellectual engagement for peaceful dialogue. Peyman Vahabzadeh in Chapter 2 reveals the commonalities of the end of history and the clash of civilizations in reasserting the West as world-history. He argues that a process of ‘Othering’

75 Benjamin R. Barber, *Era of Jihad vs. McWorld*, 247.

76 Ibid.

77 Walther Lichem, ‘Capacity for Otherness in Pluri-identity Societies,’ this volume.

78 Jean-Paul Sartre, ‘Anti-Semite and Jew,’ *Les Temps Modernes* (Paris: 1946).

accompanied the creation of empires. Vahabzadeh argues forcefully that the chaotic modern world holds no place for universalism, and proposes a 'politics of transcendence' as an alternative. It is an idea that chimes nicely with Jonathan Sacks' dignity of difference. In Chapter 3 Aloka Parasher-Sen vigorously rejects both Fukuyama and Huntington's idea of fixed cultures and proves her point by examining the pluralistic society found in India, where identities are fluid and influenced by historical, economic, and political forces. The chapter goes on to explore the idea that the 'Self' changes over time and therefore perceived difference of the 'Other' also changes. In her view, we need to promote a continuous state of negotiation with cultures other than our own.

Chapter 4 by Houchang Hassan-Yari dismantles Huntington's ideas from another angle, demonstrating that far from being a unified civilization, the Islamic world is large, diffuse, and ridden with division. The chapter concludes by arguing that these intra-civilizational clashes are not just caused by the friction between different cultures, but also actively encouraged by governments as a way to deflect criticism. Hence, the political situation needs to be addressed in order to resolve such conflicts. Vesselin Popovski's Chapter 5 explores the main tenets of the Western hegemonic discourse but also points out the limits of dignity of difference by underlining differences within differences.

The second part of this volume moves on to other critiques of Fukuyama and Huntington by embracing the concept of dialogue and 'dignity of difference.' This section examines how dialogue and dignity of difference can be applied in practice. Robert Cox, in Chapter 6, historicizes and problematizes 'The End of History' thesis. He challenges the assumption that the future belongs to a globalizing merger of all civilizations into one. He accepts civilization as a unit of analysis and suggests that 'encounters among civilizations may gradually lead to awareness that each is relative to its particular historical experience.' Cox's essay goes on to outline three conflicts in which world powers could demonstrate coexistence: in Taiwan, Georgia, and Israel/Palestine. In Chapter 7, Fred Dallmayr's main question is whether religious faith can respect religious diversity. He is very enthusiastic about interfaith dialogue and dignity of religious difference and argues that a new theology should be cultivated by finding common ground in all religions. This could be demonstrated symbolically by having different religious authorities participate in the same services and rituals. Ramin Jahanbegloo in Chapter 8 demonstrates the benefits of dialogue between religions and societies. Firstly, it means that common ideas in different traditions are identified, which would dissolve boundaries between individuals and communities. Secondly, dialogue allows for new ideas to be borrowed from other traditions, which could aid personal and social development. Keeping these benefits in mind, he calls for 'boosting exchanges' between religions. Amira Sonbol in Chapter 9 suggests that while recent international conflicts present a picture of a clash of civilizations rooted in past history and present differences, the historical evidence actually leads to common history. The chapter is an attempt to pose new questions and re-conceptualize human relations so that we can move the agenda ahead to show where cultures meet and where they differ; thereby allowing

for greater and different discourses of understanding and affinity. In Chapter 10 Walter Lichem echoes the common theme of other chapters in this section, but argues for a shift away from an emphasis on religious identity, to raising awareness of human rights, and through that to build ‘capacity for Otherness.’ He argues that we all live in ‘pluri-identity’ societies and therefore must embrace diversity and dialogue. Paul Rowe in Chapter 11 is critical of the way in which dialogue between religions has been pursued thus far, but points to alternative methods of engagement that work at more local and informal levels. Chapter 12 by Abraham Khan puts dialogue in the context of international politics by recognizing a plurality of the intersection of religion and culture, each differently informing the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. James Lawson in Chapter 13 explores in some detail the way in which the West, believing itself to be a superior civilization by virtue of its literacy and urbanism, has engaged with other societies organized in different ways. Lawson argues persuasively that such ideas of ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ countries – that are determined by parameters created by the West – should be dismantled. In his view, we need to create alternative universal parameters for ranking societies based on human rights, carbon emissions, and so forth. However, in revealing and challenging our ingrained assumptions about the Western world, Lawson provides a crucial perspective on Fukuyama and Huntington, and his proposals are in sync with the paradigms of dialogue and the dignity of difference. Last but not least in this section is Chapter 14 by Benjamin Barber which suggests that while dignity of difference is an attractive idea, it is unlikely to bridge different views on theology, the family, and women. Instead, the focus should be on recognizing economic interdependence through new global institutions. Industrialization and globalization have created global problems in the areas of health, finance, equality and climate. Dealing with these problems will require a new, global understanding of sovereignty, and political leadership at a global level.

Part Three of the volume problematizes limitations of dialogue and dignity of difference. It looks at some of the shortcomings of the dialogue model for resolving conflict. Hassan Hanafi, in Chapter 15, attempts to put an end to the polarization between capital Culture in the centre and small cultures in the periphery. He suggests that dialogues between cultures are only possible when they are equal. As long as the dialogue continues within the framework of the complex of superiority from the culture in the centre and the complex of inferiority from the cultures in the periphery, the model of conflict will prevail. In his view, humanity has had enough of this model of conflict and thus the model based on dialogue should be within reach. Siavash Saffari argues persuasively in Chapter 16 that dialogue in practice cannot avoid reflecting unequal and asymmetrical power relationships. The essential problem of how to persuade hegemonic powers to reduce their power in the interests of equality and peace is forcefully underlined. Saffari hopes for an alternative public sphere in which dialogue among equals can occur, although he admits that he can point only to few examples of these exchanges and organizations. Chapter 17 by Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Abigail B. Bakan picks up from where

Saffari leaves off and argues that dialogue across lines of difference is an attractive alternative to conflict. Like Saffari, these authors posit that constructive dialogue must presume equality of participants. Equal access to information and equal influence of the outcome, are necessary preconditions to a constructive dialogue. In the Israel–Palestine case an absence of such basic commonalities has rendered abstract calls for dialogue ineffective. Ben White in Chapter 18 suggests that there is no ‘Clash of Civilizations’ in the Palestine/Israel conflict. His position is that this conflict is really predominantly about Israeli colonization and ethno-religious segregation. Civilizational dialogue is not a viable alternative to the Clash of Civilizations thesis, according to the author, because dialogue is not effective where distorted, imbalanced power relations exist. This view is similar to that of the previous two chapters. According to White, critiquing the false dialogue of unequal participants, and working in the international movement in solidarity with the Palestinian people, is not perpetuating or contributing to the conflict. This tact is deemed necessarily for exposing the tension that has to be resolved for ‘positive peace’ to emerge in that region. Ghada Talhami, in Chapter 19, examines the practice of dialogue and difference in the context of the struggle against terrorism across nations. She argues that the term ‘Jihad’ has been conflated with ‘terrorism’ and in this chapter she problematizes the resort to violence by some Islamists and by the state of Israel. Like other authors in this section of the volume, Talhami also unearths some of the limitations of dialogue, but does so in the context of the broader Arab–Israeli conflict. Chapter 20 by Sevgi Adak and Ömer Turan is a theoretical critique of ‘dialogue among civilizations’ in the context of Turkey–EU relations. These authors maintain that the discourse of ‘dialogue among civilizations’ reproduces the civilizationist discourse and is imprisoned within Orientalist ontology and epistemology; it places too much emphasis on culture, and not enough on the political and economic forces that influence diplomacy, in the author’s opinion. A case study, Chapter 21, by Younes Abouyoub goes into some detail about the political and historical reasons for the conflict in the Sudan. This chapter critiques Huntington’s ideas and the limits of dialogue in the context of US Foreign Policy and the National Islamic Front in the Sudan. Chapter 22 by Tanya Narozhna examines the limits of dialogue and difference in the context of Western academic discourses on female suicide bombings. She suggests that female suicide bombings may well represent a way of expressing collective resistance against asymmetric power relations in the twenty-first-century world order. The final chapter in this section, Chapter 23 by Ali Dizboni, looks closely at the limits and requirements for dialogue in Islamic thought. He contests Islamic classicism and argues for a historical appreciation of Islam, and an empirical re-evaluation of the *Shari’a*.

The final section of the volume is an attempt to shed lights on the possibilities and conditions of alternatives discourses to the current dominant narratives/paradigms. Tariq Ali’s chapter, Chapter 24, grapples with American imperialism; eloquently asserting that dialogue can achieve little as long as western policies towards the developing world undermine it. Aziz Al-Azmeh in Chapter 25 challenges three

major current discourses on liberal hegemonic universalism, post-modern cultural relativism and radical violent Islamism. Hamid Dabashi in Chapter 26 continues that exploration by noting that as they declared the final triumph/superiority of the West, both Fukuyama and Huntington were in fact mourning the 'death' of the West. The implosion of the West, in Dabashi's view has conditioned an epistemic exhaustion of all its creative and destructive forces and conditioned the moral meltdown of all historically-manufactured manners of civilizational Othering. In the author's opinion, this is a sign of the birth of the 'first post-colonial person' whose very existence transcends our understanding of dialogue and difference. What we are witnessing, in Dabashi's view, is a creative retrieval of a worldliness/cosmopolitanism that was already embedded in historical cultures – from China to India to the African, Muslim, and Latin American worlds. Mohammed Ayoob in Chapter 27 makes a clear distinction between the 'hegemonic and subaltern perspectives of international order.' While the former stresses order among states and justice within them, the latter emphasizes order within states and justice among them. For Ayoob, the tension between the dominant and subaltern views of world order is a global phenomenon, but it finds manifestation in its most acute form in regional politics. 'This is because issues such as Iran's nuclear aspirations, Israel's occupation of Palestine, and the rise of political Islam as the anti-hegemonic ideology par excellence highlight this tension most clearly.' Finally, Timothy Shaw, in his Postscript, draws some useful and practical concluding remarks.

In sum, this volume acknowledges that conflict is both material and cultural, although some of the authors quibble with this notion. Those that emphasize culture or civilization are, however, careful to avoid endorsing the kind of colonial discourses that often accompany the use of these terms. Most of the essays in this volume acknowledge the possibility that dialogue could help overcome the divisions in our increasingly plural world. Many of the authors are careful to point out the overlap in values of people from different cultural backgrounds; the universal elements present in the human experience; the ubiquitous presence of human capacities for generosity towards and tolerance of the other. Such an appeal to dialogue have become commonplace, particularly over the last decade or more, as one practical 'solution' to the problem of difference. However, as many of the authors in this volume point out, the easy recourse to dialogue has to be critiqued and problematized. Several of these authors have been careful to identify the conditions of possibility of dialogue and their analysis certainly should leave the reader with greater pause. Is it now time to begin to think with and beyond dialogism in our confrontation with the problem of difference and diversity? You be the judge.