

BOOK REVIEWS

UNDERSTANDING POST-9/11 AFGHANISTAN: A CRITICAL INSIGHT INTO HUNTINGTON'S CIVILIZATIONAL APPROACH

Deepshikha Shahi: *Understanding Post-9/11 Afghanistan: A Critical Insight into Huntington's Civilizational Approach*, E-International Relations Publishing, Bristol, England: 2017, p. 137

Understanding Post-9/11 Afghanistan: A Critical Insight into Huntington's Civilizational Approach is a book written by Deepshikha Shani - Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Delhi in India. In this book, the author reconsiders Huntington's thesis about the clash of civilization and presents an alternative understanding of the post-9/11 situation. In reason of simplified and overspread accepted idea about the 'civilizational' clash between 'demonized' Islamic and the West-democratic cultures, the author uses the Critical International Theory to highlight hidden political and economic aspects of the so-called civilizational conflict in post-9/11 Afghanistan. The critical approach served to the following objectives: to expose the theoretical loopholes and practical pitfalls implicit in Huntington's thesis of civilizational clash, explain the popularity of Huntington's thesis, reveal the hidden political motives of the West in the Afghanistan's war, diagnose the historical and sociological roots of the post-9/11 Afghan conflict, and suggest a way out of those crises.

The book is organized into six chapters: on the beginning – *INTRODUCTION*; then, a reconsideration of Huntington's idea - *THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS THESIS: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL*; the next is the usage of Huntington's thesis on the particular conflict example: *HUNTINGTON AMONGST THE AFGHANS: REVISITING THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS THESIS AFTER 9/11*; fourth, the introduction of an alternative explanation: *CRITICAL INTERNATIONAL THEORY: A COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE FRAMEWORK*; fifth, testing the alternative critical approach on post-9/11 Afghanistan: *ALTERNATIVE UNDERSTANDING OF POST-9/11 AFGHANISTAN: THE CRITICAL-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE*; and, in the end, finished with the *CONCLUSION* chapter.

The main thesis is that the Critical International Theory, based on Robert Cox's "production paradigm" and Andrew Linklater's "communication paradigm", offer a better explanation of post-9/11 Afghanistan than the thesis about the

“civilizational” clash. In general, the book is divided into two parts: First – the critical insight on the Huntington’s civilizational clash thesis, argumentative, in detail processed, and second – establishing an alternative approach based on Ian Craib’s theoretical framework criteria.

The International Critical Theory (ICT) is an integrative theory composed of a set of paradigms which share a common ancestry in the Hegelian-Marxist tradition and Kantian tradition of critical philosophy, the Gramscian production paradigm, focused more on economic ‘base’ and the Frankfurtian communication paradigm concentrated more on the ideological superstructure. That is the reason why complicated conflict situations between the West-democratic and Islamic societies could be better explained, by highlighting different aspects of certain situations. From the author’s alternative perspective, rupture and distortion of dialogue are presented not as a clash of civilizations but the conflict based on superpower’s hegemonic aspirations.

Given that the author is comparing two theoretical paradigms in the discipline of International Relations, the book is recommended to the scientific community related to these subjects. An objective perspective is what highlights this book, serious access to overspread prejudice and the alternative critical explanations, which are in accordance with the new theoretical trend in the study of International Relations.

As above-mentioned, the book is well structured, precisely divided into chapters in accordance with the presented subjects. Every section contains a clear introduction, the main principles and a short summary of the text below. The author argumentatively and critically disputes Huntington’s ideas and systematically tests and offers a new approach for understanding post 9/11 Afghanistan.

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