

**REVISTA CIDOB D'AFERS
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Identity-Based Dynamics.**

Abstracts.

ABSTRACTS

Identity-Based Strategies: between “Being” and “Doing”

Miquel Rodrigo

The article is a brief presentation of the identity-based dynamic. In concrete, the author reflects upon the ontological aspect of identity -the “being” of identity- and upon its function -the “doing” aspect within the present- day information society. Cultural identity is defined as the possibility of belonging to one or many groups. In this way, a conception of identity as being multiple, diverse and flexible is a good antidote against manipulation. Likewise, Rodrigo indicates that the function of cultural identity is also a source for the creation of sensing one’s environment: this, despite the fact that modernity has brought with it a pluralism that has generated a crisis of senses. Finally, the author sustains that identity-based dynamics will comprise one of the configuring elements of the 21st century.

Identity-Based Dynamics and Public Spaces

Manuel Delgado

Manuel Delgado questions whether anyone can be described as an “immigrant” in the city. Urban centers are precisely characterized for being heterogeneous and unstable spaces, in which nobody is a foreigner since, in the city, all are in a state of transit. The city is thus a space of interculturality, of a generalized cultural hybridization in which, even as the fear of excessive hybridization might appear to reinforce identities, identities remain volatile. Indeed, identity is a relational phenomenon; and, in spite of its being indispensable, identity is more a matter of form than of content. To put a stop to the tendencies of intolerance and exclusion a reality should have to be created out of two apparent antagonisms: the right to be different and the right to be equal.

Identity-Based Dynamics and Geopolitics in the Relations between the Arab World and Europe

Georges Corm

The article examines the epistemological problems in apprehending the socio-political and identity-based realities of Arab societies, and also studies the impact that European ideas and politics have had on them. In addition, it explores the European influence on the modalities of analysis of behavior of Arab societies. On this point, the author notes, there have been, over the past 150 years, distinct models that have questioned the Arab identity: from the Enlightenment to Marxism, on through to the creation of the State of Israel. In the second half of the 20th century, the fact that Arab solidarity has failed to materialize has caused the modern nationalistic identity to give way to a mythic and religious-based identity.

Intercultural Communication between the Real and the Virtual

Nour Eddine Affaya

This article brings to light the obstacles that are imposed on communications between different cultures.

These obstacles are primarily due to how the Other is perceived and how the different images of the Other are used. Such a process can be clearly seen in the different Muslim-Arabic representations that circulate in the West, representations which are created by the West itself and often propagated by certain media. One consequence of this is that the Muslim-Arabic world has internalized a double despotism: on the outside, that which is represented by Western consumerism; on the inside, that which is tied to one power only. Finally, the author considers that intercultural communication is the only horizon for thought possible between the West and the Muslim-Arabic world, with neither beggary nor perverse rejection involved.

Islam and Democracy

Edgard Weber

Edgard Weber raises the issue of the societal statute given to an individual in different cultures. Evidently, an historic change has occurred. To illustrate this, he puts forth the case of the Muslim-Arabic culture, which grants the individual in society a statute different from that of other Western, Judaic-Christian cultures. The author centralizes his study on the concept of democracy and shows the distinctiveness of the Islamic conceptions of State and of the individual when compared to the West's. Plainly, it would be erroneous to affirm the superiority of one system over the other. Rather, the issue is, before anything else, a matter of comprehending the function each system fulfills, of understanding how both may begin the next century in better conditions, and of seeing how these realizations may lead mankind towards a more universal dimension that banishes the demons of racism, exclusion, and war.

Negotiation of Conflicts: Dialogue or Entente

Rik Pinxten

The negotiation of conflicts should part from profound scientific analysis. This said, in the relations between Europe and Maghreb one may observe identity-based dynamics on both sides, new intercultural dynamics, and possible spaces for negotiation and conflict. The author indicates three vias for resolving conflicts: violent confrontation, dialogue, and entente. More than the other two, the latter via for conflict resolution takes into account the intercultural aspects and the principle of equality in the interaction. Entente is also characterized in three ways: first, for being minimalist -he willingness to submit to a common, and minimal, agreement; second, for being multilateral -no agent is superior to the other; and, third, for being based on scientific analysis -the interlocutors make use of reason and common sense to come to know and draw closer to the other. In this regard, the author specifies that there are two institutions which are fundamental in the negotiation of conflicts: the educative system, and the political structures of States and of those between States.

Globalization, Deculturation, and the Crisis of Identity

Burhan Ghalioun

The study presents five trends resulting from the impact of globalization and the emergence of the information society in the evolution of cultures world-wide, which, in the future, may well bring about great transformations within the geocultural configuration of the planet. Concretely, the author refers to the relations of culture with the economy, geopolitics, politics, the same culture itself, and finally, with society. In definitive, the author explores the impact globalization has on the crisis of identity and puts forth a number of possible solutions. Only a concerted global action that tries to counteract the negative effects of globalization may stop the mercantile devastation and help to protect humanity from a cultural catastrophe. To begin to make this happen, the article proposes that the United Nations adopt a means by which hundreds of millions of people are prevented from turning into culturally excluded and disinherited beings.

The West, the Others and the Construction of a New Public Space

Elsie Rockwell

Although the encounters among distinct groups may give rise to complex cultural situations, the contents of these are not always exclusively cultural. An example of this is the dialogue in Chiapas between the EZLN (“Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional”) and the delegation from the Mexican government that was, precisely, the same group that had proposed dialogues with “culturalistic” interpretations and solutions, without offering real respect for the differing indigenous elements in Chiapas. In this case, it was the representatives of the indigenous tribes themselves who proposed an open and modern political discussion that transcended the boundaries of the old one, the one in which arrogance, local boss dominance, impunity, murder, corruption, and the use of force, among others, prevail. The dialogue in Chiapas showed, indeed, that the West is not the proprietor of rationality.

Transversal Lines of the Debates

Yolanda Onghena

The Transversal Lines of the Debates gathers for publication the presentations of the scholars invited to the seminar. In the papers, Yolanda Onghena observes that the evolution from the cultural to the inter-cultural travels along four axes: the relations between culture and society; the processes of change within identity-based dynamics; the representations of the Other; and, interculturality. Throughout the presentations and subsequent debates, whenever the different participants referred to aspects of the cultural identity problematic-
-”angst”, “obsession”, “deficit”, manipulation”, and others, these same participants in the Transversal Lines of the Debates also showed that, in certain areas, an optimistic viewpoint is not out of the question.