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# IDENTITY CULTURE & POLITICS



*an afro-asian dialogue*



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*un dialogue afro-asiatique*

# IDENTITÉ CULTURE et POLITIQUE



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L'intolérance apparaît une fois de plus pour presque devenir la «nouvelle norme. Cela est vrai non seulement dans le cas des États-Unis, où Donald Trump, loin d'aider à le contenir, en fait l'alimente, tweetant en 280 caractères ou moins ses pensées sur l'immigration, les Hispaniques, les Musulmans, les femmes, le changement climatique, les Arabes, l'Iran et la politique mondiale. Mais cela est vrai pour une multitude d'autres leaders, y compris Narendra Modi, Rodrigo Duterte, Mohammad bin Salman Al Saud, et quelques autres. L'affaire n'est pas différente en ce qui concerne le Kenya et la politique identitaire, comme l'affirme Fiona Ngarachu dans son article sur la politique kenyane. Bien que Ngarachu se concentre sur les attitudes des jeunes envers la politique, qui espèrent un avenir meilleur compte tenu du fait que les jeunes, contrairement à leurs parents, éprouvent des «espaces démocratiques plus grands» et s'engagent activement dans politique. On peut certainement apprécier l'optimisme de Ngarachu, mais le fait reste que les «nouveaux normaux» et les «espaces démocratiques» sont le produit de la «politique électorale», où gagner une élection a moins à voir avec obtenir des votes de la majorité et plus à faire avec la manipulation de la nombres, comme cela a été le cas avec Trump (obtenant moins de 3 millions voix que Hillary Clinton mais remportant la présidence) et Modi (obtenant seulement 36 pour cent des votes populaires mais remportant la majorité deux-troisième au Parlement). La question est donc beaucoup plus

## From the Editors' Desk

Intolerance once again is creeping in, and almost becoming the 'new normal.' This is true not only in the case of the United States, where Donald Trump, far from helping to contain it, is actually involved in the business of fueling it, at times astonishingly by tweeting in 280 characters or less his thoughts on immigration, Hispanics, Muslims, women, climate change, Arabs, Iran, and world politics. But this is true for a host of other leaders as well, including Narendra Modi, Rodrigo Duterte, Mohammad Bin Salman Al Saud, and a few more. The case is no different when it comes to Kenya and the reproduction of identity politics, as Fiona Ngarachu contends in her paper on Kenyan politics. Insightfully though Ngarachu focuses on the young's people's attitudes towards politics, where she is hopeful of a brighter future given the fact that the young people, unlike their parents, are experiencing 'greater democratic spaces' and actively engaged in politics. One can certainly appreciate Ngarachu's optimism, but the fact remains that the 'new normal' and 'democratic spaces' are product of 'electoral politics,' where winning an election has less to do with getting votes of the majority and more to do with manipulating the numbers, as it has been the case with both Trump (getting less than three million votes than Hillary Clinton but winning the presidency) and Modi (getting only 36 percent of the popular votes but winning two-third majority in the parliament). The matter is therefore much more complex than what meets our eyes.

complexe que ce qui nous regarde.

L'intolérance est également à la hausse quand il s'agit de traiter les minorités religieuses à travers le monde, une question qu'évoque de manière critique Ainoon Nahar en soulignant le cas de la communauté ahmadiyya au Bangladesh. Fait intéressant, bien que les membres de la communauté ahmadiyya aient "vécu dans la paix relative depuis qu'elle a pris racine dans la première partie du XXe siècle," comme l'explique Nahar, ce n'est que dans la dernière partie du XXe siècle, plus précisément à partir des années 1980, que les hostilités s'élèvent contre eux. La Wahhabisation de l'Islam, parrainée par l'Arabie saoudite et les wahhabis, qui étaient historiquement virulemment anti-Ahmadiyya, a ciblé les Ahmadis, des Zélotes musulmans. La complicité de l'État ne peut pas être exclue. Néanmoins, dialectiquement c'est là que réside l'espoir! L'État, s'il pouvait promouvoir ou tolérer la campagne anti-Ahmadiyya, comme cela avait été le cas au Bangladesh, il est possible alors pour le même État de poursuivre et d'entreprendre des mesures, pour contenir l'agitation contre les Ahmadis.

Les deux articles suivants traitent de l'intolérance sous sa forme la plus extrême. Il s'agit des atrocités commises par les militaires du Myanmar contre la population Rohingya, qui lui ont fait fuir le Myanmar et se réfugier au Bangladesh. Ces réfugiés sont maintenant au nombre de 1,2 million. C'est précisément la raison pour laquelle

Intolerance is also on the rise when it comes to treating religious minorities across the world, an issue which Ainoon Nahar critically flagged by highlighting the case of the Ahmadiyya community in Bangladesh. Interestingly, although the members of the Ahmadiyya community "lived in relative peace since it took root from the early part of the 20th century," as Nahar explains, it is only in the later part of the 20th century, more specifically from the 1980s onwards, do we see hostilities rising against them. Apart from the fact that the Wahhabization of Islam, sponsored by Saudi Arabia and the Wahhabis, who were historically virulently anti-Ahmadiyya, made the Ahmadis target of Muslim zealots, the complicity of the state cannot be ruled out. But then dialectically this is where the hope lies! The state, if it were in the business of promoting or tolerating anti-Ahmadiyya campaign, as it had been the case in Bangladesh, it is possible then for the same state, if it were to pursue and undertake measures, to contain the agitation against the Ahmadis.

The next two papers deal with intolerance at its most extreme form. This refers to the atrocities committed by the Myanmar military against the Rohingya population, which made the latter flee Myanmar and take shelter in Bangladesh, now numbering 1.2 million of them. This is precisely the reason why Mizanur Rahman in his paper explores the possibility of applying the provisions of R2P - Responsibility to Protect, a global political commitment endorsed by all member states of the United Nations



Mizanur Rahman dans son article explore la possibilité d'appliquer les dispositions de la responsabilité de protéger, un engagement politique mondial approuvé par tous les États membres de l'Organisation des Nations Unies lors du Sommet mondial de 2005, principalement contre le génocide, les crimes contre l'humanité, les crimes de guerre et le nettoyage ethnique. Le scepticisme de Rahman vient du fait que les dispositions de la protection ont été invoquées de manière sélective, le Conseil de sécurité n'agissant que sur cinq cas parmi les dix les plus meurtriers entre 2006-2011. Dans ce contexte, la crise des Rohingyas est un test décisif pour la lutte contre la discrimination, dont la non-application rendra non seulement le R2P non idoine mais aussi se traduira également par un recul sérieux pour la communauté internationale essayant de contenir des atrocités contre les civils.

Ishrat Sultana signale aussi la «persécution systématique» à l'encontre des Rohingyas au Myanmar, mais son article aborde le sort de l'apatridie de ce côté de la frontière. Dans le cas des Rohingyas résidant au Bangladesh, cela inclurait, parmi beaucoup d'autres, la difficulté que rencontrent les enfants Rohingyas pour accéder à l'éducation. Sultana est critique à l'égard du gouvernement bangladais, en particulier quand ce pays est signataire de la Convention des Nations Unies sur les droits de l'enfant. Celle-ci oblige les États à assurer pour les enfants l'accès à l'éducation, quelle que soit leur sexe et leur ethnicité. Celle-ci se limite au cas des «Rohingyas enregistrés», Sultana

at the 2005 World Summit, mainly to prevent genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and ethnic cleansing. Rahman's skepticism comes from the fact that the provisions of R2P has been invoked selectively, with the Security Council acting only on five cases out of ten deadliest cases of anti-civilian violence between 2006-2011. In this context, the Rohingya crisis is a litmus test for R2P, the non-application of which will not only make R2P 'irrelevant' but will also result in a serious setback for the international community trying to contain atrocities against the civilians.

Ishrat Sultana too flags the 'consistent persecution' of the Rohingyas in Myanmar but her paper addresses the plight of statelessness on this side of the border. In the case of the Rohingyas residing in Bangladesh this would include, among many others, the difficulty the Rohingya children face in attaining education. Sultana is critical of the Bangladesh government, particularly in the backdrop of the country being a signatory of UNCRC - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which obligates "states to ensure children's access to education regardless of their gender and ethnicity." But then compulsion creates conditions for creativity! Limiting her case to the 'registered Rohingyas,' Sultana uncovers something that 'raises hope in the midst of their statelessness,' and that is, "social relations and network with local people often help them to get out of this trap." Indeed, as the saying goes, where there's a will, there's a way!

révèle un élément qui «soulève l'espoir. En effet "les relations sociales et les gens locaux les aident souvent à sortir de ce piège. " Justifiant le dicton qui dit que là où il y a volonté, il y a moyen!

**Solofo Randrinja**  
**Imtiaz Ahmed**

Are we then losing our battle against intolerance? Or, are states incapable of containing intolerance and the only hope now for tolerance is the goodwill of the 'local people'? There is, indeed, some hope in putting faith on the people, as Adama Djigo also tries to argue, although on a subject markedly different from the rest of the papers, while "shedding light on new efforts to reclaim and redefine heritage and cultural expressions of identity." Djigo contends that the 'heritagization and appreciation of cultural heritage' are reproduced differently, with the state limiting itself to the 'recognition and protection,' while the population or people are more interested in preserving or reinventing "a social or ancestral legacy." The statist position is bound to invite intolerance, while people's active engagement has the potential of reproducing tolerance. Indeed, all options ought to be kept open for containing the rising intolerance on earth!

**Imtiaz Ahmed**  
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