



Towards the Dignity of Difference?: Neither 'End of History' nor 'Clash of Civilizations' (Ethics and Global Politics)

By Mojtaba Mahdavi

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The rise of popular social movements throughout the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and North America in 2011 challenged two hegemonic discourses of the post-Cold War era: Francis Fukuyama's 'The End of History' and Samuel Huntington's 'The Clash of Civilizations.' The quest for genuine democracy and social justice and the backlash against the neoliberal order is a common theme in the global mass protests in the West and the East. This is no less than a discursive paradigm shift, a new beginning to the history, a move towards new alternatives to the status quo. This book is about difference and dialogue; it embraces The Dignity of Difference and promotes dialogue. However, it also demonstrates the limits of dialogue as a useful and universal approach for resolving conflicts, particularly in cases involving asymmetric and unequal power relations. The distinguished group of authors suggests in this volume that there is a 'third way' of addressing global tensions - one that rejects the extremes of both universalism and particularism. This third way is a radical call for an epistemic shift in our understanding of 'us-other' and 'good-evil', a radical approach toward accommodating difference as well as embracing the plural concept of 'the good'. The authors strengthen their alternative approach with 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. This important book will be essential reading for all those studying civilizations, globalization, foreign policy, peace and security studies, multiculturalism and ethnicity, regionalism, global governance and international political economy.

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Review

'In addition to presenting a sophisticated, multi-layered and rigorous set of critiques of neo-colonial hegemonic discourse in this age of pluralistic self-determination, this volume advances the case for a humane and pragmatic alternative of dignity of difference.' Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, Emory Law School, USA

'Offers a more sophisticated and empirically sound analysis of the discourse of intercultural dialogue, transcending the universalist and particularist models of analysis that have generally defined the field of international relations. As such, this publication opens up new possibilities for imagining alternative policy choices.' Fackson Banda, UNESCO, France

About the Author

Mojtaba Mahdavi is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Alberta, Canada. W. Andy Knight is Director of the Institute of International Relations (IIR) at The University of the West Indies and Professor and former Chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Alberta. He served as Governor of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) from 2007 to 2012, co-edited Global Governance journal from 2000 to 2005 and was Vice Chair of the Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS). Knight has written and edited several books, book chapters and journal articles on various aspects of multilateralism, global governance and peace, and United Nations reform. His recent books include: The Routledge Handbook of the Responsibility to Protect (with Frazer Egerton) -Routledge 2012 and Global Politics (with Tom Keating) - Oxford University Press 2010. Professor Knight is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

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