



Diversity and the Globalising World Challenges for Research and Leadership Development

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WARNING: parts provocative and damage your mental health

Outline

1. assessment of term "diversity"
2. assessment of the term the "globalising world": is it globalising? Or is it de-globalising, as many are suggesting.
3. diversity in a European context: what does it mean, how do we measure?
4. challenges for research and leadership

Diversity

Many different "varieties" of "diversity"

- ethnic, linguistic, religious (conventional)
- gender (two, but sexual orientation multiplier effect!)
- generation (geriatric North vs a bulging youth South) 1.5 billion youth, 90% developing world
- income – does "diversity" include the poor? 3 billion people below poverty line
- education – knowledge age/information society with very high level of illiteracy, including in "advanced" countries
- profession – diverse ethnic origins of investment bankers, maybe great homogeneity; NGOs, artists, etc.
- ideological persuasion – take the typical MBA class, no matter how "diverse" the ethnic origins, the probability will be a very low degree of diversity in ideological persuasion
- and many other forms of diversity, eg vegetarians versus meat eaters, techno music fans versus folk music, Bordeaux versus Burgundy wine drinkers, etc.

True diversity is when all these different (and many other) dimensions of diversity are recognised and incorporated in the mindset. Diversity in the purely ethnic sense, is misleading.

Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, that we all have multiple identities as individuals and different identities and different priorities in our identities. Eg vegetarians may feel that as their greatest sense of identity. To limit identity to the conventional is wrong and dangerous. Inter alia because it creates a sense of distinctiveness, where in fact it does not necessarily exist. For many of us, our religion or nationality is incidental to our identity and across religions and nationalities we have many overlapping identities.

Thus for the American Jew member of AIPAC, both his Judaism and his Americanism are striking dimensions of his identity. For the vast majority of people who happen to be American and who happen to be Jewish, it is incidental. But then if you typecast people – whether because you want to persecute them or whether you want to employ them – you are imposing one form of identity and only one of many interpretations of diversity.

One way to look at the world is to categorise in terms of different types of human species: 1.7 billion Muslims, 1.4 billion Chinese, 2 million Slovenians, etc. The other way is to say there are 6 billion individuals out there, all of whom have their multiple identities.

Distinction between *horizontal* and *vertical* diversity.

There has to be some horizontal classification obviously. Hence X is a Brazilian, Y is an Egyptian, Z is an Indian. And probabilities are that X will be a Christian, Y a Muslim and Z a Hindu. And clearly these identities, even if they are not preponderant, do matter.

But in this globalising world (coming to), maybe not matter as much as we think so far as elite is concerned.

John Micklethwait, editor of the Economist, coined the term “cosmocrats” to describe the new global elite. Thus, if you take X, Y and Z, they may be, respectively, Brazilian/Christian, Egyptian/Muslim, Indian/Hindu, but assuming, for example, they all work for Goldman Sachs or McKinsey or Shell, they will have a very strong dosage of shared identity. There will not be much diversity there, certainly not a diversity that matters!

Then if you assume that X, Y and Z are not with Goldman Sachs but are each in his own country one of the 3 billion persons who lives below the poverty line, then their horizontal differences may be marginal, albeit for different reasons. They are unlikely, however, to find a common bond, partly because they are highly unlikely ever to meet, also because they do not have a common language. (English is the language of the cosmocrats.)

Thus in this globalising world, perhaps the more acute distinction is at the vertical level.

Micklethwait and his co-author Adrian Wooldridge (*A Future Perfect*) make the point that never has an elite been more distant from its base. In feudal times, for example, there may have been great social distance between the count and the peasant, but they spoke the same language, shared the same space, etc. The remarkable book by Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie on an Occitan village, Montailou, in the 13th/14th century. JPL Rouzeau in the Vendée.

Leads us to discussion of the globalising world. But a key lesson here is to be very careful about the terms we use. Diversity is a complex term that describes many different realities.

The current weight of a horizontal homogeneity – as opposed to diversity – results in perception that globalising world is an elite project, hence the growing backlash against it everywhere.

Globalising World

Renato Ruggiero: “we have gone from a divided world to an integrated world”.

For most of the second half of the 20th century, we had three worlds: the First (rich and predominantly Western) world; the Second socialist/Warsaw pact) world; the third (predominantly poor and marginalised) world.

Destruction of the Berlin Wall 1989 ushered in a renewed era of globalisation: the integration of markets through the cross border flows of goods, capital, information and labour on the basis of comparative advantage.

In the early 1990s a cascade of market reforms virtually everywhere in the planet. The abandonment of central command economies for market economies. The abandonment of autarky and protectionism in favour of global trade and openness.

A massive increase in trade and in FDI and other investment flows. A massive increase in the number of countries joining international institutions, eg WTO, WB, IMF, etc

The connectivity of the planet was driven by policies, but also by underpinning technologies, IT. Outsourcing, atomisation of the supply chain, etc. Immense increase in globalisation through opportunities provided by IT.

But, but, but

- Even in the most conventional form of trade, we are still far from a globalising world, notably in agriculture.
- It is emphatically not a “borderless” world in respect to the mobility of people and labour. Someone looking for a better job, more challenge, satisfaction, remuneration, etc, can move easily from Manchester to London, but not from Mumbai to Manchester. There is no global labour market and without a global labour market it seems difficult to be talking about a globalising world. Thins are probably de-globalising in this area.
- The fact that the WTO so-called Doha Round of Trade talks has broken down is another indication of the paralysis of globalisation.
- Globalisation has seen an increase in new actors and instruments. Emerging markets have spewed emerging multinational companies. And there has been a huge shift in capital stock and flows. The money is primarily with the Asians and especially Chinese, the Russians and the Arabs. All have seen dramatic increase in Sovereign Wealth Funds! Yet rise of financial protectionism and other forms of protectionism and “security grounds”.
- To have a global market, imperative of a global community: sense of solidarity, respect, trust, curiosity, etc. All of which are in very short supply/conspicuous by their absence!
- In the mid-1990s, at a time when we believed the globalising world was well under way, the Harvard professor Samuel Huntington came out with his article, later book, entitled “clash of civilisations”.
- Some would argue it is becoming a self-fulfilling prophesy. And a major reason has been the emphasis given to the exclusively ethnic/religious/linguistic form of diversity.

A big question in all this is how the established world powers are going to react to the emerging world powers. And here there is a tectonic shift.

From roughly the 8th to the 15th century we lived in what we would call today a "multipolar" world: the Persian/Arab/Mongol empires, the Indian empire, the Chinese empire and Europe. In fact for much of this period the key global agents were the Arabs.

In the late 15th century, rise of the Portuguese Seaborne Empire, tectonic shift, beginning of the irreversible ascent of the West. For the ensuing 500 years the world has been dominated by a succession of Western powers, the Europeans and their offshoots.

As late as 1800, China's share of global GDP = 33%; by 1975 = less than 5%. The West were the "lords of human kind".

Now the re-emergence of China, of Asia, of possibly the Arab world (we will see!). But fear that West will resist, is not prepared to accept this shift.

Read Kishore Mahbubani, **The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East**

Mahbubani, Singaporean, head of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at National University of Singapore, a prominent Asian "thought leader". Belief, widely shared, that the West will do its utmost to prevent this "irresistible shift".

Remains to be seen. But the fact is that the level of knowledge about the world in this allegedly globalising world is woefully low. Lack of curiosity in the West and a desire to go beyond the superficial. JPL's globalisation/regionalisation literacy tests.

Globalisation may fail. It may fail because of many reasons. The inability to manage diversity at its many dimensions: environmentalists versus materialists, Muslim versus Christian, reactionary versus progressive, but also haves versus have nots.

The important point is that the "globalising world" is not a given! We need to work at it and work at it very hard!

European "Diversity"

One of the manifestations of the Eurocentric view of the world is that we (Europeans) tend to see ourselves as diverse.

In fact, if you apply the multiple dimensions of diversity I mentioned above, the striking thing about Europe is how "un-diverse" we are.

Even if you take the more conventional dimension of "diversity", we are not that diverse.

Among the 27 member states of the European Union there are of course in some countries multiple ethnicities. Thus, the Basques, Catalans, etc, in Spain, the Scots and Welsh in the UK, etc. So let us say about three ethnicities per country, means that there are about 90 ethnicities among the almost 500 million population of the EU.

But in Kenya, with a population less than 40 million, ie about 8% of the EU, there are 32 recognised different ethnicities/tribes, along with a strong Indian population and left-overs from the Empire.

In Nigeria, roughly 1/3 the population of the EU, there are 521 different recognised languages, with 510 considered to be "live".

When we talk about diversity, the Indians double up in laughter. There is infinitely more diversity in India.

Take religion: fundamentally Europe from North to South and East to West is derived from Judeo-Christian, with a few small exceptions, eg Bosnia, Kosovo, Albania, and one bigger exception, Turkey. Yet the EU at present excludes these exceptions.

One of the many reasons why I am very favourable to Turkey becoming a member of the EU is to prevent us from becoming too boring due to lack of diversity.

But take other factors.

Generational, for example. One of the features of European lack of diversity is that we are going increasingly towards a very top heavy demographic pyramid. We will soon be predominantly a society of old people. This absence of diversity will have a huge impact. There are now more OAPs voting than people under 25. Politicians are much more concerned in real terms (as opposed to rhetoric) about OAPs than about youth, because the former have money and represent large constituencies.

This will be one of the many reasons that Europe will continue to lag behind in education. OAPs are not interested in education.

Innovation has clearly been in many ways and across time a product of diversity. True diversity. Diversity results in cross-fertilisation. That is what is one of the great strengths of California today, as it was of Cordoba a millennium ago.

The challenge to Europe is to diversify. If we cannot make enough young people ourselves, import them!

We should be filling our schools and universities with students from multiple parts of the world, but then make efforts to keep them, at least for a while, rather than expel them.

We should amplify and modify the definition of what is European.

Being "European" should not be a question of skin colour or religion, but of the adherence to certain defined principles and values. And contrary to a lot of sensationalist stuff in the press, most multi-ethnic Europeans that I know do feel strongly about these values.

The Fatimata Niang story.

My dream of a richly diverse and dynamic Europe is one of multiple Fatimata Niangs!

Challenges for Research and Leadership

A really important point in terms of research and leadership development is to recognise the complexity and the richness of human society. Therefore, cut out the crap!

If you are one of those who is fond of "mapping" people on a two by four matrix, or whatever, please, stop immediately. That is exactly the kind of thing that Amartya Sen tries to warn against. You are pigeon-holing the un-pigeon-holeable! And you are imposing a single dimension of diversity, rather than recognising the multiplicity of identities.

If you wish to get to know an individual, you know it is going to be difficult. Individuals are complex. There is a family history, something about where she

grew up, her image of herself, her schooling, her fondness for music, etc, etc. You know it requires an effort and time.

Well obviously the same is true, except even more so, of societies. If you want to understand Indians better, then you have to read about Indian history, philosophy, society, linguistics, economics, literature, music, cinema, etc; that is before you take off to India; then you should try to meet as many Indians as possible with diverse identities: different professions, different income levels, different generations, etc.

The multiplicity of identities that form true diversity require a multi-disciplinary approach. And it requires depth.

The study of diversity must also focus, perhaps especially focus, on the "vertical" nature of diversity. We cannot have a globalising world if 60% ++ feel excluded from it.

I am fond of quoting the president of Brazil, Lula, who said: "how will we explain to future generations that we had so much, but accomplished so little".

I worry about that. I worry that the unbelievable opportunities that we have before us in this early 21st century will be squandered and lost. I believe this may happen because of an inability to manage true diversity, which, in turn, may arise from the initial mistake made of seeing diversity in a one-dimensional, rather than multidimensional manner.

Your challenge is to prove me wrong.