



## INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE AND MANAGEMENT

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**CULTURE AND DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT- A PERSPECTIVE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Globalisation has created international managers honed with varying skills of which diversity management holds prime importance. Culture plays an all important role in creating diversity as people cross borders. Varied ideas about diversity, its origins and its management have been presented. This paper contributes another perspective on diversity: Roosevelt discusses about how in the American society, Nathan Glazer offered his ideas regarding diversity decisions, yet he articulates about how important it is to have consensus with the ideals that bind us and the necessity to create an environment that works for all, along with a willingness to change and explore. He delivers five conditions, which, if compromised, escalates diversity tension, along with the threat of contentious divisiveness. Caslione presents the idea of Global manifest destiny, which is compelling businesses to look at themselves in completely new and revolutionary ways. Stevenson conveys his concept of a 'cultural' citizenship, which is more the product of the free mobility of goods and peoples than legally formulated rights and obligations. According to Caslione, a global corporate culture is a system of shared goals, values, and behaviors. Global culture involves using a global mind-set to develop a global strategic vision. Assimilating a global culture can present dilemmas to different people as is observed in the Dilemma theory, which has been developed by Hampden-Turner and is an attempt to pick up the pieces of those extraordinary and moving experiences of a genuine community.*

**KEYWORDS**

Cultural citizen, Global manifest destiny, global corporate culture, dilemma theory.

**INTRODUCTION**

Today's international managers face the challenge of creating work environments that address the needs of a culturally diverse workforce. For that to happen, international managers need to be involved and move beyond their own cultural frame of reference to a multicultural one. The international manager needs to know that to be successful in the global business world; he or she must know their particular field of functional expertise and act on that. Knowing the culture they are working with proves more important. Since every culture has its own perceptions about the proper roles of the manager and the employee, there is nothing instinctively natural about the way the two groups interact. Individual culture shapes the ideas and norms for both parties and it is critical that the international manager be aware of this. Characteristics of an effective, efficient international manager are hard to define. The key to being a good international manager is first learning about the new culture and then adapting one's "old" ways to fit in with the new culture and employees. (Adekola, 2007) Globalisation, which has led to the development of the international manager, is not really a novel trend as it appears to be.

The new global economy is actually a vision as old as time itself, one that arguably began not with the European age of maritime exploration five centuries ago, but with the Phoenicians, Vikings, Chinese, and other great trading peoples who dreamed of the unification of markets. The new global economy is not a new phenomenon. The expansion around the Nile in 3000 B.C. and the European colonialism of the 18th and 19th centuries were both global manifest destiny in their eras, just as the globalization movement is today. (Caslione, 2001) Yet the current globalization has a set of requirements that are more complex in nature to that of the globalization envisioned centuries ago.

The pervasive globalization trends... require visionary thinking, creativity, information focus, considerable investments, and organizational change so that corporate management can effectively respond to the emerging global challenges and opportunities. In today's global markets, while consumption patterns, consumer expectations, and overall consumer behavior patterns are becoming increasingly harmonized, certain infrastructural and cultural peculiarities of individual national markets continue to pose difficult managerial problems. Today's corporate management has to deal simultaneously with converging commonality and persistent diversity in various global markets. Such contrary trends created by globalization processes seem to require globalized strategies but localized marketing and management practices. Depending upon the extent of globalization taking place in specific industries, management is finding that customer needs and behaviors the world over are increasingly homogenized. Following this development, both traditional and new competitors think and behave globally, forcing global orientation on the part of many other enterprises. Without such global orientation, enterprises may be missing out on the opportunities for substantial economies of scale or scope in their key value-creating activities. Hence, management is forced to perceive the world as a global village and formulate business strategies on an integrated worldwide basis. Further, they need to aggressively and effectively implement their global strategies with large investments, technological innovations, and strategic alliances. In general, global competitors are well-managed companies. (Rao, 2000) The necessity of working with diversity has not been a tranquil assignment for international managers who have to transact with a wholly original environment in the new country of operations.

Working with diversity and learning how to do business in different cultures have created many problems. In India for example, some companies have found it difficult to deal with centralized government regulations to do business. Many businesses see tremendous opportunities in Mexico, Malaysia and India as a result of a growing middle class and a demand for more products. Companies will have to learn to deal with different ways of life and cultural norms in conducting business. Managers will have to value diversity in working with indigenous workers, adapt to changes in business practices, and empower people who work in remote field locations. (Minor, 1995) The culture may diverge not only between countries, but also within countries, as many countries themselves are multicultural, calling for multicultural decision-making skills.

Noting that managers are multicultural is necessary not only when they work with people from other countries but also with people from the same country, who speak the same language, have the same national heritage and yet, have different ways of looking at the world. An economy per se is multicultural nowadays. In fact, international management involves planning, organizing, leading, and controlling of employees and other resources to achieve organizational goals across unique multicultural and multinational boundaries. An international manager is someone who must handle things, ideas, and people belonging to different cultural environments while ensuring that allocating and directing of human resources achieves the goals of the organization, while respecting the beliefs,

traditions, and values of the native or host country (Pierre, 1980) (Adekola, 2007). Transnational corporations have recognized the value of adhering to diversity. International human resource managers have been viewing Human Resource Development (HRD) as involving a diverse working environment.

The adolescent HRD is now entering a phase where it too is being viewed from a more critical stance. Perhaps it is now time to examine the terms – both “HRD” and “critical” – that we use to describe our own work and identity. For example, there is a potential crisis looming regarding the actual label appropriate to capture the diverse and dynamic features of work-related learning and development. (Trehn, 2004) Overall and comprehensive economic integration on a global scale appears imperative as is propounded by the global manifest destiny notion.

## GLOBAL MANIFEST DESTINY

Global manifest destiny takes the long view of what is happening today and explains it within a historical context. Events that are taking place today are only snap-shots of what humans have been trying to accomplish since the beginning of recorded history: total and complete economic integration on a global scale. Global manifest destiny is compelling businesses to look at themselves in completely new and revolutionary ways. Because of it, markets for goods, services, finance, and information have moved rapidly and tightly across borders. Barriers to the flow of trade and investment have begun to fall, and deregulation is spreading throughout the world as ideological divisions collapse and the cost of communication and data transmission plummet. Global manifest destiny is providing firms with enormous opportunities to not only sell and invest in previously sheltered markets and form growing global alliances, but also to leverage technological breakthroughs to sell to expanded markets. Companies can access components and technology globally, secure financing by tapping world markets, and obtain human talent from a multitude of nations.

Although global manifest destiny has been with us since the origin of civilization, three drivers are enlarging its current scope: increasing global interdependence, accelerating rate of change, and new information technology.

## THE BUSINESS PHASES OF GLOBAL MANIFEST DESTINY

From a business perspective, global manifest destiny has traditionally revealed itself in one of two forms: first, as a period of rapid growth, high sales, and oftentimes, but not always, high profits. Additionally during this period, there is heightened competition for limited resources and arrogance on the part of customers, suppliers, governments, etc., and constructive partnerships among and between customers, suppliers, and governments are relatively low. Also, a specific infrastructure and unique behavioral mode of collective thinking and actions prevail. This is the accelerated reactivity phase of global manifest destiny. Conversely, the contrasting second period of slower economic growth of global manifest destiny is characterized by comparatively lower sales and profits, reduced competition for limited resources, i.e., a talent pool of workers, much easier compliance on the part of customers, suppliers, and governments, with a bias for more constructive alliancing and partnerships. During this time, a very different, but equally specific, infrastructure dominates and a very different mode of behavior prevails. This is the decelerated proactivity phase of global manifest destiny. The phase of accelerated reactivity is usually the time when companies most often build greater profits. The pace of business is usually faster and more subject to wild fluctuations in the marketplace than during the decelerated proactivity phase. The accelerated reactivity phase typically reveals higher growth rates in both sales and profits than does the decelerated proactivity phase. (Casliane, 2001)

## DIVERSITY DECISIONS

Roosevelt discusses about how in the American society, Nathan Glazer offered his ideas regarding diversity decisions, yet he articulates about how important it is to have consensus with the ideals that bind us and the necessity to create an environment that works for all, along with a willingness to change and explore. He delivers five conditions, which, if compromised, escalates diversity tension, along with the threat of contentious divisiveness. Nathan Glazer argues that over time, three diversity decisions evolved. These decisions, he writes, “. . . were not taken all at once, or absolutely, or in full consciousness of their implications, but the major tendencies of American thought and political action have regularly given their assent to them.” First, according to Glazer, “The entire world would be allowed to enter the United States,” and the definition of an American would turn not on ethnicity, but rather on a “commitment to ideals” and a community defined by these ideals. Second, he wrote, “No separate ethnic group was to be allowed to establish an independent polity in the United States.” Third, “No group would be required to give up its group character and distinctiveness as the price of full entry into the American society and polity.”

The diversity decisions delineated by Glazer don't manifest themselves in a vacuum. They can only be implemented if five conditions exist: 1. We must have consensus about the ideals that bind us. The greater this consensus, the easier it is to create an environment that works for all. 2. We must be open to change and willing to explore, continually and carefully, the appropriateness of existing values and ideals. Schlesinger writes, “The American identity will never be fixed and final; it will always be in the making.” The challenge will be to permit this evolution without compromising “national integration.” 3. Citizens must assimilate willingly around the consensus ideals and values. A challenge (and significant source of diversity tension) is that encouragement to retain ethnic distinctiveness counters the needed assimilation. 4. Citizens must understand the “diversity decisions” and trust that they are operative if they are to support them. If they don't, fear of becoming a numerical minority will lead people to worry excessively about their parochial interests. 5. Citizens must possess the ability to manage diversity. That is, they must master the craft of making quality decisions amid the inevitable differences, similarities, and related tensions that result from welcoming all and allowing ethnic groups to retain their character. If any of the five conditions is compromised, diversity tension escalates, along with the threat of contentious divisiveness.

Huntington identifies three ways in which a country can relate to the world: 1. Cosmopolitan. A country can embrace the world and allow its internal culture to be reshaped by external forces. 2. Imperial. A country can reshape world peoples and cultures in terms of its own culture. 3. National. A country can recognize, accept, and protect what distinguishes it from other societies. (Roosevelt, 2005) To be able to understand diversity and adhere to it, it is indispensable to be a cultural citizen, as envisaged by Stevenson.

## A CULTURAL CITIZEN

A cultural citizen is a polyglot who is able to move comfortably within multiple and diverse communities while resisting the temptation to search for a purer and less complex identity. Conversely, John Urry (1995) suggests that we become cultural citizens through the growth of a ‘surface’ cosmopolitanism that has helped produce a certain ‘openness’ to the rich patterns of geographical and historical cultures the globe has to offer. On this reading, ‘cultural’ citizenship is more the product of the free mobility of goods and peoples than legally formulated rights and obligations.

The other key social development that has ignited questions of cultural citizenship has been globalization. The ‘cultural’ aspects of globalization are by now well known and include a number of processes encompassing the growing intensification of the movement of people and symbols across national borders. This has fostered a number of complex and often contradictory developments. The first and most obvious has been the growing penetration of the cultural sphere by economics and instrumental reason. Huge conglomerates specializing in the production of a range of cultural goods now dominate world markets. However new levels of cultural intermixing partially breaking down older more homogeneous cultures have also coupled this development. . . . Processes of globalization then can be read ambivalently in that they have provided new zones of cultural intermixing while progressively commodifying the cultural realm. (Stevenson, 2001) The question that arises here is that, in assimilating that cultural citizenship is mandatory, there a compulsion for global corporations to identify that they are destined to have a global corporate culture.

## A GLOBAL CORPORATE CULTURE

A global corporate culture is a system of shared goals, values, and behaviors. A global culture is often characterized by the following: • Indifference to nationality, race, color, and creed • Respect for cultural differences • Shared core values • A behavioral as well as a common lingua franca. A global culture is an

assimilation of the best characteristics of a wide variety of individuals from diverse backgrounds who feel they are actively encouraged to contribute to the greater goals of the company. It is an integration of these people, ideas, and innovations into the entire corporate culture. Global culture is much more than a global mind-set. A global mind-set is primarily an appreciation of other cultures. Global culture involves using a global mind-set to develop a global strategic vision. To create a global culture requires leadership that intuitively and viscerally embraces venturing into the global unknown and, moreover, possesses the strength and skills to take a company into the new global economy.

There is hope, however, and global manifest destiny holds the promise. By recognizing, embracing, and assimilating global manifest destiny as part of the very fabric of their organizations, forward-thinking leaders will undoubtedly be the ones who benefit from the inevitable economic integration of humankind. Those who fail to do so will eventually be disregarded and easily forgotten. (Caslione, 2001)

Members of one culture can, by the force of imaginative insight, understand (what Vico called *entrare*) the values, the ideals, the form of life of another culture or society, even those remote in time or space. They may find these values unacceptable, but if they open their minds sufficiently they can grasp how one might be a full human being, with whom one could communicate, and at the same time live in the light of values widely different from one's own, but which nevertheless one can see to be values, ends of life, by the realisation of which men could be fulfilled. (Berlin, 1990: 10) (Alred, 2006)

Importantly, it includes the concept of critical cultural awareness: an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries. (Byram, 1997: 53) What is at stake is the ability to decentre from one's own culture and its practices and products and to gain insight into another. With the help of a comparative juxtaposition, one is able to apprehend what might otherwise be too familiar in one's own culture or too strange in another... This competence is not a *sine qua non* of intercultural communication, but is an educational objective, that is, an objective that is to be pursued where the teacher of language and culture takes responsibility for the education of pupils and not just the development of their communication skills. It is this aspect of the model that is to be compared with models for political education and education for citizenship. (Alred, 2006)



Figure 6.1 The components of intercultural communicative competence

Alred, Geof (Editor); Byram, Michael (Editor); Fleming, Mike (Editor). *Education for Intercultural Citizenship : Concepts and Comparisons*. Clevedon, GBR: Multilingual Matters Limited, 2006. P 125.

### EXCERPTS FROM THE MOTOROLA EXPERIENCE OF MANAGING DIVERSITY

Motorola has experimented successfully with the concept of working with a diverse human resources force: Our goal at Motorola is to create a globally diverse business environment and to be recognized by our customers, shareholders, employees, and communities as the premier company for which to work, from which to buy products, and in which to invest. Having a diverse organization results in a stronger business. Diversity is not about employing more women; it is about being a better company that can find better solutions. At Motorola we appreciate different ways of looking at an issue. Our mission is very simple: to ensure the long-term success of the company by empowering "Motorolans" with diverse backgrounds, styles, cultures, and abilities to turn global diversity into a competitive advantage. To be a successful company (after all, what really counts is what your stakeholders think about your business), you need experienced employees with diverse backgrounds.

What do we do at Motorola to improve retention and advancement? First, we try to include diversity in all of our strategic business plans. Catalyst has recognized Motorola for doing a very, very good job in evaluating and promoting people to senior management positions. However, before individuals can be promoted, they have to be prepared to succeed. Training is a very important aspect of an employee's career path. To help us identify and sponsor candidates for development, Motorola established a special human resources task force to develop systems for selecting and promoting qualified individuals, especially minorities.

What would we like to accomplish through our diversity efforts? If we are successful, the most qualified women and minority engineers will stay with Motorola. Women and minority engineers will rise without barriers through corporate and organizational ranks, based on their personal talents, interests, and ethics. Overall, the number of engineers will remain at a healthy level and will reflect a vibrant, multicultural workforce...We did a focus group study at one of the Motorola labs I manage in the United States.

The lab has 75 employees. Thirty-six employees were randomly assigned to be part of five focus groups on diversity-related topics. The first question was: What factors contribute to your overall job satisfaction in the Motorola Advanced Technology Center? The participants had several answers, such as "ideas are always welcome" and "there is a lot of freedom and openness for engineers' creativity." They also mentioned respect for peers and coworkers, the cultural mix, including women, welcoming and friendly people and interaction. Clearly, diversity was important even though no one specifically mentioned "diversity." Being open and including people from different cultures is more important than having specific numbers of women and minorities in your organization. The second question was: Do we recognize people fairly well? I was very pleased with the answer from my team on this point. My senior management is very sensitive to recognizing people when they make an impact. I think that this is the most important kind of recognition. If you recognize contributions at the right time and in the right place, everybody benefits, and the organization becomes much better.

We asked the focus groups if they feel that employees, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, are treated fairly by peers, supervisors, and managers. One response was that we have the most diverse organization they have seen. Another response was that we have a good mix of people. We don't favor any special group; we favor very good performance. We are not judgmental, and we have an open-door policy. The lab works well because of the diversity and exposure to different cultures. People are open-minded and treat each other with respect. These are simple, small steps an organization can take to be more successful. There is no magic behind it. Responsiveness and strong leadership involve more than simply measuring the minority numbers.

We also asked how they felt about diversity business councils. The response was that they contribute to networking and awareness, but some employees weren't sure what the councils do. Employees also wanted to know why only certain groups had business councils. If an employee is already comfortable and functioning well in a diverse environment, he or she might not feel the need to associate with a special group, might not want to be singled out in that way.



**TABLE 3 Motorola Diversity Awards**

100 Best Companies for Working Mothers (1992–2000), *Working Mother*  
 The Best Companies to Work for and Why (1992–2000), National Society of Black Engineers  
 Executive Director's Award for Community Partnership (2000), National Society of Black Engineers Bridge Legacy Program  
 Hispanic Corporate 100 List (2000), *Hispanic Magazine*  
 Pride in Excellence Employer of the Year Award (2000), Project Equality, Inc.  
 Secretary of Labor's Opportunity 2000 Award, U.S. Department of Labor  
 Top 100 Employers of the Class of 2000, *The Black Collegian*  
 Top 50 Companies for Diversity (2001), DiversityInc.com  
 Top Gay-Friendly Public Companies in Corporate America for 2001, The Gay Financial Network  
 America's Top 50 Corporations (2001), Div2000.com  
 Corporation of the Year (2001), National Society of Hispanic MBAs  
 2001 "Outie" Award for significant achievement, Out and Equal Workplace Advocates

NOTE: For more information on Motorola's awards related to diversity, see <<http://www.motorolacareers.com/ufsd2/diversity/awards.cfm>>.

Finally, we asked our employees for suggestions for improving our diversity programs. Some said we didn't need to do anything more because we are already diverse. In my opinion, however, if you are not moving forward, you are losing ground. The focus group's response indicated that they appreciated our very good, diverse organization but that not all groups in Motorola are as diverse as we are. Thus, there is still work to do. (NAES, 2002)  
 The dilemma theory needs to be explained here because of the paradoxes faced by a culture and its intimidations about getting entwined in a global culture that may threaten certain features of its particular culture.

### A LOOK AT THE DILEMMA THEORY

Dilemma theory is an attempt to pick up the pieces of those extraordinary and moving experiences of a genuine community. A Summary: 1. Values deemed virtuous, god-like, and personified by heroes inevitably conflict and must achieve harmony if protagonists are not to clash tragically. 2. Among conflicting values, one is often consciously and culturally preferred to the other which is buried and repressed. 3. The personality constantly struggles for consistency and may successfully integrate opposing values or repress and deny one side. 4. These values, properly conceived, are differences on an often tacit continuum and thereby structure the patterns of a culture and the minds of its members. 5. These combinations of values may grow synergistically and humanistically, or regress with catastrophic consequences. 6. Much of this inherent opposition and unity has been found in contrasting brain functions. 7. Values form open systems which spontaneously self-organize and steer by getting feedback from their environment. 8. Many of the tensions within living systems have been found in organization behavior. Industries and workplaces confront dilemmas which they must resolve to generate wealth. 9. Similar dilemmas pattern the politics and sociology of American and other societies and must be resolved if those societies are to continue developing. 10. The ways Americans resolve dilemmas are often the mirror image of the ways East Asians resolve theirs, leading to considerable misunderstandings and culture shock. 11. Searching into and resolving dilemmas is a form of human and organizational learning. 12. It requires creativity and innovation. 13. May involve moral development. 14. Is reflected in architecture and design. 15. And enables us to bring order to chaotic events and manage the fractal patterns which arise. ( Hampden-Turner, 2000)

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The modern world offers a realisation of cultural dominance. Culture may begin in technology, if it does not begin in language: the first tools must, along with the first efforts to speak, have been the foundation of what made us specifically human. To consider the impact of technology on culture is therefore to go to its heart, for without technological development, the development of culture itself is severely circumscribed... This is tied in with the idea that we are leaving an industrial society to enter a technological one based upon the dissemination of information that technology is so adept at making possible... Adorno was right to argue that culture in the contemporary world is effectively being stolen from us, turned into a pure commodity controlled by the Culture Industry, which has permeated society so much that it does make it difficult for us to recognise our real desires or to realise our wishes. Instead we are prey to management strategies that degrade all cultural forms. (Richardson, 2001). In our attempts to conform and derive a global culture-based diverse management community, let not our identities or freedom be curtailed.

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