

## The Diversity Paradox

### Introduction

I assume that when a good person knows the truth he will act in accordance to what he believes is good. This is not to be misunderstood with Socrates' assumption that nobody voluntarily commits bad things (I call that Socratic naivety). So when someone who you expect to be a good person does not act accordingly he is either not aware of the truth or he is not as good as you thought he was. But before you can use this logic to identify someone as good or bad, you need to define what is to be considered 'bad' or 'good' behavior. Since this article is about the diversity paradox (which I will explain shortly), I will define 'bad' and 'good' according to the concept of cultural and ethnic diversity.

Being 'good' (and consequentially doing 'good' things) regarding diversity must be understood as being someone who believes that diversity is very important to Nature and beneficial to Humanity, and that it therefore must be protected. Similarly, being 'bad' according to the concept of diversity is being someone who does not recognize the importance of diversity and therefore, in best case, remains indifferent to it and does not protect it from its enemies.

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Now, if a good person – someone who recognizes the importance and benefits of diversity – is aware of how it must be protected and nurtured he must do and/or approve actions that help protect diversity. If the same individual does not act in such a way we must conclude that he does not understand how diversity works and how it is sustained (i.e. he is not aware of the truth). This individual, you might say, does not understand

the diversity paradox: in order to protect and sustain cultural and ethnic diversity within a species the different subspecies must be sufficiently isolated from each other. For ecologists this should not sound surprising but as I'm aware that we are not all ecologists let me explain why this is so.

### The Origins of Diversity

We are all aware of the fact that Nature is diverse: the millions of animal and plant species we observe are all part of what we call Nature. A less well known fact is how this enormous diversity has been made possible. In ecology, there is a law that dictates the amount of diversity in Nature: the number of species (or subspecies) within a certain environment (a biotope) is limited by the number of 'niches' available in that environment. A niche can best be explained as the specialization of a certain animal or plant species within a certain biotope. For example, there is a bird species that is specialized in foraging seeds on the ground while another is specialized to forage in trees. The amount of niches available in a certain biotope may vary greatly (a desert has fewer niches than a tropical forest) but the more niches available the more animal and plant species exist within that biotope. All these species live relatively peacefully with each other because each of them has its own occupation and specialty and don't intervene in each others 'living space'.

How this specialization evolved is explained by Darwin's famous 'survival of the most adapted' principle. If two different species compete for the same niche, only the most adapted will survive in the long term. The most adapted will be able to raise the most offspring and thus drive out the fewer offspring of the competing species. Unless the other species migrates to another biotope or adapts itself to another niche, he will go extinct. After millions of years of competition, all surviving species have occupied all existing niches.

This does not explain all the diversity though. There is great diversity in species that occupy the same niche. This is possible because of the principle of geographic

isolation: if species occupying the same niche are sufficiently isolated from each other by distance or topology they both can exist at the same moment. For example, there are many bird species that are specialized at foraging ground seeds because each has its own 'living space'. If humans neglect this principle, imported species exterminate the local species that occupy the same niche. So the huge amount and diversity of species in our world is not only due to the large amount of niches present in one area but also due to the large amount of different isolated areas.

## Human Ecology

I will now apply these ecological concepts to the species that we are most interested in, humans. It would be arrogant to think that the human species is not subject to these universal laws (after all, humans are just another species of animals).

First, humans all occupy the same ecological niche, the human niche. We are specialized in all things related to being human: things we do and where we don't allow other species to compete with us. If they do, we exterminate them or domesticate them. Because of our cleverness we have expanded our niche so successfully that we are driving all other species out of their respective niches. A bird species that is more successful than the ground-foraging bird and the tree-foraging bird in their respective niches, will drive out both species.

Secondly, geographic isolation is responsible for the huge cultural and ethnic diversity within the human species. For example, the Irish and Indian culture can both coexist because they are given their own biotope, Ireland and India respectively, although the Irishman and Indian occupy the same ecological niche. But what happens if we allow the Indian to live in the same biotope of the Irishman? According to the principle 'survival of the most adapted' this situation must lead to the extinction of one of them. As the most adapted subspecies is the one that raises the most offspring, this would obviously mean that the Irishman will become extinct in the long term. Here we must observe,

unfortunately, that the diversity has decreased: from the original two subspecies, Indian and Irishman, there is only one left (Indian) as the other has gone extinct.

## The Importance of Diversity

In Nature, the importance of diversity in species and subspecies is a well known fact. Such diversity increases complexity and, paradoxically, gives the whole system of Nature more stability and protects it from unexpected events that may otherwise threaten her existence. The more different species the greater the chance that there exists one that can survive a specific event (sicknesses, weather changes, etc...). One might have developed a cure for a troublesome disease or might have found a new way of finding food in a given biotope. These benefits are also applicable to the human species: each human culture develops another method of interacting with its natural environment, both culturally and biologically. These different cultures can learn from each others discoveries and 'enrich' their own way of life by doing so (many tools we use and food we eat come from other cultures).

Besides the cultural and biological benefits, there is also the aesthetic benefit (which, together with the biological one, are referred to as the ethnic benefits). The many different human ethnicities show remarkable variety (difference in anatomy, hair and skin color, etc...) which any person knows to appreciate. Without these two forms of diversity, cultural and ethnic, the world would lose much of her beauty and value.

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Because of its importance, the concept of diversity deserves a more detailed look. The quality of the benefits we just spoke of depends on two different factors: on how much the different cultures differ from each other and on the number of different existing

cultures.

### **Qualitative Value**

In a world where two greatly different populations (ethnically and culturally) live at the same moment the diversity is said to be of a greater quality than the diversity of a world where two almost similar populations live. For example, the diversity between a Native American and a European is of greater quality than the diversity between an Englishman and an Irishman. The more different the environment and the more time each population remains isolated from each other, the greater the cultural and ethnic differences and the higher quality of diversity.

Also, when two culturally and ethnically different populations get mixed, the qualitative difference between the resulting hybrid population and one of the original populations is lower than between both original populations. The hybrid form will show different cultural and ethnic elements of both original populations and only over time and isolation will it evolve towards a more 'independent' new variety. This may be seen as an increase of diversity but this would only be the case if both original populations keep existing along with the hybrid one. If only one original culture survives we still have the same amount of distinct cultures but the overall quality of diversity will have decreased. Cultural mixing has always existed among neighboring populations but as long as they grant each other their own living space the diversity is not threatened.

### **Quantitative Value**

If both original cultures get extinct and are replaced by the hybrid culture, we have besides a qualitative decrease also a quantitative decrease in diversity. In the worst cases, when one population decides to invade and colonize the home territory of another population, we have the most clear form of quantitative decrease: instead of having an Indian and Irishman (each having their peculiar ethnic and cultural uniqueness and right to establish an independent living space)

we only have one left while the other has become a fossil of human history.

### **The Multiculturalist's Dream**

People who appreciate the beauty and importance of cultural and ethnic diversity are good souls. This appreciation is a sign of affection towards humanity and thus indicates a philanthropist character. The most devoted of them, the multiculturalists, even dream about recreating this great world diversity within one society or community. They want to bring together the Indian and Irishman in the same house and celebrate this achievement. As we have seen in the previous paragraph, it is something worth celebrating but interfering in such a way in the workings of Nature can be a dangerous thing.

If we believe that humans are not subject to such 'primitive' laws of nature (or at least not completely) we may indeed conclude that it is possible to let different human subtypes coexist in the same environment. For this situation to exist, there are two conditions that must be satisfied: a sustainable demographic balance between the Indian and Irish population and a sufficiently isolated living space for both populations.

### **Demographic Balance**

If we want two different ground foraging bird species to live in the same environment, we will have to 'manage' their offspring in such a way that the numbers of birds for each species remains constant. This can only be achieved if both populations have a fertility rate equal to their respective replacement levels. As we know from current experience and history, the fertility rate between the many remaining cultures vary greatly. So if we want the multiculturalist's experiment to work, we will have to manage child birth so that each culture's population remains stable. But as even overpopulation remains a controversial topic in our society this condition seems impossible to implement. The disrespect towards the demographic balance principle is also a widely underestimated factor in today's immigration problems. People believe that a

small amount of immigrants do not pose a threat to the sustenance of the local population but they obviously forget that populations are dynamic systems: a small minority necessarily becomes the majority if each successive generation has a high fertility rate. Adding to this, a constant inflow of new individuals who have a high fertility rate guarantee a demographic explosion which cannot be foreseen – apparently - by the average person.

### **Territorial Balance**

A second condition must be fulfilled if we want to recreate the world's diversity in a single society. For a separate culture to exist, a human population must be sufficiently isolated from other human populations. Each has to have its own playground where it can experiment with its natural environment and as long as neighboring populations do not exterminate each other by invading their homeland the diversity could prevail. As I have said before, we owe human diversity to geographic isolation and thus removing it is a dangerous thing to do. If we want to recreate the whole world inside a relatively small place, we must put into place artificial alternatives that simulate the effects of geographic isolation. Besides being relatively isolated, their playground must also be sufficiently large, otherwise they risk of collapsing and disappear. It is difficult for a culture or ethnic group to survive in a district of a city even if there is demographic balance.

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### **The Benefits without the Worries**

But what about the benefits of cultural and ethnic diversity? If we remain isolated from each other we cannot harvest the benefits! This is the usual response someone gets when explaining the diversity paradox. This impulsive reaction is easily countered by pointing out the difference between spreading

ideas and spreading populations. As the ecologist Garrett Hardin says, *'ideas don't have to be wrapped in human form to get them from one place to another. Radio wave, printed documents, film and electronic records do the job very well indeed. There is no need to risk the civil disorder that can so easily follow from mixing substantial bodies of human beings in the same location, when these beings bring with them passionately held beliefs and practices that are irreconcilable with those of the receiving nation'*.

If one wishes to benefit from the ethnic benefits (which cannot be converted into radio waves or printed documents), one can, without endangering diversity, admit a small minority of other populations, whatever the cultural differences. Hardin continues: *'perhaps really small numbers of immigrants of almost any belief are safely admissible, but the rate of admission should be slow enough to allow assimilation of immigrants and ideas to take place peacefully'*. As long as the demographic and territorial balance principles are respected, there is no reason to believe that protecting diversity is impossible without complete physical isolation. This is indeed a tricky balance, as increasing the mixing between cultures decreases the quality of diversity, but nonetheless it remains practically possible (and necessary if we wish to succeed in sustaining diversity). Of course, it remains possible to travel freely to whatever nation you wish and enjoy nature's diversity as long as your stay has no long-term effects on the local populations.

### **Mainstream Counterarguments**

Some argue that multiculturalism is a necessary consequence of war and poverty in the world. The same line of reasoning holds for this case: you must point out the difference between foreign aid and permanently displacing populations. For example, this can easily be solved by giving refugees a temporary asylum, thus not threatening the host's cultural and ethnic uniqueness and right to exist in the long term, or by accommodating the refugees in neighboring regions that are culturally and ethnically less different. A

refugee is by definition a temporary condition and should therefore not have any long term effects on other populations.

Some promote migration from poorer countries to the so-called more developed ones as a form of foreign development. But as any true philanthropist would admit, helping displacing the poor populations will not solve the problem of poverty (we must, instead of giving them aid, teach them how to help themselves). Worse, it will only conceal the real problem from the consciousness of the citizens of the richer countries and the poorer countries will be less motivated to solve their problems. Wealth can be created anywhere and believing that it is only the privilege of the more developed societies is not only arrogant but also racist.

Others argue that migration is necessary because of economic reasons. It is said that the so-called developed societies need a constant growing population in order to function; without a steady inflow of labor forces the economy would collapse. Such a counterargument is a clear sign of arrogance, selfishness and shortsightedness. Endless population growth in a finite world only delays the inevitable. We can easily adjust our economic and social systems to cope with a decreasing population (this transition is also critical if we wish to become an ecologic sustainable society) and as if the cheap labor forces from the less developed countries are only good and useful if they fuel our economy. We may even ask ourselves that such nations, who are dependent on other nations for their survival, deserve to survive.

Many believe that a good 'integration' of the newcomers would solve all the problems. Indeed, it is important for those who permanently settle in a foreign nation to learn the local culture and thus minimize the effects of their presence. This does fix a lot of problems but it shouldn't be used as an excuse for increasing and promoting (more) migration. While a good integration minimizes the damage to cultural diversity, the threat to ethnic diversity remains. Even if you assume a 'perfect' integration (which is practically impossible), if your perfectly integrated

migrants are about to become the majority of you population (which is likely the case if you don't stop immigration at some point), you still are committing a crime against diversity. But besides the fact that a perfect integration is impossible we should also ask ourselves if it is morally acceptable. As Nobel prize winner Jean-Marie Gustave explains: *I don't know any person who would accept that (full integration or assimilation). It is brain robbery. Everything that is dear to you is taken from you: your past, your habits, your religion, your ancestors.*

But whatever argument is used to justify a correct understanding of how diversity works and how it should be appreciated, from the moment you try to do so, you are being labeled as either a racist or a nationalist. This is perhaps the toughest 'argument' that you may encounter, as it directly isolates and disables you from further argumentation. But here too, they must be made aware that they make a mistake in their reasoning. They label any form of cultural and ethnic discrimination as a form of racism or nationalism. Racism is indeed to be condemned because it is the thought that there are 'better' and 'lesser' human subspecies or cultures and that therefore some deserve more rights than others. But cultural and ethnic discrimination on the other hand, does not mean that rights and freedoms of one group are being limited by another. Yes, if one finds himself in the home of someone else they have fewer rights and freedoms, but this is equally the case when the owner of the house finds himself in the home of the visitor. In other words, cultural and ethnic discrimination must be seen as a mutual sign of respect and we must realize that it is necessary if we want to respect each others differences and sustain this diversity. Every people is equal and they all have the same rights and freedoms as long as they are not a threat to the rights and freedoms of another people.

## Conclusion

Now that we have a better understanding of the truth about the mechanisms governing diversity in Nature and Human societies, we

can conclude that a good person will protect and sustain cultural and ethnic diversity by giving each human subspecies its own living space where it can develop itself independently from others. As the french philosopher Pierre Manent said: *'the idea that each people is allowed to do it his own way and recognizes the right of the other across the border to do the same seems like one of the great achievements of civilization'*. If we choose to continue with this multicultural experiment we must limit the mixing of cultures to well delineated places and without compromising the homes of the already existing cultures. Additionally, we will have to limit the population sizes of foreign populations (in all nations of the world) because protecting minorities without population control measures leads to the extinction of the majorities in the long term.

But because of the reasons I explained, a person who still does not realize this (willingly or not) must be considered as an enemy of diversity. By supporting migration and assimilation they actively contribute to a mixing and extinction of identities and therefore are responsible for the continuing qualitative and quantitative decrease of diversity in our world. The diversity paradox can thus be summarized by the following phrase: *it is remarkable that those who plead for more cultural diversity in our societies support a process that will eradicate most cultures and that we therefore, in the not so distant future, will live in a world with no cultural diversity at all*. Something is only a paradox to someone if he does not understand or see the truth behind it.

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For those who understand or see this, there is much work to be done. Human diversity has been decreasing since the days

that humanity has completed its conquest of the world (with perhaps the European populations as largest contributors). In order to protect the cultures, ethnicity, languages, beliefs and customs of the people who are still with us today we must stop this ongoing ravaging impoverishment of our species by teaching the truth to those who do not yet understand or see this. The multiculturalist must realize that his great social experiment is of no benefit to anyone and only destroys (or at least impoverishes) what he loves. The true lover of diversity is he who wants to safeguard every culture's home territory from others. That is why we have to support every people in the world that is seeking independence and autonomy from its colonizer, because, besides the individual multiculturalist, the largest threat to diversity are the many power states who oppress the remaining people for their own imperialist interests. To conclude I quote Garrett Hardin one last time: *'To nurture both unity and progress a double policy should be embraced; great diversity worldwide; limited diversity within each nation'*. We must all realize that the former is not possible without the latter and that enjoying the benefits of cultural and ethnic diversity is perfectly possible without harming it.