

Reconciling Multiple Identities

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Drivers of Multiple Identities

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- Different cultures, beliefs, values
 - Different geographical locations
 - Different socio-economic status
 - Different ethnic background
 - Gender-based differences; sexuality
 - Colour, other physical attributes
 - Language
 - Disability
 - Etc.




Identities are based on differences.

Identities nurture 'us' and 'they'

Identities are always in opposition to something.

And often to oppression and/or discrimination, historical or contemporary.



Identities are dynamic over time and space

Identities can harden, compete,
radicalize

Or soften, adapt, amalgamate

Assume new characteristics



But, multiple identities will be
there for a long time....through
different Futures

Even in a 'global' man/woman

Even vis-à-vis robots....aliens

Because multiple identities are
based on differences, not on
universality



Some cultures are historically
richer with diverse identities

Eg. Moroccan Constitution
recognises 'plurality of Moroccan
identity'

Eg. Indian Constitution guarantees
diversity & reflects diversity in its
National Anthem



Celebrate Diversity...Cultural Pluralism


Yesterday we heard diversity gives rise to different kinds of creativities

Reflects a more tolerant, adaptive, mature society

Diversity is 'natural' given the different races, cultures, even attributes....we can, and have in many instances, learnt to live with it.



The problem is with identity politics



**The demand is not for inclusion
within the fold of “universal
humankind” on the basis of shared
human attributes;**

**Nor is it for respect “in spite of” one's
differences.**

**Rather, what is demanded is respect
for oneself as different**

(Retrieving Experiences by Sonia Kruks ,2001, 85)



Diversity....but Universal Human Rights


The underlying notion for ‘respect for oneself as different’ is driven by the notion of universal human rights —

UN Declaration on Human Rights: All human beings deserve equal (economic, social, political, cultural & civic) rights and justice (a life free from want and fear).

The case of India

Rights and Duties





Largest and perhaps most plural society: 4635 communities, 12 distinct language families, 325 languages and dialects, 24 language scripts (Anthropological Survey of India).

‘Sacred’ and ‘Profane’: Indian philosophy sees diversity in nature and human body, including trees, flowers, human bodies, minds, languages and cultures as ‘sacred’ Celebrates the ‘oneness’ of nature and human beings.

The concept of *dharma* or ‘Duties’ towards nature & people.....taking the ‘right’ action is most important



Reconciling Multiple Identities in Multiple Futures



Philosophical Underpinning

From ‘Who am I?’ to “the ability to find a way of being that is somehow true to oneself;” (Taylor, 1989)....and

“Without the ‘others’ there is no ‘self’ or self-recognition.”(Hall, 1996)

(Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity by Charles Taylor, 1989. Who needs ‘identity?’ by S. Hall, 1996 in Questions of Cultural Identity, Sage)

Key issues

- Citizenship may or may not reconcile multiple identities but this is one step that governments can take now....the role of the State and Law
- The notion of 'individualism' will become stronger in the short to medium term but will community and society again outpace this in the longer run? What kind of 'groupings?'
- Using culture for solutions. Being 'comfortable' with each other
- A 'melting pot' strategy where everyone submerges their identity does not work unless the philosophical perception of 'self' is recognised
- Being prepared for changing identities and nature of conflict – using the traditional 'risk management' as a planning tool, as a strategy, scoping study? By governments & private sector
- Use of public spaces, media, opinion leaders, broad-based technology: Innovative? Destructive? Can reconcile/reject multiple identities.



Thank you!

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