The Symposium for the Centenary of Kyushu University

Cultural Diversity in a Hundred Years: Prospects and Policies

Background

Since the 1990's, the important role played by culture and its multiple manifestations in development is now widely accepted.   UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted in 2001, is an example of such international recognition.   The recent UNESCO World Report has further examined the opportunity of investing in cultural diversity. Some proponents have highlighted the benefit of diverse creative expressions as a sustainable source of income generation, while others have regarded cultural diversity as an area of knowledge, social practice and value systems distinctive to each community that need to be respected if we are to make any developmental intervention a success.   However, despite well-established principles, it appears that many governments are yet to be fully convinced of the advantage of cultural diversity, and some are not clear about how these ends are to be achieved.

The present Symposium was an attempt to shed light on multiple facets of cultural diversity and associated issues to offer insights on why and how policies should strive to protect and promote cultural diversity; as well as how the academic world may contribute to such effort. The Symposium has heard the views of the experts representing various fields, including political science, economics, and law as well as linguistics, archeology, and musicology.

The recommendations that follow are drawn from the individual presentations that were made during the Symposium.   While not every participant necessarily agreed with every point that was made in the course of each presentation, the group as a whole believes that the points below are worthy of serious consideration.

We recommend:

I   In response to growing threats to language diversity, the following actions would help to ensure a sustainable multilingual world:

Governments should encourage and plan for the sustained use of all languages spoken by their citizens. A comprehensive documentation of every language is of great importance, in order to constitute crucial sources for reconstructing language and human history, and also to guarantee intergenerational equity in allowing future

generations to revive their heritage languages, in cases where present communities might later decide to abandon them. Depending on language communities' demands, linguists should also support the development and modernization of heritage languages, to foster their use and transmission to future generations.

II   As far as archeology is concerned, there is no such thing as 'the' authentic claim over the ownership of particular monuments and other items, because archaeo-heritage is now detached from those who created them. Perhaps the adoption of an idea of 'universal ownership' is the best option. However, some particular individuals or groups have to act as the local 'custodians' of archaeo-heritages. In that sense, they need to be granted a 'sense of special attachment' to the heritage they take care of. Such custodians should be organized upon voluntary bases in order to avoid the manipulation of their privileged access to the heritage they are entrusted to take care of.

Governmental bodies of various levels should confine their role to offering platforms for facilitating the activities of such custodians so as to avoid promoting nationalistic claims. In all, 'gift-giving principles' should be (re)introduced to (archaeo-)heritage management, and they should replace 'equivalent exchange principles', which might lead to harmful short-term political /economic manipulation, which archaeo-heritage is often subjected to.

III   Although the paradigm of ecologically sustainable development is now well established, the sustainability of culture - encapsulated in the parallel concept of culturally sustainable development – is less well understood.   In particular, there is a need to promote the contribution that cultural industries can make to sustainable economic and cultural development, especially in their role in furthering the benefits to be derived from cultural diversity.   The 2005 UNESCO Convention provides a framework for putting together cultural policies in Member States that will enable these goals to be pursued.   Nevertheless, a lack of data and research resources persists, and there remain significant gaps in our capacity to assess the potential value of cultural development strategies to the economy and society.

In order to foster awareness of culturally sustainable development as an essential concept in realizing the benefits of cultural diversity in the twenty-first century, the relevant authorities should: continue to advocate the further ratification of the 2005 Convention around the world; support efforts to develop new procedures for data collection and analysis relevant   to the cultural sector; and promote further research on the economic contribution of the arts and culture to the developmental process in

both developing and industrialized countries.

IV   Law should serve for the diversification of cultural expressions in society. In order to achieve this goal, it is important to stabilize the economic foundation of the creators, intermediaries and other relevant stakeholders. States can take several possible policy measures, and considerations based on such an overarching framework of "cultural policy", which includes inter alia "direct subsidy", "philanthropy", and "intellectual property" , are becoming increasingly important.

In order for the state to achieve a desirable cultural policy, we should be aware that certain institutional bias is inherently embedded in each institutional mechanism, and it is important to complement the flaws of other mechanisms and also achieve certain desirable values.   We should continue the effort to identify the pros and cons of each institutional framework in the "portfolios" of cultural policy, and endeavor to create an optimal mix of such policy instruments.

V   According to UNESCO, audiovisual materials should be used "to encourage dialogue, which respects cultural diversity".

It is essential for a proper dialogue that the cultural content in these audiovisual materials reflect faithfully the community's sense of its creation. There should be much more involvement in film-making by anthropologists. Otherwise the contribution to real understanding and respect will be minimal. If not, it may be damaging intercultural dialogue.

VI   Cultural diversity is sometimes conducive to conflict among ethnic, racial, religious or linguistic groups. It is important for states to attempt to mitigate the conflictual manifestations of cultural diversity by making constitutional and statutory provisions for intergroup accommodation.

Constitution-making processes should be geared toward providing opportunity for creating conflict-mitigating political institutions, paying due attention to the interests of majorities and the rights of minorities alike.

As a concluding remark, we note that while cultural diversity provides inestimable benefits, sometimes measures to preserve or promote diversity can produce unfortunate side-effects. Some policies to promote group cultures can set in motion cultural competition or even conflicts, and can foster group claims made at the expense of other

groups.   For instance, identifying the origin or ownership of heritage objects may operate to exclude others from access to them. Allowing communities to make binding decisions about matters of culture risks preventing minorities within those communities from pursuing their distinctive path or distinctive tastes.

None of these consequences is inevitable.   But a vigorous and legitimate cultural policy needs to take concerted action to prevent negative externalities from occurring. Cultural policy is at its best when it proceeds with a clear-eyed view of the possible costs as well as the significant benefits of promoting cultural diversity and when it attempts to minimize the former and maximize the latter.

Donald L. Horowitz (Duke University), "*Conciliatory Institutions to Reduce Ethnic Conflict*"

Matthias Brenzinger (University of Cape Town), *"Sustainability of Language Diversity"*

Koji Mizoguchi (Kyushu University), *"Authenticity, Essentialism and Challenges for Archaeology in the 21st Century"*

David Throsby (Macquarie University), "*Cultural Diversity and Sustainable Development*"

Ryu Kojima (Kyushu University), "*Cultural Diversity and the Law*"

Wim van Zanten (Leiden University), "*Cultural Diversity and Social Qualities of Time as Expressed by the Performing Arts*"