Fundamentalism in Global Management and Organisational Ideologies

Stream Title: Critical Views Across Cultures: Legitimacy and Divergences in Management Practices

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FUNDAMENTALISM IN GLOBAL MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL IDEOLOGIES

Introduction

Many organisational practices and beliefs are grounded in Western psychology which is dominated by Western and American ideologies and which by default discriminates against cultural differences. Theories and methodology contain Western ethnocentric biases. When business paradigms based on such biased research is transplanted blindly to non-Western countries without adequate modification to fit the local cultures, it is usually irrelevant, inappropriate or incompatible for understanding the mentalities of non-Western people. This can be regarded as a kind of imperialism or colonialism.

It can be argued that the constructs of processes identified in Western psychology have either ignored or falsified an account of the true nature of life in a non-Western society. For example the term ‘attitude’ may be a different construct in an individualistic culture from what it would be in a collectivist one. This is an example of how different assumptions associated with constructs can lead to cultural conflict and management difficulties if there is a lack of awareness of such differences. As with organisations, Euro-American psychology has suffered from a form of ethnocentrism which reinforces the superiority of Western management practices. Civic emancipation as promoted in Western societies supports a social structure that promotes the existence and protection of the individual, such as individual freedom, right of choice and self-actualisation. It is evident that American and Western psychology are infused with an understanding of human nature based on individualism. This world view has had a tremendous influence on economic traditions and challenges the ability of Westerners to separate their individualism-based way of understanding human nature and individual identity from a collectivist perspective. Since the collapse of communist regimes, many previously communist countries began participating to a far greater extent in the world market of capitalism. In Asia, the People’s Republic of China also began to engage fully with
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capitalist international trade. globalisation is seen as an inevitable trend and the concept of multiculturalism has accordingly been proposed as a matching concept of globalisation. it is vital, but challenging, for people to understand different cultures and yet at the same time seek to maintain their own cultural identities. international conflict is inevitable with increased cultural contact and therefore opposing ideologies, which is evident in many regions around the world. in order to resolve these conflicts a true understanding and recognition of cultural difference is necessary.

culture as a discourse

in order to understand culture as a discourse, it is necessary to first understand what is meant by discourse. a discourse consists of the many perspectives, metaphors and concepts that define a particular object or description of a particular event. these discourses may vary from culture to culture or have different statements to define the object in that particular culture. furthermore, as cultures are exposed to the influence of other cultures, the nature of truth and objective truth is under increasing strain as it becomes clear that different objective truths exist in different cultures. it is necessary to consider that cultures are dynamic and forever changing. each generation forms its own interpretations of a particular period in history, an interpretation that may not necessarily be shared by another generation.

social constructionism maintains that there are many discourses available on any particular subject and each culture will live according to a certain set of discourses depending on their history and interpretation of events. tourism can be used as an illustration of this statement. in many cultures tourism means a time of leisure, the opportunity to relax and get away from your own culture to experience the different experiences of another culture. to other groups tourism has become synonymous with binge drinking, clubbing and sexual promiscuity. for yet another group the discourse of tourism has meant the provision of jobs and development of their particular regions, while for others tourism has meant the destruction of natural places of beauty and fragile ecologies and changes to a particular way of life that will never be the same again.
are many discourses for every object one can care to think of and these varying discourses construct the reality of that particular object in a different way. Every discourse will claim to have the ‘truth’ about the particular subject or object. All visual objects are a representation of a particular discourse.

**Fundamentalism and Culture**

A product of fundamentalism, even in its mildest form is, the silencing of the voices of diversity and challenge (Sim, 2004). Without debate and challenge, it is impossible to get to know and understand and ultimately appreciate the value of difference and diversity. Fundamentalism runs much deeper in cultures than just matters of religion. Religious fundamentalism is inextricably implicated in politics as contemporary American Christian fundamentalism testifies to. Fundamentalism in the political arena is embroiled in issues of economics, not to mention nationalism and ethnic strife. If we look around us, fundamentalist principles can be found in all spheres of life. For some commentators the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank are examples of Western fundamentalism, which poses as much of a threat to global peace and harmony as any Islamic fundamentalist movement. Many countries from different continents such as Africa, Russia, South-East Asia and Argentina can all bear witness to what happens when free market economics, as practised in the most advanced nations of the West are imposed on countries lacking the requisite social and political structures to accommodate principles.

Religious fundamentalism frequently clashes with other forms of fundamentalism. For many in Western Europe, Islam represents the antithesis to traditional conceptions of national identity (Sim, 2004). Even in the most liberal corners of Europe, can a sense of disquiet be found and questions being raised regarding the long-term implications of immigration from the Third World on the national way of life. The lack of tolerance to perceived outsiders is a characteristic of fundamentalism, which has little time for any but its own. Fundamentalism does nothing to encourage difference nor does it tolerate dissent. What it does expect, however, is submission to the system and an uncritical
adherence to its values and beliefs. A fundamentalist world demands conformity to a totalitarian mind-set which brooks no opposition. The forces of discrimination, tyranny and cultural oppression are flourishing all around the globe, both in the West, East and in the Third World.

The current economic paradigm can be seen as market fundamentalism and which acts as the ideal against which most Western governments construct their economic policy. Some authors believe that a global free market is not the result of competition between countries or economic systems, but a utopian political project, which is likely to break down at some stage in the future (Gray, 1998, Sim, 2004). Market fundamentalism is perceived as an outcome of the work ethic of the protestants. Market fundamentalism as imposed and protected by the IMF and World Bank policies often stopped short of disaster as far as the many of their client countries are concerned. The outcome of such policies in Europe has resulted in large-scale unemployment, destruction of traditional industries, dramatic increase in homelessness and many living below the poverty line. Market fundamentalist policies have generated militant opposition in the West as well as the Third World, expressed through the anti-globalisation movement in the last decade.

Fundamentalism and democracy are presented as opposing ideological forces with fundamentalism perceived as a threat to the democratic values of free speech and scepticism. A key tenet of fundamentalism is the attempt by its followers to convince others that they have a duty to develop an absolute conception of reality. Fundamentalism reflects unchallengeable truths, which does not include tolerance of diversity. Although fundamentalism is increasingly associated with Eastern or Islamic ideologies, its origin can be traced to the Protestant US in the early twentieth century which had as its essence the prevention and erosion of the fundamental Protestant beliefs. Fundamentalism relies on the sacredness of the text and justifies violence against those who do not stick to its commandments. This is paradoxical in itself as any written text represents plurality of meanings supported by the work of Derrida, amongst others.
As discussed, fundamentalism is traditionally associated with religion and ideologies and not necessarily associated with the practices of management, organisational activities and associated ideologies. However, market fundamentalism is the ideal against which most Western governments construct their economic policies and many would argue that these policies are largely negative. Furthermore, it can also be argued that market fundamentalist policies are the products of the Anglo-Saxon economic model. Global management and organisational policies are built on these principles and as with any form of fundamentalism, is perceived by its proponents as the only way of conducting business and the economy. The result is that diversity of management and organisational practices are not entertained. These Anglo-Saxon management and organisational practices are imposed on cultures without consideration of its suitability and reflection of different cultural values.

Understanding the Nature of Culture

According to Lane et al. (2000) culture can be described as collective programme of how the world is viewed from the perspective of a particular culture. Culture is very much a group phenomenon specific to a particular group. Fundamentalism protects these group norms from external influence. This group phenomenon provides the group with guidelines and a framework of how to behave in different scenarios, both socially and within organisations. It is, however, a process which is subconscious and a culture will be unaware of the blueprint of behaviour provided by their culture. The result is that people rarely question their behaviours or their motivations. Social constructionism views discourse about the world not as a map reflecting what is out there, but the product of a communal interchange (Gergen, 1985). According to social constructionism a particular rendition of truth and reality are constructed between people within relationships. Furthermore, according to the philosophy of Personal Construct Psychology, everyone construes the world differently (Kelly, 1955). Social constructionism challenges the taken-for-granted beliefs about the world and the perception that the knowledge a person holds about the world is acquired through observation alone. Instead it argues that what one experiences is as a result of active interchange between people engaged within
reciprocal relationships. Furthermore, constructionism advocates a multiplicity of ways in which the world may be constructed and interpreted and rejects any attempt at establishing universal first principles. An underlying principle of social constructionism is therefore that whatever people construct within their societies can also be constructed in a different way. There is therefore never only one way of viewing anything; a concept that is the antithesis of fundamentalism. Culture creates the norms and rules which determine the assumptions of a particular culture which in turn drives human activity and these rules are very much culturally specific.

Social Constructionism and Culture

If culture is a group phenomenon, social constructionism may contribute significantly to an understanding of cultural diversity and the assumed superiority of one cultural approach over that of others. A key feature of social constructionism is the challenge it brings to bear on what is taken to be the truth about life, personal identify and the wider world. The traditional and scientific approach to knowledge has mainly been through observation, assuming that the world will reveal its nature. Social constructionism is fundamentally opposed to this assumed objective and unbiased perspective of the world and the knowledge drawn from observations alone. In contrast, social constructionism advices people to be ever vigilant and critical of assumptions of observations and assumed truths about the world in which they live. A fundamental aspect of understanding phenomena from a social constructionist perspective is the application of language. The labels given to people and other social phenomena directly affect the way others behave toward them. Labels carry with them assumptions and expectations, especially the labels assigned to people. Many of the labels attached to categories of the world are according to social constructionism erroneous and not necessarily reflective of the nature of things. The problem arises when the expectations of these labels become so imbedded within societies that they assume the true nature of things. For example, in many societies the roles and positions assigned to individuals by their social labels will mean they are never able to be or become anything else.
Specific characteristics are associated with certain groups of people and the assumptions held about them influences the behaviour others exhibit them and in many instances leads to exclusion of certain groups from some social activities and opportunities. For example, Africans are perceived as good athletes, Asians as shopkeepers, Jews as having shrewd business acumen, fat people as being jolly and the wealthy as being happy. According to social constructionism no such ultimate truths exist. Instead, there are numerous truths and different constructions about the world and contained within the world. The truth for each person will depend on their cultural norms and beliefs and is therefore relative to other events and circumstances (Burr, 1995).

A specific world view reflects the beliefs of a culture and, as discussed, will vary significantly from culture to culture. It is therefore difficult to accept a specific cultural belief to be representative of the world when there are such significant differences between cultures. Furthermore, knowledge and perspectives are constantly evolving as cultures evolve. If truth is therefore not inherent within the world then how does one arrive at the knowledge which guides individual or social preferences? According to social constructionism knowledge is constructed within interactive relationships such as those within a particular culture. People therefore negotiate within their cultures the norms which will guide their actions and behaviours and the individual roles and places they will hold within that society. Such behaviour is seen as rational and should behaviour in a given society contradict expected behaviour, it is often referred to as irrational and possibly subjected to control or punishment. Labels do not within themselves constitute a reality which exists external to the observer, but are merely reflections of a communal process of sensemaking. Knowledge about the world is therefore dependent on the particular perspective with which it is approached. As there are many different perspectives with which one can view a particular subject, there are also many different truths related to the same subject.

Language facilitates the acquisition of different categories and frameworks within a culture (Burr, 1995). Language can therefore be seen as a prerequisite for knowing and it is through the application of language that the world is constructed. It is through language
that the plethora of discourses as to what constitutes society and its associated realities are constructed and direct the ways in which a society will live. The sounds of language are, however, without meaning and are reliant on the interdependent relationships within society to give meaning to it. Even where one is able to speak the language of a different culture, it is no guarantee that one will understand the subtleties of communication of that culture. This is because meanings associated with the same words may vary from culture to culture. Anyone who is able to speak another language will testify to the fact that although words may be translated into another language, often the associated meaning does not. Many organisations have made costly mistakes for exactly this reason. Equally English business language in particular is littered with military and sport metaphors. Not only is this confusing to non English speakers, but to anyone not familiar with that particular sport. The result is exclusion and alienation of anyone outside of that particular group.

According to social constructionism language does not mirror reality and is merely the reflection of the beliefs held by a particular group convention. These realities then directly influence the behaviour of each individual within that society to the point of their very identities and how they are perceived by that particular society. Discourses that are accepted as common sense or ‘truth’ are enforced as they normally reflect the interest of those in power and who have a lot to lose should they change. Language is more than merely being the transporter of truth and meaning. It also provides the lenses through which discourses are viewed and realities created. Nothing has existence outside of language as it is through language that the world is created, ideologies and subsequent behaviours. It is erroneous to assume that one can understand the mind of the speaker if the language employed is understood. As Gergen (1991, p. 121) argues, language does not reveal objective truth and there is “…no final voice that speaks beyond the interest of some community.”

Social constructionism challenges the objectification of reality as it leads to the closure of arguments and denial of multiplicity of thought and action. According to structuralism the very identity of an individual is constructed through language. The self is open to
negotiation, reconstruction as well as deconstruction (Gergen, 1991). The very way an individual presents herself to others; her experiences, personality and emotions are done through language and the meanings associated with a particular language. Many words representing different concepts, emotions and feelings are either not found in other languages or the meanings vary widely. At the heart of Western philosophy, and many other cultures for that matter, is the fundamental belief of humanism. This refers to the notion of human beings as being unified, rational and coherent agents. Humanism represents a modernist view of essentialism which perceives an unchangeable essence at the core of each individual. Psychology reinforces these beliefs with discourses of behaviourism and trait theory as an example. These beliefs therefore create prisons for individuals from which they can not escape. Structuralism however argues that one is constantly in a state of flux and change and reinventing oneself with every interaction with others (Burr, 1995). Gergen refers to the pastiche personality meaning that identity is composed of many different personalities and identities, all of which are constantly evolving and changing.

**Ideology of Globalisation**

Ideologies are created through the process of socialisation. From an early age one is exposed to explicit and implicit ideas and values of a particular society. Because the individual is preconditioned with these ideas and beliefs, they are rarely questioned and the ideology of that society as accepted as natural (Golding and Curry, 2000). In fact, a society will often bring pressure to bear on those who question the validity of its ideology. One of the effects of ideology is that it controls and shapes behaviours and often the place people will occupy in that society. If one is born to a certain class in a particular society, people may not strive to occupy another social class or status. On the other hand, some societies encourage members of their community to develop and improve themselves and to strive to be part of a perceived more privileged status. Ideologies are used to justify the inequalities between different groups as it is perceived as being the natural state of things (Saraga, 1998). Ideology creates unspoken and implicit rules by which the citizen will conduct themselves and if these rules are strong,
they are not questioned or challenged. The assumed natural state of affairs is often quoted as being ‘common sense’ and therefore dismissing any challenges to the taken-for-granted beliefs. The ideology of the Thatcher era of the eighties in Britain perceived individualism and the natural state of economic competition as common sense. Often, as with this particular ideology, that which does not fit in with the dominant ideology and which is perceived as contradictory is demonised, suppressed or dismissed. The values of interdependency and collective provision were branded as socialism during the 80s (Saraga, 1998).

Many in positions of power act as the guardians of the ideology of society and often abuse their positions of power for the manipulation and exploitation of the population. Often such ideology includes the assumption of superiority of one culture over another. The history of colonialism is based on the fundamental belief of the superiority of the invading culture over that of the invaded society. The belief of superiority continues to dominate many ideologies, leading to the exclusion of others who represent different cultural norms and traditions.

Even the meaning and models of globalisation are different in different countries. Globalisation for Americans means economies of scale and the assumption that technology permits the normalisation of production. Japanese companies have subscribed to the model of globalisation as an activities chain wherein segments of the chain can be de-localised. These differences are partly culturally driven. The impact of globalisation is wide and varied. Some perceive a global free market at a project that was destined to fail and perceive it in the same way as the Marxist experiment in utopian social engineering. Each was convinced that human progress must have a single civilisation as its goal and each denied that a modern economy can come in many varieties. Imposing their single vision on the world a large price in suffering was exacted from humanity.

The increasingly aggressive American model of capitalism is seen as the culprit by some, making it impossible for any of the social democratic models favoured in Europe since
the post-war period to compete. With the Soviet Union gone there is no economic alternative. European and Asian capitalism have traditionally favoured some variant or other of the social democratic model. With at least some safeguards provided for workers, but this is being undermined by the current American system.

With their outsourcing of production to Third World countries, Western companies are undercutting all their competitors in the global market. Some of the major multinationals have shed all notions of social responsibility when it comes to wages and working conditions and European and Asian capitalism are being forced down the same road if they to survive.

The environment is also suffering under this model with the West now exporting its industrial pollution to the Third World, along with its production. The result is that more and more of the earth is becoming less habitable. We can see the consequences of irresponsible tourism on many of the beautiful and fragile ecologies of the world. Many cultures and their environments have been destroyed by the greed of global tourism.

If one accepts the constructionist view of reality which advocates the existence of many truths, ideology represents merely one particular version of truth. A particular representation of truth becomes an ideology because its status is maintained and protected by various powerful groups in society. To understand ideology one has to understand the application of the ideas which form a particular ideology, often controlled by and for the benefit of those in power. Ideologies are enforced through the many institutions of ideology such as the churches and their religions, schools, the media and the family. The practices of these institutions ensure the survival and enforcement of their ideologies. One can observe the tangible expression of the ideology of a particular country in their language and behaviours.

There are many behaviours and actions the individual engages in at the subconscious level every day which is the expression of their group ideologies. The very thoughts are shaped by the ideologies of culture and it is not often that people question the truth of the
ideologies of their society. An example is the belief of individualism within Western ideology. This is an ideology that has dominated many practices within the West and which is contrary to the ideology of collectivism of the East. As had been argued from a social constructionist perspective, individuals are interdependent with others in their communities. In fact, social constructionism argues that the individual needs these interdependent relationships for their very identity. This notion is a very challenging thought for traditional Western societies who value and uphold individualism in virtually every sphere of life.

**Cross Cultural Learning**

The globalisation of business necessitates cross-cultural training of the workforce to create an awareness of the varying business practices as well as the cultural life of foreign countries. Despite this, in many UK universities the onus is placed on the international students to adapt to the cultural context in which they are studying (Bodycott and Walker, 2000). Students bring to their learning experience expectations and assumptions, which reflects the national cultures they originate from. These differing expectations are further complicated by the vast variation in educational traditions that students represent.

According to Jackson (1995), not much has been done to understand the different learning styles, attitudes and expectations of cross cultural differences within Europe and the effect on successful delivery of management education. Jackson drew on the work carried out by Hughes-Weiner who proposes that the cultural experience within each stage of Kolb’s learning style may differ considerably due to different behaviour patterns, learning experiences and socialisation. Kolb’s learning cycle does not define and explain cultural differences. On the other hand, Mellahi (2001) suggests there is a body of text purporting that the importance of national cultures is diminishing and that the world is moving towards a global western management culture. As discussed above, the author suggests that assumptions such as these are informed by the intrinsic fundamentalist assumption that the Western approach to management and organisations is the only way and that it is the responsibility of International students and managers to be subsumed
into this, the superior system. According to Ogbor and Williams (2003), the convergence theory reflects a deep seated belief that economic ideology drives cultural values. In contrast, proponents of the divergence approach argue that national culture is the driving force behind the economy and even if a culture should adopt capitalism, the value system of the workforce will remain unchanged. These value systems will influence the way organisations are managed. The salient work of Hofstede (1980) has demonstrated the unchanged nature of cultural practices despite industrialisation.

However, it is acknowledged that values established early in life will influence future behaviour such as management style and the approach to tasks by the individual. These values will inevitably reflect the cultural background of the individual. A study carried out by Mellahi (2001) investigating whether there were significant differences between five cultures represented within a group of MBA students revealed significant differences. The findings suggested that their understanding to work as well as approach and how individuals behave with others and their expectations in terms of how they will be treated by others, varied according to the national cultures represented. De Vita (2002a, p. 32) argues that cross-cultural groups need to confront their differences in beliefs and expectations about group behaviour before the group can function effectively. He suggests that ‘the creation of such groups requires the establishment of agreed group processes aimed at ensuring both the exploration of what each cultural perspective has to offer (de-centering) and the integration of the strengths of each (re-centering), so as to produce more effective outcomes through cultural synergy.’ Clear guidelines must be issued to groups to help facilitate this process.

Bodycott and Walker (2000) argue that academic staff must play a greater role in developing inter-cultural understandings and creating what they describe as ‘scaffolds’ to support student learning. They outline a shared experience strategy aimed at addressing language and communication issues by making explicit the implicit experiences of the students and using those experiences to stimulate content discussion, for example leadership classes began with an examination of students; past experience of leaders. Issues of hierarchy in group work have a clear impact on student behaviour. Bodycott and
Walker (2000) state that in their study of a class of educators that consideration of hierarchy and issues of 'face' made students reluctant to contribute to class discussion. They argue that 'the more hierarchically homogeneous the group of students, the less the issue of hierarchy emerged' (p.88).

Stone (2001) and her colleagues endeavoured to give international marketing students an understanding of the role culture and technology plays in international marketing. Their intention was to move away from the traditional case study method of teaching popular at higher education and approach it from a constructivist perspective. Such an approach aims to support the learner in the process of performing problem solving tasks and activities during which the student builds their own knowledge. Within management education the application of a constructivist approach has been to move away from the traditional case study method to one of simulations which reflect the reality they will experience as practitioners. A specific model designed at marketing students was used in the project by Stone (2001). Stone found that although such a model supported the development of management skills as applied to marketing, it did not expand the issues of cross cultural communication within an international group. Among the numerous objectives of the project was the identification of cultural differences in marketing to be achieved through the bringing together of multi-cultural students. The project created an awareness with both the academics and the students, of the cultural similarities and differences between the various European countries. The project defined the practical difficulties experienced in making the project happen, but failed to identify the learning and challenges as a result of the cultural differences and varying approaches to the group activities.

There are strong arguments for the use of cross-cultural work in groups in higher education (de Vita, 2002b). Despite this, Quintrell and Westwood (1994) have argued that home and international students would rather study in monocultural educational settings. Research conducted in Australia by Volet and Ang (1998) concluded that home (Australian) students preferred low levels of interaction with international students. It was felt that this preference arose from the belief that cross cultural group worked pulled
down the individual average mark. The author is currently conducting research with small groups of students enrolled in a number of Master programmes at the moment and found the same bias of UK students towards working with International students. However, some students admit that reflecting on their experiences of multi-cultural team work they recognise the value of their learning.

De Vita (2002b) acknowledges that international students appear to benefit most (average group work marks were 16% higher than their individual average marks) but points out that the individual average mark of home students is also lower than their group work mark. In short, cross cultural work groups do benefit from positive synergy, and sharing this conclusion with students may help break down barriers and prejudices. Again, the early indications of the research currently conducted by the author supports the findings of De Vita. For whatever reasons a student may decide to study abroad, an implicit reason is the opportunity to experience points of view contrary to their own, broadening their view of the world. However, this is not a conscious choice of the UK students who do not necessarily seek programmes or environments that will afford them with opportunities for cross cultural learning, unless they seek out a programme with this as a programme outcome. Such an experience challenges the assumptions and beliefs held by the student and according to Ingulsrud et al. (2002) allows for the development of critical thinking. It was the purpose of Ingulsrud and his colleagues to assess the cross-cultural experience for students as part of a study-abroad project by arts students. The intention of the curriculum was to develop cross-cultural awareness among the participants. Such awareness is perceived as including both self-awareness as well as an awareness of other cultures. Ingulsrud et al. (2002) concluded that a multitude of factors are involved in a cross-cultural learning experience and to account for as many as possible, they found a portfolio assessment tool to be the most appropriate.

On the other hand, according to Luwisch (2001), personal stories act as powerful means to understand the assumptions of one’s one culture and learning about the culture of others. Through the telling of stories, marginalized groups are able to claim the voices silenced by mainstream. Storytelling also facilitates the inclusion of others into one’s
world eliminating the strangeness of the other (Luwisch, 2001). Storytelling allows exposure to other cultural awareness and implicitly acknowledging that other realities may exist. Each participant of a cross-cultural group bring their own stories to the group experience resulting in diverse interpretations of events. According to Luwisch for meaningful learning to take place within a diverse cultural group, it is essential for students to become aware of and valuing diversity for its own sake and secondly, to acquire an understanding of the differences in privileges some groups experience in society and how everyone reinforces the situation. The vehicle of storytelling allows the group to construct a common world. All participants within group learning approach the experience from the common assumption that words will convey the same meaning to every member of the group. Allan and Temple (2000) discovered that everyday words such as ‘team’, ‘group’, ‘assessment’ and ‘group’ do not always translate directly into other languages and reflected differing realities. Shared understanding leads to common objectives and activities.

**Cross Cultural Teams**

If the biases and prejudices of different cultures are to be addressed, perhaps Business Schools can make a significant contribution and challenge these with students as the future managers of organisations. Group and teamwork are becoming more prevalent in both organisations and education. In education, groups are seen as a key element of student-centred and active learning. Teams are seen as solutions to problems of external adaptation, responding to complexity by bringing together a variety of perspectives. Multicultural teams take many forms such as project teams, task forces, steering committees and boards. Transnational teams can contribute to cohesiveness among otherwise independent and autonomous national subsidiaries and other business and functional units. Given the greater complexity and speed of change in the international business environment, it seems obvious that bringing together people with different cultural backgrounds will enhance the quality of decisions taken. Research demonstrates that once initial difficulties are overcome, multicultural teams perform better than monocultural ones.
Different cultures have different assumptions about the reason for teams, i.e. task vs relationships. If a task approach is chosen decisions need to be made in terms of the setting of agendas or allowing the meeting to flow. The expectations of roles will vary across cultures, especially between individualistic or collectivist cultures. Decisions can either be made by majority rule, consensus or compromise. In some cultures the building and sustaining of trust is a prerequisite to any team activity. Communication will be a significant issue to resolve as the mechanism of communication of a team reveals and influences the team dynamics. The choice of language will be a first priority and there will inevitably be winners and losers.

Some cultures have a tendency to jump in and take control while others wait and listen, the Japanese being an example of the latter. It is necessary to solicit the participation of every team member and make sure the views of everyone are listened to and considered, not just listening, but acknowledging the contribution of everyone. Conflict is inevitable and it will be resolved according to degrees and preferences of assertiveness and cooperativeness, competing, collaborating, compromising, accommodating and avoiding. The giving and receiving of feedback is a potential cultural minefield and care and sensitivity needs to be exercised in understanding the cultural norms of giving and receiving feedback.

Conclusion

As part of an ongoing research project, the author explored how the underlying fundamentalist assumptions of Western ideologies influence the globalisation of management and the development of those management practices within Western Business Schools. Fundamentalism is very much perceived as a threat to the democratic values of free speech and scepticism as it reflects unchallengeable truths, which does not include tolerance of diversity. Fundamentalism has traditionally been associated with religion and ideologies, but not necessarily that of management and organisational
practices and ideologies. A key tenet of fundamentalism is the attempt by its followers to convince others that they have a duty to develop an absolute conception of reality. This paper explored how the ideal of Market fundamentalism against which most Western governments construct their economic policies influence the assumptions of global management. A product of fundamentalism, even in its mildest form is the silencing of the voices of debate and challenge. Global management and organisational policies are built on the principles of the Anglo-Saxon economic model and as with any form of fundamentalism, is perceived by its proponents as the only way of conducting business and the economy. The result is that diversity of management and organisational practices are not entertained. These Anglo-Saxon management and organisational practices are imposed on cultures without consideration of its suitability and reflection of different cultural values. It may be that Universities can take the lead in breaking down these barriers and assumed superiority through learning, debate and challenge.
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