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Chapter

Harnessing the Potential of Cultural Diversity to Foster Creativity

Ciarán Dunne

Abstract

Despite recent increases in investment in initiatives relating to equality, diversity and inclusion, phenomena such as immigration and the resultant societal and organisational diversity are often seen through the lens of a deficit model - perceived as an issue that needs to be addressed, or a potential problem which needs to be neutralised or minimised. This, however, is a myopic lens. Cultural diversity affords many potential benefits, one of which is as a stimulus for arguably the most important human attribute of all, creativity. Having explored in detail the meaning of culture and the relationship between multiculturalism and intercultural, this chapter examines the concept of creativity, highlighting its value for individual and collective well-being, before drawing upon cognitive psychology to architect a compelling rationale for the potential value of cultural diversity as a facilitator of creativity. Importantly, by examining the factors which foster creativity, the discussion offers managers, leaders, policy makers and those in positions of power to identify the values and conditions which underpin a culture of creativity in a culturally diverse context, and highlights how interculturalism is preferable multiculturalism in this regard.

Keywords: creativity, culture, diversity, innovation, interculturalism, multiculturalism, affordances

1. Introduction

International migration levels have been increasing notably in recent decades, with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) [1] estimating that in 2020, some 281 million people were living in a country other than that of their birth. This compares with a figure of 153 million in 1990, an increase of almost 85% over a 30-year period. Such human mobility inevitably alters the composition and dynamics of societies, albeit some more than others, given that certain geographical regions and corridors experience much higher levels of migration than others. Indeed, the mass migration of millions resulting from the conflict in Ukraine, which commenced in 2022, is a stark example of this.

To suggest that the diversity which emerges from migration does not bring with it a variety of challenges would be naive. Indeed, to ignore humans' natural proclivity

to gravitate towards familiarity, and instead rush to stigmatise such homophilic behaviour as inherently racist or xenophobic, is profoundly myopic, often serving to undermine the potential for honest, respectful and productive dialogues which can benefit everyone. That said, in many countries, migration and the diversity it brings is often disproportionately viewed through the lens of a deficit model, framed as a problem which needs to be addressed, minimised or neutralised, rather than a potential resource which can be cultivated to enrich society. This perspective can become yet more blinkered in the context of scarce resources, such as growing unemployment, limited accommodation or food shortages, which has come to characterise many societies in recent years. The resulting narrative, which often comes to dominate, is a manifestation of the tribal discrimination explained by in-groups and out-groups and, regrettably, moves discussions further away from exploring curious perspectives which seek to harness the many affordances of diversity within society.

Nonetheless, beyond the romance of intuitive assumptions about the value of diversity, which some people may hold, there exists a compelling rationale for not simply accepting or tolerating, but actively seeking out interactions with difference. This is perhaps most explicitly articulated in the 2001 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity [2]. Several of the 12 articles which comprise this document refer to the relationship between cultural diversity and creativity, and crucially present the former as constituting both a source and catalyst for the latter. In particular, Article 7 contends that creativity 'flourishes in contact with other cultures'. This is a statement of profound importance, as it appears to offer us a mechanism to cultivate what Sir Ken Robinson [3] referred to as 'the greatest gift of human intelligence': namely, human creativity. Indeed, in the context of an increasingly unscripted world defined by exponential technological and social change, and the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) which characterise our lives, the need for creativity is more pressing than ever before. However, despite the seductive nature of such declarations, the cited beneficial outcomes are neither automatic, nor guaranteed. Like any resource, the accruable benefits of diversity have to be both firstly recognised and then actively fostered and harnessed. It is precisely here where notable divergences between multiculturalism and interculturalism are brought into sharp relief, given that the former recognises cultural plurality, but does not necessarily promote interaction, while the latter seeks to promote mutually enriching contact and communication across cultural boundaries.

2. Culture, multicultural and interculturalism

Whether exploring or discussing multiculturalism or interculturalism, or indeed ideas such as 'cross-cultural' or 'intracultural', the unifying concept is that of 'culture'. Despite having been referred to as 'the most central problem of all social science' [4] way back in 1939, culture is a complex and slippery construct, which stubbornly eludes a universally accepted definition. Indeed, Keating, Martin and Szabo (2002) [5] remind us that as far back as 1952, Kroeber and Kluckhohn identified more than 160 definitions of 'culture'. While examining such a diversity of definitions is beyond the remit of this chapter, Singer's [6] description of culture as a *"pattern of learned, group-related perceptions – including both verbal and non-verbal language, attitudes, values, belief systems, disbelief systems, and behaviors – that is accepted and expected by an identity group* (original italics)", is particularly useful. Firstly, it conceptualises culture as shared knowledge that is acquired as part of a socialisation process. Although, it

is worth pointing out that knowledge is not necessarily shared equally within a given culture, a point we will return to later on in our discussion. Secondly, it proffers various components of culture, such as values, language, norms and behaviours, according to which cultures may be differentiated from each other. Thirdly, by citing an identity group, it implies that culture is fundamentally a collective phenomenon. An individual, for example, while being culturally unique on the basis of being simultaneously a member of multiple distinct cultural groups, cannot be a culture unto her/himself. As Levine, Park and Kim [7] succinctly point out, "culture is something people have in common with some people, but not with others".

Given that culture is then inherently a group phenomenon, the challenge therefore is identifying the boundaries lines that separate groups. Historically, these have been pragmatically drawn according to predetermined socio-political constructs, such as nationality. Certainly, from a research perspective, the ease of operationalising culture according to nationality makes cross-cultural and intercultural research much easier to conduct [8]. However, in recent decades the shortcomings which the expediency of this approach offers have been increasingly highlighted, challenged by the argument that diverse cultural groups may exist within, or indeed across, national boundaries [9]. Depending on the context, alternative markers, such as age, ethnicity, gender, race and others have been used to operationalise culture and, by extension, frame interactions as intra- or intercultural in nature. In terms of multiculturalism and interculturalism, however, the primary difference is not how the boundary lines of culture are delineated, but rather the nature of the relationship and interaction that exists between cultural groups.

Emerging from movements in countries such as Australia and Canada during the 1960s and 1970s, multiculturalism was associated with liberal values and sought to recognise cultural plurality and pursue equality for members of cultural groups within a nation-state, who were often disenfranchised indigenous communities. In the European context, however, multiculturalism came to be discussed primarily in relation to immigration and through the lens of identity markers such as race, religion and ethnicity. The primary goal of multiculturalism, therefore, was not to promote *interaction* between cultural groups cohabiting within a given territory, but rather to recognise differences and address more fundamental inequalities that characterised these societies. In this sense, the recognition of difference and calls for accommodation of the same, which characterised multiculturalism, meant that it was preferable to assimilation policies, which negated societal diversity. As such, one could argue that multiculturalism is in some way comparable to first-wave feminism, which sought to secure basic rights for women within a long established patriarchal social system, but did not necessarily explore how the sexes might most productively coexist. However, subsequent criticisms levelled at multiculturalism have argued that it promotes social divisions, solidifies boundary lines within societies, and inadvertently facilitates balkanisation within nation-states [10]. This is a key point for our current discussion: the idea that multicultural societies, while very possibly having high levels of structural diversity, are not organised in a manner that promotes meaningful and authentic interaction *between* diverse cultural groups. This not only means that in-group and out-group boundaries may crystalise, leading to tensions between groups, but crucially, that the affordances of diversity are not realised, including the opportunity to stimulate creativity, which will be discussed later.

In contrast to multiculturalism, interculturalism is premised on the idea of promoting dialogue and interaction between diverse groups. It espouses the thesis that such interaction may foster the co-creation of a synthesised, richer, more

multifaceted individual and collective identity. Furthermore, it may also help overcome the problems of cultural relativism, such as an aversion to questioning cultural behaviours, sometimes associated with multicultural societies. However, as mentioned at the outset, the disproportionate dominance of a problematising mindset and narrative in relation to cultural diversity within many societies - perhaps due in part to the unintended negative consequences of multiculturalism - has meant that the potential benefits associated with societal diversity have not be adequately explored and articulated by individuals and groups in positions of influence. The tokenistic, moral-based support for interculturalism and the goal of integration is insufficient and, arguably, damaging. In this sense, the current chapter is an attempt to offer some kind of counterbalance to this, by examining in depth how diversity can foster greater levels of creativity in our societies - a pursuit that commences with an attempt to clarify precisely what is meant by creativity.

3. The value of creativity

Many of the most important and influential concepts which shape and inform human existence and our lived experiences - ideas such as health, happiness, love and identity - are notoriously difficult to define. As we have seen, this is true for 'culture' and it is equally true for 'creativity'. Much like culture, the complexity and abstrusity of the concept of creativity has precipitated multiple definitions over many decades. Despite this, however, there is a broad consensus that the creativity of an idea, product or other output, regardless of the domain in which it is located, or the medium through which it is expressed, is characterised by two fundamental criteria; novelty (originality, uniqueness) and value (usefulness, purposefulness, appropriateness, effectiveness) [11]. Importantly, such novelty does not emerge *ex nihilo*, but rather emerges from the synthesis of different knowledge sets. That is, novelty and the perceived value attributed to it, which combine to satisfy the fundamental criteria for creativity, stem from connections made between discrete, and at times apparently unrelated, knowledge sets [12]. This is an important point, as it implies that exposure to a greater variety of knowledge sets constitutes a valuable resource or stage in the creative process.

The diversity of perspectives about how to define and indeed operationalise creativity can be juxtaposed with the agreement about its importance to humans' individual and collective wellbeing. Across multiple domains, tributes to the centrality of creativity to the survival and development of human civilisations can be found. Simonton [13], for example, suggests that were we to '[r]emove everything about us that was not the product of the creative mind ... we would find ourselves naked in some primeval forest', while Tina Seeling [14], adopting a more individualistic perspective, remarks that "without creativity we are not just condemned to a life of repetition, but to a life that slips backwards". Indeed, the utility function of creativity is increasingly highlighted given the myriad challenges stemming from the highly unscripted nature of our contemporary world [15, 16], with Montuori [17] declaring that creativity constitutes 'a vital human capacity for postnormal times', defined by the aforementioned conditions of VUCA. The implication of this is that wherever possible, creativity should be actively fostered, given its acute importance to both societies and individuals. This, in turn, raises the question as to whether creativity can actually be fostered and, if so, precisely how this might be achieved.

Formal interest in the field of creativity is relatively recent, and the idea that it can be nurtured is relatively new. Pre-1950s, creativity was a heavily gendered and individualistic concept, viewed as the quasi-mystical characteristic of a small number of lone male geniuses operating independently of their external environment. Individuals were born to be creative (or not), and the thesis was that regardless of external variables, an individual's creative capacity would inevitably manifest itself. However, this rigid, Galtonian mindset shifted significantly from the 1950s onwards, as creativity, influenced by the field of cognitive psychology, became 'democratised' and reconceptualised as a universal human attribute, a cognitive process within the reach of all individuals. Crucially, this shift also implied that creativity could be both fostered and hindered. That is, contrary to the historical perspective, an individual's or group's creativity capacity could be enhanced if certain conditions were satisfied. As we shall see, this recognition of the potential influence of environmental factors and lived experiences on creativity is central to the idea that engagement with cultural diversity in the form of intercultural contact may foster creativity.

4. The creative process

The 1950s paradigm shift away from the idea that individuals' creativity is predestined and fixed, towards a mindset in which creativity became democratised and conceptualised as a malleable, universal human trait, sparked huge interest among those who were interested in, (i) identifying how it might be stimulated, and (ii) understanding how it might be assessed. As regards the former, in his 2011 book, The Geography of Creativity, Törnqvist [18] reflects upon how a certain cultural milieu which dominated in particular cities at particular points in history appeared to promote creativity and innovation. Examples include 5th century Athens, Florence during late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Vienna from 1880 to 1930 and Paris in the period between the two world wars. Importantly, Törnqvist's observation raises the important question as to what specific factors combine to promote a culture of creativity within a large social context, or perhaps even a private organisation. Over the decades, various scholars [19–22], have suggested factors which they believe can foster creativity. One of the first was Arieti [23], who as far back as 1976 proposed nine socio-cultural factors which underpin a 'creativogenic culture' - understood as a culture which facilitates, but does not guarantee, the realisation of creative potential. Factors he proposed include openness, the availability of cultural resources, freedom of access to cultural media, incentives and rewards for creative endeavours, the ability to interact with significant cultural agents, and, crucially for our discussion, exposure to diversity, as well as tolerance of diverse perspectives. Csikszentmihalyi [19], meanwhile, also acknowledges the value of diversity as a stimulus for creativity when he argues that "hubs of creativity tend to be at the intersection of different cultures, where beliefs, lifestyles, and knowledge mingle and allow individuals to see new combinations of ideas with greater ease". It is here we see an explicit link between creativity and intercultural contact, and an echoing of the ethos, which underpinned the UNESCO declaration on cultural diversity. But why would exposure to diversity, which includes intercultural contact, serve to stimulate creativity? This is the fundamental question, given that it underpins the rationale for seeking out contact with culturally different others in order to stimulate creativity.

The idea that intercultural experiences can foster creativity is part of what is referred to as the 'value-in-diversity' hypothesis [24], and contrasts with

aforementioned tendency to view diversity as a problem that needs to be addressed, rather than an opportunity to be harnessed. In exploring the relationship between creativity and intercultural contact, it is first useful to present the theoretical argument, before citing the results of empirical studies. In order to elucidate this, we must examine the cognitive approach to creativity in some detail, including the two central processes; namely, the generative and exploratory process. By doing this, we, and others, can articulate a far more compelling, evidence-based approach to promoting interculturalism, rather than relying on solely emotional appeals and moral arguments.

In creativity, the *generative* process essentially involves producing and combining ideas. Specifically, it is associated with the capacity to demonstrate 'fluency' (the ability to produce many ideas in a given timeframe), 'flexibility' (the ability to produce a variety of qualitatively different ideas) and 'originality' (the ability to produce unusual or novel ideas), which are encapsulated under the conceptual umbrella of 'divergent thinking'. This is seen as an important component of the overall creative process and is facilitated by what is termed 'conceptual expansion'. This is a cognitive process whereby the boundaries of an existing concept are expanded by adding attributes of other *seemingly irrelevant* concepts' [25]. In addition to this, the creative process is facilitated by 'cognitive flexibility', which refers to the ability to diverge from, or transcend, established cognitive patterns and make novel associations between concepts [26]. Importantly, the cognitive approach to creativity supports the thesis that creativity involves accessing a variety of apparently unrelated knowledge sets and making connections between them in order to produce novel and useful outputs [27–29]. The implication of this is that individuals can benefit from experiences that enable them to increase both the variety and density of their knowledge sets, given that this can facilitate more productive divergent thinking. That is, creativity emerges at the nexus between diverse domains.

Crucially, it can be posited that intercultural experiences have the *potential* to facilitate both conceptual expansion and cognitive flexibility, and as a result stimulate the generative process, by exposing individuals to new forms of social organisation and the diversity these entail. Intercultural experiences, by bringing individuals into direct contact with difference, often expose us to novel or unexpected phenomena for which we have no predefined 'script'. This means that there is a level of uncertainty that needs to be addressed. According to development theorists such as Newcomb [30], the psychological discontinuity and incongruence resulting from exposure to such novelty, subsequently encapsulated under the term 'disequilibrium' by Piaget in 1971 [31], are conducive to stimulating cognitive activity in order to re-establish 'equilibrium'. That is, in the same way that humans collectively seek to mitigate uncertainty via (i) the use of technology, such as traffic lights or sensors, (ii) the creation of laws, which are essentially legalised coercion used to predict and control behaviour, and (iii) religion, which offers us an reassurance to counteract existential angst, we take action to reconcile incongruence resulting from intercultural interactions, given the uncomfortable cognitive and emotional states these can generate. This, in turn, is said to counteract the common tendency towards what Langer [32] terms 'mindless' thought processes. That is, automatic, unengaged, sub-optimal forms of thinking. Not surprisingly, such preconditioned, uncurious, predictable thinking is argued to be unconducive to generating novel ideas, which we know is part of the creative process. In addition to this, the idea of 'minority influence' [33], which can arise when diverse perspectives are introduced into a relatively homogeneous group, counteracts the proclivity towards routinised 'groupthink' [34] within groups. Importantly,

intercultural experiences often involve exposure to such diverse perspectives, and this in turn can challenge mundane thinking styles and help to develop a more flexible mindset [35]. As such, based on the premise that intercultural experiences involve exposure to diverse information, alternative knowledge sets, and alternative value and behavioural systems, which challenge conditioned mindsets, there emerges a strong rationale, from a cognitive psychology perspective, for the potential for such experiences to stimulate the generative cognitive process associated with creativity.

Meanwhile, following on from the generative process, the *exploratory process* adopts a more exacting lens and examines and evaluates 'candidate ideas to determine which ones should receive further processing, such as modification, elaboration, and transformation' [36]. Upon consideration of this in greater detail, a strong rationale for the potential of intercultural experiences to stimulate the exploratory process can also be constructed. This is because such experiences often see individuals confronted with norms, values and behaviours which may be incongruent with those to which the individual has been conditioned within his/her core cultural group. Therefore, seeking to reconcile alternative and potentially conflicting cultural systems, individuals can engage in a process termed 'perspective-taking' [37]. This cognitive process involves trying to understand another person's viewpoint through the conscious and deliberate adoption of their perspective. This process, in turn, is associated with 'integrative complexity', which is 'the capacity and willingness to acknowledge the legitimacy of competing perspectives on the same issue (differentiation) and to forge conceptual links among these (integration)' [38]. Importantly, for our discussion, this is proffered as an important mediator of creativity, facilitating several mechanisms associated with the creative process, including the ability to frame problems flexibly from different perspectives. Indeed, over fifty years ago, in 1966, Tuckman [39] suggested a link between integrative complexity and creative performance. This implies that the process of actively attempting to engage with another's perspective in a manner which suspends judgement, in order to achieve integration, can stimulate cognitive reframing, which along with challenging assumptions and making novel connections between ideas, is key to the overall creative process. With regard to this idea of challenging assumptions, intercultural experiences offer the opportunity to challenge stereotypical assumptions by using cognitive adaptation and flexibility to resolve inconsistencies that emerge during or pursuant to the interaction. While the cognitive process of creativity is complex, collectively, these processes can facilitate the overall exploratory process, including the elaboration stage, which Csikszentmihalyi [19] contends is the most labour-intensive stage of the creative process.

In sum, a detailed literature review indicates that when creativity is conceptualised as a cognitive process, which encompasses both the generative and exploratory stages, the constituent sub-processes - such as cognitive expansion, cognitive flexibility, integrative complexity, inconsistency resolution, perspective-taking, cognitive reframing and integration - may be stimulated by intercultural experiences. As such, there emerges a compelling, albeit complex, theoretical rationale for the potential for intercultural experiences to foster and stimulate creativity. In addition to this, there is an increasing body of empirical evidence to support this thesis. Dunne [11], for example, reviews fourteen empirical studies published since 2008 that explored the connection between intercultural experiences and creativity, and presents a growing body of empirical data in support of the argument that intercultural experiences can enhance creativity. Indeed, this review indicates that the adoption of integration, rather than assimilation strategies offer the greatest likelihood of achieving enhancements in

creativity. This, in turn, is part of a broader narrative and body of empirical data that examines the potential of diversity, which can be operationalised in myriad ways, to foster creativity. This is more recently outlined in detail by Hundshell, Razinskas and Backmann [40], in their detailed multilevel review of 119 empirical studies which explores the effects of diversity on creativity. Such findings, in turn, bring us on to another question, which relates to the conditions which ought to characterise an intercultural society in order to maxmise the probability of realising the creative potential which such a society affords us.

5. 'Creativogenic' interculturalism

By now, we have drawn upon knowledge from cognitive psychology to highlight the potential for interculturalism, understood most simply as the interactions between diverse cultural groups – or individuals from diverse cultural groups - within a society, to foster creativity. That is, interculturalism, rather than multiculturalism, given the lack of interaction which often characterises the latter, affords societies the opportunity to generate greater levels of individual and collective creativity. However, in the same way as any resource needs to be carefully managed in order for its benefits to be realised, and indeed its potential drawbacks to be minimised, it is necessary to consider the specific conditions which an intercultural society, community, or organisation ought to espouse and prioritise, in order to fulfil this creative potential. This is an important point for organisations that are explicitly espousing initiatives relating to equality, diversity and inclusion – that is, the vital importance of not simply engineering diverse workforces or communities, but the equally important task of architecting and 'infrastructuring' an organisation in such as a way as the affordances of such diversity are both recognised and fostered. Indeed, the empirical studies conducted to date indicate a complex, rather than simplistic relationship between creativity, diversity and intercultural experiences. Importantly, these conditions may be categorised under two broad headings, (i) resources and (ii) values, which will be discussed below.

As regards 'resources', we must not only consider the nature of these resources, but also the manner in which they are distributed within an intercultural context. This relates to the definition of culture presented at the outset, and the idea that culture involves the sharing of knowledge among a group. This means that the ability for individuals and groups to access these resources must be carefully considered. Such resources may be technological, material, informational, human and capital in nature. Beyond the more obvious ones, such as finance, raw materials and labour, other resources which can be highlighted as important include communication channels and the ease of access to existing knowledge sets. This is a key point: in order for intercultural societies to foster creativity they need to be architected in such a way that access to knowledge is both easy and equitable. This means that intercultural societies should actively develop strategies and create environments which not only provide migrant or minority communities with access to knowledge, but also offer members of the 'host', dominant or majority communities - all of which, we must acknowledge, are contentious terms - the opportunity to access the cultural knowledge which resides primarily within the migrant and minority communities. Therefore, a robust and quality knowledge sharing exchange, whatever format that might take, is an important resource to have in order to foster creativity within an intercultural society. At an organisational level, the same is true, and there are important implications for

internal structural and hierarchical design to ensure appropriate access to resources if the full potential of a diverse workforce is to be realised.

The easy and equitable access to diverse knowledge sets is directly linked to the level of social capital within society. This is arguably one of the most important concepts in sociology, and can usefully be applied to differentiate interculturalism and multiculturalism. Specifically, multiculturalism is often strong on the first level of social capital. This is the concept of bonding, understood as connecting with others who are like you. Bonding has certain benefits and is important in relation to having a strong identity group, a sense of security and validation of one's self-concept. However, from a knowledge sharing perspective, bonding offers minimal opportunities to engage with different knowledge sets, as relationships and communications are kept primarily within the in-group. As such, multiculturalism as a model does not promote creativity in the sense that it does not promote meaningful interaction between different cultural groups and therefore nor does it facilitate the sharing of diverse knowledge sets. Interculturalism, meanwhile, in principle at least, espouses the second and third levels of social capital: namely, bridging - creating links with those who are different to you - and linking - connecting with people and groups in positions of power within society, or even within an organisation. Both of these levels are characterised by giving individuals access to knowledge and other resources, including power, which bonding does not. We also know that societies with high levels of social capital and the social cohesion it promotes, tend to enjoy disproportionate benefits vis-a-vis societies with low levels of social capital. Again, this is true of organisations which promote healthy and rewarding relations among co-workers. As such, interculturalism is far better positioned to promote a culture of creativity within society than multiculturalism. However, the cautionary note is that these potential benefits will not automatically accrue unless purposefully cultivated.

With regard to the second umbrella concept of 'values', this encompasses the dominant values within a society or organisation, including the norms, attitudes, systems and behaviours, which reflect these values. Furthermore, it also includes the value which a given cultural group ascribes to creativity itself, which is typically reflected in the form of incentives or disincentives, rewards or punishments relating to creativity and creative pursuits. For example, if a society is defined by high levels of power-distance, this will have a direct impact on how the aforementioned resources are shared within society. Specifically, high power distance societies are those in which power is very unequally distributed among the population and, as a consequence, such societies will not realise their creative potential, given that a large proportion of those within the society would be limited in their ability to access to the aforementioned resources and knowledge that facilitate and stimulate the creative process. This point is made by Hoegl, Parboteeah and Muethel [41] who, when exploring how cultural values promote creativity, conclude that power distance plays a negative role when promoting creativity. This point equally applies to organisations, whereby employees who feel valued and have access to resources are more likely to produce creative outputs. That is, outputs which are both novel and of value to the organisation.

Furthermore, if one of the dominant values within a society were to minimise uncertainty, be it via the aforementioned mechanisms of technology, laws or religion, then several factors which have been identified as fostering creativity - tolerating ambiguity, risk-taking, suspending judgement, embracing novelty, sensation-seeking - would be implicitly or explicitly discouraged. Fortunately, the values of interculturalism are typically aligned with low power-distance and encourage mixing

with difference, which augurs well when it comes to fostering creativity. However, it is imperative that any intercultural society actively espouses and enacts the values it claims to prioritise. A concept which is closely related to this, is that of 'failure'. Often framed as an a priori negative outcome, and one with which individuals and organisations are deeply uncomfortable, there is ample opportunity to reframe 'failure' as a mechanism for reducing uncertainty, given that each attempt constitutes a step closer to a desirable outcome and also eliminates one possible course of action.

In addition to this, Kim [42], having examined the relationship between Confucian values and creativity, concluded that Confucianism could stifle creativity based on the values it espouses. Specifically, she highlighted the values of gender inequality, unconditional obedience and the suppression of expression, which are associated with Confucianism, as representing significant obstacles to creativity. It is perhaps within this context that Lubart [43] noted how during the 2000s several Asian societies, including China, Taiwan, and Singapore, began to set specific objectives to foster creativity in their education systems. That said, it is important to keep in mind the problems associated with 'sophisticated stereotyping' of cultures, and recognise that different cultures may have discrete approaches to stimulating creativity. In sum, however, the fundamental argument is that the dominant values within a given culture, national, societal, organisational, or otherwise, may play a significant role in the level of creativity which is permitted, encouraged and produced within that context.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have raised the idea that interculturalism, understood as a situation which involves constructive interaction between diverse cultural groups, is a preferable model to multiculturalism. This thesis is based on the idea that multiculturalism is defined by cultural plurality, but does not necessarily involve interaction between groups, yet we know that such interaction has the greater potential to foster higher levels of creativity within such a society. This is important because creativity is arguably the most valuable human attribute of all, and is central to humans' individual and collective well-being, progress and, ultimately, our survival. The rationale for this thesis is grounded in the field of cognitive psychology and supported by an increasing number of empirical studies which provide supporting data. However, a key message which is highlighted is that a society or organisation which embraces interculturalism will not reap the potential benefits of enhanced creativity unless the values which define this society and the manner in which its resources are managed and distributed are such that creativity is encouraged to flourish. In this sense, this chapter serves the dual purpose of counteracting the deficit model which often problematises diversity in society, by presenting a compelling, evidence-based argument in favour of cultural diversity within societies, while also cautioning against a naive passivity in relation to how such diversity is managed. Only through an intentional, careful, evidence-informed and ongoing consideration of the potential benefits of diversity, can such benefits be fully realised.

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Author details

Ciarán Dunne
Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland

*Address all correspondence to: ciaran.dunne@dcu.ie

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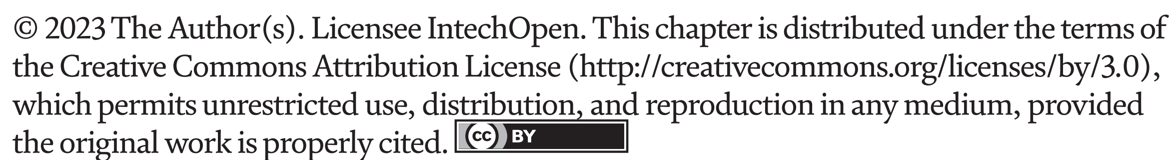

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