

“British Workers for British Jobs” Remarked the former Prime Minister – Gordon Brown: An Insight of ‘New Diversity’ forming a New Economic Frontier (NEF)

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Abstract: There is need in all fairness to lawfully protect local population, more so, there is need for a country or organization to operationalize diversity of thought in order to exploit human capital. A revisit of the remark ‘British workers for British jobs’ made by the former Prime Minister, Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom in 2007 impugned the capacity of diversity as a new frontier to economic growth. With the obvious reasons that foreign workers were displacing the workforce of the local population. This article argues that since then, the government has gone a long way to imbibe the principles of new diversity as a new economic frontier to greatness. The method of multidisciplinary approach in comparative perspective is adopted in order to elucidate the journalistic comments, arguments, statements made as rejoinders and published in some online national British media.

Keywords: British, Jobs, new diversity, diversity of thought, new economic frontier.

I. Introduction

There is need in all fairness to lawfully protect local population, more so, there is need for a country or organization to operationalize diversity of thought in order to exploit human capital. A revisit of the remark ‘British workers for British jobs’ made by the former Prime Minister, Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom in 2007 impugned the capacity of diversity as a new frontier to economic growth. With the obvious reasons that foreign workers were displacing the workforce of the local population. This article argues that since then, the government has gone a long way to imbibe the principles of new diversity as a new economic frontier to greatness. With strong viewpoints stressing the dangers of marginalization of mainstream local labour market and the positive arguments of the enrichment and demographic transformation of British labour market, it examines the remark ‘British workers for British jobs’ from the perspectives of new diversity principles. The method of multidisciplinary approach in comparative perspective is adopted in order to elucidate the journalistic comments, arguments, statements made as rejoinders and published in some online national British media.

Some scholars have countenanced the importance of classifying journalistic genres when it comes to online media in order to determine whether it has descriptive, exploratory or conservative character.² One reason is to “consider the principal expressive forms on the basis of their similarities to, and differences from, the traditional geological model of the printed press.”³ The remark was made as Gordon Brown was addressing GMB Union in 2007 and later on reported by

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² Marcos Palacios & Javier Diaz Noci (eds.) *Online Journalism: Research Methods – A multidisciplinary approach in comparative perspective*. Argitalpen Zerbitzua Servicio Editorial. www.argitalpenak.ehu.es. 2007.

³ Ibid.

many newspapers and commented by many people on different social networks. It was not made in an academia-structuralist traditional model of lecture-hall or conference or seminar setting. After the remark came different opinions, comments, suggestions and essays. These are discovered as online materials on many cybermedia. This article will not strictly follow the structural pattern of online journalism by:

First, grouping the genres in categories that correspond to the determinant purpose of the narratives (...), and second, seeking to identify the genres on the basis of the structural nature of the observable narratives in journalistic processes.⁴

Rather, recognising the need for observing the different typologies of online journalism, it will evaluate the reactions published by some online national British media.

Characteristically, there is a proposal of genres of online journalism.⁵ The table below is a beautiful adaptation of such schema.

News Genres	News Item
Interpretative Genres	-Reportage (reportage of current events, special reports, documentary dossier) -Chronicle
Dialogical Genres	-Interview -Forum or debate -Chat (online interview, interaction with personalities, interaction amongst users) -Survey
Opinion Genres	Traditional: editorial, comment, criticism, letters to the editor, article, column, cartoons, etc. Networked debates: forums, chat

Table 1: Genres of Online Journalism (Source: Javier Diaz Noci & Ramon Salaverria 2003)

Choosing to analyse the *remark* includes analysing at the same timestories, comments, facts, and criticisms coming from commentators and analysts. From the perspective of Diaz Noci and Salaverria's proposals, it must be reckoned that the actual remark made by Brown falls under the category of opinion just as the comments, articles, and criticisms made by other commentators. Nevertheless, there is an interconnectedness of the genres such as survey or poll and reports coming under dialogical and interpretative genres respectively.

The thrust here is that new diversity is becoming a new economic frontier to greatness. Some commentators indirectly were making references to the new global mind-sets by their vehement stand on the import of diversification principles and their benefits. What is the 'new diversity' and how is it a new frontier of 'good to great'?⁶ Has diversity, as we know it changed in any way?

⁴ Jose Marques de Melo. *A Opinao no Jornalismo Brasileiro*. Petropolis Voces. 1994. P.62. In Marcos Palacios & Javier Diaz Noci (eds.) *Online Journalism: Research Methods – A multidisciplinary approach in comparative perspective*. ArgitalpenZerbitzuaServicio Editorial. www.argitalpenak.ehu.es. 2007.

⁵Javier Diaz Noci and Ramon Salaverria (cords.) *Manual de redaccionciberperiodistica*. Barcelona. Ariel. 2003. In Marcos Palacios & Javier Diaz Noci (eds.) *Online Journalism: Research Methods– A multidisciplinary approach in comparative perspective*. ArgitalpenZerbitzuaServicio Editorial. www.argitalpenak.ehu.es. 2007.

⁶ Jim Collins, *Good to Great*. Random House Business Books. London. 2001.

II. Diversity

The concept of diversity is still the same but there is now a shift in paradigm. Today to 'great' organizations, governments and corporate conglomerates, diversity is more than just acknowledging and tolerating difference, acceptance and respect. It is more than tinkering on the lines of age, gender, race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, physical abilities, religion, status, and other ideologies. These dimensions make diversity feel 'good.'

At the very first chapter of *Good to Great*, Jim Collins argued that one of the main reasons why we have so little that becomes great is that our 'good' has become the enemy of 'great.' He claimed that:

We don't have great schools, principally because we have good schools. We don't have great government, principally because we have good government. Few people attain great lives, in large part because it is just so easy to settle for a good life. The vast majority of companies never become great, precisely because the vast majority becomes quite good – and that is their main problem.⁷

Businesswise, new diversity is all about individuality, the difference, uniqueness of each individual. This individuality is showcased in thought. The new diversity is all about diversity of thought. The individual instead of becoming a *think-tank* (a body of experts providing ideas and advice) he or she becomes an *ideation-generator* (a creative mechanism of generating, expanding and transferring ideas to results). For Cramer & Osborne "Diversity of thought is a critical element in determining the ultimate performance of workgroups."⁸

The phrase 'new diversity' signifies that diversity as we know it is changing. Diversity still means:

Understanding and appreciating interdependence of humanity, cultures and the natural environment; practising mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from our own ... recognising that personal, cultural and institutionalized discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others; building alliances across differences so that we can work together to eradicate all forms of discrimination.⁹

Looking at diversity as the new frontier to economic growth and better way of harnessing human capital, scholars have argued for the need to think outside the box; to push the boundary walls of homogeneity. In the words of Albert Einstein "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."¹⁰ A new paradigm is a great way of tackling an old one. Randy Hain argues that diversity has taken a shape among companies and even countries who more or less have focused on building dedicated and strategic labour force.

Most sizable companies today utilize some form of diversity initiative in an effort to provide appropriate jobs and career opportunities for minorities and women ... these initiatives typically address race and gender but how often do companies' hiring policies target candidates who *think* differently and don't fit the traditional culture standard that has been in place since the company was founded? Diversity of thought – often the last form of diversity to seep into a company's culture – is becoming an important recruiting strategy for today's leading organizations.¹¹

The new diversity is also about integration as old diversity. However, it is bestriding the niche appeal of old diversity which emphasis includes gender, race, nationality, language etc. Though organizations are not countries, they are mini-countries. "Leading companies are altering their approach to employee selection and learning to embrace diverse thinking throughout their organizations."¹² Hain went as far as citing the speeches of some executives of big organizations and their

⁷ Ibid. p.1

⁸ Vincent M. Cramer & Clayton H. Osborne, 'Taking Diversity to the Summit: Diversity of Thought.' In DiversityBusiness.com. <http://www.diversitybusiness.com/news/diversity.magazine/99200827.asp>(Accessed 7/4/2014).

⁹ Queensborough Community College, 'Definition of Diversity.' <http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/diversity/definition.html> (Accessed 8/4/2014).

¹⁰ David Mielach, '5 Business Tips from Albert Einstein.' In Business News Daily, April 18, 2012. <http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/2381-albert-einstein-business-tips.html> (Accessed 7/4/2014).

¹¹ Randy Hain, 'Diversity of Thought: The next frontier.' In Belloaks. <http://www.belloaks.com>(Accessed 7/4/2014).

¹² Ibid.

admiration of this “new inclusive idiom.”¹³ They include speeches by Carly Fiorina, Jim Walton and David Greenberg respectively:

To be successful, we must harness diversity of thought. Yes, diversity of people, diversity of background, diversity of experience, diversity of skills. But most important, diversity of ideas. This is about a new definition of diversity that has to do with more than national origin or race or greed – it has to do with keeping the market in motion by feeding it new models, new ideas, new approaches.

We need to have people with diverse thought challenging us in the planning of what stories to cover; who to interview, what questions to ask, and we feel this is a start, to continue to grow our fine profession.

Do we have enough diversity? Not just international and ethnic diversity, but a diversity of thought – which is key to how L’Oreal fosters innovation. A diverse group of people can be more innovative than a homogenous group. There might be more friction and discomfort among people who think differently, but the output is more innovative.¹⁴

Thus, diversity is about innovation, and this can only come about through engaging diverse voices and ideas. Think-tanks can come out with beautiful ideas that could be very innovative, if the budget of their getting around sees them through. But individuals as ideation-generators come off not only innovative, they spring competition. This is what new diversity is all about. “In the evolution of leadership, diversity is not defined just by race or gender. It also encompasses the whole human experience – age, culture, education, personality, skills and life experiences.”¹⁵ Though the concept of diversity of thought is not new, ‘great’ companies and conglomerates have since adopted its principles while hiring for their workforces. Hain arguably asked:

Do companies like Google, Ebay and MySpace focus on hiring people who think alike, look alike and act alike? Or do their success lie in the pursuit of intelligent, diverse (in thought) and creative people who can help them make breakthrough discoveries, challenge the rules of convention, create exciting new products and reshape the marketplace?¹⁶

Hain’s answer to that was the latter and this article is also positive with him. It has examined the arguments about diversity and ‘new diversity.’ The next step is to analyse the remark ‘British workers for British jobs’ by examining the discourses of some online national British media.

III. British Workers for British Jobs

Brown getting ready to take over the mantle of leadership from Tony Blair in June 2007, addressing the GMB, a general trade union in the United Kingdom, opined:

It is time to train British workers for the British jobs that will be available over the coming few years and to make sure that people who are inactive and unemployed are able to get the new jobs on offer in our country.¹⁷

His emphasis was on “Britishness” which would become his focal point as a Prime Minister. His promise, beyond party politics was to launch a strong drive to get thousands of unemployed individuals trained and ready to fill the vacant positions taking up by foreign workers. The new wave of immigrants from countries such as Poland and Romania were viewed as distorting the labour market by “driving down wages and reducing job opportunities for domestic

¹³ EY.COM. ‘Driving innovation through diversity.’ <http://www.ey.com/GL/en/Issues/Driving-growth/the-new-global-mindset-driving-innovation-through-diversity> (Accessed 7/4/2014).

¹⁴ Randy Hain, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ EY.COM. ‘Driving innovation through diversity.’ <http://www.ey.com/GL/en/Issues/Driving-growth/the-new-global-mindset-driving-innovation-through-diversity> (Accessed 7/4/2014).

¹⁶ Randy Hain *op. cit.*

¹⁷ George Jones, Toby Helm and Graeme Wilson, ‘British workers for British jobs says Brown’ in the *Telegraph*, 06 June 2007. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1553710/British-workers-for-British-jobs-s...> (Accessed 9/4/2014).

workers.”¹⁸The *Telegraph* report was an open discourse, a narrative of the former Chancellor’s intention and planned programme. However, the leader of the Conservative Party, David Cameron interpreted the remark by asking for Gordon Brown’s “moral compass” because he claimed that the phrase *British jobs for British workers* was very desultory. For Cameron: "Here's one he borrowed off the National Front. Here's another one he borrowed off the British National Party. "Where was his moral compass when he was doing that?"¹⁹

As a follow up, the rhetoric of immigration and the displacement of British workforce by European workers in construction jobs led to a series of unofficial strikes in 2009. And people’s emotions were livid as oil companies planned to employ Portuguese and Italian workers.²⁰

Besides, when questioned at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Brown avowed:

I came into politics to help people out of unemployment, to help people who were poor by building an economy that was confident and strong to weather this storm. I believe that the action we have taken to help people in work stay in work, to help people who lose their jobs get jobs again ... is the way to do it.²¹

The remark ‘British jobs for British workers’ was a political brouhaha in the UK facing up the challenges of the global economic downturn. No wonder some countries in order to protect their national economies started to build trade barriers in response to the global crisis; a kind of protectionism. While in Davos, Brown warned that “This form of deglobalisation, which will lead to trade protectionism if it’s not stopped, is something I’m warning people about.”²²It could be said that the above statement is an example of one coin with two sides; protecting jobs of the local population and protecting local trade and industries by another country. One way or the other, they are all kinds of protectionisms, which are far from the principles of diversity of thought. The juxtaposing of these kinds of protectionisms group them together as ‘the Pot – Kettle Syndrome.’ *The Guardian* afore-quoted essay provided such interpretative structure of analysing the *remark*.

The *Express* revealed in the article by Martyn Brown 2013, a very distressing title: ‘Scandal of cheaper foreign workers who snatch British jobs.’²³Among other things, he observed that “One recruiter alone, Central European firm EUwork is luring workers from Hungary offering jobs at top British firms and boasts more than 30,000 would-be employees on its books. Low-paid Hungarians could undercut UK labour market wages.”²⁴Suggestions are made to companies to think along line the principle of the remark of Brown. In a speech at an event hosted by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Migration at the Labour Party conference, Bryant said: “Sometimes people’s concerns about migration are really concerns about jobs for themselves. In particular I think there are three industries, the hospitality industry, the construction industry and agriculture who have done remarkably little to make sure there are British people able to come in [and work in] those industries.”²⁵It could be viewed as a suggestion to tie jobs to nationalities. This comment explains it all: “Why is it that you go to a hotel in France and you’re welcomed by a French person, that’s delightful.”²⁶The comment above alludes that more British nationals should be given more opportunity than foreign workers. That is part of the fairness of protecting the jobs of the local population.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Justin Parkinson, ‘What does ‘British jobs’ pledge mean?’ in *News BBC*. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/7097837.stm (Accessed 9/4/2014).

²⁰ Deborah Summers, ‘Brown stands by British jobs for British workers remark’ in *the Guardian*, 30 January 2009. <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2009/jan/30/brown-british-jobs-workers/print>(Accessed 9/4/2014).

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Martyn Brown, ‘Scandal of cheaper foreign workers who snatch British jobs,’ in *Express*, Saturday August 24, 2013. <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/424333/scandal-of-cheaper-foreign-workers-who-s snatch-British-jobs> (Accessed 9/4/2014).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Dina Rickman, ‘Chris Bryant: British Jobs for British Workers.’ in *Huff Post Party Conference 2012*. 02/10/2012. http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2012/10/01/chris-bryant-british-jobs-british-workers-labour_n_1929948.html (Accessed 9/4/2014).

²⁶ Ibid.

In 2013, the remark made by Brown in 2007 was said to have becoming a reality. Becky Barrow wrote in the *Mail Online* with the title: ‘British jobs for British workers! Seven in ten go to those born here: Watershed moment as Brits are finally winning new jobs race.’²⁷ The fact-check from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reveal the following:

Of the 376,000 jobs created over the last year, the ONS said 256,000 – 68 per cent – went to workers who had been born in this country. Only 112,000 of the jobs went to people born outside this country, with the 376,000 total also including those who refuse to say where they were born. If the figures are calculated according to nationality, rather than country of birth, more than 90 per cent of the new jobs went to British people.²⁸

The current government has claimed that its immigration policy has changed the employment race; now Britons beat foreigners in the labour market instead of what it used to be in the past. According to Mark Harper, the Immigration Minister: “In the past, the majority of growth in employment was taken up by foreign nationals. Under this government, two-thirds of these jobs have gone to British citizens. This shows that our immigration policy benefits UK nationals first, while still attracting skilled migrants where needed by British business.”²⁹

The political furore and more so, the rhetoric of the remark *British workers for British jobs* are constantly visited and critically reviewed whenever immigration policies are on the table. However, the principle of new diversity, which more or less, is centred on diversity of thought is taking centre-stage in some government or big businesses’ employments. Below this article will discuss two different examples of how the new shift in diversity is becoming trendy to new economic frontier.

IV. Discussion

The new economic frontier (NEF) is trendy today. Following the success made by industries in technology whose employments are based on diversity of thought rather than race, gender, language, ethnicity or nationality. Many governments and institutions are following the same trend. It was unthinkable that the government would deviate along the line of the remark *British workers for British jobs* and hire a foreigner to take up one of the highest positions of employment in the country. Mark Carney, born in Fort Smith, Northwest Territories, Canada was ratified as Governor of the Bank of England and Chairman of the Monetary Policy Committee, Financial Policy Committee and the Board of the Prudential Regulation Authority. This appointment as Governor was approved by Her Majesty the Queen on 26 November 2012 and the Governor joined the Bank on 1 July 2013. He is a Canadian but his success in different Goldman Sachs offices in London, Tokyo, New York and Toronto and his success in Canada as deputy and also Governor of Bank of Canada made him the top man for the top job. Here new diversity broke the bond of national tie. Based on the remark made by Brown, one can say that the government has altered its employee selection because it wants to have ‘great’ Bank of England that will oversee the activities of the banking industry.

Another employment that hinges on the principle of ‘great’ leadership is the hiring of Sir Alex Ferguson by Harvard Business School (HBS) to ‘teach in Harvard Business School’s Executive Education Programs.’³⁰ The erstwhile manager of Manchester United Football Club for 26 years, and winning 49 trophies in 39 years provoked the interests of HBS that they hired him to lecture to senior executives from around the world as part of their new “The Business of Entertainment, Media and Sports” program.³¹ I think HBS are going for the best; nationality, creed or professorial stance notwithstanding. Some would argue that his experience and talents inveighed all forms of academic training. But that is not what diversity of thought is all about. Being successful means harnessing diversity of thought and ‘great’ governments, institutions, companies and organizations take advantage of this new economic creed.

²⁷ Becky Barrow, ‘British jobs for British workers! Seven in ten go to those born here: watershed moment as Brits are finally winning new jobs race.’ in *Mail Online*, 14 November 2013. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2506954/Brit> (Accessed 9/4/2014).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Harvard Business School, ‘Sir Alex Ferguson to Teach in Harvard Business School’s Executive Education Programs.’ 03 April 2014. <http://www.hbs.edu/news/releases/Pages/sir-alex-ferguson-executive-education-hbs.aspx>

³¹ Ibid.

V. Conclusion

It must be repeated that new diversity is all about individuality, the difference, uniqueness of each individual. This individuality is showcased in thought. The new diversity is all about diversity of thought. The individual instead of becoming a *think-tank* (a body of experts providing ideas and advice) he or she becomes an *ideation-generator* (a creative mechanism of generating, expanding and transferring ideas to results). This is seen in the current flow of labour market from different countries and continents, bridging the divide of race, nationality, ethnicity or gender. The best guy gets the best job and the once 'good' company or country becomes 'great.'

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