The Challenges Of A World With Disappearing Borders

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A Fragmented World

We live in a world in which communication technologies enable us to communicate within a fraction of a second with nearly every individual across the globe. It enables us to look beyond the restrictions imposed by national frontiers. Moreover, this comes along with a youth that has an open mind-set. The world is seen as a more flat, open and unlimited space, which builds bridges between different individuals, societies and cultures rapidly. The chance to connive dividing limitations from those ''imposed by nations, to those set by knowledge or by ourselves'' will be a key to solve current problems. It is fundamental to work together, to be able to distinguish and go over these barriers, with the goal of directing humanity's efforts toward global objectives. How can modern means of communication be used to effectively and cautiously peace together a fragmented world?

In order to answer these questions, I would like to discuss the challenges of a multinational dialogue, which is imposed upon us due to current events such as terrorism (A), the refugee crisis and thus the humanitarian disaster (B). Notably, which influence and impact the Internet and social media can have on the development of today's world affairs will be discussed (C). To which degree should conversation be fostered and until which degree be limited keeping the freedom of expression? And to which degree can individuals – who realize their personality through their culture – make a difference within a fragmented world of increasing inequalities.
,,An extraordinary situation requires extraordinary measures.''
French President Valle after the terrorist attacks of Charlie Hebdo, January 2015

A) An imposed dialogue

After the attacks of Charlie Hebdo (January 7th 2015) in Paris several heads of states gathered for a funeral march to honour the victims just a couple of days after the attacks. It was no longer an option to show coalition against the Middle East-threat but an obligation. 3.7 million people joined the march. Furthermore, foreign minister Valle came up with a plan of actions, which in addition to the extension of the security apparatus wants to strengthen the dialogue with other national security agencies. The fact that warnings had reached the French security service in advance but were not adequately addressed due to an information overflow and too little manpower resources clearly shows the huge discrepancy between the information procurement and the effective information filtering of it. Again these terrorist attacks – such as many other worse events– were not completely unknown to the police before. This example shows the undisputed issue that security concerns need to be addressed by conjoint actions including all sovereign nations. The development of the safety apparatus, to fill security systems with more data and a better and more effective communication

is crucial. The dichotomy between individual liberties and collective safety should not hold us back to implement important measures such as more monitoring of public places via security cameras like implemented in London for instance. Public places should remain open and especially safe for everyone. The collection of such data can be an important step towards a safer society without fear of terrorist attacks. An appropriate handling of the personal information is important too, but should not be put first to collective safety issues. To find a good balance between mass data and an effective use of it will be the task of our security agencies in the near future.

B) Refugee crisis and society

The terror of Islamic terrorists and the civil war in Syria have lead to a refugee crisis leaving more than 3 million refugees without shelter. How can we intervene in conflicts causing people to abandon their countries and not only fight their consequences? Is warfare justifiable to prevent more violence?

Besides the important steps to prevent such mass movements to happen we need to act within today's circumstances. That means finding a way to integrate refugees in our society and providing them with perspectives. Every crisis also brings along its chances to develop something new. How can knowledge of mostly well-educated refugees be used most effectively? To let them pursue only inferior careers is not the ultimate solution to this problem. Quite the contrary, it would be a shame to waste know-how and personnel resources. In particular we should see it rather as a threat to not fully integrate the refugees than to have them in our country. Since making them gradually an outcast will make them again sensible to populist's messages and so continuously nourish the conflict. This way we will move with the times in which frontiers are disappearing and societies and cultures are intermixing gradually. The only question is if we want to be a pioneer in this movement or if we want to neglect an always more open society. Not only open for conversation between countries but also open for intercultural conversations within borders with different affiliation groups. From my viewpoint we should therefore as quickly as possible encourage politics and society to think more open-minded and let change happen to find an adequate solution to humanitarian crisis of today and integrate threatened people. The community of states should stand for a very liberal integration of refugees and generously welcome them. The question if we should accept them or not is no longer needed as the mass movement has already arrived in Europe. In order to appropriately integrate the refugees in our society and to handle the aftermaths of it, we should in addition not degrade the upcoming safety aspects. Crime fighting needs to be intensified to create and guarantee security for the domestic population. If the local population feels unsafe in this process, it would cut back liberties and nurture populist conditions. Therefore, the main issue seems to be to ensure a reasonable integration in our society of all refugees.

A conversation across borders, including all parties has become more necessary than ever nowadays. Not only to react to excesses of a crisis but in particular to prevent more suffering to happen.

C) Internet and social media

Information has become available for the great part of the world population nearly instantly nowadays. We are able to communicate everywhere and always and are connected to our interlocutor immediately. How can we utilize these resources and process capabilities to meet challenges?

Talking about terrorism, how much are we frightened by the promotion of fear via media and how do we get an objective perspective of the hazardous situation? Swiss newspaper TagesAnzeiger concludes that European media blows out of proportion victims of terrorist attacks and states that every year more people die from swallowed fish bones than from terrorist activities overall. So what data responsibility do media have and up to which extent should they restrict the information production to explicitly not promote fear and let the terrorist's organisations succeed in such a way. When can we define a ''right'' or ''wrong'' of expressed opinions and when is it our obligation to restrict the liberty of speech to upheld national security and prevent a threat for the society? Will it be the ''liberty'' of speech of tomorrow to restrict certain provocative content or at least its wide distribution via online channels? Probably a more discreet way of showing biting satire of Charlie Hebdo would have prevented hatred in the Muslim world. But to restrict liberty of speech will at the same time as well give justice to the terrorists and restrict our Western values. So is it an applicable option or even obligation to take such measures?

A further question to be answered is how we can limit the alarming reach the Internet has for the mobilisation of fighters or sleeper cells. It seems very much necessary to block website with hate-based content and accelerate procedures to keep safe criminals with terrorist intentions. But all this needs academic education of which treats we face online nowadays. Prevention will be a key to restrict the excesses of terrorist activities.

Conclusion

All the above-mentioned suggestions for improvement need to be placed carefully into each society. In order to consider global interest each country needs to satisfy their national population first - this is of utmost importance. Populist tendencies must be recognized in time and not allow a minority to jeopardise global objectives. Will democracy be sufficient and an ordinary solution to face all these challenges?

What are the affinities that allow the borders to be bridged? There must also be a conception of affinities or similarities that transcend these borders. Always considering and respecting the ''hard core of similarities between cultures - which means people's tolerance for behaviour of another group different than their own – is crucial in order to meet the challenges of today's world and adopt with the present values of our society.

The arguments presented above raise a number of questions that have not had space to be addressed at length. Further global concerns of the future will be the climate change and the accelerating demographic growth. How will these challenges be taken up by increasing right-wing movements in Europe?

A cross-cultural, worldwide dialogue seems thus to be indispensable. Globe-spanning topics such as global warmth must be tackled by the international community and the G8 or more explicitly, by the ones who want to be seen as the leading countries of tomorrow's world.
Foremost we should not ignore national interest. In times when borders are slowly disappearing (refugee crisis, modern communication technologies and today's youth), we can observe an opposite tendency of fragmentation of national states which is occurring also in Europe. How can opposite forces such as states like Cataluña in Spain, which want to regain independence, and states, which got nationalist tendencies - be reunited to tackle global concerns?

To conclude, I have come up with the following plan of action, which imposes some radical changes. Nonetheless it seems to have become an inevitable necessity to implement these to tackle the challenges today's world is facing:
A Increase manpower in security agencies
B Improve global collaboration to exchange intelligence and adopt legislature to provide a legal framework
C Define the role of media
D Implement open-minded thinking by politics and society pioneers, to accept a more diverse society and world with disappearing borders
E Restriction of private sphere in social networks and in private places to make efforts to guarantee collateral safety

With regard to the safety concern we should however calculate setbacks, not over-react in cases of emergency and especially not neglect integration efforts afterwards. At the end, we should be aware of safety concerns, which must be meticulously balanced between costs, liberties and safety. Last but not least, it is important to keep in mind that the current refugee movement is a historical movement, which we have to accept and not counteract.