



Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity

It is my pleasure to join the competition on the 8th way to think like 21st century economist. I saw my mother reading the book “Doughnut economics” and after searching online what’s behind the title, I found a web page with the competition announcement. I am also studying basics of economics at school and our teacher is putting a lot of emphases on green and sustainable growth, which got me into the thinking process.

I fully agree with Ms. Kate Raworth that we need a new world view, that we must reframe the problem and we must use new methods and approached to solve current issues. Indeed, if we use methods known by now, we will inevitably repeat previous problems. But how to obtain this new thinking?

I believe that the 8th way to think like the 21st century economist should be **cultural awareness and sensibility**. We, developed countries, subconsciously export our problems to the rest of the world assuming that our way of living, our way of thinking and doing is the right one. We transpose this approach through schools, universities, exchange programs, books, movies, music, development programs, investments, international collaboration etc. Through our limited world comprehension, we usually do not respect local cultures or attitudes, imposing on them our ways of living and therefore diffusing the same attitudes of unsustainable growth, endless consumption and unequal society.

By suggesting cultural awareness, we should consider two possibilities to act right away:

1. Why not to move Bretton Woods institutions into the Global South or at least into the cities that are considered advanced in meeting Sustainable Development Goals? I believe that by living and working in a sustainable environment, all the staff members of the World Bank or IMF as well as United Nations would be personally exposed to benefits of the green and sustainable living. Living and working in Copenhagen would provide another mindset and reflection to all these officers and would eventually contribute to more sustainable global cities and transportation programs, more social benefits and more thinking about equality. I also believe that major development organizations should move their Head Offices to the Global South, the least developed countries, in order to be closer to their problems and realities as well as cultural perceptions and expectations. Some developing countries are also performing very well in terms of SDG index progress or Happiness indexes. So why

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2. not Costa Rica instead of Washington D.C.? Similarly, experiencing different lifestyles and attitudes can open different perspectives, would it be developed or developing countries. Some countries are scoring high in happiness indexes but are not the top performers in GDP growth rates. Still their people are happy, and discovering why and what created such a different attitude and expectation could be very helpful to all future economists, and not only, through their professional path.
 3. The second possibility to cultivate more cultural aware economists would be through education. I believe that all economics students should have an exchange semester abroad in one of the sustainable countries/cities that are performing well according to the SDG index. Again, by being exposed and personally living, studying and working in such an environment, students would naturally absorb sustainable growth and fair society's benefits. Being confronted with it daily would result them by having this experience for the rest of their lives and reflecting in their later work and attitudes as economists. I have no doubt that USA students after living and experiencing sustainable city transportation in Scandinavia would have a natural tendency to project and work toward sustainable city projects in their future. Similarly having experienced social protection schemes would encourage all potential development economists to embed social fairness into future policies and programs.

I believe therefore that cultural sensitivity and awareness can be cultivated in a young generation of economists, project managers or politicians **only by giving possibility to experience an alternative way of living**. Someone who lived all his life by using cars can not even imagine what a relief can be having a quick and reliable city transportation, no rush and stress, and still good for the environment. But while we all understand it rationally, these are only words till a person experiences benefits in person.

Providing these opportunities to young students as part of their educational program could help the new thinking seed to grow and to bring real deeds later. Similarly, by placing offices of major international organizations in a sustainable working environment, in countries and cities that lead by example, would help to transpose sustainable thinking into new policies and programs that are being designed for other countries.

I strongly believe that words or theoretical teaching can not fill the cultural awareness gap unless one lives and tries it. Discovering new ways of thinking and alternative forms of enjoying daily lives could help younger thinkers to build foundations for a new society.



I tried to draw this cultural awareness, which will be attached to my submission.

With warm regards,

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