Is globalization bad for multiculturalism? Or – on the contrary – does it enhance it? Is there such a thing as a universal concept of diversity? Or is it a culture-bound, historical notion, susceptible of change? How did legal systems and international organizations react to the new diversities that emerged in last decade following migration from Asia and Africa to the West? What are the new challenges facing an enlarged Europe? Is there any lesson that can be learned from the U.S. Multicultural paradigm? What are the new frontiers of multiculturalism?

This book gathers contributions on present and relevant issues, written by scholars coming from different backgrounds, in the attempt to give the reader new and wider perspectives on multiculturalisms in a global world.
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Foreword

Multiculturalism is a word that appears every day in the media, a practice that has, over time, depleted the term of its meaning. When we speak about multiculturalism we refer to a society, which is characterised by diversity: of race, religion, gender, colour, sexual orientation, age, disabilities, etc. But diversity is a multifaceted concept, deeply influenced by its historical, societal and cultural context. Without resorting to exotic examples, when an Englishman pops up exclaiming “It’s Greek to me”, it is in order to express the profound diversity between his own language and a different one. The expression is not translatable into any Latin language, due to the indebtedness of all these languages to Greek culture. And in fact the French will use: “C’est du chinois”, while Italians will generally refer to Arabic.

The rising awareness that the idea of diversity can be diverse, poses a new challenge to comparative lawyers. New tools and skills need to be developed in order to analyze this entangled puzzle. Globalization, on the other hand, has often been accused – even too often – of implying cultural homogenization, a process whereby the local culture is supplanted by the imported one.

At the same time, Globalization presents a major challenge to existing legal responses to population diversity within nation states.

This challenge is all the more significant because the various legal regimes that address population diversity are quite young and only recently widely accepted.

The research project, on which the book is based, started in 2006 when the Italian Ministry for the Research and the University accepted my proposal to invite professor John Valery White to teach a series of common lectures on Multiculturalism and Multilingualism in a comparative perspective.

The Faculty of Law of the University of Insubria, located in Como – Italy, was granted a special funding for the lectures and the publication of this volume.

The book aims at investigating the various perspectives that legal systems have purported, taking into consideration seminal concrete issues, that reveal how dynamic the approach to the problem must be. Diversity is not a static concept: it changes at different times with different speed, as 11 September 2001 has dramatically shown.
Ex. Barbara Pozzo
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