



OPPORTUNITY #14

What if differing opinions could connect and improve business and society?

AGREEING TO DISAGREE AS ONE

Brain-computer interfaces (BCIs) and advances in brain-mapping techniques make the most of diverse human thought, promoting cooperation and tolerance, reversing fragmentation in societies and fostering cognitive diversity and the ability to have productive discussions.

MEGATREND
Future Humanity

TRENDS
Future of Purpose & Work
Generational & Cognitive Diversity

SECTORS AFFECTED
Materials & Biotechnology
Communication Technologies & Systems
Cyber & Information Security
Data Science, AI & Machine Learning
Education
Health & Healthcare
Immersive Technologies
Government Services
Professional Services

WHY IT MATTERS TODAY

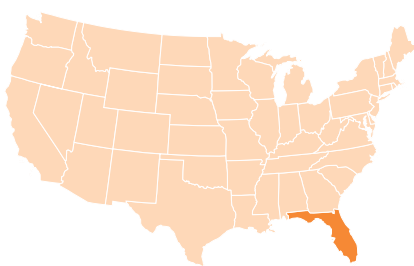
A McKinsey & Company report found that companies in the top quartiles for gender diversity and ethnic diversity on executive teams were 25% and 36% more likely (respectively) to have above-average profitability. Outperformance is more common when companies have ethnic diversity than when they have gender diversity.³³⁴

Integrating diverse views and experiences can contribute to more robust decisions and outcomes for organisations and communities.³³⁵ In organisations, cognitive diversity in how people solve problems enhances innovation by 20% and reduces risks by 30%.³³⁶ Purposely managing cognitive diversity can create high-performing teams, particularly when those teams are generating new ideas.³³⁷

This also applies in the boardroom. One study found that boards whose directors had a range of qualifications, skillsets and genders had enhanced cognitive diversity, and this contributed to increases in their firm's value and effectiveness.³³⁸

Miami, Florida, is the most diverse city in the world in terms of origin, with 58% of its residents being international immigrants. Second is Toronto, Canada – home to over 250 ethnicities and 175 different languages.³³⁹ The residents of Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, are made up of over 200 nationalities.³⁴⁰

MIAMI, FLORIDA



Most diverse city in the world in terms of origin, with

58%

of its residents being international immigrants

TORONTO, CANADA



Over

250

ethnicities and

175

different languages

DUBAI, UAE



Over

200

nationalities



THE OPPORTUNITY

Ultra-precise functional brain mapping combined with state-of-the-art transcranial brain-machine connectivity may open doors to a scientific form of ‘mind-reading’. The result will be a highly nuanced understanding of how biochemical, genetic, physical and environmental factors shape how individuals experience the world and respond to negative and positive situations.

This knowledge can reshape our understanding of cognitive diversity (also called ‘intellectual diversity’),³⁴¹ informing and improving our responses to the whole range of human views and behaviours. A deeper understanding of innate and acquired cognitive differences can improve the integration of diversity of thought into decision-making and promote cooperation and tolerance among groups with diverging views. This understanding can be used to rethink and inform school curricula, educational approaches, team-building and diplomatic and policy thinking.

Demographic diversity – including by gender, age and ethnicity – does not substantially increase cognitive diversity.³⁴² Nevertheless, as communities become more diverse through increasing migration and mobility, it may become more challenging to navigate differing views and values. Benefitting from these differences will be critical to a safe future.

Improving our understanding of how our own brains work and the relationships between biochemistry, genetics, epigenetics and lived experience can offer a fresh perspective on both our common and our diverse cognitive traits and attitudes.

BENEFITS

Better ability to structure teams and groups so that diversity is leveraged. Enhanced outcomes across education and careers for everyone. Improved bonds within and across diverse groups and communities.

RISKS

An increased focus on cognitive diversity overlooking original business objectives and failing to meet strategic goals. Misuse of brain-mapping technologies to manipulate or repress individuals.

