

Chapter 2

SUPERDIVERSITY AND DEMOCRACY A FEW THOUGHTS ON PHILIPPE VAN PARIJS

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to assess Philippe Van Parijs's ideas of English as a lingua franca against the arguments of his opponents. Among other things, Philippe Van Parijs is known for his arguments favouring the adoption of English as a language that should be learned by as many people around the world as possible. This would facilitate understanding between population groups with different languages and thus benefit democracy. Voices opposing this are Pascale Casanova, Anna Wierzbicka, and Yukio Tsuda. Casanova (2015) acknowledges that the advance of English is unstoppable, but points out that any adoption of a lingua franca, a mother tongue for part of the world's population, puts all the others, whose mother tongue it is not, in a disadvantaged position. They will eventually be 'dominated'. Anna Wierzbicka (2014) suggests that in the adoption of English by researchers, there is a danger that everything will be seen through the conceptual glasses of English, hiding the peculiarities of specific problems. Finally, Yukio Tsuda agrees with Robert Phillipson (1992) when he claims that the dominance of English amounts to a kind of

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intellectuals, is very high, English-language literature continues to be translated into the national languages.

Perhaps it is instructive to remember that the English language itself is the result of a mixture of Anglo-Saxon, Danish, Norwegian, and French, and has been strongly influenced in its vocabulary by Latin, Greek, Dutch, Spanish and even Chinese, Hindi, Japanese. English seems in itself to be malleable enough to adapt to other cultures. English is more and more a de-culturalised language. It will promote a global culture, but it will not destroy the local ones.

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