



## **HIS or HERS: Time to decide which side you're on**

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I'm sure a lot of readers are aware of the debate raging these days about what kind of country we want to live in. It comes up in boardrooms, breakrooms, bathrooms, classrooms, cafeterias, restaurants, and especially around the dining room table.

You literally can't look at your smartphone, TV, laptop, iPad, or any other device without coming face-to-face with this protracted and often capricious feud. It can be exhausting.

Of course, I'm talking about the ongoing and frequently unhinged shouting match that erupts regularly between those who favor Heterogeneity, Impartiality and Subsumption (HIS), and those with a preference for Homogeneity, Ethnocentricity, Racism and Segregation (HERS).

Well, take heart. I'm about to break it down for you in simple, straightforward terms. None of that fancy academic language here.

Let's start with the Heterogeneity, Impartiality and Subsumption (HIS) camp. Full disclosure, I am a staunch defender of HIS, always have been, always will be.

Until recently, it was fashionable to be a supporter of HIS. Progress in these areas was a source of pride for many and a metric by which we judged societal efficacy. Then, almost overnight, and for reasons that remain unclear, HIS became taboo.

So what happened?

Take Heterogeneity. Do we really want to live in a nation where everyone is a carbon copy of everyone else? Where we all believe the same things? Have the same aspirations? Dress the same? I mean, how boring would that be?

As Stephen Covey once famously said, "Strength lies in differences, not in similarities." I guess not everyone got the memo.

By the same measure, consider Impartiality. Do we really want a world in which some of us have opportunities that are not available to other, equally qualified individuals? I guess if you're the one receiving an unearned advantage you might, but I hope most of us want all of us to have an equal shot at success in life.

Finally, what's wrong with Subsumption? Doesn't everyone want to be in the game? The bottom line is we are all in this together. And while a few may like the members only philosophy, I think it's safe to say most of us want to have a seat at the table.

All things considered, HIS does seem to define the path to a more perfect union. But, as we are all acutely aware, not everyone agrees. A myopic yet increasingly charismatic segment of the population seems to be embracing the HERS approach.

To recap, HERS refers to Homogeneity, Ethnocentricity, Racism and Segregation. While many mistakenly thought we had moved away from these archaic practices decades ago, apparently the affinity for these less-civilized proclivities is still alive and well in some quarters.

Take Homogeneity for starters. Much to the chagrin of those who think and feel, not everyone is comfortable with those who look different, act different, love different, worship different, or are just plain different. They want everyone to fit into the same “acceptable” mold.

The same with Ethnocentricity. While some have an appreciation for those who come from different cultures, speak different languages, or engage in different traditions, evidently there are those who see these differences as threats to our way of life that must be eradicated.

Moving on. Racism is somewhat similar to Ethnocentricity, although – as the name implies – this variant focuses almost exclusively on one singular aspect of human existence. Specifically, there are those who think race can be used to distinguish superiority or inferiority.

And even though this idea was debunked centuries ago, it seems to be exceptionally difficult to expunge from human experience.

Last but certainly not least, there is Segregation. Once considered an antediluvian way of looking at things, those who hold on to this insular mindset seem to be relatively resilient in their discredited beliefs. I guess some take comfort being with their own, but it’s not a realistic strategy for overcoming today’s complex challenges.

There you have it. HIS and HERS in a nutshell.

As noted previously, I believe HIS is the only sensible way of looking at things. By contrast, I believe just as strongly that those who take the HERS route are destined to crash and burn spectacularly in the not-so-distant future.

But it’s still a free country, at least at the moment. Which means you still get to decide for yourself. So what’ll it be: HIS or HERS?



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