World Forum for Intercultural Dialogue

Baku, April 7-9, 2011

Information paper

Introduction

This paper attempts to set the scene for the World Forum onIntercultural Dialogue in Baku. It begins by painting the historical backdrop: what was it that made this thing called ‘intercultural dialogue’ become such a pressing global need? It answers this question by pointing to dramatic transformations in the world system in recent decades which fostered renewed intolerance of the ‘self’ for the ‘other’.

Then, equally important, it looks at what gives intercultural dialogue its supposed redeeming properties to solve so many of the world’s apparently intractable problems. It focuses on the relationship between intercultural dialogue and universal norms and, more specifically, a supportive political architecture, and it highlights how intercultural dialogue engages in the broad cultural arena where acute manifestations of intolerance appear.

The paper then moves from the general towards the particular, first by identifying how the challenge of dialogue manifests itself in four cultural domains. Next it specifies the problems which concretely affect individual regions of the globe, taken one by one. It defines the contribution that can be made to dialogue at all levels, from the transnational to the local. And it focuses on particular agents who are critical to making dialogue happen.

Finally, it pulls together the understanding about intercultural dialogue which we have accumulated in recent years. It concludes with some open questions which the forum might illuminate and some ideas as to how the dialogue *about* dialogue can best be sustained.

The paper was commissioned from the author as a researcher who has advised the Council of Europe on intercultural dialogue for several years and was heavily involved in the ‘White Paper process’. It is based on social science—where it should be noted that terms such as ‘ethnic’ and ‘cosmopolitanism’, deployed below, have specific meanings which are not the same as their everyday use: ‘ethnic’ does not imply ‘racial’ but has come to connote any difference between ‘self’ and ‘other’ which is socially constructed as a source of division, whether that be skin colour, language or religion; and ‘cosmopolitanism’ does not convey ‘rootlessness’ but a disposition to

include the other within oneself, across ethnic boundaries. But while the paper does seek to be objective and is ethically founded on norms all can share, it is presented as a stimulus for discussion and the perspectives it contains are the responsibility of the author alone.

The global panorama

We live in troubled times—times which would have been difficult to anticipate half a century ago. Then, the defeat of fascism in World War II had heralded what seemed to be never-ending decades of peace and prosperity.

In western Europe and the United States, this social comfort was underpinned by developed welfare states. Decolonisation held out new hope for the 'third world'—that political emancipation would not only throw off the shackles of imperial oppression but would also issue in at last a better life for the 'wretched of the earth'. The self-styled 'really-existing socialist' world, centred on the Soviet Union, publicly supported these struggles for freedom while determinedly denying such basic liberties at home and in its satellites, yet to many oblivious of these realities the USSR presented a model of state-led industrialisation—indeed, the Cold War with the US was premised on the belief that this might indeed prove to be the case.[1]

On a global scale, the Bretton Woods arrangements, allied to widely pursued Keynesian demand-management, appeared to have banished the pre-war spectre of international financial volatility and mass unemployment (a concept which only made sense, of course, in developed capitalist societies mainly comprising employees). It was, in short, a world of relative optimism after the horrors of global depression and the Holocaust—for many a 'golden age'.[2] The leaders of a range of secular political projects—ranging from 'Soviet Man' to the 'American dream', and various nationalist and populist forces in between, as well as the more measured reformism of social democracy—all told their followers variants of the same reassuring story: tomorrow will be better than today, and the day after that will be better still.

Yet the 1970s began a great unravelling. The exchange-rate stability heralded by Bretton Woods collapsed into a beggar-my-neighbour jostling of floating currencies after the exit of the dollar from the system in 1971 and hope seemed to become devalued too as the decade progressed. In 1972, the first study was published suggesting economic growth was confronting the finite constraints of the planetary biosphere.[3] And, amidst global oil-price shocks the following year and in 1979, in the advanced capitalist countries intense contests over the distribution of the social surplus were met by deflationary macro-economic policies that brought the return of large-scale unemployment. As the crisis unfolded, in the developing world 'structural adjustment policies' imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to deal with rising debts stymied development projects and discounted popular sovereignty.

Partly in response to a further wave of 'national liberation' struggles in the 1970s—although some of these new 'nation-states' were proving to be authoritarian *party*-states—a 'second cold war' was launched by the US and the world at times seemed to stand on the threshold of nuclear disaster.[4] But the merely 'industrial' Soviet system and its satellites was to collapse with remarkable speed in the face of the competitive challenge from the restructured, 'informational' capitalist economies[5] and the awareness of educated and increasingly demanding citizens of alternatives beyond the Iron Curtain.[6]

Nineteen eighty-nine was a global turning-point on the scale of 1945. And yet the civilisational achievement of the bringing down of the Wall, in which citizen-based movements had played such a key role, was soon tarnished by the emergence of ethno-nationalist conflicts.

Across the former Soviet sphere of influence, to varying degrees nationalistic forces appropriated the collectivist discourses of the declining Stalinist parties—indeed, in some cases were fostered by them in a desperate attempt to retain legitimacy—against a backdrop of little prior historical experience of independent and impartial political and civic institutions.[7] The problem was compounded by 'the old chickens of Versailles once again coming home to roost'—the unresolved border issues stemming from the attempt to fill with ethnically defined nation-states the space left when World War I occasioned the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian, Tsarist and Ottoman empires.[8]

Amidst this loss of optimism and belief, it became the fashion in the academy to disown the Enlightenment-based idea of progress, of the individual most immediately and all of humanity at the moral horizon. 'Post-modernism' abjured 'grand historical narratives',[9] such as the Cold War counterpositions of how the modern world was to be understood—from one side, as 'freedom' *versus* 'dictatorship'; from the other, as 'progress' *versus* 'reaction.

The world which emerged from the collapse of this 'logic of the blocs' was characterised by fragmented and particularistic exchanges, which all too often took the form of synthetic clashes between taken-for-granted 'traditions' and 'communities'.[10] 'Globalisation', it seemed, was not making for one global conversation but, at worst, a cacophony of noise.

Globalisation itself was not new: global trade and capital movements were features of the economy before World War I.[11] But the accelerated innovations in electronic communication in the decades following the launch of Sputnik now allowed of a dramatic flow of cultural images and ideas, which could circuit the globe in seconds, alongside a movement of transnational capital and a more 'sticky' migration of labour. This all heralded a 'really existing cosmopolitanisation'—this time a genuine phenomenon unlike the Soviet rhetoric it parodied, even if patchy and uneven. It was irreversible and in many ways desirable, including in its dramatic economic agglomeration effects from San Jose to Bangalore.[12]

But globalisation also brought renewed gyrations in the now wholly interconnected financial arena, destabilising domestic economies and labour markets. Meanwhile, the conventional fiscal and monetary levers pulled by merely national governments were increasingly rubbery in the face of deregulated capital movements and strategic decisions by unaccountable transnational corporations, leaving citizens more and more disillusioned.[13]

It became increasingly undeniable, moreover, that the 'externalities' of global capitalist accumulation, and particularly greenhouse gas emissions, threatened the ultimate 'tragedy of the commons'. The very fabric of human life itself appeared in jeopardy as the 21st century would progress. Humanity now inhabited a 'world at risk', where the easiest answer seemed to be blame the evil 'stranger' for the waking nightmares it engendered.[14]

At the world's ethnic fault-lines, these dislocations and associated insecurities were exploited by 'ethno-political entrepreneurs' to engender very troubling conflicts. A survey of 'cultural' conflicts since the second world war across the world found that in

the mid-1980s these surpassed those where the *casus belli* was non-cultural, and they reached a peak in 2007, the last year of the study.[15]

Despite much talk of a global 'clash of civilisations', these 'new wars' were mainly intra- rather than inter-state affairs, were fought primarily over identity rather than interest, and the principal protagonists were often paramilitary rather than conventional forces.[16] If an earlier nationalism had been a modernising project linked to state-building, this was a nationalism of state disintegration, as in ex-Yugoslavia—appealing particularly to the male 'classic industrial worker' who had been left behind by 'symbolic analysts' in the informational age, struggling for survival in casual, informal and even criminal economies.[17]

On the worldwide scale, however, there were asymmetric confrontations between the protagonists of 'jihad' and the 'war on terror'. Caught in the vice were the norms of human rights and the international rule of law. Just as Hercules' labour to destroy the Hydra by slicing off its many heads merely saw them proliferate—until his nephew Iolaus saved him by cauterising the monster's wounds—state actions in the name of 'counter-terrorism' often perversely stimulated new emergent threats.[18] 'Al Qaida' became a kind of transnational franchise, with bombing attacks across Africa and Asia, not just the US or the 'west'.

International tensions also erupted over freedom of religion *versus* freedom of expression. Both are enshrined in the European Convention of Human Rights, in articles 9 and 10 respectively, and have been the subject of extensive jurisprudence by the European Court of Human Rights.[19] But episodes such as pejorative visual portrayals of the prophet Mohammed led to violent reactions across the world, as shouts of 'Islamofascism' met cries of 'Islamophobia'.

Finally, within countries of significant labour immigration, xenophobic, populist political forces emerged to challenge democratic stability. These 'preachers of hate' masqueraded as the tribunes of the 'little man' against the political powers that be.[20] Despite the manifest economic success stemming from the cultural dynamism associated with immigration and its new 'transcultural' identities,[21] in an age where global competition put innovation at a premium—Japan, so successful in the industrial era, now found its relatively closed society struggling to compete—sweating of labour at the low end of national labour markets engendered ethnic tensions among the victims of this 'race to the bottom', providing grievances to exploit.

These conflicts would place the task of 'intercultural dialogue', as it came to be known from the mid-1990s, upon—and ever higher on—the agenda of the international community. In 1998 the United Nations General Assembly designated 2001 as the UN Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and the UN Alliance of Civilizations emerged in 2005. That year, the Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue was commissioned and it was published in 2008, chosen by the European Union as EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

The common challenge

At one level, the variety of these conflicts is bewildering complex: every conflict defined by particularistic 'difference' is inherently different from all the others. Add the tendency of observers to characterise the protagonists in schematic, bipolar ways—in Northern Ireland, for example, as 'unionists' and 'nationalists'—and it is easy to see why members of the international community should sometimes throw up their

hands in despair, fatalistically concluding that we are fated to live in a more fractious and violent world.

Yet the problem is, at another level, very simple to grasp: it is how to stop, or better still prevent, the identity of the 'self' hardening out as utterly distinct from, and antagonistic to, that of the 'other'. For the latter can then be presented as an existential threat to the former and subjected to intolerant exclusion or even extermination—as in the huge conflicts between the state of Sudan and southern secessionists and subsequently Darfur, at the cost of millions of lives and the potential prosecution of the Sudanese leader for alleged war crimes.

The very commonality of that challenge means that governments, transgovernmental organisations and global civil society can collaborate to address it. We will never finally win—we now know there is no 'end of history'[22]—but there is no reason to believe that this must always be a losing battle.

Moreover, more fine-grained empirical analysis of concrete situations shows that even divided societies are characterised by significant identity pluralism: the most-favoured political identification in Northern Ireland is actually the non-sectarian 'neither', particularly among young people.[23] And, after all, 'identity' can only be sensibly applied—as in the idea of an identity card—at the level of the individual, where it is precisely the complex combination of elements comprising each individual's identity which makes him or her unique.[24]

The writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie insists that she is Nigerian, feminist, Black, Igbo, and more' and finds it 'limiting' when she is categorised as one, as this 'makes it almost impossible to be seen as all of the others'.[25] Thus overlapping identities, and so solidarities across ethnic 'groups', are possible.

Tolerance, then, is about inclusion of the other within oneself[26]—including in being willing to accept that the 'self' is enriched, and not threatened, by incorporating aspects of the identity of the 'other'. Intercultural dialogue is, equally simply, about bringing the self and other together in a more conscious and deliberate fashion. It is pursued with a view to ensuring that at the societal level—and even in terms of a global ethic—a culture of tolerance prevails over a culture of exclusion. As Tolstoy suggested of happy families in *Anna Karenina*, well integrated societies are all alike, whereas those where dialogue fails are each dis-integrated in their own particular way.

If intercultural dialogue is possible because of humanity's capacity for mutual reciprocation, it is however urgent not only to save the world from the horrors of genocide, terrorism and other war crimes. While intercultural dialogue is of huge value, in and of itself, it is also critical to the solution of the two other greatest challenges mankind must face in the 21st century: making the world a more equal place and preserving its fragile ecological fabric.

For these are ambitions which will only be realised—as was all too evident at the fractious and ultimately unsuccessful 2009 world conference on climate change—if an underlying sense of global social solidarity develops. Domestic political pressures, and in particular the power of energy companies, have so far prevented the US president, Barack Obama, securing legislation to reduce greenhouse gases emissions stemming from the world's largest *per capita* source. And the chief negotiator in Copenhagen for what is now the largest global emitter, China, defending the claim that developing countries should be able to pursue the path from poverty already traversed by the developed world, has insisted that 'national interests

should come first'.[27] In short, ensuring we can live together is integrally linked to ensuring we can live together as equals and that we can live at all.

Of course, bringing people from different cultural backgrounds into the same room may not achieve anything. So what is special about intercultural dialogue, which the Council of Europe White Paper defined as 'an open and respectful exchange of views'?[28] It has a capacity to transcend dividing lines because of three features.

First, intercultural dialogue is securely founded upon the universal norms of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.[29] Acceptance of these norms was the fundamental lesson of the global defeat of fascism—the ultimate embodiment of the demonisation of the Jewish 'other' by the 'Aryan' self.

These are not 'western' norms. The world's largest democracy is of course India, where more than one sixth of its population lives. The 'international bill of rights' is recognised as comprising the UN Declaration on Human Rights and its two covenants—on civil and political, and on economic, social and cultural, rights—which came into force in 1976. And the rule of law is acquiring global aspects, with the emergence of institutions such as the *ad hoc* international tribunals on war crimes in ex-Yugoslavia and Rwanda and the International Criminal Court. What is fundamental about these norms is that they define the individual as the subject of politics, bearer of rights and beneficiary of justice—rather than their being consigned by the powerful to a stereotyped and stigmatised group on whom the most horrific inhumanities can be visited, as the Holocaust came to symbolise.

Secondly, intercultural dialogue matches its recognition of the 'individualistic concept of society'[30] with a vision of our common humanity. It is this empathy with diverse human beings which engenders tolerance towards ideas with which we do not agree—within the limits of universal norms—as evidence on the range of attitudes amongst 'indigenous' Dutch towards members of Muslim minorities shows.[31] As we are all individuals irreducible to our various affiliations and associations, others who share our locality, our workplace, our country or our world are our fellow citizens. By contrast, if we just have fellow Christians, fellow Muslims, fellow Hindus or fellow Buddhists, then citizens are not our fellows.[32]

A certain political architecture follows from this, which is defined by three elements: equality of individual citizenship regardless of ethnic background, reciprocal recognition by each citizen of this common moral realm, and impartial public authority to adjudicate those competing claims among citizens which can not be resolved through dialogue in the public sphere.[33] This is not just a moral imperative: where states have seen their purview of responsibility not as embracing all citizens equally but as privileging domestic religious majorities—regardless of whether these may be Protestant (Northern Ireland before 1972), Jewish (contemporary Israel), Buddhist (Sri Lanka) or Shia (Iran) or Sunni (Pakistan) Muslim—they have been beset by perceived or actual enemies, without or within, representing the religious 'other' or comprising fundamentalists from their 'own' camp.

Thirdly, intercultural dialogue engages directly in the very cultural arena in which ethnic tensions are manifested. Public manifestations of intolerance are heavily freighted with emotional affect: the blare of martial music, the waving of flags, the rhythmic chant of slogans, the ritual display of weapons. Intercultural dialogue is certainly about ensuring the force of argument prevails over the use of force.[34] But it must appeal to the heart as well as to the head and so must reach deeply into popular culture if it is to avoid being merely a discourse for 'balcony speeches' which have little traction on the people below. Thus, for all the legitimate concerns in South

Africa about the sunk costs of the football stadia amid unrelieved social inequalities—and the dominance, again, of Europe on the pitch—the 2010 Fifa World Cup breathed real life, at least for a time, into the official concept of 'the rainbow nation'.

Moreover, intercultural dialogue requires a capacity for individual reflection, for perspective-taking, to see things from other standpoints. Within the cultural arena, it thus allocates a particular role to the arts—not because these represent a 'higher' cultural form but because their various genres have one feature in common: they enable the individual to remove themselves from immersion as a routine actor in their quotidian world, to become an analyst of its contradictions and an observer of its horizon of possibilities.

Reading Simon Mawer's *The Glass Room*, for example, we share the pleasure of the character Viktor that in pre-war Czechoslovakia his children are acquiring German from their mother and Czech from their nanny: 'They mustn't be labelled,' Viktor has always insisted, 'not by language, nor by culture, nor family or anything. They must be brought up as citizens of the world.' But a few pages later we sense what it is like to be on the receiving end of an ominous confrontation over dinner with an overbearing guest sporting a Nazi party badge, who insists that each Czech German has a 'duty towards his national culture', and how in that context Viktor is forced to retreat from this ambition: 'But I am not a German, Herr Schreiber,' he says. 'I am a Jew.'

There are, in this context, two valuable reasons for a world forum on intercultural dialogue. First, there is a need to take the existing debate about intercultural dialogue further on to the global level. This should not—and must not—be conceived as a 21st century *mission civilisatrice*, once it is recognised that the underpinning norms are universal rather than of 'imperial' provenance.

Secondly, there is merit in focusing on *who* needs to do *what*, on top of the existing efforts by the Alliance of Civilizations and regional organisations, if intercultural dialogue is to realise its potential across the globe. This is not just a matter of mapping what these organisations are already doing, avoiding duplication and identifying gaps to be filled, valuable though that is. It is also a question of identifying the roles of a much wider range of actors, including non-governmental organisations as well as individual states, if intercultural dialogue is not to be confined to the 'official' arena but is to develop a genuinely 'spontaneous' character.

One challenge, many domains

If the challenge of intercultural dialogue is a simple and common one, it needs to be met in the full range of cultural domains. This begins from a recognition that 'culture' is not a thing, an unquestioned 'tradition' into which one is automatically born and which is for all time set in aspic—if that were so, there would literally be nothing for intercultural dialogue to discuss. Rather, what we are talking about is a set of cultural *practices* which are constantly being reinvented under the pressures of changing contexts and whose meaning is contested among various social actors—particularly where globalisation is accelerating contextual change and the associated flow of people and images is bringing an ever-more-diverse range of actors into relationships with one another.

For example, the idea that there is a single 'Muslim culture' assumes that this supposed object is shared by every individual of Muslim background everywhere, regardless of his or her national or other affiliations and regardless of their actual

level of religiosity (if any), in a manner which only makes sense if it is presented as the undifferentiated ‘other’ to the taken-for-granted ‘self’. As it has been put, a ‘Punjabi ballet’ is a reasonable idea; a ‘Muslim ballet’ is not.[35]

While this is by no means exhaustive, four particular cultural domains are particular critical for the pursuit of intercultural dialogue. First, there is a great need for intercultural dialogue among, within and around the great **world religions**.

Most of the global adult population is in some way affiliated to Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism or folk religions—not to mention less widely supported faiths such as Judaism or Sikhism—and the character of religion as a spiritual guide through life and a source of solace in the face of death means it is part of the fabric of life for billions. But the evidence of recent years—such as the Regensburg lecture in 2006 by Pope Benedict, in which he compared Islam unfavourably with (the Catholic version of) Christianity, and the subsequent furore in the Muslim world—has been that such dialogue is fraught with difficulty.

It is in the nature of religions to make claims to truth, often embodied in ancient texts, which their adherents are expected to accept without question—as, literally, acts of ‘faith’. To the extent that this is so, these will be incommensurables in inter-religious dialogue. To the extent, however, that religious heritages are treated as open to interpretation in light of contemporary circumstances—which within Islam, for instance, is expressed in the idea of *ijtihad*, within Catholicism is encapsulated in the phrase ‘the spirit of Vatican II’ and with regard to Protestantism was famously linked by Max Weber to the restless ‘spirit of capitalism’[36]—then dialogue between adherents of different faiths may come rather closer to ‘an open and respectful exchange of views’.

Success in inter-religious dialogue also requires acceptance—by agnostics and atheists as well as believers—of the legitimate parameters of exchange. So while it is not reasonable for secularists to insist that all manifestations of religion be confined to the private sphere, as this would deny the pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness which the European Court of Human Rights has defined as requirements of a democratic society,[37] by the same token it is not legitimate for members of a religious majority to insist that the state define the public sphere by their ethos, as that breaches the principle of impartial treatment *vis-à-vis* members of different faiths and none and can be expected to abrogate fundamental principles such as gender equality.

In addition, if non-believers can not arrogate to themselves the right to adjudicate religious truth claims, the religious must equally accept the authority of ‘natural’ reason stemming from the sciences and ‘universal egalitarianism’ in law and morality.[38] Indeed, the cliché of ‘a homogeneous collectivity innocent of modernity’ applied to Muslims in Europe by ‘nativist right-wing movements’[39] writes out of history the major contribution from within the Muslim world to the global progress of knowledge, and in particular to algebra and astronomy, centuries before the Renaissance.

Even the power of religion is however outweighed by that of **the media and the internet** in today’s world. Participants in intercultural dialogue need to bring with them as much objective knowledge about the issue at hand and as much awareness of the range of available perspectives as they can. This depends on a media environment which combines impartial public-service broadcasting, including a commitment to minority programming, with a plurality of commercial and social media. The legislative context must thus secure the independence of the state

broadcaster from political control—the way Yugoslav television was fractured into nationalistic broadcasters as the state collapsed represents a warning as to how the media can be complicit in the emergence of new dividing lines[40]—and the media market from monopoly domination.

Legislation must also protect freedom of information for the citizen, while outlawing such 'hate speech' as was evident in the stereotyping of Rwandan Tutsis as 'cockroaches' by *Radio Milles Collines* in the run-up to the genocide in 1994. Reporters must be trained in intercultural competence, embodied in codes of conduct developed by their unions or within the industry, and arrangements for handling complaints against the media of stereotyped reporting must be robust. Awards, such as that provided by the OSCE for the photograph on the first page of this paper, can recognise and valorise good practice.

Leicester is an ethnically diverse city in the English east midlands which, while not devoid of tensions, has been a relative intercultural success story. The main local newspaper, the *Leicester Mercury*, which has a readership of more than 200,000, seeks to challenge sensationalism and myths. The editor of the paper takes part in (and often chairs) the city's Multicultural Advisory Group, which meets every month to address potential communal conflicts. This helps ensure the paper engages in informed and sensitive reporting.[41]

The informational revolution has burst the national boundaries of states and markets to which the media were previously largely confined and the digitalisation of the media, social networks and telecommunications—and the associated move from the passive media consumer to the interactive user—has made global intercultural dialogue, like 'global civil society',[42] a concrete reality rather than a utopian aspiration. Such dialogue is however threatened by partisan and often hate-filled internet comment and by journalistic commitments falling victim to financial considerations in a fiercely competitive media environment. To pursue it requires that 'media literacy' is seen as a universal entitlement, like literacy itself, that journalists are drawn from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds and that they report 'with' subjects from which they may be socially distanced rather than objectifying them as the 'other'.[43]

The domain of **the arts** is often seen as of relatively minor importance in the public political arena. Yet the arts have a great transformative potential in intercultural dialogue. According to the Nobel prize-winning writer Orhan Pamuk, 'central to the art of the novel' is 'the question of the "other", the "stranger", the "enemy" that resides inside each of our heads, or rather, the question of how to transform it'. Novelists, according to Pamuk, 'can begin to test the lines that mark off that "other" and in so doing alter the boundaries of our own identities. Others become "us" and we become "others".' And even as the novel 'relates our own lives as if they were the lives of others, it offers us the chance to describe other people's lives as if they were our own'.[44]

For instance, in what became for two years the best-selling novel in Arabic, Alaa Al Aswany used the simple device of presenting a range of characters who move in and out of *The Yacoubian Building* in Cairo to re-present the cultural diversity and so vibrancy of life in the Egyptian capital circa 1990, highlighting how it was being squeezed between authoritarianism and fundamentalism.[45] Similarly, Marjane Satrapi's graphic novel *Persepolis*, which was converted into an award-winning film of the same name, allows us to reconceive modern Iran by depicting its trajectory over recent decades through the eyes of a woman growing up in Teheran, an urban milieu characterised by a considerable pluralism of opinion.[46] And a popular Saudi

situation comedy, *Tash ma Tash*, which is broadcast annually during Ramadan and has become increasingly bold over the years, angered some clerics in 2010 by presenting Christian characters in a positive light rather than as ‘apostates’.[47]

Internationally, co-productions, particularly in high-cost artistic products like film, and travelling exhibitions and shows present important opportunities for intercultural dialogue to transcend national boundaries. Against a backdrop of tensions between the two countries which had been intractable for politicians, a South Korean soap opera shown on Japanese television some years ago became very popular in Japan and led to many more Japanese learning Korean.[48] In 2010, the Japanese prime minister, Naoto Kan, expressed ‘deep remorse’ for his country’s 35-year occupation of Korea, a gesture welcomed by his South Korean counterpart, Lee Myung-bak, as ‘a step forward’.[49] Similarly, the Romanian film *Francesca* attempted to humanise the process of emigration to Italy in light of stereotyped representations of Romanian immigrants there as ‘criminals’—without, in turn, succumbing to the temptation to produce an alternative, positive stereotype.

Education is bound to figure centrally in a world where ‘intercultural competence’ is no longer something that can be understood as the monopoly of business and cultural elites but as a prerequisite of citizenship in the context of ‘really existing cosmopolitanisation’. Intercultural competence includes the acquisition of general cultural knowledge and communication skills, as well as attitudes valuing cultural diversity. Allied to developing capacities for reflection and empathy and the experience of positive outcomes to intercultural situations, this can bring personal development and cultural enrichment.

Conceiving tolerance as a matter of inclusion of the ‘other’ here too helps to clarify what is needed. Intercultural competence is not the impossible goal of acquiring complete knowledge of the infinite diversity of the world but is essentially about developing a capacity to relativise one’s own perspective and put oneself in the other’s shoes[50]—in which non-formal education and practical projects can often be particularly effective.

History-teaching represents a particularly important dimension of intercultural education, if experiences of man’s inhumanity to man on a global scale, such as the Holocaust, are not to be repeated as their memory is allowed to fade.[51] This is a matter of narrowing the scope for the telling of illegitimate ‘truths’, by ensuring citizens have an informed capacity to question ideological narratives and an appreciation of universal norms.

The ‘educational’ power of heritage is also critical here and hence the particular significance of monumental statuary and memorials, which often present the state in the ‘triumphal’ image of a dominant majority. The Vietnam war memorial in Washington, by contrast, in simply naming all the American victims, not only encourages visitors to reflect on the human cost of war but also ensures the many African-American soldiers who died—the Vietnamese remain the anonymous ‘other’—at least achieve equality in death.

Language-learning is meanwhile an important gateway to intercultural competence. While globalisation has been associated with the emergence of English as a de facto *lingua franca*, the associated reluctance of many English-speakers to learn other languages defies the intercultural principle of reciprocal recognition. Encouraging bi- or multilingualism gets over the insensitivity of requiring members of minority communities to adopt the majority language at the expense of their mother tongue (which promoted tensions with Russian-speakers in the Baltic states in the early

years of independence) and, conversely, helps overcome the suspicion which can grow between segregated language communities (which now threatens the future of Belgium as a state).

Sport for many is a secular religion and the breadth and depth of its popular appeal, albeit male-dominated, makes it an important location for the contest between tolerance and intolerance. Take, for example, the symbolic role played by the national football team of Côte d'Ivoire in recent times, against the background of the conflict between the mainly Muslim north and mainly Christian south.[52]

Football is a particularly important sport, as it is a global game, played universally to the same rules, with very low entry costs. Players are selected on the basis of their ability, they are required to show team spirit with colleagues, regardless of colour or creed, and matches are governed by the idea of 'fair play'. These principles—microcosms of the equality of citizenship, reciprocal recognition and impartial treatment which provide the framework for intercultural dialogue—have been successfully mobilised by the NGO Football Against Racism in Europe to tackle the xenophobic responses to immigration of some football fans on that continent over the last decade.[53]

At the grassroots, sports clubs can promote intercultural dialogue by becoming 'open clubs':

- organising open days for local youngsters, with sustained efforts to attract kids (girls as well as boys) from minority backgrounds;
- developing links with local schools, especially those with concentrations of minority pupils, encouraging club membership;
- supporting school-related activities to use the sport to promote knowledge of the 'host' language among minority children; and
- seeking to involve minority parents as volunteers, including in club management.

Once again, it comes back to the simple idea of the inclusion of the other. No one can forget—and indeed the episode has now been made into a blockbuster film—the reconciliatory power of the donning by Nelson Mandela of the Springbok rugby shirt, previously so central to Afrikaner self-images, at the World Cup final in 1995, having become the first president of a post-*apartheid* South Africa the previous year.

Concrete situations

Intercultural dialogue must also take place across particular regions of the globe, especially if it is to be credible as a practical alternative to antagonism. There are several such 'hotspots' across the world, though intolerance tends to manifest itself in somewhat different fashion in each case.

Across **eastern Europe and Eurasia**, there are live and latent nationality conflicts. In a stereotyped western view, these have tended to be described in the language of 'ancient hatreds', purportedly suppressed by the Soviet Union and on which the 'lid was lifted' when the USSR collapsed. But this view does not account for the peace which held for decades in the non-aligned Yugoslavia and does not recognise how the Soviet system itself gave official recognition to ethnically and folkloristically defined nationalities within the state. The real difficulty was the radical rethink required of a diminished Russian Federation as to its 'near abroad' and the absence

of a readily available discourse through which the successor states could define themselves, other than through the predominant national 'ethnos'.

It has never been possible to align the supposed extent of such an 'imagined community'[54] with the state—as in the slogan 'All Serbs in One State' which came to the fore in Yugoslavia once the official slogan of 'Brotherhood and Unity' was gone—in a manner which does not involve the oppression or exclusion of the minority 'other', not forgetting in this context the Roma. Hence the nature of the conflict in 2008 not only between the Russian Federation and Georgia but also within the latter state with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Hence also issues stemming from the demise of the Habsburg empire, and in particular issues around the position of Hungarian minorities outside Hungary and homeland nationalism within it.

The non-correspondence between the state and the dominant 'nation' thus tended to lead to complex, triadic conflicts—involving leaders of a 'nationalising majority' within the jurisdiction, seeking to ensure the state reflected 'their' ethos; representatives of a 'national minority' within the same jurisdiction, seeking to secure minority rights; and
a 'homeland nationalism' in the neighbouring jurisdiction, supporting the secession of the 'national minority'.[55] Kosovo remains a challenging contemporary case.

A moral compass is provided here by concepts developed by Jürgen Habermas and Ulrich Beck, anxious against the background of the historic pathology of aggressive German nationalism to define other forms of civic allegiance. Habermas' 'constitutional patriotism'[56] is a positive allegiance to the democratic institutions of the state of which one is a citizen, as against a negative nationalistic counterposition to the ethnic 'outgroup'. Similarly, Beck's constitutional tolerance'[57] recognises that all states nowadays are to some extent comprised of citizens of more than one national origin, and just as the principle of state neutrality between religions became accepted to guarantee freedom of conscience in multi-religious societies, so constitutional tolerance—defined by a similar impartiality with regard to nationality—becomes essential in multi-national societies.

These ideas, applicable universally, are particularly helpful as antidotes to nationalism in eastern Europe and Eurasia. They were effective, for example, in preserving Tuzla as an enclave of peace in Bosnia-Hercegovina during the wars of the Yugoslav succession. Embrace of the EU and the Council of Europe has helped embed these emergent norms more generally within the region.

In **western Europe**, since the end of the *trentes années glorieuses* of rising and widely shared welfare in the 1970s, and particularly since the onset of the financial crisis in 2007, anti-immigrant sentiment has manifested itself in growing support for 'populist radical right' parties, defined primarily by a 'nativism' which combines nationalism and xenophobia. Immigrants and refugees have been the main target, with Muslims a particular focus (though Jews and Roma have continued to provide convenient scapegoats). Such parties have echoed the friend/foe definition of politics, with its demonisation of the 'other', characteristic of the Nazi-era political philosopher Carl Schmitt.[58] They thus also shade into parties in the former eastern bloc—Jobbik, for example, in Hungary—for whom that 'other' may be a member of another nationality in the region rather than a migrant to it.

Everywhere, however, the sentiment is the same—of trying, vainly, to close off the 'self' from the cosmopolitanising trends in daily life, as in the anti-immigrant slogan 'Vienna for the Viennese' which saw the late Jörg Haider rise to become a national politician in Austria. His fate, however, also reveals the answer to this threat—

European solidarity in defence of universal norms. For the other EU members responded to the inclusion of Haider's then party in a coalition by freezing relations with Austria; the party subsequently split and neither it nor its successor has been in power since.

Including the migrant 'other' can be done by facilitating citizenship, thereby encouraging a less instrumental disposition on the part of immigrants and maximising the social and cultural, as well as economic, contribution they make to their 'host' country. Europe's ethos can only be one of 'hospitality'[59] if the EU is to cope with the challenges of enlargement, sustain its own 'unity in diversity' and engage meaningfully with its wider 'neighbourhood'.

The Council of Europe White Paper linked such 'hospitality to the wider world' to 'respect for the equal dignity of every individual',[60] highlighting the interconnection between living together and living together as equals. For the timing of the rise of 'immigration' up the western European political agenda, particularly in 'Anglo-Saxon' countries like the UK (and the US), has reflected the growing insecurity of those least able to command and sustain good work in the face of the deregulation of the capital and labour markets, allied to the contraction of public employment and welfare, characteristic of the neo-liberal era.[61]

Psychologists explain this link by the notion of 'displaced aggression'. As two epidemiologists have concluded from their huge survey of studies worldwide on a range of social pathologies, 'In more unequal societies, more people are oriented towards dominance; in more egalitarian societies, more people are oriented towards inclusiveness and empathy.'[62]

Sweden remains one of the most egalitarian societies in the world and its experience points the way to how other western European countries can best meet the migration challenge. After over six decades of continuous post-war immigration, Sweden has one of the highest proportions of immigrants to total population in the EU. Three quarters have acquired Swedish (or dual) citizenship and an earlier multiculturalism celebrating 'difference' has been replaced by the goal of an integrated, multi-ethnic society.[63] Only in very recent times, with the rise of the Sweden Democrats—perhaps not unconnected to a widening of the income gap in the country—has any significant populist right-wing challenge emerged.

The relationship between living together and living together as equals can also be seen from the other side of the coin—in terms of how best to regulate global migration for the general good. As the European commissioner for human rights has put it, 'The fact that there is such a large amount of migration is a call for a more equal distribution of wealth and income in the world.'[64]

As for the **middle east** and its environs in recent times, violence has scarred a region pockmarked by unstable and failed states, reverberating from the Israel/Palestinian conflict and the invasion of Iraq. The failure of dialogue in the first case is symbolised by the wall snaking its way down eastern Israel and into the occupied west bank and by the stand-off between the Hamas administration in Gaza, committed to Israel's destruction, and the Israeli state which visited huge destruction upon the civilian population there in 2009. In the latter instance, the failure by the United States to plan for life after the demise of the Baathist party-state—stemming from the US neo-conservative expectation that the invaders would be welcomed with 'garlands and flowers'—left a vacuum in the rule of law which fostered sectarian polarisation, the proliferation of violent paramilitary gangs, major question-marks over the competence

and impartiality of state forces, and stalemate in the religio-political balance between Shia parties and their Sunni and allied secular competitors.

Two other regional hotspots, Cyprus and Lebanon, are currently peaceful. But they suffer from the perpetuation of communalist politics at the expense of genuine intercultural dialogue.[65] And over much of the region hangs the tension between two states which define themselves entirely in terms of the predominant religious ethos, Iran and Israel, with the first under its current leadership rhetorically committed to the removal of the second from the map, while facing an implied reciprocal threat of nuclear devastation.

Part of the problem has been external influences, in particular by the US in the unipolar world since the Cold War. This not only meant the occupation of Iraq lacked the international legitimacy which only a UN resolution could have conferred but also has exacerbated the difficulties in resolving the Israel/Palestinian conflict. Impartiality is not only required within states to secure intercultural dialogue. It is also required if representatives of the international community are to be perceived as neutral brokers between states, and the US can not play this role in the middle east, given its close bilateral relationship with Israel.

Obstacles to dialogue are also internal, however. The series of Arab Human Development Report publications for the UN Development Programme—produced by Arab intellectuals and practitioners—has pointed the way ahead by identifying structural weaknesses in the region, in democracy, gender equality and access to knowledge.[66] These are all interconnected via the need to implant more firmly the universal—to repeat, not 'western'—norm of the individualistic concept of society.

Democracy is by definition based on the individual citizen as the unit of society, with the democratic process the means by which all such individuals share their sovereignty; dictatorships, by contrast, purport to rule on behalf of the 'people' collectively.[67] Only when individuals are recognised as citizens can women even begin to demand equal citizenship. And it is only on this foundation of deep and broad civic participation that intercultural dialogue becomes feasible.

This is critical not just to peace in the region but also to development. In earlier decades, statist industrialisation strategies appeared to work. In the 'informational' age, however, slow acquisition and circulation of knowledge has become a brake on development. More and better intercultural dialogue is needed to speed it up. In its absence, the danger is that fundamentalist forces may successfully exploit economic frustrations felt on the 'Arab street' in closed, authoritarian societies.

Various **African states** endure acute or chronic ethnic conflicts. While acute recent outbreaks in Kenya (Kikuyu/Kalenjin) and Nigeria (Christian/Muslim) have been distressing, the chronic violence which has beset Sudan and, going back to the Rwanda genocide, the Democratic Republic of Congo has entailed vast human tragedies. These humanitarian disasters have not engendered proportionate commitment from the international community, which reflects an often unspoken stereotype that there is something inherent about Africans—rather than Africa—which makes the continent prone to such conflicts.

Yet an excellent book on Europe in the 20th century was entitled *Dark Continent*—the pejorative label often applied to Africa—to make the point that on the scale of human destruction Europe's murderous world wars have no global parallel.[68] Moreover, the drawing of African borders by European colonialists left a raft of challenging legacies for post-colonial leaders—not unlike the effects of the imperial collapses in Europe in

the wake of World War I—where the extent of various ‘imagined communities’ did not correspond with the arbitrary boundaries of states.

Decolonisation however compounded the problem: ethnic identifications were often used as a basis for political mobilisation by anti-colonial movements, and ‘ethnic arithmetic’ often governed clientelistic decisions following independence in a context of resource scarcity.[69] In some cases guerrilla leaders used to giving unquestioned military commands segued into political office as ‘big men’ unable to adapt to political pluralism and the rule of law. This deficit with regard to universal norms has been highlighted by the African Union’s non-compliance with the indictment by the International Criminal Court of the Sudanese ruler, Omar al-Bashir.

Far from Africa being mysterious, however, those very universal norms which have confined violent ethnic conflict in post-war western Europe to its margins (Northern Ireland, the Basque country and Corsica) provide the only vaccine against the fatal disease of ethnic antagonism. But instead of ensuring Africans across the continent can enjoy these normative foundations of security taken for granted elsewhere, the wider international community has often taken the easier option of a *Realpolitik* which treats with dictators—Mobtu Sese Seko, for decades one-man ruler of then Zaire, was indulged in western capitals as a Cold War ally.

The same amoral approach has been apparent in attempts to cut deals with violent sub-state organisations in conflict situations. As is evident in the failure of the government installed in Somalia, incorporating former Islamist rebels in the Islamic Courts Union to stem violence from still more fundamentalist paramilitaries such as al-Shabab, this can not confer stable legitimacy. Nor can it cope with the plethora of sub- and trans-state groups in Darfur, fighting the Arab-dominated state of Sudan and its allied militia, or those which have terrorised the eastern DRC.

The alternative route is shown by how *apartheid* was brought down in favour of a democratic South Africa, following an international NGO crusade against this inhuman system. Enduring international commitment and an engagement to promote constitutional arrangements which embody universal norms is required if intercultural dialogue are is to flourish across the continent.

Across the **Indian sub-continent** and beyond, there are enduring tensions arising from two primary and interconnected sources. The partition of independent India in 1947 by a British government committed to minimising its losses forced, at vast human cost in the millions killed or displaced, a simplification of identities from ‘richer and more complicated pasts’.[70] The legacy has been three wars between the partitioned states over contested Kashmir, periodic intercommunal riots in secular India and now-growing Islamist challenges in Muslim Pakistan.

With the great diversity of its expanse of states and cities, India offers a huge social laboratory for intercultural dialogue. And the results of this half-century-long experiment are clear. Those states (like Kerala) which have remained most peaceful are also those characterised by impartial authority, particularly policing.[71] And those cities (like Kolkata) which have been least prone to rioting have been notable for the strength of their intercommunal civic associations, buffering tensions by quashing the wild rumours about the intentions of the ‘other’ which have fostered violence elsewhere.[72]

Finally, at the federal level, the unimpaired experience of democracy in multi-ethnic India, contrasting with the repeated bouts of military dictatorship in almost Pakistan, says nothing in terms of comparative religion but much about comparative politics.

The maintenance of secular government, in the face of repeated challenges from Hindu nationalists, has borne out the political vision of India's founding fathers.

The two post-colonial powers on the sub-continent have also vied over Afghanistan, whose three decades of instability and violence since the Soviet invasion of 1979 stem mainly from its misfortune in finding itself the principal *locus* of the transition from the 'second cold war' between the US and the USSR to the American 'war on terror' with the new global 'other' of political Islam. Afghanistan shows, however, how much the concept of intercultural dialogue has to offer in the most challenging of real situations.

With the international community otherwise caught in a despairing trap between, on the one hand, pursuit of the chimera of military victory over the Taliban at the expense of the rule of law and, on the other, dialogue with militia leaders at the expense of human rights (particularly gender equality), and with a government struggling for democratic legitimacy in the middle, the consistent pursuit of the universal norms of democracy, human rights and the rule of law provides a route map towards eventual success. This would be embodied in a political architecture ensuring equality of citizenship for the mainly southern Pashtuns (among whom the Taliban is based) with their Tajik counterparts, reciprocal recognition among individuals (including other minority members) among the various Afghan communities and impartial public authority freed from corruption and warlord involvement.

Despite being one of the world's oldest democracies, the **United States** has yet to solve its problem with 'race', particularly as it bears down on the position of African-Americans. While the states of the southern confederacy were defeated in the civil war, and while the subsequent 'Jim Crow' laws which enforced segregation and disenfranchised blacks were overruled by the 1954 *Brown versus Topeka Board of Education* Supreme Court judgment[73] and the civil-rights legislation passed in the 1960s, the then Democrat president, Lyndon Johnson, correctly predicted that these acts would cede the south to the Republican party, which dominated US government for a generation, despite extensive liberal support concentrated in the north-east and in west-coast cities.

'Race riots' and the Vietnam war polarised America increasingly along ethnic lines. The official metaphor of the 'melting pot', assuming members of minority communities would assimilate to the pre-existing social *mélange*, was challenged in this identity politics by the alternative of the 'salad bowl'. This imagined society as 'a complex patchwork of distinctive communities', in which the purported rights of groups replaced those of individuals and universal norms were supplanted by a 'post-modernist' staking of particular claims.[74] Impacted 'culture wars' were the result.

The hope invested in the 2008 candidacy of Barack Obama, the first African-American president, was that he could somehow embody a 'post-racial' politics and there was much talk of 'turning a page'. But Obama's campaign, launched in Springfield, Illinois, home to Abraham Lincoln, harked back to the defeat of slavery rather than articulating a 'cosmopolitan' social model which would have married the classic, individualistic conception of society with 21st-century cultural diversity.[75]

He was thus unable to focus the blurred aspiration for 'change' and his constituency of support soon narrowed in office, as an angry and antagonistic political culture was restored. A xenophobic movement developed across some southern states, focused on undocumented immigrants, and hostility grew in a number of cities to the building

of mosques[76]—particularly an Islamic centre proposed near the symbolic site of the former World Trade Centre in New York.

There remain issues in various parts of the world, including in **Latin America** and **Australasia**, with regard to indigenous peoples, victims of their imperial conquests. In the 1990s, social movements based among indigenous peoples created political parties across several Latin American countries, coming to control local and regional governments in some instances. In Ecuador and Bolivia, in 2002 and 2005 respectively, for the first time indigenous community leaders were elected to the presidency. Major tensions ensued in Bolivia, as opposition emerged among *mestizo* and white Bolivians to Evo Morales' constitutional changes favouring the indigenous majority.

This process of indigenous assertion has brought new elements of participation and associationalism to the political arena, but the weakness of individualism in indigenous cultural practices has also entailed illiberal elements, notably exclusion of women and restriction of dissent. Success in bridging ethnic divides has tended to depend on charismatic indigenous leaders, professionally equipped to work in intercultural contexts.[77] Meeting this challenge is not helped by the exoticisation of indigenous peoples by some observers—a 'positive' form of stereotyping—who are searching for an 'authenticity' which defies the internal plurality and external fluidity of a phenomenon such as Morales' MAS.[78]

If the changes advanced in Bolivia sought to undo centuries of European dominance, the then Australian prime minister, Kevin Rudd, made a significant gesture symbolically to the same end when, in 2008, he apologised in Parliament for the 'profound grief, suffering and loss' inflicted on members of aboriginal communities by successive governments. He apologised 'especially' for the assimilationist policy, pursued until the 1960s, of taking children from aboriginal parents.

Some aboriginal representatives believed this statement should have been accompanied by material compensation. But it did at least show the real value of an affirmation of reciprocal recognition—particularly in the prime minister's telling reference to aboriginals as 'fellow Australians'.[79]

Azerbaijan is located at the edge of two of these difficult 'neighbourhoods'—eastern Europe / Eurasia and the middle east. The 'Baku process' was conceived to take account of this interface location. Next door is Georgia, with its secessionist struggles. Azerbaijan has of course itself a 'frozen' conflict with mainly-Orthodox Armenia over the contested region of Nagorno-Karabakh, which has been occupied by Armenia since the war between the then two newly independent states in the early 1990s.

These fault-lines lie behind the 'Baku process', signalled at the Conference of Ministers of Culture of Europe and its Neighbouring Regions held in the Azerbaijani capital in December 2008. The concluding declaration described the process as a 'normative framework' to address how such conflicts could be tackled through intercultural dialogue based on universal norms. In this regard, the declaration pointed to the key roles played by international organisations, journalists and artists, and to the centrality of inter-religious dialogue.[80]

Levels of intercultural dialogue

Intercultural dialogue not only needs to take place within several cultural domains and in different regions of the world. It also needs to operate at several levels, from the global down to the local. If higher levels are not involved, there will be a lack of co-ordination of otherwise fragmented and disparate efforts. Equally, if lower levels are not engaged, there will be no sense that it touches life on the street.

At the **global** level, intercultural dialogue centres on the roles of international organisations. The United Nations has been engaged via UNESCO and the Alliance of Civilizations, Europe has been to the fore via the Council of Europe and the European Union, its neighbours in north Africa have been involved with the support of the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Arab and Muslim worlds have participated via ALECSO and ISESCO. Encouragingly, as 'intercultural dialogue' has moved up the global political agenda, having had its first official reference in the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities only in 1995, there has been a substantial consensus on the principles involved—and in particular the critical acceptance that no particular cultural 'tradition' can be held to trump universal norms.

But major regional organisations, like the AU and ASEAN, have yet substantially to be involved. This although, for example, in Indonesia since the end of the Suharto dictatorship the secessionist conflicts in East Timor and West Papua (though not Aceh) have had a Muslim-Christian dimension and the Moluccas have seen inter-religious rioting.

Turning to the strongest world powers, while north American intellectuals have been heavily involved in the academic debate on multiculturalism,[81] public political discourse in the US has perceived issues of global cultural diversity primarily through the lens of 'homeland security', in turn understood as defended by foreign military interventions. The foreign-policy philosophy espoused by the former president Theodore Roosevelt, 'speak softly and carry a big stick', has had an enduring legacy.

As for China, its nationalistic official ideology sustains it as a party-state defying universal norms and it is correspondingly incapable of resolving the issue of Tibetan autonomy or the tensions in the west between dominant Han Chinese and mainly Muslim Uighurs. This though its own history, from the introduction of Buddhism from India, through cultural contacts arising from migration and dispersal over centuries, to syncretic rituals among today's Chinese emigrants in Thailand, indicates how the cultural practice of the self unavoidably 'slips into' another, 'half forgetting itself and half changing the other'.[82]

It is thus no surprise that the 'G2' of the US and China so strikingly failed to find a common language at the Copenhagen summit, in which both powers acted unilaterally. A 'political nationalism' must give way to a 'cosmopolitan orientation' to address the challenges of a global era marked by 'overlapping communities of fate'.[83]

All this suggests a need to engage the major states in intercultural dialogue, best done under UN auspices via UNESCO and the Alliance of Civilizations. It also entails stimulating regional organisations, particularly in the southern hemisphere, to take up the intercultural mantle.

The larger question is also raised, however, of reform of the intergovernmental organisations themselves. In taking as their democratic unit the 'nation-state', they are products of the post-war heyday of 'methodological nationalism'[84]—and, indeed, the arrangements for permanent membership of the UN Security Council have set in stone the individual veto-wielding authority of the powers which rose from the world

debris in 1945. It is not easy to see how this is compatible with the fostering of intercultural dialogue as a global public good.

Another way to begin to resolve this co-ordination dilemma is for individual **governments** to show the way. In 2007, Spain pioneered the idea of a national integration plan,[85] quickly followed within Europe by Portugal and Germany. The compelling rationale behind such a plan is threefold.

First, intercultural dialogue is a classical example of a challenge which cuts across departmental boundaries in government: it involves the culture minister, since it impinges on the arts and the media; it involves the education minister, since the school will have to prepare future adults for dialogue across boundaries to which their families may be confined; it involves the economy/employment minister, as there will be issues of labour-market access and claims of job discrimination; it involves the health minister, as there may be cultural sensitivities of which medical personnel need to be aware; and so on. An holistic, 'joined-up' approach is therefore needed, whereby clear objectives are translated into specific commitments by departments and other agencies—the Spanish plan has 10 objectives and 12 consequent 'areas of action'.[86]

Secondly, and relatedly, this requires co-ordination of the effort at the highest political level, preferably the office of the prime minister. In turn, this sends out an important signal across government and the wider society of a serious political commitment. And, thirdly, such a plan will be best tailored to the particular needs of any one diverse society and will be most effectively implemented on the ground if relevant non-governmental organisations are involved as partners in the design of the plan and in its delivery. For minority NGOs in particular, this provides important access to, and a voice within, government at national level.

Underpinning such a plan is a break with former methods of managing cultural diversity, which the 'White Paper process', and in particular the consultation with Council of Europe member states, showed had become obsolete. On the one hand, the approach of requiring members of minority community to assimilate to a dominant majority ethos falls foul of the principles of equality of citizenship, reciprocal recognition and impartiality of public authority set out in the White Paper. On the other, the multiculturalist alternative of recognising separate, homogenised 'cultures' within society does not comply with the individualistic conception of society and so tends to breach universal norms, such as gender equality,[87] while putting up cultural walls favouring mutual incomprehension rather than dialogue.[88] Hence, the Spanish integration plan affirmed, like the subsequent White Paper, that integration was a '*two-way process* of mutual adaptation'.[89]

If even the best of integration plans are to have real purchase in society at large, however, **local authorities** must be heavily involved, particularly urban municipalities. Hundreds of authorities in Germany and Denmark, in particular, have developed integration/foreigners' councils, which provide a forum for representatives drawn from migrant communities to engage with the local political leadership and for the challenges of integration to be dealt with jointly.

Good practice in this regard has been prepared by the Congress of Regional and Local Authorities of Europe.[90] It is desirable that such a council be chaired by the local mayor, or co-chaired with a minority representative, to ensure it carries real weight. And to make that commitment substantive, it helps if working groups are established to address particular challenges as practical problems to be solved, before they become the source of huge symbolic conflicts—such as supporting

schools were there are many children whose mother tongue is not the main ‘host’ language.

There have, however, been difficulties, including in sustaining interest among fragmented minority communities and maintaining effective dialogue with the municipal authority as a whole.[91] These may best be faced by the latter producing an intercultural plan through a dialogic process which fully engages the former. Here Barcelona has led the way, publishing such a plan in 2010. It follows the new paradigm of defining interculturalism as an approach which transcends the failed models of the past, of assimilation and multiculturalism, and the plan itself was the product of widespread public participation.[92]

While each local authority has particular problems to face, this offers at least a template others can adapt. It is less applicable, of course, to sparsely populated rural areas of the globe, but the worst interethnic tensions, escalating into violence, are heavily concentrated in urban areas unless land issues are involved. More than 90 per cent of the deaths following intercommunal riots in India, for example, have occurred in cities.[93]

The Intercultural Cities programme, a partnership between the Council of Europe and the EU, provides a network through which participating cities, 11 so far, can share ideas about good practice in intercultural dialogue. This has developed an integration model, which has been taken up by Copenhagen in developing its integration concept. In Italy meanwhile, where Reggio Emilia is the participating city, a national network of intercultural cities has recently been initiated.[94]

Intercultural dialogue must, however, take place ‘spontaneously’ in such quotidian milieux as **the neighbourhood and the workplace**. Dialogue can succeed in making neighbourhoods vibrant and attractive places where they represent a ‘commons’ that all can share, rather than ghettoised spaces colonised by particular ‘communities’. Part of the reason for the peculiar vehemence of US public and political discourse, particularly where ‘race’ is the unspoken undercurrent, is the Balkanisation of urban civic life, with decades of ‘white flight’ to the suburbs and ‘exurbs’ leaving behind inner-city neighbourhoods primarily inhabited by African or Hispanic Americans, who can then be stereotyped as the threatening or even criminal ‘other’.

Fostering dialogue, then, is about planning policies which favour ‘open-minded spaces’ of *piazzas* and parks over private enclosures like shopping malls.[95] It implies transport policies which support social networks by an emphasis on pedestrian movement and public transport rather than the private car. And it entails social policies which encourage a rich associational life not bounded by ethnic divides.

One very simple example of exploiting the public realm to promote dialogue is the Dutch ‘Days of Dialogue’ project. Neighbourhood organisations, enterprises, schools and so on are invited to organise dialogue tables, where a trained facilitator leads a discussion for 2-3 hours on a central theme among 6-8 participants. In the space of a few years, this project has spread to more than 50 municipalities and it has been found to develop enduring relationships between some individuals who have taken part.

Trade unions represent important associations which by their emphasis on social solidarity have a strong capacity to train ‘fellow citizens’. But the workplace is an important site of intercultural dialogue in its own right.

Here the case for workforce—and boardroom—diversity has been well made. A correspondence has been established between the degree of prosperity of US regions and the three variables of technology, talent and … tolerance.[96] One of the fastest growing sports in Silicon Valley in recent decades has been cricket, reflecting the influx of qualified workers from the Indian sub-continent to its successful high-tech enterprises. In France, some 3,000 enterprises, including major companies like Canal Plus, have signed up to a *Charte de la Diversité*, supported by government. The charter has been translated into German and has been accepted by a number of large firms there.

In the informational age, the old vertical corporation must give way to the 'network enterprise'[97] if information of sufficient originality about customers and suppliers, products and processes is to be generated and to be circulated sufficiently rapidly to ensure a competitive edge. New ideas will tend to come from new sources or at least out of communication between individuals with different perspectives. So culturally diverse teams of autonomous employees, rather than collectively conforming 'company men'—like the array of identical mechanical clerks clicking away in the opening scene of Billy Wilder's 1960 film *The Apartment*—are now at a premium.

For example, an Italian, Stefan Marzano, took over product design at the Dutch electronics giant Phillips in the 1990s. Feeling the organisation had become staid, he deliberately sought to make his 500-strong department more diverse, eventually ending up with 33 nationalities on his team. Marzano argues that it was this revivified staffing mix which put Phillips products once more at the cutting edge by the end of the decade.[98]

Social psychologists point out that while cultural diversity can be a source of creativity and innovation, blind agreement or 'groupthink' can lead to destructive decisions.[99] Many have asked why no one shouted 'stop' on the top floors of the financial titans which were to collapse in 2008. It is perhaps no coincidence that neither of the two most prominent forecasters of the crisis to come, the Turkish-born US economist Nouriel Roubini and the female British financial journalist Gillian Tett, had the cultural profile likely to see them appointed to the board of a Wall Street or City company—where all around the table agreed that the bubble was really a never-ending boom.

Agents of intercultural dialogue

Intercultural dialogue needs protagonists with the credibility and voluntary commitment to drive it forward on the ground—to be the facilitators of conversations. Equally, such individuals and organisations need moral and intellectual, as well as financial, support. Two groups are in the vanguard in this regard: civic-minded NGOs, particularly those involving women and young people, and individual cultural practitioners.

By definition, the social world outside government is populated by **NGOs**. But the transition from a relatively stable and predictable industrial capitalism, operating within national state confines, to a globalised, informational mode has seen something of a bifurcation within the non-governmental arena.

On the one hand are the new social movements which emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, concerned with issues of gender equality, environmental protection, peace and human rights, underpinned by a strong commitment to autonomy which chimed with the individualistic concept of society. On the other hand, the 1990s saw a revival

of nationalist and religious movements, which capitalised on the economic turbulence and social insecurity which were the downside of globalisation, and so were often more effective at reaching out to those excluded from the world of travel and global communication.[100]

In Cyprus, for example, the NGOs comprising the bicommunal peace movement meeting in the 'buffer zone' through the medium of English during the 1990s challenged the nationalistic discourses on the Turkish- and Greek-Cypriot sides, with their 'traditional pattern of interaction based on reified and objectified images of the other'.[101] But this was not enough to ensure the Annan plan would win sufficient support on both sides in the 2004 referenda, when a majority of Greek Cypriots rejected it, or to prevent the defeat of the more moderate camp in the Turkish-Cypriot community in the 2010 election.

Because nationalism tends to valorise 'masculine virtues' like 'national pride, courage, physical strength and self-sacrifice', women's NGOs specifically may be critical to contesting it.[102] And, on a more mundane level, projects focused on women from both minority and majority communities—such as to improve labour-market opportunities or to provide childcare—can build bonds across ethnic divides on the basis of shared gender experiences.[103]

When the failure of intercultural dialogue spills over into violence, this tends to take the form of the 'deadly ethnic riot'. The participants in such episodes around the world are not only overwhelmingly male but overwhelming young.[104]

Yet young people can at the same time be moved by idealistic campaigns and may feel more at ease with a world of 'really existing cosmopolitanisation' and the various electronic means by which intercultural dialogue may be effected at a distance. In Northern Ireland, for example, the Spirit of Enniskillen Trust has for over two decades brought young people together across the sectarian divide to challenge intolerance. Many have been so enthused that they have gone on to volunteer as facilitators of dialogue themselves.[105]

The discourse of intolerance is a discourse of 'collective punishment': all putative members of 'communities' are deemed to blame for the depredations of the homogenised 'other'. The discourse of cosmopolitanism, conversely, is a discourse of individual responsibility. This not only means that the individual war criminal should be punished for their crimes, before international courts if necessary, but also more positively that each of us as an individual global citizens has a responsibility to engage in, and support, intercultural dialogue.

It has become a truism to say that 'soft skills', notably in communication, are essential for today's world. But this is often conceived purely in an instrumental, employment-related way. On a broader social canvas, individual citizens now all need the capacities for compassion and empathy on which intercultural dialogue depends.

In this context, **cultural practitioners**, across a range of disciplines, are key vectors of intercultural dialogue, particularly in the most challenging of situations. It is inherent in the work generated by the visual, aural, performative and written arts that they present the viewer/listener/reader with characters and scenarios outside of their daily routines and physically exterior to them—on a stage, a screen, a plinth or the pages of a book—which places them in a position requiring reflection for the work of art to be appreciated.

No one, for example, can fail to be moved in circling Michelangelo's *Les Esclaves* in the Louvre in Paris. This monumental sculpture powerfully evokes that empathy on which a common humanity depends. To the viewer, that is the only, and indeed compelling, reaction. Yet slavery throughout history has of course been 'legitimised' by the official insistence that slaves are *Untermenschen*, deserving of no other fate.

Visual artists obviously have a particular capacity to encourage the viewer to reflect on taken-for-granted assumptions. For example, Erich Hartmann's arresting black-and-white photographs of relics of the concentration camps a half-century earlier embody his belief 'that if we decide that we must link our lives inextricably—that "me" and "them" must be replaced by "us"—we may succeed in making a world where gas chambers will never be used again'.[106]

The launch of Artists for Dialogue, as part of the 'Baku process', recognised the significance of cultural practitioners. To favour the emergence of such figures, cultural policy must protect the autonomy of the individual artist from state control and the domain of the arts generally from the dominance of commercial considerations.

As to the first concern, the Council of Europe's recent CultureWatchEurope initiative pinpoints developments, difficulties and good practices so that cultural governance and policy-making can be enhanced Europe-wide, from a human-rights perspective. Key words in this mission are transparency, access and participation, respect for identity and diversity, intercultural dialogue and cultural rights. As to the second constraint, Hartmann's status as a member of the international Magnum photographers' co-operative provides a good example of how practitioners with a public purpose can be shielded from the power of private money.

Two specific approaches by which cultural practitioners can promote dialogue without their work being politically instrumentalised can be seen through focusing on music. One is to bring players from different cultural backgrounds together within the frame of a universal form.

In establishing the East-West Divan Orchestra, Daniel Barenboim involved Israeli and Palestinian musicians in a common project, which offered a symbol of how particularistic identity claims in the region could be transcended. And in Iraq in 2009, a teenage pianist, Zuhal Sultan, literally took up this baton, initiating a National Youth Orchestra embracing musicians from a range of ethnic background. Given the obvious physical challenges of assembling the team, auditioning videos were posted on You Tube.

Musicians experimenting with the potential of fusion among various cultural 'selves' can equally produce compelling results. The emergence of jazz in the 20th-century US would have been inconceivable outside of the contribution to American popular music of Jewish refugees from the pogroms of eastern Europe and the role of the blues in African-American life.

Similarly, Youssou N'Dour has become one of the leading figures in 'world music', in a career spanning decades, through his eclectic intermingling of traditional Senegalese music with a range of other genres around the globe. And the ensemble Los Desterrados have created a unique folkloric sound, expressed through Judeo-Spanish, by mining the vein of musical sedimentation laid down by Jews wandering across the Mediterranean basin in the centuries following the expulsions from Spain in 1492, before the cultural boundaries created by 19th-century nation-states.

What we know, and what we need to know

In the decade since the events of 'September 11', we have learned a great deal from research and experience, including the 'White Paper process', as to what makes for success in intercultural dialogue. We have learned, first of all, that there is no substitute for dialogue in managing an increasingly interconnected and so increasingly diverse world.

A retreat into a fundamentalist refusal of dialogue, to preserve religious and/or nationalistic identities from 'contamination'—as expressed, for example, in the dynamiting of the huge pair of sixth-century Buddha statues in central Afghanistan at the behest of the then Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, in 2001—is not only intolerant but is as viable as trying to stop the globe rotating on its axis. Pursuing violence by states or non-state forces against the ethnic 'other' in a presumed 'clash of civilisations' is, equally, not only inhumane but is guaranteed to have inchoate and unanticipated side-effects, from which the perpetrator will not be immune, as evidenced by the continuing miasma in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Secondly, intercultural dialogue can not be an anything-goes Tower of Babel. The universal norms of democracy, human rights and the rule of law must provide the parameters if this is not to be a dialogue of the deaf between particularistic claims and if inhuman practices, notably those targeted at women—such as genital mutilation, 'honour' killings or forced marriages—are not to be wrapped up in the language of cultural pluralism.

Thirdly, just as we know that these norms prevented European states from yet again embroiling the whole world in war in the second half of the 20th century, in the 21st century we can expect that the internal political architecture which has been identified as being required more specifically for intercultural dialogue—equality of citizenship, reciprocal recognition and impartial authority—will provide the antidote to the 'new', intra-state wars which rose relentlessly around the globe during that time.

Fourthly, intercultural dialogue needs to take place at all levels, from the local to the global. The virus of intolerance can appear and spread in any context at any time, so there needs to be action throughout to immunise society against it—prevention is much better than cure—and to combat it when it emerges.

Fifthly, intercultural dialogue needs not just a normative consensus and supportive structures. It also needs agents—individuals as well as organisations—to make it happen. Political leaders must eschew the easy option of populist rallying cries against convenient scapegoats, in favour of the higher road of presenting citizens honestly with the complexity of the problems they face and the hard choices which solutions entail.

In so doing, they may find over time that this helps rebuild trust between electors and a 'political class' whose venality they have in many cases come to despise. History will, after all, be very much kinder to Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela than Slobodan Milosević or Foday Sankoh.

There remain outstanding problems on which the World Forum might point to solutions. First, there is the question as how intercultural dialogue can answer the cry for 'security' in an uncertain world, often translated into the scapegoating of members of minority communities, who can be painted as much more tangible and concrete

sources of insecurity—however inappropriately—than the invisible, global financial markets and their complex derivative instruments.

Part of the answer is that, unlike the multiculturalism which became fashionable in western Europe and north America in earlier decades—itself a reprise of the millet system of the Ottoman empire—intercultural dialogue does privilege communication across, rather than consolidation of, ethnic dividing lines. Ensuring education systems are not segregated by ethnicity or social class and that housing is not ghettoised into either minority-ethnic or exclusive neighbourhoods will at least provide the daily contact with diverse others which makes dehumanising stereotyping far harder to countenance.

Part too may lie in a recognition that tackling the sources of insecurity at root, through universal welfare states—as in the Nordic countries—into which all contribute and from which all benefit on an impartial basis across the life cycle, engenders a society in which trust among citizens is markedly higher, as public-attitudes surveys indicate, than in societies riven by ethnic division. By contrast, 'tough', means-tested alternatives encourage claimants—often concentrated in particular minority communities—to work a complicated system to their advantage and affluent taxpayers to suspect widespread abuse by those they deem their social inferiors.[107]

Worst of all, in states—covering large parts of the globe—without any significant welfare arrangements at all, politics inevitably becomes a bitter competition for scarce public resources, whose distribution all too readily follows lines of ethnic patronage. This is further evidence of the interconnectedness of the challenges facing the globe in the 21st century.

Secondly, there is the question as to how intercultural dialogue can become embedded in the culture of everyday life. 'Really existing cosmopolitanisation' is a necessary condition for intercultural dialogue in everyday milieux but it is not a sufficient one. Here government may be able to help simply by ensuring that there are 'safe spaces' for dialogue, where all can contribute without fear or exclusion.

For instance, Canada has attracted, and embraced, much immigration in recent decades. And research in multi-ethnic areas of Montreal has found a virtuous circle of interaction between migrants and members of the 'host' community leading to greater cultural appreciation and tolerance, while highlighting the importance of municipal governments and public spaces facilitating local 'cultures of hospitality'.[108]

The Intercultural Cities programme has thrown up a host of examples of good practice in this regard, inside and outside the network across Europe—from festivals to football, from mentoring to mediation.[109] A key innovation here would be to open up the network to global participation. Already, Mexico City wants to join and there is interest from cities in Canada, the US and Japan.

Finally, there is the subtle but pressing question as to how political discourse can change from binary antagonism to the 'agonistic pluralism'[110] required for intercultural dialogue to thrive. The former tends to dominate societies divided between ethnic blocs, represented as if these were homogeneous collective entities. Rwanda has pursued a solution to the problem of antagonism but only at the expense of pluralism: all talk of 'divisionism' has been officially suppressed under the regime installed after the 1994 genocide.

The individualistic concept of society may point to a way out of this dilemma. Such a society is characterised by a genuine ‘cultural variety’, rather than a mere ‘variety of cultures’.[111]

Perhaps too the collapse of the global neo-liberal economic paradigm may occasion a reinvigoration and expansion of the left-right political spectrum. This provides a universal language for political deliberation: in 77 countries taking part in the World Values Survey in 1999-2001, only in Jordan, Pakistan and Morocco were a majority of respondents unable or unwilling to place themselves at some point along it.[112] And its weakness in recent decades, in which macro-economic debate was constrained by the ‘Washington consensus’, favoured instead the emergence of collective ethnic identifications.[113]

Intercultural dialogue is a challenge, and indeed an opportunity, which never comes to an end. In parallel, therefore, the dialogue *about* dialogue itself must continue indefinitely, if new manifestations of intolerance are to be defeated and the full potentiality of the endlessly changing kaleidoscope engendered by ‘really existing cosmopolitanisation’ is to be realised. Three options suggest themselves. In each case, the international organisations which have led the debate about intercultural dialogue in recent years could be joint sponsors.

First, there is a risk of ‘intercultural dialogue fatigue’, since while the concept has a strong normative foundation and is of obvious political utility it does not have enough ‘scientific substance’. There is as yet only one substantial academic volume devoted to intercultural dialogue.[114]

This deficit of objective analysis implies the formation of an institute for the study of intercultural dialogue—looked at as philosophy, policy and practice—which might be attached to an existing university or a small consortium of universities around the world. There is already, in a European context, a network of nine universities which offer a masters degree in intercultural communication.

Secondly, while there are various networks for dialogue, including within the various international organisations involved, these are inevitably patchy and fragmented. They need to be connected up and developed. One way of doing this would be to establish a virtual hub, particularly with a view to providing a reservoir for the collection of examples of good practice—as with the regularly updated Council of Europe compendium of cultural policies and the Intercultural Cities programme—and an electronic vehicle for real-time discussion among experts, policy-makers and practitioners.

Finally, there could be a case for a regular—annual or biennial—world forum on intercultural dialogue. Rotating around the globe, this could take stock of the current state of play and distil and share lessons learned from contemporary developments, perhaps with the venue chosen each time to focus on particular regional concerns. A big risk with the dialogue *about* intercultural dialogue is that, for all its novelty, it could easily fail to keep up with such a rapidly changing global picture. Migration flows, demographic changes, new threats of nationalistic intolerance, racism and religious fundamentalism, all require firm, urgent and co-ordinated action.

It would be crucial, of course, that such an event did not substantiate Craig Calhoun’s ironic description of cosmopolitanism as ‘the class consciousness of frequent flyers’[115] and that its participants’ feet were kept firmly on the ground by facing concrete problems in a participatory format. But it could, itself, represent a rich,

intercultural dialogue—setting, and resetting, a public agenda for how global civil society should address one of its biggest, yet not insuperable, challenges.

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