

*The Value of Diversity: How Best to Combine Human Rights and Peaceful
Coexistence in 21st-Century Liberal Democracies*

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It's a great honour to be asked to speak in this historic building, and to such a distinguished audience. I am deeply grateful to my friend Michael Platzer and the Karl Renner Institute for arranging it, and to you, Mr Schieder, for those very kind opening remarks.

Michael knows me as Kofi Annan's former speechwriter, and the editor of the selection of Mr Annan's speeches which is on sale outside/at the back of this room, as a book entitled *We the Peoples*. When we met a couple of months ago in Istanbul, at the annual conference of the Academic Council on the UN System, his first suggestion was that I should come to Vienna to talk about that book – which of course I am happy to do, and since Vienna is one of the UN's headquarters this is a very appropriate place to do it. But while in Istanbul Michael also heard me speak at another conference, where my theme was “Freedom in Diversity”, and he picked up a copy of the essay with that title, written last year by Timothy Garton Ash, Kerem Öktem and myself, and published by the Dahrendorff Programme for the Study of Freedom at the University of Oxford. (Some copies of this too are available at the back, and they are free, on a first-come-first-served basis. If you get there too late, don't worry: you can also download the text as a pdf or e-book on the website of St Antony's College, Oxford.)

Michael thought that this theme might also be of interest to the Austrian public. And so, after some discussion, we agreed to combine the two, which is actually not at all difficult, because diversity is a theme to which Kofi Annan attaches great importance.

In fact the title of this talk – “The Value of Diversity” – is also the title of the last chapter of the book *We the Peoples*, which contains five statements on that subject that he made, as UN Secretary-General, between 1999 and 2006. Let me mention four of them.

The first is a lecture that he gave, in Oxford as it happens, at the invitation of the Centre for Islamic Studies. It was given at a time when there was still much discussion of Samuel Huntington's book, *The Clash of Civilizations?*, and when President Khatami of Iran had proposed, as an alternative, a “dialogue among civilizations”. Needless to say, Annan preferred dialogue to clash, but he avoided a direct endorsement of Khatami's proposal because he felt that implicitly it accepted Huntington's premise – the idea that today's world is, or can be, divided into separate, self-contained civilisations, each governed by its own rules and values. That would indeed be a form of pluralism at the global level, but it would risk suppressing diversity within each “civilisation”, especially if, as Huntington seems to envisage, each civilisation is seen as dominant within a particular region of the world. Instead,

Annan insisted that “the dialogue among civilizations must be a dialogue within societies as well as between them” – a dialogue which would aim “not to eliminate differences between human beings, but to preserve and even celebrate them as a source of joy and strength”.

The second statement is a speech that Annan made in Indonesia in February 2000, only a few months after the traumatic events which led to, and followed, Indonesia’s acceptance of the right of the people of East Timor to determine their own destiny and form an independent state. Many Indonesians feared that this would lead to the secession of other territories and even the breakup of their vast and diverse country. Annan offered them some advice on how to avoid this, using their national motto “Unity in Diversity”. He pleaded with them not to think that the United Nations, because it had organized the referendum in East Timor and was now helping the Timorese prepare for independence, was “predisposed in favour of separatism or that its purpose is to break up large States into smaller ones”. On the contrary, he said, “the purpose of the United Nations is to enable peoples to live together without conflict. If there is one thing we hate in the modern world, it is so-called ethnic cleansing – the idea that people can live safely only among their own kind and that the price of survival is to expel or exterminate anyone whose language or religion or culture is different from their own.

“But,” he added, “those who oppose separatism have got to show that their solution is less wasteful and more imaginative. Minorities have to be convinced that the State really belongs to them, as well as to the majority, and that both will be the losers if it breaks up.” I must admit that when I drafted those words for the Secretary-General I did not foresee how relevant they would prove to be in my own country. But they do describe exactly what those of us who support the continued union between England and Scotland are currently trying to do. On the 18th of this month we shall find out whether we have succeeded.

The third statement in the chapter is a very short one. It was made at the annual Interfaith Service of Commitment to the United Nations held at St Bartholomew’s Church, in New York, on 13 September 2001. Two days earlier the World Trade Center had been destroyed, in perhaps the most spectacular act of terrorism the world has yet seen, and the city was still reeling from the shock. The danger that one of the world’s most diverse and open communities might descend into racial and religious conflict was all too obvious. So the Secretary-General’s attendance at this service took on vastly heightened significance. He went there to praise the efforts of the Interfaith Centre, which – he said – “proceed, I know, from a shared faith – faith in a dimension of life beyond the material, and in the obligation, binding on all human beings, to strive to understand each other and live in peace... That is the faith we must have in each other – now and in the days ahead.”

Nearly three years later, at another church in New York – Trinity Church, Wall Street, very close to the World Trade Center – Annan had the chance to spell out that idea in greater detail. He was asked to speak on the theme “Naming Evil”, but he may have surprised his hosts by declaring, at the outset, that the word “evil” was not a regular part of his vocabulary. He conceded that “unquestionably, some very evil things happen in the world”, but suggested that it may be better “when we use the word ‘evil’ as an adjective, to apply it to actions rather than to people”. And his conclusion was:

If we are intent on naming evil ... then let us name it as intolerance.

Let us name it as exclusion.

Let us name it as the false assumption that we have nothing to learn from beliefs and traditions different from our own.

So it wasn't such a great leap for me, from drafting speeches like that for Kofi Annan to drafting the report published three years ago by the Council of Europe on "Living Together: Combining Diversity and Freedom in 21st Century Europe", and then the Oxford essay on *Freedom in Diversity* last year. The central idea of both these texts is that diversity is something to be cherished, not feared, but also something that needs to be carefully managed. The specific diversity that they focus on is the cultural, religious, ethnic and linguistic diversity of Western societies which has come about, over the last half-century or so, as a result of mass migration. The Council of Europe report looked at problems affecting, to a greater or lesser degree, all the 47 member States of that organization, while the Oxford one analysed and compared, in greater detail, the policies that had been adopted in just three of those countries – Britain, France and Germany – but also in Canada and the United States. Austria, you will notice, was not one of the five, and therefore I must leave it to you to decide how far our observations are or are not applicable to conditions and policies in this country.

I hesitate to say that recent migration has made Western societies *more* diverse. They have always been diverse in many ways, being composed of people of many different origins, languages, faiths and opinions. And one major source of this diversity has always been the arrival of successive waves of immigrants – waves seldom absorbed without some degree of stress and even conflict, but which have also enriched and developed the identities of both migrants and "hosts". But the recent experience of Western Europe and North America has been different, in significant ways.

Until 1948 Europe was a net exporter of population. North America was not, of course, but did go through a period of tightly controlling immigration from the 1920s to the early 1960s. Since then, by contrast, all five countries in our study have experienced immigration on a massive, perhaps unprecedented scale. In north-western Europe, the post-war reconstruction boom created a large number of urban job vacancies, which were filled initially by internal migration from the countryside but soon sucked in workers from further afield – south Europeans (including Turks) in Germany, North Africans in France, and in Britain people from former colonies in the Caribbean and South Asia. In the early 1960s, the United States too opened its doors to a massive wave of immigrants, after a 40-year period of tight controls, with the result that the number of first-generation immigrants living in the United States quadrupled, from 9.6m in 1970 to about 38m in 2007. In Canada meanwhile, since the Immigration Act was revised in 1967, immigrants have come overwhelmingly from the developing world, with growing numbers most recently from South Asia and China.

By 2010, London, Paris, Toronto and eight cities in the US all had one million or more foreign-born residents, while the proportion of the five countries' population that was foreign or foreign-born ranged from 14.6% in France to 25.3% in Canada. By 2011 no fewer than 51% of those living in Toronto were foreign-born, and one third of these foreign-born residents had arrived in Canada within the last ten years. In

Germany, 20% of the population now has a “migrant history”, and every second child born in the city of Hamburg has a “migrant background”.

So much for sheer numbers. But the **political context** of this mass migration was also new. Before 1948 the white population in both Europe and North America generally considered itself superior to other races. Since then, by contrast, people in the West have been coming to assume, at least in theory, that all human beings have equal rights. Moreover, in earlier periods there was little or no welfare state, and therefore less scope for arguments about the relative contributions made, and benefits derived, by different sections of society.

Nor was there democracy as we know it today. There is plenty of evidence that indigenous populations, or host societies, felt no less negative about newcomers in the past than they do today, but it was usually easier for governments to ignore their feelings, and to suppress any violent expression of them, without paying much of a political price. Today, by contrast, we have the phenomenon of democratic impatience: governments are subject to greater pressures, and expected to maintain harmony, or social cohesion, in a fast-changing society. The results are constantly measured, and often found wanting, so that policy shifts back and forth, sometimes with unintended or perverse consequences. And these arguments have been sharpened, in the last two decades, by attempts to restructure the welfare state with a view to reducing its cost.

Many would argue that **cultural and religious differences** between the existing population and the new minorities have also been greater in this period than in the past. In particular, European societies which had hitherto been predominantly Christian, and were becoming more secular, found themselves absorbing large numbers of Muslims, who may now form as much as 8% of the population in France, 5% in Germany and 3% in Britain. While the second and third generations of these new communities have been growing up in the West, much of the postcolonial Islamic world has experienced a strong reassertion of the primacy of religion in social and political life, often expressed as a reaction against Western influence or domination; and this, moreover, is a time when cheap travel and vastly improved and accelerated communications (the internet, satellite television, mobile phones) have made people far more aware of events in other parts of the world. On the one hand, this makes it far easier than it was in the past, not only for immigrants but for their children and grandchildren born in the host country – a category for which the name “postmigrants” has been coined – to remain in close touch with their countries of origin, and feel that they belong to a wider space than their country of residence: a space which may include the country of origin of their parents, or larger religious or cultural worlds such as the world of Islam. On the other hand, many *non*-Muslims in the West have come to see Islam as a religion that embodies a particularly indigestible culture, harder to reconcile with the Western way of life than the traditions brought by earlier waves of immigrants. However inaccurate this perception may be, in such matters it is the perceptions themselves that count. If strong enough, they may even become self-fulfilling prophecies.

For all these reasons, the five countries we studied have all found managing diversity in the last few decades a considerable challenge. In all five, governments have reacted to mass immigration and its consequences in different ways at different times, experimenting with different approaches, which have seldom been applied as coherently or consistently as rhetoric might suggest. All have confronted similar

dilemmas – economic arguments *for* immigration versus political ones *against* it; peaceful coexistence of diverse communities versus their freedom to insult each other; the rights of established citizens versus the need for special efforts to assist postmigrants and promote integration; and none of the five can claim to have resolved these dilemmas in a complete or permanent way. Each has been humbled in some degree by recent failures of integration, and perhaps my own country especially just in the last few weeks: on the one hand we have seen someone apparently born and educated in Britain publicly commit a truly barbaric act in a foreign country, apparently motivated by religious fanaticism; while on the other it has been revealed that more than 1400 children were sexually abused and exploited over a period of 16 years in the Yorkshire town of Rotherham, mainly by men of Pakistani heritage, and that one reason why this was allowed to continue was that public officials were reluctant to discuss the ethnic dimension for fear of being labelled racist.

In the light of such events we believe that all five countries may be more willing now than in the past to study what the others have done, with a view to learning lessons both positive and negative – and our aim in undertaking the study was to contribute to this learning process. In the spring of last year we convened a conference of distinguished scholars, policymakers, writers and journalists to discuss our findings, and then – drawing on both the research and the discussion – we came up with ten **lessons for public policy**, aimed at upholding the rights and freedoms of the diverse individuals who make up a diverse society.

Most of these lessons are not addressed exclusively, or even primarily, to national governments. Rather, they are recommendations to society as a whole, and to a wide range of actors within it – people and institutions whose words and actions often have as great or even greater consequences for the day-to-day life of diverse societies than do those of national legislators. I mean such actors as local authorities, churches and other religious groups, civil society or voluntary organizations more generally, celebrities and role models, employers, trade unions, mass media (both old and new) and, probably most important of all, educators.

The first three lessons all concern **citizenship**. We noted that in all five countries there are large numbers of long-term residents who are not citizens, and this seemed to us a matter of concern. Citizenship does not, of course, guarantee full inclusion or integration in a society. There are many examples of people who are citizens but still feel excluded and marginalised, or live – by choice or otherwise – isolated within their own communities. But several recent studies show that citizenship, without being a panacea, can be a valuable tool for integrating newcomers into a society as willing and useful members. It is less helpful when treated as a reward for, or certificate of, successful integration, bestowed on new residents only if and when they can demonstrate that they are already integrated. This latter approach may deter them from applying for citizenship, or at least delay their acquisition of it, and can thus defeat its own object by delaying or impeding the integration process itself, and maintaining a large body of foreign residents who do not enjoy full civic rights.

Better a tool than a reward, then. But we went further, arguing that for all long-term residents citizenship should be considered a democratic right. The founding principle of democracy is, after all, that the government is chosen by the governed; that all who have to live under the law should have a share in choosing the lawmakers. If large numbers of them are disenfranchised by being denied citizenship, there is a greater risk that they will be treated in an arbitrary way. The claim of the

state to be democratic is also weakened, as are the chances that these long-term residents will fully identify with it. Therefore, our first lesson is that **all long-term residents in a democratic state should be citizens of that state.**

Citizenship does, of course, bring with it obligations as well as rights, and it is highly desirable that this should be understood by all citizens, both old and new. But in practice it is only new citizens who are expected to prove that they understand these obligations by passing a test. This is a form of discrimination, and we are ambivalent about it. It is certainly reasonable to ask people applying for citizenship to declare explicitly that they wish to become active and law-abiding citizens. But beyond this, while tests do have a value in drawing new citizens' attention to the content of citizenship and its obligations, they should not become, or be seen as, arbitrary and discriminatory hurdles, making citizenship more difficult to acquire and resulting in the exclusion of large numbers of residents from the body politic. If there are to be tests, therefore, they should be simple and encouraging, rather than setting high bars which are unattainable for immigrants with only basic education or skills. Above all, failing the test must not be the end of the story, resulting in permanent denial of citizenship to people who will remain as residents in the country. There must be an active policy to remedy whatever failures of knowledge or understanding the test reveals, by organizing special classes for those who fail and allowing them to re-sit the test after a short time.

By contrast, we definitely support **ceremonies** to mark accession to citizenship, as a matter for celebration both by the new citizens themselves and by the community they are joining. Such ceremonies must make the new citizen feel welcome and included, rather than intimidated, excluded or unwelcome. And so our second lesson, applicable to both tests and ceremonies, is that **new citizens must be made welcome in their new country, and be willing to contribute to its success.**

One other obstacle to residents becoming citizens is, in some countries, the fact that they hold the citizenship of another country – usually their country of origin. Our third lesson is that this obstacle too should be removed, where it exists, by **legalising dual citizenship**. This was done in Britain by the British Nationality Act of 1948, in Canada by the Citizenship Act of 1967, and in the United States by a Supreme Court decision of the same year. In France it did not need to be done, since in principle dual nationality has never been outlawed, although that principle has come under pressure in recent decades. In Germany the process has been gradual and is still incomplete, while in some other European countries – and I believe Austria is one of them, but perhaps you will correct me – it has hardly begun.

Our fourth lesson concerns **education**. Schools, along with the family, probably have the biggest capacity to influence the attitudes of future citizens, and therefore the biggest responsibility. We need to get away from the notion, which seems implicit if not explicit in much contemporary discourse, that the sole purpose of education is to equip people for economic activity. That would certainly have surprised the founders of the French and American public education systems, to name but two. Their aim was, rather, to ensure the unity of their respective nations, and the effective functioning of their institutions, by forming a society of well educated citizens with a shared civic culture. An alternative, more liberal approach would see education's primary purpose as being to ensure that individuals can develop their full potential to lead meaningful lives, by giving them the opportunities and the

framework they will need. But that too includes playing their part as full members of a democratic society, with all the attendant rights and responsibilities.

Three subjects seem particularly important in this context. First, children must be equipped to communicate with their fellow-citizens in the main **language** or languages of the society, which will normally also be the official language or languages of the state. Language proficiency is essential for participation in wider society and for the exercise of citizenship rights and duties.

As with any other subject, schools achieve best results when they follow a needs-oriented approach that seeks to develop differentiated strategies for each disadvantaged group. If there are only limited levels of proficiency in the national language among a certain group of pupils, additional resources need to be made available for teaching it. This is not something that can always be left to the local level, because schools which educate children from disadvantaged communities are often located in disadvantaged areas, and suffer from underfunding. Both public and private funders (including, for instance, local employers) have a responsibility to overcome this problem. Deciding to allocate funding for extra language tuition for pupils of immigrant background may not be easy in a time of austerity. It is a matter of priorities, and therefore a test of leadership.

Secondly, there should be more and better teaching of **history**. Children should learn at school “the story so far” of how and why the society and state of which they will be citizens came to take its current form. This will equip them to understand the contemporary culture and institutions of the country, and can enable them to develop civic pride and a sense of belonging, with local loyalties. But in a globalised world and a multicultural society, it must also equip them as citizens of the world. This means it must be set firmly in the context of world history, and include material on places, religions and cultures with which pupils and their families are likely to identify – as well as the history of migration itself. And it must develop their capacity for constructive controversy and critical thought, including the questioning of established narratives. If they leave school with *both* a secure sense of their place in the world *and* the ability to think critically, they will be well on the way to becoming good democratic citizens.

Thirdly, school curricula should include more **civics**. One way to think about this is to set the education system the task of ensuring that *all* adult citizens would pass whatever test is set for foreigners seeking to acquire citizenship. In other words, they should have learnt at school to understand the general principles of democracy and the rule of law, their rights and obligations in a democratic state, and the particular institutions and customs of the society they belong to, as well as the norms and values that hold it together and enable it to function. As with history, this knowledge should be set in a global context, including some understanding of the political or legal traditions and religious institutions that immigrant communities may have brought with them, as well as those with a longer history within the country. Education should help members of all different groups in society to understand each other, as well as themselves.

To sum up: for education to fulfil its all-important civic function, resources must be made available where they are most needed – notably for teaching the national language or languages to those who do not learn them from their parents, but also more generally for ensuring that children from minorities or otherwise disadvantaged groups enjoy genuine equality of opportunity. For instance, if parents

from certain communities are not sending their daughters to school, additional efforts are required to get the communities, and the individual parents, to understand why this is essential. The same will apply, in equal measure, to white working class boys, and their families, in places where they have been found to suffer from a lack of self-confidence.

The overall lesson that we deduce is:

Schools must have the curriculum and resources to perform their vital function of preparing pupils for life as active citizens in a free society.

The fifth lesson concerns **labour markets and the workplace**. Here the issue of rights becomes problematic. The economist Martin Ruhs points out that there is often a trade-off between the right to migrate to a country and the rights the migrant enjoys once he or she has got there. If low-skilled migrant workers are accorded all the same rights and benefits as indigenous workers, they are less likely to get jobs – since they will be just as expensive as local workers and may not speak the language or have other relevant local knowledge. For this reason, the governments of some migrant-sending countries – both new European Union member states in eastern Europe and developing countries, led by India – have explicitly rejected equality of rights for their nationals working abroad, on the grounds that it constitutes a restrictive immigration policy measure.

Well, it is no doubt true that low-skilled temporary workers are more likely to find (or to accept) low-paid jobs if they do not have the alternative of living on welfare, and it may be true that the relatively low unemployment rate among immigrants in the United States is due partly to the absence of a generous welfare system for anyone. But there are obvious dangers in denying to immigrants – and *a fortiori* to postmigrants – rights and benefits that are available to the rest of the population. Just as democracy is undermined by having a large resident population without voting rights, so justice is undermined by maintaining a large population of migrant workers with few rights and therefore very little defence against exploitation. This is especially true of *undocumented* migrants, who dare not complain for fear of being deported. It may suit some employers, but it is likely to increase the risk of unemployment for indigenous workers, and generally to increase tensions between them and migrants or postmigrants. We therefore conclude that

Employers and colleagues must give migrants and postmigrants equal opportunities, and help them integrate socially as well as economically.

Lesson Six concerns **cities and local communities**, which is where most actual encounters happen between people of different faiths, cultures and ethnic identities. While debates about multiculturalism are carried on at the national level, it is in towns and cities that the reality of culturally diverse societies is lived day by day, with all its excitement and creativity, and all its problems. A sense of place is a vital element in identity formation – and this can include the place where people live now, as well as the one they are from. By helping define the place, civic leaders can help each resident to define her or his identity.

A special responsibility falls, therefore, on both the elected and the professional officials who lead towns and cities. National leaders may set the legal

framework for their actions, and to some extent define the terms of debate. But it is the mayors and city or district councils, working with voluntary groups of citizens, who have to deal with the issues as they arise from day to day. In the last resort it is often their wisdom – or lack of it – that determines whether people in a given area can live together successfully, without conflict or unmanageable stress.

Cities bear a large responsibility for ensuring that culturally diverse societies are *open* ones, in which people belonging to different cultural groups, including those who are perceived as recent arrivals or temporary residents, can feel at home and make their own contribution, in their own way, to the common life of the city, and to its character as a social space that is, at best, liberating and inspiring. If this is to happen peacefully and fruitfully in diverse communities there must be dialogue between members of the different groups. It is necessarily a two-way exercise: members of the majority population need to feel able to accept difference, and newcomers as a contribution to the future of their country, while members of the minorities must be equipped with knowledge of, and be ready to play by, local “rules of the game”.

In the paper we give a number examples of constructive initiatives taken at local level, and conclude that ***Towns and cities have a unique role to play in creating a sense of shared community and common purpose.***

We then move on to the issue of **representation in the media.**

Almost all media are competing for market share, and therefore tend to report events in the way that is most likely to arouse public interest. So they emphasize what is dramatic, unusual or shocking, with the result that almost all groups or individuals that receive extensive media coverage (including mainstream politicians) feel that they are being misrepresented, with undue emphasis on faults and unduly negative interpretations. The more the medium is aimed at a mass audience, the truer this is likely to be. Ethnic and religious minorities, and those most often described as “immigrants”, have a particularly strong sense of grievance, often feeling that they are *only* reported when they can be associated with crime, terrorism or behaviour that is perceived as antisocial. They also often feel they are only an *object* of media coverage, and never its subject – in the sense that they are being reported *on*, but not given the opportunity to do the reporting themselves and describe the world as it appears to *them*. In particular, many **Muslims** feel that their religion and their community are the object of constant vilification.

But if Muslims regard the media as a threat, the reverse is also true. The furious reaction of some Muslims to perceived slights to their religion has led them to be widely seen as posing a threat to freedom of expression. This concern results from a number of episodes, including the Rushdie affair in 1989 and the Danish cartoons in 2005-6. In these cases Islamist activists succeeded in instigating parts of the Muslim communities to react with violence and death threats (including at least two actual murders) to what they saw, or claimed to see, as extreme provocation – first, the portrayal of the wives of the Prophet as prostitutes (albeit only dreamt by a character in a novel), and then the publication of cartoons of the Prophet himself. Others demanded that sacred symbols or beliefs should be protected from public insult, citing the precedent of laws against Holocaust denial in some European countries. Partly as a result, the mainstream media have become very cautious in their handling of such

issues, sometimes to the point of self-censorship, for fear of a violent response.

What seems clear is that it is in the interest of *both* freedom of expression *and* good community relations that minorities should be properly represented in the media, in two distinct senses: first, the media should cover the affairs of minorities fully and fairly – without fear or favour; and secondly, minority faces and voices should be well represented among media professionals – those who can be seen and heard on TV and radio, those who report and comment in print or online, and also those with editorial or gatekeeper functions who decide what the public should or should not see and hear.

It is important that these two forms of representation are not conflated. Minority affairs should not be reported exclusively by minority journalists; nor should minority journalists be used only or mainly to report on issues affecting their own ethnic or religious group – any more than we would expect gay journalists to report only about issues of sexual orientation, or women correspondents only on women’s issues. It is essential that well-qualified members of minorities are seen to be trusted, not just to describe the experience of their own community, but as general reporters, authority figures and specialists in issues unconnected with their ethnic/religious identity.

And so our seventh lesson is

Minorities must be fully represented both in the media and by the media.

In our eighth lesson we firmly defend the right to freedom of opinion and expression, but also stress a corresponding *duty*: **the duty to speak out**. The state, we argue, should not place limits on freedom of expression, except where absolutely necessary for the prevention of violence or material damage, and the protection of privacy when there is no public interest at stake. We recognise that this core liberal principle is interpreted somewhat differently in France and Germany – and indeed in Austria – where denial of the Holocaust and some other historical facts is banned by law. While such “memory laws” need to be understood in the context of the experiences of World War II, we believe that they not only limit freedom of expression but may also have a negative effect on community relations.

As a general rule, the battle for public opinion does not belong in the law courts. But that only makes it more important to fight it where it does belong, namely in the media and public debate. Slanders and stereotypes should not be left unanswered, as they may have a corrosive influence on our chances of living together in freedom and diversity.

The American political scientist Corey Brettschneider usefully distinguishes between the state’s “coercive” and its “expressive” role. While it must maintain “freedom for the thought that we hate” in law, that should not prevent it “speaking” clearly itself— through memorial days (such as Holocaust memorial day), museums, monuments, ceremonies, parliamentary declarations, and the statements of government leaders.

Yet this obligation does not lie only on the state, or on those holding power in it. Not only people in positions of authority, but also those whose celebrity or profession gives them privileged access to the public eye or ear, have a responsibility to give, wherever possible, a fair and accurate account of the beliefs, culture and

activities of other groups, to condemn racial or religious abuse, and to refute misleading generalisations or stereotypes wherever they may encounter them. They must be aware of the impact of their statements, even casual ones, on both minority and majority attitudes. This does not mean suppressing the adversarial nature of political and social debate, which is essential for democratic decision-making, and often valuable in itself. Rather, it means ensuring that there is indeed a robust debate about questionable generalisations which stereotype or insult members of a group or adherents of a religion, and which may otherwise be in danger of gaining acceptance by default.

Even where mainstream media have begun to be more careful about their portrayal of minority groups, hatred and stereotyping are often given free rein in online social media, which are increasingly influential in forming public opinion. It is all the more important that they are not left unanswered there either, and here responsibility falls not only on public figures as conventionally understood, but also on everyone who is active online, and especially those who have a sizeable audience for what they write on these subjects. The Institute for Strategic Dialogue, in London, has published a useful guide to the skills and strategies needed to counter and refute extremist and radicalising narratives with some hope of success.

Needless to say, this applies with equal force to members of minorities, who should not only refrain from using the internet and social media to preach prejudice and intolerance, let alone violence, against the majority population or the institutions of the democratic state in which they live, but should actively oppose them wherever they appear. It is essential that people speak out against abuse and stereotyping not only *of* their own group, but also *by* members of that group. It will not serve the cause of living together in freedom if Muslims only speak out to defend Muslims, Jews only against verbal attacks on Jews, Somalis only against attacks on Somalis, liberals only in defence of liberals, and so on. Indeed, as George Orwell showed us, we have a duty to be especially critical of the falsehoods or half-truths produced by our own side.

In general, we argue that **public figures, and people with a significant presence online, should challenge stereotypes and misleading generalisations about any group.**

Our ninth lesson is about the participation of minorities in **politics**. It is no good vaunting citizenship as a tool of integration if those who acquire it do not then exercise their right to vote, or if they feel that their votes make no difference.

It is important that minorities should be, and feel, empowered, but this is not achieved by recognising self-appointed minority leaderships, or by ascribing to people identities which they do not themselves choose. Too often, the anxiety of states to find *interlocuteurs valables* through whom they can deal with minorities leads them to promote and empower self-appointed “community leaders”, some of them with dubious credentials. We give examples, from all three of the European countries we studied, of attempts made by the state to engage Muslim communities by creating or fostering semi-official bodies that are supposed to represent them. In all three cases the intentions may have been commendable; yet the desire of state agencies to interact with one body representing all Muslims (even while dealing separately with a wide range of Christian groups) has almost always been too obviously driven by the security agenda and a sense of distrust towards Muslim organizations.

In principle, therefore, it is preferable if members of minorities can express themselves through regular democratic institutions, rather than *ad hoc* bodies created or promoted by the state. Where there are already relatively well-organized and representative bodies (as for instance in Germany), the state should interact with them in the same way as it does with the main Christian denominations.

Clearly, in a democracy, members of minorities must be free not only to vote, but also to organize themselves, as they see fit – including, if they so wish, in separate parties formed to advance their specific interests. If they are denied this freedom there is a danger that they will feel the system is excluding or discriminating against them, and either relapse into apathy or contest the system through undemocratic means.

It is, however, even more desirable, indeed essential, that migrants, postmigrants and members of minorities should participate in mainstream parties, based on shared interests, values and policies, and make their voices heard in and through them. The question of how one secures such representation in the high places of a free country – not just in political parties but also in the law courts, the police, the civil service and so on – is a famously difficult one. Affirmative action, particularly in the form of quotas, risks the accusation that one is undermining foundational principles of equal opportunity and selection by merit. ‘So now you are discriminating against us!’ cry the members of a disgruntled majority (sometimes, as in the case of the white English working class, themselves underprivileged and educationally deprived). It further risks undermining the credibility of those of minority background who are promoted to senior positions (‘she’s only there because she’s...’).

None the less, such visible representation is enormously important, in politics as in the media, and can have a positive impact much wider than the relatively small number of people involved. There is no simple or absolutely fair way of achieving this. But mainstream parties must make efforts to ensure that people from minorities can achieve positions of real power (and not just token prominence) within their ranks.

Our conclusion is that

Active steps need to be taken, notably by political parties, to ensure that minorities and their members are fully represented through established democratic institutions.

In our final lesson, we stretch the notion of “public policy” to its fullest extent, and address ourselves to society as a whole.

We believe that a better common life in today’s diverse societies ultimately depends less on legal compulsion, and more on enabling people of different cultures and persuasions to *feel* that they actually need to live together, and can do so without feeling threatened, because they are all members of the same society and nation. Such feelings will depend, in large part, on the “signals” that different parts of society are receiving from each other, whether or not these signals are consciously and deliberately emitted.

We are all members of the public, and in the last resort it is the personal responsibility of every one of us who lives in a diverse society to pay attention to the signals we are sending to our neighbours in our everyday interactions with them. Those actions – at school, at work, on the street, in the local shop or café – will affect

the attitudes of migrants and postmigrants at least as much as any high policy. As Timothy Garton Ash has written, in an essay which expands on this theme: “Small slights alienate, small courtesies integrate.”

Some signals are, however, picked up more widely than others, and they can be negative as well as positive. Some very powerful ones were received by Muslims in Germany from the reception of Thilo Sarrazin’s book *Deutschland schafft sich ab*, which argued (as I’m sure this audience remembers) that Germany is in imminent danger of being taken over by Muslims, and that genetic and religious reasons explain the underperformance of Muslim immigrants, particularly Turks. The issue here was not the author’s right to publish his views, nor even primarily the reaction of the political and cultural elite, which did by and large distance itself from those views. More important was the reaction of a significant part of the popular press and general public, which behaved as if Sarrazin’s statements had unmasked an elite conspiracy to deny or conceal what everyone knew to be true. The book led the best-seller lists for a year, selling more than 1.5 million copies. According to a Bertelsmann poll in 2013, more than 50% of Germans regarded Islam as more a threat than an enrichment.

It is vital that there should be positive signals to counterbalance the negative ones. The ability and willingness of members of minorities to feel that they belong to a nation, and for majorities to accept them as part of it, will depend in large part on such signals over time – on the way a nation or society presents or depicts itself, and the way minorities are depicted or represented, not only in political and social discourse but also in cultural products such as soap operas, feature films, popular novels, museums, sporting events and so on. The American TV sitcom *The Cosby Show*, which portrayed the life of an upper middle class African-American family living in Brooklyn in the late 1980s and early 90s, is widely recognised as a breakthrough moment in the way that community has been seen and has seen itself within wider society. There is now a vigorous debate about whether sitcoms that highlight recognizable Hispanic actors working in English-language television such as ABC’s *Modern Family* – which Republican Presidential nominee Mitt Romney proclaimed his favourite TV show in 2012 – can do the same for the Hispanic community. In Canada, *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, the comedy series aired on CBC from 2007 to 2012 which depicted the lives of Muslim and Christian characters in a prairie town in Saskatchewan, was well received by both Muslim and non-Muslim Canadians.

Another interesting example was the widely watched opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics. This was a long, exuberant and partly ironic self-portrait of the British nation, which mixed several strands: a traditional narrative (cricket, green fields, Shakespeare), multicultural diversity, pop music, and widely treasured public goods such as the National Health Service. Many members of minorities, as well as of the white British majority, responded warmly to this very high-profile and quasi-official event, in which the Queen herself made an unexpected cameo appearance, alongside James Bond.

People’s picture or understanding of their own society, and of their place in it, derives in no small degree from the way it is presented in such cultural, sporting and social contexts, as well as from their direct experience of everyday interactions. We believe more attention needs to be paid to understanding this apparently “soft” yet actually crucial dimension of combining diversity and freedom.

This final lesson is not easy to encapsulate in a single sentence, but we can say

that

For everyone in a diverse society, the feeling of belonging together depends crucially on the social and cultural signals sent and received every day.

Thus our overall conclusion is that, in the essential task of protecting the rights and freedoms of all members of a diverse society, the coercive power of the law has a necessary role, but will never be sufficient. We should distinguish between what is *required*, by law, and what is merely *desirable* for good citizenship and for living together in a free country. The first category includes basic rights and freedoms, while the second comprises such things as “mutual respect” – which is clearly important, but cannot be compelled. It goes without saying that respect should also be reflected in outward behaviour, but it is not practicable, and may be counterproductive, to treat it as a *right* which can be claimed by law. People *should* show respect for each other, but failure to do so is a subjective matter, except when it goes so far as to infringe clearly defined rights, violations of which can be objectively determined. The burden of proof should always be on those who seek to extend legal restrictions and create new punishable offences, thereby imposing new limits on the rights and freedoms of others.

Compulsion should be minimised, and persuasion maximised. Western democracies already have many good laws on their statute books, and in Europe we have the European Convention on Human Rights. There may be cases where national or sub-national legislation needs to be improved to bring it in line with the highest standards. But the more urgent task is to implement and enforce existing legal and human rights standards – and, indeed, to ask why, in so many cases, this is not currently being done. Excuses will always be found. States will argue, for instance, that they lack the resources to do it, or that special national circumstances should be taken into account. But in the last resort it is always a matter of priorities. Authorities will enforce the law when they are fully convinced that it is right and necessary to do so, and in a democracy their view on that matter will inevitably be influenced by public opinion, or by what they believe the public will accept. Laws perceived by much of the public to be unjust, excessive or unreasonable will generally prove impossible to enforce. Thus even the best laws are of little use if mainstream opinion is not convinced that they are right. It follows that a better common life, in which people’s rights and freedoms are fully respected, depends relatively little on compulsion. It depends much more on convincing people of different cultures and beliefs that they actually *need* to live together, respecting each other’s rights and each other’s freedom. And they do – because, as Kofi Annan says on the last page of the book – “today, for better or worse, we are all living in one civilisation”.