

EDUCATION TOWARDS “DIALOGUE OF CULTURES” IN THE CONTEXT OF AXIOLOGICAL PLURALISM

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Abstract: The main aim of this paper is the analysis and interpretation of education towards “dialogue of cultures” in the context of an upgraded concept of axiological pluralism. This paper deems multiculturalism as unsustainable as it is not sufficiently elaborate. The concept of this study is comprised of the description of the current state of affairs and the distinction between the possibilities of coexistence in certain societies into commensurable and incommensurable. Axiological monism is being put up against cultural pluralism. The most fundamental problem of the coexistence of various cultures being identified is the incommensurability of values. We believe that culturally incommensurable groups can only coexist side by side, but they cannot live together. This can also be applied to various groups of Christian and Islamic communities, which is why this paper addresses the issue in terms of the values of Christianity and Islam.

Keywords: Man, Values, Education, Culture, Dialogue

1 Introduction

“Different value systems of the world are opposite each other in the implacable struggle” (Max Weber)

“In contact with foreign environment, the encounter of two (or more) cultures is common in situations with an incompatible cultural aspect” (Bilá, Kačmárová and Vaňková 2020: 344). Relations between the *Western* (Euro - Atlantic) and *Arabic* (Islamic) civilizations have - after the terrorist attacks of Islamic extremists in the US and in Europe - reached a stalemate. “We are thus witnessing the so-called ‘securitization’ of the immigration crisis in our societies, which is often abused by extremist right-wing parties and increasingly also by mainstream politicians and the media” (Valčová et al. 2021: 210). On the other hand, it should be noted that this was not just about the terrorist attacks in Europe and the US. A serious terrorist attack took place in Egypt, where several hundred Islamic believers were murdered by Muslim radicals. The Boko Haram terrorist organization murdered about 13,000 people in Africa. It is not just a problem that concerns the Euro-Atlantic region. The tension between these cultures is rising up in the context of the current wave of migration and immigration; moreover, it takes the form of outright “Islamophobia” in several EU countries. While Islamic extremists (i.e. the terrorists of Al - Qaeda, ISIL, Taliban, etc.) are calling for an open confrontation with the so-called “godless” Western civilization; extremists on the other side of the spectrum (i.e. “Militant anti-Islamists”) propose a new “occidentalization” across the Middle East.

2 Different cultures, values and their coexistence

“Propagandist slander is focused on the negative portrayal of the other party” (Šoltés 2017a: 109). It may also be other tricks, e.g. so-called calculation - the use of some words with a strong connotation the meaning of which many do not really understand (e.g. fascist), the use of euphemisms (e.g. humanitarian bombing), the spread of the atmosphere of fear, the so-called technique of pre-cooking, that is, slow massaging of the brain by progressively dosed information. “Crowds cannot be rationally argued with, it is necessary to understand the feelings that control them, to pretend to be helpful and to constantly create new needs” (Grečo 2013: 124). As Michel Foucault recalls, a dialectical relationship emerges between new media technologies and the participatory practices of these technologies, which is called dual economy of freedom and constraint (Foucault: 1982).

In both of these initiatives, respectively, the positions being held are - according to the authors of the present study - *misguided* and *mistaken*. Violence only leads to more violence. The solution to the tensions between cultures is not (and cannot) be the even more sophisticated Islamic terrorists’ confrontation with the West, nor any new (*violent*) “occidentalization” of the Islamic world. The solution could and should be the mutually tolerant *dialogue* of the cultures carried out on the basis of commonly respecting the concept of *axiological pluralism* and applying a model of *pluralism of cultures*.

It has already been stated that traditional multiculturalism has used its initial potential. The reason for this situation seems to be because the variety of cultures as an isolated phenomenon has not been appropriately analyzed by axiology. There was no evidence that it would *influence* a value incommensurable, incompatible, and mutually exclusive culture. It was based on a naïve belief that the differences between cultures (and their systems of values) could be “solved” by mutual tolerance, empathy, or *consensus* with respect to the so-called “universal human values” that must be accepted by all the participative cultures and so on - compare Sucharek (Sucharek: 2017).

However, the early experience of the current wave of migration and immigration to Europe suggest that the problems arising from the *meeting* of different cultures and their *coexistence* within a single political and legal order cannot be effectively addressed only by the aforementioned traditional vision of multiculturalism.

One of the solutions is to offer a reformulated and reinterpreted concept of *axiological pluralism*, which is based on two assumptions: 1. Quantity (a lot of) value systems, which generally constitute the structural core of the different cultures; 2. People are dealing with a *number* of concrete values that may - within the system - be of *absolute* or relative validity in the individual (specific) systems. While the argument in favor of the first view is the real existence of value-different cultures, as an argument in favor of the second assumption, the division of the values - even within individual value systems - *primary*, *secondary*, *contingent*, *superior*, *excess*, etc., may be mentioned.

The importance of pluralism - as the axiological position - has already been addressed by Isaiah Berlin’s statement: “pluralism, it seems to me, is a truer and more humane ideal than the goals of those, who, within large authoritarian structures, look for the self-managements of social classes, nations, or humanity as a whole. ... Pluralism is more human because it does not deprive people of something that they themselves consider to be essential to their lives, in the name of some distant or imperfect ideal” (Berlin 1969, 68 - 69). Some religions have a tendency to authoritatively enforce moral standards. Plurality can be seen in the context of religion as a legitimate part of scientific and theological discourse (Šoltés 2017b: 73).

Respect for the freedom of the individual as a rights holder and respect for private property are fundamental pillars of liberalism - compare: (Martín, Rojas and Kralík: 2020). Liberalism cannot be exported to other countries for the purpose of indoctrination. The separation of state and society does not apply in a universal sense. According to Immanuel Kant and John Locke, human rights form the basis for the arrangement of the state - the theory of the treaty - based on respecting them (Do and Valčo 2021: 3). “The human rights and freedoms found in the modern codifications of the 19th and 20th centuries, with a direct result of their incorporation into the immanent part of the constitutions of individual states, have a special standing” (Mosný and Laclaviková 2013: 59). Human rights in Islam are perceived differently than in the Euro-Atlantic region - compare: (Tkáčová et al.: 2021; Paľa 2017). This by no means implies their absence in Islam.

If it is still true that “Of all things the measure is man”, etc. (written by Protagoras), then perhaps the concept of value (and everything that belongs to it) is considered only as the “creation” of man. Each value is attaining the status of a value only for a specific person, and in relation to him/herself. In light of this fact, a value - it's the broadest definition - is that, which has *significance, validity, meaning, price* for humans. However, Immanuel Kant warned that it is not true that everything which has a price also has a value; which is associated with *dignity*. He documents those words: “the place of something what has some value, can substitute something else equivalent, but this goes beyond any price and therefore it does not allow any equivalent, it has dignity” (Kant 2003: 63). Kant clearly indicates that dignity (as something what cannot be replaced by any equivalent in *value*) relates to the field of morality (Martin, Rojas and Kralik: 2021).

This issue is highlighted also in an interesting way in the study written by Pasternáková *Value orientation influence on quality of life* (Pasternáková 2014: 80 – 100). A *value* is therefore *constituted* by people, their “vision” and “leadership”, their experience and expectation of their spiritual and present-practical activity, etc. The basic source of a *value* is life itself that forces humans to satisfy their basic human needs and thus create or discover the values at the same time. From a certain point of view, it could be stated that *values* belong to the existential *conditions* of human life. From the standpoint of religious belief, values can be perceived as transcendent.

The world of the values is, vertically and horizontally, structured in a very complex manner, and there is a need for a presumption of reflections about the relationship between the *means* and *goals* of human beings. “On the one hand the values in this relationship express the desired state of being and on the other hand it suggests courses of action as a means to achieve them ... there are things on the basis of some quality which are values per self, and things whose value is that they are the means of achieving something what is desirable per self” (Sisáková 2001: 172).

The issue of values and beliefs, their validity, character, and functions is, since the period of classical Greek philosophy, linked to controversy of the so-called *axiological monism* with *axiological relativism*. While monists justified the *absoluteness*, i.e. eternity and constancy of values, *relativists* pointed out that values have not universally valid character; values exist in their semantic diversity, uniqueness, etc.

The position of axiological monism is usually exemplified by Plato's understanding of *beauty*, or rather that which is “beautiful”. In the Plato's dialogue *Symposium* – uttered through the mouth of the Mantinean woman named Diotima – he notes: “He, who, on the road to love, can come here and gradually and correctly observes the phenomena of beauty, can suddenly...naturally see something that is remarkably beautiful, and that beauty...which is, firstly, eternal, thus it cannot be created, nor destroyed; it does not grow, nor does it recede; beauty is not from one side beautiful, nor is it from the other ugly, neither is it beautiful at one time, and ugly another time; it is not beautiful when related to one thing, nor is it ugly when related to something else, neither is it beautiful here, nor ugly over there; beautiful for one person, and ugly for another. Beauty is not revealed as something...physical, nor as some speech or science...but like something that is grand, unified of itself, and with itself, and all other beautiful things participate in it, so that when something is created or destroyed, beauty does not grow, nor does it recede, and neither does anything happen to it” (Plato 1986: 256 – 257). These “absolute values” belong - according to axiological monists - to values such as “truth”, “good”, and so on. The concept of axiological monism, as it has been already indicated, constitutes the ideological and theoretical core of the so-called *cultural absolutism*.

Axiological relativists sought (and still seek) arguments against monists by the definition of the value as it is connected with the satisfaction of human needs. Whereas the process of satisfying

human needs is usually *unique*, then everything connected to this process is - sui generis – *unique*, and such *uniqueness* is also embodied in each individual set of values that is bound to a specific process of satisfying one's needs. Moreover, this process is always carried out at a specific time, in a specific natural and social environment, in society with concrete cultural and religious traditions, with concrete level and form of rationality and emotionality, etc. (Rollo 1993: 100 – 105). The understanding of axiological relativism in this way is the basis of the so-called *cultural relativism*.

It has been already stated that similarly then *the cultural pluralism* “stands” above the *cultural absolutism* and *relativism*, as well as the plurality of values “stands” above the *axiological relativism* and *monism* which theoretically reflects axiological pluralism.

At the beginning on this issue, there is tendency to emphasize that axiological pluralism acknowledges the *absolute* validity of a concrete value only in a concrete system of values and in the concrete culture which creates these values, develops and stores them, while in relation to another system of values (in a different culture) the validity of these values is being relativized. Therefore, the understanding of *the relativism of values* in this way should not be equated with *nihilism*, or rather with the position of “nothing is valid”, even with *naive optimism*, with the position according to which “everything is possible” (Kardis et al. 2021). The axiological pluralism respects the hierarchy of values in different value systems, however, it stresses that what is valid in one system of values may not be valid in another system, which results *the relativity of values*.

If society has a relatively large impact on an individual, it can suppress individual ethics. There is a dialectical relationship between the individual and the social (Bastianel: 2010). As Mamuka Dolidze says, „intentional content of time, place, circumstance, individual psychology and communicative relations – all these factors are responsible for the coexistence of individuals who out necessity seek support in group cooperation and create community as such” (Dolidze 2013: 115).

The questions about the future of the world that can be waiting for us in the inter-religious dialogue are so complex that many renowned researchers consider them open and unanswerable. As an example, Veronika Cibotaru's opinion may be looked at: “Since one religion opens us towards the extraordinary of our human existence, which is always here and at the same time always beyond our ordinary world, how much more extraordinary should be the world created through the dialogue of several religions? Such a common world through the dialogue of religions remains still a mystery for me. However, this dialogue could perhaps already develop itself around the challenges and issues that we perceive in the world in which we live today and how we face the challenge, it might be on a tiny scale, inspired by the religion to which we belong and the sacred texts that we read. Through this dialogue of religions, we could thus shed light from multiple angles on a new shape of the world in which we live today” (Cibotaru 2014: 91).

Among such values, it seems, belong values such as value of life, value of freedom, and so on. It appears to be only an illusion. However, experience from the conflicts between cultures suggests that even these may not act as a value “beyond the limits” of all different cultures and therefore may not be *universal*. Value of life and value of freedom can, in fact, be considered contextually, and so it is not surprising that there are cultures in which these values are not considered as an “excess”. This is particularly prominent in cases and situations in which - at the expense of life – the value of “victimization”, or the so-called value of “the self-negation of martyrdom,” and so on, is stressed. This could be seen, for example, when Islamic terrorists sent a message to Western democracies (and to indeed to the entire Euro - Atlantic culture) after the events of 11th of September in 2001 in the United States when these events were commented by saying: “We love death more than you love life” (Kuras 2015: 14).

In this context, the political scientist, Jozef Polačko, reminds us that “in the game of life, people have a tendency to choose various, often conflicting values. The reason behind these actions does not arise from relativism. In fact, value inconsistency is natural for humans” (Polačko 2018: 92).

The real possibility and a form of values’ coexistence is - in terms of *the plurality of values* - dependent on their *commensurability* or *incommensurability*. It is understood that the *commensurability* or *incommensurability* of values is a necessary consequence and concomitant feature of *the plurality of values*. There is no *commensurability of values* where values are diverse, different, divergent, or even antagonistic. However, every difference or diversity of values is not necessarily *incommensurable* and does not have to result in conflicting coexistence.

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It is already known that some cultures harboring varied and different value systems can coexist with each other in a *tolerant* way, but some of them cannot. The result of this fact is that there is relatively tolerant coexistence of values within one (common) political and legal system. Max Weber states that “the different value systems of the world are opposite to each other in a bitter struggle” (Weber 1983: 244). It is true only in cases where there is an *incommensurable* “value order” that is incompatible or even antagonistic. In the case of value *incommensurable* “world orders,” the so-called “irreconcilable struggle” is not inherently necessary.

The coexistence of different values or the “implacable struggle” between them could be meaningfully spoken of when it is determined (identified and defined) by the boundaries between them and by their *commensurability* or *incommensurability*. The truth is that this threshold is based on a point of view about a state where the values are mutually exclusive. This is a condition in which the validity of the parallel two (different) values is practically impossible.

While *commensurability* of values is designated by their *connectedness* and functional *comparability*, according to some - together respected - standards, the *incommensurability* of values is based on their *discontinuity*. Thus, the *commensurability* of values allows for a *bridge* to form between them. *Incommensurable* values - in the collective “world order” - cannot be *bridged* with the *commensurable* ones. Certain “intersections” between them are possible, provided that the given values are not together in the same value system, but function *in parallel* to each other, “side by side”. (The creator of the values is the “man” who is related to “generic” *commensurate* essential forces, spiritual and present-practical layout (thinking, freedom of will, satisfying basic needs), and so on. It follows that, in contacts with the systems of *incommensurable* values can be found some - human and existentially contingent - “intrusions”). The coexistence of people who *confess* and practically apply *incommensurable* values is only possible in an atmosphere of permanent tension, disagreements, and conflicts. *Incommensurable* values are the result of not only the *incommensurable* way of perception (understanding and reflection) of reality, but also of the *incommensurable* relations towards said reality. There is no doubt that the relationship between *commensurable* and *incommensurable* values is fully reflected in the relationship between those cultures, which will - among other things - also illustrate the actual shape of the current cultural pluralism.

The presented and preferred concept of the pluralism of cultures - which was based on the concept of axiological pluralism - has no ambition to *radicalize* the plurality of values at any cost. If the plurality of values “modifies the practice of evaluation, so the fact of pluralism is perceived as value, the hyperbole of values/means leads to a situation that where final values/goals outgrow, the only absolute is relativity of things” (Sisáková 2001, p. 169). However, the plurality of values can be viewed and interpreted in other ways. Traditional multiculturalism is based on the *compatibility* of cultures as well as the possibility of their cohabitation. The presented pluralism of cultures - with regard to value *commensurability* and *incommensurability* of the cultures - has allowed (and has justified) coexistence of both, the conflicting and non-conflicting cultures. While cohabitation of cultures is related to value *commensurate* cultures, the conflicting coexistence of cultures is linked with value *incommensurable* cultures.

The Slovak sociologist Fedor Gál suggests that multiculturalism can also result in “hostile coexistence of cultures side by side”, which would be - according to him - “nothing pleasant” (Gál 2006: 12). From the point of view of the concept of multiculturalism, which is, in this study, being compared to the concept of the pluralism of cultures, Fedor Gál’s claim about the *hostile coexistence of cultures* “side by side” is of significance.

The view that the actual cause of conflicts is not free and autonomous functioning “side by side” in value *incommensurate* culture, but it is their coexistence in a common system of generally applicable political, legal, and moral norms and values, has been expressed. This system of political, legal, and moral norms and values which would be truly “common” was not created, on the other hand, it would be mutually acceptable and respectable for all present and value-antagonistic culture as well (at least in the territory of contemporary migration and immigration).

The original multiculturalism succumbed to the illusion that the value *incommensurate* cultures can *merge*, because apparently all of them follow and respect *human dignity*, *humanism*, *human* and *civil rights*, and so on. However, the development in Europe and worldwide suggests that there is no internationally accepted declaration or legislation - formally guaranteeing respect for human rights - which is able to *fuse the cultures* that are value *incommensurable*. Perhaps that is why authors such as Jacques Derrida, Jurgen Habermas, Zygmunt. Baumann, Václav Bělohorský, Janusz Czerny, etc. are encouraged to seek a new form of *humanism* (*human dignity*), and new application of the principle of holism.

The conflicts between cultures can have different forms. Some of them are “solvable” by a dialog. Some of them are - sui generis - “unsolvable”. The understating of axiological pluralism, as stated above - and the understanding of the pluralism of cultures related to it - offers “solutions” on the level of *the dialogue of cultures* and on the level of the coexistence of cultures “side by side,” meaning in separate political and legal systems with a specific hierarchy of values. The so called “territorial separation of the warring ethnic groups” also allows the current political geography as a way to solve the conflicts of ethno-cultural origin (Gurňák, Blažík and Lauko 2017: 83-84).

“The parallel coexistence of cultures,” meaning their coexistence “side by side,” is not the best solution in the 21st century. However, if there is a way that guarantees the individual (*incommensurable*) cultures to preserve their identity and allows them to prevent violent conflicts between each other (including the so-called “holy wars”), then this solution is not the worst. On the contrary! In this (migration) situation and for this (specific) case (ad hoc), the solution may be quite acceptable, because it is a real solution that gives hope of a dignified coexistence of value *incommensurable* cultures in the future.

This form of coexistence of cultures, i.e. their functioning “side by side” and *independently* of each other, allows realizing their value in full range and without “restrictions” for each - even

conflicting – culture. It is possible even without “restricting” or “limiting” the concept of human rights and freedoms, because at the very least, a part of the Muslim world – leaning towards the radical version of Islam, the so-called “Wahhabism” – has *serious* issues with the Euro-Atlantic understanding of human rights. It also does not identify with Euro-Atlantic understanding of *freedom* and *equality*, nor does it identify with various political and legal norms which constitute the basis for the understanding of *Western democracy* itself. In other words: the culture which is based on freedom of expression, freedom of conscience and religion, gender equality, equal rights for men and women, etc. is *incommensurable* in comparison with the culture where these freedoms and rights are not respected. Cohabitation of these cultures (in one legal system) is not possible. This does not mean that the parallel coexistence of cultures “must” always be in a tolerant form.

Several available statistics conclude the results about the causes and nature of the contemporary conflicts - more than 60% of them are conflicts of *ethno-cultural* and *ethno-religious* nature. In this context, the following Francis Fukuyama's claim seems to be quite unconvincing: “the liberalism prevailed in religion over Europe... Today it sounds bizarre that anyone, even the most avid priest, could be offended by the religious ceremonies of another church. Religion became a private matter - it seems to have more or less permanently left the European political scene that are affected only in respect of distinct themes such as the question of abortion” (Fukuyama 1992: 260).

However, even in this case, the impact of religion – in these conflicts – is not overestimated. It is also said by Hans Knippenberg when he argues that, in the background, even “purely” religious conflicts, the so-called “Holy wars” refers to “secular, political, social, and economic causes and interests” (Knippenberg 2011: 13).

3 Selected aspects of mutual value relations of Christianity and Islam

In its entirety, it is also applicable to the conflicts between Christianity and Islam, although, there are religious causes in this case – factors that have specifically literal and “irreplaceable” importance. It arises from the fact that the very *core* of European, as well as Islamic cultures is occupied by a system of religious norms and values. Because this system is, in Christianity and Islam, largely *incommensurable*, it affects and co-determines the nature of the conflicts between these two cultures and religions.

The French historian, orientalist, and comparative religionist Jean-Paul Roux has written in his work entitled *The conflict of religions. Long war between Islam and Christianity (7th-21st century)*. whether you admit it or not, the fact is that the West is at war with Muslims, and, consequently, Islam... not a year, a month, a week goes by when Christian or Muslim blood is not spilled... the war between Islam and Christianity, whether it is declared and open, or concealed and insidious, is a reality in spite of the often mentioned alliance between Francis I and Suleyman Gorgeous, even despite long periods of truce... this war, in fact, has never actually ended (Roux 2007). Therefore, all three “holy books” of these religions, i.e. the Christian *Bible*, the Islamic *Qur'an*, and Jewish *Torah* come from these sources.

Conflicts between Islam and Christianity have been triggered not only by their differences but also by their common features, characteristics, and elements. It is remarked that as Christianity as well as Islam are classified as so-called *monotheistic religions*, i.e. religion based on faith in *the one* (and only) God, the creator of man, heaven and earth, etc. Both *religions* are, along with the Jewish religion (Judaism), considered to be so-called “heavenly religions”, and “the all heavenly religions”, written by one of the translators of the *Qur'an* into Slovak, Abdulwahab Al-Sbenaty: “come from the same source ... the one Book which is kept in heaven” (Al-Sbenaty 2015: 14). Therefore, all three “holy books” of these religions, i.e. the Christian *Bible*, the Islamic *Qur'an*, and Jewish *Torah* come

from these sources. Christianity and Islam also have a claim for universal mission and force.

Generally, what is “the common” may not be “the same”, or well understood, accepted, cherished the same way, and so on. It applies to one's own perspective of God (*Yahweh*, *Jehovah*, *the God-Father*, *Allah*) and his son as well, a messenger or prophet (*Jesus*, or *Muhammad*).

At the beginning on this matter, it is necessary to note that *monotheism* could be (and is) perceived in different forms. It has already been mentioned that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are *monotheistic religions*. All of the three postulated religious belief in one God. However, whereas the *Lord* (*Yahweh*) is God of “chosen” (Jewish) nation in Judaism, *God* is (i.e. *God-Father* and *Allah*) God of all nations in Christianity and in Islam. Whereas God “speaks” to the people (and declare them to his will) especially through the *prophets* or *messengers* (beginning with Moses and ending with Muhammad) in Judaism and in Islam, the will of God-Father conveys to people (“translates”) his *son* - *Jesus*, who is not just a “messenger” of God, but he is *Christ*, i.e. *Messiah* (*Redeemer* and *Saviour*) in Christianity. Messianism as faith in the salvation of man, nation, or of all mankind through God's chosen Messiah, i.e. “Anointed” (Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ - „māšîḥ“, Aramaic מְשִׁיחָא - „m'šīḥā“, Greek χριστός - „christos“) belongs to the dominant component of the Jewish (Judaist) and Christian spirituality (Dupkala, 2003: 7 – 39). In this context, Mesias Solomon wrote: “Judaism and Christianity are two common beliefs *bred* by common Scripture. They have a common *vocabulary* derived from the Bible, but they do not always use it in the same way. The Hebrew word *māšîḥ* (anointed), from which the word *Messiah* is derived, belongs to this dictionary. Christians apply it in the name of *Jesus*. Jews do not do that” (Solomon 2002: 6).

According to Judaism, the “real” *Messiah* “did not come”, according to Islam he will never come, because Allah “is the only one God and he is above having a son. All belongs to Him that is in the heavens and on earth” (Qur'an 4: 171) and “only unbelievers can say: *The Messiah, son of Mary, he is definitely the God*” (Qur'an 5:17). Finally, there is request to add that while God in Islam is *explicitly* (or rather *unspeakably*) “transcendent” (*over-terrestrial*, *over-natural*, *over-sensory*, etc.), “Trinitarian” God of the Christian religion is also “transcendent” and “immanent” (he “transcends” the world of people and he “dwells” in this world), and so on.

The most important *factors* giving rise to conflict with the Western (*Christian*) and Arabic (*Islamic*) cultures is rightfully the so-called “Sharia” law, which - according to Islam - is “God-given” (and therefore “immutable”) a set of legal and moral norms (regulations, orders, prohibitions), which *govern* not only the duty of man to God, but also the relationships between humans (including family relations, the status of man and woman, father and mother, patrimonial “action”, dressing up), “right” to *revenge*, “right” for *vendetta*, or even “the right to kill,” and so on. To illustrate at least one, particularly verse 33 of Surah (chapter) 17, concerning “the right to kill” for all of the verses of the *Qur'an*, concerning Sharia, where there is stated: “Do not kill those whom God will not allow to kill unless it is for a reasonable cause (followed by a footnote: death for death, in case of an adultery, and in case of falling away from faith). If you do that, we give the next of kin the right to carry out revenge for an unjust death. Do not exceed his right for the killing, because the offender has some rights” (Qur'an 17:33).

According to it, there is, although only partial – but obvious – conflict of two legal and moral value orientations that are culturally based on Christianity and Islam. On the one hand, Christianity, seeking to “bring” the biblical commandment *THOU SHALT NOT KILL* into legislation prohibiting “the death penalty” and on the other hand, Islam through *Sharia legitimizes* “the law of killing,” the application of the “authorized revenge”. One consequence of this incommensurability of legal and moral values of Christianity and Islam is that “there is no Muslim country which has signed II. Optional Protocol to the

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which expresses the will to work towards the abolition of capital punishment. The breakthrough was made in Turkey in the year 2002, when the negotiations on its accession to the European Union passed a law abolishing the death penalty outside wartime" (Kropáček 2002: 98 – 99). It should be noted here that Turkey is in a state of war quite often.

4. Discussion

The dialogue of cultures will fulfill its mission when representatives of different cultures and different value systems recognize the *pluralism of cultures* without having to resign on their own value orientation, etc. *The dialogue of cultures* should not be (primarily) concerned with who has or does not have the *truth*, this is about attaining a state of mutual respect – the *right for truth* and its *validity* within the limits of the system of values in which the actors of the dialogue are anthropologically and existentially docked. (Finally, what is or what is not the *truth* may not be agreed upon by people with contradictory value orientation, because the *truth* is a valid and accepted always only within the system of values in which it was – as *truth* – formulated, supported by evidence and provided by reason. Therefore, probably, Pilate also responded to the words of Jesus, that He – Jesus – is the truth ... etc. by asking: "What is truth?" (John 18, 38).

In that view, it is necessary to stress once again that *the dialogue of cultures* can complete its mission only if at least these (fundamental) conditions and criteria are respected:

- Full equality of all its stakeholders;
- Guaranteeing and respecting *freedom of thought*;
- The ability and willingness to hear *the other side*;
- Consensus on the content or the thematic focus of the dialogue;
- Determining the common "limits of the dialogue" or agreeing about what should not be "discussed"; (The limit of the dialogue should be established with regard to the "limits" of freedom of expression. The freedom of one part of the conversation "ends" where the freedom of another begins. The part of the freedom of expression in *the dialogue of cultures* should be a right or obligation "to retain the word" especially if its "vote" led to the induction, or to an escalation of tensions. This right or obligation for example, refers to "eternal truths" like "Allah Akbar", "Resurrection Christian Messiah", "four Buddha's truths" and so on. In the context sought to apply the known principles of Ludwig Wittgenstein, according to which: "*What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence*" (Wittgenstein 2003, p. 29).
- Mutual helpfulness in dealing with acute existential problems;
- Civilized and fair manner and style of communication;
- Mutual tolerance, etc.

It seems that the power – purpose "experiments", regardless of whether they are "experiments" with *an all-planetary socialism*, liberalism or any fundamentalism; it does not save the *human world*. *The human world* will be probably culturally, religiously, socially and politically differentiated and this differentiation may be due to global accretion of the so-called "horizontal forms of social mobility", and even intensify. Karl Mannheim has already stated that "horizontal mobility, i.e. the human movement from one place to another or from one country to another, shows that different nations think differently. However, the tradition of national or local groups remains intact; people are so strongly in the captivity of their habitual ways of thinking They have no doubt about the accuracy of the own traditions and ways of thinking" (Mannheim 1991: 61).

Raymond Aron has once written: "politics has not revealed the secret how violence can be avoided" (Aron 1955: 205). It seems that this "mystery" – under certain circumstances – may be hidden in the conflicting parties in dialogue, of which the famous French humanist – Jean Bodin was already aware of

when, at the end of the 16th century, i.e. in an atmosphere of religious intolerance, violence, and war, he wrote his spiritual testament – dialogue "Heptaplomeres" – also known as "The Interview of Seven Sages". The interviewed were Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Lutheran, Calvinist, sceptic and a representative of the so-called "natural religion". The interview has taken a place in a calm mood, because the participants – on the application of tolerance – they are both looking for (and finding) that which brings them together (despite all of the things that separate them) (Bodin 2008).

In another atmosphere, about four hundred years later, the Second Vatican Council commented to promote dialogue between religions, especially in the documents *Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et Spes* and *Nostra Aetate*. The Declaration on the Attitude of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*) mentions: "People are waiting from different religions for the answer to the unsolved riddles of human existence, which, like today, once deeply concerned about the human heart... religions, in relate to cultural progress, is trying to answer these problems... the Catholic Church rejects nothing what is in these religions true and holy. With sincere respect looks at ways of actions and behavior to the rules and doctrines, although differing in many ways from what it keeps and teaches, but nevertheless often reflect a ray of Truth... The Church looks with respect to Muslims and worshipping to one, living, merciful and almighty God... as through the ages have arisen between Christians and Muslims many of strife and hostility, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past, cultivate sincere mutual understanding and together to protect and cultivate social justice, moral values, peace and freedom for all people" (*Nostra aetate* 2008: 569 – 571).

5. Conclusions

Education towards the "dialogue of cultures" should be part of a wider, intercultural education, which aims to prepare man for life in a value-pluralistic society. That objective should be specified and implemented in three areas: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor.

In terms of *cognitive area*: it is important to disseminate knowledge of one's own culture, system of values, symbols, signs, rituals, institutions, etc. In the area of *psychomotor skills*: habits and abilities which one can use in a culturally diverse (asymmetric and contradictory) reality. This is about the ability to perceive events and phenomena in intercultural contexts, the ability to compare the values, ability to make decisions about forms of coexistence with culturally "differently" oriented people, etc. In the field of *affective skills*: it is important to perceive one's own cultural identity, the ability to take attitudes (emotionally contingent) towards "otherness", (towards "other" values, etc.), the expression of the responsibility for own existential attitudes and decisions, the application of tolerance towards "otherness" and also to determine one's own limits, the expression of feelings of togetherness, solidarity, etc. (Tkáčová et al. 2021).

To prepare a person to live in a value-pluralistic society means – among other things – to prepare him for a dialogue with different cultures, which constitute the spiritual core of a particular society. There is no dialogue without talking: an interview, where there are no "free-flowing vibrations" of different opinions is not (and cannot be) understood as being a part of a *dialogue of cultures*. The Slovak philosopher Etela Farkašová, highlights the importance of the *interview* as a dialogic form of communication by saying: "we achieve shaping our ideas, exchange our ideas, and interact with others only in an interview; we have a chance to verify the weight of our own arguments and get to know the weight of other arguments in a conversation, we can move into our own deeper layers, adjust the mirror of self-reflection, which would not exist without the presence of others in interviews" (Farkašová 2004: 229). Each person, as a being that *contemplates*, is *free*, and *responsible*, has the option, but also the responsibility to be the creator and actor of such a

dialogue that, in the end, is nothing more than his inner-most cultural creation and performance.

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