

***Using Interreligious Dialogue(IRD) to
Strengthen Peace , Reconciliation and
Social Cohesion***

**استخدام الحوار بين الأديان (IRD) لتعزيز السلام
والمصالحة والتماسك الاجتماعي**

Dr. Ilyas Dekkar

***Member of Theological Studies and Comparative Religions'
Laboratory
Emir Abd El Kader University of Islamic Sciences***

Abstract

Interfaith dialogue (IRD) is considered a sacred religious practice among adherents of religions and has become increasingly present in interventions to address conflict resulting from exposure to religious diversity. However, some experimental efforts have tested the efficacy and outcomes of IRD. The rooted theoretical approach is well suited to describe the precise role of religion in inter-group processes in major theoretical frameworks. The IRD experiences were explored and analyzed through useful case descriptions and religious style scores. Interfaith dialogue (IRD) is also used to promote peace, reconciliation and social cohesion.

Keywords: interreligious dialogue, religious styles, peace, reconciliation, social cohesion.

ملخص:

يعتبر الحوار بين الأديان (IRD) ممارسة دينية مقدسة لدى أتباع الأديان وقد أصبح حاضرًا بشكل متزايد في التدخلات لمعالجة الصراع الناتج عن التعرض للتنوع الديني. ومع ذلك، فقد اختبرت بعض الجهود التجريبية فعالية ونتائج IRD. النهج النظري المتجذر مناسب تمامًا، لوصف الدور الدقيق للدين في العمليات بين المجموعات في الأطر النظرية الرئيسية. تم استكشاف تجارب IRD وتحليلها من خلال أوصاف الحالات المفيدة ودرجات الأسلوب الديني. كما يتم استخدام الحوار بين الأديان (IRD) لتعزيز السلام والمصالحة والتماسك الاجتماعي.

كلمات مفتاحية: الحوار بين الأديان، الأساليب الدينية، السلام، المصالحة، التماسك

الاجتماعي.

Introduction

Forced globalization is the problem of this generation. – Ralph W. Hood Jr¹. There will be no peace among the nations without peace among the religions. There will be no peace among the religions without dialogue among the religions. –

Hans Küng²

Interreligious Dialogue (IRD) has become an increasingly visible topic in the global religious landscape. The popularity of the topic is attributed, in part, as a response to globalization that provides an increased prospect for individuals to be exposed to diverse religions³. Perhaps, as a result of globalization, the

1 Ralph W. Hood Jr, personal communication (2018)

2 Hans Küng, Address at the opening of the Exhibit on the World's Religions at Santa Clara University (2005)

3 Bainbridge, W. S. (2003). A Prophet's Reward: Dynamics of Religious Exchange. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.; Patel, E. (2018). Out of Many Faiths: Religious Diversity and the American Promise (Vol. 4). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

practice of IRD as a sacred religious imperative and opportunity has gained prominence among a variety of religious traditions¹. Many religions promote dialogue between the religions engaged with religions who differ from their own as a sacred religious duty to encourage both personal development and peacebuilding inherent in religious teachings². Theologians, practitioners, and scholars have positioned IRD as a critical practice in the movement to build global peace and combating complex and intractable social conflicts attributed to religion³. Dialogue between the religions is likely to grow as a result of the continued and rapid encounter of diverse religious beliefs and practices in communities that have previously been more homogeneous⁴. Popular efforts endorse the affinity between religions through practices of IRD as an overwhelmingly positive experience with constructive outcomes however, any effort to engage in religious diversity must recognize the potential threats that may come as a result of increased exposure to issues inherent in globalization.

A responsible first step in understanding any phenomena of IRD, particularly given the weight attributed to the results of successful practice, is to examine the existent theories that aim to understand IRD and the efficacy of IRD outcomes. Current theories range across disciplines; however, there is no systematic integration of theory that builds upon existent theory and ideas or attempts to discern any distinct element of IRD in a landscape of practices that involves a variety of motives and goals across various levels of dialogue. A range of considerations and criticisms of IRD practices should be acknowledged in tandem with an integration of IRD constructs to areas of inquiry that are well-grounded in established theoretical framework and well-suited to 3 provide a basic understanding of IRD. In this inquiry of IRD, practices and perceptions of IRD efficacy from case study narratives are integrated with the Religious Styles Perspective⁵. An understanding through this theoretical lens helps answer criticisms of IRD and build toward a theoretical foundation for future empirical research and understanding of the impact and efficacy of IRD practices.

I. Theories and methods in Interreligious dialogue ; An Overview

There are many types of Interreligious dialogue :

1 Pew Research Center (2017). Americans Express Increasingly Warm Feelings Toward Religious Groups. Retrieved from; Abdool, A., Potgieter, F., Van der Walt, J. L., & Wolhuter, C. (2007). Inter-religious dialogue in schools: a pedagogical and civic unavoidability. *HTS: Theological Studies*, 63(2), 543- 560.

2 [PCID], 2017; Merdjanova, I. (2016). Overhauling Interreligious Dialogue for Peacebuilding. *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*, 36(1), 3.

3 Knitter, P. F. (Ed.) (2013). *Inter-Religious Dialogue and Social Action*. Chinchester: Wiley.; Merdjanova, 2016; Patel, 2012)

4 Streib, H., & Klein, C. (Eds.). (2018). *Xenosophia and Religion: Biographical and Statistical Paths for a Culture of Welcome*. Cham, Heidelberg, New York, Dordrecht, London: Springer International Publishing.

5 Streib, H. (2001a). Faith Development Theory Revisited: The Religious Styles Perspective. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 11, 143-158.

1- Typologies of Dialogue:

A- Broad Definition

I- Broad Definition of Dialogue - Example 1

Here is a broad definition of dialogue, divided into two parts; a noun and a verb.

a- Noun : Dialogue as a noun can mean the following¹ :

- Conversation between two or more persons.
- The conversation between characters in a novel, drama, etc.
- An exchange of ideas or opinions on a particular issue, especially apolitical or religious issue, with a view to reaching an amicable agreement or settlement.
- A literary work in the form of a conversation: Dialogue of Plato.

b- Verb : Dialogue as a verb can mean the following²:

- To carry on a dialogue; converse.
- To discuss areas of disagreement frankly in order to resolve them.

The first broad definition is simply starting from a dictionary, an online dictionary called ‘dictionary.com’. In that definition, there are four ways of understanding the noun ‘dialogue’ and two around the verb ‘to dialogue’.

The first of these, in terms of the noun, is ‘a conversation between two or more persons’ that cannot be broader. The second is ‘a conversation between characters in a novel’. The third is ‘an exchange of ideas or opinions on a particular issue, especially a political or religious issue we reviewed to reaching an amicable agreement or settlement. You will see how that third one dovetails with some other aspects of defining dialogue that we will see in the narrow definitions. Finally, the word ‘dialogue’ can actually be also a literary work in the form of a conversation and especially the most famous of them, for the Western world, is the dialogue of Plato; and, in some sense, if we still use the term ‘dialogue’ -which comes from the Greek- actually is probably because of the importance of this book in Western history.

The verb ‘to dialogue’ simply means ‘to carry on a dialogue’ or ‘to converse’, ‘to talk’. And the sixth -or the second of the verb definitions- is ‘to discuss areas of disagreement frankly, in order to resolve them’. And so, the fifth of those definitions is a broad one, and the sixth one is a much more narrow one, in and of itself linked to conflict resolution, in a way using dialogue as a tool to resolve a disagreement in understanding. So you can see that these six different definitions of both the noun and the verb ‘dialogue’ are useful as a starting point to give us a framework of reference.

1 <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/dialogue?s=t/20/09/2020>, 19.00.

2 <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/dialogue?s=t/20/09/2020>, 19.10.

II- Broad Definition of Dialogue - Example 2

This next definition comes from the Quebec Ministry of Education¹. They introduce 7 different forms of human verbal exchange. Let's start by reading the quote below²:

In this program [Ethics and Religious Culture], the practice of dialogue entails adopting attitudes and behaviours that foster community life. Such dialogue involves two interactive dimensions: individual deliberation and the exchange of ideas with others.

1. The first dimension, which promotes self-knowledge, requires moments of personal reflection. Such moments of reflection allow for examining a process, perceptions, preferences, attitudes and ideas, and for making connections with what is already known about a given topic.

2. The second dimension, which enables encounters with the other, consists in taking time with others to share and explore, during which different points of view are constructed and expressed.

7 Different Forms of Human Verbal Exchange

Here are the 7 different forms of human verbal exchange outlined by the Quebec Ministry of Education :

✳ **Conversation** : A chat between two or more individuals in an informal way.

✳ **Discussion** : A talk between two or more individuals in a formal way.

✳ **Deliberation** : A long and careful consideration or discussion.

✳ **Debate** : A formal discussion on a particular matter in a public meeting or legislative assembly, in which opposing arguments are put forward and which usually ends with a vote.

✳ **Naration** : The action or process of narrating a story.

✳ **Interview** : A meeting of people face to face, especially for consultation.

✳ **Panel** : A small group of people brought together to investigate or decide on a particular matter.

The second example is much more specific to a particular geographical context – the province of Quebec in the country of Canada. The Ministry of Education, back in 2008, started implementing a K to 12 from first grade really to the end of high school program called religious and ethical culture. That program uses dialogue as its primary central concept to link both the ethics side and the religious side of the program.

1 <http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/en/parentsguardians/culture-religieuse/programme-ethique-et-culture-religieuse/program-secondary-level/competency-3-engages-in-dialogue>.

2 http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/education/jeunes/pfeq/PFEQ_ethique-culture-religieuse-secondaire_2008_EN.pdf

It understands the concept of dialogue as basically an umbrella term that includes seven different forms of human verbal exchange. The first set is four of these which are conversation, discussion, deliberation and debate. The second set is narration, interview and panel. So if dialogue is supposed to mean any of these seven forms then obviously, it refers to a very broad definition. And to quote the program itself (Ethics and Religious Culture), the practice of dialogue requires adopting attitudes and behaviors that foster community life. Such dialogue involves two interactive dimensions; individual deliberation and the exchange of ideas with others.

In this first paragraph, I think you can notice that the second part, exchange of ideas with others, is what we think of when we think of the seven different forms of human verbal exchange referred to earlier, but it adds also individual deliberation – so one can also think of dialogue within one's head. These two dimensions are important because at the end of the day, when we talk with other people, part of the exchange we have with others resonates inside of our own heads and therefore also call on the importance of thinking within ourselves.

So the first dimension, which promotes self-knowledge, requires moments of personal reflection. Such moments of reflection allow for examining a process, perceptions, preferences, attitudes and ideas, and for making connections with what is already known about a given topic.

The second dimension enables encounters with the other and it consists in taking time with others to share and explore during which different points of views are constructed and expressed. So one notices the complementarity between the first and the second dimension of dialogue as understood within this program on ethics and religious culture by the Ministry of Education of the province of Quebec in Canada and therefore it relies on a very broad definition in understanding of dialogue.

B- Narrow Definition

I- Narrow Definition of Dialogue - Example 1

Let us take a look at a narrow definition of dialogue presented by Leonard Swidler (1983) :

Dialogue is a conversation on a common subject between two or more persons with differing views, the primary purpose of which is for each participant to learn from the other so that s/he can change and grow¹.

Swidler (1983) describes three goals of inter-religious dialogue :

1- To know « oneself eye » more profoundly and enrich and round one's appreciation of one's own faith tradition ;

2- To know the other ever more authentically and gain a friendly understanding of others as they are not in caricature ;

¹ Leonard Swidler, Dialogue Decalogue: Ground Rules for Interreligious, Interideological Dialogue, 1983, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0360966900024087>.

3- To live ever more fully accordingly and to establish a more solid foundation for community of life and action among persons and various traditions.

It gives a sense in which there is in fact the first part of the goal or the first goal is linked to the broad definition of the Ministry of Education in Quebec, which talks about inner dialogue knowing oneself better.

The second one to know the other ever more authentically is linked to the second dimension of the ministry but what is not present in the DOS in in the ministry. In the ministries understanding of dialogue is the third goal here present which is to live ever more fully according in to establish a more solid foundation for community life. Although of course the aims of the program in Quebec happened to be also about improving community of life in action among persons of various traditions and so there is complementarity between the two, but this one is more focused on the transformative dimensions that dialogue can bring to the human use of this particular approach to interactions between two human beings.

Dialogue Decalogue

According to Swidler (1983) there are ten Ground Rules for Interreligious, Interideological Dialogue¹ :

- Dialogue to learn, to change, and to grow, and act accordingly.
- Dialogue to share and receive from others.
- Dialogue with honesty and sincerity
- Dialogue comparing ideals with ideals, and practice with practice.
- Dialogue to define yourself and to learn the self definition of others.
- Dialogue with no hard and fast assumptions about someone else's beliefs.
- Dialogue to share with equals
- Dialogue in trust.
- Dialogue with willingness to look at your beliefs and traditions critically.
- Dialogue seeking to understand the other person's beliefs from within ;

II- Narrow Definition of Dialogue - Example 2

A second example of a narrow definition comes from the work of Reverend Dr. Marcus Braybrooke, an English pastor anglican, who has developed and written a lot about the inter religious dialogue movement. And he raises in one of his books some very important elements, they're not listed in any particular order or numbered order but I will read part of those extracts from his book because they are in fact reflective of deeper understanding of the notion of dialogue.

¹ Leonard Swidler, *Toward a Universal Theology of Religion*, New York : Orbis Books, 1st Ed, p. 26.

First, he recognizes that there are various levels of dialogue and that the dialogue itself is a process of growth¹. So it's not something that you do once and that's it you've acquired it and it's over. He also talks about dialogue as an initial requirement of openness to an acceptance of the other. It takes time to build trust and to deepen relationships. This is why some continuity in a dialogue group is helpful and why patience and time are necessary. All of which are particularly difficult to ensure especially when we're doing dialogue at an international level. He talks about the fact that too easily we find ourselves imposing our presuppositions on the conversation. We have to learn to enter another world that may seem alien and which has different presuppositions and it does indeed require a lot of time to discover those presuppositions, which we all have about myself and about others².

And it is through dialogue and through a patient listening of the questions about myself that another person can bring that I may be able to better understand what my own presuppositions are and vice-versa. My questioning of another person is helping that person discover their own. In dialogue we have to allow our deepest convictions to be questioned as long as it is done with respect those the questioning. The critical questioning even that has a reality in the exchange of two people engaged in dialogue requires therefore us to be open and be at times vulnerable to some of our deepest convictions. Not because we are going to change them but simply because we need to be open to exploring what they mean to others that don't share necessarily the same presuppositions in worldview. Dialogue is important for those venturing to be secure in their own faith they need to beware of becoming marginalized in or alienated from their own religious tradition. Dialogue is also to be of equals that is to say of those with similar levels of scholarship and study. At its deepest dialogue will raise questions of truth of course it is challenging when we get to that level of questioning because at times it may indeed cause some sort of emotions and some difficulties in how we feel we're not understood exactly the way we would like to be or vice-versa. We don't fully understand what the other person is saying and we want to be respectful and ask further questions but it does at the end become tricky. And out of even the sensitivity of being nice to one another at times we may fall short of wanting to go further in asking some of the more difficult questions especially when they are referring to deeper truth or truth claims that we have about reality.

Dialogue does not necessarily produce agreement and if it is a search for truth there is no desire for easy compromise. In fact, it is not necessary to reach agreement at all in dialogue. Sometimes it dialogue makes clearer where essential

1 Marcus Braybrooke, *A Pilgrimage of Hope: One Hundred Years of Interfaith Dialogue*, New York : Crossroad,

1st Ed, 1992, p 310.

2 Ibid, p 312.

differences lie exposing the various presupposition or views of the world with which partners in dialogue or operating sometimes the dialogue can even be painful¹.

Narrow Definition of Dialogue - Example 3










Here we explore Jean-Claude Basset's (1996) narrow definition of dialogue. There are five elements of dialogue² :

- ✓ Encounter between persons
- ✓ Speaking exchange
- ✓ Reciprocity
- ✓ Alterity
- ✓ Stake

Narrow Definition of Dialogue - Example 4

We will now take a look at the World Council of Churches³ (2002) narrow definition of dialogue.

They suggest guidelines for dialogue and relations with people of other religions⁴ :

-  Dialogue must be a process of mutual empowerment.
-  In dialogue we grow in faith.
-  In dialogue we affirm hope.
-  In dialogue we nurture relations.
-  In dialogue we must be informed by the context.
-  In dialogue it is important to respect the integrity of religious traditions in the variety of their structures and organisations. Equally important is to recognise the way that participants in dialogue define their relation with their community.
-  Dialogue is a co-operative and collaborative activity.
-  In dialogue we strive towards mutual respect.
-  In dialogue we strive to be inclusive, since dialogue can easily become an elitist activity and be confined to certain strata of society.

1 Ibid, p 313.

2 Jean-Claude Basset, *Le dialogue interreligieux : chance ou déchéance de la foi*, Paris : les éditions du CERF, 1ère édit, 1996, p 269.

3 The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is a community of churches on the way to visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ. It seeks to advance towards this unity, as Jesus prayed for his followers, "so that the world may believe." (John 17:21), The (WCC) is the broadest and most inclusive among the many organized expressions of the modern ecumenical movement, a movement whose goal is Christian unity.[<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us>]

4 World Council of Churches (2002): *Guidelines for dialogue and relations with people of other religions* (<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/2002/guidelines-for-dialogue-and-relations-with-people-of-other-religions>)

C- The Most Famous and Useful Definitions of Dialogue

We'll now look at some of the considerations when finding the most useful definition of dialogue to use. It depends on the needs of the user and we need to consider the factors below:

Professor Brodeur discusses the most useful definition of dialogue in more details, He says :

« Then we can ask ourselves, ok there are lots of different definitions and so which one is the most useful? If there is no one correct one at least some may be more useful than others.

Well of course that's true, but it all depends on the needs of the user or the group of people the users for a particular goal. I think we need to recognize that our informal versus formal context within which we practice dialogue and therefore it's useful to think of the reasons why we want to do and engage in dialogue.

Whether they are informal or formal and how that has an influence on the choices of the definitions that we would like to use in the especially introductory part of a particular dialogical activity.

Of course the number of participants will greatly influence our choice, as well for example, if you are just a group of colleagues and friends you may take the time to actually use a long definition but if you are a large group of people gathering, especially, if it's for a short period of time you may just choose a short one like the five-point definition, in order to be able to just move on to the rest of the reasons for why you're together. The level of knowledge and experience of participants may also have an influence on the choice of definition you want to use, as well as a number of meetings that you intend to have in the process or the length of the meetings as well as of course obviously their purposes or objectives.

So in other words, we see that there is a lot of different reasons different objective reasons that are underpinning consciously or unconsciously the reasons why people will want to prefer one particular definition over another. And that's what I call inter objectivity, there's a different objective for a particular biological encounter and there it is not that one is better than the other necessarily it depends on what the people coming together strive to achieve together »¹.

C- Limitations and Conclusions of any definition of dialogue

It's also important to consider the potential limitations of any definition of dialogue, so we need to ask what are the limits of any of these definitions?.

1 Patrice Brodeur, Eboo Patel, *Building the Interfaith Youth Movement: Beyond Dialogue to Action*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006, p 27. See also : Patrice Brodeur, *Interfaith & Intercultural Dialogue: Issues and Promises*, 2nd UNESCO Forum on Global Citizenship Education: Preparing for post-2015: Building peaceful & sustainable societies UNESCO, Paris: 29 January 2015, (<http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/pdf/PlenaryII-PatriceBrodeur.pdf>).

Professor Brodeur answers : « It all depends again on the specific context of the dialogical encounter, which I've referred to previously. There needs therefore to be an interdependency we need to recognize that there are these different contexts are not mutually exclusive most of the time there are specific of many contexts require dialogue but different definitions are better suited for different contexts and over time as one person or group of person experiences maybe different kinds of encounters, different contexts of encounters, one can eventually over time developed a sense of interdependency between definitions of dialogue because of the way in which each approach basically makes us discover a new element or a new facet to this particularly rich concept of dialogue »¹.

Typologies of Dialogue

In this section, we will cover four key typologies of dialogue by a variety of leading authors based in chronological order, as follows:

Typologies of dialogue 1²:

Let us watch Professor Brodeur as he explains Eck's (1987) six forms of dialogue:

The first comes from an article that was written in 1987 by Professor Diana Eck of Harvard University on six forms of dialogue. She wrote it at a time when she was also leading or chairing an International Committee for inter-religious dialogue at the World Council of Churches.

She described six forms starting with a parliamentary style dialogue referring ofcourse to the 1893 Parliament of the world's religions that took place in Chicago, as part of the World Fair which took place that year. That particular Parliament of the world's religions basically was in many ways the beginning point of the modern movement of inter-religious dialogue a parliamentary style.

1- Parliamentary Style of Dialogue

Simply means that you have individuals coming from a variety of different places, in this case in 1893, from different continents together in the same space and they spent two weeks sharing with each other on the podium and off the podium about their own respective traditions and worldviews.

That Parliament was not for the purpose of voting laws but it was for the purpose of better understanding each other's traditions in that late 19th century. This parliamentary style continues today in a variety of ways through the activities of organizations whether local or global that continue to bring a variety of different

1 Patrice Brodeur, Description of the "Guidelines for Interfaith Celebrations.", « Journal of Ecumenical Studies », Volume 34, Number 4 (Fall, 1997) , p 568,(<https://dialogueinstitute.org/jes-volume-34-1997>).

2 Diana Eck (1987), Six Forms of Dialogue (WCC Dialogue publications).

people from a variety of different religions to address common concerns today. So the parliamentary style is a useful but broad multi-religious framework within which the dialogue can take place.

2- Institutional dialogue

A second form is institutional dialogue that is when official either very old or more recent institutions that have developed between people that have a shared religious identity. When these institutions decide to send representatives to somebody else's institutions in order to be able to promote better understanding through dialogue. The third kind is really about theological dialogue, which is actually the particular focus of the topic of conversation which is to better understanding one's worldview once notion of truth one's ultimate claims about reality. And for Christians this is the concept of theology the study of God as a central concept that frames the whole of reality for Christians there are also similar words in different religious traditions.

Some of them may be also of the level of theology meanings are centered around the study of what does the notion of God means and how do human beings relate to that ultimate reality. That ultimate concept but also it may be other kinds of words that could include the notion of Halawa or of sacred law in a Jewish context or the notion of Sharia. Or of a particular understanding of the actual juridical foundations of the way by which people need to interact with each other as guided by the principles of which at the center lies a sacred revelation called the Quran and for Jews.

In the same sort of parallel way the notion of the Tanakh and the basic scripture that reflects God's message for the Jewish people and so whether in a Jewish in a Muslim or a Christian context there are different words that are central to the way of self understanding.

3- Theological dialogue

And so in this case when the third form is called theological dialogue one should not understand it as necessarily only reduce to a dialogue about theology but other words that are central to self understanding across different worldviews. It could be Dharma, for example, in a South Asian religious context it could be the Dao in a chinese context. So there are several other words and concepts rooted in different languages which are important to recognize as part of the central ways in which the meaning of life is expressed.

4- Dialogue of life

The fourth kind of form of dialogue is the dialogue of life, this is incredibly broad it simply means the dialogue about the daily relationships that people have in a very local way, as well as of course those that take place through international sort of dynamics whether institutional or otherwise. It could be

international business but that includes people that self-identify in very different religious ways and through the work place of these transnationals. One provides an array or one encounters opportunities for the dialogue of life and that of course is the same elsewhere worldwide on a local level.

5- Spiritual dialogue The fifth form is spiritual dialogue what happens when people take the time to not only talk about what the ultimate reality may mean to each other but actually they take the time to practice or to try to practice some of the elements of somebody else's tradition. And therefore enter into somebody else's tradition through a spiritual dialogue that is trying to make sense of that worldview over and beyond. The only that the intellectual or the verbal expression of what that worldview is like.

6- Inner dialogue

Finally, the sixth form of dialogue is inner dialogue; how do we actually talked within ourselves about the meaning of life and about what's going on in my life today or in the future or in the past. And that inner dialogue as I mentioned last time in the last the first part of this module, is an equally important dynamic to think about and to practice in a better way so these are the six forms of dialogue according to Professor Diana Eck.

Typologies of Dialogue 2¹:

The next example comes from the Vatican or the Holy See in Rome. It's linked to a collective process developed by the Pontifical Council for inter-religious dialogue which is the predominant place through, which the Roman Catholic Church processes and fosters inter-religious dialogue worldwide. They have developed guidelines for inter-religious dialogue in which they mention among other things for different kinds of dialogue. And so it is a simple typology and it is simple in part because it can therefore be used on a large scale with any audience worldwide.

1- Dialogue of life

It puts first a dialogue of life recognizing of course that most of us most of the time encounter a variety of differences in our daily lives and that it is the dialogue of life which ultimately is at the center of much of our reality on a daily

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https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_19051991_dialogue-and-proclamatio_en.html/ KURUVACHIRA JOSE, INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN DIALOGUE AND MISSION, <http://www.euclid.int/papers/JOSE%20KURU%20---%20INTERRELIGIOUS%20DIALOGUE%20AND%20MISSION.pdf> .

basis¹, and that needs to be reflected upon and discussed. And of course the content of the dialogue of life would be very different from person to person and from context to context.²

2- Dialogue of action

The second is dialogue of action then it is no longer what happens to be had to be discussed among people in their local context but it is a purposed dialogue where people together decide to come together to do particular kinds of action to address most of the time problems in society but it could also be a form of action that is simply there to enhance the quality of already what is being happening in a positive sense. So not necessarily only about reacting to negative issues.

3- Dialogue is of theological exchange

The third kind of dialogue is of theological exchange and that is what I've described in the previous six forms of dialogue of Diana Eck. It is in that sense the same sort of challenge which is how do we intellectually make sense of each other's world views from the particulars and the language that is unique in the framework that is uniquely developed within different religious worldviews. And of course that is slightly different depending on which part of a religious community one speaks to finally the fourth aspect is a dialogue of religious experience it goes back to the fifth of the six forms of dialogue presented by Professor Eck.

This one of course is about religious experience what she calls a spiritual dialogue and what here is referred to our religious experience. Where we begin to try to the extent possible of course to make sense of the experience of somebody else's tradition one understands of course that there are limits to that particular form of dialogue and that those limits will be coming from how each person involved in dialogue. Self understand themselves and therefore one does not need to break any belief or practice that one has in order to do a dialogue of religious experience but rather simply goes as far as one is allowed to do so according to one's own beliefs and practices but often this particular form.

4- Dialogue that of religious experience

This fourth form of dialogue that of religious experience allows to go beyond the simple intellectual understanding³, there are things that happen when

1 Cfr. Edward Idris Cassidy, *Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue*, Unitatis Redintegratio, Nostra Aetate, New York, Paulist Press, 2005, p. 137.

2 Cfr. Michael L. Fitzgerald and John Borelli, *Interfaith Dialogue. A Catholic View*, New York, Orbis Books, 2006, p. 28.

3 Segretariato per i Non-Cristiani, "L'atteggiamento della Chiesa di fronte ai seguaci di altre religioni. Riflessioni e orientamenti su dialogo e missione", in *Enchiridion Vaticanum. Documenti*

you meet somebody else on their really sacred grounds of practices which allows you to discover and understand things differently and that I think is an important reason why it is part of these guidelines for inter-religious dialogue¹. That when it is possible and to whatever extent it is possible it is an incredibly enriching diamond - getting to know one another².

Typologies of dialogue 3³:

Another typology of dialogue comes from father Fadi Daou from Lebanon, who a few years ago talked about the dialogue of civilizations. And that of course came after the development of a whole set of activities a new understanding that across civilizations especially those that still exist today.

1- Dialogue of civilizations

There is a need for human interaction and that was promoted in particular from 2005 onwards. When the United Nations decided to develop the alliance of civilizations, a network of countries, institutions, scholars, experts and practitioners of dialogue that wanted to ensure that we would be able to overcome the misunderstandings and the ignorance, which is so often fueling violence across and among different religious in other forms of traditions.

2- Intercultural dialogue

He then talks about intercultural dialogue that dialogue among people as part of their daily realities.

Understanding that part of the way in which they make sense of life is not just about ultimate belief but it's also about practical ways of interacting with each other in a particular public space. And we all know of the cultural diversity worldwide and we also know that most regions of the world especially the larger cities will have several people of different cultural understanding sharing common space.

And therefore the need for intercultural dialogue to first of all recognize and be enriched by this diversity but also often to address tensions and conflicts.

3- Intercultural dialogue

The third kind of dialogue he points to is inter-religious and of course that's one which is particularly important for us in this course because it

Ufficiali della Santa Sede 1983-1985, Vol. 9, Testo ufficiale e versione Italiana, Bologna, Centro Editoriale Dehoniano, 1987, pp. 940. (Henceforth referred to as Dialogo e Missione).

1 Michael L. Fitzgerald and John Borelli, *Interfaith Dialogue. A Catholic View*, New York, Orbis Books, 2006, pp. 76-77.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 77.

3 Fadi Daou, Nayla Tabbara, *L'hospitalité divine «L'autre dans le dialogue des théologie chrétienne et musulmane* », 1ère ed, Umsclagbild : Abraham et ses trois invités, Londres, 2013, vol 1, pp. 163-170.

recognizes the particular dynamic that comes from people sharing and understanding that they have a relationship to reality, which includes in some ways a relation to something that is transcendent to human to human finiteness and whatever it is called.

And of course our different names for that ultimate reality and that is what is at the heart of what makes a religious identity a religious one. And on that basis the importance of understanding each other who share in that connectedness to ultimate reality. In one way or another what is at the core of inter-religious dialogue it is definitely at the level of discovering about. This what one has called in the previous typologies in theological dialogue.

4- The Spiritual solidarity

Finally, there is what if I did that would cause the spiritual solidarity and that is very in many ways linked to either the dialogue of action that is in the guidelines of the of the Roman Catholic Church or some other similar language that is being used in the previous and other topologies that call for the notion that through solidarity through a recognizing that we have shared moral commitments to do something about a particular issue. A particular problem that through that comes a spiritual connectedness across different religious identities and beyond in a way that also helps foster dialogue in a deeper way.

Typologies of dialogue 4:¹

Professor Brodeur explains his typology on dialogue:

So then I will end with what I have gathered over the years from the need to recognise five dimensions to dialogue or and in that sense this constitutes another form of typology and this is not exhaustive by any means. First, we need to develop a language around the number of kinds of partners in dialogue. Is it a bilateral dialogue where there are people from two identities to religious identities, in particular coming together or two cultures or two social class or two generations. You know one could expand the concept of bilateral in this sense or is it that they come from essentially three different groups you know or we talk about an Abrahamic trilateral dialogue between Jews Christians and Muslims or between Jains Hindus and Buddhists in South Asia, for example.

So in that sense there are different options for trilateral kinds of approaches to dialogue then there are multilateral kinds of dialogues and that's when you have four or more different identities that are being shared in a given place, in a particular dialogical context. That of course raises some other challenges of complexity but at the same time if you are organizing a dialogue activity to address a particular concern in a given neighborhood in your town you may want to ensure that everybody who lives in that neighborhood is included everybody

¹ Patrice Brodeur, *Interfaith & Intercultural Dialogue: Issues and Promises*, 2nd UNESCO Forum on Global Citizenship Education: Preparing for post-2015: Building peaceful & sustainable societies UNESCO, Paris: 29 January 2015, p.8.

Using Interreligious Dialogue(IRD) to Strengthen Peace ...—Dr. Ilyas Dekkar representing AIDA the diversity of worldviews in that particular neighbourhood.

That of course most likely will take him multilateral for especially in the larger cities that are becoming more in more diverse worldwide. The second point I want to distinguish is the need to distinguish between inter-religious in the case that is interesting for us but it could be also intercultural and intra religious or intracultural and if we look at interreligious dynamics. Diversity within a religious community, one also recognizes that over time this is not new, people have recognized that diversity and had to address it in different ways. In the Christian context it's called often Ecumenical going back to the Greek root of the word Ecumene, which talks about the common language at that time of the of the Mediterranean area. That somehow provided a common language for much of the early Christian community and through that concept of the Ecumene came the adjective Ecumenical, meaning the conversations the dialogue across different churches or between members of different churches.

There are similar expressions in other religious communities and traditions although maybe not as well-known or necessarily equally used. So far but definitely one could turn the noun of the Umma or the concept of the whole Muslim community worldwide the Umma into an adjective and therefore in English talk about an U-Matic dialogue recognizing and seeking to better understand the rich diversity of perspectives within the Islamic tradition. The same for the Jewish community the concept of M is high in the concept of the people of Israel which is really all it's a very old concept. That around the concept of a more people one can turn that into an adjective and talk about an emic dialogue for the Jewish community the same also for Buddhism and the Sangha concept which is not or in a narrow definition signifies the community of monks and nuns across the Buddhist world.

But in a broader definition is anybody engaged in practices linked to the Buddhist community is part of the Sangha then one could translate or turn the word an initially Sanskrit and Pali word to turn it into an adjective and talk about the Sangguk dialogue which would specifically refer to dialogue looking at the diversity of perspectives within Buddhism. Ofcourse, any other religious tradition one can come up with similar words that are completely within that tradition self understanding and use it in an adjective way. In order to reflect on the particular ways in which this community seeks to better understand its internal diversity. I say this in part because there is a tendency in English language to sometimes use the word Ecumenical in a way that is then used across other religious tradition and that may come as in some ways paternalistic and to try to come up with language that is unique from within each religious tradition is probably better at the end.

The other problem in the popular use of the word ecumenical is that it's sometimes a synonym of inter-religious and that is problematic because it would assume that somehow you can apply a Christian term to an inter-religious encounter and that in turn has a power dynamic which is not the most just and therefore does not help to foster equity in the encounter space that we call dialogue. Thus the need to keep the concept of ecumenical specifically for intra Christian sessions and not to refer to or to use it in a inter-religious context.

The third element I want to talk about is what I call the spectrum between religious officials and unofficial grassroots dialogue and anything in the middle. That's really important because it is not I prefer to think of it not as an opposition between top-down you know or unofficial but to think of a spectrum both because I think that within any religious communities there are different notions of representation and officiality and so some communities are very centralized.

That's just a Roman Catholic Church, for example, and most other religious communities are rather decentralized in the dynamics and therefore any person sort of taking an official or representational role may in fact be relatively limited in weight and of authority within that particular tradition. So that's one of the reasons why it's important to recognize a scale or a spectrum of possibilities. Another reason is that a person who may be in one instance give an official responsibility you know to wear an official hat as the popular expression would have it, to represent you know his or her religious institution in a dialogical context that same person in an other context in a dialogue of life in the neighborhood might be interacted with somebody else in a completely grassroots way.

So this is why even one person may at times be at one end of the spectrum or an another or anywhere in between depending on the nature of their understanding of the role they play in a particular context of dialogue and of course these contexts vary tremendously of course. The fourth kind is theological it comes back as for all typologies. The fifth one is ideological or activist in some ways it's linked to the concept of a denial of spiritual solidarity in this fifth ideological activist approach to dialogue. I think we need to think again of a right of a spectrum from something which may be very high at why high end institutionally of interstate. I mean a really transnational international you know state collaboration for particular kinds of inter-religious dialogue activities versus at the other end of the spectrum interpersonal dynamics that have an activist perspective meaning that they try to together address the problem and try to bring some solutions to it and so between the very high level interstate and the very personal level which is grassroots you have a spectrum here in this case as I mentioned in number three the difference in this case is that it is the focus that

is rooted in a particular ideology of what to do about reality which brings people together. There's a shared in that sense theme which comes out of a shared moral commitment regarding a particular issue whether it has to do with the alleviation of poverty or addressing climate change or whether it has to do with reducing violence or whether it has to do with ending war. All of those major challenges that one comes across around the world today and so there are different groups of people that will come together and address and use an inter-religious dialogue approach to their concerns and hope that they can that way better address and do something positive to transform society. So this particular fifth kind of dialogue is always collaborative because it requires more than two or three people to come together because they share a common approach and a common interest then they figure out sort of how to address the problem together and so there is a growing recognition that much of the inter-religious dialogue movement around the world today takes the fifth form especially among the younger generations today.

II. Challenges of Dialogue

There are four key challenges relating to dialogue that must be considered, as follows:

1-**Definitional Challenges** : Interfaith versus interreligious versus intercultural versus interworldview.

2-**Hermeneutical Challenges** :

-From essentialist to pluralist interpretations.

-A glocal approach to structuring interreligious dialogue: Symbiotic global-local relations

3- **Institutional Challenges: Creating and Networking** : UN, Transnational alliances, National coalitions, Local groups: Community of communities.

4- **Ethical Challenges** :

-Which memory? What degree of inclusion?

-Instrumentalization: political, emotional, intellectual? Who benefits?

-How far does dialogue, as a tool/approach, foster non-violent communication?¹

I'd like now to simply sort of move on to the question of challenges of dialogue. Of course, from my previous analysis and now you will recognise our definitional challenges around the concept of inter-religious dialogue, and dialogue in general, of course. But also in English -too just stick with English-one can talk about inter-faith versus inter-religious or versus inter-cultural, which sometimes is broadly understood to include religion, or inter-worldview, which includes worldview, which is religious and non-religious. And so there are different terminology being used, and part of the definitional challenges in which terminology do we want to use, and for what purpose, and what exactly is meant

1 MacMaster Johnston, *A Word Between Us : ethics in interfaith dialogue*, 1st Ed, Centre for Hizmet Studies, London, 2015, p.11.

by it. And some terms are more inclusive, and some terms are more exclusive. And so I think it's important to be careful about which terms we use.¹

And, of course, I can only begin to mention how if we use other languages than English, then it becomes even more complex, in terms of challenges if we talk about [?] in Arabic or [?] in Hebrew or any other term that come from any of the languages that exist around the world. Today, to reflect a particular kind of interaction between human beings, be it more broad or more narrow in definition, there is definitely a wealth of possibilities of understanding of what this means. And

that is particularly challenging for the kinds of dialogue which bring people from different linguistic identity, and whose understanding or use of English may either be non-existent or not very well developed. And therefore, if we conduct the conversations in English when that is not the dominant language for the majority of the people there, or not for all of them, then there are issues of power dynamics of understanding that amidst themselves within the process and less equity exists in those contexts in the interactions. And so that's why taking care of understanding sort of the nature of the linguistic identities in the participants of dialogue is also very important.

In conclusion, of course, I go back to the limits of the ground rules and guidelines as well as typologies of dialogue that I've talked about in both part 1 and part 2 of this presentation. But all of this is really important to recognise, but at the same time, it doesn't stop us from celebrating some of the really important achievements which have happened in the world of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue in recent years.

Despite all of these challenges, we have the development first, at the international community level, a UN resolution on December 20th of 2006 entitled "the promotion of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue understanding and cooperation for peace" and you can see here that there's both the site of understanding, at an informational level, as well as cooperations which mean on the ground, in terms of how you connect people to do things about reality. All of this to promote peace. And so I think that this is really a major achievement, it means that dialogue is now a common concern of the international community in ways which had never been so explicit since the beginning of the United Nations over 50 years ago. And so that, to me, is a major improvement to be celebrated and to anchor in some ways some of the rationales for developing all kinds of dialogical activities worldwide.

A second example is the development within the United Nations, in particular of the Alliance of Civilizations, sponsored initially by Turkey in Spain.

1 Brodeur Patrice , *Interfaith & Intercultural Dialogue: Issues and Promises*, p.13.

And there are now over a hundred countries that have become members of the Alliance and are able, through this alliance, to foster a variety of activities, especially international ones, that are trying to address again sort of the importance of better understanding and cooperation for world peace. Understanding, of course, that dialogue is the way forward to decrease and avoid violence which often only ends up in a vicious downward spiral of further violence.

A last example, among many possible ones, is the development of the King Abdullah International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, co-sponsored initially by Austria, Saudi Arabia and Spain, as well as the Holy See as a founding observer. This development, put in place since November of 2012, brings together the dialogue of religion and politics, in a way. It's nation-states that are trying to understand that by collaborating with each other and with a series of high religious leaders, as well as leaders and religious people across the spectrum from official to grassroots, can actually learn more how to better practice dialogue in their different settings in order to be able to promote world peace. That particular piece of the unfolding creative dimensions of new institutions, in this case, transnational ones or international ones, are again just a few examples of the over thousands of different organisations that have developed in the last 20 years or so. And that is a development which we will talk more about, in its diverse forms and expressions, over the next presentations.

III. A Brief History of the Modern Interreligious Dialogue Movement

On the brief history on the modern interreligious dialogue movement. We will cover a variety of organizations, rather than individuals. I will divide the section into the following sections: pre-modern history, then the early and middle history, and finally ending with the modern-day present. We will cover a dozen or so organizations, which are listed here. At this point, I think it is simply important to have a sense of the diversity of efforts on the part of the human kind, which have been developing an international interreligious dialogue.

1- Pre-modern History of Dialogue

The origins of Dialogue : Dialogue comes from two Greek words:

The term dialogue stems from the Greek διάλογος (*dialogos*, conversation); its roots are διά (*dia*: through) and λόγος (*logos*: speech, reason). The first extant author who uses the term is Plato, in whose works it is closely associated with the art of dialectic.¹ Latin took over the word as *dialogus*.²

Together, they mean 'to speak across', 'to exchange', or 'to converse' in a way that shows a two-way flow. It does not necessarily define how this verbal

1 Jazdzewska, K. (1 June 2015). "From Dialogos to Dialogue: The Use of the Term from Plato to the Second Century CE". *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*. 54 (1): 17–36.

2 "Dialogue", *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edition.

exchange ought to take place, and for what purposes, except that of increased understanding of different perspectives.

It is not Billogos, it is DIAlogos – it's the exchange of words between different people. It does not necessarily define how this exchange of words should take place, or to what purposes, except that of an increased understanding of different perspectives on any issue. So, dialogue is, and has carried for centuries now, over 2500 years, this broad understanding and meaning. It has come to our time in part because it has also been used in the title of what has become known as a literary genre with a very long history indeed, that is not only linked to the Greek history of literature, but also to other civilization literature.¹

Dialogue as a literary genre has a very long history, with examples from different civilizations:

- Late third millennium BCE: Sumerian disputations.²
- Around third millennium BCE: Rigvedic dialogue hymns.³
- 9th-8th century BCE (oral) – ca. 400 BCE (written): Mahabharata⁴.

In the Western Tradition, the word 'dialogue' has been transmitted for centuries through the literary and philosophical work known as the "Dialogues of Plato" (Athens: b. 427/8 – d. 347 BCE).⁵

Dialogue in Chinese and Arabic Culture

We also know that the concept of dialogue existed in other civilizations. One can look at the Chinese culture, where we find the concept of Duihua. Together with that ideogram, which is actually two ideograms, we find a variety of other ideograms, which give nuance to the ways of using Chinese words for what in English would translate in general as 'dialogue'. In Arabic culture, we have the word "hiwaar". Again, the derivatives of this word, provide depth and nuance to the concept of 'dialogue'. Whether we look at the Chinese or Arabic culture, we observe a similar phenomenon of a concept that is more or less similar to the concept of 'dialogue' in the English language.⁶

2- Early Modern History (1893-1959)

1 Bird, Otto A.; Musial, Thomas J. (1973). "Great Books Programs". *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science*. 10. pp. 159–160.

2 G. J., and H. L. J. Vansitphout. 1991. *Dispute Poems and Dialogues in the Ancient and Mediaeval Near East: Forms and Types of Literary Debates in Semitic and Related Literatures*. Leuven: Department Oriëntalistiek.

3 Wendy Doniger (1981). *The Rig Veda: An Anthology : One Hundred and Eight Hymns, Selected, Translated and Annotated*. Penguin Books. pp. 167–168.

4 Austin, Christopher R. (2019). *Pradyumna: Lover, Magician, and Son of the Avatara*. Oxford University Press. p. 21.

5 Gosse, Edmund (1911). "Dialogue" . In Chisholm, Hugh (ed.). *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 8 (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press. pp. 156–157.

6 G. J., and H. L. J. Vansitphout. 1991. *Dispute Poems and Dialogues in the Ancient and Mediaeval Near East: Forms and Types of Literary Debates in Semitic and Related Literatures*. Leuven: Department Oriëntalistiek.

1893: The World's Parliament of Religions¹

A world fair took place in Chicago, here are some of the key highlights:

- Chicago wanted to place itself on the map.
- It marked a new form of non-material technology; How to relate to one-another across human differences.
- It saw the coming together from many different religions including Christianity, Buddhists and Islam.
- The aim was to put aside there differences and learn from each other.
- It was not about converting each other but learning from each other.
- Key component of the world fair was the "World's Parliament of Religions"
- The city wanted to demonstrate how advantaged and progressive they have become.
- It marked a new era in inter-religious relations.²

Here we can divide two periods: before and after First World War. In 1893, a World Fair took place in Chicago. It was, at that point, a relatively young city that was a part of the new outreach into the western wilds of the Americas. It was a very dynamic city that wanted to place itself on the North Atlantic map, meaning the European consciousness, as a city worthy of hosting a world fair. The phenomenon of a World Fair has developed a few years earlier, starting in London and then Paris. Those world Fairs were often linked to the efforts of the cities, countries and empires that were hosting them, to show off different new technologies that they have developed, and through which they showed the world how progressive they are becoming. With these goals in mind, a World Fair was hosted in Chicago in 1893.³

There were several parts to it, but one component that stood out and definitely had a long-lasting impact all the way to today, took place over two weeks, and was called the ‘Worlds Parliament for Religions’. It was, in many ways, historically the first human effort to come together from as many different religions as possible, and to put aside their differences and tendencies to convert each other, in order to learn from one another. Because of that ethos, which was avant-garde for that period to put aside the missionary zeal and to say ‘we are coming hear not to convert but to learn from each other’, is why that particular parliament was considered as a beginning of a new era in inter-religious relations, which allowed for mutual learning rather than trying to debate as to who has the ultimate truth and through those debate always trying to convert one another.⁴

1 Chicago 1893 parliamentofreligions.org

2 "Parliament of the World's Religions", Religion & Ethics Newsweekly, 23 October 2015

3 Bishop, Donald H. 1969. "Religious Confrontation, a Case Study: The 1893 Parliament of Religions." Numen 16 April, 63-76.

4 THE WORLD'S PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS, Bonney, Charles C, The Monist journal, April, 1895, Vol. 5, No. 3 (April, 1895), pp. 321-344.

The parliament's role in that sense marked a new form of non-material technology. It was not about iron or different chemical discoveries. It was about a different way, not completely new, but certainly in an era of the dominant missionary zeal and atmosphere, it was definitely a new technology of how to relate to one another across human differences, and religious ones in particular.¹

1900: International Association for Religious Freedom

The World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910 marks the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement².

Nevertheless, it sparked the imagination of a lot of Americans, which had a long-lasting effect. There was no subsequent organization to this parliament, but in part due to one Indian participant (Vivekananda), who remained afterwards for a long period in the US and moved to Boston, there was a degree of influence in the Boston area that led eventually, in 1900, to the formation of what is called the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF).³ This is the current name of the organization, not its original name. In 1900 in Boston, a number of different religious leaders, from what might be understood today as more progressive religious organizations or wings of religious communities came together to form IARF. They came together in part because of their liberal outlook on their tradition.⁴ They were modernizing their religious traditions, trying to bring them up to speed with the understanding that women should play bigger roles, that lay people should be more involved in the decision making process of the organization, and often that they would have a more historical contextual reading of their own history, as well as the understanding that whatever their world-view was, it had to account for the modern discoveries of sciences. These were, in a nutshell, different aspects of liberalism which infused their transformation (sometimes called reformation movements) within their own respective religious communities. Whether they were Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, or Hindu, these more liberal reform movements, came together to support each other, and to provide protection against prosecution, as new religious movements that were often prosecuted mainly by their own co-religionists. The IARF is truly the oldest existing inter-religious dialogue organization. To this day, it focuses primarily on this effort to cooperate in order to preserve and foster this notion of religious freedom: the right of minority religious groups to sustain themselves and to have a place within a family of a particular religious community.⁵

1 Guénon René, *le Théosophisme*, 1ère ed, Nouvelle librairie nationale, Paris, 1921, p.18.

2 Traer Robert, *A Short History of the IARF*, p.1; <https://iarf.net/about/history/>

3 Charles W.Wendte, *The Wider Fellowship*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1927), Volume II, pp.190 – 196; Charles W. Wendte, ed., *Freedom and Fellowship in Religion: Proceedings and Papers of the Fourth International Congress of Religious Liberals* (Boston: International Council, 1907), p. 1.

4 W. Copeland Bowie, ed., *Liberal Religious Thought at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century* (London: 1901).

5 Charles W. Wendte, *The Wider Fellowship*, Vol 2, p.188.

A subsequent development that took place, which was important even though it wasn't inter-religious, was the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, taking place in 1910. It marks the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement. By ecumenical we mean the inter-Christian, or the inter-church movement. It is a modern notion that we need to dialogue, but rather than being inter, it is intra-religious: a dialogue between different Christian churches. The World Missionary Conference understood that, on the one hand, there were new opportunities in part due to technological developments in transportation (train and boat), which allowed for a greater outreach and travel of missionaries around the world. As many embarked on these missions, missionary associations were formed to propagate Christianity across the world. But at the same time, a growing number of people were also being self-critical, or at least wanted to limit this missionary zeal, and understood it was important to do so both through intra- and inter- religious dialogue.¹

That conference in 1910 became a beginning point, especially among protestant European and North American churches, of reflection of the need to combine or add or even put more emphasis on a non-converting philosophy to inter-church relations.²

Here are some of the key highlights World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh³:

- Progressive religious leaders came together because they had a liberal outlook

- Their aim was to modernise religious traditions in certain ways, such as:

- Women had to play more of a role
- More involvement of lay-people
- More contextual reading
- Need to make room for modern discoveries

1914: World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through Churches

This organisation did not last long due to the First World War. A short-lived organization was formed, World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through Churches, formed in 1914. You can see how in some way, beyond the Edinburgh conference, there was a formation of an actual

1 Ibid, vol 2, p.192-193.

2 Charles W. Wendte, "A Summary and Appreciation, from The Fifth World Congress of Free Christians and Other Religious Liberals, reprinted from The Christian Register (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1910), 15.

3 Charles W. Wendte and V. D. Davis, ed.s, Fifth International Congress of Free Christianity and Religious Progress: Proceedings and Papers, Berlin, August 5-10, 1910 (London: Williams & Norgate, 1911).

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organization, although unfortunately it lasted only a very short time due to the First World War.¹

1920: Religiöser Menschheitsbund

Formed in Germany under the leadership of Rudolf Otto, who was a senior figure in the relatively new scientific movement in religion.²

After the First World War, there was an effort to consolidate the previous efforts of the peace movements that arose from the fights against the World War, and many of the people fighting for peace were doing it from a Christian perspective, and have gotten together to broaden that work and make it more inter-religious. One particular organization was formed in 1920 called Religiöser Menschheitsbund in Germany, under the leadership of Rudolf Otto, who was a senior figure in the scientific study of religion (Religionswissenschaft). That approach was at the heart of trying to marry different methodologies of science to the importance of making sense of what is unique about religious phenomena around the world. Unfortunately, as an international organization it did not last long.³

1936: World Congress of Faiths

In 1936, the World Congress of Faith (WCF) was established in London. At the time of the height of the British Empire, WCF was established to link the religious leaders throughout the empire in a way that was unprecedented. It was very much a top-down approach, and it still exists today, although it has mostly been a European-based organisation and has had a variety of different emphases over the decades.⁴

One example of a person who somehow influenced of the WCF, as well as other efforts for inter-religious dialogue, was Martin Buber, a German European Jewish philosopher, who wrote an influential book 'Ich und Du' (1923). This book started the development of a current in philosophy called the 'philosophy of dialogue'. For Buber, dialogue is more than simply exchanging points of view, or efforts at reaching conclusions. Dialogue is, deeper still, at the heart of authentic human relationships, both between human beings, as well as

1 World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship Through the Churches The Copenhagen Conference, August 5-12, 1922, 1st ed, New York, p.2. See: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044133893800&view=1up&seq=2>.

2 Wolfes, Matthias, "Religiöser Menschheitsbund", in: Religion Past and Present. Consulted online on 21 December 2020 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1877-5888_rpp_SIM_13959> First published online: 2011

3 Obergethmann, Frank (1998): Rudolf Ottos 'Religiöser Menschheitsbund' - ein Kapitel interreligiöser Begegnung zwischen den Weltkriegen", in: ZfR 6 (1/1998), Marburg, S.85-86.

4 <http://www.open.ac.uk/researchprojects/makingbritain/content/world-congress-faiths>.

between humans and god. And so through his exploration of exactly the nature of the ethical quality necessary to engage with somebody else, Buber was able to improve the modern understanding of what exactly it means to talk to somebody else, recognising the differences but also dealing with those differences that is appreciative and respectful.¹

A couple of the key points to consider are shown below:

1- Martin Buber (1878-1965) was a German European philosopher who, through his famous work “Ich und Du” (1923), started a current of philosophy called ‘philosophy of dialogue’.²

2- For Buber, dialogue is more than exchanging points of view or efforts at reaching conclusions; dialogue is deeper still, at the heart of authentic human relationships, both between human beings as well as between humans and God.³

3- Middle Modern History (1960-2000)

There are three key parts of the Middle Modern History to consider:

1960: Temple of Understanding

1967: Christian Dialogue with Men of Other Faiths

1970: World Conference of Religions for Peace

After the WW2, what we see is first the re-emergence of the ecumenical movement in more official ways. It was the development of the World Council of Churches in 1948. It is not until more than a decade later that we see the emergence of the second functioning organization (after IARF which continued to work throughout these decades) for inter-religious dialogue. It emerged in NYC, right besides the UN, called the Temple of Understanding. Created by Juliette Hollister⁴, after having had a vision of how religious communities ought to come together and work along international communities like the UN, her vision led to the coming together of hundreds of different leaders and people of all walks of life, to celebrate the similarities and differences across the various religious traditions.⁵ The Temple of Understanding continues to exist in NYC, carrying out a variety of activities that are international in nature, but primarily

1 Braybrooke, Marcus, *A Wider Vision: A History of the World Congress of Faiths 1936-1996* (Oxford: One World, 1996).

2 Livingstone, E. A. (2013). *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 79 ; *Island of Freedom - Martin Buber*. Roberthsarkissian.com.

3 Langton, Daniel (2010). *The Apostle Paul in the Jewish Imagination*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 67–71.

4 Braybrooke, Marcus (2009), *Beacons of the Light: One Hundred People Who Have Shaped the Spiritual History of Humankind*. O Books. p. 86 ; Saxon, Wolfgang (2000-11-30). "Juliet Garretson Hollister, 84; Led Temple of Understanding". *New York Times*. Retrieved 2015-08-09.

5 Lamb, Henry (October 2001). "Green Religion and Public Policy". *Sovereignty International, Inc*. Retrieved 2015-08-08 ; Saxon, Wolfgang (2000-11-30). "Juliet Garretson Hollister, 84; Led Temple of Understanding". *New York Times*. Retrieved 2015-08-09.

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based in NYC and USA. Being closely linked to the UN, it uses the opportunity to include people based around the world who come to visit NYC.¹

Slightly later, we see the development in 1967 of the organization called Christian Dialogue with Men of Other Faiths. This organization did not last very long, but it does show a hybrid between an ecumenical and an inter-religious organization, of course, from a Christian perspective.²

Finally, in 1970 we have an organization called for many decades the World Conference on Religions for Peace, which started as a conference of religions working towards peace. That particular organization has been to the present the largest of the international inter-religious organizations. In the late 1960s, the increasing violence that resulted from the Cold war, led the variety of different religious leaders to the necessity to establish a long-lasting organization to foster inter-religious collaboration for peace.³ It is not so much dialogue to learn about one another, but rather a co-operation on the ground to diminish or reduce violence from happening. This event took three years in the making, resulting in a conference in Kyoto, Japan. What is fascinating when interviewing the people behind this movement, whether Christians from North American and Europe, or Muslims from Turkey or the Middle East, of Buddhists from Japan, all of them have a sense that they already were the founders of similar efforts within their own countries for what eventually emerges as the World Conference on Religions for Peace.⁴ Today, the organization is called Religions for Peace International, with membership in over 70 different countries world-wide, organized mostly through religious councils. It is not focused on dialogues, as much on working together on disarmament, education, empowerment of women, etc. This organization had leadership from a variety of Buddhist organizations, relatively new at that time. Rishso Kosei-kai was one of the major movements led by its founder Reverend Niwano, who hosted the event, but there were other organizations involved as well. There were people like Archbishop Hernandez, from New Delhi, a Roman Catholic who strongly advocated for the development of this organization from his Indian background. Dr. Aram, who was one of the leaders of the Gandhian movement. There were also Muslims from Pakistan and turkey behind the development of this movement as well. European

1 Ghai, O. P. (2008). *Sterling Book of Unity in Diversity: Thoughts of the World's Great Religions*. Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd. p. 7.

2 CHRISTIANS IN DIALOGUE WITH MEN OF OTHER FAITHS, This statement was made by the Protestant/Orthodox/Catholic Consultation on Dialogue with Men of Other Faiths which met in Kandy, Ceylon, February 27 to March 6, 1967.

3 Peace, Religions for. "International Secretariat". Religions for Peace International. Retrieved 8 March 2020.

4 Jean Dumas, « Halte à l'islamophobie », *Évangile et Liberté*, 4 mars 2014 (consulté le 21 décembre 2020).

representatives were present too, including some who have learned a great deal about the dialogue through the IARF, such as Reverend Really, who had been the primary architect to bring together the movements of the Unitarians and Universalists, into what is now called the Unitarian- Universalist movement.¹ Therefore, whether we talk about mainline Christian denominations, or other Christian denominations, or post-Christian denominations from the Western-North Atlantic framework, or Muslim, Buddhist, or Hindu organization from Asia, we see that different people were thinking more or less the same thing: the need for religious leaders to come together to foster peace in order to limit the spread of violence due to the ideological warfare of the Cold war.²

Dialogue in the Second Vatican Documents³

Dialogue is at the heart of most of the Second Vatican Council's documents. And here are four key texts that you must be aware of:

Nostra Aetate : Dialogue with other religions

Unitatis Redintegratio : Dialogue with other Christians

Gaudium et Spes : Dialogue with modern society

Dignitatis Humanae : Dialogue with political authorities

What we see is in the Second Vatican Council taking place in Rome between 1962 -1965 which resulted in many different changes to the Roman Catholic self-understanding. These changes resulted from decades of personal dialogue between some theologians and people of different religions. Some documents, such as *Nostra Aetate*, in 1965, stressed the importance of dialogue with other religions⁴. There was also *Unitatis Redintegratio*, which talked about the dialogue with other Christians, therefore again showing the close correlation between ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue from the Catholic perspective.⁵ Followed by of course the *Gaudium et Spes* that talked about dialogue with the modern society⁶, and the *Dignitatis Humanae*, a document that promoted dialogue with political authorities.⁷ Therefore, the concept of dialogue in the early 60s, became central as a methodology as a tool to transform theological

1 Anne-Bénédictte Hoffner, « "Religions pour la paix" veut davantage s'appuyer sur les femmes », *La Croix*, 30 août 2019 (consulté le 21 décembre 2020).

2 Lina Farelli et H. Ben Rhouma, « Religions pour la Paix : ce qu'il faut retenir de la conférence interreligieuse mondiale organisée en Allemagne », *Saphirnews*, 28 août 2019.

3

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_19051991_dialogue-and-proclamatio_en.html.

4 Yves Chiron, *Histoire des conciles*, Paris, Perrin, 2011, p.263 ; « 28 octobre 1965 - Déclaration *Nostra Aetate* sur l'Église et les religions non chrétiennes », *Amitié judéo-chrétienne de France*, 1965 (consulté le 21 décembre 2020) ; Raphy Marciano, « « NOSTRA AETATE » : 50 ans après », *AJCF*, 2015 (consulté le 21 décembre 2020).

5 http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_fr.html.

6 Bologna, Società editrice il Mulino, 2000, p.832.

7 Discours de Benoît XVI à la Curie romaine, 22 décembre 2005.

outputs with very concrete changes to the traditional way in which the catholic self-understanding was, regarding a variety of different modern issues, including among them relations with non-Christians.

The result of this Second Vatican Council, and these documents, led to the launch institutionally of the Pontifical Council of Inter-Religious Dialogue¹. From there, we have the growth of the leadership of the Catholic church, in a variety of different initiatives in inter- religious dialogue, first bi-lateral, and eventually multi-lateral, with the 1987 Pope John Paul II calling for a major meeting of religious leaders in Assisi, in October of that year. That also caught the attention of the World in a way that has begun to put inter-religious dialogue on the map of the international community from that time onwards.²

The Pontifical Council and WCC Sub-unit

The result of this Second Vatican Council, and these documents, led to the launch institutionally of the Pontifical Council of Inter-Religious Dialogue. From there, we have the growth of the leadership of the Catholic church, in a variety of different initiatives in inter- religious dialogue, first bi-lateral, and eventually multi-lateral, with the 1987 Pope John Paul II calling for a major meeting of religious leaders in Assisi, in October of that year. That also caught the attention of the World in a way that has begun to put inter-religious dialogue on the map of the international community from that time onwards.³

Following the footsteps of the Vatican developments, at the same time, the already-established WCC, and over time, a variety of different activities led to the launch of the WCC sub-unit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies in 1971. Notice that the world ideology is there, very much reflecting the Cold War era of the day, and the need to not only think of inter-religious dialogue in isolation of what are the current dominant ideologies, such as communism and socialism. It was therefore understood to be important for this dialogue to be inclusive of all non-Christians.⁴

The complementarity between the Vatican and WCC efforts, one based in Rome and the other in Geneva at the time, has led in many ways the Christian Europeans (although non- European Christians were involved as well), to the efforts of funding of many different initiatives, causing over the years the need

1 THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE". Vatican.va. Retrieved 30 September 2017.

2 Pope Paul VI (19 May 1964). "Progrediente Concilio" (in Italian). Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Retrieved 26 May 2019.

3 "The Holy See - The Roman Curia - Pontifical Councils - Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity". www.vatican.va. Retrieved 2017-11-25.

4

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_pro_20051996_chrstuni_pro_en.html.

for other inter-religious dialogue events, that were not only the initiative or funded by Christians.

3- Recent Modern History (2001-present) and Conclusions

Here are three key organisations that are playing a key role in the Recent Modern History of Interreligious Dialogue:

United Nations Alliance of Civilisations (2005)

Universal Peace Federation (2005)

KAICIID Dialogue Centre (2012)

Let's explain how each organisation has contributed to Interreligious dialogue:

Since 2001 what we see is the emergence of some organization that are playing a role in a way that adds another layer to this history. First, within the UN, we see the emergence of the Alliance of Civilizations in 2005, based on the concept of the dialogue of civilization¹, brought up a decade earlier, in the late 1990s, by the president Khatami of Iran. That initiative was proposed to the UN by the President Zapatero together with Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey, which was then adopted in the fall of 2005, under the leadership of Kofi Annan. This Alliance of Civilizations included mostly intercultural dialogue of different kinds, but it also has within its mandate to carry out inter-religious dialogue activities.²

In the same year, we have the development of the Universal Peace Federation³, led by one particular church, called the Church of the Unification⁴, led by Reverend Moon from South Korea. That is in some ways a combination of earlier organization led also by Reverend Moon, to begin to see how to muster more inter-religious collaborations with existing governmental and UN representations. To this day, the Universal Peace Federation continues its work, trying to be a venue for collaboration across organization, primarily at the nexus or religion and politics.⁵

The emergence in 2012 of a new kind of organization, also at the nexus of religion and politics, is called KAICIID Dialogue Center. It is a brainchild of King Abdullah, who is both the king of Saudi Arabia, as well as the custodian of

1 <https://www.unaoc.org/who-we-are/> consulté le 21 décembre 2020)

2 For Turkey's role and motivations, see, Ali Balci, and Nebi Miş, "Turkey's Role in the Alliance of Civilizations: A New Perspective in Turkish Foreign Policy?" *Turkish Studies* 9.3 (2008): 387-406.

3 <https://eume.upf.org/index.php>, A l'onglet "Who we are" il est bien expliqué que Sun Myung Moon est le fondateur de l'UPF.

4 *Prophets and Protons: New Religious Movements and Science in Late Twentieth-Century America*, Benjamin E. Zeller, NYU Press, Mar 1, 2010, page 13.

5 Sontag, Fredrick (1977). *Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church*. Abingdon. pp. 102-105.

two holy Mosques, in Mecca and Medina¹, therefore serving in two capacities: at a nation-state level, as well as a transnational leadership level of the highest level of the Muslim community. In the later capacity, he established not only in 2005 a national center to promote national unity in Saudi Arabia, but then worked from 2011 onwards to establish an international center called KAICIID.² Even though the center was established in 2012, it builds on the momentum of both getting the consensus of religious Muslim leaders of the importance for the King Abdullah to be in the center of the international creation of KAICIID, therefore also leading in tri-islamic dialogue, but also working in eventually meeting Pope Benedict XVI in a historic first meeting in 2008 between the two leaders of two largest religious communities in the world. This meeting led to a collaboration on this creation of a dialogue center: the Vatican is now the founding observed of the center. Two other organizations were involved in the founding: the government of Austria and the Government of Spain. Therefore, the intergovernmental collaboration of the three nation-states, as well as Vatican as the observed, has allowed the creation of the first historic organization focused on promoting international inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue. In a way, because its focus is primarily inter-religious, it is clearly a new phenomenon in terms of geopolitical reality globally.³

IV. Dialogue Theories and Ethics Exploring the Conceptual Landscape of Dialogue

Many of scholars and preachers are part of the interreligious dialogue movement and a few of them have been doing this for over 30 years. In private conversations, you often hear them admit to each other, rather painfully, that interreligious dialogue just doesn't work.

Some say that it is repetitive because people tend to pronounce the same noble sentiments, for example, the commitment to mutual respect as all humans are created in the image of God; the promotion of tolerance, understanding, love and compassion as they are shared by all religions;

Some complain that it is tedious because there is a tendency to cover the same grounds, seek consensus and avoid tension or conflict;

1 "King Abdullah interfaith dialogue center opens in Vienna". Arab News. Retrieved 15 March 2014; "Saudi intercultural centre to be opened in Vienna". Al Shorfa. Retrieved 29 August 2012.

2 "Speech of Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger in the King Abdullah Center". Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. Archived from the original on 30 July 2012. Retrieved 29 August 2012; "Spindelegger: "Great opportunity for interreligious dialogue"". Austrian Foreign Ministry. Archived from the original on 8 October 2013. Retrieved 29 August 2012; Jahn, George (13 October 2011). "Saudi-backed religious tolerance center opens". Huffington Post. Retrieved 30 August 2012.

3 "Muslim, Christian, Jewish Leaders Unite to Condemn Jihadi Violence". Voice of America. Retrieved 30 June 2016.

Others suggest that it is superficial as few would venture beneath the surface of rhetoric and explore substance of religions; and equally, it is frustrating as most of the time, they leave the dialogue event without getting to know the person behind those noble statements.

However, when you ask, if it doesn't work, why have they been doing this for all these years? This is the moment when you notice a spark in their eyes, and a discreet curve of excitement at the corner of their mouths, they would lean closer and lower their voice and speak with a mysterious examined tone:

Because, very rarely, something absolutely extraordinary or even magical happens in dialogue –

“It is one of those conversations that would change me forever not because I share the same views with the other person, but because we see things so differently”, says one;

“It is one of those moments when I am so inspired by someone else's religious passion that it adds depth to my own faith”, claims another;

“It is one of those occasions when I feel deeply moved and uplifted by an amazing closeness to someone who was a total stranger before the conversation”, adds a third...

We will do this in the following four steps:

First, we revisit some of the key concepts and theories of dialogue. We are concerned with dialogue in general, including interreligious dialogue and other dialogue events. Here we highlight dialogue as human's way of being-in-the-word¹ and for communities to come together.²

Secondly, we take a closer look at the ethics of dialogue, which refers to core practical ethos underpinning dialogue encounter. This prepares us to engage in dialogue as practical philosophy.

Thirdly, we examine dialogue as praxis, i.e. how we relate to things in the world and ground our relationships in dialogue as “a thoughtful act”.³ In doing so, we consider practical points of what it entails to live a life in dialogue, as in *vita activa*⁴. We explore in societies can be dialogically cultivated globally.

1 Heidegger Martin , *Being and Time*, Trans by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, 1st ed, Blackwell Publishers Ltd 1962, Oxford OX4 1JF,UK, p.205; Mendes-Flohr, Paul. “Martin Buber and Martin Heidegger in Dialogue.” *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 94, no. 1, 2014, pp. 2–25. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/673540. Accessed 22 Dec. 2020.

2 Gadamer, H-G, *Language and understanding*, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F026327640606322>.

3 Dallmayr, F. (2009) ‘Hermeneutics and intercultural dialog: linking theory and practice’, *Ethics & Global Politics*, 2(1), 23-39.

4 Arendt, H. (2018) *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, USA, p.15.

1- The key concepts and theories of dialogue.

A- Dialogue as Thinking Together (David Bohm)

The first dialogue theory developed by David Bohm is known as '*Dialogue as Thinking Together*'. David Bohm (1917-1992) was an American physicist-philosopher, one of the 20th century's most important thinkers¹. His main concern has been with understanding the nature of reality in general and of consciousness in particular as a coherent whole. From late 1980s to early 1990s, Bohm held weekend seminars to explore the process of thought and the nature of consciousness. This experience had led to his developing a unique theory of dialogue and his much read book 'On Dialogue'.²

A-1-Bohm's Theory of Dialogue³

Bohm argues that we live in a world which is the product of human thought, such as the language we speak, our system of economic values, national boundaries, beliefs, etc. Equally, human thought includes our feelings, emotions, desires and motivations. Thus our acts are constrained by our assumptions and feelings and by the psychological and sociological pressures behind them. So it is important that humans explore our thought process through dialogue as dialogue helps us slow down the process of thought so that we can observe it while it is actually happening.⁴

For Bohm, dialogue is practical as it takes the form of a group of people coming together to explore the individual and collective presuppositions, ideas, beliefs, and feelings.⁵ Dialogue is thus 'thinking together', it is a way of observing, collectively, how hidden values and intentions can frame our behaviour and action; it is also a way of witnessing how unnoticed cultural differences can clash without our realizing what is occurring.⁶ As such, dialogue is part of an unfolding process of creative participation in shared thinking and learning. Dialogue as thinking together is truly powerful in helping engender a sense of increased harmony, fellowship and creativity amongst people.⁷

A-2-Principles of Bohm's Approach to Dialogue

There are broadly four key principles underlying Bohm's approach to Dialogue. These, however, are not practical guidelines. Instead they articulate

1 B. J. Hiley (1997). "David Joseph Bohm. 20 December 1917 – 27 October 1992: Elected F.R.S. 1990". *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*. 43: 107–131. doi:10.1098/rsbm.1997.0007. S2CID 70366771.

2 David Edmund Moody (2016). *An Uncommon Collaboration: David Bohm and J. Krishnamurti*. Alpha Centauri Press. ISBN 978-0692854273.

3 http://www.david-bohm.net/dialogue/dialogue_proposal.html, Retrieved 23 December 2020.

4 Bohm, D. (1996). *On dialogue*, 1st ed, New York: Routledge, p.10.

5 *Ibid*, p26.

6 *Ibid*, p.27.

7 Arleta Griffor: Mind and its Wholeness, ANPA West Journal, vol. 7, no. 1 Archived March 26, 2012, at the Wayback Machine, September 1997, pages 25–26.

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the values that people must hold and live in order to engage in this process of thinking together.

1- The group agrees that no group-level decisions will be made in the conversation.¹

2- Each individual agrees to suspend judgement in the conversation.²

3- As these individuals "suspend judgement" they also simultaneously are as honest and transparent as possible.

4- Individuals in the conversation try to build on other individuals' ideas in the conversation.

Bohm's theorisation offers a possibility to transform human consciousness in and through dialogue, both individually and collectively. Dialogue leads to shared meaning, which according to Bohm, is what truly holds a society together.

However, Bohm's approach to dialogue has its limitations. For instance, it ignores the impact of power dynamics on the dialogic process, and shows little sensitivity to the socially constructed power-relations such as in gender, class, ethnicity, and their effect on the individual's engagement in dialogue.

Furthermore, it downplays the need to identify with individual thought and emotions. This leaves no opportunities for individuals to work with their assumptions and feelings as an authentic expression of their lives in the world. Thus in practice, Bohm's approach to dialogue falls short of empowering the participants for self-improvement.

B- Dialogue as Emancipation (Paulo Freire)

Paulo Freire (1921-1997) was a Brazilian educationalist and one of the most significant educational thinkers in the 20th Century.³ Freire initiated a national literacy programme for peasants and slum dwellers in the 1950s and 60s. Through this work in the field, he discovered that poor and working class Brazilians believed it was impossible to change their individual circumstances and were resigned to their situation in society. Freire realised that this acceptance is due to their education which tends to perpetuate an oppressive structure as too often, education is like 'banking' where the educator makes 'deposits', i.e. information, knowledge, status quo, in the educated. Therefore, Freire's goals were to develop an efficient pedagogy for adults, and to raise the social

1 Bohm, "On Dialogue", p. 18-19.

2 Bohm, "On Dialogue", p. 22.

3 Wyllye, Justin (7 June 2012) [2010]. "Review of Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed". The New Observer. Retrieved 23 December 2020.

consciousness of the Brazilian working class.¹ In this process, he advanced an approach to dialogue that is emancipatory, at the heart of which is the recognition of the need for the 'oppressed' to move from an object position in society (being acted upon) to a subject position where one can act proactively to transform one's life and the society one lives in. This theory is summarised in his seminal book entitled "the Pedagogy of the Oppressed".²

B-1- Freire's Theory of Dialogue

Paulo Freire sees that dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world. ... Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people. The naming the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself.³

He maintains that:

1- Humans are limited by social, economic, political and other conditions. The purpose of education is to enable people to become 'conscious of such conditioning' in order to 'go beyond it'.⁴

2- Thus pedagogy must focus on helping individuals develop critical capacities and critical attitude through dialogue.

3- By cultivating these capacities, dialogue enables people to reflect on their experience in the world with a view to transform it.⁵

B-2- Freire's Approach to Critical Dialogue

Freirean dialogue is described as critical pedagogy which has been integrated in adult education in Brazil and across the world.⁶ Such education is not based on pre-prescribed curriculum, instead, it is structured to be dialogical. There are four core aspects to the Freirean dialogue:

Problematizing : developing an awareness of reality and one's place in the world. According to Freire, a critical approach starts with problematising in order to develop an awareness of the reality in concrete situations as well as an understanding of one's place in the world. The participants learn to pose questions such as 'who is making this statement?', 'for whom is he/she making it?', 'why is this statement being made here, now?' and 'who benefits from such statement and who is left out?'. Thus problematising honours and respects the

1 Mayo, Peter (1999). Gramsci, Freire, and Adult Education: Possibilities for Transformative Action. London: Zed Books, p. 5.

2 Freire, Paulo (1971). Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Translated by Ramos, Myra Bergman. New York: Herder and Herder, p.39.

3 Ibid, p.70.

4 Ibid, p.64.

5 Dewey, John (1897). My Pedagogic Creed. New York: E. L. Kellogg & Co. Retrieved 23 December 2020.

6 Kincheloe, Joe L. (2008). Critical Pedagogy Primer (2nd ed.). New York: Peter Lang.

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agency of each participant and supports the development of their critical consciousness.¹

Critical reflection : the group shares views and reflects together.

In dialogue, it is crucial that none of the existing dominant views are imposed or conveyed without them being probed and questioned. The purpose of critical reflection is to question the nature of the individual's historical and social situation, so that together the group will be able to 'name the world'.² Naming the world give voices to the oppressed and allow them to identify the unjust condition of their existence and locate the root causes of these situations and problems. Naming the world is emancipatory.³

Praxis : a dialectical movement from thinking to action; action to ideas and to a new action.

The central concept in Freire's epistemology is praxis, which he refers to as conscious action. In this way, the act of knowing includes a dialectical movement from thinking to action; action to new ideas and to a new action because both thinking and action are simultaneously constituted in the praxis. Dialogue is aimed at action which characterises the *raison d'être* of critical dialogue — collective actions for a societal future.⁴

Solidarity : the end of dialogue and of education is mutual humanisation which in turn entails solidarity.

Critical reflection and actions engender solidarity amongst dialogue partners, in Freire's case, the teachers and the students. Dialogue demands respect for each other and it itself affirms each person's humanity. Freire sees that the end of dialogue and of education is mutual humanisation which in turn entails solidarity.⁵

C- Dialogue as Encounter

Martin Buber (1878–1965) was an Austrian author, scholar, literary translator and political activist.⁶ His contribution to dialogue is summarised in a

1 Freire, P. (1977). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (translation in Greek Kritikos, G.). Athens: Rappa (in Greek), p.109; Vergidis, Dimitris, *Dialogue in Freire's Educational Method, in Era of Crisis*, Hellenic Open University, Greece, 2017/01/07, p.2.

2 Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). New York, NY: The Continuum. (Original work published 1968).

3 Tang, R. Y. (2004). *A study on Paulo Freire's dialogic pedagogy: An encounter of ideas and praxis* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). National Taiwan Normal University, Taipei.

4 Hamilton, S. (2018). *The relationship between theory & practice in Education*. Retrieved from <https://classroom.synonym.com/relationship-between-theory-practice-education-5050.html>.

5 Freire, Paulo (September 2000). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*(30th anniversary ed.). New York: Bloomsbury. p. 16

6 "Island of Freedom - Martin Buber". Roberthsarkissian.com.

number of his books, the most significant of which is the one entitled “I and Thou” published in 1923.¹ In *I and Thou*, Buber argues that the fundamental form of human existence is ‘man with man, a dialogue which takes place in the so-called ‘sphere of between’, in the encounter, through relationships. Buber’s theory of dialogue deals with the most profound issues of human relations, human relations with reality, and human relations with God. It sits comfortably between theology and philosophical anthropology.²

C-1- Buber’s Theory of Dialogue

According to Buber human beings possess a two-fold attitude towards the world - the ‘I-Thou’ and the ‘I-It’. The ‘I-Thou’ relation stresses the mutual and holistic existence of two entities. It is an encounter of equals, who recognise each other as such. It is a dialogue. The ‘I-It’ relations emphasises the other being as an object to be used or experienced as a means to an end, failing to recognise the other as an equal. Therefore, the ‘I-It’ relations contain no dialogue.³

Although, human existence is consisted in an oscillation between ‘I-Thou’ and ‘I-It’ relations, Buber argues that humans’ being is predominantly characterised by a dialogic relation with others, not only with human other but with other animate beings, such as trees, animals, as well as with the Divine Other. Buber maintains that all experience is relational, and that no isolated ‘I’ exists apart from relationship to an other. Equally, in every ‘I-Thou’ dialogue, the ‘I’ is affirmed. Thus he concludes: ‘All real living is meeting’.

The meeting isn’t just between two people or between a person and the world. Buber believed that ‘every particular Thou is a glimpse through to the eternal Thou’ (99). In other words, each and every ‘I-Thou’ relationship opens up a window to the ultimate Thou. Thus God is not an entity to be merely ‘believed in’, instead, God is the Divine Other that human beings ‘live with’ and with whom true dialogue and encounter is necessary.⁴

The ‘I-It’ relationship, however, involves distancing where differences are accentuated, the uniqueness of ‘I’ stressed. As a result, the ‘I’ is separated from the self it encounters. The latter is a reflection of the crisis of being in a modern society and therefore Buber sees that in such societies, it is becoming more and more difficult for humans to encounter God.⁵

C-2- Buber’s Approach to Critical Dialogue

Buber establishes that dialogue is located in the ‘in-between’ space of the ‘I’ and an other. This ‘in-between’ space is defined as ‘reciprocal relationship’

1 Kramer, Kenneth; Gawlick, Mechthild (November 2003). *Martin Buber’s I and thou: practicing living dialogue*. Paulist Press. p. 39.

2 Ibid, p.39-40.

3 Buber, Martin (2002) [1947]. *Between Man and Man*. Routledge. pp. 250–51.

4 Langton, Daniel (2010). *The Apostle Paul in the Jewish Imagination*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 67–71.

5 Kramer, Kenneth; Gawlick, Mechthild, *Martin Buber’s I and thou: practicing living dialogue* p. 39.

which is transformative. Indeed, through every 'I-Thou' encounter, the 'I' is transformed and this affects the 'I's further engagement in the 'I-it' relation with the future 'I-Thou' encounters.

There are four key features in the Buber's approach to dialogue encounter.¹

Intersubjectivity : As already pointed out, for Buber, the 'I' does not exist ontologically prior to relation, that is, there cannot be 'I' without it being related to a 'Thou' or to an 'it'. Intersubjectivity arises only when there is a relation in place. Intersubjectivity calls for a we-relationship, which is tied to the lived presence of oneself with the other, and the content of this experience in relation to the being of the other.

The meeting of souls: According to Buber, genuine dialogue is the meeting of souls because the 'I-Thou' encounter can only take place between whole beings, including our spiritual or higher self. The life of dialogue involves 'the turning towards the other', not by seeking but by grace as if we are called to dialogue.

Silence and Stillness: For Buber 'attentive silence' is the basis of dialogue (Avnon 1998: 42-3). Silence is active, and is regarded a welcoming acceptance of the other; and any words born out of silence are received in silence. In silence arises the stillness, which is located in an in-between space, a generative space, a kind of knowing which bears a different quality from the fruit of meditation.

Community: According to Buber, dialogic life is a form of political life through the actions of dialogue community. Buber implies that for a dialogue community to thrive, it requires leaders to commit themselves to dialogic life and to exemplify what it means to be in reciprocal relationship with others. With dialogue communities, institutions become associations through the fellowship of men.

D- Dialogue as Being in the World

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) was a German philosopher of the continental tradition, best known for his magnum opus *Truth and Method* published in 1960.² Gadamer developed a distinctive and thoroughly dialogical

1 W. J. MORGAN & ALEXANDRE GUILHERME (2012) I and Thou: The educational lessons of Martin Buber's dialogue with the conflicts of his times, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 44:9, 979-996, DOI: 10.1111/j.1469-5812.2010.00681.x

2 Grondin, Jean (2003). *Hans-Georg Gadamer: A Biography*. Translated by Weinsheimer, Joel. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p.12.

approach, grounded in Platonic-Aristotelian as well as Heideggerian thinking, that rejects subjectivism and relativism, renouncing any simple notion of interpretive method, and locates dialogic understanding in the linguistically mediated human relationships. Following Heidegger, Gadamer argues that dialogue is fundamental to human's being-in-the-world.

D-1- Gadamer's Theory of Dialogue

Here some of the key points to note about Gadamer's theory of dialogue¹:

1- Humans are finite beings as our knowledge of the world and of ourselves and our language are always framed within our personal and social history, cultural and political context, religious practices and so forth.

2- To grow, it requires human effort to overcome such finitude through interpretation and understanding.

3- To understand is to interpret a web of meanings and contexts within which such understanding takes place.

4- Understanding is necessarily dialogic.

D-2- Five Aspects of Gadamerian Dialogue

Although Gadamer's thinking is predominantly philosophical², it has much practical relevance to dialogue at both micro and macro levels. In fact, the following five ethical principles are applicable in the encounter between individuals as well as the encounter of communities, nations and states.

D-2-1 -Opening oneself to the Other: The first condition of dialogue is an encounter with otherness. An encounter brings our attention to something 'alien', or otherness, which in turn, makes us become acutely aware of the situatedness of our understanding and knowing. An openness to otherness calls for one's capacity to listen to what addresses us in a conversation. Whilst it is necessary that we remain open to the meaning of the other, this openness 'always includes our situating the other meaning in relation to the whole of our own meanings or ourselves in relation to it'.³ In this sense, the Other is a Thou.

D-2-2 -Engaging 'prejudice': Our tradition and history form the basis of our 'prejudice' which doesn't have negative connotation attached to the word now, i.e. being unjustified, erroneous and distorting the truth. Prejudice simply means 'a judgement that is rendered before all the elements that determine a situation have been examined'.⁴ Prejudices do not readily limit one's freedom, and to understand does not necessitate that one becomes prejudice-free. Prejudice connects the familiar world we inhabit and the unfamiliar meanings to be incorporated into our own. This is where we engage with otherness.

1 Gadamer, H-G. (1975) *Truth and Method*, 2nd and revised edition, trans. by J. Weinsheimer and D. Marshall, London/New York: Continuum.

2 Gadamer, H. G. 2004b. *Philosophical Hermeneutics*. Translated and edited by D. E. Linge. Second edition, Berkeley: University of California Press.

3 Gadamer, H-G, *Truth and Method*, p.247.

4 *Ibid*, p.273.

D-2-3 - Fusion of Horizons: Our prejudices are constituted in our horizon which is referred as a range of vision that ‘includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point’.¹ Horizons do not imprison us as they can shift and expand. Dialogue helps broadening our perspectives through the fusion of horizons. Fusion of horizons means that we are open for the other to genuinely challenge our own perspectives so that we are able to recognise the particularities of our own horizon and that of the other in relation to the greater universality. Historical movement of human life suggests that there is never a horizon that is closed, and instead, it is ‘something into which we move and that moves with us’.² Thus understanding through fusion of horizons is continuous and necessarily incomplete and dialogue allows an infinite possibility for human’s growth.

D-2-4 – Questioning: In order to attend to the meanings implicit in the otherness and achieve understanding (rather than misunderstanding), the criterion of questioning is imperative in Gadamerian dialogue. Thus, our task during dialogue ‘becomes of itself a questioning of things and is always in part so defined’.³ In fact, the real power of dialogue is our ability to see what is questionable. Dialogue involves not only an act of questioning but also the experience of being questioned or for our perspectives to be ‘called into question’, possibly in unsettling ways. After all, it is in the challenging tension between at-homeness and not-at-homeness, self-possession and what places our horizon in question, lies the true transformative potential of dialogue.

D-2-5- Mutual engagement: Dialogue requires mutual engagement and reciprocal learning. As dialogue is always dialogue about something, so understanding is coming to an understanding with someone ‘with respect to something’. Accordingly, dialogue requires equally committed partners to engage in a mutualising act of interpretation.⁴ Gadamer clarifies that it is not a matter of looking at the other person, but looking, with the other, at the thing we dialogue about. Therefore, dialogue partners are bound in the event of dialogue as if players are mutually engaged in a game and are equally carried away by the ‘rule of the game’ - the shared concern for the topic of dialogue.

2- Dialogue Theories and Ethics: Exploring the Conceptual Landscape of Dialogue

So far, we have revisited four key dialogue theories in the 20th century and their relevant foundational concepts. These clearly articulate how some thinkers conceive as dialogue and understanding. Together they establish human’s ways of being in the world as fundamentally relational – not only in the

1 Ibid, p.301.

2 Ibid, p.303.

3 Ibid, p.271.

4 Ibid, p.274.

way we are in relation to other human beings, the Divine, but also in our relation to the world itself, such as other animated beings and nature. These prepare the fertile ground for discussing the practice of dialogue ethics.

In a global era where a plurality of otherness is a common factor in all encounters, an analysis of the ethical resources and a reconstruction of ethical orientations are pressingly necessary in order to provide guidelines for dialogue partners to put ethics into practice.

There are four broad ethical considerations embedded in the dialogue theories: (1) alterity; (2) self-cultivation; (3) mutuality; (4) solidarity. Let's examine them.

2.1.Ethics of Alterity

Dialogue insists on an ethics of alterity and responsibility. In the work of Buber, Gadamer¹, and to a certain extent, the work Freire, the place of the other and otherness has been regarded as central to genuine dialogic encounter. The other and their otherness are constituted in the moral worthiness of the person, which is an end in oneself. Therefore the other can command our own moral attitudes of respect, responsiveness and relationship.

To ignore the other and otherness in dialogue is to underplay the tension between divergent presumptions, beliefs, cultural contexts and historical traditions that shape our perspectives. In fact, as we have seen, residing in such tension are the conditions for dialogue. It is precisely by engaging with these differences; our own horizon becomes expandable.

Thus dialogue demands the conversation partners, first and foremost, to prioritise an openness and attentiveness to the other and otherness. This means care – care for the other and care for what the other has to say, instead of inattention to, or disinterest in the other. It is such care that enables us to listen to, respond to and thereby bond with the other.²

The primacy of the other in dialogic encounter is equally proposed in the philosophical ideas of Emmanuel Levinas insofar as there is a similar insistence on the subject's irreducible engagement with otherness. In this way, some suggest that 'the other appears as a partner, a mutual co-self, another who

1 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 265; see Dreyfus, Hubert (1980) "Holism and Hermeneutics," *Review of Metaphysics* 34 (1) 3 – 24; and Searle, John (1983) *Intentionality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 378.

is both different and close enough to be understood, to be taken seriously, to be taken into account'.¹

2.2.Ethics of Self-Cultivation

Dialogue entails the ethics of self-cultivation and self-transcendence, which include the cultivation of virtues,

all dialogue theories recognise that human thought and understanding are situated and constrained in some ways by our histories, traditions and cultural practices. To overcome such finite determinacy, humans must engage in dialogue. Growth through dialogue is to embrace otherness so that it becomes our own, not by destroying it critically or reproducing it uncritically, but by explicating it within one's own horizons and thus giving it new validity.²

Dialogue creates unity in which difference is appreciated not rejected. Self-transcendence (without necessary the religious connotation) leads to the reconstruction of how traditions on each side are understood and historical meaning comprehended. The ethos here is that both dialogue partners are open to the other's truth-claim and are willing to confront it and to be confronted by it.

Accordingly, dialogue will contest those forces and influences embedded in our prejudices and cultural biases. This process is never static nor uncritical but rather productive and transformational. In this way, this ethos not only gives rise to individual growth but also enables cultures to progress and evolve.

2.3.Ethics of Mutuality

Dialogue requires the ethics of mutuality. In dialogue, both conversation partners must be concerned, in a similar way, with what motivates the conversation, its meaning and the questions it intends to address. At the same time, they must both be provoked by it to 'question further' in the direction the dialogue indicates. This equality and active reciprocity are referred to as the ethics of mutuality.

The ethics of mutuality can be problematic especially when the relationship between the dialogue partners is inherently asymmetrical because it is often not in the power of the individuals to establish equality; rather it is in the historical and institutional realities that the power imbalance prevails.

1 Kögler, Hans-Herbert (1999) *The Power of Dialogue: Critical Hermeneutics after Gadamer and Foucault*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, p. 114.

2 Giri, Ananta Kumar. "Power and Self-Cultivation: Aesthetics, Development Ethics and the Calling of Poverty." *Asian Journal of Social Science*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2005, pp. 46–61. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/23654343. Accessed 23 Dec. 2020.

However, the ethos of mutuality can help bring more engagement in dialogue as it does not undermine critical self-examination. Mutuality is neither an act of blind empathy, nor an act of assimilation, nor an act of domination. Mutuality rests on a conception of the good, which can give rise to ethical questions about the power dynamics.

The ethos of mutuality reminds us that the openness to the other and otherness is by no means ‘reducing the other to the categories of the self’. It prompts us to face the danger of domination, control or assimilation, especially after the West’s active othering indigenous and minority cultures for its own benefit. Equally, it instigates an awareness of the risk of essentialising cultures’ otherness.

2.4.Ethics of Solidarity

Dialogue evokes the ethics of solidarity. Understanding is language-bound and language is ‘the real mark of our finitude’, and we are always already biased in our thinking and knowing by our linguistic interpretation of the world. Dialogue acknowledges that language and understanding are not two processes but one and the same. This is because language frames our horizons; so language and understanding are inseparable structural aspects of human’s being-in-the-world. In this way, language is by no means simply an instrument or a tool. Rather, we are always already encompassed by our language. Language binds one human being with another.¹

So it is in language and dialogue that solidarity occurs. It is an expression of human bonds developed through a reciprocal engagement with one another in dialogue. These bonds emerge when we are able to perceive the ‘I’ and the ‘other’ as the ‘we’, despite our differences. Thus the community of life is lived through solidarity (solidarities) and through people acting in solidarity.

In a highly politicalised world where there are competing ideologies, values and embedded power imbalances, as well as the pluralistic identities, all decisions are made within finite and limited knowledge constrained by cultural contexts, historical references and individual and institutional narratives. Dialogue can help us recognise differences, negotiate meanings and seek understanding so that humans can reach out to one another for the betterment of the world and our lives within it.²

Dialogue ethics enables us to develop a sense of we-ness and of solidarity with others in the world. This is really the basis for communities to

1 Józef Tischner, *The Ethics of Solidarity*, Translated by Anna Fraś, Kraków 2005, p.38.

2 Jenlink, P. & Banath, B. (eds.) (2008). *Dialogue as a Collective Means of Design Conversation*, New York: Springer.

come together. Solidarity calls for actions to address power imbalance, oppression and exploitation, and hence, dialogic life inhabited in the solidarity involves our participation in ‘a community of doing’ in the words of Merleau-Ponty (1973).¹ We participate in each other’s ‘doing’, including rituals, memories, narratives, past pains, present concerns, future inspiration and hopes, a participation ‘proceeding in the direction of ethical well- being and a shared concern with the good life’.² Such community must be dialogically cultivated globally.

2.5. Summary Points- Here are the key summary points to note:

2.5.a. Defining Dialogue:

✓ Dialogue is a focused and intentional conversation, a space of civility and equality in which those who hold different perspectives may come together in a collaborative inquiry.

✓ Dialogue is a way of learning and self-cultivation through relationships that are reciprocal, caring, and empowering.

✓ Dialogue is human’s way of being-in-the-world, an existential pursuit that underlies our personal and communal life. We are always already in dialogue

2.5.b. Dialogue is not...

☒ Two egos meeting separately

☒ Debate, discussion, persuasion, domination, bargaining, negotiation;

☒ The triumph of one opinion over another; nor the correction of other people’s mistake or misunderstanding;

☒ Making statement, seeking agreement or consensus;

☒ Conversion or proselytising even though we may consider our religion or our faith a gift for the other.

2.5.c. What happens during dialogue?

☒ Observe our fears and other emotions and engage with preconceptions and presuppositions

Attend intensely to other’s voices and perspectives through that of our own;

☒ See the other not as a threat but a cause for celebration;

☒ Raise questions and develop sensitivities to what is questionable

☒ Encounter

☒ Silence and stillness

☒ Tensions and paradoxes

1 Merleau-Ponty, M. (1973) ‘Dialogue and the Perception of the Other’, in C. Lefort (ed.) *The Prose of the World*, trans. J. O’Neill, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

2 Dallmayr, F. (2009) ‘Hermeneutics and intercultural dialog: linking theory and practice’, *Ethics & Global Politics*, p.37.

✘Engaging and appreciating differences
✘A public forum for exploring the structural roots of our social malaises.

- ✘Questioning social policies and institutional values;
- ✘Imagining pillars and pathways for peace
- ✘Evoking joined social actions and civic engagement.

2.5.d. Virtues necessary for dialogue

- ❖ Openness
- ❖ Care
- ❖ Respect
- ❖ Affection
- ❖ Solidarity
- ❖ Hope

V. The Prejudices and Stereotypes

1- Identities in a globalised world

Our societies are gradually becoming more multi-cultural with a wide range of:

Languages ; Religions ; Expectations ; Life projects

1.1. Absurdity to isolate oneself : Increasingly, kind of everywhere, globalisation is driving us to manage our ways of thinking, behaving and feeling about that which is culturally different from our own. Gradually, and in a subtle way, we are assimilating values coming from other cultures or, on the contrary, we are obstinately rejecting them. Our societies are gradually becoming more multi- cultural, with a wide diversity of languages, religions, expectations and life projects. In any event, it is increasingly clear the absurdity of trying to isolate oneself in a world where, potentially, there are no communication limitations and where everything contributes to the permanent influence of outside elements which leave in us (both on individual and collective level) a cultural stamp.¹

It is known that we live all this in a contradictory way as there is a tendency to work exclusively with the criteria that the social system provides or filters : today, like yesterday, ethical and economic reasons continue to be found as the base of the geo-strategy of prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination, facilitating that more than one provide a biased viewpoint, which in crude terms, predicts a future of confrontations between civilisations.²

1 Gearon, Liam. 2010. "Inter-Religious Education for Citizenship and Human Rights." In *International Handbook for Interreligious Education*, edited by Kath Engebretson, Marian de Souza, Gloria Durka, Liam Gearon, Dordrecht: Springer.,p.861-863.

2 Garcia, Leovino. 2008. "On Paul Ricoeur and the Translation-Interpretation of Cultures." Thesis Eleven 94 (1):72–87; Kearney, Richard. 2010. *Anatheism: Returning to God after God*. New York: Columbia University Press; Matern, Jens. 2008. *Zwischen Kultureller Symbolik Und Allgemeiner Wahrheit*. Nordhausen: Traugott Bautz. ; Taylor, James. 2011. "Hospitality a

1.2. A multi-disciplinary approach

Our societies are already limited by: Spaces ; Zones of people ; Diverse identities.

It is known that there is an urgent need to delve like never before in a critical way because, as illustrated optimism towards education has failed and in the principle support of the struggle against marginalisation, the unstoppable process of globalisation sentences us to the exclusion of people, groups and, even countries and whole continents.

The investigation of cultural diversity ¹is the equivalent of travelling through territory with changing scenery, impossible to identify if global and local perspectives are not combined. There is no sense in simplifying arbitrarily complex realities, as if we should concern ourselves more with categorising rather than understanding. Our societies are already limited spaces, zones of people with diverse identities and these demands, at the very least, a multi-disciplinary approach where the ethical dimension acts as the focal point : the differences are constitutive, but the inequalities are imposed. As a result, the defense of justice and equality is directly linked to respect, in other words, the challenge to embrace and include alterity.

Indeed, our societies have to face a series of situations for which they seem to be poorly prepared. A straight line links the appearance of xenophobic and discriminatory attitudes with ignorance which is guided by stereotypes and prejudices, with a slowness in reflexes from administrations who do not know (or do not want to know?) how to develop preventive policies and by the media who often seem to complicate coexistence by increasing distrust towards people coming from diverse cultural areas.²

In this way, it is particularly urgent to reflect on what society requires to canalise and reduce the tension that living in settings of cultural plurality could produce. It is about the education of citizens in heterogeneous cultural identities but with common values which favour social cohesion. The intercultural work should be capable of protecting the cultural identity of each citizen without creating difficulties in social integration, either at a local or global level. For this reason, all cultures should be aware of their own challenges, if they really want

Translation.” In *Hosting the Stranger between Religions*, edited by Richard Kearney and James Taylor, 11–21. New York: Continuum.

1 Sara Guzman, *AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN SME ORGANISATIONS IN DUBLIN*, The National College of Ireland, September 2014, Dissertation MSc Management x – 13120701.

2 Gardensuwartz, L., & Rowe, A. (2003) “The EffectiveMAnagement of Cultural Diversity” Alexandria, VA: Society of Human Resource Management, pp. 35-43.

to commit themselves to find space for meeting and dialogue which, far from having a homogenising intention, favours integration and participation.¹

2- Prejudices and Stereotypes

2.1. A respectful look

The determining importance of looking at the world as a whole when taking in hand reality will not be discussed in detail. We only confirm that maps (it is indifferent whether cartographic or mental) allow us to appropriate reality by proposing notes and routes. Cartography, a codified form of writing, makes us often forget the options implicit in its structure and it becomes a subliminal imposition resource of symbols which are merely ideological. Just as no projection system conserves all the geometric properties of the planet, neither does a mental representation of the world portray it faithfully.

Every world view is, by definition, an ongoing recycling of heredity; there exists, therefore, a thread that connects all attempts at an implementation of the classifying logic which has tried to order the world. All of this is a skilful do-it-yourself project based on the cultural survival of the model Us vs Them. In this way, the West keep their distance from the rest of the civilisations whom they perceive as different.²

2.2. An Ethnocentric Point of View

Thinking about the world in a different way requires some effort, if you allow the expression, of mental decolonisation to show the relativity of guidelines of thought considered for a long time as absolute.

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In this way, the West, keep their distance from the rest of the civilisations whom they perceive as different. Just as European ethnic-centrism is shown in planispheres as an attempt to legitimise in nature the order imposed in the world, the western negativity to recognise cultural diversity is also obvious.

World limits are not so much geographic as mental: natural borders do not exist and, in this sense, neither do foreigners exist to be massacred,

1 Cox, T., Jr. & Smolinski, C. (1994) 'Managing diversity and glass ceiling initiatives as national economic imperatives'. Michigan: Published report, The University of Michigan.

2 Joan Hernández Serret, «La contribución social de las comunidades religiosas en los procesos de pacificación: el caso de Colombia y la firma de los acuerdos de paz», en *Religión, libertad y seguridad*, coord Francisca Pérez-Madrid (Valencia: Tirant lo Blanch, 2017), 253-257. (2) (PDF) Peacebuilding like a tuner of interreligious dialogue in Colombia. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341365533_Peacebuilding_like_a_tuner_of_interreligious_dialogue_in_Colombia [accessed Dec 25 2020].

enslaved, assimilated or integrated. It is only our look that over-dimensions heterogeneity.¹

Every ethnocentric point of view presents a partial look: the value of alien culture (branding it as inexistent, inferior inferior or under-developed) leads one to consider it negligible in processes of social interaction and, therefore, to wait for Them to get rid of their culture in favour of ours. All this, apart from producing too many difficulties from a social science point of view, also provokes many cautions of an ethical type as the other cultures end up being drawn as a deficient group, introducing them as a figure of ineligible sub alterity when orienting its members.

This social structure of alterity (the “power of speech” and “speech of power” which appeals systematically to regulatory and/or repairing measures) reveals the myth of the innocence or neutrality of the investigator: all information received always includes a judgement, an imperative act which tends to reproduce the very social system.

Lastly, it must not be forgotten that designing a social group as problematic is a way of exercising power. Knowledge about them cannot be separated from the power over them, as knowledge of the social reality is an operation which we both recognise and do not recognise that which we aspire to know.²

The essentialisation of culture establishes the distinction between insiders and outsiders, requiring the latter group assimilation if they wish to be socially accepted. In accordance with what has been denominated “cultural fundamentalism” differences in cultural identity and traditions are emphasised, new exclusion borders are created and one is encouraged to consider the rest as a potential threat to identity. Since there exists a tendency to “naturalise” phenomena constructed socially, it is clear that the problematic issue is not cultural diversity but the sociopolitical meaning that is assigned and the framework of the relationships that are established between groups in conflict and domination situations. Thus, the investigator does not only form part of the process that he is studying, but is also influenced by the expectations that this awakes and the personal identifications that are at stake and are turned into non-controlled variables. In a word, as an active member of society, the investigator does not carry out a representation task as well as a (re) construction one.

Critical thought and ethic sense is found here. Our horizon of knowledge is constantly determined by the totality of one that is always dealing with convergence, conflict enlightenment and undermining issues. As it is

1 See, Montserrat Gas-Aixendri, «Libertad religiosa y peacebuilding. El papel de las religiones en la consolidación de la paz», en *Religión, libertad y seguridad*, 221-247.

2 William Elvis Plata Quezada y Jhon Janer Vega Rincón, «Religión, Conflicto Armado Colombiano y Resistencia: Un Análisis Bibliográfico», *Revista Anuario de Historia Regional y de Las Fronteras* 20, 2 (2015): 132.

impossible to achieve complete knowledge, uncertainty and irreducibility must be recognised. An issue cannot be exhausted from a unique focus, nor can it disregard the weight of “tacit knowledge” contextualised and implicit, which includes all learnt previously and which already forms a part of life experience. Therefore, it must be defended that the battle for power and social customs are as decisive as the socio-psychological processes of a cognitive nature, subconscious dynamics and social narratives.

In this sense, all forms of clash of civilisations are simply a phenomena of (in)communication (in-) between groups.

Every culture is an open system that interacts with its environment: it requires, therefore, interaction potential or establishment of relationships which confront the tendency for defensive separation and inbreeding.

On the contrary, interest to maintain the hope for cultural homogeneity leads to a conferring of differences and active exclusion by the strongest culture, denigrating in Them those feared and repressed aspects of society. In this way, the exclusion of others, supposedly different, serves for the building and affirmation of one’s identity: internal cohesion implies the satisfaction of belonging to a superior group with a supplementary contempt toward the other groups; at the same time, greater cohesion implies a better organisation to exclude the other groups from participation in the power structures. The differences between groups, therefore, are not the cause of the tension but they are created socially to defend the monopoly of power. Appealing to the differences is a strategy to impede the inclusion of others in issues which affect everyone. This is what psychology refers to as the mechanisms of the “exclusion figure”, alterophobia, “fear of contamination” and of “anatomic infection, internalisation of or utilitarian use of identity for ones’ own interest.

In short, the lack of positive recognition of the identity of other cultures (“omission practice”) is the main problem of those who exert “symbolic violence” towards them.

For this reason, while the interpretive models continue to be those which defend an idea based on the model of separate compartments, contextual factors linked to ideologies and attitudes will continue to be ignored, to norms and values. Done in this way, measures which help to understand cultural diversity as an enrichment, will never take precedence.

2.3. Essentialisation of Culture: Establishes the distinction between: Insiders and Outsiders and Rrequiring the latter group assimilation if they wish to be socially accepted.

Since there exists a tendency to “naturalise” phenomena constructed socially, it is clear that the problematic issue is not cultural diversity but the

sociopolitical meaning that is assigned and the framework of the relationships that are established between groups in conflict and domination situations.¹

3- Diversity and Exclusion Technologies

The words with which we interpret alterity are loaded with evaluation: we do not simply designate the culturally different but also the nations considered culturally behind, under- developed, inferior, third-world (“emerging”, in politically correct terminology. New “barbarians” who should be treated with a certain condescendence, mistrust, contempt or fear as supposedly they put the population in danger. For this reason, one of the first tasks consists in denouncing the deficiency of a pure sociographic description and help individuals become aware of the dynamic and socially constructed dimension of our cosmo-visions.²

Contact with other cultures does not mean at all a type of emergence of savage acts which interrupt an alleged social consensus (“social normality”).

On the contrary, an analysis of the internal tensions and the interdependences of society is key to understand the terms of the coexistence and conflict, between “us” and “them”. Without analysing the discursive configurations of alterity (in other words, the ways of seeing, thinking about and treating it) one loses sight that alterity is a social figure through which (compared to with which) the figure of “us” is constructed.

In this sense, the rhetoric and practices of exclusion do not emerge spontaneously in social fringes, but in great measure are pre formulated and propagated by the processes of the (re)production of prejudices, creating new ways of social demarcation and new symbolic borders.

The uncritical perception of differences (with an increase in the social rejection of Them) ends up being based on a culturalistic interpretation of social plurality: culture as a social segmentation factor is presented as the only explanatory dimension of social interaction, as if heterogeneity came exclusively from abroad and was always disturbing and dissolving.

An enthronement which, if not done carefully, emphasises the incommensurability of the different cultures, dehumanising as defined and compact entities which have as their corollary the conviction that contact between them can only be conflictive. However, ethic reflection shows us that social relationships cannot be based on the strength of who imposes assimilation on Them.

1 Joan Hernández Serret, «La contribución social de las comunidades religiosas en los procesos de pacificación: el caso de Colombia y la firma de los acuerdos de paz», p.258.

2 UNESCO. 2015. *CONNECTing the Dots*. Paris, UNESCO. Also see the final declaration of the conference: UNESCO. 2015. Outcome Document: ‘CONNECTing the Dots: Options for Future Action’. Paris, UNESCO. http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/outcome_document.pdf (accessed 27 March 2017).

In reality, this idea paralyses the democratic debate and sacralises that which should be constantly interrogated and reformed: the conditions and ways of coexistence in which each individual-group-culture finds its place and recognition.

However, despite the porosities of our social limitations, when we demand that others detach themselves from their seal of origin in order to be worthy of being considered valid interlocutors, we have the irrefutable truth that too many mental barriers continue to be uncrossable.

Social Darwinism, excluding by definition appealing to diversity to maintain inequalities, shutting itself out as a component of solidarity coexistence.

One must not lose sight of the fact that, from an ethical interpretation, there exists in every society more humiliation than perceived, more than is recognised and much more than is decided to be alleviated. For this reason, the ethical imperative demands public sensitivity and protest.

The responsibility of ethic societies passes without fail through the cultivation of moral sensibility and public protest against all that favours an increase of those located in the “fringes of humanity”. As a consequence, the battle against the magnification of such differences means promoting the recognition of concepts such as equity (emphasising the diversity of human possibilities), --- justice (to respond to the aspirations of all) and equality (insisting on the possibilities of access and opportunities)

When the social construct of cultural differences is not considered as a value exclusion processes appear automatically.

Just like ethic communities, our societies cannot evade the fundamental equality of all human beings, the imperative of welcome, coexistence and participation, mutual recognition in the exchange of opinions, beliefs, values and customs with the objective to improve communication.¹

Undoubtedly it will be difficult to work simultaneously with unity and diversity as, if we affirm with such passion our differences, this is precisely because dynamics have been established which allow us to increasingly perceive less differences. It is no longer possible to disguise oneself in a plural “us” which supposedly joins us together without exceptions.

There are some voices which are not easy to listen to because they do not match the dominating criteria or simply because they are not invited to intervene. The first ethical obligation, therefore, is to let everyone have their say.²

4- Tool for Recognition

Cultural identity provides an anchor for the self- identification of people, the security of a necessary stable sense of belonging to enable the

1 For a discussion of regionalist trends and how they relate to cultural diversity, see: Garabaghi, N. 2010. *Les espaces de la diversité culturelle*. Paris, Karthala.

2 L'Estoile, B. 2007. *Le goût des autres*. Paris, Flammarion.

construction of an identity with meaning and an ability to interact healthily with the environment.¹

The societies that long to be ethical cannot live with mere tolerance, capable of coexisting with what they do not understand or what they look down on. Unlike tolerance, recognition presupposes the effort of understanding Them, the task of putting oneself in their shoes and trying to see the world from their point of view. It is not simply a cognitive effort but ultimately an emotional task based on empathy. This is the base on the dialogue: understanding and respect towards others, explicitness of values and norms that come to play when cultures are in contact with each other...It is not simply the necessary opening for a reciprocal agreement, of mutual listening which requires a minimum respect between interlocutors, but risking oneself by entering into a dynamic situation of mutual conditioning and of auto critical analysis.²

VI. Interfaith Dialogue on the Internet

We will explore the religious phenomenon on virtual communities and social networks as well as the impact of social media on interfaith dialogue, their achievements and challenges, and the relevance of interfaith dialogue to create a truly multicultural society.

In these days, technologies should be seen as forms of life, not just tools because they are becoming increasingly relevant to our everyday life. We will discuss whether or not inter-religious dialogue can benefit from an intelligent and positive use of the Internet; are there any potential benefits of using the net in the interfaith dialogue?; are there drawbacks?; as well, is Internet demystifying religion?; has the notion of mysterious silence, on the part of religious institutions, become out of fashion? We will also examine why internet dialogue is important for congregations. We'll also study how technology mediated communications can promote understanding, particularly in social networks and virtual communities. Even though the topics of virtual communities are frequently superficial and taken from everyday life can they add value to our living experiences?; should we pay attention to the importance attributed to virtual dialogue by people?; could the Internet be a relevant element of their religious experience?.

1- Impact of Internet on interfaith dialogue issues, achievements and challenges

We know that Information Technologies (ITs) are becoming increasingly relevant in our everyday life and

Inter-religious dialogue can benefit from an intelligent and positive use of Internet, so Face-to-face dialogue is locally restricted, but Internet can bring

1 Joan Hernández Serret, «La contribución social de las comunidades religiosas en los procesos de pacificación: el caso de Colombia y la firma de los acuerdos de paz», p.270.

2 Ibid, p.271-272.

together distant people to participate in a more lively interfaith discourse, but it has advantages and disadvantages.

1.1. Advantages- Here are some of the advantages of interfaith dialogue:

❖ **Private conversations allows us to ask embarrassing questions**

–Steve Waldman, says that "the anonymity of the Internet is what makes it work so well for religion . . . it's that you can explore religious matters in the privacy of your own home; ask questions you might be embarrassed to ask; have conversations with some anonymity; and do it anytime day or night".¹

❖ **Removes bias brought in by physical religious symbols**

–The lack of physical symbols of religiousness, such as wearing a cross necklace, a kippah, or a headscarf, requires users to look to the words of the person before they can define them as a practitioner of a particular faith. This would appear to be a disadvantage, but it could help us to develop a sense of respect and an attitude of prudence in dealing with people that can hold different beliefs.²

❖ **Transportation not required; allowing more inclusion**

–Further, online dialogue requires that participants have access to a computer instead of transportation to a face-to-face meeting, potentially allowing for the inclusion of people who might otherwise not participate in interreligious exchange.³ For example, people with disabilities or with special needs. An intelligent use of the Internet is crucial to get to a real inclusive society.

❖ **Observance and practices**

–Another advantage is the multi-dimensional aspect of each tradition. Interacting with someone from another denomination within a particular religion, enhances the spectrum of its tradition: they can speak about their observance and practices, and show a range of adherence beyond doctrine."Surveys tend to over simplify traditions, and ignore the many voices and lived experiences of the cumulative aspects of the tradition".⁴

❖ **Richer sense of how a religion functions**

– This plurality of voices representing a tradition allows for a richer sense of how a religion functions in the lives of individuals.

❖ **Instant connection to others**

–It allows instant connection to others, and a sense of anonymity that comes from not seeing the other person. This connection allows honesty, openness, and the development of a common ground for discussion.⁵

❖ **Allows greater self-disclosure**

1 Last, J. V. (2005). God on the Internet. *First Things*(158), p.8.

2 Ibid, p.10.

3 Ostrowski, A. (2006). Texting tolerance: Computer-mediated interfaith dialogue. *Webology*, p.3.

4 Berling, J. A. (2004). Understanding other religious worlds: A guide for interreligious education. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. p. 83.

5 Jones, H. K. (2006). Telephone interview, March 27.

–In some situations, text only environments can allow for greater self-disclosure when the information is potentially embarrassing.¹ For example, when your opinions are different from the main current, or you put into question what orthodoxy takes for granted in your local community.

1.2. Disadvantages

❖ **Lack of immediate response**

–Interaction within a "virtual" group of people: there is always a time lapse between messages. It is not the same as a "live" group.² There is a lack of immediate response (dialogue can be less dynamic).³ As we have seen, you have more time to ponder information and to create new messages, but also removes the dynamic nature typical of a reciprocal discussion environment.

❖ **Do not take online**

– Online addictions and virtual living are also problematic. Turkle (1995) says that three ways in which online interactivity has the potential to skew in person experiences.

- First, the artificial experiences may seem real.

- Second, fake may seem more real than real. This could indicate that the experiences people have with interfaith dialogue in an online setting might seem more intimate or real to them than the interreligious discussions they could have face to face.⁴

❖ **Effects of virtual dialogue**

–Finally, Turkle suggests that people who have experiences online might feel that they have done more than they really have because of the intensity of the virtual nature.

At the end of the conversation some participants might feel that they have accomplished large things with respect to interreligious discourse and understanding but the feeling will soon precipitate and the results can be disappearing gradually.

❖ **Miscommunication**

–This lack of physical and nonverbal help also is a limitation for online interfaith exchange. It makes difficult to interpret what people really want to say and allow for the potential of misreading posts and responding negatively to

1 Newell, A.F. & Gregor, P., (1997). "Human computer interfaces for people with disabilities", in "Handbook of Human-Computer Interaction", Helander, M., Landauer, T.K. and Prabhu, P. (eds), Elsevier Science BV, (ISBN 0 444 81862 6) pp 813-824.

2 Jones, H. K. (2006). Telephone interview, March 27.

3 Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2002). Qualitative communication research methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

4 Sherry Turkle, (1995), *Life on the Screen*, 1st ed, Simon and Schuster, Rockefeller center, New York, p.117.

words when this was not the intention of the author.¹ "Misunderstandings are particularly common among people who are not used Internet because they have had no time to get used to it and to develop ways of getting around this problem".²

❖ **Possible existence of lurkers**

—Ostrowsky says that a final limitation is the presence of lurkers. They are participants that may read but never respond. Their presence is an obstacle for the readiness of participants to be open about their feelings. When you realize that others are listening to the conversation but not contributing, full disclosure is not so easy. Lurkers are a big problem in virtual chats where participants are talking about intensely personal information.

❖ **Risk of inappropriate comments**

—There is a risk of inappropriate comments and tangential discourse. Moderators must be experienced, active, and able to control a room of very different people using only their word to keep conversations under control. **It is good to have understood what Internet dialogue is. Now let us have a look on how we can improve this dialogue and put it to good use in congregations.**

How can we improve internet dialogue?

This can be facilitated by the use of moderators in the following ways:

- ▶ Facilitate, manage and encourage questions and answers.
- ▶ Stay active online by posting issues for discussion.
- ▶ By keeping at bay inappropriate behaviour on forums.
- ▶ Keep a balance between opinion and fact.

Why is Internet dialogue important for congregations?

- ▶ IFD typically does not recruit new believers.³
- ▶ Interfaith programs are designed to increase tolerance.⁴
- ▶ Online IFD can join distant people in a common space.

2- The religious phenomenon on virtual communities and social networks

John Last's article⁵ will be our guide for us on this issue. Last discusses the phenomenon of the increasing use of Internet that deals on the subject of God. He studies its implications for religions and personal religiosity. And arrives to some conclusions I would like you to think about. Whether or not authority suffers from the disappearance of mystery.

1 Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B C. (2002). Qualitative communication research methods.

2 Preece & Maloney-Krichmar,(2003), Online communities: Focusing on sociability and usability, L. Erlbaum Associates Inc, p.12.

3 Landau, R. M. (2006c). What the world needs to know about interfaith dialogue. Retrieved April 18, 2006, from <http://www.how-to-succeed-at-interfaithdialogue.com/>

4 United States Institute of Peace (USIP). (2004). What works? Evaluating interfaith dialogue programs. No. 123, July. P.4. <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr123.html>

5 Last, J. V. (2005). God on the Internet. First Things, 158, December, 34-40.

Moreover, he considers that the Internet is a weakening of reality even at its best, and with its consumer satisfactions, politicising impulses, and substitutions for the body.

The role of the moderator in an online setting is to facilitate, manage, filter, serve as an expert, edit text, promote questions, and help people in general. Jones (2006) suggests that effective moderators need to remain active and involved in the forums, reading and posting regularly as well as providing participants with issues to consider in their offline time.

Moderators should not be tolerant on inappropriate behaviour in the forums. Good moderators need to keep a reasonable balance between opinions and facts, between the participants, and to incite consideration about issues that would be relevant to participants in their offline lives.¹

Oughton (2006) believes that a good inter-religious moderator has experience in this area and it is because of this professional background that he can give his opinion, background or viewpoints that participants might not be aware of to enhance the dialogue experience.²

Moderators must be experienced, active, and able to control a room of very different people using only their word to keep conversation on track.

As discussed by a very critical, passionate and controversial article by J. Last:

- ▶ The power of ritual is diminished by having every conversation in the sacristy broadcast for public consumption.
- ▶ Authority suffers from the disappearance of mystery.
- ▶ Internet is a weakening of reality, with its consumer satisfactions, politicizing impulses, and substitutions for the body.

Now let us see some examples of Spiritual Expression on the net.

- 1- The cases of Pope Michael and Pope Pius XIII and their websites.
- 2- 64 percent of Internet-using Americans-82 million people-say they use the web for religious purposes.
- 3- There are millions of religious bloggers, and maybe a couple of thousand serious *Godblogs*.
- 4- Nearly every American church has its own web page... and many priests run blogs, too.
- 5- Protestant churches are, in general, more advanced and ambitious than Catholic parishes.
- 6- The exception is the Vatican's enormous, trench-deep site.

As we come to an end of Part 2, let's get a good sense of the brilliant conclusions of J. Lasts' article below.

These are the brilliant conclusions of J. Lasts' article:

1 Landau, R. M. What the world needs to know about interfaith dialogue.

2 Oughton, D. (2006). Telephone interview, March 29.

- “Internet can be a good tool for collaborating. That's the most we might hope for” (It is a powerful tools, but just a tool).
- “The great blessing of Internet: it lets people find each other. But it also works for anti- Semites, child molesters, and gang members”
- “Even at its best, Internet is a weakening of reality“ (consumer satisfactions, politicising impulses, and substitutions for the body, it is constantly attracting us into thinner and thinner air)
- “Isn't religion supposed to enrich the world around us instead? Shut off your computer. Take a deep breath. Go to church”.

3- Digital citizenship and faith: Technology-mediated communication

3.1- Social network meaning

A social network is a set of actors and nodes that are connected by a particular type of relationship. Each type of relationship has corresponds to a different network, even though actors are the same. There are some of the problems when we create a real social network for IFD. In the first place, a user's popularity or social success is measured by the number of contacts. This implies that there are users who set out to get the highest number of contacts, whether they are friends or not.

These false connections become a real obstacle for the development of strong relationships in virtual communities. Friend collectors appear and they act as hubs within the network. This results in a Matthew Effect in which already popular users (because of their large number of contacts) become even more popular, with the same effect in communities.

3.2. implications of social relations

A social relationship implies costs in terms of time, dedication, commitment, etc.: it is not possible to maintain real interaction with a large number of people.¹

We could say that Recuero's argument is relevant regarding people with a very large number of contacts.

this trivializing effect on relationships does not seem to apply in the case of middle-size groups.

Until a critical number of contacts is achieved, the larger the number of contacts is, the greater the ability to make new contacts (increase of usefulness).

This critical number refers to the level at which interaction is reduced because of lack of time and resources, weakening social ties. (friend collectors).

No real social link is necessary for someone to appear as a friend within the network. (Recuero doubts that we are talking about a real social network).

1 Recuero Raquel da Cunha,(2004), *Redes sociais na Internet: Considerações iniciais*, boccupipt journal, p. 7.

Friend collectors play an important role: They could still serve as communicative elements in a triad, bringing nodes closer together than, without their intervention, would have no significant probability of meeting.¹

3.3. Territorialization and Deterritorialization

A - Religions and technologies play a role also as identity-building processes. Ian Chambers (1994) the walkman metaphor to explain the process for identifying ourselves in terms of a compilation of life stories.²

B - The physical description of people walking (walk-man), in motion, is in their portable sound device (walkman). The choice of songs they listen to on their walkman is an intensively private experience with respect to their environment.

C - The music and audiobooks chosen are, therefore, a collage of sounds that redefines the environment (soundscape/landscape) -> defines the physical territory of their body.³

D - However, this also deterritorializes them because their identity remains in their walkman, in that collage of sound.

VII. Interfaith Peace and Dialogue Models

1- Institutions and Faith

– Do religions (institutions and faith) -not only religions in general- have a role in conflict resolution? The reason for this question has to do with the notion that there are societies, individuals as well as experts who argue for a total separation between politics, religion and policy. Therefore, they also have some skeptical views about the possibilities and notion that religious actors, religious institution should and can have a role in solving conflicts in general.⁴

It's understandable where this skepticism comes from considering the fact that historically religious institutions and religious figures have had a negative view, negative perception, also negative contribution because they've been used as a tool to provoke violence. Religion has been an instrument used by politicians to mobilise support for war and one can be back to many examples in the history from ancient Greek all the way to Christianity period and to the Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindus. I don't think any of the religions are exempt from this image or perception.⁵

Throughout the history we have many examples where religious leaders and religious actors have been used either by politicians or they themselves developed, as we see religion as an ideology to justify exclusion and discrimination. Now there is no doubt that there are aspects in each religious

1 Ibid, p.9.

2 Chambers Iain (1994), *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*, Routledge pub, London and New York, p.49.

3 Ibid, p.50.

4 Abu-Nimer, M. (2002). *The miracles of transformation through interfaith dialogue: Are you a believer?* In D. R. Smock (Ed.), *Interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press. p.15.

5 Ibid, p.16.

institution and maybe we should clarify from the beginning that when we deal with religion, what we mean here really is three components. One is set of belief system or belief principles, values that the group has. And the second one is the institutions and those are structures in a place. In all religious systems we have them and they are in charge of organising the followers and the faith groups. And the third one is the component of rituals, practices that religious groups have. So when we talk about religions being utilised/manipulated for war and for exclusion, we're talking about sometimes the brilliant use of political leaders in picking up one ritual or one religious symbol and trying to mobilise people to be followed along that.¹

So my invitation to you is to think from your own faith group, from your own religion how your politicians, your religious groups throughout the history have manipulated and selectively handled one ritual, one principle or one symbol and they brought it into the battle.

Just a quick example. When Milosevic in I believe 1989 engaged in one speech in Balkans trying to mobilise his constituency and he made a reference to the history in 1386 and basically took one war or one battle that took place there using the religious identity of the Serbs in that case to mobilise against in this case the Bosnian Muslims in that area.² Or a religious Muslim leader who called for war against other groups and they would reach out to a historical period like the Crusades and bring it in the current period.

Again, you can find that in Sri Lanka. A number of Hindu and Buddhist religious leaders and politicians often will go back to the history of the religious war and justify their interaction accordingly.

Anyway, I don't want to dwell more on this point. It is clear that religion has been abused in that. The really more interesting question is can religion provide us with a set of different values, different principles and can the same rituals that we utilise for violence/exclusion, can they also be used for peace and for harmony, for justice, for forgiveness, patience, resistance, mercy? These are things that I have identified as common values in most of the traditions and easily link themselves to themes of peace and conflict resolution.³

So in all of the faith groups that we deal with there is no shortage in those values. In fact, in many cases when we do training and bring people from different faith groups, when we ask people one question, "Can you generate values that support peace in your tradition?" And we ask them that to write them on a flipchart and then you could see that Christians, Muslims, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, they'll come up with a very similar list of values. In fact, if you remove

1 Ibid, p.17.

2 Abu-Nimer, M, Muslim peace-building actors in Africa and the Balkan context: Challenges and needs, *Peace & Change*, 2008, 33 (4), 549-581.

3 Abu-Nimer Mohammed, Conflict Resolution, Culture, and Religion: Toward a Training Model of Interreligious Peacebuilding, *Journal of Peace Research* 2001; 38; 685, DOI: 10.1177/0022343301038006003.

the affiliation of the group written on the top of the flipchart and ask people to walk in the room, they will rarely be able to identify which list belongs to who. The values are similar and these are common universal values in many ways.

Each religious group describes them in their own primarily language, in their own specific, unique language. So the Christian will speak the language of Christ in describing forgiveness. The Muslim will speak the language of the Prophet, the language of the Qur'an in describing justice, in describing peacemaking and similarly other groups will use the specific language to them.¹

2- Religion and the peace process

We have many examples in the history where we try to do political peacebuilding and we know peace processes have failed for many reasons. I have a list here on the peace processes without paying attention to religious identity and the religious space. This means that we have many example from history where peace processes like the one in both maybe Israeli/Palestinian one or the Iraqi or the Afghani case and the Somali case.² Many, many cases around the world I think and one can even speak about Sri Lanka and Mindanao, Philippines where religious leadership was not involved in any form of setting up the peace process. The argument I'm trying to make here is it is very hard to ensure sustainability and application/implementation of these peace processes without the engagement of religious leaders. The assumption here is that we have many of those processes, whether it is the OSLO, the Camp David 1 and 2, the Road map, as I said, the negotiations with the religious leaders in Iraq or the Taliban in Afghanistan. Many of these components and relationships with the religious leaders were neglected and as a result I think this has contributed to the failure of many of these peace processes.³

There are number of ways in which peace processes can engage religious leaders and those can be throughout the entire peace process design, whether it is in the preparation or whether it is in the actual negotiation. Not necessarily to sit around the negotiating team with politicians, but at least to be in the background for input as well as for capacity to enhance the possibility for success of these negotiations. And in the third phase when it comes to implementation and ensuring that there is a buy in, in the process from these communities.

Here are the specific examples he discusses:⁴

- OSLO
- David Camp 1 and 2

1 Ibid, p.701.

2 Abu-Nimer Mohammed, *Conflict Resolution Approaches: Western and Middle Eastern Lessons and Possibilities*, American Journal of Economics and Sociology, 1996, 55 (1), 35-52.

3 Ibid, p.44.

4 Abu-Nimer, Mohammed, 1998. 'Conflict Resolution Training in the Middle East: Lessons to be Learned', *International Negotiation* 3(1): 99-116.

- Road map
- Iraq
- Afghanistan

3. Multi-track Diplomacy

Let's move to maybe something more conceptual here and this is a multi-track diplomacy wheel that we've worked with institutions for multi-track diplomacy in Washington, DC. With their team they have developed this concept and model. I like to use it because it really captures what we're trying to do in peace building in general and it divides this into nine tracks.¹

As you see, religion is track seven and this supports the notion of what I was saying previously. You cannot create and work with peace building in silos, in compartments, separated. Meaning that government in track one should not be working along in separation from business or from civil society, the non-governmental in track two or in track five: research, training and education. Also number six, activist individuals who work for advocacy for human rights, non-violence resistance and in this context religion becomes one important track that I think can be complementary to the other group.

So according to this concept that I have used to work with the institution, with IMTD as well as other organizations. We believe in the assumption that interreligious dialogue, interreligious peace building is not responsible alone on achieving peace in any given conflict zone or any given conflict area or conflict issue. Without the cooperating, without the connection, without the coordination with those nine tracks, including the media then as a connecting circle, one cannot speak about comprehensive peace building efforts and attempts.

If we take something sort of very concrete maybe this will help explain the point. If we talk about the conflict in Sri Lanka for example where I've worked extensively for a number of years with different civil society groups, it is unrealistic to expect that civil society groups in the case of Tamils/Sinhalese, Muslims and Christians. Four different religious groups there and at least three different ethnicities to be expected to create peace and be held accountable for the success or even the failure of the peace process in Sri Lanka.

This should be deal with by all these tracks and there should be coordination on the ground level as well as maybe on the national level in order to really harvest the fruits and the impact of all these tracks. They will enhance each other.

The point being made here is that religion is one of the tracks for peace building and it's not the only track. It's one of the components that needs to be

1 Abu-Nimer M, *Dialogue, conflict resolution, and change: Arab-Jewish encounters in Israel*, Suny Press, 1999,

in touch with other actors who are working for peace in any given conflict and that relation should be ongoing rather than as it happens, whether it is in the Middle East or South Asian or Europe or the North, in the US as well. Religious peace building efforts are done in many cases in enclaves or in separation without much connection to the peace movements, political peace movements, the social movements that are taking place. And this is one of the limitations of this field of interreligious peace building.¹

4- Peacebuilding activities

Peacebuilding means creating the tangible and intangible conditions to enable a conflict- habituated system to

become a peace system.² There are three types of peacebuilding approaches, all of which are necessary to the successful transformation to a peace system:

Political Peacebuilding—agreements

Structural Peacebuilding—activities

Social Peacebuilding—relationships

Transactional : Mediation, negotiation, arbitration, problem solving, early warning

Transformational : Dialogue, confidence building, rapprochement, reconciliation, peace education

Structural : Capacity building and building civil society (media, NGOs, human rights, rule of law), peace education

The tools and activities under this category are classified as dialogue peace education. You work on reconciliation. South Africa maybe is a classic example here, where after the collapse of the 'apartheid' system began working on building a relationship between white and black in that country, and among all the communities in order to rebuild the relationship, or in order to build a relationship based on reconciliation. Some confidence-building measures are necessary for the transformational model or transformational type of activities

but looking at all the three.³

I could say that religion inter-religious peacebuilding can be an integral part of those three areas of peacebuilding. So religion and religious identity or actors should not be excluded from the possibility that they can contribute to these three areas.

5- Transforming conflict-habituated systems and the Peacebuilding Map⁴

1 Ibid.

2 Charles T. Call and Elizabeth M. Cousens, "Ending Wars and Building Peace," *Coping with Crisis* (Working Paper Series, International Peace Academy, March 2007), p.3.

3 Oscar Daniel Franco Conforti, Education for Peace What Building Peace Means, Online Restorative Justice, DOI: 10.33258/birle.v2i4.490.

4 Abu-Nimer Mohammed, A Framework for Nonviolence and Peacebuilding in Islam, *Journal of Law and Religion* January 2000, 15(1/2), p.217.265. DOI: 10.2307/1051519.

Being aware of this process of dismissing a [piece of] new information; of supporting a prior view; of filtering the incoming data; of selectively looking at the history and revising the history according to our memories to become what we call history, is crucial in inter-religious peacebuilding. It's crucial for inter-religious peacebuilding because it can constitute a base for either continues to live in habituated inter-religious conflict or being able to engage in a transformative relationship, one that's based on a critical examination of that history.

So, as we established in this list of partisan or bias perceptions for religion or ethnicity, it might be helpful now to move to the next concept, in which we are trying to illustrate maybe the role of religion in inter-religious peacebuilding. And this is something you know I compiled with a colleague, Louise Diamond in Sri Lanka in 1997. I remember working on this chart when we were working with a group of Tamil and Sinhalese and Muslims, three ethnic groups in Sri Lanka, ethnic and religious [group]. And the notion here is really 'what we're dealing with?', 'where does inter-religious peacebuilding be integrated?' and 'should it be integrated?'. But first of all, let's start from the assumption that [...] try to understand what we mean by.

First of all, people have differences and, as we said in the previous slide, people are born different. And people are born different because- that's maybe the simplest question. If you're a religious person, you could say because God wanted this; if you are a non-religious person, you could say this is a matter of evolution. Regardless [of] the explanation, twins from the same family are different in their taste and in their preferences, in their system of thinking, in their wishes and in their emotions. So, differences- and diversity- is the rule of the world. And this, maybe, is the most important principle that one can understand and believe in inter-religious peacebuilding and in peacebuilding in general, if not in life. That human and their ecology, and their environment is based on the principle of diversity, based on the principle that people of different colour, gender, ethnicity, language, shape, weight, height, whatever it is, is a given and our objective should not be to mend those differences in a way that people become like us. And I think that's the rule where [the] conflict starts. Conflict starts in general when, whatever we want, because of our difference, contradicts with another person wishes, desires, system of values, and as a result we reach to the second stage, usually, the stage of the disagreement. And this disagreement means that one or two people want something, wish to achieve something, they need something, and there is disagreement around the capacity to acquire that

thing. And there is already perceptions and understandings that there is a disagreement. You know, if we are in the same room, whether I say I want to open this window because I feel hot here in this room, the temperature and another person says 'no, I want to keep it close because it is cold'. So, we have a disagreement, and it becomes a problem when we articulate that when there is the problem articulated into a conflict. So, again, people walk around with disagreements; people do not need to agree. The fact that you have one person even or two people in any room will have so many disagreements, just you know [to] take any moment and ask people who are with you, and you will see so many disagreements. Because people have different preferences, the problem is when they want something, when you want something, and the other person also wanted, or you cannot get it without the consent of the other person. It becomes a conflict when you want something, and the other person wants the same aspect, and it becomes public. It means that one of the party at least declared their intention and desire to acquire that interest and that need and the other person disagree with it, and then we have a conflict. So, the conflict is not really [a] disaster; it doesn't have to be violent. The conflict is just simply a situation where one or more persons perceives that their desires, their needs, their wishes, their interest are incompatible –[they] cannot be achieved in contradiction with another person needs, wishes and interests. That perception of incompatibility caused the conflict or what we can call 'conflict'. Now, we walk around with many conflicts around the world, we walk around with many disagreements, with many problems and nothing [happens]. You know, things do not have to be violent. I think violence is the situation where one party, at least, try to acquire what they want despite the will, the desire, and despite the refusal, of the other party, so we put violence, so we try to twist their hand, we try to curse them, we try to insult them, we try to bombard them, we use weapon, we use the military, we use army and we use bombs. And the human has used so many forms of violence, of course as you know, there are physical violence, emotional violence, psychological violence, there is direct violence, so there is the structural violence. We have become, in many of our societies -if not all of them-, very creative in bringing violence in [a] systematic way into each other. Either socially, culturally or psychologically and physically, so violence is one stage. And in most of the cases what it means, it means that the party and the individual is incapable of achieving what they want through persuasion; either because they don't know how to persuade; they did not think about the notion of persuasion or cooperation; this is what they were raised to do; it's easier, and it is faster, maybe. For many reasons, people use violence, but it is clear that it is a stage. It's an intentional decision made by one party to use.

My question to you, to think about it at this point [is] 'where do you think religion fit in this?', 'where does the religious identity, religious values, belief system, rituals and religious actors can contribute to this agreement?', 'can they

create a problem? 'can they create or cause conflict? 'can religion justify the cycle of violence?'. As I said earlier, maybe in the first slide, there are so many examples from the history where violence have been justified by religion; where ongoing conflict have been explained by religious terms; where rituals have been used in order to escalate a conflict. A well-known case, actually I use an example from the Balkans, a well-known case in the Balkans when one person used a, I think, a head of a pig and thrown [it] into a mosque during the visit of a foreign ambassador to that town. I'm not sure if it was Serbian or mostar[?] -if I'm not mistaken-, and that caused a great deal of havoc in that area during that day and caused a major escalation in the community relation and also on the national level in Bosnia and Serbia. But again, the visit of Ariel Sharon to the Holy Mosque in Jerusalem, in 2000 was one of the major triggers to the escalation in the conflict in Israel-Palestine and it was basically one of the major events of the start of the Second Intifada, that it triggered a great deal of violence, a great deal of protests on the Palestinian side, the fact that Sharon decided to walk into the Holy Mosque. A similar rate was done in 2014, in October 2014, when certain religious extremist radical groups tried to take control of the same Holy Mosque. Similarly, Muslim militant groups, whether they are Sunni or Shia in Iraq and Syria in Pakistan, decided to attack the mask of the other or the shrine of the other. So this use of the holy sites, the holy sacred sites, the use of rituals is a classical use of violence use of religion to justify violence. And you can see throughout this line, starting from differences and then going up all the way to war. And some wars are being described as religious, but I think those are the type of situations in the history where religion, or the religious identity, have been in the centre of the debate, the centre of the conflict. And it depends on the group, some groups today in Syria and Iraq describe the war as a war between sects between Sunni [and] Shia or between Muslim seeking the pure Muslim state, I'm referring to ISIS group, who are trying to establish certain ruling. And some argue that this war is a religious war, but regardless the situation of war is basically the use of violence in a systematic way, organised, systematic way and the purpose is to force the other side to give you to your side what you want, with the possibility and the cost of physically eliminating them. So, in many soldiers when you ask them 'what do you do in the war?', they will not say 'we are here to kill the enemy', they will use more in neutral language, you know 'neutralise' or 'stop' but they will not use the term 'killing' because we do not feel that settled with the use of the term 'killing' but eventually what we do in wars is 'the art of killing other people' in a systematic, organised way. And we can do that for many years, for centuries throughout the history; the Christians, in European history - Protestants and Catholics- had that war for over a few decades; Muslim engaged the same; Buddhists in Sri Lanka and South Asia; and Hindus as well engaging in a similar situation of war.

What we have after the war is a state where we have a ceasefire. And practically what it is, it's really the two sides agreeing 'okay, we are not going to kill you for three months or for one month' and it's a kind of situation where there is either a unilateral ceasefire or a joint ceasefire -or mutual ceasefire- where the two sides agree for many reasons. The ceasefire can happen because 'I'm exhausted'; 'I don't have any more resources to fight'; 'I need to rearm myself'; 'I need to get more supplies to continue the fight'; there is an intervention from a third party -from outside- that came in, and they stopped the fighting, but 'we really don't want to continue and fight'; and maybe the possibility of that 'I want to negotiate, actually now it's a good time to negotiate'. But regardless [of] what is the motivation for it, it's a phase in which the parties are able to rest and not fight.¹

[As] in the escalation and the development of the conflict, also religion can have a role here in the ceasefire. One can look at the different religious groups, different religious traditions and rely on the use of ceasefires; in the prevention of killing; in the cost of the killing on the war; and also, one can utilise the religious leader to enhance the possibility of [a] ceasefire. This happened in [a] number of conflicted areas; in the Philippines, when religious leaders stepped [?] during a ceasefire; and in Mindanao Catholic and Muslim religious leaders were monitoring ceasefire, were able to contribute to the sustaining a good ceasefire, and the level [?] of the community in it.

I'm beginning to go down with this curve and triangle, in order to illustrate how religion and the religious actors and religious institution can play a role as well. After the ceasefire, there is a supposed negotiation going on, so an agreement can take place. And an agreement, in this case, is a situation where the parties agreed to divide the land; agree to have what we call 'free zone', 'free armed zone' like Israelis and Egyptians agreed on Sinai to be demilitarised. So, the demilitarised zone that started from 1973 the negotiation that ended up with the visit of Sadam [Husain] to Jerusalem with a historic visit in 1977, and then an agreement that concluded in 1981, if I'm not mistaken. But that period was a period of negotiation, where agreement resulted and, as I said, the agreement after a ceasefire means that the two parties, or more, divided the land, divide the resources, they do not necessarily address the root causes of the problem and basically they come back to it, if we are not moving to the next phase of a transformation. But, in this case, reconstruction maybe this is a good illustration with the Lebanese case, with Lebanon. But the reconstruction comes after agreement, so one can ask you now 'you're listening to it, what does it mean to have a reconstruction after an agreement?'. And here, what we mean is that the World Bank, the International United Nation, international organisations, they

¹ Ibid, p. 225.

come in and with a plan helping the local community to reconstruct. What do we reconstruct? most of the cases we reconstruct buildings; we reconstruct prisons; we reconstruct hospitals; we reconstruct infrastructure; buildings basically. And this usually takes [a] few years to reconstruct what the war destroyed. So, if you go to Lebanon, to Beirut you'll see very beautiful buildings in the West and the East, you'll see the constructed nice sites but you also see some -which I think it's a smart thing to do- they left some buildings with holes, bullet holes in it, as a reminder of what the civil war between 1974 until 1991 has done to them. So, after a Taif [?] agreement [in] 1991, the reconstruction began in Beirut or in Lebanon, and the reconstruction of the buildings took place, but not very few programs or activities went to correct the relationship or correct the root causes of the conflict. And eventually, we also can move to the rehabilitation of the physical, the people who, in Sierra Leona[?] for example, after the Civil War, the war left so many people with limbs, missing hands, foot, ears, and there was the need to be physically rehab, people were traumatised physically, so we opened centres to fix people physically. But there's also the psychological rehab because war leaves people with deep scars of trauma, psychological trauma. The memory of war is very traumatic for many people who experience it. And, again, here you can have lots of religious community who can work on rehabilitation, psychological as well physical. They work in the reconstruction. Many examples with Catholic Relief Services, or Islamic Relief, or Buddhist groups, as well Hindu groups, in India, have worked on this type of projects. Rehab is the psychological healing that people take as a result of the trauma of the war. Now, what do we mean by reconciliation? Reconciliation doesn't mean reconstruction. Maybe that's why Lebanon, Beirut has been built many times. If you look at the history of Lebanon, where there are about 18 different ethnic groups, ethnic, religious sect groups, in the history since [the] 1860s -even 1832, if I'm not mistaken-; and then you move into the 80s, and the 90s, and then you move into the 20s and 1932, and then you move into the different wars that Lebanon have [had], and the last one [in] 1991, and after that had the war in 2006, with the recent war. But, again, if you look at it, some argue that every 15 to 20 years a major war goes through the Lebanese context, regardless whether they have caused it or [its] because of a neighbouring country, but regardless, the outcome is that a new reconstruction is taking place and reconciliation at the end. And it's generational, every 20 years or so people come into the same story. Generational because they inherited the animosity, if you remember the habituated conflict system, that we talked about it earlier, it's a classic case where people inherent the animosity, inherent the sectarian thinking, inherent the lack of hope, and having the mistrust and the lack of complexity, and continually. So, what we are dealing with in the reconciliation is the capacity to transform. And that's why we have it as a Transformation Resolution Settlement Management and Prevention. And these are five different processes of peacebuilding, the last one is the transformation and in reconciliation, what do we really looking for? what are we

looking for here, the objective here is simple. And, simply because if you look at it, and I'm gonna go into this area, if you're really looking at it, what you're trying to do is to bring the parties back to reconciliation. What does the reconciliation mean? it means the willingness to accept the differences of the other side; it means, in a simple way, to reconcile is to recognise the need of the person; to hold their own identity, which is the same place where we started with. So we went all the way up; we killed, we lived the war, we went in many years here and then, it took us another few years to calm down, and we went back to what we needed and what we had from the beginning; the need to build a system that ensure differences, ensure diversity, and the need for a system that helped in solving the disagreement problem conflict but without the violence. What we're looking for is a system that stops here, [a] system that 'yes, you disagree; yes, you have a conflict, but then you move to negotiate the conflict, and you continue to move into these cycles in a way where you get rid of the top of this triangle'. That's what we're looking for. And religious leaders have a role in this, [a] religious leader can play a role up here, but also religious leader can play a role all the way in each of these stages. That is what we are looking for. And, in a few words, to summarise, the purpose of this section has been to illustrate the point: religious leaders, religious institutions have always had the choice to play a role in the escalation of a conflict, and also to play a role in the de-escalation of a conflict, and help us build systems of reconciliation. And it's not really only for the religious either; it's also a duty of policymakers to take their input and their role into consideration.¹

VIII. A Venue for Peacebuilding

1- Rules of Interreligious Peacebuilding

‘There are multiple roles and the diverse one for religious leaders, actors in a conflict situation or peace building efforts as educators, as advocate, as a clergy who do diplomacy, shuttle diplomacy between different parties and different groups.’²

Professor Abu Nimer.M

1.1. There are 12 key Rules for Peacebuilding³

Professor Abu Nimer describes the Rules for Peacebuilding. Listen to the audio to learn more :

Key 1- Education

Key 2- Advocacy

Key 3- Clerical diplomacy

Key 4- Observation presence

1 Abu-Nimer, M, A Khoury, E Welty,(2007), Unity in diversity: Interfaith dialogue in the Middle East, US Institute of Peace Press, Washington D.C,p. 176-190.

2 Abu-Nimer, M, (2003),Toward the Theory and Practice of Positive Approaches to Peacebuilding, In book: Positive Approaches to Peacebuilding, PACT publications, p.13-23.

3 Payne, L. and Islamic Relief. Introduction to Peacebuilding: An Islamic Relief Practitioners' Guide, Islamic Relief Sweden, Stockholm, 2020.

- Key 5- Accompaniment
- Key 6- Fact finding assessment
- Key 7- Good Offices
- Key 8- Conciliation
- Key 9- Provide auspices
- Key 10- Facilitation, Meditation (in Dialogue and CR)
- Key 11- Witness to truth

1.2. Seven key Principles of Dialogue¹

These are 7 principles of dialogue and there could be 9, 15, 20, depending on the one who is presenting that, but I think there are core aspects of it and I think this list in particular have many of those principle and therefore I use it and it was developed with the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy in 1993.

Principle -1- Create safe space.

Principle -2- Agree that the purpose is learning.

Principle -3- Use appropriate communication skills.

Principle -4- Surface what is hidden!

Principle -5- Focus on the relationship.

Principle -6- Stay through the hard places.

Principle -7- Be willing to be changed by the situation.

1.3. Ground Rules, Challenges and Paradoxes

A- Ground rules for dialogue groups²

There are ten ground rules to consider:

1- Confidentiality : to ensure that there is safety.

2- Respect differences : to ensure safety as well as to allow people to speak freely.

3- No interrupting : Do not interrupt when someone is expressing a point of view. Hear them out fully.

4- Equal time –equal space : give everyone equal time and equal space.

5- No advice : make sure that in dialogue don't tell people what they need to do, how to fix things.

6- Listening : seek first to understand then to be understood.

7- Speak in the "first" person : « I » statement when you are in interreligious dialogue, speak from your own experience because it reduces generalisation, reducing categorization, reducing the possibility of stereotyping.

8- Responsibility : take responsibility on what you said, it's serious business, because if you don't take responsibility you might say statement that other people misunderstand.

1 Ambassador John McDonald, Using Multi-Track Diplomacy to Deal with Ethnic Conflict, IMTD's Occasional Paper Number 9, The Need for MultiTrack Diplomacy, May 2000 and IMTD Report.

2 Abu-Nimer (2010). Positive approaches to peacebuilding: a resource for innovators. (Chapter 1) Sampson, C. (2010). Chagrin Falls, OH: Taos Institute Publications.

9- Disclosure

10- Pass : you should not talk when you are not ready

Watch Professor Abu Nimer as he explains the different ground rules in more detail:

The ground rules, as you could see confidentiality to ensure that there is safety, respect differences also to ensure safety as well allow people to speak freely. Interruptions for the communication. Again, not to advise people. In most of our communication we try to advise, to give people advice in terms of what they need to be doing and what we are trying to do – sorry, what we are trying to do here is to make sure in the dialogue you don't tell people what they need to do, how to fix things. What you need to be doing is listening to them and not give them advice. Listen and not give advice and this is not only in dialogue, I recommend for you to also do it with your wife and husband and children rather than interreligious dialogue. It's a universal rule for communication.

"I" statement. When you are in interreligious dialogue and you say we, the Muslim, it means that you are carrying the burden of 1.4 billion Muslim on your back and you don't want that. Same thing for the Christian, even you might have 2 billion. So let that go, speak from your own experience and it's important because that reduces the generalization, reduces the categorization, reducing the possibility of stereotyping, it actually breaks the notion that all the Christian are the same, all the Muslim are the same, all the Hindus are the same, here you speak from your experience by using – this happened to me and that's maybe more – take responsibility on what you said, it's serious business, because if you do not take responsibility you might say statement that other people misunderstand. You do the disclosure, dialogue does not work without disclosure and disclosure will get us to the harder places. Disclosure is the only tool to decide to take the risk, to say something that otherwise you will not say, but because there is safety, you decide to do disclosure.

2- Design and Process Challenges¹

First paradox tention : Are you inviting people as individuals or member of the collective group?

Awareness vs action : Do we do the interreligious education to become aware that a problem exists or try to understand the dynamic within their faith.

Process vs content : Interreligious dialogue relate to – many of the interreligious models emphasize too much content versus a process oriented dialogue, interreligious dialogue where you work with here and now.

1 Abu-Nimer M(2010), *Islamic Model of Conflict Resolution: Principles and Challenges*, United States Institute of Peace: Qamar El huda.

3- Interfaith Encounter Models¹

Another aspect that you have to deal with in your design is your emphasis on the interfaith encounter [model being here] that for anyone to accomplish a change, you need three components to be addressed; one is the head and the hand and the heart is the third one.

And the head means that you in your inter-religious dialogue, you focus more on information or knowledge, you give more knowledge to the participants about themselves and about their faith and about the other faith and the assumption behind it is that people don't know about the other side and therefore they're ignorant and they create stereotypes and negative images and therefore they are easier to persuade to engage in violent action against. It's a big assumption and many of the models of interfaith dialogue focus on [new knowledge], so they bring a book, new knowledge, bring a new lecture, new movie, they provide surveys, they provide lots of new information. Very important, but as we said in the previous module, information is not enough to change perception. Attitude is another one, positive experience and that's the hard part. You want to form relationship, you want to have a positive interaction with the other side, so some interfaith dialogue do lots of – lots of friendship building, lots of ceremonial things, lots of positive interaction, has to do with singing together, eating together and music together, celebrating things together, without necessarily dealing with the conflict, dealing with controversial issue.

The third one is the action where the inter-religious dialogue focus on building things together, so they will do like the habitat for humanities, they'll go and build a house together, they'll go and build a [well] together, they will go a micro-finance project together. They are doing things together is the assumption there, when you do joint activity, joint action, at the end of the three months you have a house, you have a structure, you feel that you accomplish things, but our experience from the Bosnian and the Balkan area indicated that in many cases you will build the house, you will build the farm, you will build the development project together, mostly Christian, however, because you did not have enough time spent on the attitude or on the new knowledge or in the process, you lift with a new building, but the people who built the building continued to argue against each other, continued to hold negative perceptions and negative emotions.

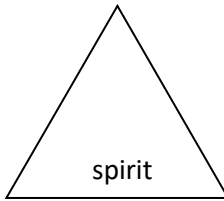
4- Principles of Attitudinal Change²

1 Abu-Nimer M, (2004), Religion, Dialogue, and Non-Violent Actions in Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society volume 17, p.491-511.

2 Abu-Nimer M, Conflict Resolution, Culture, and Religion: Toward a Training Model of Interreligious Peacebuilding, Journal of Peace Research 2001; 38; p.689.

Here is a diagram that shows the model:

Heart



Head Hand

Head : You focus more on information or knowledge.

Hand : Focus on building things together.

Heart : You want to form relationship, you want to have a positive interaction with the other side.

So one might think, okay, this is a model that actually work for most of the encountered program, where is the faith component? It enter in all the three but also in general – I have tried to introduce in some of the research that we have done here the notion of the spiritual and I think that’s the unique part for interfaith dialogue. Without the spiritual here in the middle, this can be a modern and it is a modern for a racial, interracial, for a gender, for sexual orientation.

With interreligious dialogue, the spiritual in the middle because people think – for many reason, because of their interfaith identity that at the end of the day our capacity as facilitators and inter is limited if the divine spirit and if the belief – if the faith language is not spoken then this is not interreligious dialogue, it become a social scientist talking to each other, or analyst or a journalist or politicians. So what’s unique about it is – in the interreligious dialogue is the capacity of the organisation and the facilitator and the design to make it [enough] space for people to speak their spiritual language. For people to speak their own faith language rather than to insist on it to be neutral and I think that’s an important part.

In Mindanao Philippines and couple of courses I’ve done there and I was happy by the end of some of the success we did in the dialogue group and you know, when I’ve asked, I said look, we’ve done great things here together in terms of dialogue and I remember an indigenous person from [The Lombard] I think tribe said yes, we manage to accept – to do this because the spirit was with us and the Christian Bishop said absolutely, the divine spirit was here. And again, for a facilitator from outside you did not really think about this from the outskirts of the design and you cannot really design that, that has to do with the attitude of the participants in the interreligious dialogue, whether they are able, capable and willing to bring their spiritual desire – spiritual identity with them and if you feel

comfortable enough as a trainer and as a facilitator to make the space possible for them to allow it to happen.

5- Model of Interfaith Dialogue: Process & Content

There is Two key models on a spectrum

A- Harmony model : The harmony model purpose for people to discover that they are very similar, so you can imagine the Abrahamic tradition, three groups come together and they are very surprised that they have so many similarities and this is a great accomplishment because it's still good, people came in with lots of assumption that they are very different or one is better than the other and here we go after two/three days of interreligious dialogue, they discover that we are very similar and they celebrate that. Mind you, they did not talk about the hard core issue, they did not surface the hidden, they remain in the polite stage. It's important, I don't want to belittling it, but it is not – probably it's not healthy to stay in the harmony model for long time or even to be defined by the society as only the harmony model conversation.¹

B- Conflict liberation model : Moving along the spectrum you can get to a conflict or liberation model where you have political action, critical – confronting critical, you speak of collective identity and the purpose is really to confront and appreciate differences. I'm not sure if this is a stage two but that's what I've been arguing – a number of research and documentation that I've done, that the harmony model or the start of that stage should lead us to the capacity to confront and appreciate differences.²

C- Dialogue through Action : Liberation theology, is a model that takes people out of their comfort zone, look at an instrument for concrete actions for justice and it's possible to do that. Another example for non-violence action where liberation model Christian and Muslim march towards a checkpoint in Bethlehem actually in other to challenge the structure of occupation that came as. An individual call for action, a Buddhist Monk who came to the same conference in Bethlehem in order to express his solidarity with the group.³

D- Model of Identity : As I said earlier, one can construct those phases in different ways, I just put them in a different order here, based on some of my work earlier. In more details, but it's basically similar to what we discussed earlier on.

Another example for non-violence action where liberation model Christian and Muslim march towards a checkpoint in Bethlehem actually in other to challenge the structure of occupation that came. An individual call for action,

1 Ibid, p.671.

2 Ibid, p.673.

3 ATALIA OMER, *Interreligious Action as a Driver for Social Cohesion and Development, Interreligious Action for Peace STUDIES IN MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN COOPERATION*, Catholic Relief Services, Baltimore, 2017, p.1-21.

a Buddhist Monk who came to the same conference in Bethlehem in order to express his solidarity with the group.¹

IX. Outcomes of Dialogue Process

We'll continue to look at the outcomes and criteria to measure effectiveness of inter-religious dialogue. We'll look at maybe the primary or main outcomes that some groups consider success and others might consider failure. We'll look at the power dynamic between the participants who come from different religious groups, from minority and majority groups and look at how each one of them perceives and sees the notion of success in inter-religious dialogue.

And then there is another major theme in this module that relates to the question of, "What is the overall process of awareness that one can seek in inter-religious dialogue? Where do we start from and where do we want to end up in the inter-religious dialogue process?" Here I talk about that one of the starting points is denial and then whether we want to end up with a bi-cultural, a bi-religious state of awareness or in a range between them, but primarily we're looking at the religio-centric group moving into a religio-relative state of mind in looking at relationships with the other groups and dealing with religious differences. We will end with another example to close the module here.

In order to be able to understand and analyse the concept and be engaging with them, it is important that you complete an assignment. As I said in the previous module, the assignment is similar or the same. It's to select an organisation that is doing interfaith dialogue and inter-religious dialogue and try to apply both the criteria for success and what is the impact? How do they measure the impact of their work? What are the criteria that they're using for the measurement of their impact? Do they see themselves as effective and why? What type of change are they seeking to accomplish through their inter-religious dialogue forums or inter-religious dialogue efforts? If it's possible, it would be very helpful if you can even interview through phone call or an email or actually one-on-one interview if that's possible for some of you.²

If not, the objective is to do an analytical paper with 1000 words on this module that tries to analyse the work of the inter-religious organisation and their module and see if they are adopting good measures, good criteria, effective ones in looking at the success and the failure of their efforts in their own given context.

1 Ibid, p.17.

2 Muhammad Saifullah Rohman, Promoting Religious Dimension in Conflict Resolution: A Review on Mohammed Abu-Nimer Thoughts, DINIKA Academic Journal of Islamic Studies 3(1):17, April 2018, DOI:10.22515/dinika.v3i1.1105

As we said in the previous module, the case to use could be any international organisation or any community based organisation. The sole criteria, most important is their work should be inter-religious, not intercultural and not interracial and not any peace project. It has to be inter-religious dialogue as the primary theme for them. Once you've written your 1000 words or four pages, share those with the forum, with the peers who are taking this online course with you and see what type of reaction you have and then you submit it to your immediate supervisor.

Once you're done with that, my recommendation or my suggestion would be to really try to reflect on it and reflect on your own experience in the inter-religious dialogue and to what extent you find these concepts and these themes helpful in improving your understanding of your own work or of other groups' work.

A- Pitfalls of Interfaith Dialogue¹

There are a number of pitfalls that interreligious dialogue face and those can be really classified as:

1- Excuse for no action : The first one is interfaith dialogue alone is an excuse for no action and I do think of in Israelis and Palestinians context of example because a number of occasion through research as well as personal participation in these events, people who come to these meetings say look, I have been doing dialogue for many years, I've participated in that and I have no need and I don't see myself going and working on – with social movement, with social protest, with other mobilization efforts to change the situation.

And the point here is that people who go to the interfaith dialogue feel that they have done their duties in reducing the tension and reducing the animosity and the conflict and therefore dialogue is used as an excuse for not to be involved in other tangible action that can also be helpful.

2- Dialogue of life : The next one is need a dialogue of life not theology and this has to do with the – what we mentioned earlier, that many of the interfaith dialogue are in some ways obsessed with theology and they think and perceive interfaith dialogue as a clergy coming together and discussing the theological difference or similarities. Yet on the ground, on the day to day life, people are more interested in a dialogue of life, dialogue around environment, dialogue around the economic employment, economic opportunities, the dialogue that involve infrastructure issue that affect the manifestation of the religious identity on the ground and that tend to be a tension in this area.

3- Time and Cost : The third one is member of the dominant majority can afford the time and cost of talk and they understand. And this is maybe relate

1 Admirand Peter, Humbling the Discourse: Why Interfaith Dialogue, Religious Pluralism, Liberation Theology, and Secular Humanism Are Needed for a Robust Public Square, Religions Journals, 2019, 10, 450, p. 2-16.DOI: 10.3390/rel10080450

to the issue of the nature of the participants who come to the interreligious dialogue and the way they perceive their needs and their expectations. It refers to the notion that member of the dominant majority are more interested and expect to work on understanding the other because of the lack of opportunities to speak to the other. And they also can afford that and the time and the cost is a clear reference to the fact that if you're a member of the minority religious group, you really feeling the persecution discrimination and for you, you've come to the dialogue to see tangible outcome on that level and – the tangible outcome on that level and you don't have time, the time is pressing you to produce and also when you go back to your community they're going to ask you what did the interreligious dialogue bring us as a community?

And if you're a dominant – member of the dominant majority who have access to power, access to structure, you do have the time, you are not pressing the time or what is the situation costing you?

4- Majority privileges allow psy... : The fourth point here, majority privileges allow psychologizing the conflict. And this is also an obstacle or a pitfall because it relate to the previous one. The psychological length orientation in the interreligious dialogue serve member of the majority in general who have privileges, economic privileges, political privileges, structural privileges and therefore what's missing for them probably is the psychology of the conflict, understanding the dynamic of it. Needing to know the other person [pain, victimhood] and how is the conflict affecting them individually. While member of the minority group are coming from a different place, coming from a different state of mind, more interested in the structural rather than the psychology of the conflict and that's a distinction that has implication, again, on how we view success. In all of those, depending on your community, collective identity, status in the conflict, it will affect the way you perceive the success and the effectiveness of interreligious dialogue. And the evaluator who looks at the success and failure in these programs have to take into consideration that participants come from a different background.

B- Obstacles and Needs¹

Here are a number of obstacles to consider:

- **Interfaith peace programming** : Many people who work in interreligious dialogue do not have the back ground in peace building programming.

- **Limited professional trainig** : Many people who work in interreligious dialogue do not necessarily have the professional training.

1 Kevin Quigley, THE CHALLENGES OF INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE, <http://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/The-Challenges-of-Interreligious-Dialogue.pdf>

- **Faith is not enough** : Faith is not enough means that if you are a Muslim or a Christian or a Buddhist or a

Hindu, you're coming to this field because your faith has instructed you.

- **Representation of participants** : Many people who participate in these events are recruited to preach to convert.

- **Sustainability and Impact** : Are you able to generate an impact that is long-lasting.

- **Outside reality and structure** : Intentionally avoiding the structure and the reality outside.

- **Lack of financial transparency**: A lack of financial transparency is also due to many of the organizations who work on interreligious dialogue, they're not necessarily well-organized in terms of their capacity, in terms of their financial resources [they have to them] and therefore in many cases they are not well developed and I think that's probably a field characteristic in some ways. I've seen that in the Middle East context, I've seen it in South Asia, I've seen it in many cases even in the US where small [land] government and non-profit organization lack these means and thus, as I said, organizational obstacle. Which again, this is an obstacle for achieving a certain level of effectiveness or success in that.¹

- **Language Barriers** : Language barrier is a challenge.

- **Localized interfaith dialogue models**: Localized interfaith dialogue model is an obstacle that relate to the nature of the programs and this is more maybe to places like Nigeria or Burkina Faso and Niger where I have worked and I have noticed in many ways that participants and organization expect you to bring the model with you. And mostly unfortunately the models of interreligious dialogue come from the north to the south and the problem with that is that you operate with an assumption that this should work in Nigeria when the program has been created in Paris or London and as a result there is a disconnect between what you assume is acceptable and what is indeed acceptable on the ground.²

- **Public perceptions of interfaith field**: Finally on this one, the public perception of interfaith field. In many conflict area I have noticed that the public perception of the interfaith field is not necessarily professional as we said and second, it's not necessarily entrusted with responsibility of changing, solving, bringing [immediate] change to the community. It continues to be marginalized, it continues to be politically marginalized, it continues to be marginalized in the mind of the overall public outside. Yet, when you, for example, travel to Philippine and you ask people about interfaith dialogue and interreligious

1 Paul Knitter (2012) Challenges of Interreligious and Intercultural Cooperation Today, Political Theology, 13:4, 397-399, DOI: 10.1558/poth.v13i4.397

2 Muthuraj Swamy, The Problem with Interreligious Dialogue: Plurality, Conflict and Elitism in Hindu-Christian-Muslim Relations, Bloomsbury Advances in Religious Studies, New York, 2016.

dialogue, people do expect – and the first question they ask you, what did they accomplish? Have they managed to prevent the conflict in Mindanao? But again, is that the responsibility? Are they capable of being the only factor and the only force that bring peace to the conflict area? And I think there is a dilemma here and the dilemma here is that in the lack of a clarity and understanding that interreligious dialogue is a limited field in its capacity to change [macro] dynamic. And it's really – its success and its effect can easily be managed and measured on attitude, individual transformation, attitude and behaviour of individual.

C- Success, Outcomes and Accomplishments¹

And it's really – its success and its effect can easily be managed and measured on attitude, individual transformation, attitude and behaviour of individual.

So I easily can and have devised surveys, observation, interviews to measure the attitudes of people who have worked in this area and also people who have been affected by it. So a person you meet and say, you know, this interreligious dialogue meeting I've had and my involvement in it have transformed my personal life. Those things are easy in a pretest or protest in an observation to see them and find indicator for them. The more challenging part is really the measurement of the structure and policy change. Level of the macro as I said, individual is possible and is feasible and we have tools for that. The level of the macro structural policy is more difficult to capture. It's more difficult for capture for a number of reasons; one, the organizations themselves, the model that they used are not aimed at changing structural policy. Neither in the design nor in the implementation. Yet, the expectation outside for an organization of interreligious dialogue to make a structural change and that's where the tension is.

Second reason is that in general in the evaluation field, it's far more difficult to measure and trace the effect of interreligious program on policy change because policy and structural changes are produced as a result of so many different forces. So many different factors. For example, you know, if we go back to the agreement of 1993 in Oslo. How much of the interreligious dialogue in Israel and Palestine caused that political agreement to take place? Even – you can go back earlier in the question and say should the interreligious dialogue be aiming and have an objective towards that or not? Again, the public do view the interreligious dialogue organization as required or responsible for producing that, but I think eventually or in reality, the interreligious dialogue can contribute and maybe can contribute symbolically for the need to make structural changes, but to be able to do structural and policy changes through interreligious dialogue, we need a different operation, you need a different resources. You need different

1 Ingeborg Gabriel (2017) All Life Is Encounter: Reflections on Interreligious Dialogue and Concrete Initiatives, *Religious Education*, 112:4, 317-322, DOI: 10.1080/00344087.2017.1325096.

participants, a different design, and that aspect is really – have to be clarified and understood.

Conclusion

Utilizing the religion of the interveners and conflicting parties, and religious aspects of the context, can assist the peacebuilding process and change in certain conflict settings. The proposed interreligious peacebuilding training approach is based on both intercultural sensitivity training and conflict resolution training concepts. An interreligious training requires content and process designs different from a typical conflict resolution or intercultural training setting. This research illustrates that, in the interreligious training, participants' responses partially correspond with Bennett's intercultural sensitivity developmental model. However, the spiritual, moral, and ethical components of any religious identity prevent full application of this model in such settings. This research has illustrated the similar role that culture and religion can play in promoting conflict resolution processes among different parties. However, it has also provided a clear indication that religious values and beliefs can dictate different reactions among people than those usually emerging in response to intercultural interactions. This supports the hypothesis that there is no full overlap between cultural and religious aspects of the individual's or group's identity. Thus, intercultural developmental sensitivity models partially capture the dynamics of interreligious interactions, and new developmental models should be developed to guide practitioners and scholars in addressing interreligious interactions. Several other conclusions can be proposed

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702 Downloaded from <http://jpr.sagepub.com> at American University of Beirut
on June 6, 2010 as future research themes and as guidelines for practitioners and scholars when dealing with peacebuilding training in an interreligious setting. First, combining elicitive and prescriptive training approaches is more effective than relying on one single approach. Second, integrating cognitive (instrumental), affective (here and now), and behavioral (action) elements in such training contributes to the process of change sought by the interveners. Third, the moral and ethical aspects of interreligious settings (in comparison to intercultural settings) add difficulties to the abilities of training participants in one religion to experience the different world-views of others. Fourth, conflict resolution skills and intercultural communication skills and processes can be effective if combined in one training format. Although qualitative and anecdotal data derived from this study suggest that the proposed training format affects the participants, a more systematic evaluation process is needed to illustrate how and to what extent the training process and design affect participants' attitudes and behaviors. In addition, both the facilitator's role and the facilitation approach should be examined to identify the most effective training conditions and structures.

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