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## Conflict or Dialogue of Cultures in the Context of Current Migrations

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Philosophy and Canon Law 2, 39-57

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2016

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej [bazhum.muzhp.pl](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl), gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

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## Conflict or Dialogue of Cultures in the Context of Current Migrations

Today we are again a little bit afraid  
of an impending clash of civilizations...

Peter Križan

**Abstract:** The article analyzes the present-day issue of migration and immigration from the perspective of reformulated concept of axiological pluralism and cultural pluralism. This concept is presented as an alternative to the “anachronistic” project of multiculturalism. The current wave of migration—according to the author—has a twofold effect: it contributes to the rapprochement and mutual enrichment of humanity and human cultures or the escalation of tensions and the outbreak of conflicts arising on the grounds of culture, religion and values. The leitmotif of this work is a reflection on the possibilities, conditions and limitations of the dialogue of cultures. In this context, the author distinguishes between cultures that are proportionate and disproportionate in value. Tolerant coexistence is “possible” only in the culture of commensurate value.

**Keywords:** human being, culture, religion, value, conflict, dialogue

Human beings are defined as migrating creatures. They migrated already at the dawn of their history, they keep migrating at present and will migrate in the future. Migration is already encoded in their gene pool.

The most important reasons for migration are as follows:

- Depletion of livelihood at the original (home) territory, possibly due to local “overpopulation”;
- Devastation of nature and climate changes (long-term drought, permanent loss of drinking water, volcanic activity, earthquakes, tsunamis, etc.);
- Military conflicts, politically, ethnically, religiously or racially motivated genocide, persecution of the population by dictatorship, etc.;

— Ever-broadening gap in living standards of the population of particular countries, escape from poverty, searching for a higher quality of life, the so-called free movement of capital, goods and services in a globalizing human space-time, etc.

Culture “migrates” together with migrants, which is visible in a constantly deepening cultural diversity. It deepens the diversity of value systems, also these value systems which constitute a component part of different cultures. The nature of such values results in a diversity of values, which is characterized by *commensurability* of cultures; it gives hope for their mutual rapprochement, or even fertilization. However, this diversity is characterized by *incommensurability* of the value systems, which could be (and generally is) the reason for tension and conflicts between cultures. Migration—as a social phenomenon—has at least two outcomes: it either contributes to bringing people closer together and to the mutual enrichment of cultures or it results in escalating tensions and conflicts of such cultures.

The leitmotif of these considerations is a theoretical reflection on the effects of the current wave of migration and immigration, especially from the territory of the Islamic culture into (our) “western,” namely “Euro-Atlantic” civilization.

The starting point for these considerations is the conviction that “we are building a democratic Europe as a worldview—neutral community, to understand equality among citizens who have religious experience and those whose experience is different.”<sup>1</sup>

It means the “democratic Europe”—among other things—comprises the pluralism of cultures and values, which includes both cultural and value *absolutism*, as well as cultural and value *relativism*, while it does not come down to either one of them.<sup>2</sup> The importance of pluralism—as an axiological position—was already noticed by Berlin, who said: “pluralism seems to me truer and more humanist ideals, as it targets those looking for large authoritarian structures, the ideal of self-management classes, nations and of all humanity. It is truer, because at least it acknowledges the fact that there are a lot of human goals that all of them are not commensurate, and they are in constant mutual rivalry. In my opinion, to take the view that all values could be measured by one yardstick, as if it was only a matter of investigation and to determine the highest of them means to disregard the knowledge that humans are free entities and represent moral decision as an operation that is essentially carried out by a slide rule. Pluralism is more human, because it does not deprive people, in the name of

<sup>1</sup> Peter Križan, “Dialóg medzi kultúrami v Európe—úvod do fiskusie,” in *Medzikultúrny dialóg a migrácia* (Prešov: Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 2008), 7.

<sup>2</sup> It is necessary to note that pluralism is not synonymous with relativism and that relativism semantically does not share the *nihilism*.

some distant or imperfect ideal, of those, whom they consider essential to their lives.”<sup>3</sup>

In order to point out the context of axiological pluralism, pluralism of cultures that we are interested in, and to understand the current wave of migration and immigration, it is necessary to outline a basic definition of the concept of “value.”

With the utmost probability the term “value” is, along with the concepts of *goodness*, *truth*, *beauty*, and *love*, the most difficult term to define. In the past an ironic but also justified remark, which referred to this phenomenon, was known: value does not show that it is a value, etc.<sup>4</sup>

If it is still true that “of all things the measure is man,” etc. (written by Protagoras), then perhaps the concept of value (and everything that belongs to it) is considered only as a “creation” of man. Each value is a value only for the person when it is in relation to him/her and with respect to him/her. In the light of this fact, a value—in its the broadest definition—is something which has significance, validity, meaning, and price for humans.<sup>5</sup> A value is therefore constituted by man, his/her “vision” and “leadership,” his/her experiencing and the expectation of his/her spiritual and present-practical activity, etc. The basic source of a value is life itself. Life forces humans to satisfy their basic human needs and create or discover values at the same time. From a certain point of view it could be stated that values belong to the existential conditions of human life.

The world of values is vertically and horizontally—complexly structured, and there is a need for a presumption of reflections about the relation between means and goal of man’s efforts. “On the one hand, the values in this relationship express the desired state of being and, on the other, it suggests courses of action as a means to achieve them [...] there are things on the basis of some quality which are values per se, and things whose value is the means of achieving something that is desirable per se.”<sup>6</sup> In this connection, the means is related

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah Berlin, “Dva pojmy slobody,” in *O slobode a spravodlivosti* (Bratislava: Archa, 1993), 68–69.

<sup>4</sup> There is a remark that Martin Heidegger complained about the difficulties with defining the concept of “value” when he analyzed the Nietzsche’s concept of a revaluation of all values (see Martin Heidegger, “Powiedzenie Nietzschego *Bóg umarł*,” in Martin Heidegger, *Drogi lasu*, 185).

<sup>5</sup> However, Kant argued that it is not true since everything that has a price has a value; which is associated with *dignity*. It is documented by means of the following words, that is, the place of something that has some value, can substitute something else equivalent, but this goes beyond any price and therefore it does not allow any equivalent, it has dignity (see Immanuel Kant, *Základy metafyziky mravov*, 63). Kant clearly indicates that dignity (as something that cannot be replaced by any equivalent in *value*) is related to the field of morality (see Kant, *Základy metafyziky mravov*, 63–64).

<sup>6</sup> Olga Sisáková, *Filozofia hodnôt medzi modernou a postmodernou* (Prešov: FF PU, 2001), 172.

to the value only if it is the result of the desired means or something that represents good. If the desired means is something *wrong*, it results in the means which cannot be a value.

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

The stance of axiological monism is usually exemplified by Plato's understanding of beauty, precisely what "beautiful" is. In Plato's dialogue *Symposium*—said by Diotima, a mantis woman—he notes: "Who on the road to love will bring up here a gradually and properly observed phenomena of beauty [...] he naturally will see something remarkably beautiful, a beauty... that is, firstly, the eternal and never arises, or destroyed, or it does not increase or be diminished, further beauty, as it is not beautiful on one side, however, ugly on the other side, not once beautiful, even once again not, it is not in beautiful in any relationship, in the second, however, ugly nor beautiful here, there turn ugly one people beautiful, others ugly. Beauty is not something like [...] something physical, it is not like some speech or science [...] but as something that is big, united in itself and with each other and all the other beautiful things participate in that, when other or they cease to exist nor increase it, neither diminished nor to it nothing happens."<sup>7</sup> These "absolute values" belong—according to axiological monists—to such values as "the truth," "the good," etc. The concept of axiological monism, as it has been already underlined, constitutes an ideological and theoretical core of the so-called the cultural absolutism.

Axiological relativists sought (and still seek) arguments against the monists' definition of value as it is connected with the satisfying human needs. Whereas the process of satisfying human needs is usually unique, then what it is connected with is, *sui generis*, unique and thus what is unique is an individual set of values bound with a specific process of satisfying needs. Moreover, this process is always carried out at a specific time, in definite natural and social environment, in society with univocal cultural and religious traditions, with specific level and form of rationality and emotionality, etc.<sup>8</sup> Such understanding of axiological relativism constitutes the basis of the so-called cultural relativism.

It has already been stated that in the same way that the cultural pluralism "stands" above the cultural absolutism and relativism, the plurality of values

<sup>7</sup> Plato, "Symposion," in Platon, *Dialógy* Book I (Bratislava: Tatran, 1990), 707–708.

<sup>8</sup> Vlastimil Rollo, *Emocionalita a racionalita aneb jak d'ábel na svét přišel* (Praha: Sociologické nakladatelství, 1993), 100–105.

“stands” above the axiological relativism and monism which theoretically reflects the axiological pluralism.

Whenever this issue is analyzed there is tendency to emphasize that axiological pluralism acknowledges the absolute validity of a specific value only in a specific system of values and in a specific culture, which creates, develops and stores these values, while in relation to another system of values (if a culture is different) the validity of these values is relativized.<sup>9</sup> Therefore the axiological pluralism and the pluralism of cultures, defined in such a way, are based on the fact that there is an alternative to the “naive multiculturalism” and the “cultural totalitarianism,” which implies that all cultures should be—in spite of their value diversity—understood as an anthropological equivalent.

One of the arguments in favor of the axiological pluralism is the “internal” division of values into such categories as conditional, overarching, and excess which John Kekes introduced in his scientific writings.<sup>10</sup> Such a division of values is significant in the terms of a dialogue of cultures, which has—probably—a chance to succeed only if it pursues a value “beyond the boundaries” of the individual (involved in the dialogue) cultures.

It seems that among these values is the value of life, the value of freedom and so on. However, experience derived from conflicts between cultures suggests that even these figures may not act as a “beyond the boundaries” value for all different cultures and therefore cannot be universal. The value of life and the value of freedom can, as a matter of fact, be seen as such, precisely they could be considered contextually or situationally, so it is not surprising that there are cultures in which these values are not considered to be “excess.” These are particularly the cases and situations in which—at the expense of life—the value of “victims” is stressed, namely the so-called value of self-negation of martyrdom and so on. This was shown, for example, when the Islamic terrorists sent a message to the Western democracies (and to the entire Euro-Atlantic culture) after the events of September 11, 2001, in the United States and commented these events by saying: “We love death more than you love life.”<sup>11</sup>

The real possibility and form of the coexistence of values—in terms of the plurality of values—depends on their commensurability or incommensurability, it is believed that the commensurability, precisely incommensurability of values

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<sup>9</sup> Therefore such understanding of the *relativism of values* should not be equated with *nihilism*, specifically with the position of “nothing is valid,” not even with *naive optimism*, namely, with a position according to which “everything is possible.” The axiological pluralism respects the hierarchy of the values in force in different value systems, however, it stresses that what is valid in one system of values may not be valid in another system, which results in the above outlined relativity of values.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. John Kekes, *The Morality of Pluralism* (Princeton–New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 19–65.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted by Kuras, in *Jak zabít civilizaci* (Praha: Eminent, 2015), 14.

is a necessary consequence and concomitant feature of the plurality of values. There is no commensurability of values when values are diverse, different, divergent or even antagonistic. However, every difference or diversity of values is not necessarily the reason of their incommensurability and any coexisting conflicts.

It is already known that some cultures that have varied and different systems of values can coexist with each other in a tolerant way, but some of them cannot. For example, some Chinese (Confucian) or Indian (Buddhist) values are commensurate with Christian culture despite their apparent differences. The result of this fact is that there is relatively tolerant coexistence of values within one (common) political and legal system.<sup>12</sup> Max Weber states that “the different value systems of the world are opposite to each other in a bitter struggle.”<sup>13</sup> It is true only in a case when the “value order” is incommensurable, incompatible or even antagonistic. There does not have to necessarily be the so-called implacable struggle between them in the case of a value-commensurable “world order.”

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

While commensurability of values is designated by their connectedness and functional comparability, according to some—mutually respected—standards, the incommensurability of values is based on their discontinuity. Therefore, the commensurability of values guarantees a bridge. Incommensurability of values—in a common system of values—with the commensurable values cannot build a bridge. Certain “intersections”<sup>14</sup> between them are possible provided that their values do not exist in the common system of values, but work in parallel “side by side.” The coexistence of people who subscribe to and practically apply incommensurable values is only possible in an atmosphere of permanent tension, disagreements, and conflicts. The incommensurable values are not only the result of an incommensurable way of perception of (understanding and reflection) the facts, but also of an incommensurable relation to it and so on. There is no doubt that the outline of the relationship between commensurable and incommensurable values is fully reflected in the relationship between those

<sup>12</sup> This is shown by, for example, the so-called Chinatown operation in several countries of the Euro-Atlantic culture and civilization.

<sup>13</sup> Max Weber, *K metodológii sociálnych vied* (Bratislava, Pravda, 1983), 244.

<sup>14</sup> The creator (exporter and importer) of the values is “man” who is related to “generic” *commensurate* essential forces, spiritual and present-practical layout (thinking, freedom of will, satisfying basic needs) and so on. As a result, in contacts with systems of in-commensurable values some—human and existentially contingent—“intrusions” can be found.

cultures, which will—among other things—also illustrate the actual shape of the current cultural pluralism.

The presented and preferred concept of the pluralism of cultures, which was based on the concept of axiological pluralism, has no ambition to radicalize the plurality of values<sup>15</sup> at any cost. It is, simply, a concept that respects and reflects the cultural diversity of the contemporary world. The traditional multiculturalism was based (and even still is) on the compatibility of cultures, as well as the possibility of their cohabitation. The presented pluralism of cultures, with regard to the value commensurability and incommensurability of cultures, has allowed (and has justified) coexistence of both, the conflicting and non-conflicting cultures. While cohabitation of cultures is related to commensurate value culture, the conflict coexistence of cultures is linked with the incommensurable value cultures.

A Slovak sociologist Fedor Gál suggests that multiculturalism can also lead to “hostile coexistence of cultures side by side,” which would be—according to him—“nothing pleasant.”<sup>16</sup> In terms of the reformulated the concept of multiculturalism and pluralism of cultures he considers it important to emphasize the presented hostile coexistence of cultures “side by side.”

Perhaps, there is no doubt that value commensurate cultures can coexist “side by side” and also “together.” This is a form of coexistence of different cultures which was anticipated by “traditional” multiculturalism.<sup>17</sup> However, it is not certain that the incommensurate value cultures can and also will “meet,” as it is proved by the current wave of the migration. Anyway, if it was also assumed, based on that belief, that the differences between cultures (and their value systems) “solve” (overcome) the one-to-one tolerance, social empathy, consensus on the so-called universal human values, we would not lack belief in the “universal” validity of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that is, the legal and moral norms included in this Declaration must be accepted (respected) by all particular cultures.

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<sup>15</sup> If “the plurality of values,” as Sisáková remarks, “modifies the practice of evaluation, so the fact of pluralism is perceived as a value, the hyperbole of values/means leads to a situation where final values/goals outgrow, the only absolute is relativity of things” (Sisáková, *Filozofia hodnôt medzi modernou a postmodernou*, 169). However, the plurality of values can be viewed and interpreted in other ways. Once again, it is noticed that the reformulated axiological pluralism is a concept which, on the one hand, respects axiological monism and its “absolute” validity of values in a specific value system at the specific time, but on the other, it does not exclude its relativity, if it is compared to values (and their “absolute” validity) in the other—different—system of values.

<sup>16</sup> Fedor Gál, “Hovorte áno, áno, nie, nie,” in *Kultúra ako emócia. Multikultúrna zbierka esejí nielen o „nás”* (Bratislava: Nadácia Milana Šimečku, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> According to the traditional cultural pluralism, multiculturalism is still just as a “mixture of the cultures.” These values—an undifferentiated “mixture of cultures” is even considered as “necessary” while “modern society leads to its maturity,” etc. David Pawson, *Islam—przyszłość czy wyzwanie?* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza VOCATIO, 2015), 36.



The early effects of the current wave of migration and immigration to Europe prove that reality “does not match” the ideas of multiculturalism. Europe has to “face” a culture with antagonistic value, which is unable to coexist in one (joint) system of political, legal, moral, and religious norms and values.

In light of the foregoing, a view is expressed which suggests that the actual cause of conflicts is not free and autonomous functioning “side by side” in incommensurate value cultures, but it is rather their coexistence in a common system of generally applicable political, legal and moral norms and values. A truly “common” system of political, legal, and moral norms and values has never been, created, namely a system that would be mutually acceptable and respectable for all current and value-antagonistic cultures as well (at least on the territory of the contemporary migration and immigration).

The original multiculturalism succumbed to the illusion that the incommensurate value cultures can merge, because, apparently, all of them follow and respect human dignity, humanism, human and civil rights and so on. However, in Europe and worldwide there is no internationally accepted declaration or legislation—formally guaranteeing respect for human rights—which would be able to *fuse the cultures* that are incommensurable when it comes to values. Perhaps that is why authors such as Jacques Derrida, Jürgen Habermas, Zygmunt Bauman, V. Bělohorský, J. Czerny and others are encouraged to search for a new form of humanism (and human dignity) and new application of the principle of holism.

Both the Christian culture and the Islamic culture are not only characterized by axiological monism, but also by the so-called situational inclination toward “totalitarianism of values.” It seems that each of these cultures tends to perceive their own values as absolute and it is convinced that their values are the “most” positive, humane, fair, moral, etc. There is no doubt that putting values of one culture over another is always dangerous and sooner or later becomes a source of conflict between them.

The conflicts between cultures can have different forms. Some of them are “solvable” by the means of a dialogue. Some of them are, *sui generis*, “unsolvable.” The above outlined understanding of the axiological pluralism—together with the understanding of the pluralism of cultures—offers “solutions” for both at the level of the dialogue of cultures and at the level of coexistence of cultures “side by side,” that is, in separate political and legal systems, on a separate territory, with a specific hierarchy of values, etc.<sup>18</sup>

“The parallel coexistence of cultures” and their coexistence “side by side” is not the happiest solution in the twenty-first century. However, if it is a manner that guarantees that the individual (incommensurable) cultures preserve their

<sup>18</sup> The so-called territorial separation of the ethnic groups that fight with one another also enables the current political geography to solve the conflicts of ethno-cultural origin, cf. Daniel Gurnák, Tibor Blažik, and Viliam Lauko, *Úvod do politickej geografie, geopolitiky a regionálnej geografie* (Bratislava: Geo-grafika, 2007), 83–4.

identity and allows what is essential to prevent violent conflicts between them (including the so-called holy wars), then this solution is not the worst. Vice versa! In this (migration) situation and for this (specific) case (ad hoc), the solution may be quite acceptable, because it is a real solution and gives the hope of a dignified coexistence of disparate in value cultures in the future.

This form of coexistence of cultures, that is, their functioning “side by side” and independently from each other, allows them to realize their values in a full scope and without “restrictions” from each—even conflicting—culture. It is possible even without “restricting” or “capping” the concept of human rights and freedom, because at least the part of the Muslim world, which tends to a radical version of Islam, the so-called Wahhabism, has serious problem with the Euro-Atlantic concept of human rights. It neither has links with the Euro-Atlantic understanding of freedom and equality, nor with several pieces of legislation based on the understanding of Western democracy.<sup>19</sup>

“The parallel coexistence” of the incommensurable cultures, their functioning “side by side” and independently from each other has its considerable importance also in regard to theological differences between Islam and Christianity as two, although monotheistic, but not identical religions. An example of these differences may be the understanding of God, that is, its strict “oneness” in Islam and “trinity” in Christianity. Furthermore, the differences are based on the definition of the duties of man to God, on experiencing religion, on defining the so-called unbelieving ones, on conducting religious services, on the organizational and hierarchical structure of the mentioned religions, etc.

The most important (and most comprehensive) “modern” conflict of cultures, which in terms of civilizations is linked with Christianity and Islam, “began” with the terrorist attacks of Muslim extremists on targets in the USA on September 11, 2001. Although, the conflict is officially presented as clash of Western democracy with terrorism, there is no doubt that its background is a—*sui generis* historical—dispute between two cultures, which are intrinsically linked to the values of Christianity and Islam.

The escalation of the conflict was anticipated before the events of September 11, 2001, by Samuel P. Huntington, when he noted that “the conflict in the twentieth century between liberal democracy and Marxism-Leninism is only fleeting and superficial historical phenomenon in comparison with permanent and highly conflictual relation between Islam and Christianity”.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> In other words, the culture which is based on freedom of expression, freedom of conscience and religion, gender equality, equal rights for men and women, etc. is *incommensurable* in comparison with the culture where these freedoms and rights are not respected. Cohabitation of these cultures (in one legal system) is not possible. This does not mean that the parallel coexistence of cultures “must” always have a tolerant form.

<sup>20</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *Střet civilizací. Boj kultur a proměna světového řádu* (Praha: Nakladatelství Rybka Publisher, 2001), 248.

The term *conflict* (lat. *conflictus*, ‘collision’) is most often used to describe a *dispute*, *struggle*, *fight*, and even *war* between two and more actors (parties), which are not *consistent* (in line), they have opposing views, different opinions, namely, their values promote mutually exclusive interests, etc. Conflict actors could be individuals, social groups, ethnic communities, nations, states, and even whole civilizations.<sup>21</sup>

Several available statistical data present the causes and nature of the contemporary conflicts—more than 60% of them are conflicts of ethno-cultural and ethno-religious nature.<sup>22</sup>

However, even in this case, the impact of religion—in these conflicts—is not overestimated. Hans Knippenberg points out that even these conflicts which, in the background, seem “purely” religious or are even called “Holy war” refer to “secular, political, social, and economic causes and interests.”<sup>23</sup>

These words, in their entirety, are also applicable to the conflicts between Christianity and Islam, although, there are some religious causes in this case, namely, factors have specifically literal and “irreplaceable” importance. It stems from the fact that the *core* of the European as well as the Islamic culture is their systems of religious norms and values. Since these systems are incommensurable in Christianity and in Islam, this situation is the biggest determinant of the nature of conflicts between these cultures and religions.

A French historian, orientalist and expert in comparative religious studies Jean-Paul Roux has written in his work entitled *The Conflict of Religions. Long War between Islam and Christianity (7th–21st century)*: “Whether you admit it or not, the fact is that the West is with Muslims or with Islam at war [...] there has not elapsed year, there has not elapsed month or even week that Christian or Muslim blood will be spilled [...] the war between Islam and Christianity, both declared and overt or covert and insidious, it is the reality despite often remembered alliance between Francis I and Suleyman Gorgeous, despite long periods of the truce [...] war in fact has never actually finished.”<sup>24</sup> The fact that different religions (including Islam and Christianity), in the history of mankind, were many times in a “state of war” does not mean that such a “war” is derived

<sup>21</sup> See Mitchell, 1981, 55 ff.

<sup>22</sup> In this context, there is at least an unconvincing argument put forward by Francis Fukuyama who stated that “the liberalism prevailed in religion over Europe [...] Today it sounds bizarre that anyone, even the most avid priest, could be offended by the religious ceremonies of another church. Religion became a private matter—it seems to have more or less permanently left the European political scene that are affected only in respect of distinct themes such as the question of abortion,” Francis Fukuyama, *Konec dějin a poslední člověk* (Praha: Nakladatelství Rybka Publisher, 2002), 260.

<sup>23</sup> Hans G. Knippenberg, *Violence as Worship. Religious Wars in the Age of Globalisation*, trans. Brian McNeil (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 13.

<sup>24</sup> Jean-Paul Roux, *Střet náboženství. Dlouhá válka mezi islamem a křesťanstvím* (Praha: Nakladatelství Rybka Publishers, 2015), 7–8.

from their substance. (The essence of religion is *faith* in God, life after death in “the second world,” etc.). “Religion”—Jean-Paul Roux writes—“may serve as a pretext for the war, it may be sacred and sometimes it may even resort to it.”<sup>25</sup> Within this context religion may become a “resort” at war for two reasons: firstly, because of the “self-salvation” and partly due to the acquisition of hegemony (domination and hegemony) over other religions and so on. It seems that the conflict between Islam and Christianity has historically covered both of these reasons, which derives from their understanding of war (violence) and peace (calm).

The conflicts between Islam and Christianity were and they are still triggered not only by the differences but also by the common features, characteristics and elements. It is remarked that both Christianity and Islam as well are classified as the so-called *monotheistic religions*, that is, religion based on faith in *the one* (and only) God, the creator of man, heaven, and earth, etc. Both religions are, along with the Jewish religion (Judaism), considered to be the so-called heavenly religions, and the all heavenly religions. Abdulwahab Al-Sbenaty, translator of the Qur’an into Slovak, wrote these religions: “come from the same source [...] the one Book which is kept in heaven.”<sup>26</sup> Christianity and Islam also have a claim for universal mission and force.

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

At the beginning, it seems important to note that *monotheism* could be (and is) perceived in different forms. It has already been mentioned that Judaism, Christianity and Islam are monotheistic religions. All of these three religions believe in one God, etc. However: whereas the *Lord (Yahweh)* is God of the “chosen” (Jewish) nation in Judaism, *God* is (i.e., *God-Father* and *Allah*) God of all nations in Christianity and in Islam. Whereas God “speaks” to the people especially through the prophets, messengers (beginning with Moses and ending with Muhammad) in Judaism and in Islam, the will of God-Father is to give people (“translate”) his *son, Jesus*, who is not just a remarkable “messenger” of God, but he is *Christ*, that is, *Messiah*<sup>27</sup> (*Redeemer* and *Saviour*) in Christianity.

<sup>25</sup> Roux, *Střet náboženství*, 10.

<sup>26</sup> Therefore, all three “holy books” of these religions, that is, the Christian *Bible*, the Islamic *Qur’an* and Jewish *Torah* come from these sources (Korán, 2008, 14).

<sup>27</sup> Messianism as faith in the salvation of man, nation, respectively of all mankind through God’s chosen Messiah, that is, “Anointed” (Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ—‘māšī’ch,’ Aramaic מְשִׁיחָא—‘m’šīhō,’ Greek χριστός—‘christos’) belongs to the dominant component of the Jewish (Judaist) and Christian spirituality (see Dupkala, 2003, 7–39). In this context, Solomon wrote: “Judaism and Christianity are two common beliefs bred by common Scripture. They have a common *vocabulary* derived from the Bible, but they do not always use it in the same way. The Hebrew word *māšī’ch*

It is important to remark that according to Judaism the “real” *Messiah* “did not come,” according to Islam he will never come, because Allah “is the only one God and he is above having a son. All belongs to Him that is in the heavens and on earth”<sup>28</sup> and “only unbelievers can say: *The Messiah, son of Mary, he is definitely the God.*”<sup>29</sup> Finally, there is a request to add that while God in Islam is explicitly (or rather unspeakably) “transcendent” (*over-terrestrial, over-naturally, over-sensory, etc.*), “three-in-one,” God of the Christian religion is also “transcendent” and “immanent” (he “transcends” the world of people and he “dwells” in this world) and so on.

It has already been mentioned that Christianity and Islam are presented as religions with a universal mission (they “turn” to the whole of humanity) and so it is not surprising that they come into competitive disputes and sometimes even direct conflicts around these ambitions and claims (“global” and “universal” human force).<sup>30</sup>

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

According to it, there is, however only partial, obvious, conflict of two legal and moral value orientations that are culturally based on Christianity and Islam. On the one hand, the Christianity, which tries to “bring” the biblical commandment *Thou shalt not kill* into legislation that would prohibit the “death

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(anointed), from which the word *Messiah* is derived, belongs to this dictionary. Christians apply it in the name of *Jesus*. Jews do not do that.” (Mesiáš Solomon, “Päť modelov a ich kritika,” in *Humanistický zborník 6—Fenomén mesianizmu II*, ed. Rudolph Dupkala (Prešov: FF PU v Prešove, 2002), 6.

<sup>28</sup> Qur’an, 4:171.

<sup>29</sup> Qur’an, 5:17.

<sup>30</sup> It is necessary to stress that the right to *universal validity* of one system of values over another system results into the so-called axiological Monism and it translates into not only a broader concept of the cultural absolutism, but also into a specific form of religious fundamentalism. There is no doubt that the claim of *universal validity* was (and is) also one of the causes of conflicts between Christianity and Islam.

penalty” and, on the other hand, Islam which through *Sharia legitimizes* the “law to kill,” namely the application of “authorized revenge.” One consequence of this incommensurability of the legal and moral values of Christianity and Islam is that “there is no Muslim country which has signed the 2nd Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which expresses the will to work towards the abolition of capital punishment. The breakthrough came in Turkey in the year 2002, when the negotiations on its accession to the European Union led to passing a law abolishing the death penalty outside wartime.”<sup>31</sup>

Despite all the above factors that provoke (and cause) conflicts between the cultures and the religions, it may be stated that neither the Western and Arab culture nor Christianity and Islam are “fatally doomed” into a conflict (or even hostile) coexistence. In the history of the relations of these cultures there are already several “intrusions” and expressions of a mutually positive influence which give hope for their tolerant coexistence even today.

The extremists speak up more frequently and more loudly in the name of Islam right now and this fact should not be overestimated nor underestimated. We should be aware of it and adequately respond to it. It is important to differentiate between ordinary-believers, ideological fundamentalist, political radicals, restrained reformists, and fanatical extremists in Islam and the way these groups experience and practice it. Simply: there has to be a constant separation between Islam as a religion and Islam as an ideological and political tool in the hands of extremists. Thus, we have to distinguish an ordinary Muslim who looks for dignified life already here on earth when practising his faith, and does in respect of “eternal life,” which is *sub specie aeternitatis*. Such Muslims (not extremists) were previously able to enter into dialogue with the followers of other religions (including Christianity) and we want to believe that it is possible to continue that tradition the current (uneasy) times.

Once again, it would be naïve to expect that all incommensurate and inconsistent values will change to commensurate and consistent in the dialogue of cultures. On the other hand, it can be assumed that incommensurate and incompatible values can get to know each other and based on it they can more or less be tolerated in the dialogue of cultures.

The dialogue of cultures will fulfil its mission when representatives of different cultures and of different value systems recognize the pluralism of cultures without having to resign from their own value orientation, etc. The dialog of cultures is not (primarily) a fact when the actors have or do not have the truth,<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Luboš Kropáček, *Islam a Západ. Historická paměť a současná krize* (Praha: Vyšehrad, 2002), 98–99.

<sup>32</sup> Finally, what is or what is not true might be difficult to settle by people with contradictory value orientation, because the truth is always valid and accepted only within the system of values in which it was—as truth—formulated, taken from evidence and provided by reasons.

this is about attaining a state of mutual respect toward the right of truth and its validity within the limits of a system of values in which the actor of the dialogue is anthropologically and existentially docked. The aim of the dialogue of cultures is not and cannot “overcome” or even “cancel” ideological pluralism, which is necessary in different cultures, civilizations, and value orientations of the world. On the contrary, the objective of the dialogue is to persuade the actors to acknowledge the necessity of pluralism and the need to be tolerant toward others.

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

- full equality of all its stakeholders,
- guaranteeing and respecting the freedom of thought,
- the ability and willingness to hear the other side,
- consensus on content, respectively thematic focus of the dialogue,
- determination the common “borders of the dialogue,” namely agreement about what should not be discussed,<sup>33</sup>
- mutual help in dealing with acute existential problems,
- culturalism and fairness in the manner and style of communication,
- mutual tolerance, etc.

It seems that the power—purpose “experiments,” regardless of whether they are “experiments” with an all-planetary socialism, liberalism or any fundamentalism, do not save the human world. The human world will be probably culturally, religiously, socially, and politically differentiated and this differentiation may, due to global accretion of the so-called horizontal forms of social mobility, even intensify. Karl Mannheim has already stated that “horizontal mobility, that is, the human movement from one place to another or from one country to another, shows that different nations think differently. However, the tradition of national or local group remains intact; people strongly adhere to habitual ways of thinking, they observe in other groups that they see the curiosity, errors, and heresy. They have no doubt about the accuracy of their own traditions of thought.”<sup>34</sup>

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Therefore probably, Pilate also responded to the words of Jesus, that He, Jesus, is the truth [...] etc. by asking: “What is truth?” (Jn 18, 38).

<sup>33</sup> “The border” of the dialogue should be established with regard to the “borders” of freedom of expression. The freedom of one part of the conversation “ends” where the freedom of another begins. The part of the freedom of expression in the dialogue of cultures should be a right or obligation “to retain the word” especially if its “vote” led to the induction, to an escalation of tensions. This right or obligation, for example, refers to “eternal truths” like “Allah Akbar,” “Resurrection of Christian Messiah,” “four Buddha’s truths,” and so on. In this context we should apply the principles of Ludwig Wittgenstein, according to whom: “What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence” (Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, 29).

<sup>34</sup> Mannheim, *Ideologie a utopie. Prednášky a eseje*, in Marshall, *Global Conflict Trends* (Bratislava: Archa, 1991), 61.

The most common manifestation of the “horizontal forms of social mobility” is legal and illegal immigration. Symbolically, it can be concluded that the man—a migrant in the era of globalization—is a wandering being. Thus, a majority of people leave mainly for work and better living conditions while wandering, but there are also those who flee their homeland due to inhuman treatment, political, social, and religious discrimination, even the threat of death, starvation and so on. They leave the premises of their original ethnic, cultural, confessional, and political embeddedness. They go through various territories, countries, cultures and civilizations and they seek refuge, the so-called political asylum.

Various forms of “rights of a foreigner,” connected with such wandering of people, have been contemplated since the times of Kant (1724–1804). As Kant explains in *Perpetual Peace*, the right of a foreigner is not to be treated with hostility by others only because he entered their territory.<sup>35</sup> This right, however, should not be confused with the so-called guest’s law, but must be seen only as a “visitor’s law, which entitles all people to offer, under the law on common ownership, surface of earth, whereas the spherical surface cannot dispel forever, but finally will have to suffer along together, originally nobody has more right to be in some place than other on Earth.”<sup>36</sup>

However, the visitors’ right does not justify the one who comes to visit (i.e., guest) and simultaneously with his/her visit (which, moreover, may not be “welcome”), “obtrude” upon host his/her way of life, culture, religiosity, the value orientation, etc. The visitor’s right should be adopted in a friendly way, just to establish with the host a friendly contact, and at the same time this law requires, from the first to the last minute, respect toward the host’s value system. There is a need to remark that cultural diversity, or even conflicts of different cultures, perhaps—according to Kant—may be solved only on the basis of rational reflection and are linked with the *laws of the law’s state* “within the world-civil meaning.”<sup>37</sup>

Anyway: it is not a coincidence that *all theories are grey; the tree of life is green* (J. W. Goethe). This also applies to the so-called Kant’s theory of “world-civil law” because neither in Europe, nor anywhere in the world there are—according to Kant—current disputes and even conflicts of cultures, yet unaddressed and unresolved. Vice versa! The conflicts of cultures in several European Union countries, where around 20 million (indigenous) immigrants obtained citizenship, mainly from the Middle East and North Africa, are becoming more dangerous (aggressive). It is corroborated by the following words

<sup>35</sup> Kant, *K večnému mieru*, 35.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Peter Kyslan, “Kantovo učenie o svetoobčianskom práve a súčasnosť” in *7. kantovský vedecký zborník*, ed. L. Belás-E. Andreanský. Prešov: FF PU v Prešove, 2010; Belás, “Kultúra, dejiny a politika vo filozofickom odkaze I. Kanta,” in *Návraty ku Kantovi*, ed. Filozofická fakulta PU v Prešove, 2011.



by Sartori: “At that moment, when the community of the Third World reaches a critical staffing level, it will claim a right to their own cultural-religious identity and they will attack their putative oppressor,” that is, the original hosts.<sup>38</sup>

There is a right to a cultural identity as for the *host* and for the *guest* in the context of the ideas of the pluralism of cultures. Neither a host nor a guest has any right to inculcate his system of cultural values by the means of violence to the other. The guest (i.e., outlander, namely immigrant), must also accept the legal and political system of the host country, otherwise the so-called visitor’s right will lose, in this case, any justification. In other words, if guest’s system of value is “not compatible” with the legal and political system of the host country, then—according to Kant—“the rights of a foreigner” should be considered as inapplicable and such guest becomes a *persona non grata*.

Raymond Aron once wrote that “politics has not revealed the secret how violence can be avoided.”<sup>39</sup> It seems that this “mystery”—under certain circumstances—may be hidden between the conflicting parties in dialogue, of what the famous French humanist Jean Bodin was probably already aware when at the end of the sixteenth century, that is, in an atmosphere of religious intolerance, violence, and war, he wrote his spiritual testament—dialogue “Heptaplomeres”—also known as “The Interview of Seven Sages.” The interviewed were Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Lutheran, Calvinist, sceptic, and a representative of the so-called natural religion. The interview has taken place in a calm atmosphere, because the participants—trying to apply tolerance—looked for (and they have found) what connects (despite of all differences) them (Bodin, 2008).

In different atmosphere, about four hundred years later, the Second Vatican Council decided to promote dialogue between religions, especially in such documents as *Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et Spes*, and *Nostra Aetate*. The Declaration on the attitude of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*) mentions:

Men expect from the various religions answers to the unsolved riddles of the human condition, which today, even as in former times, deeply stir the hearts of men: What is man? What is the meaning, the aim of our life? What is moral good, what is sin? Whence suffering and what purpose does it serve? Which is the road to true happiness? What are death, judgment and retribution after death? What, finally, is that ultimate inexpressible mystery which encompasses our existence: whence do we come, and where are we going? [...]

The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones

<sup>38</sup> Giovanni Sartori, *Pluralizmus, multikulturalizmus a přistehovalci. Esej o multietnické společnosti* (Praha: Dokořán, 2005), 71.

<sup>39</sup> Raymond Aron, *L'opium des intellectuels* (Paris: Gallimard, 1955), 205.

she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. [...]

The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, [...].

Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.<sup>40</sup>

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The interview,<sup>41</sup> in which a different opinion “does not freely vibrate” is not (and cannot) be seen as a part of the dialogue of cultures. Everyone, as a being that thinks freely and responsibly, has the opportunity and obligation to be a creator and actor of that conversation, which ultimately is nothing else than his/her special and essential cultural creation and performance.

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<sup>40</sup> *Nostra Aetate*, nn. 1–3, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651028\\_nostra-aetate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html).

<sup>41</sup> At least at the edge a Slovak philosopher and litterateur—Farkašová, highlights the importance of the *interview* as the dialogic form of communication by saying: “We achieve shaping our ideas, exchange our ideas and interact with others only in an interview, we have a chance to verify the weight of our own arguments and we get to know the weight of other arguments in a conversation, we can move into our own deeper layers in an interviews, we may adjust the mirror of self-reflection, which would not exist without the presence of others,” Farkašová, “Filozofia pre nové tisícročie,” in *Filozofia ako problém*, ed. Višňovský (Bratislava, Kalligram, 2004), 229.

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Rudolf Dupkala

## Conflit ou dialogue des cultures dans le contexte des migrations contemporaines

### Résumé

L'article analyse la question de la migration et de l'immigration actuelles dans la perspective de la conception reformulée du pluralisme axiologique et celui des cultures. Cette conception est présentée comme une alternative pour le projet « anachronique » du multiculturalisme. Selon l'auteur, la vague actuelle de migration produit un double effet : d'un côté, elle contribue au rapprochement et à l'enrichissement mutuel de l'humanité et des cultures de l'homme, mais de l'autre, elle provoque l'escalade des tensions et l'explosion des conflits culturels, religieux et ceux motivés par les valeurs. Les réflexions sur les possibilités, sur les conditions et sur les limitations du dialogue entre les cultures sont l'élément principal de cet article. Dans ce contexte, l'auteur distingue les cultures qui sont pareilles et dissemblables au niveau axiologique. Une coexistence tolérante est « possible » uniquement dans les cultures ayant des valeurs comparables.

Mots clés : homme, culture, religion, valeur, conflit, dialogue

Rudolf Dupkala

## Il conflitto o il dialogo delle culture nel contesto delle migrazioni attuali

### Sommario

L'articolo analizza la questione attuale della migrazione e dell'immigrazione dalla prospettiva della concezione riformulata del pluralismo assiologico e del pluralismo delle culture. Tale concezione è presentata come alternativa al progetto "anacronistico" del multiculturalismo. Secondo l'autore l'onda attuale di migrazione consegue un duplice effetto: contribuisce ad un avvicinamento ed a un arricchimento reciproco dell'umanità e delle culture dell'uomo oppure causa un'escalation delle tensioni e un'esplosione di conflitti culturali, religiosi e motivati dai valori. Il motivo conduttore di questo studio è rappresentato dalle riflessioni sulle possibilità, sulle condizioni e sui limiti del dialogo tra le culture. In tale contesto l'autore distingue le culture che sono conformi e non conformi ai valori. La coesistenza tollerante è "possibile" soltanto nella cultura conforme ai valori.

Parole chiave: uomo, cultura, religione, valore, conflitto, dialogo