From Cultural Violence to Dialogue of Civilizations

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FROM CULTURAL VIOLENCE TO DIALOGUE OF CIVILIZATIONS: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE CONCEPTUAL TOOLBOX

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INTRODUCTION

In the mass media and diplomatic circles “clash of civilizations,” “dialogue among civilizations” and “alliance of civilizations” have been mentioned frequently without critical scrutiny. Clash of civilizations/ cultural conflicts discourse indirectly created its “other” or supposedly antidote, dialogue or alliance of civilizations. These two sets of concepts should be considered together. Concentrating the debate in world politics solely on these themes may conceal some of the more urgent political and economic problems and distinctive forms of postmodern violence. Facilitating peaceful coexistence of cultures is the main aim of the activities that may be mentioned under the title of “dialogue among civilizations”. The reverse of the peaceful coexistence of cultures and civilizations in today’s world is not civilizational conflict but more comprehensive forms of cultural violence and intolerance. As a possible answer to the deep-rooted problem of cultural violence I call attention to the dialogue as a process that would facilitate intercultural understanding.

Civilizations are more than sum total of their components. Historical, philosophical, normative and cultural features of the civilizations can not be restrained to particular time and space. Cartoon crisis, immigration policies, debates in the international organizations, terrorist activities, cultural and economic exploitation of “others”, propagating fundamentalist ideas, violation of minority rights and attributing cultural/religious stigma and stereotypes are the components of cultural/civilizational controversies in the contemporary context. Sum total of all these issues practically constitute the domain of cultural conflicts. Any attempt that defines civilizations as actors in the global realpolitics, consciously or unconsciously supports the “clash of civilizations” discourse.
It is important not to fall into the trap of propagating the idea of civilizational realpolitics\(^1\). It is equally important not to fall into the trap of considering “dialogue” and “alliance” activities as abstract notions and wishful thinking that do not have any concrete correspondence in real life. For many years among numerous intellectuals the issue of Islam-West relations have been discussed on the theological and religious terms. Describing the conflict between Islamic and Western civilizations as a theological controversy, and developing the models of dialogue according to this assumption is misrepresentative and reductionist. There is not much space for compromise in the theological debates; every discussion either widens the gap between contradictory discourses or offers some superficial commonalities that is not agreed by majority in practice. The other extreme is adopting one of the discourses as a possible unifying force and trying to construct the commonality around that worldview.

When the problems and controversies we try to deal are about cultural misunderstanding, ideological and theological differences; dialogue activities and projects may be very influential to create an environment of intercultural communication. Ranging from all levels intercultural, inter-religious and inter-civilizational dialogue projects, if operationalized properly, can be an effective way to mitigate hostilities and facilitate better understanding. But majority of the structural conflicts today are political, economic and it is ambitious to expect resolution of these problems through dialogue activities. UN secretary general’s speech at the Fourth High Level Group Meeting of the Alliance of Civilizations project, which was held in Istanbul 12-13 November 2006, also highlighted the point that the politics, not the religion is at the heart of growing Muslim-West divide.

We should start by reaffirming- and demonstrating- that the problem is not the Koran, nor the Torah or the Bible. Indeed the problem is never the faith- it is the faithful, and how they behave towards each other\(^2\).

We need to get away from stereotypes generalizations and preconceptions and take care not to let crimes committed by individuals or small groups dictate our image of an entire people, an entire region, or an entire religion\(^3\).

Some concrete steps and policies have been recommended by the final report of the High Level Group of the Alliance of Civilizations Project\(^4\). Methods and the principles of sustainable dialogue that may transform the hostile underlying relationships of conflicting cultures are emphasized in this study. Dialogue is considered as Conflict Resolution process that facilitates common understanding. Gadamer defines dialogue as a way of coming to a shared understanding.\(^5\) Shared understanding may help dissolution of conflictual frames and discourses and replace them with more constructive joint

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1 There were many criticisms to Huntington’s famous “The Clash of Civilizations” article and his later book “The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order”. Huntington has been criticized for being the propagandist of civilizational realpolitics. The aim of this study is not to contribute to the literature that either support or criticize Huntington’s thesis. I rather discuss the theoretical backgrounds of practical processes that may address the cultural conflicts at many levels. Civilizations are considered as the biggest cultural umbrellas in this study.


3 Ibid.


discourses. Our understanding of dialogue is a process of creation of common language and reaching a shared understanding. Negotiation of the political, economic and cultural differences; and making structural adjustment to create a just and peaceful environment, are further steps that can be approached after reaching a common understanding.

Who represents Islamic, Western or Chinese civilizations is an important concern. Any person or organization that claims this position will be questioned and criticized by the parties that are not included within the dialogue process. This may be the weakest point about the use of civilization as a practical category, especially when the concern is about conflict, dialogue and alliance. In any given context some people will be excluded from the process, this concern is more relevant when the scale of the dialogue immensely wide like between civilizations or religions. The parties who are against the idea use this point to delegitimize the activities that are planned under dialogue of civilizations. One possible answer to these criticisms is to design a comprehensive model of a dialogue processes that would include actors from multiplicity of levels, such as the youth dialogue, dialogue of politicians, bureaucrats, religious leaders, civil society activists and women.

Intra-civilizational dialogue processes are also another important issue that needs to be considered parallel to inter-civilizational dialogues. Cultural and civilizational categories are not essential categories that can be generalized over time and space. Controversial issues and challenges vary across the borders and different segments of societies. It is very important to include diverse voices and perspectives from same culture and civilizations, the feedback of inter and intra civilizational dialogues will corroborate or sometimes undermine each other. This is a feature of any comprehensive dialogue process.

1. Emergence of the Idea of Dialogue Among Civilizations

The idea of Dialogue among Civilizations had been discussed in the UN General Assembly meeting 1998. In 53rd meeting of the UN General Assembly, year 2001 was designated as the United Nations Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations. Iran’s reformist president Mohammed Khatami was the initiator of the idea. At the time the idea was very well received and acclaimed because of the growing discourse of “Clash of Civilizations”. UN Resolution A/56/6, which was accepted in November 21 2001 proposed a very comprehensive frame for a Dialogue among Civilizations. The main objective of the idea has been defined as follows:

Dialogue among civilizations is a process between and within civilizations, founded on inclusion, and a collective desire to learn, uncover and examine assumptions, unfold shared meaning and core values and integrate multiple perspectives through dialogue (UN).

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The initiative was an important opportunity for Iran as well. Iran’s president Mohammed Khatami, who was a prominent philosophy professor, wanted to make some constructive moves to transform the image of Iran in international community and within the Muslim World. The agenda of the dialogue included both intra and inter civilizational dimensions. It was a significant project in the sense that, it tried to create a common language for reaching a mutual understanding. For Iran the initiative was an important experience as well, with this initiative Iranian diplomacy tried to replace the revolutionary discourse of total denial with a discourse that would present Iran’s Islamic Revolution as a social process that is understandable and acceptable to western audience.

Khatami’s efforts was not effective in preventing Iran’s inclusion to the list of “rogue state” and “axis of evil”, but the idea of “Dialogue among Civilizations” stayed within the lexicon of international politics, just like the concept of “Clash of Civilizations,” which in itself should be considered as a significant step. It should be kept in mind that any activity or attempt that would contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts is possible only with the mutual will and support of the parties. Because of the changing context in international affairs after 9/11 attacks, partners of the dialogue are more willing to get into an argument rather than getting into a constructive talk.

It may be disappointing to examine the record of the practical goals that have been achieved within the frame of dialogue of civilizations. September 11 2001 Attacks, Madrid, Istanbul, Bali and London bombings shifted the hegemonic discourse in the international relations from democratization, protection of human rights and conflict prevention; to global war on terror and security. Discourse of dialogue turned into a dialectic or dualistic discourse of good vs evil; friend vs enemy; believer vs infidel; human being vs terrorist, the list can be extended.

The occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, emergence of Danish cartoon crisis, Pope Benedict XVI’s insulting comments on Islam, issue related to immigrant rights, and torture photos from Guantanamo and Abu Ghraiib prisons, reminded the traumatic memories of colonial era to many Muslims all over the world. Heightened feelings of insecurity in both sides helped the spread of hostile discourses in inter-cultural relations. It may be overgeneralization to emphasize just Islam/ West relations or political dimensions of the “Global War on Terrorism”, but it represents a significant change in the

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9 In his 1998 interview for CNN’s Christine Amanpour, Khatami made references to Tocqueville’s Democracy in America. He thought presenting Iran’s Islamic Revolution with Tocqueville’s conceptual frame would provide the common language that would enable dialogue between Islamic Iran and America (Pease, 1999, p: 82).


11 On September 30 2005, Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten published twelve editorial cartoons, most of which depicted the prophet Muhammad in a pejorative way. Derogatory cartoons created public unrest in Muslim world. Cartoon controversy recalled the legacy of Eurocentric discrimination.

12 In his lecture delivered on 12 September 2006 by Pope Benedict XVI at the University of Regensburg in Germany, said “Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached”. BBC News Article: Pope sorry for offending Muslims, last accessed September 17, 2006, BBC Article. In quotes: Muslim reaction to Pope last accessed September 17, 2006. Those comments disturbed Muslims all over world, Muslim politicians, religious leaders and registered protest against insult against Islam.

13 Especially the September 11 2001 attacks, Madrid and London bombings increased Islamophobia, xenophobia and racism in many western societies. Institutions such as UK based organization, Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR) and Vienna based The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), try to monitor and combat Islamophobia but Islamophobic discourse have been spread out very fastly due to irresponsible and discriminatory speeches of some politicians and religious elite in the US and Europe.
framing of relations. The discursive change is very important and it organizes the dimensions of relations in other domains as well.

2. FROM DIALOGUE TO ALLIANCE: SAME IDEA NEW CONCEPT

The idea of “Alliance of Civilizations” has been mentioned during the interregnum period of the post-911 world. Security issues started to dominate the agenda of international relations, this trend deteriorated relations of Islamic and Western civilizations. Suddenly the entire Muslim world turned into a battleground of the “Global War on Terrorism”. Increasing levels of xenophobia and especially Islamophobia within the western democracies created a reaction among the Muslims and the other immigrants that have been living in Western states. The issue was also considered as a challenge to the Western values by some of the moderate European leaders, because many of the bombers were their own home grown citizens. The call for an alliance was initiated by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero during the 59th General Assembly of the United Nations.

It is considered as an alliance against prejudices, misunderstandings and hatreds that had been heightened in the post 9/11 era.

The initiative is intended to respond to the need for a committed effort by the international community ... to bridge divides and overcome prejudice, misconceptions, misperceptions, and polarization, which potentially threaten world peace. The Alliance will aim to address emerging threats emanating from hostile perceptions that foment violence, and to bring about cooperation among various efforts to heal such divisions.

Events of recent years have heightened the sense of a widening gap and lack of mutual understanding between Islamic and Western societies -- an environment that has been exploited and exacerbated by extremists in all societies. The Alliance of Civilizations is intended as a coalition against such forces...

A "high-level group" of some 20 members including Iran’s former president Mohammed Khatami, former French foreign minister Hubert Vedrine, South Africa’s Archbishop Desmond Tutu tasked with creating an 'Alliance of Civilizations' had its first meeting in Palma de Mallorca, Spain. The meeting was co-chaired by Mehmet Aydin from Turkey and Spanish former UNESCO Director General Federico Mayor Zaragoza. The Report of the High-level Group was presented to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and to Prime Ministers José Luis Rodriguez Zapatero and Recep Tayyip Erdogan on 13 November 2006 at the final meeting of the High-level Group in Istanbul, Turkey.

In terms of planning and agenda setting the project of “Dialogue among Civilizations” was very well planned one, but it could not provide the expected outcomes because of the changing political context. We have to learn some lessons from the previous project in or to sustain “Alliance of Civilizations” project. Security oriented

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16 “Alliance of Civilizations urges ‘Action not talk’”, http://www.islam-online.net/ English/News/2006-02/26/article05.shtml
agenda of the post-911 era curbed the efforts that tried to create dialogue process.

“Islamic fundamentalism” was considered as the main threat to Western interests. For many politicians in US and Europe, Muslims all over the world, especially Muslim Diasporas have been considered as an enemy that should be contained, rather than possible dialogue partners. The idea of “Dialogue among Civilizations” was also associated with former Iranian president Khatami; especially American politicians were unwilling to acknowledge Iran for such a constructive agenda. “The Alliance of Civilizations” project have been proposed by two new authorities, Spanish and Turkish prime ministers within a new context in international relations. Both Turkey and Spain have been hurt by the bombings in Madrid and Istanbul. It was also part of Zapatero’s policy to distance himself from the rightist previous Prime Minister José María Aznar. Zapatero wanted to make Spain the central actor within the dialogue camp and keep Spain out of the coalition that occupied Iraq. Turkish politicians also sponsored this project with the expectation that it would contribute to Turkey’s EU accession negotiations.

Alliance concept is often used at diplomatic or military contexts. In international relations, alliance refers to a formal agreement between two or more states for mutual support in cases of war. If we examine the operational definition of the Alliance of Civilization within the mission statement we can recognize that it is a comprehensive statement that tries to prevent cultural violence.

To bridge divides and overcome prejudice, misconceptions, misperceptions, and polarization which potentially threaten world peace. The Alliance will aim to address emerging threats emanating from hostile perceptions that foment violence, and to bring about cooperation among various efforts to heal such divisions (UN). An environment that has been exploited and exacerbated by extremists in all societies. The Alliance of Civilizations is intended as a coalition against such forces, as a movement to advance mutual respect for religious beliefs and traditions, and as a reaffirmation of humankind’s increasing interdependence in all areas -- from the environment to health, from economic and social development to peace and security.

The agenda of Alliance of Civilizations project is a comprehensive one, Madrid, Istanbul, London, Bali bombings and 911 attacks; conflicts in the Middle East; growing level of cultural intolerance; and the future of Muslim population in Europe and North America has been selected as the task to be deal with. Although the agenda of the project is a comprehensive one “Alliance of Civilizations” sounds a defensive concept against a common threat. In relation to “Alliance of Civilization,” former Iranian president Khatami said "An alliance of civilizations will be meaningless without dialogue among civilizations," which is a remarkable point. The concept of alliance represents the dialectic logic rather than the dialogic perspective. Alliances can create counter-alliances, or they may be interested oriented and if the issue to be united against is removed the alliances may be meaningless. Dialogic or open-ended concepts such as collaboration,

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18 Alliance is a defensive concept, which reminds the European diplomacy in the reign of balance of powers regime. Contemporary alliances provide for combined action on the part of two or more independent states and are generally defensive in nature, obligating allies to join forces if one or more of them is attacked by another state or coalition. Although alliances may be informal, they are typically formalized by a treaty of alliance, the most critical clauses of which are those that define the casus foederis, or the circumstances under which the treaty obligates an ally to aid a fellow member. In Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved March 3, 2007, from Encyclopedia Britannica Online: http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9355043

19 UN Press Release SG/SM/10004: Secretary General Announces Launch of ‘Alliance of Civilizations’

cooperation, partnership may be used for developing relationships beyond the constrains of particularistic objectives. In addition to the points related to Middle East conflicts, terrorism and cultural discrimination; High Level Group Report have important items related to education, media, youth and migration21.

3. UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE OF CULTURAL VIOLENCE22

Johan Galtung’s analytical categorization of violence23 is useful for the purpose of deeper analysis of the issues related to violence at different levels. He differentiates the analytical layers of violence into three, on the tip of the iceberg stands the direct violence, which is visible form of violence but it, stands on the layers of structural and cultural violence.24 It is more difficult to discuss and bring practical protections against deep-rooted forms of cultural violence. International institutions are not prepared to understand and deal with the cultural forms of violence. If there is a challenge called a clash of civilizations it will not be experienced like civilizations as macro structures getting into an actual physical fights.

Civilizations may not be seen actors interacting as categories with clear boundaries. Boundaries of the civilizations have been drawn culturally and historically25. Civilizations will not get into discussion, debate or fight as homogenous units. Clash of civilizations or cultures will be the cumulative record of conflicts that may be experienced at the religious and symbolic dimensions. Boundaries of the civilizations are characterized by the common symbolic, cultural repertoire and shared historical experiences. Danish cartoon controversy, Salman Rushdi Affair, immigrant protests in Paris Suburbs, controversies on citizenship tests in Germany can be considered as the dimensions of a civilizational conflict. There are cultural, religious, economic, social and political dimensions of these

22 A more detailed discussion of the cultural violence have been mentioned in a previous study by Talha Köse, & Nuh Yılmaz.(2007). Evrensel insan hakları söylemi ve şiddet sorunları. İnsan Hakları Araştırmaları (İnsan Haklarında yeni Araşttarlar Sempozyum Özel Sayısı), 4 (8).
23 Manifest and Latent violence differentiation have also been used to in defining dimensions of conflicts among civilizations (M. Tehranian, & D. W. Campell,eds, (2002) Dialogue of Civilizations: A New Peace Agenda for a New Millemium, London: I.B. Tauris Publishers). Manifest violence is defines as the all kinds of direct physical violence exercised by state or non-state actors. Latent violence is defined as the routinized and institutionalized repressive factors that produce a resentful angry and violence prone society. In this definition of latent violence is close to the structural violence that has been described by Galtung. Latent violence is being institutionalized by the growing gaps between the rich and poor within and among nations that globalization generated in recent decades (Dialogue of Civilizations, xxi). I think the concept of cultural violence is a more important concern that needs to be worked on especially in relation to the issues of cultural discrimination in a broader macro agenda.
25 There is a debate over the boundaries of civilizations. In this study I adopt Toynbee’s approach, according which civilizations are human collectivities each possessing a culture shared by its members, with bounded locations in space and time. David Wilkinson discusses Toynbee’s treatment of civilizations as networks of relations. Toynbee adopts the society metaphor to define the network; "society is the total network of relations between human beings"; a civilization is a species of society, a network of relations of a distinct nature and pattern; and the network of external relations linking coexistent civilizations with each other is significantly more tenuous than the network of internal relations between the participants in any one of them (Op cit.Toynbee, 1961:81, 280, 286). For the details of the discussion and comprehensive analysis of network model of civilizations David Wilkinson, http://cse.ucdavis.edu/~cmg/netdyn/Wilkinson.pdf, Civilizations as Networks: Trade, War, Diplomacy, and Command-Control States-systems Bonded by Influence, Alliance, and War Relations (2003)
controversies but overall the sum of all these controversies and many others transcend the boundaries of modern social and political institutions.

The rapid process of globalization in some parts of the world has accelerated human mobility and communication, cultural differences and also the intolerance to these differences came to forefront of the world agenda. The population mobility and information exchange is fast and in the contexts where the experience of cultural coexistence is inadequate the boundaries of the hegemonic culture is protected by intolerance to cultural aliens. Cultural violence against the cultural aliens is used as a tool to protect the boundaries of floating cultures. It is not easy to understand and prevent these post-conventional threats with the legal instruments. Cultural violence had been easily identifiable during the colonial era but with the increasing levels of cultural interactions and human mobility, hybrid cultures and human identities have emerged like the Muslims, Indians, Hispanics and Chinese in Europe and North America. Rather than “clash of civilizations” I prefer to use the concept of “cultural violence”. Clash of civilizations imply political and economic and strategic contradictions and conceptualize civilizations as actors with clear boundaries and political interests like nation states.

Cultural violence does not have spatio-temporal boundaries but it is a significant challenge. I consider cultural violence as the other of intercultural and civilizational dialogue. Cultural violence operates much faster and effective than ever, with the instruments of mass media and communication. A discriminatory provocation such as the controversial Danish Cartoons may have a very fast impact all over the world and responses to cultural violence may lead direct violence in different parts of world like Afghanistan, Pakistan and Indonesia. Cultural and structural violence may not be challenged by direct violence. That’s why dialogue is an important idea with a practical potential. Before getting into the question of how to replace the growing tendency of cultural violence with a genuine dialogue of civilizations? I will explicate the issue of violence.

Galtung defines cultural violence as the aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of human being’s existence- that is exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical and formal science that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence. Cultural violence is invisible, but it has a clear intent to harm, even kill, indirectly, through words and images. This is the violence of the intellectuals, journalists, priests and the militarist ideology. Stars, crosses, swastikas and crescents; flags and anthems and military parades; the ubiquitous portraits of the leaders; inflammatory speeches, posters, cartoons and discourses of hatred may be the tools of cultural violence. Cultural violence defines certain acts of violence as good or acceptable, similarly it may also be used in order to legitimize certain forms of exploitations and unjust social and political practices.

Direct violence is just a visible symptom of a deeper level of violence that reproduces the ideological and structural backgrounds of cultural and civilizational controversies. I think it is crucial for the states and international institutions that are members of all civilizations to take the challenge of cultural violence seriously and try to constrain it. Unlike the conventional security issues cultural violence and discrimination can not be resolved at the elite level or by political and intellectual elites. There is a necessity for a comprehensive process of sustained dialogue that would encompass all layers of societies.

Political Philosopher Beatrice Hanssen claims that violence today while coercive is not physical but insidious.\(^{27}\) Category of violence is not always manifest or visible. The more graphic representation of violence in our mediatized culture has been enacted through enunciatory and discursive practices.\(^{28}\) Poststructuralists argue that freedom, discrimination and violence can be reproduced with same instruments: discourses, speech acts and performative practices of violence. *Cultural violence and discrimination should be considered as a serious matter of collective security and it can only be handled by a collective will.*

### 1. Dialectic Legacy and the Dialogic Possibilities

Twentieth century Western political philosophy had a special emphasis on the subject of ethics of the other. From Husserl’s phenomenological conception of the alter ego, Buber’s dialogical philosophy of I and Thou, and Levinas’s asymmetric other, to Lacanian psychoanalysis and deconstruction the issue has been discussed.\(^{29}\) The approach to deal with the “cultural other” without recognizing its authentic characteristics cannot be considered as sincere recognition. We are in a stage in which there’s an increased belief that modernization and westernization is not the inevitable path in Human history. But the other cultures and civilizations have not yet been recognized and taken as the partners of a genuine dialogue. Especially in international affairs dominant political discourse insisted upon the universal validity of its claims. In other words, the belief in the Eurocentric worldview and notion of world order has been challenged, but not yet been replaced by a more multi-cultural and multi-civilizational one.

Postmodern and poststructuralists based their epistemology and ontology on the criticism of object, subject differentiation. According to S. Sayyid the constitution of the West depends on the institution of the West/Non-West dyad. Thus any attempt to locate peers for the West necessitates the acceptance of the West/Non-West dyad as precondition to any ‘inter-civilisational’ dialogic possibility.\(^{30}\) Same motion may be relevant for other cultures and civilizations as well. One of the reasons why cultural violence and intolerance is being spread so fast is that, as the cultures and civilizations interact more and come closer because of communication revolution and globalization, cultures and civilizations need to construct new differences to protect their boundaries. This is a paradoxical situation because increased communication and interaction has not opened the channels for a genuine dialogical communication and interaction.

Having a meaningful conversation within the contemporary world order requires the recognition of the plurality of civilizations. According to S. Said, the attempts to create a vocabulary or a universal language that would enable such conversations to take place is crucial for such a conversation.\(^{31}\) This universal language may be meaningful if it is co-created by the all the parties that take place in the conversation. A language that is based

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\(^{28}\) Ibid. P.174.


on a particular normative background (communitarian) or on the bases of exchange of interests (market civilization) will not create a ground for a dialogic interaction.

European diplomatic practice and discourse until the declarations of Wilson Principles, was one of the most obvious examples of dualistic legacies, which was based on West/Non-West distinction. Kishore Mahbubani also makes the similar point and emphasizes that the West and the “International Community” are used as synonym. Civilization was not considered as the common feature of Western and non-Western cultures. Within the colonial discourse civilization was considered as the property of the West and the various antinomies of civilization were considered to be characteristics of the Rest. In the family of civilized nations, which was composed of European nations, the main point of international political and legal order was to respect for the equality and independent sovereignty of individual states or nations. According to Keene the ultimate purpose of this perspective was to promote the toleration of cultural and political differences between civilized peoples so as to allow them to live together in peace. Outside the family of civilized nations, other forms of international political organization and different legal rules were pursued. The discourse and the practice were to promote the civilization of decadent, backward, savage or barbaric peoples.

The European order of toleration was predicated on the principle that states should respect each other’s territorial sovereignty, and hence their equality and independence. By contrast, the extra-European order was based on the principle that sovereignty should be divided across national and territorial boundaries, creating hierarchical institutions through which colonial and imperial powers transmitted the supposed benefits to their civilization to the rest of the world.

The instrumental use of the concept of civilization helped the drawing of the border between two patterns of modern international order. Keene argued that the vision of a bifurcated world was fully developed by the middle of the nineteenth century, international legal texts from that period widely accepted distinction between the family of civilized nations and the backward or uncivilized world beyond. Nowadays the discourses of democratization and human rights have been considered as a general frame for constructing a common vision. These concepts have been the idioms of liberal political theory and have been debated by the intellectuals all over the world. The main controversy is not about the Eurocentric origins of the concepts but on the political and pragmatic use of these concepts by the Westerner politicians and activists to intervene internal affairs of other cultures. For example, Tsutsumibayashi argues that these concepts have been resisted because of the patronizing attitudes of the Western advocates.

32 Edward Keene, Beyond the Anarchical Society; Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics, Cambridge University Press, 2002.
35 Ibid.
36 Edward Keene, Beyond the Anarchical Society; Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics, Cambridge University Press, 2002.
37 Ibid.
38 I consider political and instrumental use of the “human rights discourse” and “democratization discourses” different than, human rights and democratization issues itself. For a detailed discussion of the issue, Talha Köse, Nuh Yılmaz, Critique of Liberal Human Rights, paper presented in International Symposium New Perspectives for Human Rights May 27-29, Istanbul.
The controversy surrounding the tensions between Asian values and western human rights values, conflicts seem to arise not from disagreements over the specific contents of human rights but from the gut reaction on the part of the Asian proponents of Asian values against what they see as patronizing attitudes of the Western advocates of HR policies.  

Structural, legal and political problems and inequalities have been shaped within centuries and they cannot be analyzed and tackled at the individual and group levels. Doing so ignores the baggage of historical controversies, colonial background and comprehensive critique of oppression and structural discrepancies. My understanding in general terms is the lack of dialogic spaces and visions for the interaction of different cultures and civilizations. The differences between cultures and civilizations have been presented as essential and irreconcilable and there were no means to approach a dialogic sphere of interaction. My emphasis on the establishment of the European diplomacy was just an illustrative example of this. In fact from the Western tradition of thought there are available models to co-create a common language for better understanding and dialogue.

5. Possibilities of Dialogue as a Conflict Resolution Process

Dialogue is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn. Conversations, talks or other forms of verbal interactions does not necessarily ensure a dialogue, in some cases conversation may not even involve dialogue. Unlike negotiation, which requires parties who are ready to try to reach agreement on some problems and issues, dialogue systematically puts substantial issues and problems a second item on the agenda and focuses on the underlying relationships that causes these problems. The differing premise of a dialogue process is that serious problems are unlikely to be resolved in the long term by practical agreements—that they will be resolved only as deeply conflictual relationships are transformed.

New human and political capacities to solve problems are expected from dialogue. In a deep rooted and complicated issues like the Islam, West relations or Asia, Europe relations, there is a need for a substantial change in hostile relationships of the conflicting parties. Negotiations and other political deals are not sufficient means to reconstruct traumatic relationships of past at broader social levels. Dialogue is primarily directed toward increased understanding and trust among participants with some eventual positive effects on public opinion, rather than creation of alternative solutions to the list of conflicts at the policy levels. It is not mediation; mediation is usually asked to help participants reach a specific agreement about one defined problem or complex set of problems.

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42 Martin Buber classified dialogue into three: genuine dialogue, technical dialogue and monologue. Only genuine dialogue is a dialogic dialogue.
43 Ibid.
Dialogue process is not issue or problem oriented. Dialogue is relationship oriented and dialogue is not alternative to other forms of relationships such as agreements, alliances, problem solving workshops, and mediation. Dialogue may make eventual contributions to success of other forms of political, economic and cultural interactions as well, but we should not expect dialogue process to bring substantive solutions. It is expected that in dialogue party’s minds open to absorb new views, enlarge perspectives, rethink assumptions and modify judgments. Agreements, negotiations and even alliances can be done within the background of a dialogue process.

Dialogue is more than simple exchange of ideas; it is a genuine openness of each to the concerns of the other. According to philosopher Martin Buber, dialogue is a way of being which requires participants to reveal to others their deepest interests, hopes and fears. Dialogue sometimes requires a participant to give up important human defenses that define her or his own identity as it contrasts to the identity of other. Since identities, cultural, religious values and interests are involved in the relationships of the actors that are supposed to represent civilizations, it seems hard to change the relationships without a genuine dialogue.

In the practical domain dialogue processes may be conducted at multiplicity of parallel levels. Dialogue is neither a top-down, nor a bottom up approach; it is rather an aggregate of multiplicity of activities, unless it is specified among a particular group of people. In that sense when the dialogue processes are evaluated there should not be unrealistic expectations. Dialogue among religious leaders, artists or youth may have a limited direct impact at the political sphere. Critical issues, contradictions, and possible constructive vocabulary in each domain may be different. For example an academic dialogue among historians and philosophers of different cultures and civilizations may create a common vocabulary out of their debates but the same vocabulary may be futile among businessmen. A comprehensive dialogue process may be conducted among, political leaders; religious or community leaders; academicians, scholars; among youth; representatives of civil society organizations and ordinary citizens. An effective dialogue process should include as diverse layers of societies as possible. If it is conducted just at the political and elite level it will not make the expected impact and contribution. Expected positive outcomes of the dialogue processes may be long term.

6. DIALOGUE BY DIALOGIC MEANS

Object-subject differentiation is one of the central assumptions of modern social sciences. Dialogue recognizes differences and never seeks for simple agreement or unanimity. Dialectic, in contrast, begins with the categories of “the same” and “the other”, but excludes the reality “the between”. Controversial outcomes of the dualistic and dialectic legacy have been indicated earlier, in this section, possibilities of dialogic perspectives that may provide some theoretical guidelines to replace dualistic or dialectic

45 For many years dialogue processes and problem solving workshops have been conducted among the intellectuals, journalists, religious leaders, politicians and young people that experience Palestine-Israeli Conflict, Balkan Conflicts, Cyprus, Northern Ireland and Tajikistan conflicts. In many cases these workshops and dialogue processes had not brought concrete outcomes yet created a common space and opened new channels for better communication and understanding.


approaches in inter-civilizations relations is elaborated. The main discussion is about philosophical assumptions of dialogue with special references to Habermas, Buber and Gadamer. This is not because of a particular bias but because of the limitations and the scope of the paper. Because the parties in conflict play incommensurable language games, finding a common language is vital for conflict resolution.\textsuperscript{49} Dialogic approaches in Conflict resolution has been discussed in few studies.\textsuperscript{50,51} Concepts such as Gadamer’s “fusion of horizons,” Charles Taylor’s “politics of recognition”, Habemas’s “communicative action” and “discourse theory of democracy”, Martin Buber’s dialogic philosophy of “I Thou”, Bakhtin’s “dialogic philosophy” provides philosophical background for the dialogue of civilizations.

According to Gadamer understanding is grounded in the interpreter’s background and identity, therefore dialogue is an interpretive process, which involves interpretation of both self and other.\textsuperscript{52} Gadamer’s notion of understanding is, placing of oneself within a process of tradition, and in dialogue it has the characteristic of sharing between two or more people.\textsuperscript{53} Dialogical conflict resolution at both interpersonal and inter-group level have been associated with the Gadamerian concept of “fusion of horizons”.\textsuperscript{54} The aim is to reach an understanding through a dialogical exchange of views via mutual translation into a common language. Within the Hermeneutical-dialogical perspective\textsuperscript{55}, the aim of intergroup dialogue of this kind is to understand both others and ourselves interactively. Gadamer’s approach has the expectation of emergence of a common moral world between divergent traditions as an outcome of a sustained dialogue. Gadamer and Gadamerians think that intercultural dialogue could foster mutual understanding and ethics of communication.

Expectation of a common moral ground is too idealistic vision, especially if the power relationship plays a significant role in determining relations of potential dialogue partners. Powerful parties may just prefer to state their views or to define the language of communication rather than creating a dialogue. This is a significant challenge and limitation for the other dialogue theories as well.

**Buber and Dialogue**

According to Buber, dialogue is the meeting between I and Thou. The meaning of this dialogue is found in neither one nor the other of the partners, nor in both taken together, but in their interchange.\textsuperscript{56} I-Thou relation is a direct knowing that gives one


\textsuperscript{50} Benjamin Broome, “Managing Differences in Conflict Resolution: The Role of Relational Empathy”, *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and Application*, Dennis Sandole and Hugo van der Merwe (eds.), Manchester&New York: Manchester University Press, 1993, p. 97-111.


\textsuperscript{53} Ibid. p: 258


neither knowledge about the Thou over against the I, nor about oneself as an objective entity apart from that relationship. In Buber’s words I-Thou is the genuinely reciprocal meeting in the fullness of life between one active existence and another.57

He who lives the life of dialogue knows a lived unity: the unity of life, as that which once truly won is no more torn by any changes, not ripped asunder into the everyday creaturely life and the ‘deified’ exalted hours; the unity of unbroken, raptureless perseverance in concreteness, in which the word is heard and a stammering answer dared.58 Buber realized that human existence is determined by two fundamentally different kinds of relations: “I-It relations and I-Thou relations. It is characteristic for I-Thou relations that only in them real encounter happens when all is left behind, all preconceptions, all reservedness is given up, when one fully engages in the encounter with the other and carries on a real dialogue with him”.59 He than extended the scope of his thought about “I and Thou” relationships from relationship of man and God to other spheres such as man and man relationships, and man and nature relationships.

According to Buber, treating others only as objects as means to an end, and living such that all is treated as an object (in extreme cases, even one’s self is considered an object - an It) is a empty and confusing existence. If we see the world only through our experiences, then we will miss much of that.60 Buber argues that the real determinant of the primary word in which a man takes his stand is not the object, which is over against him but the way in which he relates himself to that object. I-Thou is the primary word of relationship. Thou, of I-Thou is not limited to men but it may also include animals, trees, objects of nature, and God. Buber presents I and Thou relationship as a pure, direct and wholistic relationship, he says that between I and Thou there is no terminology, no preconception and no imagination, and memory itself changes, since it plunges from singularity into the whole. Between I and Thou there is no purpose, no greed and no anticipation; and longing itself changes, since it plunges from dream into appearance. All means are impediment. Only where all means fall to pieces, real encounter happens.61

Buber says that there is no static relationship between I and Thou, it is a dynamic dialogical relationship. Man can live continuously and securely in the world of It, since it is a static and one sided relation, but can not live in the Thou without a change.62

i. Abstract and mutual experience of inclusion: two men different in nature and outlook and calling, each is aware of the other’s full legitimacy, insignia and meaning.63 Truth of recognition and acknowledgment belongs to this category.

ii. Concrete but one-sided experience of inclusion: relation of education. Means affect a person through the medium of another person. Influencing of the lives of others with one’s own life. However intense the mutuality of giving and taking with which he is bound to his pupil inclusion can not be mutual.

iii. Concrete and mutual experience of inclusion: friendship, which is Inclusion of one another by human souls.

References:
In each three models there is a genuine experience of inclusion. Rather than constructing categories like self/other, enemy/ally; and constituting these categories through certain exclusionary social processes, dialogic relationships offer certain inclusive and integrative social processes. Dialogic relationships are different from empathy, because in empathy a person puts himself in other’s place, he tries to subjectify other in his personality. In empathy these is still an object-subject relationship, one side tries to understand other with other’s lenses. Whereas in dialogic relationship there is a process of building I and Thou relationship and experiencing the relationship, there is no need for constructing categories such as self and other. Only the relationship is considered as real not the categories that interact during the relational process.

Conflict of worldviews (weltanschauung) are usually considered as the hardest conflicts to be intervened, because too may absolute beliefs and values are involved in such situations. Buber offers the genuine dialogue as a mean to deal most essential conflicts such as religious conflicts. A time of genuine religious conversation where none regarded and addressed his partner in reality, but genuine dialogues, speech from certainty to certainty, but also from one open hearted person to another open-hearted person. Dialogue does not try to change or manipulate the absolute beliefs of man, it rather tries to change the relational context in which these absolutes are interacted. Buber differentiates various forms of dialogues, but real I and Thou relationship is experienced in genuine dialogue.

**Genuine dialogue:** no matter whether spoken or silent- where each of the participants really has in mind the other or others in their present and particular being and turns to them with the intention of establishing living mutual relation between himself and them. Genuine conversation is most often found in the dialogue between two persons, but it also occurs occasionally in a dialogue of several voices. Each must be ready to share with the others, and no one who really takes part can know in advance that he will not have something to say. Buber’s definition of genuine dialogue resembles to Habermas’ notion of ideal speech situation.

**Technical dialogue:** which is prompted solely by the need of objective understanding. There are certain conceptual and categorical common grounds through which the dialogue is sustained, therefore technical dialogue has its limitations. Operational conduct and ground rules, tries to shape the relationships of participants of dialogue. Dialogue workshops in Conflict Resolution field are usually conducted according to procedures of a technical dialogue, rather than a genuine dialogue.

**Monologue:** Two or more men, speak each with himself in strangely tortuous and circuitous ways and yet imagine they have escaped the torment of being thrown back their own resources. He who lives monologue is never aware of the other as something that absolutely not himself and at the same time something with which he nevertheless communicates. Communication is not possible without reciprocity and sharing certain things. Being, lived in dialogue, receives even in a sense of reciprocity; being, lived in monologue, will not, grope out over the outlines of the self. There may be parallel monologues that have no connection and interaction at all. Overall monologue is a form of I-It. Sustaining such a form of relation is condemned by Buber, for example related to the realm of love he said that:

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66 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
Dialogic is not to be identified with love. But love without dialogic, without real outgoing to the other, reaching to the other, and companying with the other, the love remaining with itself- this is called Lucifer. 69

7. HABERMAS’ COMMUNICATIVE RATIONALITY AND THE DISCOURSE THEORY OF DEMOCRACY

In one of his latest books “The Inclusion of Other”, Habermas elaborates and supports his notion of “discourse theory of democracy”. With its proceduralist orientation, the discourse theory places the whole weight of political legitimation on informal and legally institutionalized procedures of opinion and will formation. 70 Habermas argues that the legitimacy of legal norms is a function of the formal procedures of political deliberation and decision making which support the presumption that their outcomes are rational. Discourse theory of democracy can be considered as an institutionally reframed version of the process of communicative action.

I proceed on the assumption that the participants do not wish to resolve their conflicts through violence, or even compromise, but through communication. Thus their initial impulse is to engage in deliberation and work out a shared ethical self-understanding on a secular basis. 71

He than presents the discourse theory of democracy as a “better” alternative to liberal and republican notions of democracy. According to the liberal view democratic process takes place exclusively in the form of compromises between competing interests. Fairness is supposed to be guaranteed by rules of compromise formation that regulate the general and equal right to vote, the representative composition of parliamentary bodies, their order of business, and so on. 72 Democratic process accomplishes the task of mobilizing the state in the interest of society. The state is conceived as an apparatus of public administration, and society is understood as a system of market-structured interactions of private persons. There is a purely instrumental and goal oriented notion of political process and state is considered as an instrumental tool.

On the other hand, according the republican view, democratic will formation is supposed to take the form of an ethical discourse of self-understanding. In republican notion deliberation can rely for its content on a culturally established background moral consensus of the citizens. Political process constitutes the medium in which the members of quasi-natural solitary communities become aware of their dependence on one another and, acting with full deliberation as citizens, further shape and develop existing relations of reciprocal recognition into an association of free and consociates under law. 73 Republican view is normative oriented and state is considered as more than an instrument for distribution of interest.

72 Ibid, p:246
73 Ibid, p: 240
Discourse theory takes the elements from both sides and integrates them into the concept of an **ideal procedure for deliberation and decision-making.** Rather than self-interest and moral consensus this approach weaves together negotiations and discourses of self-understanding and of justice. This democratic procedure grounds the presumption that under such conditions reasonable or fair results are obtained.\(^{74}\) Discourse theory works with higher level intersubjectivity of communication process that unfolds in the institutionalized deliberations in parliamentary bodies, on the one hand, and in the informal networks of public sphere, on the other. Public sphere and the civil society are the domains through which political will-formation takes place by a process of open discussion.

Habermas’s discourse theory of democracy may be an ideal kind of macro level Conflict Resolution process model. It is neither purely instrumentally oriented nor purely normatively oriented; rather it is a kind of integrative and deliberative consent formation process. The major constrain of Habermas’s notion of discourse theory is its difficulty of its applicability in intercultural/intercivilizational context. The processes of opinion and will formation may take place very differently at different cultural contexts. Public sphere and civil society have Eurocentric roots, though they may have correspondents at different political and social settings.

**Communicative action** aims at achieving understanding, which Habermas takes to be the inherent telos of human speech.\(^{75}\) The key to what Habermas means by communicative action is his special use of the term *understanding.* Reaching understanding is considered to be a process of reaching agreement among speaking and acting subjects.\(^{76}\) In communicative action, human beings are not objects to be used to further predefined goals; instead goals are mutually agreed upon through a process of communication that recognizes the autonomous humanity of all persons involved. Social action is the very process through which understanding is achieved also generates cooperative goals and agreements. Communicative action offers a form of rationality that escapes the spell of instrumental reason and provides a definition of non-pathological communication upon the basis of which social crises can be diagnosed as pathologies.\(^{77}\)

Habermas argues that for normal communication, participants must be able to take a stand based only on the rationality of the argument; and second, there must be reciprocity predicated on the mutual recognition of all competent subjects.\(^{78}\) He than mentions the basic conditions of ideal speech situation:

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\(^{74}\) Ibid. p.246.


All potential participants to a discourse must have the same chance to employ communicative speech acts so that at all times they may open discourse, as well as perpetuate it through address and reply, question and answer.

All participants in a discourse must have the same chance to put forward interpretations, assertions, recommendations, explanations and justifications, and problematize their validity claim, to establish or reject it, so that no preconceived opinion escapes discussion or criticism for any length of time.

The discourse allows only for speakers that have an even chance as active subjects to employ regulative speech acts, that is, to command and to resist, to allow and to forbid, to make and retract a promise, to account for something and to owe an explanation. Only complete reciprocity of behavioral expectations that exclude privileges in the sense of one sided bindling behavioral and evaluative norms can guarantee that the formal even distribution of chances to open and continue and address can actually be used to suspend the constraints of reality and move to the area of communication that is free from experience and the burden of action. The difference between strategic action and communicative action is not that one is goal oriented and other is not. Both forms involve coordinating action to achieve predetermined objectives. The difference lies in the distinct relation between the goal pursued and the language used.

According to Habermas, communicative action is an inclusive, consensual decision-making process, which integrates interests as well as lifeworlds of participants through unconstrained social interaction. Whereas strategic action is a goal oriented (teleological) action. Language and communication are only instrumental means in the notion of goal-oriented action and they do not embody any kind of integrative understanding, and decision-making process. In Habermas’s work, social theory as a critical theory of modernity and philosophy as the theory of rationality are dependent on one another. The concept of “communicative rationality” is the middle term, and the concept is intended to link a theory of rationality and social theory in a way that a social life context that is tailored to the paradoxes of modernity. A theory of communicative action places understanding in language, as the medium of coordinating action at the focal point of interest.

In his theory of action, Habermas puts an emphasis on the communicative processes, common language and linguistic interaction, rather than on human nature, rationalistic human agencies or structures of social action. Unlike structuralist and functionalist approaches, which put a great deal of emphasis on social/material structures and the determinants of human action; or unlike agency oriented rational action approaches that define agents as goal oriented actors, he conceptualizes a communicative and intersubjective process of social action. His ideal definitions of human actions are always process oriented. According to Habermas, main processes of emancipatory social action are: processes of communication, processes of political participation, processes of

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82 Rationalism in terms of goal oriented, utility maximizing agencies (teleological rationality), not Habermas’s revised version of communicative rationality.
discussion and processes of opinion and will formation. Rather than oppressive systemic and structural instruments such as money and power, which also serve for the sustenance and maintenance of structures of modern capitalist societies, language serves as a constructive instrument of mutual understanding and collective will formation in the process of communicative interaction.

Rather than putting the emphasis on the resources and goals of agencies, or the normative and structural dynamics of the system; communicative action and communicative rationality puts the emphasis on the inclusive processes of intersubjective mutual understanding and “problem solving”. Language and the communicative rationality are not only the intermediary instruments within this communicative process, but they are also constructive elements of lifeworld and system as well. His notions of discourse theory and procedural democracy are closely related to communicative rationality. Habermas claims that legitimacy of political authority can only be secured through broad popular participation in political deliberation and decision-making or, more succinctly, that there is internal relation between rule of law and popular sovereignty.\(^\text{83}\)

Forms of argumentation and reasoned justification in practical discourse provide the normative validity of discourse theory of democracy. Everything depends on the conditions of communication and the procedures that lend the institutionalized opinion and will-formation their legitimating force.

Rational acceptability of a statement rests on reason in conjunction with specific features of the process of argumentation. He defines the four most important features of argumentation process as follows: i) nobody who could make a relevant contribution may be excluded; ii) all participants are granted an equal opportunity to make contributions; iii) participants must mean what they say; iv) communication must be free from external and internal coercion so that yes or no stances that participants adopt on criticizable validity claims are motivated solely by rational force of better reason.\(^\text{84}\)

With his discourse theory of democracy Habermas tries to shift the domain of politics from individual or state to public sphere and civil society, and the legitimation basis of politics from interest aggregation or common norms to the process of opinion and will-formation. One of the major controversial assumptions of Habermas’ theory is the difficulty of the creating a space for ideal speech situation at inter-cultural settings. Power asymmetries or structural inequalities in political, economic and cultural spheres obstruct proper communication and understanding. Yet if the communicative rationality replaces the pathologic forms of interactions in intercultural settings, it may create an enormous potential for mutual understanding and problem solving. In inter-national and inter-cultural contexts the parties that benefit from the asymmetries and structural inequalities may challenge Habermas’ vision. Reaching the model of ideal speech situation and a democratic system in international/ inter-cultural contexts may be a non-violent revolution that may prevent cultural violence. This transformation necessitates the goodwill and the hard work of many actors. Alliance of Civilizations, Dialogue of Civilizations projects and other inter-cultural projects may be considered as steps towards reaching these goals.

Martin Buber’s notion of I and Thou is traditional and transcendental idea, which may even be considered as a spiritual tie. Buber’s ideas offer more of an abstract ideal


guideline to engage with other. Whereas Habermas calls for modern/ secular vision of opinion and will formation and conflict resolution processes, which may be offer more concrete practical principles. Habermas’ ideas may be institutionalized at political and social contexts.

CONCLUSION

Cultural, religious problems and conflicts in the contemporary world cannot be explained and tackled with the growing discourse of clash of civilizations. The concept of cultural violence provides better analytic instruments for understanding of the cultural controversies at many different levels. Sum total of all problems such as cartoon crisis, immigration policies, debates in the international organizations, terrorist activities, cultural and economic exploitation of “others”, propagating fundamentalist ideas, violation of minority rights and attributing cultural/religious stigma and stereotypes are the components of cultural violence in the contemporary context.

Cultural violence should be taken as a comprehensive threat to collective security and should be tackled with the cooperation of world politicians, intellectuals and leaders. These problems cannot be resolved through conventional conflict resolution processes. Unlike the conventional security issues cultural violence and discrimination cannot be resolved at the elite level or by political and intellectual elites. Therefore there is a necessity for a comprehensive process of sustained dialogue that would encompass all layers of societies.

In modern international system predominant way to relate with the cultural others was shaped dialectically since the establishment of European diplomatic order and colonial system. This dialectic legacy has been transformed into a sophisticated form of postmodern violence with the new discursive and practical instruments of media and communication, socio-cultural practices. There is a rich ground for a dialogic understanding and philosophy within the Western tradition of thinking. I just referred the Gadamer’s hermeneutic legacy; Habermas’s discourse theory of democracy and communicative rationality; and Buber’s dialogic philosophy in this study. I think this dialogic philosophy within western thought is an important resource that may philosophically and practically support practical dialogue activities that is exemplified with the two recent projects “Dialogue among Civilizations” and “Alliance of Civilizations”.

Structural inequalities and power asymmetries are obstacles to dialogic dialogue. In order to have a meaningful inter-cultural exchange among the participants of dialogue projects, neutral and democratic spaces or forums are necessary. “Dialogue among Civilizations” and “Alliance of Civilizations” are important forums that may help emergence of a common language for intercultural understanding.