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"Intercultural Dialogue" as it developed in the Security Council of the United Nations (2000 - 2012)

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This research programme focuses on a range of issues, theoretical and practical, related to cultural diversity and difference. Migration and media are twin facets of globalization, the one demographic, with crucial spatio-temporal consequences, and the other cultural and technological. While migration often poses the question of cultural difference, diverse forms of media play a key role in enabling representation, thus forging modes of communication. Through a focus on the role of media, this research programme explores the extent to which the latter bridges cultural differences in contexts of migration and facilitates intercultural dialogue. Of interest too are the ways in which media can mobilize societies and cultures. Also relevant is the role of media in triggering migration, as well as in connecting migrants to their homelands.

"Intercultural Dialogue" as it developed in the Security Council of the United Nations (2000 - 2012)

Summary

This report presents the results of both discourse and contents analyses of 75 Security Council documents in which the concept of "Intercultural Dialogue" appeared. The decision to examine the SC documents was driven by how the concept of intercultural dialogue developed in the UN context. This report analyzes the concept of "Intercultural dialogue" (ICD) as it developed within the United Nations (UN) Official Documents since 2000, and particularly within those produced by the Security Council (SC). From this analysis, we would recommend carefully taking into account the different positions that have emerged, within both the European and other contexts, such as Latin America, Africa, China, Russia, and the US. In fact, those differences, which can appear to be merely different formulations of the same concept, instead brought with them different interpretations of the very problematic: that is to say, where the roots of the inter-cultural "clash" lies.

Preliminary analysis

A preliminary content analysis of the official documents produced by all the different entities of the UN[1] exposes the usage of this concept and its relations with other core notions. This content analysis shows that this issue is mostly connected with the following issues: security (74%); racism (51%); inter-religion and interfaith issues (59%), as table 1 shows.

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[1]   This report presents the findings of analyses done on the UN Official Documents available on the UN website: <http://documents.un.org> (Last accessed on Monday, 15 April 2013).

Table 1 Proportion of references to other core concepts in discourse about ICD appearing in UN official documents related to ICD[2]

Years	Interreligious	Security	Interfaith	Racism
2012	0.31	0.73	0.24	0.44
2011	0.28	0.69	0.23	0.50
2010	0.36	0.80	0.28	0.49
2009	0.35	0.63	0.27	0.49
2008	0.34	0.76	0.16	0.54
2007	0.52	0.79	0.35	0.45
2006	0.39	0.80	0.24	0.46
2005	0.40	0.83	0.23	0.60
2004	0.37	0.78	0.12	0.63
2003	0.17	0.48	0.09	0.74
2002	0.29	0.86	0.00	0.79
2001	0.29	1.21	0.36	0.86
2000	0.17	0.83	0.00	0.83
overall	0.35	0.74	0.24	0.51

Figure 1 Absolute number of documents containing the concept ICD in which each of four other core phrases also appear
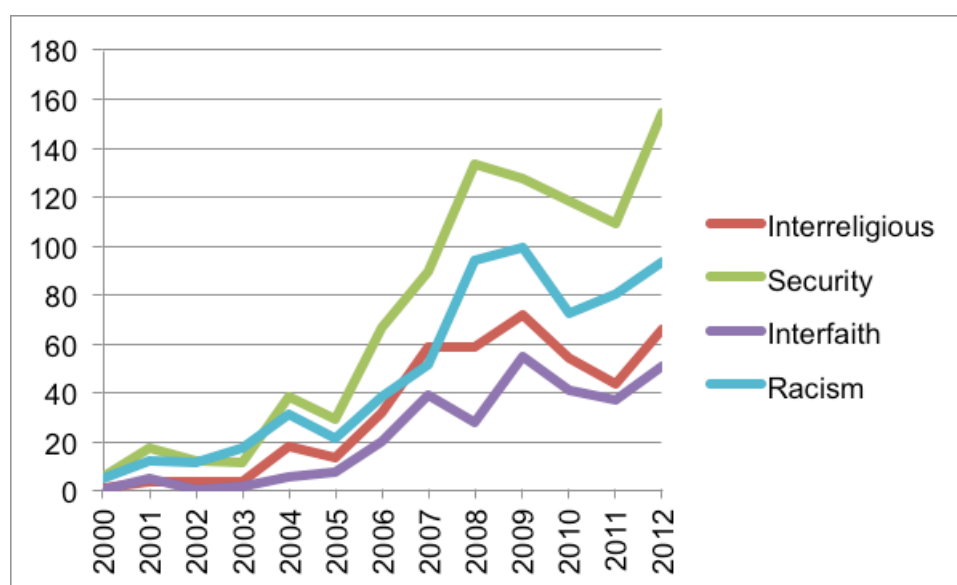
In Figure 1, each of the 4 lines represents the use of each of the four other concepts in documents where the expression "Intercultural Dialogue" is also used. As the table shows, racism was the key argument associated with the term "Intercultural Dialogue" in the first half of the last decade (2000-

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2   Please, note that there can be several references to other core concepts appearing in discourses on intercultural dialogue in one single document. For this reason, the proportion can be higher than 1.

2005). However, little by little it lost importance. Instead, security has always been an issue strictly connected with the ICD concept.

For this very reason, the Security Council was considered to be a crucial locus of analysis.

Evidence

This report presents the results of both discourse and contents analyses of 75 Security Council documents in which at least one of the four expressions appeared. However, most of these documents contained simultaneously more than one of these core concepts, for a total of 218 different references, as table 2 shows.

Table 2 Number of times each of the four concepts appears in official documents produced by the Security Council (2000-2012)

| Years	Intercultural dialogue	Alliance of civilizations	Dialogue of civilizations	Dialogue among civilizations	TOTAL
2012	5	6	4	2	17
2011	4	3	0	2	9
2010	9	11	7	7	34
2009	2	1	18	3	24
2008	1	4	8	4	17
2007	2	5	10	5	22
2006	9	14	4	22	49
2005	1	2	4	9	16
2004	1	1	0	6	8
2003	0	0	0	6	6
2002	0	0	4	3	7
2001	0	0	7	1	8
2000	0	0	0	1	1
TOT	34	47	66	71	218

The table clearly exemplifies that the most used concept is the one of "Dialogue among Civilizations". In 62 documents, both "DaC" and "DoC" were included. Figure 2 presents a graph in which the two expressions were summed up in one single item (DaC+DoC). Interestingly, from Figure 2, it is clear that the three core concepts (Dialogue among/of Civilizations, Alliance of Civilizations, Intercultural Dialogue) follow the same trends over time.

Through content and discourse analyses, it becomes clear that in the first part of the time frame analyzed (2000-2004), within the Security Council, national representatives did not use the concept of intercultural dialogue. Instead, they discussed the "Dialogue among/of civilizations". As table 2 clearly illustrates, national representatives started to employ the concept of Intercultural Dialogue, within the Security Council, only after the Spanish and the Turkish governments in 2005 proposed the initiative of an "Alliance of Civilizations".

The notion of "Dialogue among Civilizations" was indeed formulated early before that, by the former Iranian president Khatami in response to S. Hungtington's article on the Clash of Civilizations (Hungtington 1996).

This concept was used in 2000 by the Representative of the Russian Delegation - Lavrov, who mentioned it while discussing the role of women in peace and security (Security Council 2000, S/PV4208). Sunsequently, in December 2001, the Moroccan Representative - Bennouna, used the notion of "Dialogue among Civilizations" in order to define the world context. This was done in response to a letter from the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan on an Inter-agency mission to West Africa (Security Council 2001, S/PV4439).

Figure 2 Security Council usage of the terms "Intercultural Dialogue", "Alliance of Civilizations" and "Dialogue among/of Civilizations" in the years 2000-2012
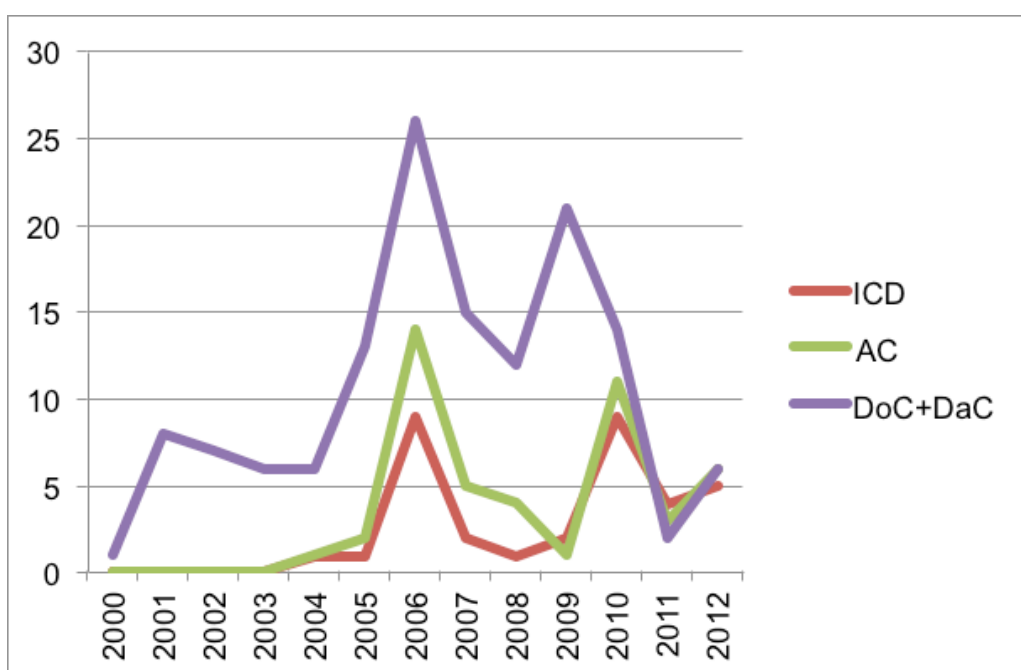
From 2002 onwards, national representatives started to use the concept of "Intercultural Dialogue" within sessions where the agenda scheduled discussions on the key issue of terrorism. In particular, it was first used by Lamani – Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference – in order to stress the importance of making efforts both against terrorism and in support of the "dialogue among civilizations" (Security Council 2002, S/PV 4618). Since then, this concept has been mostly used by non-Western Countries' representatives, with the exception of the representative of the Spanish government and Germany's representative. They both mentioned the DaC in 2003, in a session on "Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts" (Security Council 2003a, S/PV 4752).

Aznar (Spain) in particular used this expression while highlighting the need to "deprive terrorists of any legitimacy and disclose the pretexts that they use … and to reactivate the Middle East peace process." (Security Council 2003a, S/PV 4752:4).

Pleuger (Germany) instead connected it to themes of tolerance, respect, economic and social

development, as ways of preventing people from becoming terrorists. However, the Prime Minister of Germany, Fischer, had already expressed the same concept early that year stressing:

> International terrorism poses a strategic threat to peace and the international order. It is aimed at forcing us to react rashly and entangling us in a war among civilizations. That must not be our response. We must react in a way which weakens terrorism. There are no easy answers to this. The fight against international terrorism must take place at various levels. Intelligence, police, judicial and, in extreme cases, even military measures are indispensable. However, crisis prevention, conflict management, participation, poverty reduction, the promotion of education and a dialogue among civilizations are equally important. It is crucial to prevent acts of terrorism, but it is even better to prevent people from becoming terrorists." (Security Council 2003b, S/PV 4688: 5).

It was only after the Security Council approved Resolution 1624 (2005) on Counter-terrorism that the majority of the Western countries started to use this concept. (Security Council 2005a, S/RES 1624(2005)). In fact, they were asked to report on practical activities undertaken to put the dialogue among civilizations into practice. Analysis of the discourse reveals that the Algerian report of 2007 was crucial for the discussion it originated. It stated for the first time that a crucial source of hostility was the climate of discrimination towards non-Western people in Western countries. (Security Council 2007 S/2007/138). This led the Chairman of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), in a briefing reported to the SC, to acknowledge that " without respect for diversity, dialogue is useless." (Security Council 2010a, S/PV 6268).

Meanwhile, from 2005 onwards, the concept of "Alliance of Civilizations" started to emerge. This initiative was launched by the Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero, supported by the Turkish government. Subsequently, the Secretary General Kofi Annan made it into a UN initiative (see Bloom 2013).

This activity was first welcomed, in the SC, by Pakistan's representative (Security Council 2005b, S/PV 5229) and by Benin's representative (Security Council 2005c, S/PV 5293). The following year, in a session on the situation in the Middle East, Qatar's representative also mentioned the Alliance of Civilization as an essential tool for peace. However, here the concept was used together with the concept of "dialogue among religions" (Security Council 2006, S/PV 5530).

From the analysis, it is clear that non-Western countries were in fact still using the concept of DaC instead of the often-quoted concept of AoC launched by Zapatero. In this context, the notion of intercultural dialogue emerged as an alternative to the "Alliance" terminology. The latter was clearly unsatisfactory for a substantial number of the UN members.

However, Salam (Lebanon), during his presidency of the SC, in a session called "Maintenance of international peace and security Intercultural dialogue for peace and security" (Security Council 2010b, S/PV 6322), gave the occasion for an in-depth discussion on "Intercultural Dialogue". In particular, this posed the question of how it should be understood and how it should be composed. This led all the countries represented in the SC at that point to express their own ideas on it. It emerged that different bases for and interpretations of intercultural dialogue existed not only among Western and non-Western, or among Christian and Muslims, but also among European countries (for further analysis on this, please see Bello 2013). For example, the French representative stressed the

importance of a secular state, where religion is an issue belonging only to the private sphere of each singular person. The Lebanese representative highlighted the problematic role played by issues of oppression, hegemony and injustice, which "render dialogue itself questionable" (Security Council 2010b, S/PV 6322: 3). Japan's representative saw it in the light of practice and pragmatic activities of diplomatic exchange programmes. Burt (UK) defended the role of the alliance of civilizations as a way of promoting dialogue and understanding through civil society and media. However, he highlights also that "First, while intercultural dialogue should acknowledge our differences, it must also be built on universal human values" (idem: 5). In order to implement the "Intercultural Dialogue" several activities were proposed by different UN members, from roundtables with civil society representatives to conferences and other events open to a wider public, to policy-related activities, in order to address the issue of discrimination in immigrant-receiving countries, to more institutional and diplomatic activities, such as the diplomatic exchange programmes. Therefore, all the Representatives were clearly referring to different typologies of activities and had different philosophies as grounds for these activities (see Bello 2013 for further details).

A few days earlier, Salam noted the following list of GA resolutions on the issue of "Intercultural Dialogue" (Security Council 2010c, S/2010/248: 2):

Table 3 List of GA Resolutions on ICD

Resolutions	Issue
56/6 of 9 November 2001	The Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations
57/6 of 4 November 2002	The promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence
58/128 of 19 December 2003	The promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation
59/23 of 11 November 2004	The promotion of interreligious dialogue
59/199 of 20 December 2004	The elimination of all forms of religious intolerance
61/161 of 19 December 2006	The elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief
61/221 of 20 December 2006	The promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace
63/22 of 13 November 2008	The promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace
64/81 of 7 December 2009	The promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace

After the discussion started by Lebanon's representative, the government of the Philippines' was working closely with its Pakistani counterparts, among others to draft a Security Council Resolution on interreligious and intercultural dialogue (Security Council 2010d, S/PV 6424).

At the end of the year, the SC adopted resolution 1963 (2010) (Security Council 2010e, S/RES/1963 (2010)) which stated:

> Emphasizing that continuing international efforts to enhance dialogue and broaden understanding among civilizations in an effort to prevent the indiscriminate targeting of different religions and cultures, can help counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism, and will contribute to strengthening

the international fight against terrorism, and, in this respect, appreciating the positive role of the Alliance of Civilizations and other similar initiatives (idem: 2).

The Philippines had also launched several activities in the past for increasing dialogue between Asia and other regions and other state groupings as well (including those containing only one or two other states as well as much larger arrangements). They were in search of alternative routes to peace to the one established via the Alliance of Civilizations.

Resolution 1963 tried, then, to satisfy all parties, by incorporating all concepts that had been in parlance until that point. However, this probably led to even more confusion about what intercultural dialogue really addressed. Soon afterwards, the concept of dialogue among civilizations seemed to have a new revival, as figure 2 shows.

Conclusions and recommendations

From this analysis, it is clear that non-Western countries did not recognize themselves in the concept of "Alliance of Civilizations", while they were more inclined towards the concept of dialogue among civilizations, which had long been in use. However, Western countries, with some exceptions, seemed uncomfortable with this formulation of the concept.

Therefore, the concept of "Intercultural Dialogue" emerged as an alternative, which in principle could satisfy all of the UN members. However, in Resolution 1963, the Security Council did not take the occasion to clarify what this expression really brought with it and put all of the different interpretations together, probably with the aim of satisfying all concerned. However, from the revival the concept of DaC had after that, it is likely that some countries, particularly non-Western ones, were unhappy about it.

From this analysis, we would recommend carefully taking into account the different positions that have emerged, both within the European context (particular divergent notions and interpretations emerged in the discourses of the representatives of France, UK, Austria and Germany) and in other contexts, such as Latin America, Africa, China, Russia, and the US. In fact, those differences, which can appear to be merely different formulations of the same concept, instead brought with them different interpretations of the very problematic: that is to say, where the roots of the inter-cultural "clash" lies.

An example of this is in the conclusion of Nigerian's delegate discourse about the Intercultural Dialogue in SC session 6322. He said:

> Nearly four decades ago, the late Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia warned that a philosophy that holds one race to be superior and another inferior could lead to war. This admonishment has played out in different theatres around the world, fuelled by differences in religion, ethnicity, language and culture, with dire consequences. The time has come for us to heed the words of Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". Respect for diversity is necessary for durable peace and security. (Security Council 2010b, S/PV 6322: 18)

Without taking into account the reality of the different positions regarding the basis of intercultural dialogue, the dialogue itself seems not to be possible. Instead, a situation of multiple parallel soliloquies seems currently to be taking place.

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