The Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture: Ideological Refractions, Othering and Obedient Politics

ASHLEY SIMPSON [a]
FRED DERVIN [b]

[a] *Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, China*
Email: ashley@mail.shufe.edu.cn

[b] *University of Helsinki, Finland*
Email: fred.dervin@helsinki.fi

Abstract

The popularity of the idea of the intercultural in different parts of the world means that there are many differing meanings and ways in which the notion is understood, represented, expressed and used. In contrast to this polysemy, democracy often appears on the surface to be understood through universalist and/or absolutist conceptualisations. Combining the intercultural and democracy thus requires problematization. In this article we use The Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (2018a, 2018b, 2018c), a document that will have a non-negligible influence on education in Europe and the rest of the world, as an example showing how the notion of the intercultural is constructed. In order to do so, we use a form of intertextuality to analyze the Framework, focusing on three key instances found in the document: identity, the political, and intercultural competence. Some of the ideologies within the Framework clearly point to Eurocentric discourses and a stigmatization of the Other. Also, the way in which the political is sanitized can engender a language of depoliticization and obedience. As a result, we propose critical interculturality as a way to move beyond culturalist self-centered notions of the intercultural, arguing that the political and the social cannot be separated from the intercultural when discussing democracy.

Keywords: Democracy, Eurocentrism, Competence, Critical Interculturality, Intertextuality, Ideology

Introduction

The polysemic notion of the intercultural is seemingly everywhere and nowhere (Atay & Toyosaki, 2018). Sometimes it is clearly positioned in given paradigms (e.g., culturalism, whereby culture becomes the explanation for everything), but it is also used as a floating signifier at times. Despite the

fact that it is not a new concept, the past decade has witnessed an exponential rise in interest in the intercultural around the world. In research, many popular models, which tend to be produced in the West, claim to describe, analyze and capture what is meant by the notion (e.g., Landis, Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Byram, 2008; Deardorff, 2009). Furthermore, supranational and intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2013), The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2018) and The World Bank (World Bank, 2010), have published on the importance of intercultural communication, education and competencies.

Considering these multiple voices, this seemingly "popular" notion thus requires further examination and problematization in terms of how it is constructed, expressed, understood and used (Piller, 2017; Kamalipour, 2019; Sorrells, 2015). In this article we use The Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (2018a, 2018b, 2018c), a document that will have a non-negligible influence on education in Europe and the rest of the world, as an example showing how the notion is deployed. Although the Council of Europe cannot officially make binding laws, we should note the influence of the institution as a supranational political body in Europe and its role in shaping domestic policies throughout the world (Newman, 1994). In recent times, the Council of Europe has published about developing intercultural competencies in education (Council of Europe, 2016a) and has called for an intercultural dialogue through education (Faas, Hajisoteriou & Angelides, 2013; Fuentes, 2016). The initial focus of the project was the intercultural, however this later shifted to democracy in summer 2015–following the mass arrival of asylum seekers in Europe. Surprised by this sudden shift–although the intercultural still plays an important role in the Framework–we decided to examine the links between democracy, as found in the new title, and the intercultural. In order to do so, we use a form of intertextuality to analyze the Framework, focusing on three key instances found in the document: *identity, the political, and intercultural competence.*

We do realize that the document under review follows certain ideological perspectives. The fact that each volume is endorsed by both the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the Director General for Democracy makes them political at first sight. Our goal is not so much to be critical of these ideologies (the intercultural and democracy cannot but be ideological) but to examine the potential coherence and pre-discursive bases (Paveau, 2006) in the three documents that compose the Framework and appear to have different flavors and tones but also, most importantly, different objectives. Volume 1 (Council of Europe, 2018a) is theoretical; Volume 2 (Council of Europe, 2018b) practical with descriptors; Volume 3 (Council of Europe, 2018c) politically positioned to justify and clarify implementation.

The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture

The Council of Europe was founded in 1949, has 47 member states and covers approximately 820 million people. In April 2018 it published three volumes of the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture titled, Volume One: Context, concepts, model (Council of Europe, 2018a), Volume Two: Descriptors of competences for democratic culture (Council of Europe, 2018b), Volume Three: Guidance for implementation (Council of Europe, 2018c). As a reminder, the Council of Europe concentrates on human rights, democracy and rule of law. Here, the authors of the volumes focus on defining, measuring and promoting the idea of democratic competence, which appears to be used interchangeably with intercultural competence. Democratic competences are made up of values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding—including responsibility, tolerance, conflict resolution, listening skills, linguistic and communication skills, critical thinking, empathy and openness, and autonomous learning skills (Council of Europe, 2018a). The descriptors for each competence claim to describe what people know, understand, and are able to do and refrain from doing.

Seemingly, the Council of Europe's (2018b) main objective is to define levels of attainment for each competence, "[to] support the assessment of the current level of proficiency with regard to each of the competences" (p. 11) and to "serve as a reference and a toolbox for educators in designing, implementing and evaluating educational interventions, in formal and non-formal settings" (p. 11). Although the main target audience of the volumes appears to be educators, it is important to note at this stage that they are also implicitly aimed at decision-makers. In a 2016 event called "Securing democracy through education: The development of a Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture" (Brussels, April 11-12, 2016), Ministers of Education of member states gave their backing to the tool and to test it out in different countries (Council of Europe, 2016b). In December 2018 the document was described by the Council of Europe as a policy tool and a practical tool:

> It targets teachers and students in the development of competences for democratic culture at grassroots level. At the same time, ministries of education and relevant national authorities can use the RFCDC [Framework] as a policy tool when making changes to their education systems." (Council of Europe website, 2018)

We are also told on the document website that the Framework has been integrated in education in Andorra, Croatia, Georgia and the Slovak Republic (Council of Europe website, 2018).

The intertextuality of interculturality and democracy

Historically, intercultural communication has often relied on biased and overly subjective and ethnocentric comparisons between cultures and countries (e.g., Hofstede, 1983 as cited in McSweeney, 2002; Holliday, 2013). Our approach is inspired by critical work on intercultural education (Byrd Clark & Dervin, 2014; Dervin, 2016; Dasli & Diaz, 2017) and intercultural communication (Holliday, 2011, 2013). Specifically, we understand the intercultural through the notion of interculturality. The suffix -ality (instead of the adjective turned into a noun, "the intercultural") refers to culture as a fluid and continuous process rather than a fixed state (Dervin, 2016). Here, interculturality also encompasses identity in recognizing that identities come into being through dialogues with the Self, the Other and with others (Dervin, 2016). In adopting a critical intercultural perspective (Dervin, 2016; Dervin, 2017; Simpson & Dervin, 2019a), we acknowledge that we should problematize the instability and polysemy of both democracy and culture (Hesmondhalgh, 2013). A critical intercultural perspective requires questioning the terms, concepts and notions that we use to discuss these topics, with an attempt to move away from Western-centric (and other kinds of centrisms), somewhat biased and limited/limiting discourses, leading to believe that we are more "civilized," more "democratic" than the Other (Phillips, 2005).

As the anthropologist Jack Goody (2006) asserts: "Democracy has become a highly value-laden concept considered to have universal applicability" (p. 253). Democracy is often understood as "rule by the people" (Mouffe, 2013, p. 80). Chantal Mouffe argues that, in this sense, the political project of Liberalism (Rawls, 1993) and rationalist-based consensual approaches (e.g., Habermas, 1984) are blind to the ontological forces in which one's identity comes-into-being, including but not exclusive to intersubjectivities such as, gender, culture, sexuality, social class, factors which constitute our experiences and one's understanding of democracy) (Mouffe, 2005). Moreover, comparative discourses on how democracy is "done" "off the center" (i.e., outside Europe) seemingly triggers self-sufficiency, self-promotion and a-criticality. Such discourses can also contribute to the reproduction of othering, "using stereotypes and representations about the other when meeting her/him and talking about her/him" (Dervin, 2016, p. 43). Thus, one needs to be aware of "democratic othering" whereby democracy discourses hierarchically position one country/context vis-à-vis another country/context through cultural essentialisms which can marginalize and discriminate against the other, as one country

and/or context is positioned as having "better" forms of democracy (Simpson & Dervin, 2017; Simpson, 2018a).

In order to delineate our approach in analyzing the discursive construction of democracy and the intercultural, one needs to consider how these notions are co-constructed, negotiated and performed by interlocutors (here, the authors of the three volumes, and beyond, bearing in mind that the work is sponsored and supported by the Council of Europe). Mikhail Bakhtin (1981, 2012) offers a way to analyze the production, reception and co-construction of dialogue. However, in his works, Bakhtin uses the word *slovo* (in Russian) which is more akin to meaning "word" in English, without referring to the idea of dialogue in the Russian version. So, the question remains: why (in a Bakhtinian sense) has slovo been translated as "discourse"? The answer lies in the interactive function of *slovo* (words) which constitutes the production of meaning, or *smysl* (Simpson, 2018b). In this sense, words, or *slovo*, are constantly interacting, metamorphosing, and antagonistically competing with other words within what can be defined as a dialogical apparatus of language (Simpson, 2018b). Here, dialogism can be understood as a mode constituted by, and constitutive of, heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981, 2012). *Raznorechie* (Bakhtin, 2012) or what has been referred to as heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984) in Bakhtin's English-language translations refers to the coexistence of a multiplicity of various struggling language-forms and voices–e.g., social registers, professional discourses and so forth–associated with certain ideological points of view (Brandist & Lähteenmäki, 2011). Dialogism is thus a chain of signification whereby all words are interrelated to all other words. As a result, within communication speaker utterances react to preceding utterances and anticipate further utterances within the over-arching mode of heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981, 2012; Simpson, 2018a).

Inspired by Bakhtin's notion of *Raznorechie*, Julia Kristeva (1969) coined the term intertextuality. Slembrouck (2011) argues that Kristeva makes "the distinction between 'discourse' (the exchange of meanings) and 'text' (the production of meaning). 'Text' is what links an instance of language use (une parole communicative) to the system (langue)" (p. 156). Thus, "'Intertextuality'…is multi-directional, unresolved (hence, a preference for 'structuration' over 'structure') and it indexes how that text inserts itself into history" (Slembrouck, 2011, p. 157). In this sense, intertextualities are multi-directional in pointing to antecedences across received fields of social activity or societal domains (Kristeva, 1969). As Fairclough (1992) notes, intertextual analyses can draw attention to how texts transform the social and historical resources and how texts mix and re-accentuate genres—discourses, narratives, registers (Fairclough, 1992). Here Valentin Vološinov's work on reported speech echoes Bakhtin's dialogical view of discourse, Vološinov defines reported speech as, "speech within speech, utterance within utterance, and at the same time also speech about speech, utterance about utterance" (Vološinov, 1985, p. 115).

The Bakhtin-Vološinov approach to language is vested in revealing the coexistence of a multiplicity of various struggling language-forms (ideologies) contained within speech and/or text. To paraphrase Bakhtin (1981, 2012), the words uttered by the Self are never one's own, they are a conglomeration of words colliding from experiences and interactions with others and the Other. The terrains through which the collisions of these words/ideas/notions take place result in refractions and contradictions within speech and text. Vološinov articulates, "Every ideological refraction of existence in process of generation, no matter what the significance of its material, is accompanied by ideological refraction in word as an obligatory concomitant phenomenon" (Vološinov, 1985, p. 15). As a result, language reflects, not subjective, psychological vacillations, but stable social interrelationships among speakers (Vološinov, 1985).

In using the works of Bakhtin, Kristeva, Fairclough and Vološinov as our foundation we perform intertextual analyses to show the indexed ideological positions and inter-text refractions of words

between the three volumes of The Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (2018a, 2018b, 2018c). After having read the three volumes separately and simultaneously, starting from Volume 3, (Guidance for implementation), which clearly positions the document in terms of democracy (see chapter 6 "Building resilience to radicalization leading to violent extremism and terrorism"), our intertextual analyses of the theoretical, practical and application aspects have highlighted three areas of ideological refraction (noted in the subsequent subheadings below): identity, the political, and, intercultural (competence). These three notions were also chosen as frames of analysis due to the fact that they function as interrelated and intertextual genres (Kristeva, 1969) in producing the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture. Intertextuality is understood as "a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another" (Kristeva, 1969, as cited in 1980, p. 36). Whereas, Bakhtin defines genres as "relatively stable thematic, compositional and stylistic types of utterances" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 64). Studying texts as intertextuality is thus an engagement with "(the text) of society and history" (Kristeva, 1969, p. 37). This engagement is multidirectional and infinite as the social production of texts and utterances contains multiple semiotic and social layers (Bakhtin, 2012). To put this another way, there is no such thing as a singular text or a singular utterance as all words are produced and reproduced by the mode of dialogism (Bakhtin, 2012). Thus, in this study we take the three volumes of Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (2018) as being distinctly different due to the differing purposes and target audiences of each volume notwithstanding the fact that the volumes have been constituted through multiple voices and ideologies, in a word, textualities. Using intertextuality as a method helps us to pinpoint the gaps and conceptual differences between the three volumes. By highlighting identity, the political, and intercultural (competence) this way, we are not suggesting that these notions should be viewed independently or separately, rather, these notions are dialogically interacting, they are irreducible to another yet inseparable from each other, what Kristeva (1969 as cited in 1980, p. 36) refers to as "translinguistic". Here, identity, the political, and intercultural (competence) are problematized in relation to their thematic and compositional significance.

Identity as an opportunity and a problem?

In this first analytical section, we concentrate on the topic of identity, which has been central in anthropology and intercultural studies over the past 15 years. It has also somewhat substituted the concept of culture (Eriksen, 2001; Dervin & Risager, 2015). Many intercultural scholars argue that interculturality and identity go hand in hand and cannot be separated to reflect on today's world (Piller, 2017; Dervin, 2016; Holliday, 2011). Most contemporary thinkers, in the West, have discussed the concept (amongst others): Zygmunt Bauman, Pierre Bourdieu, Fernand Braudel, Anthony Giddens, Jurgen Habermas, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Paul Ricoeur, Amartya Sen, Margaret Somers, Charles Taylor. As a successful concept, it has led to weak conceptions "routinely packaged with standard qualifiers indicating that identity is multiple, unstable, in flux, contingent, fragmented, constructed, negotiated, and so on" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 11) but also to "solid" conceptualizations (Bauman, 2004).

In this paper, and in relation to the paradigm of critical interculturality that we adopt, we consider identity to be both 'soft' and 'solid'. In today's world, "which multipl[ies] interactions with others not personally known, such occasions for identification are particularly abundant (Martínez Guillem, 2017). They include innumerable situations of everyday life as well as more formal and official contexts. How one identifies oneself and how one is identified by others may vary greatly from context to context; self- and other-identification are fundamentally situational and contextual" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2001). This postmodern understanding of identity questions the experience of a "secure sense of self" (Gergen, 1991, p. 15) and thus leads to constant, contextualized identity changes. According to Sen, (2007) "There is no conflict here, even though the priorities over these identities must be

relative to the issue at hand" (p. 350). Finally, we note with Duveen (1998) that to change one's beliefs is also to change one's identity. In what follows we consider the concept of identity to be a category of practice and are interested in how the Framework constructs this first intertextual genre of identity.

Maybe without much surprise, and because of the Council of Europe's parlance, the word identity is not used abundantly in the volumes. In Volume 3, the word identity appears eight times (for the first time on p. 106); in Volume 2, twice (descriptor for Valuing cultural diversity); and in Volume 1 four times (for the first time on p. 31 when basic concepts are defined). It is interesting to note that words such as belonging, citizenship or together are used more often. This confirms, in a sense, what Gert Biesta (2009) notes: Council of Europe directives in education have to be understood through the apparatus of citizenship ideologies whereby the census notion of democracy has been promoted to depoliticize political agency and to prevent wider debates on what is meant by "citizenship" within Europe. The words belonging and citizenship represent top-down approaches that seem to put an emphasis on unicity and group prevalence. Our interest in discourses of identity (even if the occurrences of the concept are limited) relates to capturing signs of both plurality of selves-others and potential agentivization of users of the Framework, coming from them rather than being imposed top-down.

Table 1 below shows six intertextual frames relating to identity across the three volumes of The Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (2018).

Table 1 *Intertextuality of "Identity"*

Example	Volume	Description
1	1	"The term "identity" denotes a person's sense of who they are and the self-descriptions to which they attribute significance and value" (Council of Europe, 2018a, p. 29)
2	1	"Personal identities are those identities that are based on personal attributes, interpersonal relationships and roles, and autobiographical narratives" (Council of Europe, 2018a, p. 29).
3	1	"Social identities are instead based on memberships of social groups are a particular type of social identity and are central to the concerns of the Framework" (Council of Europe, 2018a, p. 29).
4	2	"Argues that intercultural dialogue should be used to help us recognize our different identities and cultural affiliations" (Council of Europe, 2018b, p. 16).
5	3	"Difficulties with personal identity: People sometimes experience a diffuse, confused, uncertain or unstable identity where they do not have a clear and secure sense of themselves and are not sure about how they would describe or define themselves, what the purpose of their life is, what their real interests are, or what their future ambitions should be" (Council of Europe, 2018c, p. 106)
6	3	"Because violent extremist and terrorist organizations offer a sense of certainty and can provide a strong identity to their members based on fierce loyalty to the cause, they can hold an attraction for individuals who are struggling with their personal identity" (Council of Europe, 2018c, p. 106-107).

Example 1, taken from Volume 1, Context, concepts, model, reveals an understanding of identity from the position of the self – without the explicit presence of the other (Council of Europe, 2018a). Here this is illustrated by the phrase "identity denotes a person's sense of who they are" (Council of Europe, 2018a, p. 29). The phrases sense of (identity) and self-descriptions might (or might not) hint at the

notion that identity is fluid and is constituted through dialogues with the Other (Bauman, 2004; Abdallah-Pretceille, 2003; Nie, 2013). However, by framing these instances in relation to self only (Example 1 "to which they attribute significance and value" Council of Europe, 2018a, p. 29), this assumed definition of identity misses out on the essential role played by others in the co-construction of identity. This means that identities cannot be simply viewed from the position of the self as the self is always in dialogue with implicit/explicit others (Bakhtin, 1981; Dervin, 2016). The authors of the text also separate personal identity (Example 2) from social identity (Example 3) seemingly rejecting the fact that the lines of what is classed as personal identity and social identity is often ambiguous as the personal is social and vice versa. These two examples might refer to the co-constructionist characteristic of identity by mentioning "interpersonal relationships and roles" (Council of Europe, 2018a, p. 29) and "memberships of social groups" (Council of Europe, 2018a, p. 29). However, the formulation of Example 3 does not allow us to decide if the plural of membership refers to a single individual's multiple social groups or to different individuals' groups. In other words, what is unclear in these three examples is if multiple internal and group identities are "permissible" according to the document.

Seemingly contra an understanding identity from the position of the self which is present in Examples 1, 2 and 3, Example 4 offers a different ideological refraction. Example 4 is a competence descriptor taken from Volume Two, Descriptors of competences for democratic culture (Council of Europe, 2018b) which seems to rely on a differentialist ideology ("different identities and cultural affiliations"). The formulation could be somewhat ambiguous as it could be interpreted in two ways: you and I are different, and/or I (we) have differences within myself (ourselves) – which would then open up the concept of identity to the plurality that was described above.

A further ideological refraction can be found in Examples 5 and 6, which are taken from Volume 3, Guidance for implementation (Council of Europe, 2018c). Contra the competence descriptor in Example 4, Examples 5 and 6 demonstrate how identity can function as a form of political ideology. Examples 5 and 6 are from a chapter titled "CDC [Competences for Democratic Culture] and building resilience to radicalization leading to violent extremism and terrorism" (Council of Europe, 2018c). Here, identity is articulated differently, for example, "People sometimes experience a diffuse, confused, uncertain or unstable identity where they do not have a clear and secure sense of themselves" (Example 5), and, in Example 6, individuals can be characterized as "struggling with their personal identity" (Example 6). These discourses are seemingly contradictory to the definition of identity in the previous examples. As such, if identity is plural and negotiated with others and groups (ideology present in previous examples?), feelings of confusion, uncertainty and instability of identity should be the "norm" (see Bauman, 2004; Laing, 1969). The argument based on personal identity (which seems to accuse the individual of being responsible for their problems) disregards the other concept of social identities which is also defined and presented in Volume 1, and stigmatizes, somewhat, those who face problems of identity. What the Framework seems to miss here is the co-responsibility of, e.g., nations and European institutions and governments in not supporting some individuals to "struggle" with the issues they face in terms of "personal identity." These issues have a direct impact on senses of belonging and citizenship and relate to the other in and with self. Inequality between social classes, gender divide, racial and religious discrimination, amongst others, can contribute to what Example 6 describes (Sorrels, 2015).

Identity discourses in these examples mark a lack of intertextuality in the way the concept of identity is used. They also create othering (Dervin, 2016) as they potentially marginalize and discriminate against people in Europe such as newcomers, migrants, representatives of certain religions and worldviews as they may be categorized and labelled as having an 'confused, uncertain or unstable' identities. Seemingly here identity discourses could be used to engender a politics of "us versus them"

(Mouffe, 2005, 2013) whilst giving the appearance of acknowledging the plurality of meanings and individuals (Martínez Guillem, 2017). The apparent over-agentivization of self in deciding over identity (and confusion over it) in the documents also de-agentivizes structures, political and economic forces which have a direct impact on identities (Giroux, 2006). The different ideologies here could show various competing language forms in terms of how the word identity is performed within the three volumes.

The sanitized and obedient political as an imposition

In this section, we concentrate on the political as it seems to be used and depicted in the three documents. As a reminder, the documents result from the work of a team of European scholars and practitioners, who were sponsored by the Council of Europe, a supranational political institution, and who were backed up by individual nation-states. Let us start with a reference to a field of research which is relevant to our exploration of the political in the volumes: Semiotics. In *The Rustle of Language*, Roland Barthes (1989) argues that semiotics (the science of sign and sign using behavior) is not merely to "de-myth" mythologies in the guise of de-mystification or de-mythification through "unmasking" and/or "revealing" myths, rather, the science of the signifier must "contest the symbolic" (Barthes, 1989, p. 66). As Barthes argues, the myth "hides nothing, its function is to distort not to make disappear" (Barthes, 1972, p. 120). Thus, the symbolic and referential characteristics of mythologies function as ideology whereby certain privileged signifiers become naturalized (for example, myths become "norms"; Eagleton, 2013). In moving from semiotics to ideology, myth is an inflexion, a change in form. When threatened by either "unmasking" or "revealing", the myth "naturalizes" (Barthes, 1972, p. 128). When naturalized, myths function as "depoliticized speech" (Barthes, 1972, p. 142) as they distort and sanitize speech.

In this section, the political is understood from an ontological perspective as the ever-present possibility of antagonism (Mouffe, 2013), i.e., decisions can only be made if a choice between undecidable alternatives from a strictly rational point of view is proposed. The Council of Europe's approach to democracy appears to rely on a liberal theory which recognizes "that we live in a world where a multiplicity of perspectives and values coexist and, for reasons it believes to be empirical, accepts that it is impossible for each of us to adopt them all" (Mouffe, 2007, p. 1). At the same time, as Hoff (2017) has highlighted, the basis of the model behind the Framework under review (Byram's work), rejects conflict. According to Mouffe's agonistic pluralism model (2005), this typical liberal approach "is therefore incapable of accounting for the necessarily conflictual nature of pluralism, which stems from the impossibility of reconciling all points of view, and it is what leads it to negate the political in its antagonistic dimension" (p. 92). There is thus a need to legitimize the existence and voice of the one who is considered/constructed as an "enemy" in political discussions, especially about democracy. This shift from antagonism (friend/enemy relation) to agonism (relation between adversaries) is essential in education in order to help individuals "genuinely have the possibility of choosing between real alternatives" (Mouffe, 2007, p. 3). Every social order is a contingent articulation of power relations that lacks an ultimate rational ground meaning that every social order is political (Mouffe, 2007).

Table two below shows the intertextuality of the political within the three volumes of The Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (2018). These were identified through direct references to the political as well as hints at suggested attitudes to antagonism.

Example 1 is from Volume 1, Context, concepts, model (Council of Europe, 2018a) and is used as a key component of the model explained in the first volume. "Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices" (Council of Europe, 2018a, p. 38) is another example of the

Table 2 *Intertextuality of the political*

Example	Volume	Description
1	1	"Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices" (Council of Europe, 2018a, p. 38).
2	2	"Can explain how people can guard and protect themselves against propaganda" (Council of Europe, 2018b, p. 23).
3	3	"There is currently widespread disillusionment with conventional political processes, and mainstream politics is frequently viewed as dominated by elites who are remote from the everyday concerns and lives of citizens. If mainstream politicians are perceived as failing to respond to citizens' concerns, or if there is a belief that the actions that politicians take are not sufficient to address these concerns in a meaningful way, then distrust of politicians and dissatisfaction with the political system can occur. This can lead to feelings of frustration and disempowerment, a rejection of the democratic norms that are held by others, and a resort to alternative modes of action that might include violent extremism" (Council of Europe, 2018c, p. 108).
4	3	Disillusionment with democratic forms of citizen participation: Individuals can also feel disenchanted and disillusioned with democratic forms of citizen participation. For example, they may feel that institutional channels through which their point of view can be expressed are ineffective, and that they are unable to have any meaningful influence on public policy. A feeling of powerlessness may result, with the person seeing little point in engaging in conventional political actions (e.g., voting, writing to an elected representative) or alternative peaceful forms of political action (e.g., participating in protests, signing petitions). Under such circumstances, membership of a violent extremist group can provide a sense of empowerment that cannot be gained through other means "(Council of Europe, 2018c, p. 108).
5	3	"Violent extremism and terrorism can be de-glamorized by stripping away its mystique and by explaining what it is really like to be a member of a violent extremist or terrorist organization. This can include explaining how such organizations manipulate their members, distort the truth and promulgate falsehoods, how they incite their members into committing violent acts, and explaining the effects that joining such an organization has on recruits' everyday lives and their relationships with families and friends" (Council of Europe, 2018c, p. 112).

liquid interpretation of society, which might ideologically appear to be close to Mouffe's Agonistic pluralism (2013). Here, the plurality of opinions and expressions is seemingly accepted. This argument is juxtaposed to Example 2, taken from Volume 2, Descriptors of competences for democratic culture (Council of Europe, 2018b). Example 2 states: "can explain how people can guard and protect themselves against propaganda" (Council of Europe, 2018b, p. 23). The relationship between Example 1 and Example 2 appears to be ambiguous and perhaps even contradictory. Example 2 reflects a potentially absolutist interpretation of world views (contrary to Example 1) whereby knowledge and information can be understood through the binary dichotomy of true/untrue (whatever that means). Questions remain from this competence descriptor: What is understood as "other beliefs, world views and practices" and "propaganda"? It is also not clear from these two examples who decides what is deemed as "propaganda" and what is deemed "other beliefs and world views." As a reminder, the etymology of the word propaganda comes from the ablative fem. gerundive of Latin propagare, which in English meant "any movement to propagate some practice or ideology" in 1790 (etymonline.com).

The intentions and meanings behind these notions could arguably be indexed through Examples 3, 4, and 5. Examples 3, 4 and 5 are taken from Volume 3, Guidance for implementation (Council of Europe, 2018c). Specifically, they are from a chapter titled "CDC [Competences for Democratic Culture] and

building resilience to radicalization leading to violent extremism and terrorism" (Council of Europe, 2018c).

Examples 3, 4, and 5 indicate an overly simplistic "us versus them" reasoning when thinking about social groups, and other people are readily seen as either friends or enemies (Mouffe, 2013). The other could easily appear to be stigmatized and labelled here (again through being associated with discourses about terrorism and radicalization). Example 3 includes the predisposed possibility that there is a "Disillusionment with politicians and conventional politics and Disillusionment with Democratic forms of citizen participation" (Council of Europe, 2018c, p. 108) whilst at the same time the authors define "conventional political actions as voting, writing to elected representatives or peaceful protests" (Council of Europe, 2018c, p. 108). One must remember that the authors are writing on behalf of the Council of Europe (i.e., politicians), writing for educators on the one hand, but also for other politicians or policy-makers (national or municipal bodies in European member state countries) on the other. Here, in a sense, the authors demarcate what is politically permissible and what is not permissible in terms of democracy, without allowing proper consideration of other forms of democratic engagement, and critiques of conventional political actions (see Mouffe's antagonism, 2013). This point can be further illustrated by the section "Developing Resilience to Radicalization: De-glamorization of violent extremism and terrorism" (Council of Europe, 2018c).

> "This can include explaining how such [terrorist] organizations manipulate their members, distort the truth and promulgate falsehoods, how they incite their members into committing violent acts, and explaining the effects that joining such an organization has on recruits' everyday lives and their relationships with families and friends" (Council of Europe, 2018c, p. 112).

It seems somewhat ironic here that the discourse in Example 5 suggests that falsehoods and distortions of truth only apply to radicalized or terrorist organizations and cannot be found within European acceptable "normality." In fact, Example 5 could be contradictory to Example 1. Here, Example 1's "openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices" could be used as a potential masquerade to hide the contradictory agendas found in the other examples. Example 2 is now shown through a different light in relation to Examples 3, 4 and 5. Example 2 reflects a rationalist and absolutist notion of knowledge/information and is imposed through a Eurocentric conceptualization of democracy. Again, this marks democratic othering (Boulbina, 2018; Simpson, 2018a) as the other is marginalized and stigmatized through discourses about democracy. Europe is hierarchically positioned as having no falsehoods, no propaganda and no distortions of truth, contra the Other. Thus, the language found within these examples serves not only to *other* the Other but also to sanitize the political through restricting how the political can be understood and expressed (through the demarcation of what is permissible and what is not) and thus making it obedient politics. Example 2 raises a number of concerns in terms of how the authors have conceptualized the descriptors found within Volume 2 and their relation to the other volumes.

The problem of [inter]cultural competence

The final section focuses on the ideological refractions found within and between the descriptors of interculturality in Volume 2, Descriptors of competences for democratic culture (Council of Europe, 2018b). Unlike the previous two sections which looked at the intertextuality between the three volumes, this section only focuses on the ideological refractions found within Volume 2 (Council of Europe, 2018b). The purpose of the competence descriptors can be understood as:

1. Support the assessment of the current level of proficiency with regard to each of the

competences, for an individual or for a group, with a view to identifying areas of further development and learning needs or identifying achieved proficiency after a period of learning;

2. To serve as a reference and a toolbox for educators in designing, implementing and evaluating educational interventions, in formal and non-formal settings. (Council of Europe, 2018b, p. 11)

The competence descriptors are categorized into three levels: Basic, Intermediate, and, Advanced (Council of Europe, 2018b). The competence descriptors cover four areas: values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding (Council of Europe, 2018b). Volume 2 includes one hundred and thirty-five competence descriptors, for the purpose of our analysis we have included five examples, at the advanced level (the "ideal-ized" level) which are shown in Table 3 below. These items were selected after consideration of the coherence between the descriptors in ideological and political terms.

Table 3 *Intertextuality of competence descriptors*

Example	Volume	Description
1	2	"Can explain why people of other cultural affiliations may follow different verbal and non-verbal communicative conventions which are meaningful from their perspective" (Council of Europe, 2018b, p. 22).
2	2	"Can explain why there are no cultural groups that have fixed inherent characteristics" (Council of Europe, 2018b, p. 23).
3	2	"Can describe basic cultural practices (e.g., eating habits, greeting practices, ways of addressing people, politeness) in one other culture" (Council of Europe, 2018b, p. 23).
4	2	"Accurately identifies the feelings of others, even when they do not want to show them" (Council of Europe, 2018b, p. 20).
5	2	"Can avoid successfully intercultural misunderstandings" (Council of Europe, 2018b, p. 20).

Example 1 states that a competent individual "may follow different verbal and non-verbal communicative conventions which are meaningful from their perspective" (Council of Europe, 2018b, p. 22). Here the word different is used to construct a differentialist bias "whereby when we think of people from other 'cultures' we often refer to them as being different rather than similar to us" (Dervin, 2016, p. 114). Also, the focus on "different verbal and non-verbal communicative conventions" marks culturalism whereby culture (see "people of other cultural affiliations") is used as a potential excuse or alibi (Dervin, 2016). Here, through the assumption and generalization is that "cultures clash" because of communicative and/or linguistic differences when other factors are seemingly not taken into consideration (such as doing identity and the political, see previous sections). In moving away from the focus on difference, Example 2 illustrates a different ideological refraction. Example 2 states that "no cultural groups that have fixed inherent characteristics" (Council of Europe, 2018b, p. 23), seemingly echoing the post-modern understanding of culture and identity (Bauman, 2001). Contra Example 2, Example 3 states, "Can describe basic cultural practices (e.g., eating habits, greeting practices, ways of addressing people, politeness) in one other culture" (Council of Europe, 2018b, p. 23). The relationship between Example 2 and Example 3 can be marked as Janusian perspective. Dervin (2016) articulates the Janusian approach: "A Janusian approach to interculturality is usually contradictory. It consists in both uttering stereotypes about a group and suggesting that the members of this group have multiple identities—thus cancelling out the stereotype" (p. 115).

Arguably, Examples 2 and 3 mark an inverse of the Janusian perspective, instead of cancelling out the stereotypes, the stereotypes are actually reinforced through compartmentalizing and separating out the notions inscribed within "culture." As such, describing basic cultural practices could easily cancel out the idea that no culture has "fixed inherent characteristics" (Council of Europe, 2018b, p. 23). In Example 4 these points are amplified by the use of the words "accurately identify" in "accurately identifies the feelings of others' others" (Council of Europe, 2018b, p. 20). How can the feelings of others be accurately identified? This descriptor can be problematic as identifying "feelings of others" can lead to the self projecting itself onto others but also "fixing" them into imagined and fantasied others (through purposely misinterpreting feelings or imposing feelings onto others). When thinking about culture and identity this can be problematic as it could engender illusory discourses of acculturation, the belief 'in the possibility of merely swapping cultures (as one changes clothes) or oscillating between 'cultures'' (Dervin, 2011, p. 39).

Attempting to articulate the feelings of others can be deeply problematic and perhaps should be avoided as it can be interpreted as the self speaking for and/or over the other. When Example 4 is viewed in relation to Example 5, the orientation towards the intercultural becomes clear. Example 5 states, "Can avoid successfully intercultural misunderstandings" (Council of Europe, 2018b, p. 20). "Success" here is attributed to the self as something that can be seemingly acquired whereas "intercultural misunderstandings" refers only to the other (as demonstrated by the focus on communicative "difference" in Example 1). "Successfully" in Example 5 is a deeply problematic word. One cannot be naive to the symbolic political and economic power that organizations like the Council of Europe have in terms of national, local and supranational policy formulation and implementation. One possible explanation in the uptake of interest in the intercultural may lie in some of the uses and applications associated with "intercultural competencies" (especially in forms of business communication and in education; see, Dervin & Gross, 2016). Here, an overt focus on measuring, defining, and assessing notions of the intercultural have arguably engendered dynamics of what is deemed interculturally permissible and what is not. In this sense, in some contexts the intercultural may have been constructed as a state of being that can be acquired, or transversely, be manipulated as a perception of a state that can be acquired. The quote below from Volume 1 is a clear example:

> "The heart of the Framework is a model of the competences that needs to be acquired by learners if they are to participate effectively in a culture of democracy and live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse democratic societies" (Council of Europe, 2018a, p. 11).

Here the "intercultural" can be exploited and manipulated to fit many different agendas and purposes through engendering the notion by means of the dichotomy of acquisition/non-acquisition (something one has or does not have). Such dichotomies engender the intercultural through discourses of "us" versus "them" i.e., through a political language of exteriorization (Mouffe, 2013). To summarize, the intercultural communication competence descriptors found within Volume 2, Descriptors of competences for democratic culture are seemingly centered on the self (not interaction and co-construction), they appear to be mostly culturalist (over-emphasis on culture and difference), and the cultural is seemingly separated from a fluid sense of identity co-constructions, and thus, the social and the political.

Discussion and conclusion: The need for critical interculturality

One of the early passages contained within Volume 1, Context, concepts, model (Council of Europe, 2018a) is the following statement: "The model is not an imposition of an ideal but a conceptual organization of the competences to which reference can be made by users of the Framework" (p. 12).

"The model is not an imposition" could be an imposition in itself. In fact, the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture dictates "softly" what is deemed as permissible and not permissible with regards to democracy, culture, and identity. Obviously, the Council of Europe cannot impose anything directly to anyone. However, the document has been endorsed by many decision-makers (ministers of education from many member states) and was produced by European scholars who have "global star" statuses around the world. Furthermore, considering the symbolic power of the institution in Europe and elsewhere, for instance in relation to the Common European Framework for Languages, which *nolens volens* has become an imposition in many parts of the world, one could easily predict a spread of the documents under review in the future. The current need for assessment tools for intercultural competence, pushed through by other institutions such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), who refers directly to the Framework under scrutiny in its description of global competence testing in the 2018 PISA studies, will surely increase the interest in this document.

In part, the agenda of the three volumes is articulated in the foreword of the first volume:

> The urgent need for it [The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture] was brought into sharp focus by the many terrorist attacks across Europe in recent times. Education is a medium- to long-term investment in preventing violent extremism and radicalization, but the work must start now. (Council of Europe, 2018a, p. 5)

Yet, throughout the three volumes there is no mention of the so-called "migrant" crisis of 2015-2016. As a result, the seemingly refracted political is a concurrent force throughout the three volumes. Echoing Barthes (1989), the focus here is not to merely de-myth mythologies but instead to contest their symbolic form (Barthes, 1989). Using a form of intertextuality (Bakhtin, 1981; Kristeva, 1968; Vološinov, 1985) to analyze across and within the three volumes this paper has focused on three key instances of intertextuality found in the three volumes, namely: identity, the political, and intercultural competence.

It is important to note here that the identified intertextuality in our analysis may not fully correspond to the what the authors of the three documents had in mind (different team members could have worked on the three documents, although authorship is indicated as covering the three volumes). However, as a political document for which budgets were allocated over several years – although we were unable to find how much was specifically allocated to the project on Democratic Culture, we note that the Council of Europe's budget, for 2019, is €437,180,100 (Council of Europe, 2019) – one would expect the three volumes to be transparent a minima and share similar and coherent understandings, ideologies and assumptions. What is more, intertextuality (or a lack of it) may not always correspond between what a reader sees in the three documents and what the authors intended. The choice of polysemic, heavily ideologically-laden terms in the documents would contribute to multifaceted intertextuality for the different actors.

Bakhtin (1981, 2012) and Volosinov's (1985) dialogical approach has been used as a basis to trace and mark competing language forms in the documents. Different and contradictory voices have contributed to all three volumes. The intertextuality of the three volumes reveals, at times, a clash of ideologies between the three volumes characterized by a push for solidity (identity/culture/democracy) vs. a postmodern agenda (identity/culture being understood fluidly/respect and openness towards different opinions and ideas). Here a form of othering (Dabashi, 2015) called democratic othering (Mignolo, 2009; Simpson & Dervin, 2017; Simpson, 2018a) can be noted. Through these democracy discourses, the other (maybe the newcomer, the migrant, the "terrorist") is hierarchically marginalized and stigmatized. Also, Eurocentrism is disguised under "intercultural correctness," in part, through appearing to focus on values such as respect and stressing a need for an intercultural dialogue, whilst

at the same time, conceptualizing a somewhat fixed sense of what is meant by identity, culture and democracy in Europe contra the other. Interestingly the approach to identity is based almost exclusively on the responsibility of the individual, without providing them with critical tools to look into decision makers' role and responsibility. It represents a form of soft identity, which is often contradicted in the document.

As interculturality has become a hot topic in different fields, the ways of talking about it, however, show somehow the tendency of "interculturalspeak" (a somewhat uncritical approach to intercultural matters; Shi-xu, 2001; Piller, 2017). When the intercultural is used side-by-side, democracy caution is needed (Simpson & Dervin, 2017). There is a multiplicity of approaches and meanings about democracy and even a lack of agreement on what it is and how to work with it (Mouffe, 2013). When democracy and the intercultural are fused together, the implicit assumptions remain mostly solid, culturalist ("culture as an excuse") and self-centered while at the same time giving the impression of dialogue (Dervin, 2016). The political and the social cannot be separated from the intercultural; these notions are irreducible to one another yet they mutually inseparable from each other. Thus, it is important to re-evaluate both interculturality and democracy. One of the ways to do this is through a critical intercultural perspective (Dervin, 2016; Dervin, 2017; Simpson & Dervin, 2019a) in acknowledging that there is a continuous need to problematize the instability and polysemy of the notions (Simpson & Dervin, 2019b) and to examine the contradictory and incoherent voices that compose the very notion of interculturality. A critical intercultural perspective requires questioning the terms, concepts and notions that we use to discuss these topics, moving away from Western-centric (and other kinds of centrisms), somewhat biased and limited/limiting discourses which can be used against others (Dervin, 2016). Most importantly, critical interculturality sends an SOS about "culturalizing" encounters and suggests "throwing the baby with the bathwater" in promoting 'the intercultural without culture." There is a need to include systematically economic, political, glocal lenses in discussing and analyzing intercultural communication.

As far as democracy is concerned, one of the ways one can problematize democracy is through the work of Chantal Mouffe (2005; 2013). As asserted earlier, Mouffe articulates the notion of agonism in decontextualizing democracy through the political (Mouffe, 2013). Agonism can be defined as the struggle between adversaries (Mouffe, 2013). Mouffe's (2013) form of agonism acknowledges the constitutive character of social division and the impossibility of a final reconciliation (e.g., a political consensus). Here "democracy" cannot be reduced to "culture" and vice versa. Nor can it be assessed or defined through a notion of competence. Mouffe's (2013) work can be an important tool in producing counter-narratives to the ways democracy can be used as an obedient form of othering (Simpson, 2018a), as is evident in the liberal approach to democracy in this document and the underlying models of intercultural competence (Byram, 1997).

It is important to note again that educational documents emerging from the Council of Europe often have an international influence, for example, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2001). Thus, there is a need to unearth the political manipulation of a seemingly innocent notion such as interculturality so that teachers, scholars and students can become aware of ideological uses of the notion and so that they can reflect on the implications and consequences of interculturality in their own work. For instance, it is essential for teacher educators and trainers to support future teachers to examine these ideologies so that they can potentially resist them and make their students aware of them too. With the current multiplication of supranational models of intercultural competence (e.g., the 2018 OECD PISA Global Competence, the 2017 UNESCO Survey on Intercultural Dialogue, etc.) there is also a need to cross-examine these initiatives.

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Author biodata

Dr. Ashley Simpson is Assistant Professor in the School of Foreign Studies, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics. Dr. Simpson specializes in Intercultural Education and Intercultural Communication, Discourse theories and methods, and, Critical approaches to Democracy and Human Rights. Dr. Simpson is also the Vice-Director of the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics – University of Helsinki Joint Research Centre on Intercultural Studies.

Fred Dervin is Professor of Multicultural Education at the University of Helsinki (Finland) and hold honorary and visiting positions around the world. Prof. Dervin specializes in intercultural education, the sociology of multiculturalism and student and academic mobility.