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Developing Intercultural and Democratic Competences in Teacher Education. The role of the International frameworks

Desarrollo de competencias Interculturales y Democráticas en la Formación docente. El papel de los marcos internacionales

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Abstract

The EU is, in formal terms, a union of states founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and values. The value of the cultural diversity of European societies is thus questioned by radical voices that endeavour to disseminate discord and fragmentation between and within MS. Both policy makers and practitioners argue for a need to develop Intercultural and Democratically competent teachers who are capable of bridging the gap between the politics of belonging and the individual's expression of belonging. The following paper analyses three international flagship competence frameworks for the development of Intercultural competence. It argues for a need in shifting the approach in teachers education for addressing Cultural Diversity choosing the Council of Europe RFCDC framework as the optimal choice for teacher education towards a new paradigm of intercultural and democratic competence.

Keywords: Intercultural and Democratic Competences; EU; Teacher education; Competence Frameworks.

Resumen

La UE es, en términos formales, una unión de Estados fundada en los valores del respeto a la dignidad humana, la libertad, la democracia, la igualdad, el estado de derecho y el respeto por los derechos y valores humanos. El valor de la diversidad cultural de las sociedades europeas se ve así cuestionado por voces radicales que se esfuerzan por diseminar la discordia y la fragmentación entre y dentro de los EM. Tanto los formuladores de políticas como los profesionales abogan por la necesidad de desarrollar maestros interculturales y democráticamente competentes que sean capaces de cerrar la brecha entre las políticas de pertenencia y la expresión de pertenencia del individuo. El siguiente artículo analiza tres marcos de competencia emblemáticos internacionales para el desarrollo de la competencia intercultural. Defiende la necesidad de cambiar el enfoque en la formación de profesores para abordar la diversidad cultural eligiendo el marco RFCDC del Consejo de Europa como la opción óptima para la formación de profesores hacia un nuevo paradigma de competencia intercultural y democrática.

Palabras clave: Competencia Democrática e Intercultural; UE; Formación de Profesorado; Marcos de referencia competenciales.

1. Introduction

The EU is, in formal terms, a union of states founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and values, which Article 2 of the TEU¹ considers common to all MS. The *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU* describes human dignity as an indivisible and universal value and places the individual at the heart of the activities of the EU, establishes the citizenship of the Union, and creates an area of freedom, security, and justice. Unfortunately, in recent times, the EU has experienced increasing tensions between national majorities and ethnic or religious minorities. Even though the EU establishes the dignity of the person as a cornerstone, and therefore recognises cultural diversity as an asset, both in its foundational treaties and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, European societies find themselves at a critical moment where discourses of a populist, nationalist, and radical nature are emerging and invading the public and civic space, seeking to question European values and unity. The value of the cultural diversity of European societies is thus questioned by radical voices that endeavour to disseminate discord and fragmentation between and within MS. Both policy makers and practitioners argue for a need to develop. The working definition for IDC which will be provided in this paper is the result a comparative analysis of the contribution of the main international flagship competence framework on Intercultural Competence. In order to establish the need for Intercultural and democratic competent teacher we provide a brief analysis of the role of education in the context of Culturally diverse democratic societies.

2. Socialisation, Cultural Diversities and Collective Identities

The final report of the project *Accept Pluralism: Tolerance, Pluralism and Social Cohesion Responding to the Challenges of the 21st Century in Europe* (Triandafyllidou, (2013,)) demonstrated already in 2013 that negative attention in the public debate mainly focuses on two groups of people: Muslims and Roma. In this way, the politically constructed designation of “others”² provides radical or hate discourses with the necessary outgroup that makes the commonality among Europeans politically and symbolically relevant.

The voices calling for the segregation of groups and the hostile attitudes towards culturally diverse citizens contributed to a further fragmentation and to the radicalisation of young Europeans, both from traditionally hegemonic cultures and from minority groups

1 Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. (2016). European Union. Retrieved from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2016:202:FULL&from=EN>

2 Otherness in this context refers to a discursive process by which a dominant in-group (“Us,” the Self) constructs one or many dominated out-groups (“Them,” Other) by stigmatizing a difference – real or imagined – that are presented as negations of the in-group identity, and using them as motives for potential discrimination. To state it naïvely, difference belongs to the realm of fact and otherness belongs to the realm of discourse. The creation of otherness (also called othering) consists of applying a principle that allows individuals to be classified into two hierarchical groups: them and us. The out-group is represented through its opposition to and differences from the in-group. These differences are based upon stereotypes that are largely stigmatizing and obviously simplistic. The in-group constructs one or more others, setting itself apart and giving itself an identity. Otherness and identity are two inseparable sides of the same coin. The Other only exists relative to the Self, and vice versa.

(Ibid,2013). Although analysis of the psychological mechanism involved radicalization and extremism, researchers demonstrate that the extent to which people experience deprivation - both as individual and as member of a group - predict the radical belief system's determinants. A common determinant for radicalization is a perceived sense of injustice, which according to a model developed by Doosje *et al.* (2013) predicts perceived societal disconnectedness, defined as a perception that an individual does not belong to the mainstream of the society, an idea that feeds violent attitudes.

Experts in the field of social psychology and political science analyse the importance of engaging individuals in civic discussions to provide them with knowledge and skills that foster their perception as relevant members that “belong” to the community. Yuval-Davis (2016) highlights the need to distinguish between politics of belonging and belonging in order to understand the elements that contribute to the individual's self-ascription or detachment from a community. Belonging is about emotional attachment, about feeling “at home”. However, “home is an on-going project entailing a sense of hope for the future”. Part of this feeling of hope relates to home as a “safe” space. At the same time, it is important to emphasise that feeling ‘at home’ does not necessarily only generate positive and warm feelings. It also allows the safety as well as the emotional engagement to be, at times, angry, resentful, ashamed, indignant (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 4). People can “belong” in many different ways and to many different objects of attachments. These can vary from a particular person to the whole humanity, in a concrete or abstract way, by self or other identification, in a stable, contested or transient way. However, Yuval Davis (2011) claims that belonging is always a dynamic process and is usually multi-layered. In order to understand this approach and its later implications, the scholar differentiates between three major analytical facets in which belonging is constructed: social locations; people's identifications and emotional attachments to various collectives and groupings; and ethical and political value systems with which people judge their own and others' belonging/s. Yuval Davis (2011) explains that these different facets are interrelated, but cannot be reduced to each other. In the context of the present project the focus is on the second facet which has to do with the individual's self-ascriptions and identifications with cultures, groups and communities.

Present studies in the field of inclusive and intercultural education, multicultural education and sociology of education demonstrate that education can bridge the gap between the politics of belonging which normally is associated with the concept of citizenship (political and legal attributions), and the individual's expression of belonging, the self-ascribed notion of being a part of a social and political project that could be described under the category of substantial citizenship (Castro, 1999). In this sense belonging is the expression of a meaningful socially based constructed affiliation (Royuela, 2019). It represents the individual's social identity which derives from the knowledge of membership together with the values and emotional significance attached to that membership. Bar-Tal (2009) proposes that the citizenship or social identity is a psychological attribute, a subjective claim and a person's self-recognition of membership in a social group. This subjective awareness of identification involves cognitive, affective and evaluative aspects of identity. In a culturally diverse context, social identities could become a basis for inclusion or exclusion for individuals. The EU institutions, acknowledging the power of education, call upon the MS to reinforce the role of education in promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination (Paris Declaration, 2015) and to contribute to an inclusive society. The European

Commission's Expert Group on Radicalisation (HLCEG-R) establishes that "Education is a cornerstone for effective prevention of radicalisation. Teachers, educators and youth workers play a crucial role in fostering social inclusion, promoting common democratic values and managing controversial issues" (HLCEG-R, 2018). Education plays a major role in establishing the values and principles that govern and determine the character of society. As early as 1895, J. Dewey stated that "the individual who is to be educated is a social individual and that society is an organic union of individuals" (Dewey, 1975, p.86). In his work dating back to 1916 *Democracy and Education* (2004) he also states that "education is a social function securing direction and development in the immature through their participation in the life of the group to which they belong" and that "a society which not only changes but which has the ideal of such change as will improve it, will have different standards and method of education from one which aims simply at the perpetuation of its own customs" (Dewey, 1995, p. 87). While Dewey highlighted the need for civic education based on the teaching of ethics, E. Durkheim, also affirmed the socialising nature of school education defining it as the "methodological socialization of the young" (Ottoway, 1968).³

Socialising individuals in a multicultural democratic society is a complex task as it should not only address individuals as unique human beings, but at the same time actively contribute to the development of a shared sense of belonging and to a sustainable and collective societal project following collective goals. In a culturally diverse society, teachers have a special responsibility to provide inclusive learning practices that will ultimately establish a path towards constructive interaction, understanding, and affinity among all of their students. An inclusive approach to education requires engaging students in a debate on both individual and collective narratives of the culture, cultural identity, cultural diversity, and affinity. Education should thus enable the negotiation between individual and collective narratives and offer the opportunity for sharing knowledge on cultures, as much as it should acknowledge how cultural identities are the voluntary expression (conscious or not) of adherence to communities and important for individual self-fulfilment or sense of wellbeing.

For Barrett *et al.* (2014) "identity" denotes a person's sense of who they are and the self-descriptions to which they attribute significance and value. According to the intercultural approach, most people use a range of different identities to describe themselves, including both personal and social identities. Personal identities are those that are based on personal and autobiographical narratives, whereas social identities are based on memberships of social groups. Cultural identities are thus a particular type of social identity. To understand the present concept of identity we need to adopt a complex and multi-layered perspective (Walford, 2008). As explained by Wenger (1998), identity is built through the negotiated experiences of participation and reification that are the essence of communities of practices; through participation, individuals become who they are. An identity can therefore be understood as a layering of events of participation and reification by which our experience and its social interpretation inform each other. School education is a major source of interaction and experience. It has a fundamental role in the development of a sense of identity and adherence to a community or a project. In the context of democratic societies, where individual freedom and self-actualisation⁴ are considered core values, teachers should be able to address this complex dimension

3 Both Dewey's and Durkheim's educational foundations are reflected in the Paris Declaration (2015).

4 Self-actualisation is a concept elaborated by A. Maslow in his theory of humanistic psychology.

by guiding individuals in the process of management and negotiation of their identities. Cultural identities are socially constructed; therefore, education systems and — more specifically — teachers should understand the influence of their actions on the individual and on the construction of their collective identities.

3. The EU Policy Context and the need for Intercultural and Democratic Competence Development

The EU needs competent teachers, capable of successfully fostering a climate of inclusion and sense of belonging. This issue was already addressed by the Ministers of Education of the MS in 2015 in the framework of the *Paris Declaration* where the Ministers explicitly stipulate the role of education in ensuring that the humanist and civic values of the EU are safeguarded, while stressing the need to make efforts in promoting freedom of thought and expression, social inclusion, and respect for others, as well as to prevent and tackle discrimination in all its forms. The Declaration makes a call for renewed efforts to reinforce the teaching and acceptance of the common fundamental values and urges Member States' education systems to lay the foundations for more inclusive societies. Furthermore, in the Declaration the Ministers affirm that the

"primary purpose of education is not only to develop knowledge, skills, competences and attitudes and to embed fundamental values, but also to help young people - in close cooperation with parents and families - to become active, responsible, open-minded members of society". (Paris Declaration, 2015, p.2)

The *Paris Declaration* (2015) calls upon teachers and educators to prioritise the development of civic, social and intercultural competences, promoting democratic values and fundamental rights. In action point 6, it establishes the need to empower

"teachers so that they are able to take an active stand against all forms of discrimination and racism, to educate children and young people in media literacy, to meet the needs of pupils from diverse backgrounds, to impart common fundamental values and to prevent and combat racism and intolerance". (Paris Declaration, 2015 p.3)

The importance of the *Paris Declaration* (2015) as a political statement thus resides in the fact that there is an explicit call by the EU leadership for education agencies to play an active role in the development of competences that can enhance engagement and a sense of belonging, in contrast to the present expression of detachment and the disengagement expressed by young European citizens regarding the EU's common project. In light of the events that led to the *Paris Declaration* (2015) as well as Brexit and the rise of other anti-European voices, it is obvious that education is not sufficiently addressing the lack of a shared sense of community and adherence among young EU citizens. Another reference document in the field of teacher education and cultural diversity in the EU is the Council of Ministers of Education of the EU *Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching*

(2018/C 195/01) (Council, 2018a).⁵ In their statement, the Ministers acknowledge the fact that EU MS are currently facing challenges including populism, xenophobia, divisive nationalism, discrimination, the spreading of fake news and misinformation, as well as the challenge of radicalisation leading to violent extremism. According to their observations, all of these pose a serious threat to the foundations of EU democracies and may hinder a common sense of belonging within and amongst European societies.

Just as in the *Paris Declaration* (2015), in response to the mentioned risks the Council underlines the pivotal role education plays in promoting common values and in providing opportunities for becoming active and critically aware citizens. It thus recommends the promotion of common values and of inclusive education through teaching (Council, 2018a) and denotes an earlier policy document, the *Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) New priorities for European cooperation in education and training* (2015/C 417/04) (Council & Commission, 2015) which addresses similar issues including prioritising inclusive education, equality, equity, non-discrimination and the promotion of civic competences in teachers training. The priority mentioned in the ET 2020 report should be addressed by:

- "iv. Promoting civic, intercultural, and social competences, mutual understanding and respect, and ownership of democratic values and fundamental rights at all levels of education and training and
- v. Enhancing critical thinking, along with cyber and media literacy." (Council & Commission, 2015)

An analysis of these policy statements provides a solid background for the acknowledgment of the need for an intercultural and democratic competences conceptual model in teacher education as a tool for fostering the notion of belonging as described by Yuval-Davis (2011). The real challenge for EU educators today consists of deploying resources to overcome the assumption that cultural diversity can pose a threat to a shared sense of belonging. On the contrary, they should provide students with competences to interact in culturally diverse classrooms and jointly construct the feeling of "home".

4. Developing Intercultural competence: Main International Frameworks

The present flagship competence frameworks on cultural diversity and education refer to the development of Intercultural Competences.

For the UNESCO the IC arise from a deep understanding of human being as dependent, and human beings as interconnected. From that notion, UNESCO attitudes and values can be classified in the three following groups:

- A first set of attitudes required in the act of stepping out of oneself and encounter: curiosity, open-mindedness, risk-taking, compromise, tolerance of ambiguity and resilience.

⁵ Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching. (2018). Official Journal of the European Union. Retrieved from: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0607\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0607(01)&from=EN)

- A second group of positive dispositions, with affective connotations, towards the other, such as empathy, resilience, friendship, conviviality or commitment.
- Finally, a third group of attitudes and values required in the encounter with a different culture, such as respect, cultural humility and responsibility, the exercise of freedom

An additional framework which is Highly aligned with the UNESCO framework is the OECD Global Competence (2018) which aims at providing citizens with the “capacity to examine local, global and intercultural issues, to understand and appreciate the perspectives and world views of others, to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different cultures, and to act for collective well-being and sustainable development”. (OECD Framework on Global Competences. p.16)

The Global competence, as conceptualized by the PISA framework, has four dimensions. These dimensions are the capacities to: examine local, global and intercultural issues, understand and appreciate the perspectives and world views of other people, engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different cultures. For the OECD (2018) there are four dimensions that cannot be separated in the process of competence acquisition. Knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, all interact in the process. Knowledge refers to learning about the “similarities, differences and relations between cultures” (p.12) and it is useful in the context of intercultural issues that arise from the interaction of people with different cultural backgrounds. Skills are defined as “the capacity to carry out a complex and well-organised pattern of thinking (in the case of a cognitive skill) behaviour (in the case of a behavioural skill) in order to achieve a particular goal. Global competence requires numerous skills, including reasoning with information, communication skills in intercultural contexts, perspective taking, conflict resolution skills and adaptability (pp-12-13)”. An important component required for the global competence is the “Perspective taking” that refers to the cognitive and social skills individuals need in order to understand how other people think and feel.

Attitudes are the “mind-set that an individual adopts towards a person, a group, an institution, an issue, a behaviour, or a symbol. This mind-set integrates beliefs, evaluations, feelings and tendencies to behave in a particular way” (OECD, 2018 ,p. 16) a global or intercultural competent behaviour requires an attitude of openness towards people from other cultural backgrounds or contexts , an attitude of respect for cultural differences, as much as an attitude of global mindedness.

Valuing human dignity and valuing cultural diversity following the OECD approach contributes to Intercultural competence. In terms of attitude it implies that individuals apply a critical filter through which they process information about other cultures, being able to relate to the human being dimension and her/his vulnerability before labelling or categorizing the individual. Respecting human beings’ core rights and dignity is an attitude which , in most cases, is compatible with respecting and valuing cultural diversities. Acknowledging Cultural diversity as an asset for societies following this framework should be a desirable goal and fundamental competence for the citizens of the future.

5. The CoE's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) policy context and conceptual framework

The RFCDC was developed by a multidisciplinary team of experts and provides a meta-framework on competences that can be used within educational systems in Europe. Barrett (2020) explains that the RFCDC is the result of merging two leading policy strands that guided the CoE in the protection and the promotion of human rights and democracy: the Education for Democratic Citizenship/Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE) CoE programme and the development of interculturalism as the CoE's preferred policy approach for responding to the challenges associated with culturally diverse democratic societies. The interculturalist paradigm was conceived as an alternative to multiculturalism. Arguments in favour of interculturalism were laid out explicitly in the CoE's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (CoE, 2008), the contents of which were unanimously endorsed by the Committee of Ministers (Barrett, 2020). In 2012, Andorra took up the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers and made education the priority of its political and policy programme. To this end, it launched a process of reflection on how education may be used to create the conditions required for living peacefully together with others in culturally diverse democratic societies. In 2013 Andorra held a Chairmanship conference focusing on the role of education in promoting learners' competences for a culture of democracy and for intercultural dialogue. The conference also explored a proposal to develop a unifying comprehensive reference framework that would describe the competences required for both democratic culture and intercultural dialogue together. In its deliberations, the conference agreed on the "importance of developing a common reference framework for democratic and intercultural competences that could empower education practitioners in promoting a culture of democracy and intercultural dialogue within the member states, and a strong political will to pursue this objective was expressed" (Barrett, 2020, p. 3).

In 2016, the CoE Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education agreed on the strategic objective: "To make the preparation for lifelong active democratic citizenship of all learners in education and training a hallmark of the quality of European education systems and an essential part of our response to the challenges Europe is facing" (CoE, 2016b, art.13). In this same document the Ministers also agreed:

"to provide all learners in education and training with the necessary competences (values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding) that will enable them to engage as active citizens in democratic and diverse societies and increase their chances of succeeding in their working lives". (CoE, 2016b, art.13)

In this regard, the synergies with the EU personal, social and learning competence as much as civic competence is clear, since in both cases education addresses lifelong learning competences that can contribute to and assure individual well-being and professional accomplishment at the same time as it prepares individuals to live peacefully in a culturally diverse context.

The CoE Conference on the Future of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe, which was held in Strasbourg in June 2017, explored how the CoE Charter on

EDC and HRE (CoE, 2010) could be further strengthened as a support tool for building democratic societies based on respect for human rights. As reflected in the final report of the conference, the participants highlighted the role that the RFCDC can play in bringing EDC/HRE closer to teachers' practice.

In order to encourage and support the implementation of the RFCDC within the member states, two significant actions were subsequently undertaken by the CoE. First, alongside the publication and launch of the RFCDC itself at the Conference of the Danish Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers in April 2018, a new Education Policy Advisors Network (EPAN) was also launched. EPAN replaced the older network of national EDC/HRE coordinators. In addition, in November 2018, at a conference held in Oslo to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the European Wergeland Centre, a new CoE Democratic Schools Network was launched. The RFCDC argues that a democratic culture is essential for the effective functioning of democracy.

According to the RFCDC principle author, there are three primary considerations underlying the educational foundations of the framework of the (Barrett, 2020):

1. *The intrinsic character of democratic institutions:* Democratic institutions are dysfunctional unless citizens are committed to the democratic processes, such as participation, decision-making, protection of minorities and their rights, and a conviction that conflicts must be resolved peacefully. All this requires values-based commitment with democratic principles. "If citizens do not hold these democratic values and attitudes – that is, if a democratic culture does not prevail – then democratic institutions will be unable to function effectively" (p. 7)
2. *The diversification of diversity:* RFCDC proposes that democratic culture within culturally diverse societies requires intercultural dialogue. "Intercultural dialogue is the means through which citizens can express their opinions, concerns and aspirations to other people who have different cultural affiliations from themselves. In the case of culturally diverse societies, intercultural dialogue is vital for democratic discussion, and for the full integration and inclusion of all citizens. For this reason, citizens need to be not only democratically competent but also interculturally competent to enable them to engage in intercultural dialogue" (p. 7)
3. The RFCDC defends that democratic culture must be "grounded in human rights. Human rights are essential for a just and cohesive society in which all citizens feel a sense of belonging and have their inherent dignity. From the point of view of the RFCDC, human rights, democracy, democratic culture and intercultural dialogue are intrinsically linked" (p. 7)

In the words of the author:

"the framework [...] provides a comprehensive competence-based approach to EDC, HRE and IE. It offers detailed proposals on how formal education – ranging all the way from pre-school through to university level – can be used to equip young people with the competences needed for participating actively in democratic culture, for respecting, promoting and defending human rights, and for engaging in respectful, appropriate and effective intercultural dialogue. It also provides guidance on how education can be used to equip young people with the competences that confer resilience to radicalization, violent extremist propaganda and hate speech" (Barrett, 2020).

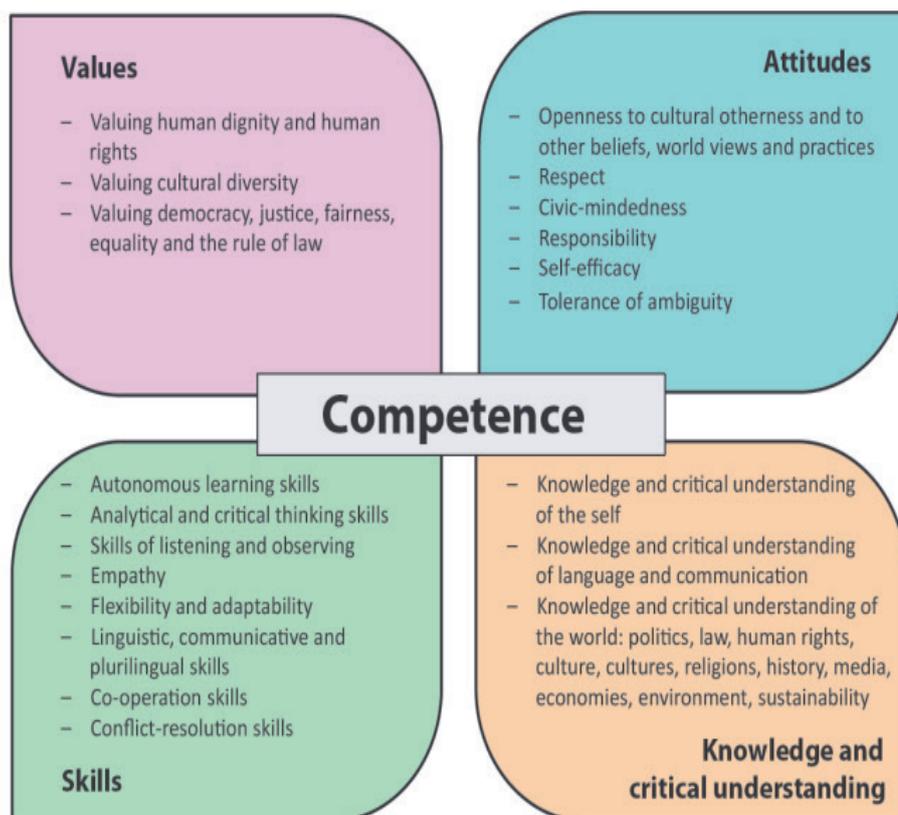


Figure 1: The 20 Competences of the CoE's RFCDC. Source: Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competence for Democratic Culture, Volume 1 (2018).

The Reference Framework of Competence for Democratic Culture of the CoE clusters the competences into four dimensions: Values, Attitudes, Skills and Knowledge and critical understanding, all of which are described as follows :

Values offer standards for evaluation and action criteria. That is why they are so powerful when it comes to intercultural situations. In order to participate effectively and appropriately in a culture of democracy, three sets of values are necessary: valuing human dignity and human rights, valuing cultural diversity and valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law.

Attitudes are overall mental orientations towards people, objects and situations. Attitudes relevant to IDC include openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices, respect, civic-mindedness, responsibility, and tolerance of ambiguity.

Skills are defined as the capacity or capability for carrying out complex, well organised patterns of thinking and behaviour. In this case, IDC requires autonomous learning skills, analytical and critical thinking, empathy, flexibility and adaptability, linguistic and communicative skills, and conflict-resolution and cooperation skills.

Knowledge and critical understating of the self is of particular importance and was already identified by the UNESCO framework in 2013. Self-awareness and self-understating are vital for participating effectively and appropriately in culture of democracy. Knowledge and understanding of the self implies analysing our own collective narrative, understanding what binds us to our communities cognitively and emotionally,

one's perspective on the world as much as our own biases. Social science knowledge is an important source for such understanding. This requires a critical understanding of language and communication as much as knowledge and critical understanding of politics, law, human rights, cultures, religions, history, media and in general, all sources for socialisation and personalisation of individuals in the context of society.

Democratic and interculturally competent behaviour arises from a dynamic and adaptive process in which an individual responds appropriately and effectively to the constantly shifting demands, challenges and opportunities presented by democratic and intercultural situations. This is achieved through the flexible mobilisation, orchestration and deployment of varying clusters of competences drawn selectively from the individual's full repertoire of values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding in a manner that is appropriate for and adapted to the ongoing situation (CoE, 2018a).

6. RFCDC and the Development of Intercultural and Democratic Competent Teachers

Based on the Council of Europe definition of **Intercultural Competence**, **Intercultural and democratic competence** can be defined as: The capacity to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions in cultural diverse context. It is the ability to establish positive interactions with people of different national, ethnic, religious, social or cultural backgrounds or gender, these being the dimensions that are most immediate and required when it comes to educational settings. These dimensions' address all marginalized groups such as minorities, religious groups or economically marginalized individuals. This competence has a potentially transformative capacity, and leads individuals towards creative solutions for conflict situations, by fostering dialogue and critical understanding through criticality and cultural awareness IDC is a fundamental resource for the achievement of successful and fulfilled personal and social life in a multicultural and democratic society and requires at the first place to be embedded in teachers in order to deploy and put it into action.

Democratic and interculturally competent behaviour is viewed by the RFCDC as arising from a dynamic and adaptive process in which an individual responds appropriately and effectively to the constantly shifting demands, challenges and opportunities presented by democratic and intercultural situations. This is achieved through the flexible mobilisation, orchestration and deployment of varying clusters of competences drawn selectively from the individual's full repertoire of values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding in a manner that is appropriate for and adapted to the on-going situation (CoE, 2018a). Thus, competence itself is the sum of applying dynamic clusters of competences to situations in an effective manner, and this may be classified as a transformative competence (Caena, 2019).

The development of IDC according to the CoE is focused on the individual. **Democratic and interculturally competent behaviour** is viewed by the framework as arising from a dynamic and adaptive process in which an individual responds appropriately and effectively to the constantly shifting demands, challenges and opportunities presented by democratic and intercultural situations. This is achieved through the flexible mobilisation, orchestration and deployment of varying clusters of psychological

resources drawn selectively from the individual's full repertoire of values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding.

The CoE framework proposes that education cannot be separated from its socio-political context. Enhancing IDC thus needs to take into consideration these aspects. According to the RFCDC, IDC requires the individual's conviction that cultural diversity is an asset to society and that social justice and inclusion are pillars for life in a democratic, cohesive and multicultural society. The concept of human dignity and its recognition is fundamental.

1. The framework was endorsed by the CoE 2016 Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education who in their final declaration agreed on the strategic objective of using the framework as a hallmark for education for democratic citizenship of all learners as an essential part of the response to the challenges Europe is facing.
2. In that same spirit the Council in the *Paris Declaration (2015)* explicitly called on education agencies to play an active role in the development of competences that can enhance engagement and a sense of belonging, in contrast to the present expression of detachment and the disengagement which is expressed by young European citizens regarding the EU's common project. In this sense, we can clearly identify that both documents are aligned in emphasising the need to foster democratic values and intercultural dialogue. The RFCDC framework is thus an optimal tool for the implementation of the priorities established by the *Paris Declaration (2015)*.
3. In the *Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching (Council, 2018a)*, the Ministers acknowledge the fact that EU Member States are currently facing challenges including populism, xenophobia, divisive nationalism and discrimination. The CoE framework aims to respond to the risks mentioned by the Council by elaborating and educational response for promoting common values and in providing opportunities for fostering active and critically aware citizens.
4. This CoE framework focuses on individuals and on their responses to democratic and intercultural situations. Furthermore, there is a clear non-essentialising⁶ approach towards the notion of culture. The framework describes IDC as arising from a dynamic and adaptive process in which an individual responds appropriately and effectively to the constantly shifting demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by democratic and intercultural situations; intercultural situations themselves are defined as arising when an individual perceives another person (or group of people) as being culturally different from themselves (CoE, 2018a, p.31). Cultural differences are therefore not essentialised, but are instead located within individual citizens' perceptions. This is a notable strength of the perspective on culture put forward by the RFCDC.

6 Essentialising means attributing natural, essential characteristics to members of specific culturally/socially defined (gender, age, ethnic, "racial", socioeconomic, linguistic...) groups. When we essentialise others, we assume that individual differences can be explained by inherent, biological, "natural" characteristics. This approach reinforces prejudice and fixed notions of cultural and identity

5. The dimension of values is also highlighted in the framework. A strong emphasis is given to ethics and to the personal transformation process which promotes the individual's conviction that cultural diversity is an asset to society and that social justice and inclusion are pillars for life in a democratic society. The concept of human dignity and its recognition is fundamental according to this approach for the development of IDC skills and attitudes.

6. The framework emphasises on personal engagement and ethical and social commitment. Such an approach requires teachers to break the inertias of conformist praxes and to go forward with an inclusive critical thinking-based pedagogy.

7. The CoE highlights especially the dimension of values as a core element in social cohesion. IDC is understood as a holistic competence which requires a complex learning process that involves knowledge, skills, attitude and values. Endorsing such a competence in teacher training and formal education can play a central role in the achievement of the goals of the *Paris Declaration*.

8. The framework is based on the development of an ethical commitment towards democratic values, inclusion and social justice. It highlights the need for the individual's recognition of diversity as a valuable asset for a cohesive society.

7. Conclusions: IDC development in Teacher Education a priority for democratic and culturally diverse societies

Intercultural and democratic Competence is the capacity to engage in open, appropriate and effective and empathic interactions in the context of Cultural diversity. It is the ability to establish positive interactions with people of different national, ethnic, religious, social or cultural backgrounds or gender is probably the dimension that is most immediate and required when it comes to educational settings (Barret, 2014, Shuali et.al 2020) . It also expresses individual's capacity for shifting across different cultural references and explore the collective identities, deploying cultural awareness and criticality towards ones shared cultural heritage. IDC in teacher's education contributes to a complex understanding of human being and situations and provide preservice and in service teachers with tools for an integral development of young learners. Drawing on the understanding of the culturally diverse character of the EU and on the perception of culture as a source of collective identity, this paper asserts the need to prepare teachers by providing them with competences to guide students in the process of negotiating individual and collective narratives, as a basis for a cohesive, inclusive, and democratic society. In looking at education through the lens of inclusivity, cultural issues must be addressed. The RFCDC, provides education stakeholders and especially teachers with a conceptual model, descriptors and guidelines for the development of IDC in both initial and continuing professional development teacher education.

Nevertheless, the fact that the framework was conceived as a generic tool mainly addressing students in different levels, requires a further pedagogical elaboration for its implementation in order to specifically address IDC development in teacher education. Although there is an explicit acknowledgment of the importance of teacher education,

there is a lack of indication on how the RFCDC framework should actually be incorporated in practice in teacher education institutes, regarding both initial and continuing professional development. Referring to the dimension of teachers training for IC, Hoffmann and Briga (2018, p.39) acknowledge that “concrete and consistent concepts of teaching and assessing IC within initial teacher education and teachers’ lifelong learning rarely exist”. There are several questions which should be asked by teacher educators before initiating ITE for the development of IDC: What are the core values associated with the development of IDC? Can knowledge required for IDC be provided and organised by the teacher or should an engaging and self-guided learning process prevail? Can student teachers develop the knowledge, attitudes, values and skills of IDC in spite of the different barriers that initial teaching modalities present to complex and long-term learning processes?

An earlier publication of the CoE on policies and practices for teaching socio-cultural diversity (Arnesen *et al.* 2008) identified three major approaches among EU teacher educators for addressing cultural diversity and intercultural education: teaching diversity, managing diversity, and enhancing diversity.

Teaching diversity is an approach that focuses primarily on developing the capacity to understand the profound significance of diversity and to work in this environment of cultural, linguistic and religious plurality, etc. It is an approach based on what the RFCDC will establish of “critical understanding” and it provides knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon of cultural diversity, its origins and its characteristics in the socio-cultural context of the country. This approach is clearly specific and needs to address the particular characteristics of each country. It is clearly based on multicultural education, multi-ethnic and ethnic studies developed in the USA (Banks, 1989; Sleeter & Carmona, 2017).

Managing diversity is an approach focusing primarily on the development of skills, attitudes and communication strategies to manage diversity, such as negotiation skills, conflict resolution, the development of mutual trust, coexistence, etc. This approach to intercultural education and development of IDC has developed in countries which have had to cope with situations with emphasised social segregation of ethnic social groups, both of indigenous origin and of migratory backgrounds. This has been the case in countries like Germany and the Netherlands.

Enhancing diversity is an approach which seeks to go beyond the knowledge of diversity, or the ability to cope in this context, and focuses on the creation of conditions which enable the appreciation of diversity itself and development of the necessary conditions for participation and equality of opportunities for all, including positive action, empowerment, active citizenship, etc. This approach is the most suitable for the conceptual paradigm which we call intercultural pedagogy. This approach directly advocates for inclusion and participation, offering individuals the possibility of personal development in a diverse cultural context.

The truth is, however, that in many cases – as shown in the aforementioned report of the CoE - teachers choose in practice to implement all three approaches at once. And, in reality, when put together, it is fair to say that a grading is made in the intensity of these three approaches with respect to the treatment of cultural diversity. So, the approach on teaching diversity sits at the base, whose objective is sensitisation by generating critical thinking; followed by the approach on managing diversity, which seeks to develop empathy and solidarity; and finally, the approach on enhancing diversity, aiming to create

conditions which enable the appreciation of diversity itself, fostering the very fact of cultural diversity as an ideological commitment.

As the starting point for the promotion of teachers' IDC, teacher education institutions should pay particular attention to IDC through training. In particular, following CoE recommendations (2018a), teacher education institutions should address their interventions towards achieving the following goals:

- Train future teachers in the promotion and development of IDC in schools;
- Motivate and support future teachers, as well as teacher educators, to play an active role in the development of their own IDC; and,
- Integrate the promotion and development of IDC as the basis of their institutional mission.

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