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INTERCULTURALITY IN EDUCATION

A Theoretical and
Methodological Toolbox

Fred Derwin



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Fred Dervin

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To Paul, Leena-Mummo, Anu, and Regis

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Introduction—Interculturality in Education: A New Beginning?

Abstract In the introduction, the author explains why it is important to reconsider the way interculturality is used in education today. He explains that the notion can mean too much or too little and that it tends to be polysemic. It is thus urgent to give some new meanings to interculturality in order to make it richer and more realistic. With the scene set, the approach of the book is introduced.

To try a concept on an object is to ask of the object what we have to do with it, what it can do for us. To label an object with a concept is to tell in precise terms the kind of action or attitude the object is to suggest to us. All knowledge properly so-called is, therefore, turned in a certain direction or taken from a certain point of view. Henri Bergson (1934: 199)

No fact is intercultural at the outset, nor is the quality of intercultural an attribute of an object, it is only intercultural analysis that can give it this character. Martine Abdallah-Pretceille (2006: 480)

This book is about interculturality in education. I use this word rather than the adjective-turned-into-a-noun *the intercultural* using the suffix *-ality*, which translates as a process and something in the making. This is the concept closest to the way intercultural encounters in education are discussed in this book. It will sound paradoxical to start a book on this notion by saying that, even though I have been writing about it in different languages for nearly 15 years now, I am not sure what interculturality

means and refers to today, or whom it includes and excludes. I agree with the two thinkers above, who have been very influential in my work: *interculturality is a point of view, not a given*. What this means is that it is we who decide what is intercultural and what is not. This makes the notion very unstable, political, and ideological. On many occasions I have tried to get rid of the notion in my work, but I could find no better alternative. I have always had to come back to it. In a world of research where the marketing and branding of scholars are becoming more and more customary, interculturality has become part of my scientific identity, which ‘clings to me like a leech’. The word interculturality often gives the impression of brotherhood and convenience when meeting other researchers and practitioners of intercultural communication and education. Regrettably we often neither speak the same language nor share the same understanding of the notion. *‘My intercultural’ may not mean the same as ‘your intercultural’*. *‘My intercultural’ might have different values and ideologies than ‘your intercultural’*. This book represents an attempt to come to terms with interculturality and to share the meanings and methods that I have developed over the past decade in dialogue with many colleagues and students from around the world.

Let me start with a cliché that still needs repeating: Interculturality has been with us since the beginning of time. People have always interacted across borders, be they national, regional, linguistic, religious, and/or social (Pieterse 2004). Interculturality is thus far from being a new phenomenon, as we tend to believe today. What is different about interculturality in our era is its omnipresence and the speed at which it can take place. Yet ‘our’ interculturality is probably not better than that of the past. Even though we are said to communicate and interact across cultures at an exponential rate, it is clear that our accelerating world does not resemble McLuhan’s Global Village, where the movement of information, objects, and people is instantaneous and can lead to more encounters and interactions (Wolton 2013: 163). Education is probably one of the best places to learn about, practise, and reflect on interculturality—something we rarely have time to do outside this context. Interculturality is both part of school life (diverse students) and an essential component of teaching-learning (all school subjects contain references to intercultural encounters, explicitly and/or implicitly). In a world where racism, different kinds of discrimination, and injustice are on the rise, time spent at school should contribute effectively to prepare students to be real *interculturalists* who can question these phenomena and act critically, ethically, and responsively.

The notion of interculturality has been popular in education, sometimes under the guise of *multiculturalism*, *transculturality*, *social justice*, or *globalization*, in the USA since the 1960s, in Europe since the 1970s, and more recently in other parts of the world. Like many other important notions in education, interculturality tends to be polysemic, fictional, and empty at the same time, conveniently meaning either too much or too little. I remember one day pondering over this while watching a scene from the popular BBC television drama series, *Waterloo Road* (2006–2014), which is set in a comprehensive school of the same name. In that scene, the Head of Pastoral Care was preparing a brochure for a visit from the Local Education Authority (LEA). She co-constructed the following text with the principal of the school:

Head of Pastoral Care: (...) to show the community that it is as much a part of the school as Waterloo Road is a part of the community (...) (*speaking to the principal*) is that enough jargon for you?

Principal: We wanna chuck in some of your multicultural expertise.

Head of Pastoral Care: OK. What about this? Miss Campbell, Head of Pastoral, will be there to answer questions on the ethnic diversity within the school... and the steps that we take to ensure (...) that each child is treated equally and with respect regardless of race, religion or culture.

Both ‘jargon’ and ‘chuck(ed) in’ could easily be used to describe the state of research and practice relating to the interculturality in education.

Interdisciplinary at heart, interculturality has also been built through borrowing ideas, concepts, and methods from other fields of research. Furthermore, practices and research agendas around interculturality in education have been highly influenced by (supra-)national policies and ideologies which have not always been in line with either interdisciplinary discussions or realities. As such, borrowing Machiavelli’s distinction, I often have the impression that the ‘thinking of the palace’ (scholars, decision makers, educators) beats that of the ‘public square’ (those who experience interculturality) (Maffesoli 1985: 184). In other words, too often the powerful speak *for* and *over* the powerless when it comes to interculturality. Finally, in research and practice, the notion is used in many different fields, such as applied linguistics, language education, communication studies, education, health, and so on. It thus circulates across fields, subfields, languages, and institutions, sometimes retaining meanings, sometimes modifying them, and indoctrinating and spreading an amalgam of stereotypes, prejudices, and biases.

THE APPROACH IN THIS BOOK

This book proposes an approach to interculturality in education which takes on a critical and reflexive stance towards the notion. Inspired by, amongst others, A. Holliday's approach to intercultural communication (2010), I claim that interculturality is ideological in the classical Marxist sense as an evaluative rather than a neutral or descriptive notion. Interculturality thus refers to power whereby some people are 'dominated, excluded, and prejudiced against', while some others tend to pretend to treat them fairly and equally by making claims about 'us' and 'them' (Shi-xu 2001).

The following questions are asked:

- What is the meaning of interculturality today?
- What are the ideologies hidden behind the notion?
- What concepts can be used to determine its characteristics?
- Why is it important to change the way we 'do' interculturality in education?
- Can one educate and train for a new kind of intercultural education?
- Are there examples of 'good' practices?

The approach to interculturality in education promoted in this book suggests that the prefix *inter-* translates best what the 'intercultural' could be about: *Interaction*, *context*, *the recognition of power relations*, *simplicity* (the inevitable combination of *the simple* and *the complex*), and *intersectionality* (how different identities beyond race, ethnicity, nationality, and language also contribute to interculturality). The second part of the notion, the 'cultural', is revised.

This book is constructed like a toolbox, whereby certain concepts, notions, and methods are proposed to both evaluate and reconstruct the notion in order to make it more useful in research and practice, and more adapted to our era of accelerated globalization. The book also represents a call for multipolar considerations of interculturality in education. The reader is introduced to recent interdisciplinary ideas that can contribute to making the most of the notion in education. Concrete examples from many and varied research projects and cultural productions illustrate the tools. Each chapter concludes with self-reflexive questions. A commented list of the ten most important references related to interculturality in education appears at the end of the book. The book is of interest to students, scholars (novice and confirmed researchers), and practitioners interested

not only in intercultural education but also in language education, communication education, and teacher education. I promise they will be rewarded.

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Misnomers

Abstract This chapter discusses and revises three problematic concepts that are often used in conjunction with interculturality. The three concepts are culture, identity, and collectivity. The concept of culture has always been central in research and practice of interculturality. Yet culture has been questioned in many other fields of research for being too solid and generalizing. A fluid approach to it is proposed. In a similar vein, the idea of identity, a central concept of our times, is very important for interculturality. The author argues that it needs to be examined from a co-constructivist position. Finally, the concept of collectivity is redefined in relation to postmodern interculturality.

The best thing would be a comparison of Eastern and Western cultures. That's a fashionable topic nowadays, and it doesn't matter particularly whether what you write is (not 's). As long as you say something with conviction, anything at all, you'll be able to sell it. (Lao She 1929: 75)

The notion of interculturality has been travelling extensively from one corner of the globe to another and back since its inception in the fields of communication in the 1950s and of education in the 1970s. Interculturality thus represents a good example of what Blommaert has called a 'travelling discourse' (2005: 72). For the scholar '[w]henver discourses travel across the globe, what is carried with them is their shape, but their value, meaning, or function do not often travel along'. Working on interculturality requires using certain concepts which have a specific history—different

meanings and associated ideologies that need to be unpacked. In this section I review some of the most contested but still heavily used concepts encountered when one works on interculturality in education. I demonstrate that they are, in fact, *misnomers* (*wrong or inaccurate uses of a term*), that is to say that they lead and contribute to certain interpretations of intercultural phenomena which are unreliable and even untrue. This section explains the need to be aware of interdisciplinary discussions to be able to question them. The section also warns readers of the danger of talking about interculturality as if it were concepts doing things and thinking in certain ways—instead of people. The idea of anthropomorphism, or the attribution of human characteristics to beings other than humans, objects, and concepts, reflects well the tendency to personalize concepts such as *culture*, *community*, and *diversity* and to make them do things and think in certain ways rather than people. In other words, people disappear behind these concepts. A good example is the use of phrases such as *communicating with other cultures*, *cultures meeting cultures*, *interacting with the Muslim community*, and so on (see such problematic uses in, e.g. Bender-Szymanski 2013). In the field of intercultural pedagogy, such uses are also widespread, as in ‘the willingness to engage with the foreign culture’ and ‘critical engagement with the foreign culture under consideration and one’s own’. My questions are: *Where are the people in these utterances? Who speaks for them through these anthropomorphic words?*

‘THE DECEPTIVELY COSY BLANKET OF CULTURE’ (ERIKSEN 2001)

I witnessed something indisputably interesting at a Global University Summit some years ago. Hundreds of students from around the world were gathered to negotiate recommendations about study abroad for the next G20 meeting, an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 20 major economies. A text, written by the organizers, served as a basis for discussions. A fascinating discussion around the concepts of *culture* and *culture shock* took place amongst the students. The room was clearly divided into two camps: those who refused to include the phrase *culture shock*—because of its fuzzy meaning and its overreliance on the word *culture*—to point at some of the problems that international students encounter abroad and for which governments should provide help, and those who asserted that culture shock is a concrete phenomenon which they had experienced themselves in ‘other cultures’. I sided with

those who had doubts about the value of these concepts and felt that they not there were too ‘cosy’.

The concept of culture is central in the word interculturality, but what should we do with it?

Culture has always been at the centre of discussions in intercultural education. Yet since the 1980s a critical turn in many fields such as anthropology, which used to depend heavily on the concept, has led to either revising its meaning and use or discarding it (Starn 2015). This section calls for an approach to culture that looks beyond ‘solid’ and illusory conceptions of national culture and discusses the ontological aspects of the concept (which can turn culture into *an excuse*).

This will be a mantra throughout this section on misnomers: Culture and the concepts to follow do not exist as such. They have no agency; they are not palpable. One cannot meet a culture but people who (are made to) represent it—or rather represent imaginaries and representations of it. Wikan (2002: 83) expressed her surprise at ‘people’s proclivity to talk as if culture were endowed with mind, feeling, and intention. (...) as if culture had taken on a life of its own’. Phillips (2007: 45) reminds us that culture is neither bounded nor closed; it is not homogeneous; it is ‘produced by people, rather than being things that explain why they behave the way they do’.

This is why any cultural habit, any so-called cultural heritage, is the result of encounters and mixing with representatives of other ‘cultures’. Trying to define a culture or its borders often leads to closing and segregating it from a world that has interacted with and influenced it. Let me take one example about China. The Joseph E. Hotung Gallery at the British Museum in London explores China, South Asia, and Southeast Asia from the Palaeolithic to the present. In the section devoted to Chinese civilization, one finds a group of 12 colourful and impressive ceramic figures from the tomb of General Liu Tingxun, an important military and political character of the Tang dynasty from around 700 CE—the ‘golden age of achievement, both at home and abroad’ (MacGregor 2010: 55). These were the heydays of the Silk Road. Walking in procession, these creatures, humans and animals of about one metre high, are meant to guard the dead and to impress the judges of the underworld ‘who would recognise his rank and his abilities, and award him the prestigious place among the dead that was his due’ (MacGregor, *ibid.*). To untrained and ignorant eyes, these sculptures look very ‘Chinese’, even ‘typically Chinese’. Yet when one looks closer at the faces of the pair of lokapāla figures (Sanskrit

for ‘guardian of the world’) one cannot but see Indian faces. At the back of the procession, the horses were, at the time, a new breed in China, brought from the West, while the Bactrian camels originated from Afghanistan and Turkestan. The Indian, Afghan, and Turkestan references highlight China’s close links with Central Asia and other parts of the world. Like other countries, China has always been in contact with the world, and its culture bears witness to not only the many and varied mixings (*mélanges*) but also to inventions and constructions of different eras. A cultural artefact such as the Liu Tingxun tomb also denotes both the symbolic power of the ‘other’ and the power relations between ‘cultures’. As such, the horses and camels, ‘borrowed’ and monetized from other parts of the world, contributed to the general’s prestigious status when facing the judges of the underworld.

Some scholars have also criticized the use of the concept of culture because it tends to give the impression that culture is endorsed coherently by those who are supposed to be represented by it (Bayart 2005: 74). In such cases, people remain imprisoned in the ‘straitjackets’ of culture or as Prashad puts it (2001: ix) culture ‘wraps [them] up in its suffocating embrace’. Adib-Moghaddam (2011: 19) reminds us that coherent cultures do not exist and that talking about a *clash of cultures* (or civilizations) is very much questionable (see also Bayart 2005: 103). *People can clash, not cultures.*

The most ferocious and serious criticisms of the concept of culture concern its biased and ideological uses.

First, there is the use of culture to explain a group’s habits, opinions, attitudes, and so on. For Piller (2011: 172), in this regard, ‘Culture is sometimes nothing more than a convenient and lazy explanation.’ Often when one cannot explain or understand interculturality, it is easy to put culture forward as an excuse or an alibi (Dervin and Machart 2015). In the following excerpt, a Finn tries to explain why Finnish people are silent (which is a stereotype):

Yes, we are maybe quieter than people in other countries. Why it is such a big problem? It just belongs to Finnish culture. It doesn’t mean that we are depressed or something, it’s just in the habit of Finland.

Note how she ‘excuses’ Finnish people’s habits and attitudes by putting Finnish culture forward and de-agentivizing them—in other words: *it is not us but our culture*. Baumann (1996: 1) noted the same in his study of the diverse inhabitants of Southall, a town near Heathrow Airport in England:

Whatever any ‘Asian’ informant was reported to have said or done was interpreted with stunning regularity as a consequence of their ‘Asianness’, their ‘ethnic identity’, or the ‘culture’ of their ‘community’. All agency seemed to be absent, and culture an imprisoning cocoon or a determining force.

The difference between the aforementioned Finnish person and the ‘Asian’ informants in Baumann’s study is that while the Finn has uttered herself generalities about Finnish culture, the ‘Asian’ informants were straitjacketed in their culture by others.

In intercultural encounters, the ‘power’ of culture has also been used to explain why people do not understand or misunderstand each other. The assumption is: *People have different cultures, so when they meet they encounter problems.* Yet Sarangi (1994: 418) wonders why this is always branded as ‘intercultural misunderstanding’ while ‘when it involves participants from the same “culture”, [it] become[s] labelled as a challenge’. *In many instances of misunderstanding between people from different countries, interculturality has nothing to do with culture.*

Second, in order to describe our own culture we need to compare it to other cultures. Although this is deemed to be ‘normal’ and/or ‘natural’, it is easy to see how problematic this can become (Holliday 2010: 39). Such comparisons can create dichotomies between the ‘good’ and ‘bad’, the ‘civilized’ and ‘uncivilized’, and the ‘same’ and the ‘other’. They can contribute to ethnocentrism (believing that our culture is better than others), establish power imbalance, patronize the other, close doors to our environment, and hide and justify negative actions (attacks against freedom of speech, violation of human rights, misogyny, and so on). Comparing cultures can also create a state of *bovarysm* (referring to the novel by French writer G. Flaubert in which a lady, dissatisfied with her life, cheats on her husband and lives beyond her means), whereby one ‘see[s] oneself as other than one is, and to bend one’s vision of other people and things to suit this willed metamorphosis’ (Jenson 2006: 167). In what follows, I review three examples of these phenomena which need to be avoided when dealing with interculturality in education.

- In the Finnish imaginary, Finns have a special cultural characteristic which they claim to be theirs only: *sisu*. Although most people would argue that the word cannot be translated into other languages, the English *ultimate determination*, *fortitude*, and *persistence* explain well what *sisu* is about. One does not need to go back too far in

history to find the origin of the word: It was invented during the Second World War to motivate Finnish troops. *We Finns are persistent, determined, and mentally and emotionally strong enough to face difficulties, adversity, and danger.* The term is still used, overused, and abused today to describe Finns in daily conversations, in politics, and also in nation branding campaigns and marketing. Although we need to respect the thousands of people who fought during the war, for whom the idea of *sisu* was probably very meaningful, the use of the word today is startling, especially when it is used to compare ‘we’ Finns with ‘them’. Such comparisons always lead without any exceptions to ethnocentrism and moralistic judgements. *We are more tenacious and courageous than you.* Interestingly, very few people have noted the similarities between *sisu* and the overused and marketed slogan *Keep calm and carry on*, which was produced by the British government in 1939 to raise the morale of the British public in preparation for the war. *Keep calm and carry on* has the same connotations as *sisu*—which makes Finnish *sisu* far from unique.

- The second example is drawn from a booklet that was largely distributed to international students at a Finnish university some years ago. The booklet aimed at teaching these students how to ‘behave’ in the institution (see Dervin and Layne 2013). In the following excerpt, the authors explain to the students what is expected of them in terms of autonomy:

Whereas in many cultures people are supposed to follow instructions of teachers and supervisors, Finns are encouraged to solve problems independently and take initiative when needed. Thus while young people in many cultures live in a very protected and supervised life, students in Finland are very independent and take responsibility for their studies. This is another area where foreign students also get easily confused.

It is interesting to note how the use of the concept of culture allows the authors to (1) Position Finns and Finnish culture as being excellent, and (2) Relegate other cultures to inferior positions. It is also noteworthy that the people who are included in the discourses of culture shift from ‘in many cultures people’ and ‘young people in many cultures’ to ‘foreign students’, thus generalizing about the latter’s capacities—or incapacities in this case. Such discourses on ‘our’ culture and ‘their’ culture are of course

very biased and ideological and cannot lead to interculturality: The potential creativity of the *inter-* is swallowed up by what I consider to be a contemptible approach to culture in education.

- The third and last example takes place in Spain, where an intercultural specialist has spent a few days and is asked about her impressions of the ‘culture’. To her surprise, Spaniards do not seem to be taking a siesta after lunch, as she had imagined. In what follows she gives explanations based on her observations:

I know that they sort of stop at about 7 o’clock or so and give the kids a snack if they have children at home and then it’s on with the evening and the tapas rounds again and people are rushing about until 12 o’clock or 1 at night so it seems to me that they sleep on average 5 or 6 hours a night and I really don’t know why this is specially as I said coming from Sweden where we need so much sleep I don’t know what it is got to do with? Is it the climate? Or is it just the fact that people having to work harder *even* in Spain?

I have emphasized the adverb *even* in the excerpt as it reveals the consultant’s subjectivity and implicitly negative perception of people and culture in Spain. What hides behind the adverb is the despicable stereotype that Spaniards are lazy. Interestingly though, by means of the very general and ‘robot-like’ schedule that she described at the beginning of the excerpt she tries to question the assumption that people take it easy in the country.

Hoskins and Sallah (2011: 114) have demonstrated how certain uses of the word *culture*—as in the excerpts above—can often contribute to xenophobia (fear of foreigners and the unfamiliar), racism, sexism, the reduction of identity, and even certain forms of physical and symbolic violence (see Sen 2005).

So what shall we do with the concept of culture then? Can we deal with interculturality *without culture* in education? Many scholars have argued that we need to keep the idea of culture (Ogay and Edelmann 2011) and to avoid ‘throwing the baby out with the bathwater’. In my own work I have decided to *throw the baby out* because it leads to so much confusion and misunderstanding between students, researchers, practitioners, and decision makers. *My understanding of culture is not always the same as that of my interlocutors.* I refuse to support a word that can rid the ‘other’ of his/her plurality and thus refrain from using this empty and problematic

concept. So what can we do without this central concept? Eriksen's piece of advice is very useful:

Instead of invoking culture, if one talks about local arts, one could simply say "local arts"; if one means language, ideology, patriarchy, children's rights, food habits, ritual practices or local political structures, one could use those or equivalent terms. (Eriksen 2001: 141)

In a similar vein, Wikan (2002: 86) suggests using the words *knowledge*, *experience*, or *lifeworld*. The more precise and explicit we are when using certain words like culture, the better and fairer it is for those whose voice(s) we (re)present when dealing with interculturality in education.

IDENTITY IS NOT A THING

This subsection reviews the meaning of the concept of identity in discussions of interculturality. Unlike the concept of culture, I believe that identity can be very useful for examining interculturality, especially if one works from an open, processual, and co-constructivist approach.

Education often contributes to making us believe that our identities are stable and constant. Yet at the same time what we experience when we meet other people is often inconstant and unpredictable (Lifton 1993). This is why we sometimes decide to hide behind a mask or reduce the other to a single identity. We all have different identities that are relevant depending on the context and our interlocutors, and also on our health, mood, readiness to speak, and so on. A. Sen (2005: 350) also reminds us that:

The same person can be of Indian origin, a Parsee, a French citizen, a US resident, a woman, a poet, a vegetarian, an anthropologist, a university professor, a Christian, a bird watcher, and an avid believer in extra-terrestrial life and of the propensity of alien creatures to ride around the cosmos in multicoloured UFOs.

So, in a sense, following Turkle (1996), when I reflect on my own self, instead of asking 'who am I?' the question 'who am we?' appears to be more suitable. And to be more precise the question should be 'who am we with and for other people?' because it is through the eyes of the other that self is constructed, that my identity becomes alive. Of course it does

not always take place that smoothly. In fact, while some people might feel free to perform their plural identities, others might be confined to a single and solid identity, like the stuffing and mounting of the skins of animals for display or study (Chebel d'Appollonia 2011: 11). In many cases we, ourselves, wish to reduce who we are to a solid identity (Bauman 2004) because we might feel uncomfortable about opening up some aspects of it for others in specific contexts (ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.).

Many scholars who have written about interculturality argue that we should become aware of our identity and/or learn to be proud of who we are (e.g. Byram 1997). I believe that this is an illusion, because who I am is unstable, contextual, and has to be negotiated with others. In fact, if one starts looking for the stable in our identity, one will face many challenges: Our memory of the past can change and be different from others; we can acquire another national identity and get rid of ours; in many countries we can adopt a new name with more or less ease; through plastic surgery and cosmetics we can change our appearance (with more or less success). Our date of birth is probably one of the only stable identity markers that we have. However, there are cases when people can request authorities to correct a date of birth on their official documents. Surprising as it may be, some people may not be aware of their real date of birth or use a wrong date. This is the case of the following individual who shared her experience online:

My Real birthdate is 03.10.1998, however my parents got the birth certificate done which stated that my birthdate is 4.4.1997. because of this all my documents such as school leaving certificate, passport has the wrong birthdate. Is there anyway I can change my birthdate to my real one? Please help! (anonymous, dates changed)

For the writer Hanif Kureishi (1998: n. p.) it is futile to try to look for our identity. He explains:

I suppose you reach a resolution when you realize that there isn't such a thing as having an identity, when in a sense the question does not exist for you anymore. When I was a young man in the suburbs I walked up the streets meeting people who'd ask me *where do you come from?* And I'd say *from the house over there* and they'd say *no but where do you really come from?* And that would really bother me because I would really come from that house over there and there was nothing else I could say. But of course my

father was Indian . . . are, and how you put together different notions of yourself to make what is commonly known as a self (my transcription).

For people who appear to be different from the ‘majority’ (different skin colour, foreign accent), the question of who they are might often be a topic of discussion with others. *Where are you from? Where are you really from? You sound foreign, what are your origins?* Although these questions might seem ‘natural’ in intercultural encounters, asking them can be very political, and answering them difficult, annoying, and/or embarrassing. In our societies, some people always need to explain their identity while others don’t. And sometimes they have to face situations which are reminiscent of police inquiries. In the context of education we need to be careful about this. Sometimes we feel that it is good to put other people’s origins on the table in order to flatter or empower them. Yet our assumptions about the other might hurt him/her. It is not because someone is of a different colour or race that they do not share nationalities, languages, and so on. I have witnessed many absurd situations in Finland where an Asian-looking person, who was born in Finland, had to struggle to make herself heard in Finnish in a shop. The shop assistant spoke to her in English and ignored the fact that she could speak Finnish. In another situation, an English teacher was teaching the names of different fruit in English, turned to a black pupil in her class and asked her in English about the kinds of fruit people eat in Africa. Embarrassed, the pupil responded that she was born in Finland and had never been to Africa and thus knew nothing about fruit eaten there. In the next chapter we’ll discuss this phenomenon through the tool of othering.

National, cultural, and group identities are often at the centre of discussions about interculturality. For many thinkers and researchers these are problematic. First of all, they tend to create artificial and politically motivated differentiation and can lead to discrimination, ethnocentrism, and toxic treatment. Secondly as Pieterse (2004: 33) explains:

National identities are *mélange* identities, combinations of people that have been conventionally amalgamated under a political heading (such as Celts, Franks, and others in ‘France’).

As I asserted in the previous section, disentangling the mixing and *mélange* of such identities should be a priority in education. These identities are neither ‘natural’ nor ‘god-given’ (Said 1993: 33) and

they represent ‘analytic stereotypes’ (Sarangi 1994) as they force us to create clear-cut boundaries between people who may actually share a lot in common. We also need to bear in mind that we have entered an era of the marketization of such identities. Nation branding is a common global phenomenon through which governments determine what symbolizes their countries, what can be sold about it, and how they profiteer from it (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009). These economic dimensions of identity formation (Halter 2000: 12) create new forms of nationalism and ethnocentrism that we need to counter in education. A piece of news from November 2015 explained how a French artist created a Chinese identity for himself, at the request of his gallery, in order to enter the Chinese—and indirectly—the international market. His works started selling much better than when they were sold under his real name. His gallery had argued that international art investors would prefer to invest in an artist who has a Chinese name in China. To conclude this section, let us listen to a wise piece of advice from Michel Foucault (1982: 10):

I don’t feel that it is necessary to know exactly what I am. The main interest in life and work is to become someone else that you were not in the beginning. If you knew when you began a book what you would say at the end, do you think that you would have the courage to write it?

Not knowing who the other is—especially in relation to biased and problematic identities such as cultural, national identities—can transform the way we work on interculturality, rebalance power relations, and lead to more authentic encounters. Like the Hong Kong comedian and film director Lee Lik-Chi’s answer to the question ‘are you a Hong Konger or Chinese?’ we could increasingly consider self and other as ‘earthmen’ (sic, Hong Kong Magazine 2015: 42).

COLLECTIVITY, SELF, AND OTHER

The question remains whether the word is chosen to describe a collectivity one willingly participates in oneself, or a stereotype of uniform commonality projected upon others on the sole basis of their ascribed ethnic identity. (Baumann about community, 1996: 15)

In intercultural encounters, collectivity can play an important role. It can help us to reinforce our identity, to feel good about ourselves, and

to differentiate ourselves from others. As asserted earlier, identity occurs through interactions with other people, who (are made to) represent other groups, other communities. In this section, I am interested in the use of the word community and its links to interculturality.

Community is a fashionable word today, although an increasing number of scholars have been critical of its uses. It is often described as a particularly vague term: 'Community has never been a term of lexical precision, though much tedious work has been dedicated to the fruitless effort to so render it' (Cohen 2002: 165). The concept has been discussed in many different fields: sociology, anthropology, social psychology, and psychology (Anderson 1983; Cohen 1985; Maffesoli 1996; Bauman 2001; Amit 2002; Brubaker 2007; Augé 2010). Other concepts are often used interchangeably with community in daily or research discourses and have also been criticized for what they can 'do' to people. This is the case, amongst others, of the word 'group'. Rogers Brubaker (2007: 7) argues that *group* functions as a seemingly unproblematic, taken-for-granted concept, apparently in no need of particular scrutiny or explication. However, Gerd Baumann (1996) has demonstrated that *community* and *group* tend to be used to refer to the 'other', the 'non-Western' in Europe. *In intercultural contexts one talks about the Muslim community, the Asian community, the Russian community, and so on, but rarely about the French or Spanish community.* Who is included or not in these communities is always unclear. Furthermore, who is entitled to speak for them is also problematic.

Many scholars have offered substitutes to decipher today's collectivities such as *neo-tribes*, *être-ensemble* (Maffesoli 1996), and *peg-communities* (Bauman 2004). Maffesoli's or Bauman's analyses of our times reveal that new and meaningful types of communities are becoming discernible. Bauman (2004: 31) defines peg-communities as communities 'formed by hanging individual concerns on a common "peg" for a short period of time'. In a similar vein for Maffesoli (1996: 75) the 'efflorescence and effervescence of neo-tribalism' is related to the fact that groups of people, 'refuse to identify with any political projects whatsoever, to subscribe to any sort of finality' (ibid.). He adds that the group members' 'sole *raison d'être* is a preoccupation with the collective present' (ibid.). The sociologist gives the following examples of what he calls 'affectual tribes' (ibid.), that is, organized or unintentional groupings of individuals based on (short-term) emotional attachments: religious, linguistic, and 'ethnic' groups that are attempting to 'revive' their 'heritage'; sport, musical, and festive events; certain forms of public solidarity and generosity; sports

clubs, office friends, fans, and hobbyists (1993: 13–14). Even though Maffesoli first conceptualized his neo-tribes as non-political, in his book *La crise est dans nos têtes* (*The crisis is in our heads*, 2011), he talks about the ‘Occupy’ anti-capitalism protests of the early 2010s (Occupy Wall Street in New York or the ‘Indignants’ in Spain or Hong Kong). Social media such as Facebook and Twitter also represent examples of ‘affectual tribes’ as their users navigate from one site to another, identifying with others in the process (Coutant and Stenger 2011). It is through these collectivities that one constructs who one is and through them that well-being and happiness occur.

The idea of community is often used in the over-recycled but flawed dichotomy of holism/collectivism (‘non-Western’, traditional) and individualism (modern, ‘Western’). These manufactured differences can trap the other in some artificial uniqueness and ‘freeze’ him/her in a state of ‘permanent otherness’ (Levinas 1969). This is obviously highly problematic. For example, in his examination of Japanese history, Emmanuel Lozerand (2010) shows that individualism has been as frequent in Japan as in Europe. Adrian Holliday (2010), in his critical review of ideology in intercultural communication, demonstrates that this dichotomy is very biased and associated with a lack of autonomy, progress, and modernity. *This Chinese student is not as autonomous as our pupils. He relies too much on others.* One of the myths of our time is that ‘Westerners’ have done away with collectivism while the East is still very much dependent upon it. But collectivism, the influence of collectivities on social beings, is a basis for sociality in the West too. Everyone is involved *nolens volens* with other groups. It is noteworthy that pedagogical theories in vogue in the West all praise the benefits of co-constructivism, where negotiating and constructing learning with others is seen as the *sine qua non* to effective education.

Questions

1. Ask people around you to define the word culture in relation to interculturality. What is common and different in their definitions?
2. In the course of a day, listen carefully to how people use the word culture when they talk about others (refugees, migrants, minorities). What does it tell us about their views on these others? What does the word culture seem to be doing?
3. Speak to someone you know who comes from abroad or who has foreign origins. Ask them how they feel about themselves, if they feel

- more, for example, Finnish than Chinese. Listen carefully to their answer, what does it tell us about the question itself?
4. Think about your own identity. Are there elements of it that you believe are always the same and will always be? Are you aware of the fact that sometimes you adapt who you are to who you are talking to or to specific contexts?
 5. Is it possible for you to determine clearly how many collectivities you belong to? Can you define the boundaries between these groups? What influence do they have on your opinions, behaviours, and attitudes?

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Imaginaries About Interculturality

Abstract Interculturality is not a new phenomenon. Throughout history people have met across boundaries. In this chapter the author revisits several imaginaries—or myths—about interculturality. He discusses the myths related to the concepts of globalization, diversity, origins, ‘the same’, and the ‘local’. Deeply engrained in official practice and research discourses on interculturality, these imaginaries deserve to be defused and replaced with alternative perspectives to alter the ways we talk about intercultural encounters in education and other disciplines.

Like any contemporary phenomenon, interculturality is a narrative that contains many imaginaries. In this section I have selected five myths that are often heard in relation to interculturality in educational contexts. One of the objectives of intercultural education should be to discuss and revise these myths.

Let me start this section with a short discussion about the concept of imaginary which has been dealt with by many scholars and thinkers. They all start from the argument that sociality is not just based on the modern ideal of reason but also on imagination. In his work on religion as a social phenomenon, the father of sociology, Emile Durkheim (1912/[1995](#)) suggested that societies exist thanks to the sharing of symbolic forms that enable people to form collectivities. He also argued (*ibid.*) that this leads to ‘collective effervescence’ which serves to endorse social bonds. Although he did not refer to the word imaginary, I feel that these forms and especially collective effervescence correspond to the concept. In the 2010s imaginaries are glocal (global+local) rather than local.

Definitions of the imaginary tend to share similarities. For Cornelius Castoriadis (1987), the imaginary corresponds to common and unifying core conceptions. In a similar vein, Charles Taylor (2004) sees imaginaries as widely shared implicit cognitive schemas. He defines them as ‘the ways that people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations’ (ibid.: 32). The psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1977) added an interesting dimension to the imaginary: He sees it as a fantasy created in response to psychological needs. Thus, while imaginaries tend to be ‘conditioning’, ‘discursive structures’, or ‘templates’ that ‘generate(s) a sense of identity and inclusiveness between the members of a community’ for some scholars (González-Vélez 2002: 349), for others, imaginaries represent the oxymoron of a ‘dynamic substrate’, that is, background imaginaries that are constantly changing (Maffesoli 1993). Salazar’s (2012: 865) conceptualization of imaginaries is most useful in defining imaginaries. For the anthropologist, they are ‘socially transmitted representational assemblages that interact with people’s personal imaginings and are used as meaning-making and world-shaping devices’. Imaginaries are thus constructed, expressed and negotiated between self and other—they are thus both stable and unstable. Although I agree with Rivzi (2011: 228) that the imaginary ‘describes a social phenomenon that is tacit and unconscious, and is adhered to by a group of people in an unreflexive manner’ in some contexts, people can be hyper-reflexive and critical about their own imaginaries.

GLOBALIZATION IS NOT NEW

This first subsection interrogates the idea of globalization and discusses the fruitful concept of glocalization (local + global). The section argues that globalization is far from new and that the kind of globalization that we are currently experiencing derives directly from other historical waves of globalization. For Amselle (2001: 35) all societies have always interacted with each other (even when they refused to). Often, people talk about globalization as if it is a particularity of our era. Many historians and anthropologists show otherwise (Subrahmanyam 2011). J. N. Pieterse (2004) gives the following historical examples:

- The ancient population movements across and between continents.
- Long-distance, cross-cultural trade.

- The ‘world religions’ (Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam).
- The diffusion of technologies (military technologies, numeracy, literacy, sciences, and the invention of ‘new’ technologies).

What differs today is of course the speed at which globalization is taking place and how it influences systematically the local—hence the word glocalization, which is sometimes used instead of globalization. Instead of being binominals, the local and the global are two sides of the same coin. McDowell (1996) uses the phrase global localism to refer to this aspect. He writes (ibid.: 38): ‘For all people... whether geographically stable or mobile, most social relations take place locally, in a place, but a place which is open to ideas and messages, to visitors and migrants, to tastes, foods, goods and experiences to a previously unprecedented extent.’

The famous idea of ‘the clash of civilizations’ as put forward by S. Huntington (1996) has been harshly criticized for ignoring this aspect of globalization. In his book entitled *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, the political scientist argues that cultures and religions would be the main source of conflict after the Cold War. In the book, the author divided the world into neatly arranged civilizations (Western, Latin American, Orthodox, Eastern, Muslim, and so on). Scholars and thinkers such as Edward Said and Amartya Sen have issued responses to Huntington’s work. In his article ‘The Clash of Ignorance’ (2001) Said explains that Huntington’s thesis is ridiculous as it does not take into account the interdependency and interaction of different cultures (see also Appadurai 2006: 164). In a later article he even goes so far as to accuse him of being a racist and a proponent of ‘a sort of parody of Hitlerian science directed today against Arabs and Muslims’ (Said 2004: 293). For Sen (2005) the idea of a Clash of Civilizations is a dangerous intellectual simplifier. He explains:

In his famous book, *The Clash of Civilizations*, Samuel Huntington places India firmly in the category of ‘the Hindu civilization’. In taking this peculiar reductionist view, Huntington’s perspective has to downplay the fact that India has many more Muslims (more than 140 million – larger than the entire British and French populations put together) than any other country in the world with the exception of Indonesia and, marginally Pakistan, and that nearly every country in Huntington’s definition of the ‘Islamic civilization’ has fewer Muslims than India has. Something goes wrong here with the number-based assessment. But perhaps the difficulties in using the statistical argument lie in the nature of the argument itself.

The different waves of globalization that our world has witnessed have led to resource inequalities and power disparities (Moghaddam 2008). Today's world is not different, and today's glocalization plays an important role in relation to interculturality: Some people have more symbolic power than others (the Centre vs. Periphery), and so do the languages they speak (native speakers of English vs. speakers of Malay), their religion, and worldview (Protestants/Catholics vs. Muslims), and so on.

DESPERATELY SEEKING DIVERSITY

The world is diverse, but it is not equally diverse. de Sousa Santos (2012: 241)

The word *diversity* (in the singular form) has been quite popular in education during the last decade, promoted by many 'diversilogues', 'diversidacts', and 'diversicrats' (Wood 2003: 16). Diversity has even started to contribute to *imagineer* (or engineer/construct imaginaries about) the world and our schools. In the Nordic countries, for example, the word is used to refer implicitly to people of certain races and religions who do not look like the imagined majority (white Christians). It is thus a politically correct notion that straitjackets some people 'as if, without a tag, they wouldn't be human' (Kureishi 2005). According to Wood (2003: 2), in education, diversity refers to 'facts' (different skin colours, different religions, different languages) but also to hopes or wishes.

While the concept is reserved for certain strata of the population (migrants, ethnic, and religious minorities), representatives of the 'elite' who travel from one place to another, are labelled 'citizens of the world', 'multinationals', or even 'cosmopolitans'. *How often do we hear teachers label a refugee kid as a 'cosmopolitan'? Probably never. How come some labels are reserved for some people? This questions the very notion of diversity: Who is diverse? What does it mean? Who is included or not in the label? Who has the power to be included or not in the label? Who has the right to reject the label for themselves? Who decides? What hides really behind the word diversity (ideologies)?*

Wood (2003: 48) has already offered some answers to these questions. The word diversity is often used as:

- A euphemism for one or more unnamed categories of people.
- A shorthand way to refer to cultural diversity in general.

- Diversity is what's left over after specifying all the groups that have come to mind.
- Cultural diversity can also be used as a compressed statement for the broader banality that the world is a big place, full of human variety.

Like the concept of culture (see Chapter 2) diversity is such a strong word that it is often made to stand for human beings. We talk about *diversity in education*, *classroom diversity is good for children*, *the benefits of diversity in the classroom*, and so on. But who are we talking about? Depending on the context, diversity might refer to and substitute the words immigrants, refugees, Muslims, Africans, and so on. This diversity is often at the mercy of our institutions which decide about their (level of) foreignness/strangeness, their culture, and their (heritage) language. For instance, a child whose parents were born in Taiwan but moved to the USA, and who was himself born in America, may be labelled Confucian or Asian because of his origins. The idea of diversity can thus easily lead to different kinds of problematic *-isms* such as West–east-ism, culturalism, linguism, religiousism, whereby the children are boxed into solid and static categories. Wood argues that diversity then leads to ‘pinning down and labelling’ (ibid.: 38).

I believe, like Peter Wood (2003), that the way we usually conceptualize diversity in education is artificial, imaginary, and concocted. Let me share an example from daily life (one could easily find similar examples in schools around the world). One day, while waiting for a flight back home to Finland, I found myself in an overcrowded waiting area full of ‘white people’ (most of them Finns?) ready to show their boarding passes to get access to the plane. On one of the walls of the room a very large piece of art depicted a group of people from around the world holding hands in harmony, with a rainbow and planet earth in the background. Typical of a multicultural patchwork of different ‘skin colours’ and ‘worldviews’ symbolizing peace and harmony, the piece of art seemed to represent a fascinating contrast to the apparent homogeneity of the crowd gathered in the waiting area. This representation of diversity is of course not recent, as it has been used in advertising, for example, since the 1990s. I started to examine the people around me: There were people of different genders, potentially straight, gay, and bisexual, rich and less rich, old and young, blondes, brunettes, purple-haired, tanned and white-skinned, quiet and noisy, healthy-looking and unhealthy-looking, and so on. Weren't these *diverse* people too? How come their bodies were not then reified as signs of diversity in the piece of art like the people from India, China, or Africa

in the painting? Why was diversity in the context of an airport presenting a hierarchy between skin colours/worldviews and the aforementioned markers of diversity? The contrast represented by the work of art at the airport, and its false assurance of diversity from a mostly racial and religious perspective, leads us to ask several questions: How many of the Finns present in the waiting area would actually consider themselves to be very similar to their Finnish compatriots? Would they really have much in common? Would they feel contented if one claimed that they were just 'normal' and 'typical' Finns? Would they vote for the same politicians? Would they really share the same values? The reified images of the 'diverse' individuals on the wall reified at the same time those waiting to board the plane... The other is said to be diverse but not the self.

I believe that by separating diversities, and fighting different battles, such hierarchies can lead to frustration, ignorance, patronizing attitudes, and disinterest in others. *Diversity* needs to become *diversities*. There are several reasons for making this apparently rebellious suggestion. We all need to fight to be recognized, to construct respect, to face some form of rejection and discrimination, to fight against essentialism, and so on. It is of course much easier for some than others. But, in times like ours, even the powerful can find themselves in powerless positions because of some of their identities, changes in life circumstances, illnesses, and so on. Our duty is then to discuss these different forms of diversities together rather than separately. I believe this could help us thinkers, researchers, practitioners, and decision makers to sympathize and identify with these different (but yet potentially similar) diversities.

The way the very idea of diversity is approached today is thus highly problematic and biased. While the word diversity should refer to multiplicity, it often means difference and 'oneness'. While the other is often imprisoned in the straitjackets of a homogenized 'diversity', the majority can freely claim to be 'normal', 'not visible' and thus not needing special attention. I agree with Wood that '(such conception of) diversity is a form of systematic injustice and it makes us accomplices to injustices. To treat people as objects, as though they are the residuum of their race, class, gender and other such superficialities, and not individuals who define themselves through their ideas and creative acts—that is injustice' (2003: 4). Let me take three examples to illustrate. The first example is taken from observation notes of one of my international student teachers in Finland. She was observing a language lesson during which the teacher introduced the words for different fruit:

A lot of fruit was rather exotic—at least to a northern country—there were many food items on the word list that originated in Asia and Africa: mango, papaya and so on. What the teacher did then was to ask one of her black pupils what some of the fruit, specifically from her home country—tasted like. (...)

As a ‘good’ teacher, the educator wanted to take ‘diverse’ students into consideration in order to empower them (as she had probably been told in teacher education). The choice of the black pupil was very unfortunate. Frustrated, she told the teacher that she was born in Finland, had never been to Africa, and knew nothing about the sort of fruit that they eat ‘there’. Singling out a student was in this case—as in many cases, a biased and unjust act from the teacher.

My other example, similar to the previous one, is borrowed from Hanif Kureishi (2011: 3), a British writer, whose father was from Pakistan. He remembers this scene from his childhood:

When I was nine or ten a teacher purposefully placed some pictures of Indian peasants in mud huts in front of me and said to the class: ‘Hanif comes from India.’ I wondered: Did my uncles ride on camels? Surely not in their suits? Did my cousins, so like me in other ways, squat down in the sand like little Mowglis, half-naked and eating with their fingers?

Again, my assumption is that the teacher did what she did to ‘infuse’ some diversity into the classroom by revealing Hanif’s ‘origins’. Kureishi explains that because of this essentializing episode, he rejected his Indian background and felt ashamed of not being like the majority, white.

My final example, again in the context of a classroom, is taken from a novel called *The Life of a Banana* (PP Wong 2014). The banana here symbolizes an Asian-looking girl who lives in the West (white inside but yellow from the outside). The main character, whose family is from Singapore, was born in the UK. In the following excerpt she talks about her first day at school and how her ‘diversity’ was put on the table by her teacher—to her surprise (ibid.: 28):

Good morning class
 Good morning Mrs Wilkins
 Class, before we begin, I would like to announce we have a newcomer all
 the way from china
 (I was born in hackney)
 Her name is...

These examples show the danger of making assumptions about others based on what they look like, but also of ‘diversifying’ certain people while treating the rest of the class as if they were all transparent, ‘robot-like’ pupils. Interculturality in this book rejects this limited and limiting approach to diversity. I argue that diversity touches us all and that educators should start treating everyone from a position of ‘diversities for all’ in order to put an end to these examples of concocted, façade diversity. I saw recently a Twitter account description that said: ‘Diversity excites her.’ The motto for interculturality in education should be *(everyone’s) diversities excite us*.

WHERE ARE YOU *REALLY* FROM?

Questions of origins are central in intercultural education, although they can be problematic. The questions ‘where are you from?’ or ‘where are you really from?’ are omnipresent in education, especially when dealing with ‘diverse’ students. This section explains why these questions might be a thing of the past and why they can easily create a single story and power imbalance between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’. Spector (2012) reminds us that ‘while we are readily biased by the colour of someone’s skin when predicting their physical or intellectual abilities, surprisingly skin colour is controlled by just a handful of genes, and is a poor guide to the other 25,000 underneath. Indeed, there is more genetic diversity in one small area of Africa than there is in the whole of Europe.’

Although our world is said to be postmodern (the era of multiple identities), global, and cosmopolitan, the idea of origins still seems to matter tremendously, sometimes for all, other times for the powerless. Let me start with an anecdote. At the beginning of a summer school on intercultural communication education that I had organized in Finland, I explained that, as is my practice, I would not ask each student to introduce themselves and to tell the group about where they came from, their interests, and so on. I preferred that they got to know each other in a less formal and somewhat less tedious way during class activities or over coffee or tea. I introduced my work but said nothing about my own life story: where I was born (my ‘origin’), where I had lived and worked, the languages I spoke, and so on. At the end of the first lecture, a student came to see me and said: ‘you didn’t tell us where you come from; now you have to tell me’. Asking the lecturer about his origins at the beginning of a course on interculturality could appear to be ‘normal’ and a way to get to know him/her. Yet I

got somewhat irritated by the tone of the student ('you have to...') and answered that it was irrelevant and that I would prefer not to mention my 'complex origins' as they would most certainly become obvious during the month-long course. The student then told me about both his 'ethnic' and 'religious' identities and said that he was very proud of them. I replied that it was his right to 'expose' his origins—and to feel proud of them—but that I did not want to go through this about myself in a few seconds at the end of a lecture. Surprised (and probably annoyed), the student then asked me if *I had something to hide about my origins* or if *I was ashamed of them...* By refusing to declare my origins I shared Foucault's views (1982): I didn't feel that *it was necessary to know who I was*. Although I reacted in a certain way in this specific situation, in another context I might have felt confident about 'revealing' and discussing my origins. For example, when I go to the barber's, the question of my origins often pops up. Depending on my mood and the atmosphere of the place (many or few people, my impressions of the barber, and so on), I might single out one of my identities and place it on the table, invent a national identity (Japanese), or simply try to avoid having to answer the question.

Origins seem to matter to some people, while they appear to be irrelevant for some others. At some point in one's life, origins can be perceived as rosy, positive, and something to boast about, and sometimes they can also be very personal, political, and distressing. Our sense of origins is thus relative, depending amongst other things, on our roles, emotions, interlocutors, and the contexts of encounters. Most people use the idea of origins as if it was an evident and transparent notion ('we all have roots'), without always realizing that questions of origins can be unstable, highly sensitive, and problematic, and that origins are very much dependent on issues of power. The etymology of the word derives from the Latin word *originem* (nom. *origo*) 'rise, beginning, source', and from the stem of *oriri* 'to rise, become visible, appear'. The idea of origins, which has been central in global education where people have been 'made' to belong to nation-states/ethnicities, has been criticized for being both an 'intellectual simplifier' (Sen 2005) and an 'anthropomorphic concept', which seems to take real and concrete persons and rid them of their agency (Heinich 2009: 39; see Chapter 2). Although the word has been around in many languages for many centuries and *used, abused, and overused* in modernity to determine 'who is in' and 'who is out' in nationalistic discourses and actions, talking about origins is a very postmodern subject, too. As such, even though we live in 'liquid

times' (Bauman 2004), where identities are said to be unstable, hybrid, and plural, and opportunities for altering the self are unlimited, sticking to, being relegated to, or attempting to find one's origins are thriving. The renewed interest in genealogy in many countries, the revival of certain languages and traditions from the past, the unearthing of one's 'heritage', and so on, all contribute to re-create and sometimes reimagine origins in order to deal with the pressures of postmodernity and globalization. According to the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2004: 20), such endeavours, which are very much related to identity seeking, are 'born out of the effort (...) to bridge the gap between the "ought" and the "is"'. Liquidity unsettles, amongst others, national identities and 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1983) but also origins.

But let us not be entirely negative about origins: It is undeniable that origins, be they national, social, or regional, can help people to feel good about who they are. This is why people should be entitled to identify their own origins as they wish—as long as they do not denigrate others. For people who have migrated to another part of the world, origins can serve as a way of reassuring themselves when they feel threatened or marginalized as minorities in a host society. Globalization and the feeling of emptiness and threat that it can trigger can lead to a wish for origins. The legal remnants of modernity, for example, the passport, also promote the importance of (good/bad) origins: Not everybody has the power to cross the same borders. Certain accents when speaking a language can also tell about one's origins and have an impact on how one is perceived and treated. This is why, sometimes, some migrants want to either keep or get rid of their accents in the majority language.

Once a border is crossed, origins can also serve the purpose of promoting the 'other'. Certain origins are considered better than others. Some societies—in the 'East' and 'West'—have resorted to positive discrimination to promote certain origins: For example, an individual can get a job thanks to her race, ethnicity, or religious background, and so on. Explicit or implicit positive discrimination can also 'boost the ego' of certain institutions and members of the majority: from 'we have done so much to support the other' to 'we are so international; we have a large number of foreigners or speakers of other languages'. This is what could be labelled as *origin as a token*. Origins can be highly political.

Yet there is another side of the coin: Origins can easily serve the purpose of creating categories that are considered useful for, for example,

administrative purposes or even for research to simplify complexity. This characteristic of origins contributes to the fact that today's individual is, *nolens volens*, a *homo hierarchicus*. For de Singly (2003: 52) the 'powerless' have fewer opportunities to question their (imagined/projected/imposed) origins than those who do not need to discuss, defend, or present theirs. He sees a danger in what he calls the 'myth of origins' (ibid.: 58) since it easily creates unjustified hierarchies and comparisons which can be abused by the powerful. He even goes as far as calling the 'origin-labelling' of the powerless *totalitarianism* (ibid.: 91).

Just like the concept of culture, origins can be used for justifying some practices, behaviours, attitudes, discourses, opinions, and even values (e.g. *I am from Italy and this is why I do this* or *my roots are in Karelia, the area between Russia and Finland, and in Karelia people are quite talkative*). Many anthropologists and sociologists have noted the tendency for origins to emerge when people are faced with problems (in 'the tumult of battle', Bauman 2004) or when they need to explain what they do or think, through the use of words such as *culture*, *identity*, *tradition*, *roots*, *community*, and so on. They also highlight the dangers of putting origins at the forefront in some situations (putting people in 'boxes'), especially when they contribute to injustice, prejudice, and even dreadful political acts (Wikan 2002; Sen 2005).

Finally, it is important to remember that behind every individual lies complex experiences, stories, and origins. This is where the concept of intersectionality matters immensely. Intersectionality represents the crossing of different identity markers or different systems of race, gender, social class, age, and so on, in order to analyse how origins are 'practised' in education. As asserted before, one essential feature of origins is that they are unstable, negotiable, and can change—in other words, they are not static. This is not a new idea, but it is important to state it again. Besides, origins are not just one (e.g. ethnicity), and as they intersect, they multiply. For example it is not the same to be, for example, a veiled Muslim woman at Harrods in London and a woman wearing a hijab in Southall, West London, UK. The same doors do not open for these individuals; the same encounters are not possible, and so on. Though they appear to share origins (for the ignorant: *they are both Arabs and Muslims*), ethnically, socially, economically, and so on, they probably differ much.

I believe that it is important that people are made aware of the instabilities of origins and of their political aspects, and that only they should be

allowed to negotiate their origins in the way they want and create, instead, *a sense of origins*.

For Simmel (2013: 39) ‘education tends to be imperfect, because it has to serve two opposite tendencies with all of its acts: to liberate and to bind’. Origins are omnipresent in education—be they social, ethnic, cultural, and so on. On the one hand, they are considered useful for equality and equity and inclusion purposes. On the other, Bhatia (2010) argues that discourses on, for example, ‘minority students’, often based on nationalistic educational policies and curricula, can contribute to simple, unproblematic, and limited uses of the idea of origins and can easily lead to institutionalized racism and categorizing. Besides, these also can often create *nolens volens* hierarchies between people, in the sense that there sometimes hides implicit moralistic judgement behind discourses of origins, cultures, and identities (Holliday 2010).

It is of course easy to generalize about teachers from one literary example. Many educators do try to move away from such appalling behaviours. Yet through our experience we have also witnessed such ‘bad’ behaviours. We need to say that researchers themselves can also add to these painful experiences by starting from a solid indicator of origins such as national identity or social class in their work (Bauman 2004; Dervin 2011). Most of the time we are unaware of what we are doing to our research participants when we do research on their origins... This is why I believe, like E. Said (1993: 33), that

With regard to the consensus on group or national identity it is the intellectual’s task to show how the group is not a natural or a God-given entity but is a constructed, manufactured, even in some cases invented object, with a history of struggle and conquest behind it, that it is sometimes important to represent.

Furthermore, in agreement with de Singly (2003), I wish to promote an approach to origins which is ‘emancipating’: Students should be given the means and tools to appropriate a sense of origins, to refuse/reject/modify them and to feel, in some cases, ‘freed’ from solid and imposed origins. I also believe that they should be prepared to answer the question ‘where are you from?’ which liberates them from the hidden query ‘why are you here?’. We don’t believe that it is up to an institution or to one of its representatives to decide on someone’s origins and to ask them to play out origins, as can be the case in schools (see Niemi et al. 2014).

‘THE SAME IS LAME’

Education is somewhat paradoxical: On the one hand, it should help students to find their own specificities and their individualities (child-centred approaches), but on the other, education tries to create commonality between students. In this subsection I analyse the bias of difference in dealing with interculturality in education. While cultural difference is often celebrated in schools, similarities with the ‘other’ tend to be rejected and banished. This bias has an impact on how minority students get treated and on our assumptions about them.

I have labelled this obsession the *differentialist bias*, or an obsession with what makes us different from others, rather than considering the fact that we are different and share commonalities. This bias often denies interculturality beyond difference. The essentialization and marketization of the other, the ‘exotic’ other (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009), have insisted on how different s/he is. Anecdotally, in 2012, the influential American singer-songwriter, Pharrell Williams, created a capsule collection for a Japanese casual wear retailer entitled *I am OTHER*. One of his creations read: ‘The same is lame’, revealing the bias that I am describing in this section. Research and practice have not been immune to this incredibly resilient groupthink, often collecting lists of differences to either explain or facilitate intercultural encounters in education. For example, in their book *Managing Cultural Differences*, Harris et al. (2011) only dedicate 12 pages to ‘intercultural similarity’. Of course differences matter and people are different (across and within ‘cultures’) but they can also be quite similar in their values, ideas, behaviours, opinions, and so on. In many cases, two individuals from different ‘cultures’ might share more in common than people from the same country. The obsession with difference seems to relate to a fear of universalism and ethnocentrism. It also leads to ‘drowning’ the other in the self.

Hannah Arendt (1958: 155) made an important point in this regard when she said: ‘If people were not different, they would have nothing to say to each other. And if they were not the same, they would not understand each other.’ As explained before, the overemphasis on discourses of culture in relation to interculturality has led researchers and practitioners alike to think exclusively in terms of difference. For Jullien (2012: 29), the concept of difference is not adventurous enough: When we meet others, it is quite easy to make a list of differences between us based on our observations and (sometimes) quick discussions. Such attitudes to the other allow us to ‘allo-

cate power, resources and rights' (Hamid 2015: 24). On the other hand, if we take the time to examine the other through the lens of similarities, too, we might start finding things, ideas, and thoughts that we share. The use of the word 'values' is interesting in this sense. I often meet people who claim that their (national) values are different from others'—and who indirectly place themselves on a pedestal. For example: *My cultural values are honesty, hard-work, and democracy—these are of course values that most people share.* Unni Wikan puts it nicely when she writes (2002: 84):

Talk of 'culture', and the picture that springs to mind is one of difference, divergence, and distance. Talk of 'people' or 'persons' instead, and the picture is one of humans who struggle with some of the same compelling concerns and who therefore—despite all difference—can resonate across time and place.

Some nationalities get more easily put in the box of extremely different alterity, like the Chinese in the 'West' (Dervin 2015). However China is also an extremely diverse country of 1.3 billion inhabitants, comprising very different social, ethnic, and linguistic groups. Students from Yining (northwest of China in the Mongolian Uplands), Qiqihar (in the north-eastern part of the country) or Nanning (southern China) may have very little in common with each other, even though they share a passport. But one does not even need to change regions; in Beijing, for example, one can meet diverse people in a different district or even on a different street. So there is diversity amongst the Chinese but also commonalities with the 'Western' world. When my team and I collected data amongst international students at a university in Beijing, we were delighted to hear from some of them that: 'There is not like the Chinese person, every Chinese person is different, every one is different, every city is different, so it depends who you know some are very international some are very traditional, you can also find more westernized people.' Of course there are many things that could be questioned in this quote (what does it mean to be 'more westernized'?) yet this student does not go with the flow of discourses such as 'the Chinese are all this, the Chinese are all that'.

Many 'victims' of the differentialist bias would like to be considered from a perspective that also sees them as potentially similar to others. In the section about diversity, I mentioned how a character from the novel *The Life of a Banana* (PP Wong 2014) was otherized by her British teacher when she came to school for the first time ('she is Chinese' even though

she was born in England). In the novel, the very same student also shares her annoyance at being constantly labelled ‘different’. She says (*ibid.*: 34):

I start to daydream about what it would be like to grow up in a country where I am not seen as different. Somewhere where I am popular and don’t have to explain my name or that I’m Chinese. It would be a really cool place where Asians and Jamaicans are just seen as doctors, schoolgirls and businesswomen. Not the ‘Chinese doctor’, ‘the Asian school girl’ or the ‘black businesswomen of the year’. It would be a country where I was not seen as ‘ethnic’ or ‘exotic’ but just ‘me’. That would be great!

This translates powerfully what many educators fail to do to many minority students by labelling and segregating them in their classrooms. We live in a world where the boundaries between ‘the normal and the abnormal, the expectable and the unexpected, the ordinary and the bizarre, domesticated and wild’ are blurred, as are those between ‘the familiar and the strange, “us” and the strangers’ (Bauman 1997: 25). This is why, in order to create intercultural practices that respect individuality, we need to accept that those who might look, sound, and behave differently might actually share many commonalities with us.

Starting critically and reflexively from similarities rather than differences might open up new vistas for both research and practice. The educationalist M. Abdallah-Pretceille (1986) shares the view that identifying similarities might be a more rewarding intellectual and relational exercise than identifying mere difference, as it requires spending quality time with people and in-depth discussions—which, in an increasingly busy world or even school contexts, often is lacking.

OBSESSION WITH THE LOCAL

I am not the person people believe me to be. I went to a party once where I didn’t know anyone. It was raining so I was soaking wet. I was carrying a shopping bag and a scooter helmet. Someone mistook me for a sushi deliveryman. Some people congratulated me for my French, which was ‘without any accent’; someone even tried to please me by saying that I was ‘cute for a Chinese’. (My translation of Chau 2015: 22. Frédéric Chau is a Vietnam-born French actor of Chinese-Cambodian descent)

Since the birth of nation-states in the eighteenth century and the birth of the passport, nationality has prevailed as well as the dichotomy of the

'local' and the 'non-local'. In most research on study abroad, for instance, during which students spend some time studying in another country as an exchange or degree student, scholars note that most of them are unwilling to meet people from their own country abroad and that they prefer to become friends and interact with 'local' people. The fear of being caught with the 'same' or 'stuck' with him/her (someone from the same country) is thus very common. We have managed to create a view of the world where crossing a national border signifies selecting those who are different, but especially from the locality, a 'real local'. The problem with the word 'local' is related to criteria: *Do we define a local by place of birth, nationality, or language, or by the simple fact that this person lives in a given place?* There are many signs in our societies that we are obsessed with the local, the 'authentic' local.

Some years ago, a friend of mine visited Finland and wanted me to organize something 'typically' Finnish for her. Not really a believer in such things myself, I went to the tourist centre and asked if they had such activities. They gave me a brochure which contained different tours. On one page, two activities were advertised. The first one was to go to the Helsinki zoo to see 'exotic' animals. This was followed by a visit to someone's home:

Have you ever met Finns on their own territory - at home? This is a special opportunity to get acquainted with the Finns and the local lifestyle.

Finns love to drink coffee with pastries. Now you can also take a seat at the coffee table and have a nice chat with native in Kruununuhaka, one of the oldest parts of the city centre. During the home visit you have a chance to talk about current topics and Finnish culture in general.

The description of this tour (for which one had to pay) is quite interesting for the topic at hand. Why would a tourist pay to visit someone's home, drink coffee, and discuss current affairs and culture? Is it because it is often difficult for a tourist to meet local people or because they are expected to meet them? The description of the tour seems to confirm the originality and exclusivity of what it offers. It is described as a 'special opportunity', 'having a chance to'. The fact that it speaks of the local (referred to as the thorny word 'native' in the description) as 'oneness' ('the local lifestyle', 'Finnish culture') confirms many of the points that we made earlier about interculturality in its essentialistic and limited form. Finally, it is important to note that the part of the city where this is taking

place is (1) in the city centre—and not in the suburbs, and (2) one of the wealthiest parts of Helsinki, the capital city of Finland. This is why the Finn who will be ‘performing’ Finnishness for the tourists could represent neither ‘the Finns’ nor ‘the local lifestyle’. The imaginary of ‘oneness’ that is being sold to tourists is potentially dangerous, as it will provide them with a single narrative about the diverse population of Finland—men/women/others, young/old, poor/rich/others, and so on

In a similar vein, some years ago, the Finnish Red Cross organized a course for those who wanted to learn how to become friends with ‘migrants’. The idea was to train people who could meet and help ‘refugees’ in Finland. I place *migrants* and *refugees* between inverted commas because they were used interchangeably by the organizers. I applied for the course but was rejected because I was not originally Finnish. They claimed that I would not be able to help them to navigate through Finnish culture and to help them to ‘integrate’. Having lived in the country for more than 20 years, I protested, saying that I felt as competent as any Finn to be a ‘friend’ with a ‘refugee’ and to show them the ropes. In one of the e-mails I received, my correspondent was telling me that they did not want the refugees to be disappointed by having a friend who was not a ‘real’ Finn. On the scale of desire, the local stands high. I felt offended and frustrated by this comment. Eventually, I was reluctantly accepted into the course.

Let me share one last example about the ‘local’. A friend of mine sent her children to Germany for three weeks in order for them to study the German language and ‘culture’. The children were to stay with a family. When the mother spoke to her children on the first night, she realized that the host family was not as she had imagined, as the parents were originally from Turkey. My friend immediately contacted the agent who had organized the stay (for which she had paid a fortune) and asked him to find a ‘real’ local German family and not (I quote) ‘an immigrant family’. The agent obliged and found a ‘typical’ white German family for her.

After all these examples, it is important for us to reflect on this issue: *Who has the right to say who can serve as a ‘local’ or not? Can one discriminate on the basis of language, religion, and origins to decide? Why can’t we let people decide by themselves? If one was born abroad, can one not become a local one day? Is it sustainable to legitimate the hierarchy between ‘locals’ and ‘non-locals’?*

In Finland, the ‘best new Finn’ is elected every year. The label refers to immigrants who have obtained Finnish nationality. I always wonder how

long the label ‘new’ will stick to them and if they will be ever able to be elected the ‘best Finn’ of the year.

Questions

1. Can you give examples of globalization from the past?
2. What kind of imaginaries do people usually have about your country? What imaginaries do you have about other countries?
3. Think of someone you know from another country: Name five things that you have in common with her/him.
4. Do you know the different theories about where your country’s people come from originally, far back in history?
5. In this chapter, I claimed that everyone is diverse. How do you understand this? In what ways are you, yourself, diverse?

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Discourses of Othering

Abstract Othering—using stereotypes and representations about the other when meeting her/him and talking about her/him—is a common phenomenon in intercultural encounters in education. This chapter questions the very definition of the other and shows how unstable the phenomenon of othering is. Tools from linguistics are introduced to help us to analyse discourses of othering and to move beyond, for example, ethnocentrism, (hidden) racism, and (hidden) xenophobia. This chapter will be of interest to both educators and researchers who need tools to examine the politics of identity and interculturality.

The lessons one learns at school are not always the ones the school thinks it's teaching. (Rushdie 2012: 31)

Some years ago, a black 'local' student at a major European university was surprised to discover that his picture had been used to promote the 'internationalization' of his university on the institution's website. He reacted by saying:

This is also very striking: If you are advertising for your research, you show people in white coats. If you are advertising your library, you show people with books. And if you are advertising your internationality, for some strange reason, you show me.

My own university launched what I consider to be a similarly controversial advertising campaign in 2015 to promote its ‘brand’ and to reach out to the world. Pictures of ‘unusual’ people were included in the campaign: A white young man with a cabbage on his head, an older white lady with a white baby on her back, a red-haired white woman with something that looks like a dinosaur egg on her head, and a grungy-looking white scientist—all looking either happy or confident. Two other ‘diverse’ characters were also present: a black woman wearing a sunflower on her head, smiling, and an Asian-looking child, who seemed sad, with a piece of ice melting on his head. I was puzzled by the intertextuality of the last picture: While the other pictures were quite positive—and full of ‘whiteness’—how come the only picture that depicted an Asian-looking child had a symbol of our decaying planet on his head? Was the message of such othering practice that Asia only is responsible for a potentially forthcoming disaster and that the ‘West’ (represented by the University) was going to help this part of the world face this wicked problem—for which the ‘West’ is as responsible?

WHO’S THE OTHER?

The other has been a major figure throughout history, defined by different labels: *the Barbarian* in Ancient Greece (an onomatopoeia for *jabbering*), *the (Noble) Savage* in the seventeenth century, and (radical) alterity in the twenty-first century. During colonization and conquest of the Americas in sixteenth-century Spain, two camps were opposed in the Valladolid debate as to the position of Amerindians from the New World: Should these others be treated as men or as slaves? Repeatedly, until today these questions have emerged in relation to different kinds of others worldwide (indigenous people in Australia, human zoos in America and Europe, South Africa’s apartheid, the war in Darfur, and so on). But the other is not a uniform figure; there is in fact a hierarchy between different kinds of others in the ways they are treated or talked about. In Europe, for example, certain migrants are better treated than others, depending on their origins, economic capitals, and languages. For Tseñlon (2001: 5):

Modernity’s obsession with order and ordering, epitomised by the nation-state, created a myth of cultural homogeneity. (...) Thus, the nation-state became a source of identity that was intertwined with exclusion. By setting boundaries around the self one is also defining the non-self (insiders/out-siders, established/strangers).

The other is also every one of us. Many famous people have written about this understanding of the other. The Greek philosopher Aristotle affirmed that ‘the self-sufficing man will require friendship in order to know himself’ (*Magna Moralia*); the French poet Arthur Rimbaud famously said, ‘I is another’ (1871/2002: 35); and more recently the Scottish psychiatrist R.D. Laing insisted: ‘Each person is the other to the others’ (1967).

The other and the notion that derives from it, otherness, is an interdisciplinary concept *par excellence*. As such, it has been dealt with in fields as diverse as psychology, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, and linguistics as well as theology, archaeology, history, and gender studies. The other has, in fact, been the core of the human and social sciences since their development in the eighteenth century. The field of anthropology, for instance, was interested in the ‘exotic’ other from its beginning until about the end of the Second World War. Today, after years of debate and criticisms of past anthropological work, most anthropologists work on globalized societies and refrain from exoticizing the populations they look at. Philosophy, and especially ontology (the study of being), is also concerned with otherness. The interest in the other and otherness seems to have increased exponentially in research since the emergence of poststructuralist/postmodern perspectives and the crisis of belonging that has marked our globalized world since the 1980s. Different figures of otherness, beyond the ‘exotic other’, have also been the attention of media and literary production worldwide (e.g. sexual minorities, the disabled, and so on).

The idea of *othering* (sometimes written as *otherizing*) derives from the presence of others in our societies. It is also very much related to the concept of identity (see chapter 2 on misnomers). Othering means turning the other into an other, thus creating a boundary between different and same, insiders and outsiders. Emotional and cognitive mechanisms leading to othering are articulated linguistically and co-constructed interactively. For Chebel d’Appollonia (2011: 11), othering corresponds to the ‘taxidermy of identity’ as it tends to confine the other to a restricted understanding of who she is and what she represents.

In psychology, othering is an ordinary process that everyone experiences: In order to exist, one needs to make sense of other people, thus one *others* them—as much as they *other* the rest of us. Othering is only possible through the hyphenation or the nexus of self and other in discourse. In order to other, one needs to compare self to other, or one’s group(s) to (an)other group(s) and vice versa.

In sociology, amongst others, othering refers to differentiating discourses that lead to moral and political judgement of superiority and inferiority between ‘us’ and ‘them’. In this understanding of othering, power is always employed in representing other and self. The other is also often described through a deficit framework, a view that she is not as good or capable as ‘we’ are, that leads to stereotypes and other forms of representation. This often takes place in the media, public discourses, and even in scholarly work (Krumer-Nevo and Sidi 2012). The literary theorist Edward Said (1978) made use of this macro-approach to othering in his work on Orientalism, where he demonstrated how the representation of the Orient (especially the Middle East) as passive, mysterious, and inferior, has allowed Occidentals to define themselves in positive terms.

Othering can relate to many and varied identity markers: nationality, race, language, religion, gender, and so on. Othering is often accompanied with the idea that some groups are dehumanized or demonized, as they are deemed to be inferior. However, othering can also take place within a ‘powerless’ group through self-othering. This is the case, for example, of the use of the words ‘Oreos’ (in reference to the sandwich cookie which is black on the outside and white inside) and ‘Bananas’ by, respectively, Afro-Americans and Asians to refer to people who are black/yellow on the outside but stereotypically white on the inside. In some cases, self-othering can serve as a way of defending oneself, claiming authority, and even asking for special rights—which is not always a good thing, especially if other rights are violated. Spokespeople for certain religions, cultures, and sexual minorities do not always represent the ‘majority’ and have their own agendas. The image that they construct of their identities does not always match those of their peers, who feel that they are being othered by these spokespeople.

With the birth of modernity in eighteenth-century Europe, amongst others, national identities became some of the most salient tools of othering, leading to, for example, de-/neo-colonization, world wars, and the Holocaust. Today, even though nation-states are losing some of their power, the economic dimensions of identity formation, such as nation branding or advertising for country-as-company for tourism, for example, are still leading to certain forms of othering where the other is artificially produced, often recycling century-old representations or creating new ones.

In educational discourses, othering has become a phenomenon that needs to be discussed openly, banished, or fought against, as it can lead to such things as racism, sexism, or even bigotry. However, in his report on

anti-racism education in Britain A. Hart (2013: 26) shows how educators themselves can contribute to discourses of othering by pushing forward a flawed anti-racism agenda:

I filmed a session where my drama tutor colleagues were (as they saw it) facilitating a process through which children could embrace and feel good about their ethnic identity. Children were asked ‘we sometimes identify ourselves as white or black or Asian or mixed—how would you identify yourself?’ Our boy mumbles his answer. ‘Ah, a dark skinned person’, says the drama tutor. ‘No, a DANCING person!’ exclaims the boy.

The labelling of persons, with the best intentions of respect and tolerance, can easily lead to othering or as is the case in this excerpt ‘boxing’ a person wrongly. For many researchers ‘national education’ has often been used as a way of contributing to othering and deciding who fits in and who does not. And this is something that is not just happening in the ‘West’—as one would be tempted to believe. In his novel about his experience as an international student in Finland, Nigerian Lammin-Sullay Sesay (1996: 22–23) explains:

I still recall one of the books we used for Geography entitled, ‘Regions and peoples of the world’ by Charles McIntyre. It was through this book that I first learnt about Scandinavia and of Finland. By then I could have been somewhere between 12 or 14 years old. During that time, when we learnt about these regions, little mention was made about the fact that these places were industrialized and well-advanced, in fact, apart from a few explanations such as the advanced techniques of protecting or measuring the weather, it never crossed my mind that people here were educated and they live in good houses. If this place was really so cold, with so harsh winters, then, the immediate reasoning was that life must be primitive indeed. This is true, because our geography teachers had always focused more or less on explaining about the climatic conditions up here. They wasted no time talking about whether there was electricity or skidos or whether even aeroplanes dared to come here. On coming to Finland, it became evident that this rather detached form of education I had received about the ‘Tundra Regions’ was virtually similar to the kind given to Finnish kids about Africa, whereby their teachers only concentrated in telling them about the hazards of famine, the primitive countryside, and pervading misery and lack. For ages I have been baffled by an inexplicable tendency as to why school teachers in each of our societies tend to be more attuned to teaching kids about the harsh characteristics of each society while the good points in each were actually ignored or stashed away.

Finally I witnessed a very interesting ‘conflict’ in Hong Kong where a person who looked Indian was complaining about the service at a restaurant—claiming that the waitress was ‘rude’ and ‘arrogant’. He compared her to waiters in mainland China, saying that he was so upset that someone in Hong Kong would be ‘ruder’ than mainlanders... *Othering is definitely a universal sin...*

OTHERING AS AN UNSTABLE PHENOMENON

Othering is a complex phenomenon, which might differ over time, depending on how collective and intersubjectively constructed ideologies evolve in specific contexts. The example of African slaves is telling: They were first perceived as pagans in sixteenth-century America before being labelled as ‘negroes’ after 1680 (Wimmer 2013: 8). Some others will remain trapped in their otherness (e.g. Gypsies in Europe), while other ‘others’ will be able to enjoy more positivity in the way they are othered after a few decades (e.g. Finnish Karelians who took refuge in Finland after the Second World War).

The concept of (social) representation as introduced by the Romanian-born French social psychologist Moscovici (1961) is useful to make sense of othering. A representation is a system of values, ideas, and practices that are shared by people and that enable them to grasp their world and interact with others (ibid.). This is precisely what othering allows in social interaction. The phenomena described above have taken place through the (co-)construction and (re-)negotiation of representation between self, other, and contexts. In a globalized world, representation is increasingly complex, as meaning making and thus othering is less predictable and certain. This has some impact: For example, one might meet someone who looks Asian but who was actually born in the same country and shares the same first language as we do.

Othering can be used for other reasons. People use it to position themselves, to defend themselves, to please/seduce the other, to claim (common/different) identities, to defend themselves against stigmatizing or marginalizing practices, or to feel better about the different other. Othering also allows people to (re-)invent and make sense of the self through imagining the other. In uncertain postmodern times, it is easy to see how unstable othering and the politics of identity can be.

Many and varied forms of othering have been identified in the literature. As far as the ‘national’ and ‘cultural’ other is concerned, the

following labels have been used: essentialism, racism, neo-racism (for which culture serves as a proxy for race, Dhamoon 2009), culturalism (culture as an explanation for all), ethnocentrism, exoticism, islamophobia, and orientalism. Occidentalism, or how non-Western people see the West and reverse orientalism, or how Orientals use orientalist expectations to other themselves (Dervin and Gao 2012), are two forms of othering that will need to be examined more carefully in the future as world powers shift. With the loss of influence of nation-states, the dichotomy of East and West has re-emerged as a way of differentiating between Westerners and Easterners. Like all labels, these two words need deconstructing. Often in education the East is associated with certain negative characteristics (rote learning, lack of criticality, and so on) while positivizing ones are reserved for Westerners. For instance, in relation to Chinese students studying abroad, one often reads that, while ‘in collective societies (such as China) students are expected to learn “how to do” in contrast to individualist societies (such as the UK), in which students are expected to learn “how to learn”’ or that ‘[t]he notion of being able to set aside one’s cultural identity is one that many people, especially those from collectivistic cultures, would find difficult to embrace’ (see Dervin 2011). Sen (2005: 129) harshly condemns such patronizing and ethnocentric comments when he writes that ‘given the cultural and intellectual interconnections in world history, the question of what is “western” and what is not would be hard to decide’. Holliday (2010) is also very critical of, for example, the claims to individualism and collectivism. For the scholar ‘despite the claim to neutrality, it seems clear that individualism represents imagined positive characteristics, and collectivism represents imagined negative characteristics’ (Holliday, *ibid.*: 9).

All these intercultural forms of othering, which are far from neutral, have in common the following flaws: They concentrate mostly on the differences between people—and ignore the fact that people share a lot of similarities even if they come from a different place and/or speak a different language; they draw artificial boundaries between people; the way culture, religion, and race are described is often one-sided and general; they give the impression that only their culture, race, or religion influences their opinions, actions, and attitudes. Some of these discourses of othering have led to dreadful acts such as hatred, killing, terrorism, slavery, genocides, and so on. In daily interaction they can easily lead to prejudice, power imbalance/discrimination (*my culture/religion is better than yours*), and patronizing attitudes (the other is deficient).

ANALYSING DISCOURSES OF OTHERING

As othering is a very interdisciplinary topic, the ways its discourses can be analysed are many and multifaceted. Two social constructivist perspectives that can be combined coherently are presented.

The first approach is taken from R. Dhamoon's 2009 book entitled *Identity/Difference Politics*. Dhamoon is a scholar of philosophy and political science. Examining how multiculturalism is discoursed in Canada, she proposes to work from the critical politics of meaning making and how and with what effects power—rather than culture—creates difference and discourses of othering. By doing so, she places othering at the centre of her work. In her analysis, Dhamoon asks a certain number of questions: How are lines of difference socially constructed in different contexts through discourse? How do they relate to power relations? Who and what is depicted as (ab-)normal and superior–inferior? (ibid.: xi). Dhamoon's approach is quite similar to two other scholars' from other fields. The sociolinguist Ingrid Piller also suggests a social constructivist approach to othering in intercultural communication. She proposes to ask the following questions when analysing data (2011: 17): 'Who is talking? Is the speaker or writer an identifiable individual or an institution? In which role do they speak or write? Who is the intended audience? Are there any overhearers? In case of an interaction, what are their reactions? What is the relevant context? For example, the what is the relationship between the interactants, the time and place, the medium? What is the purpose of bringing up culture?' Breidenbach and Nyíri (2009), in their volume *Seeing Culture Everywhere*, tread a similar path when they question the 'implicit and explicit assumptions behind cultural claims and the power dynamics that they may be concealing' (2009: 340). Here are some of the questions that they propose we ask ourselves (ibid.: 343): 'What explicit and implicit statements about culture are involved, about which groups? What are the fault lines along which groups are defined and differentiated? (...) Who is making the statements about culture? Why might they be making them?'

What all these scholars share in common is an interest in deconstructing discourses of othering in utterances about people's culture, or attitudes towards the other, by examining the impact of power differentials. Yet Dhamoon (ibid.) is the only one who seems to take seriously the important feature of intersectionality in her work. She defines it as 'the complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects which ensue when multiple axes of differentiation—economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective, and

experiential—intersect in historically specific contexts’ (ibid.: 61). Her message is important: In order to examine multiculturalism, the other, and acts of othering, one must take into account more than one identity marker. Instead of concentrating, for example, only on culture as a sole contributor to othering, one should also include systems of race, gender, class, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, and so on, in how people identify and differentiate (ibid.: 63). In her chapter on ‘Accounts of Racialized Gendering’, this is exactly what she does in relation to Muslim women in Canada by looking at how forms of gendered racialization are produced through the ‘blending’ of discourses of, for example, Orientalism, Islamophobia, and Eurocentric sexism (ibid.: 132). In order to complexify our understanding and analysis of othering, intersectionality appears to be an important step.

As asserted before, identifying these multiple voices can be challenging for researchers, especially if they want to ‘dig deeper’ into their data in order to move beyond mere descriptions of othering processes and to describe the instability of these discourses. Bakhtin’s Dialogism (1982) and methods from the interdisciplinary movement of research on the Dialogical Self, which is inspired by Bakhtin, Mead, and Hegel, can be very rewarding in this sense. Dialogism is based mainly on the argument that otherness is at the centre of everything (Bakhtin 1982). In other words dialogue should be the basic unit of analysis when analysing such dynamic and contextual phenomena as knowledge, society, and subjectivity (Gillespie and Cornish 2010: 15). Furthermore, the social, historical, and cultural context in which the phenomena under review take place should be fully integrated in the analysis. Bakhtin’s theory places the concept of *voice* at the centre of discourse. Roulet (2011: 209) summarizes the Russian philosopher’s ideas as follows:

- There is constant interplay between multiple voices in discourse and society;
- Any discourse is always associated with former discourses and voices;
- Any discourse is always a reaction to previous discourses and thus enters into dialogue with these discourses;
- Other persons are thus always present in what people say.

Analysing discourses of othering thus requires examining these elements. For Grossen (2010: 7), ‘One key-element of a dialogical approach is that language is fundamentally polysemic and that its meaning is not

predetermined by the linguistic code but constructed within a certain discursive situation'. This means that in terms of research methods, we should use approaches that allow moments of intersubjectivity to emerge (Gillespie and Cornish 2010). Linguistically speaking, dialogism is marked by the apparition of certain linguistic markers or forms (pronouns such as *we*; reported discourses; passive voice; and so on). Dialogists call reported discourse (direct or indirect) *discourse representation* (Roulet 2011: 210) as, being reported from another context, it *represents* discourses and actions. Certain phenomena such as irony, negation, and the use of certain discourse markers such as *but* all signal dialogism. These examples are taken from Roulet (ibid.: 215–216):

- (Uttered in a situation of evident failure): What a triumph! (irony)
- Paul is big; yet he is not strong (negation).

In her 2010 article, M. Grossen asks herself if and how researchers can develop tools of analysis that are suitable for dialogism—especially as not all voices that contribute to discoursing are identifiable. Even though her conclusions confirm the gap between a complex theory and tools that are unable to grasp it fully, her article offers a few hints at how the sets of questions from Dhamoon, Piller, Breidenbach, and Nyíri could work in order to examine othering. Her first proposal is to use linguistic methods that can show how discourse navigates from one speaker to another and how discourse is integrated and reinvested (ibid.: 17): the shift of personal pronouns, the speaker's position(s) (teacher, woman, doctor...) and argumentative contradictions. French *énonciation* (often called French pragmatics) appears to be a good complement to work on Dialogism. Johansson and Suomela-Salmi (2011: 71) explain that 'enunciation deals with utterance-level meaning from the perspective of different linguistic elements. In other words, the activity of the speaker is the focus: On the one hand, there are traces and indices left by the speaker in the utterance; on the other hand, there is the relationship the speaker maintains with her/his interlocutor.' In short, *énonciation* approaches are interested in (1) How a person constructs her/his discourse, and (2) How s/he negotiates this discourse with others (intersubjectivity). One central aspect of *énonciation* is to consider a speaker as a heterogeneous subject, meaning an individual who positions her/himself in interaction with others and who thus uses and manages various discursive and pragmatic strategies to construct self, other, surroundings, experiences,

and so on. This also takes place in often unplanned, unsystematic, and changing manners.

The most famous representatives of French pragmatics are Émile Benveniste, Antoine Culioli, Oswald Ducrot, and Catherine Kerbrat-Orechionni (cf. Johansson and Suomela-Salmi 2011). Many and varied linguistic elements have been examined to analyse enunciation. Deictics (markers of person, time, and space such as personal pronouns, adverbs, and verbs) are such elements which allow speakers to ‘stage themselves or make themselves manifest in utterances, or on the other hand may decide to distance themselves from it, leaving no explicit signs of their presence or manifesting their attitude in utterances’ (Johansson and Suomela-Salmi 2011: 94). The same goes for utterance modalities, which can give us a clue about the attitude of the speaker towards what s/he is saying (adverbs, shifters, etc.). For example, deontic modalities mark an obligation and relate to moral and social norms (e.g. You *must do* this) (Johansson & Suomela-Salmi, *ibid.*: 97). Nouns may also express the attitude of a speaker towards a person, a phenomenon, an object, and so on (Paul is a *lazybone*). It is easy to see how enunciative markers can help the researcher to analyse how people co-construct who they are when interacting but also reveal the sentiments they attach to these images. By working on pragmatic changes in discourse, *énonciation* can also help us to identify instability: shifts, contradictions, corrections, potential manipulation, and so on.

A final issue concerns the possibility to identify multiple voices in what people say and what they construct: Voices of others, their own past/future voices, and so on. Gillespie and Cornish (2010), who also work from a dialogical perspective, suggest placing intersubjectivity at the centre of analysis. As such, they propose moving beyond individualistic research methodologies that ignore the fact that discourses of othering are co-constructed between people (*ibid.*: 3). This can allow examining the instability of othering processes in interaction and the complexity of their formation.

Questions

1. Do you agree with the idea that othering is a ‘universal sin’? Do you think that one cannot live without it?
2. When was the last time someone othered you overtly? How and why did they do it? Similarly when did you last other someone?

3. There are clearly people who are more prone to othering than others. Who are they in your own society?
4. Can you think of any individual spokesperson for certain groups/minorities who are omnipresent in the media? Ask someone whom they represent how they feel about this person and what s/he stands for.
5. How would you define the concept of culturalism?

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Interculturality and the ‘Fragilities’ of Human Rights

Abstract Many discussions on interculturality are based on the idea of human rights. This chapter proposes to move beyond human rightism, a somewhat naïve Eurocentric approach to human rights. Some supranational initiatives are critiqued for being ‘fragile’ and for positioning ‘us’ and ‘them’ in relation to human rights. Counterhegemonic ways that go counter to such approaches are discussed in the field of education to conclude the chapter.

I live and work in a country which often tops most international rankings: no. 1 in the Worldwide Press Freedom Index (2009); no. 1 in *Newsweek* World’s Best Countries (2010), no. 2 in the ‘Good’ country index (2014), but also no. 7 in the State of the World’s Mothers (2010) and no. 7 in the Global Peace Index (2010). Finland also scored the highest number of points for the Freedom in the World 2015 Index (freedom rating, civil liberties, political rights). The Nordic country has thus often been revered and constructed as a utopia, especially in terms of equality, social justice, democracy and human rights. However there is another side to this fairy tale. According to a 2013 Amnesty International report, Finland breaches many aspects of human rights (or contributes to breach them). In 2011 the small country of 5 million inhabitants granted arms exports to 25 countries that do not respect EU criteria in terms of human rights. For example, the Ministry of Defence granted licenses to export rifles and ammunition to Kazakhstan, where press freedom and human rights are often said to be violated. Other examples include (1) Asylum seekers are detained in police

facilities with people facing criminal charges rather than in adequate locations, (2) Violence against women and girls is a serious problem, (3) Many instances of excessive use of force during police custody have been reported, and (4) Conscientious objectors to military service are imprisoned, which has a discriminatory impact on their future (e.g. the impossibility of becoming a civil servant). Very few news outlets, Finnish people, and the hundreds of ‘pedagogical tourists’ who visit Finland every year would note and criticize human rights in the country, because they are unaware of these issues and have been brainwashed about the ‘good’ of the country (Dervin 2013).

Finland often gives lessons about equality, democracy, and human rights to other countries. This can easily lead to ethnocentrism (an implicit and/or explicit feeling of superiority towards the other) (LeVine and Campbell 1972) and to self-congratulation (*we help others and need no help*) (de Oliveira 2011). In terms of interculturality, understood here as the encounter of people from different countries, bearing in mind that they do not just represent a ‘culture’ but also different social classes, genders, generations, and religions that intersect, this is highly problematic. This chapter questions the hegemony of human rights discourses (de Sousa Santos 2015) when dealing with intercultural dialogue and proposes ways of including this element in a ‘counterhegemonic way’ (ibid.) in education. For Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2009, n. p.) ‘In this time and age, it is not easy to theorize about human rights. Human rights are supposed to be a strong answer to the problems of the world, so strong as to be universally valid. Now, it seems more and more obvious that our time is not one of strong answers. It is rather a time of strong questions and weak answers.’ Examples from the Finnish context illustrate some of my arguments.

Since the approval of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, discourses on human rights have become prevalent in ‘international law, global and regional institutions, foreign policies of (mostly liberal-democratic) states, and in the activities of a diverse and growing array of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and networks’ (Beitz 2011: 1). In short, they have a ‘moral life’, a ‘legal life’, and a ‘political life’ (ibid.). We also need to bear in mind, in order to avoid certain ‘centrisms’ such as historiocentrism or Eurocentrism, that human rights also have a ‘historical life’ (ibid.: 2). For instance, the Cyrus Cylinder from Persia, dating back to the sixth century before our common era, which promoted harmony between different people and faiths, has often been described as a first symbol of universal human rights (Mitchell 1988: 83).

The founding member states of the Charter of the United Nations (1945) declared:

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. (Article 26)

In the field of education, human rights have played an important role over the past decades, especially in relation to the idea of interculturality. As such the EU white paper on intercultural dialogue from 2008 identifies intercultural education as one of the five key areas where action is needed to safeguard and develop human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, and to promote mutual understanding. However, the 'intercultural' in education still remains largely treated as neutral transactional encounters, ignoring the fact that they encompass and contribute to unbalanced power relations, differential treatment, different kinds of -isms such as racism, culturalism, linguism, and so on. These represent what I consider to be the most 'hidden' violations of human rights. Following de Sousa Santos (2015: 1), I also believe that intercultural education can also too easily contribute to 'a large majority of the world's inhabitants [not being] the subjects of human rights (...) but rather the objects of human rights discourses'. This chapter problematizes these aspects.

BEYOND MERE HUMAN RIGHTISM?

Many scholars note that the conventional idea of human rights (*human rightism*) is problematic because of its inflationary use. Mchangama and Verdirame (2014, n. p.) note: 'If human rights were a currency, its value would be in free fall, thanks to a gross inflation in the number of human rights treaties and nonbinding international instruments adopted by international organizations over the last several decades.' The canonical definitions of human rights also seem to want to include 'everything', too many aspects that make the notion difficult to manage. For example, for Starkey (2003), human rights include personal rights, rights in relationships between people, public freedoms, and political rights, in addition to economic, social, and cultural rights. This inflation, and the lack of intersectionability between these aspects, often makes it challenging to work effectively with the idea of human rights in education.

Relevant to interculturality, de Sousa Santos (2015) is worried about (1) the fact that human rights are ‘universally valid irrespective of the social, political, and cultural context in which they operate’ (ibid.: 7), (2) the way human rights are conceptualized is often based on ‘a conception of human nature as individual, self-sustaining, and qualitatively different from the non-human nature’ (ibid.), (3) what counts as human rights or not is determined by universal declarations, multilateral institutions, and North-based/Western non-governmental organizations (ibid.), and (4) human rights are often presented as being problematic in the global South (not so much in the North, ibid.: 49). For the sociologist, human rights discourses are dependent on and reproduce asymmetries of power deriving from the ‘neo-imperial, neo-colonial nature of contemporary world disorder’ (2009, n. p.). He even argues that some representatives of the world disorder are objects rather than subjects of human rights discourses in, for example, the Global South; that a lot of human suffering does not count as human rights; and that many acts of human rights violation have been done in the name of human rights (2015: 78). While promoting dignity, ‘Western’ notions of human rights can facilitate imperialism and the proliferation of misery (2009, n. p.).

During the 1993 UN World Conference on Human Rights in Austria, certain lines were drawn between Western and non-Western interpretations of human rights (Friedman et al. 2005). The Bangkok Declaration, signed and released by Asian States before the 1993 Conference, offered a critique of human rights universalism:

[The signatories] recognize that while human rights are universal in nature, they must be considered in the context of a dynamic and evolving process of international norm-setting, bearing in mind the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds. (Hamelink 1997: 100)

Let me take two examples to illustrate how human rights can be explicitly and implicitly used to manipulate discourses about self and other, and lead to unjustified and politically motivated hierarchies. First, in 2014 the former Prime Minister of Finland organized the Northern Future Forum in Finland. His special guest was David Cameron, the then Prime Minister of the UK:

The prime ministers of the UK, the Nordic countries and the Baltic States will convene with the aim of sharing ideas and finding new ways of tackling

the common challenges encountered in the modern northern European economies. The Northern Future Forum (NFF) is a unique event that brings together the prime ministers, business leaders, entrepreneurs and policy makers from nine northern European countries. The discussion at NFF 2014 will focus on how to foster equality, wellbeing and competitiveness under the current economic challenges. The meeting will also include presentations and discussions on policies, ideas and innovations that have helped create jobs and improve the standard of living in the participating countries. (<http://nff2014.government.fi/about-northern-future-forum>)

The following comment from Cameron, at the end of the event, illustrates well how the neo-liberal discourses of innovation and competition were masked by an imagined comparison between the imagined space of 'northern Europe' with China and Russia:

Finally for me, I think we are very rational northern Europeans, we come together and we talk about our problems, some of the difficulties that we have. I think we should also celebrate our successes and I think that one of the successes that we should celebrate is the fact that I profoundly believe that societies like ours that are open democratic and liberal and tolerant and disputatious and argumentative, we are more creative and more inventive than closed societies whether in China or in Russia or elsewhere. And I think we should celebrate that one of the best ways to keep ahead and to be creative and to be recognised as the sort of societies we are, and the sort of creativity we achieve, we often talk about our problems but let's also pick up the values that we have which are very important part of our prosperity now and in the future.

Interestingly, Cameron has imagined a new regional identity: Northern Europeans. The label includes the Nordic countries, the Baltic countries, and Britain. Defining this new category as 'very rational', 'open', 'democratic', 'liberal', 'tolerant', 'disputatious', 'argumentative', 'creative', and 'inventive', the British prime minister opposed it to 'closed' societies like China and Russia 'or elsewhere', creating a new hierarchy between and within the West and the East. Even though the word human rights is not mentioned as one of the 'values' and 'achievements' of Northern Europeans, many of the aforementioned characteristics hint at them: rationality (the 'rational' respects human rights), democracy, tolerance, and open (vs. closed societies). Although many commentators would agree with the arguments made by Cameron, I argue that this typically leads

not only to self-congratulation and satisfaction but also to asymmetries of power. As seen in the example of Finland in the introduction, many of the values spelled out by Cameron and opposed to the Chinese or Russians are not stabilized in this part of the world either.

The second example of manipulation of the universal understanding of human rights was reported by the Finnish media in November 2014. Although it does not relate directly to the canonical definition of ‘intercultural’ as it deals with same-sex marriage, I find this case to be very relevant. At the time Finland was one of the last European countries not to have approved same-sex marriage. The then interior minister and Christian Democratic chair declared that she was opposed to marriage equality (Yle News 2014). Her justification was based on the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights. She claimed: ‘If we think about the UN declaration, which is significant from the perspective of a universal understanding of human rights, it says that everyone has the right... every man and woman has the right to marriage, in other words it defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman.’ Article 16.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reads:

Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

This is a good example of an unstable interpretation of human rights, used to serve political (and religious) motivations in one of the most ‘democratic’ countries in the world.

INTERCULTURALITY AND THE HEGEMONY OF HUMAN RIGHTS: PROBLEMATIC SUPRANATIONAL INITIATIVES

In March 2015, the Council of Europe, the intergovernmental organization, which promotes, trains about, and produces educational materials on human rights and citizenship education, announced that it was working on a ‘universal and objective system to define and measure democratic competences’ (personal e-mail, 18.3.2015). Interestingly, the idea of democratic competences is used interchangeably with intercultural competence in the message I received from the institution. Twenty core ‘democratic’ competences were defined by the institution: (amongst others) responsibility, tolerance, conflict resolution, listening

skills, linguistic and communication skills, critical thinking, empathy and openness, and autonomous learning skills (ibid.). Descriptors for each competence describe what people know, understand, and are able to do and refrain from doing. According to the head of the institution's department of education, the main objective is to define levels of attainment for each competence and 'to incorporate into teacher-training programmes, recruitment tests, and the school curriculum, across Europe and beyond' (ibid.). Although the word *human rights* is nowhere to be found in the description of the competences, it is contained implicitly in many of its aspects (democracy, tolerance, responsibility, and so on). The initiative is taking place, of course, in a specific context: Extremism is increasing on many fronts; people question who they are and where they belong, often putting boundaries between themselves and others to defend themselves; the world is facing horrific refugee crises, and so on. So one might think that the work of the Council is much needed and welcomed. However, while reading the description of the initiative, I worry about its supposedly 'universal' and 'objective' appeal. *Who will make the final decision as to what, for example, 'critical thinking' means or as to what 'responsibility' entails? Whose voices will be included in the descriptors? Will this lead to the 'centre' (Europe) dictating to the rest of the world what democratic and intercultural competences are?* I also find many of the components—which relate to discourses on human rights—to be extremely problematic. For example, the notion of tolerance has been criticized by many interculturalists for its somewhat passive and potentially patronizing characteristics (see Dobbernack and Modood 2013; Adcock 2013 about the Indian case). The same goes for the idea of 'openness': *Who can be deemed to be really 'open'? 'Open' to what? Can 'openness' always be considered genuine?*

In a somewhat more interesting but ambiguous statement on the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development (2010), a group of United Nations experts expressed the idea that human rights are essential 'tools' for an 'effective' intercultural dialogue. The statement lays a lot of emphasis on the idea of 'cultural diversity', an anthropomorphic word that hides the social beings who enter into dialogue and tends to remove agency off them. For instance, at the beginning, the statement talks about globalization 'eroding cultural diversity' and the need to 'pre-serve cultural diversity'. However, I agree with Wood (2003: 21) that 'we are drunk with the idea that every difference of ethnic custom, every foreign or regional accent, every traditional recipe, and every in-group

attitude betokens a distinct worldview'. The cultural diversity promoted by the statement, which resembles museum pieces to be 'preserved', could easily pass as 'concocted diversity' which 'imagines the world as divisible into neatly defined social groups, each with its own thriving cultural traditions' (Wood, *ibid.*: 37). It is interesting to see that the statement seems to contradict itself when its authors explain:

Cultural rights include the right to question the existing parametres of 'culture', to opt in or out of particular cultural entities, and to continuously create new culture. Individuals have multiple plural identities and inhabit societies which are also pluralistic. Promoting cultural diversity is thus the preservation of a living process, a renewable treasure for the benefit of present and future generations that guarantees everyone's human rights as an adaptive process nurturing the capacity for expression, creation and innovation. (UN 2010)

What this means is that the authors of the statement see culture as something that changes, a process, but it also recognizes the rights of people to opt out of culture. The oxymoron (two contradictory terms used together), 'the preservation of a living process, a renewable treasure', in reference to promoting cultural diversity, translates this process well. What the statement also argues for here is that human rights are a process that relies directly on cultural expression, creation, and innovation. I agree with these points. However, it is a shame that the statement only refers to the fuzzy word of *culture* to discuss the link between human rights and intercultural dialogue. Jahoda (2012: 300) reminds us rightly that "“culture” is not a thing, but a social construct vaguely referring to a vastly complex set of phenomena'. Maybe more importantly, Holliday (2010: 4) argues that 'culture can easily lead to essentialism by “present[ing] people's individual behaviour as entirely defined and constrained by the cultures in which they live so that the stereotype becomes the essence of who they are”'. This leads to the following questions: *When one talks about culture in relation to human rights, whose culture does one refer to? Whose culture should one respect and why? Whose voice is included and excluded in these discussions?* It has become increasingly important to intersect culture and other identity markers (gender, social class, language, and so on) to deal with these issues.

The statement also highlights political aspects of the use of human rights in intercultural dialogue:

No one may invoke cultural diversity as an excuse to infringe on human rights guaranteed by international law or limit their scope, nor should cultural diversity be taken to support segregation and harmful traditional practices which, in the name of culture, seek to sanctify differences that run counter to the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights. (UN 2010)

This is an extremely important aspect of interculturality as we problematize it: Culture (or cultural diversity in the statement) is often used as an 'excuse', an 'alibi', to discriminate against the other and to put oneself on a pedestal (Dervin and Machart 2015). Interestingly, these practices are very common in, for example, Finnish education, where the other is often treated differently, segregated, and asked to perform a 'cultural' other to please teachers', teacher educators', and decision makers' wish for multiculturalism (Riitaoja 2013). To me, through the statement, this could be read as infringement on Human Rights: Based on skin colour and apparent difference—rather than potential commonality as someone who was born, lives and studies in Finland—teachers too often make the mistake of 'picking' on certain students.

WORKING ON THE 'FRAGILITIES' OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

I agree with de Sousa Santos (2009: 17) that we should not discard the idea of human rights. As the sociologist suggests, what we need to do is to find ways of making people aware of their 'current fragilities', to help them to construct 'strong ideas and practices of resistance' (ibid.) and to deconstruct forms of indoctrination in relation to discussions on the 'interculturality' and hegemonic discourses on human rights.

In what follows I suggest ways of doing so. As rightly argued by Mchangama and Verdirame (2014), first of all, we need to narrow down and define a clearer set of human rights. It is essential for students to examine diachronically how human rights have been presented and constructed in different parts of the world. *What similarities and differences are there between these different models? Whose conceptions seem to have won over others internationally? What aspects of human rights from the past and different parts of the world would they want to keep and maybe apply in their school?* Discussions on human rights are included in many school subjects and are often found in textbooks. It is important for

teachers and students to examine and compare how, across subjects, they are introduced and discussed.

Questioning the instability of human rights and their manipulation in discourses of intercultural dialogue is also an important educational goal. For de Sousa Santos, again, we need to raise ‘suspicion regarding human rights’, especially in their relation to a ‘Western, liberal matrix’ (2009, 2015). De Sousa Santos suggests comparing, for example, human rights as discussed in the West to other ‘grammars of human dignity’ which have been considered ‘inherently inferior in ethical and political terms’ (2015: 3). *Who is included and excluded from discussions of human rights? How is ‘human dignity’ conceptualized elsewhere? What commonalities and differences are there between ‘our’ ways and ‘theirs’?* The fact that human rights also tend to be individualistic deserves our full attention (de Sousa Santos 2015: xiv).

At a more micro-level it is interesting for pupils to reflect on interculturality and human rights in their own environment. One interesting element is to discuss the rights of ‘minorities’ in the class (migrant-background pupils, representatives of religious and sexual minorities, and so on). Following Amselle (2010: 79), one could reflect on, for example, migrant-background pupils’ rights to claim and/or opt out of an ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identity which tends to be imposed on her/him in our schools. Pupils should have the right to appropriate or refuse their ‘origins’ (de Singly 2003: 58). *How much of this is taking place in a specific school? How is it done? How can people be empowered to question these behaviours?*

Discussions of human rights and the ‘intercultural’ have often eluded the question of environmental issues. Quessada (2013: 277) has proposed the fascinating idea of shifting the focus from *human rights* to *human duties* in this regard. This opens up the idea of interculturality. According to an increasing number of scientists, our era is that of the *anthropocene* (*anthopos*=human; *cene*=new or recent), defined by humanity’s major and ongoing impact on shaping Earth’s geology and ecology. It marks the end of the *Holocene*, a time when humans colonized new territories (Quessada, *ibid.*). The anthropocene is represented by the explosion in the human population, the mass use of fossil fuels, demands on fresh water, the destruction of habitats, and the dramatic loss of species as evidence for ‘the central role of mankind’ in shaping Earth’s geology and ecology. In daily media and intercultural discourses one often attempts to ‘blame’ and ‘shame’, for example, the biggest polluters, but the anthropocene tells

us that every single human being is responsible for this new chapter in Earth's history, that all humans constitute a geological force (Quessada 2013: 274). Pollution thus becomes reciprocal: 'my consumption, my way of life, the fact that I live, now relate me to other people on the basis of reciprocal pollution' (Quessada, *ibid.*). All humans are equal in front of environmental issues (*ibid.*: 276). It is thus essential that intercultural education takes on board this aspect and helps pupils to examine critically discourses about 'polluters' and 'victims of pollution' and media reports on pollution beyond one's borders, and to be more critical towards one's own position and contradictions (*how do I contribute to pollution directly and indirectly on a daily basis, in my own environment but also thousands of miles away through my consumption?*).

REFLECTING ON COUNTERHEGEMONIC WAYS

This chapter has reviewed the link between interculturality and discourses of human rights in education. Hegemonic and problematic perspectives on these issues were reviewed and 'counterhegemonic ways' of approaching human rights in the 'intercultural' were suggested. Inspired by Hoskins and Sallah's (2011) critical discussions of the concept of intercultural competence, and as an introduction to the final two chapters of this book, I wish to summarize the main points made here by listing the kinds of knowledge, awareness, understanding, and critical thinking that could be implemented in relation to human rights and interculturality in education:

1. Knowledge of human rights violations or contributions to such violations in one's own context. Demonstrate humility when discussing other contexts.
2. Knowledge of the human rights discourses across time and space and how some of these discourses have remained and 'ruled over' others. Question Eurocentrism and indoctrination from the media and decision makers.
3. Knowledge about alternatives ways of conceptualizing 'dignity' around the world in comparison to *human rightism*. Discuss their pros and cons, similarities and differences.
4. Ability to select and discuss some precise aspects of human rights instead of a more global approach. Detect how discourses of culture and solid identity can violate other people's human rights.
5. Awareness and understanding of the 'fragilities' of human rights.

6. Ability to support those in need of claiming and/or opting out of static identities. Give them a voice.
7. Critical thinking towards one's own beliefs and actions towards others.
8. Knowledge of the characteristics of the anthropocene era. Negotiate one's own human duties and those of others.

Questions

1. Define the idea of human rights in your own words.
2. What do you think are human duties in relation to interculturality?
3. Do you think I would go too far if I said that a white teacher who otherizes a black student violates his human rights? Explain.
4. Do you think that you are 'open-minded'? What does it mean?
5. Give an example of how people use human rights as an excuse.

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Tools for Change—Dynamic and Realistic Intercultural Competences

Abstract The knotty concept of intercultural competence is introduced in this chapter. The author calls for a dynamic definition of the concept that questions universal and objective assumptions about it. The most popular models of intercultural competence are reviewed and deconstructed. The author then proposes to concentrate on what he calls a realistic approach to intercultural competences (in the plural form) that could allow practitioners, researchers, and decision makers to revise their use of the concept. The chapter ends on observations of teachers' intercultural competence made by student teachers who were trained to 'do' intercultural competences in the proposed way when they did their practicums.

This section proposes to reconstruct interculturality after having deconstructed it in the previous sections. A series of conceptual and methodological tools are defined and illustrated with examples. With these tools, a new sense of interculturality can be achieved in education. The central but problematic concept of intercultural competence is dealt with. Following a critical review of the concept and demonstrating how it has contributed to the problems presented in the previous sections, the idea of intercultural dynamics is introduced as an alternative to the problematic concept of intercultural competence. Components of the dynamics are exemplified.

TOWARDS DYNAMIC COMPETENCES

Before tackling intercultural competences, let me summarize the salient points that have been made until now. One thing is for sure: We need to move away from a perspective that lays an emphasis on facts about a ‘target culture’, presents ‘grammars of culture’ (do’s and don’ts), concentrates on cultural difference, and confronts cultures and civilizations (Valette 1986).

Probably the most important aspect of interculturality is that it can only happen through interactions with another person, which has an influence on how we think, behave, perform, present ourselves, and so on. For Gallagher (2011: 488), there is no way we can think of a social being without considering the dynamics that s/he experiences all the time. He suggests that we always bear in mind that when we meet someone, ‘self-in-the-other’ and the ‘other-in-the-self’ occur (ibid.: 492). Shi-xu (2001: 280) makes a similar claim when he criticizes the often ‘individual-knowledge-minded approach’ to interculturality, which ignores completely the fact that interaction is jointly constructed. This is why acting in and examining these intercultural dynamics require a political approach, an approach that places a strong emphasis on power (how does *homo hierarchicus* position herself and the other?), unstable identification, and ‘facework’, that is, how we protect ourselves and the other in interaction (Bensa 2010; Lakoff 1990)?

The following extract will allow me to illustrate these points. Some years ago, a Finnish TV channel broadcasted a series of interviews with a fake Japanese journalist (*Noriko Show*). The journalist was actually a famous Finnish actress. Disguised as a ‘typical’ Japanese, she spoke broken English and acted silly. In one of the episodes, she meets Finnish singer Dany, who, like all the other guests, is confused by her English and the incoherence of her discourse. Midway through the interview, Noriko (the journalist) starts rambling about an imagined Finnish singer. Here is a transcription of the excerpt:

N(oriko): ...so there is also other Finnish singer called Duck?

D(any): (silence) ...excuse me?

N: there is also other Finnish singer called Duck?

D: yes we have...

N: because I meet him and was yesterday Duck Mr Dickier Duck... Last name Duck... you know him?

D: yes I know him... eh... I think when I was in Japan I also had the possibility to go into a show business school they took me to a show business school where they rehearsed the movements and everything

N: you know some kung kung fighter?

D: yes I know a lot about your culture because your culture is so old and many cultures are based on your culture.

In this excerpt what happens is that the guest is trying to save face in front of the non-understandable reactions of the journalist. There is power imbalance here: the singer believes that he is going to be on Japanese television so he needs to keep up appearances and make sure that his 'face' is viewed in a positive light. Because of this he tries to continue as if everything was normal, even praising Japanese culture ('your culture') for being old and the basis of many other cultures. This discourse of culture as an excuse allows him to escape from the imbroglio of the invented singer Duck and to flatter the ego of his imagined viewers. Although this scene is pure fiction on the side of one of the interlocutors (Noriko), the Finnish singer falls into the trap of essentialism and culturalism because of the 'intercultural' pressure that is being performed with him. Before this excerpt the singer tried to ask for clarifications a few times but decided to ignore, somehow, the journalist and go on with his own discussion. It is clear throughout this (manipulated) interview, which is reminiscent of many 'real' intercultural encounters, that interculturality is not something that is experienced like a formula and lived in a tutelage.

AGAINST A 'UNIVERSAL' AND 'OBJECTIVE' DEFINITION

In a message received from the Head of the Education Department at the Council of Europe (aninfluential European institution in education in Europe and around the world) in March 2015, mentioned earlier, the Council's plans about ambitious 'Pioneering work on democratic competences to transform the way we live and work' were revealed. As a reminder, in the message, the democratic competences of the title were partnered with *intercultural competences* (IC) and defined as 'the values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding that enable us to participate effectively in today's diverse democracies'. The objective of this 'pioneering work' was to find 'a universal and objective system to define and measure (the) democratic competences [required to promote human rights and citizenship education]'. In order to do so, '20 core competences, including:

responsibility, tolerance, conflict resolution, listening skills, linguistic and communication skills, critical thinking, empathy and “openness” were identified and would be measured to, for example, cite ‘levels of attainment for “empathy” and “critical thinking”’.

For Maffesoli (1976: 259): ‘The quest for a “best way of being” (*mieux-être*) which is always expressed by the imposition of a “should-be” (*devoir-être*), leads inescapably to totalitarianism’. I believe that we should worry about the insistence on *the* ‘best way of doing’ contained in this prophecy, which can easily turn into a pseudo-universal ‘should-be’. The proposed 20 core competences could be easily criticized for their polysemy and emptiness as well as the Eurocentric values hidden behind them (e.g. *tolerance, critical thinking, openness*, and so on). The ‘objective’ and ‘universal’ argument of the message also raises a lot of questions in a postcolonial world like ours. Rereading the message, and pondering over its somewhat commonsensical and potentially colonizing discourse of self and other, one easily gets the impression that the Council of Europe is contributing to what I would call the ‘imagineering industry of Intercultural Competence (IC)’—a portmanteau word for the engineering of imaginaries (Härkönen and Dervin 2015). Too often, intercultural competence has been treated as a neutral transactional encounter by the Council, ignoring the fact that it encompasses and contributes to unbalanced power relations, differential treatment, different kinds of -ism such as racism, culturalism, and so on (see Abdallah-Pretceille 1986; Dervin 2010; Holliday 2010; Hoskins and Sallah 2011). These are crucial social problems that need further critical inquiry in order to challenge current hegemonies, hierarchies, and power differentials. Although we live in postmodern intercultural times, my impression is that the Council of Europe’s proposal, despite good intentions, contributes to analysing our world through Eurocentric and universalistic sociopolitical and economic categories and perspectives from a different era (Maffesoli 1993: 8).

In this chapter, I would like to show that what escapes the ‘Imagineering industry’ like the Council of Europe, has already been tackled by the scholars, thinkers, and practitioners who contribute actively to the current (r)evolution of interculturality in education. They belong to many and varied fields and subfields that look into interculturality: intercultural/multicultural/social justice education, language education, health care, business, and so on. This selective list doesn’t include all the fields that do not contain the word *intercultural* in their names (anthropology, sociology, psychology, other subfields of education, etc.) but without whom the

(r)evolution may not have happened. I argue that this (r)evolution can help us to tackle today's burning issues of othering, racism/xenophobia, and social injustice and to revise the important concept of intercultural competence in education. I also offer some criticisms of the (r)evolution as well as some suggestions for what I call a 'realistic' approach to IC.

(DE-)(RE)CONSTRUCTING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES

The concept of intercultural competences (IC) is one of the most discussed aspects of interculturality in education, especially in teacher education, language education, and study abroad. Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) have proposed a review of the various models of intercultural competences 'available on the market', which they classify into five categories: (1) *Compositional models* propose a simple list of what often appear to be unrelated attitudes, skills, knowledge, and behaviours; (2) *Co-orientational models* concentrate on interactions and on the construction of self and other; (3) *Developmental models* describe how individuals acquire intercultural competences; (4) *Adaptational models* examine adjustment and adaptation of people involved in intercultural encounters; and (5) *Causal path models* are interested in how different components of intercultural competences are related.

A few models of Intercultural Competences have gained 'fame' in the last decades and are used beyond the boundaries of their original fields. They all represent models that fit into the aforementioned categories of compositional, developmental, and adaptational models. The following three models have been very influential in my own context (Finnish teacher education) but also worldwide, and deserve to be increasingly evaluated.

The first model was proposed by Milton J. Bennett (1986, 1993) and is named *The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (DMIS). Although it is not officially called a model of intercultural competences, it is often used as such (Hosaya et al. 2010). The model outlines a continuum of increasing cultural awareness, understanding, and adjustment from *ethnocentrism* (believing that one's culture is the best) to *ethnorelativism* (realizing that all cultures are 'good' and 'bad'). The model has been used in business and intercultural communication studies as well as in education research around the world. The main problems with this model are: One must pay to use it; it is based on 'levels' of competence; it is often used in a step-by-step way as if interculturality could be pre-programmed and stabilized—hence the model claims that intercultural competence can be

acquired rather than, for example, *developed*. The model is thus very much individualistic in the sense that it relies too much on the ‘performance’ of one individual and ignores the fact that interculturality is co-constructed, influenced, and somewhat determined by the presence of an other, by power differentials, and by specific contexts and intertextuality—the fact that there is always dialogue between appearances, situations, and discourses, and that these influence one’s behaviours and attitudes. Finally, the model insists largely on the ‘power’ of culture in its continuum and relies on the accumulation of knowledge about different cultures, often used synonymously with knowledge about ‘nations’ (McSweeney 2012).

The next two models are the most popular in Google Scholar. The second model shares some characteristics with the previous one. Byram’s (1997) Intercultural Communicative Competence emerged from the field of language education and has its origins in Hymes’ work on communication. The model is theorized in terms of personal cognitive and motivational aspects in relation to knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Although the model has some interesting characteristics, I have been very critical of its somewhat naïve and positivistic approach (Derwin 2010). For example, the component of *savoir être* (attitudes) can be misleading and too easily lead to self-congratulating. It consists in showing curiosity and openness, and a readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own. To me, *showing* is not enough and very unstable (I can show but not believe in what I am showing). One also needs to question one’s attitudes about self and other and one’s performing of these acts. Another component, *savoirs* (knowledge), refers to the knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one’s own and in one’s interlocutor’s country. Again the emphasis on ‘countries’ and ‘cultures’ lays down artificially created boundaries that in a global world like ours one may wish to question (Appadurai 1996). Byram’s model also includes the component of *savoir s’engager* (critical cultural awareness and/or political education). This relates to the idea of intercultural citizenship and was developed within the framework of the work that Byram did for the Council of Europe. Although this aspect is interesting, one can be critical of the European political bias behind it and the Kantian rationality perspective on morality and the Western activist orientation to human rights (Matsuo 2012; see also Hoff 2014 and chapter 5).

The final highly influential model of intercultural competences is that of Darla Deardorff. Based on a review of ‘Western’ models of such competence, Deardorff proposed the *Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence*

(2006, 2009). Like Bennett's and Byram's models, the Pyramid is based on knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and shares many problematic components. *Knowledge* includes cultural self-awareness, a deep understanding and knowledge of culture, and culture-specific information. *Skills* are based on listening, observing, interpreting, analysing, evaluating, and relating. And requisite *attitudes* consist of respect (valuing other cultures, cultural diversity); openness (to intercultural learning and to people from other cultures, withholding judgment); and curiosity and discovery (tolerating ambiguity and uncertainty). Deardorff lists the following desired outcomes: (desired external outcome): *Behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately (based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes) to achieve one's goals to some degree*; (desired internal outcome): *Informed frame of reference/filter shift: Adaptability (to different communication styles and behaviours; adjustment to new cultural environments); Flexibility (selecting and using appropriate communication styles and behaviours; cognitive flexibility); Ethnorelative view; Empathy*. Many of these aspects can too easily remain highly essentialistic and acritical if they are not deconstructed.

Going back to Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) one notices that in the three models, the co-orientational and causal path are often lacking; that is, the emphasis is on the individual who performs but not on the interaction or relationship that they are involved in. For example, the desired outcome of 'behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately' is potentially biased. In education, who can decide what is *effective* and *appropriate* interculturally, especially when these are co-constructed and negotiated? The emphasis is also on attitudes, skills, knowledge, and behaviours in the three models. These elements contain problematic elements whose 'acquisition' is very difficult or impossible to evaluate. For example, empathy, flexibility, 'views', and so on. As we need to rely on discourse and/or action to examine these aspects, one can only note their enactments.

WAYS OF CONSTRUCTING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES

Let me start by saying that I agree with P. Nynäs (2001: 34) when he claims that 'there is no way we can provide a technique for successful communication or a causal model for intercultural communication'. We could even go further and argue with the philosopher Henri Bergson (1907: 72) who wrote: 'It would be futile to try to assign to life a goal, in the human sense of the word. To speak of a goal is to think of a pre-existing model which need only be realized.'

The three models mentioned in the previous section, though still popular in some educational contexts, have been questioned. They symbolize an era of research and practice of the ‘interculturality’ which does not match the central educational objectives of fighting against othering, hegemony, hierarchies, and power differentials. In what follows, I propose a meta-analysis of ways of constructing IC in research and teaching: ‘solid’, *Janusian*, ‘liquid’ *idealistic*, and ‘liquid’ *realistic*. These categories are based on close observation and analysis of current critical approaches to IC in the fields of education and communication. Much critical work has been published about the ‘solid’ approach to IC, and the reviews of the three models in the previous section exposed some of the critics. The ‘liquid’ categories represent applications of the (r)evolution of interculturality, which reflect critically on the aforementioned issues. The metaphors of the ‘solid’ and ‘liquid’ are borrowed directly from the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, who describes our world as being ‘liquid’ (some would say postmodern) versus the ‘solidity’ of the modern world of the nation-states (Bauman 2004).

A ‘solid’ approach to IC consists in pigeonholing individuals into static identities related to national cultures or languages. In order to illustrate this approach to IC, I use a publication from the Council of Europe (an influential European institution in education in Europe and around the world) based on a project entitled *Intercultural communication training in teacher education* (ICcinTE). The book, *Developing and assessing intercultural communicative competence: A guide for language teachers and teacher educators*, was published in 2007 and was still in use by the institution and more recent projects in 2015. The research team follows Byram’s model and sets as learning objectives: *to learn about cultures, to acquire a culture, and to mediate between two or more cultures*. In the book there is no mentioning of burning issues such as hegemony, hierarchies, and power differentials. As such, the authors nicely divide the world into cultural insiders and cultural outsiders. The end result is that of intercultural encounters that resemble tectonic plates moving against each other. In more scientific terms, the notions of essentialism and cultur(al)ism have been used to describe this highly problematic perspective that rids people of their agency and ‘blames’ their culture for problems in intercultural encounters (see Holliday 2010; Frenkiel and Rocca 2013). Besides, an overemphasis on differences (rather than the continuum difference–similarity, see Chapter 2) contributes to solidifying IC. For E. Said (1978: 349), ‘cultures and civilizations are so interrelated and interdependent

as to beggar any unitary or simply delineated description of their individuality'. As such, the boundaries between cultures and so-called cultural groups are quite fuzzy in an interrelated world like ours (Subrahmanyam 2011). By separating cultures, this kind of model of IC corresponds to the aforementioned idea of 'the clash of civilizations' as put forward by S. Huntington (1996).

The second approach to IC, entitled Janusian, tends to oscillate between the previous perspective ('pigeonholing') and a postmodern, co-constructivist approach that takes into account, amongst others, identity positionings and the instability of discourses of culture. This often leads to contradictions and incoherence in the way one interprets, analyses, and constructs intercultural encounters, privileges, and power differentials. Most of the time 'Janusianists' are unaware of these problems or of the fact that they shift from one position to another. Some of these issues were identified in the *Developing and assessing intercultural communicative competence: A guide for language teachers and teacher educators*. For instance, at the beginning of the book, the authors claim that 'worldwide communication and the new development of technologies have created a transnational culture' or 'We know that language teachers are conveyors of cultural representations from various information sources: syllabuses, teaching materials, selection of texts and their own experiences.' Yet, at the same time, they make the following claims: "Interacting effectively across cultures" means accomplishing a negotiation between people based on both culture-specific and cultural-general features that are on the whole respectful and favourable to each'. The reference to 'culture-specific' and 'cultural-general features' seems to contradict the idea of a 'transnational culture' and the criticism addressed at language teachers in the previous quotes. Like Abdallah-Preteille (1986) I believe that any reference to culture is a representation. Janusianism represents a potentially dangerous position if one does not notice and admit such contradictions, as they will always affect the 'subaltern', who might be powerless to defend him/herself.

The next two perspectives fall into the same category of 'liquid approaches to IC' and correspond to current analyses of postmodern and postcolonial realities and critics of the two previous approaches in education. For instance, following van Dijk (1987) amongst others, these approaches demonstrate how IC can contribute to the spread, reproduction, and acceptance of prejudice. Adrian Holliday (2010) adds that it can also implicitly express the 'hidden concept-pair of superiority and

inferiority' (van Dijk, *ibid.*: 386). In a similar vein, the postcolonial educationalist Vanessa Andreotti (2011) sees in some IC work hostility to the 'other' from dominant Western epistemologies based on the project of European Enlightenment humanism. In her analyses of educational policies and practices in the UK, Andreotti (*ibid.*) shows that the 'other' is often used to validate 'our' superiority. I have argued that solid models of IC encounter similar issues (Dervin 2011).

While the first perspective is referred to as (liquid) idealistic, the second one is (liquid) realistic. The (liquid) idealistic approach has been at the centre of critical discussions of interculturality and IC for at least a decade now (see Piller 2011). Its starting point is the idea of *diverse diversities* (everybody is diverse regardless of their origins, skin colour, social background, and so on). It aims at educating about the dangers of non-essentialistic, non-culturalist ideas and to 'suppress' them, as they can hide discourses of discrimination, power, and superiority, and can easily serve as excuses and alibis (Dervin 2015). The (liquid) idealistic approach also questions issues of 'solid' origins (see Dervin 2015), which can conceal 'codes' leading to (hidden) discrimination, oppression, injustice, and hierarchies.

I was a proponent of the liquid 'idealistic' approach for many years. However, I now see a problem with the perspective in relation to ideologies: It tends to ignore the fact that it is itself ideological (like any other approach) in the sense that it aims at the unreachable objectives of non-essentialism and non-culturalism. These objectives are, of course, noble and should be borne in mind at all times in intercultural education. However, they can be quite unstable, as they are negotiated in interaction with 'complex' people and in specific contexts, which have an impact on, for example, power relations. In some situations, because one feels inferior or simply because one is tired, these noble objectives cannot be met even if one tries hard. Another issue relates to the fact that the (liquid) idealistic approach does not recognize fully (like all other approaches) that it creates neo-imagineering of IC, which can lead to self-congratulation but also to patronizing attitudes ('I am non-essentialist and you are not'). If I consider that I am non-essentialist (which I cannot really be), does it mean that I 'won the battle'? Furthermore, (liquid) idealistic approaches are somewhat frustrating. Non-essentialism is an ideal that cannot be reached: How do, for example, students react to their constant battle with it when they are made to believe that there is a reachable end to it? How do they deal with this frustration?

The (liquid) realistic approach to IC that I propose to consider wishes to move beyond this problematic issue by recognizing that essentialism is a ‘universal sin’ and that no one is immune to it. As disappointing as it may seem, the approach accepts that ‘Clichés; stock phrases; and adherence to conventional, standardized codes of expression and conduct have the socially recognized function of protecting us against reality’ (Arendt 1978: 4). The approach does recognize the importance of non-essentialism and non-culturalism, but at the same time urges its supporters to remain aware of the ‘simplicity’ of any act of interaction. Simplicity, a portmanteau word composed of *simple* and *complexity*, represents a continuum between the simple and the complex—two processes that we have to face all the time (Dervin 2015). There is a need to recognize and accept that, as researchers and practitioners, we can only reach a practical simplification of intercultural phenomena. Simplicity, an emerging theory in General Systems Theory, philosophy, biology, and neurosciences (Berthoz 2012; Louie 2009), represents the experiential continuum that every social being has to face on a daily basis. We all need to navigate between simple and complex ideas and opinions when we interact with others. It means that we often end up contradicting ourselves, not being sure about what we think, adapting our discourses to specific situations and interlocutors, using ‘white lies’ to please the other, and so on. Sometimes what we say shows some level of complexity (e.g. ‘I believe that everybody has multiple identities’/‘I don’t believe in stereotypes’), which can quickly dive back into the simple (‘but I think that Finnish people are this or that’). Neither simplicity nor complexity can thus be fully reached and what might appear simple can become complex and vice versa. Complexity has gained in popularity over the past decades in most fields of research. The world is complex; people are complex. Yet can we, *complex people* (researchers, practitioners, decision makers), examine complexity? Our own complexity makes it impossible to grasp the complexity of others. No one can claim to be able to analyse, understand, and/or talk about the interculturality from a complex perspective because sooner or later the complex becomes simple, and vice versa. ‘Simplexifying’ IC consists in recognizing and accepting that one cannot access its complexity but one can navigate, like Sisyphus rolling up his boulder up a hill, between the ‘simple’ and the ‘complex’. In a sense the (liquid) realistic approach resembles the Janusian approach presented before, except that one is aware of the shortcomings of the approach. Furthermore, unlike Janusianism, one tries to pull one’s position towards the complex side of simplicity as often as possible, bear-

ing in mind that it is impossible to reach it without falling back into the simple. This, of course, can make us uneasy and vertiginous.

In the following table the four different categories of IC are summarized.

<i>Approach</i>	<i>‘Solid’</i>	<i>Janusian</i>	<i>(Liquid) idealistic</i>	<i>(Liquid) realistic</i>
Components	Pigeonholing Miraculous recipes based on acritical, individualistic and stereotypical elements Overemphasis on difference	Pigeonholing and constructivism	Interculturality is ideological (failure to recognize that this perspective is also ideological) Belief in full change Failure is still not acceptable	Interculturality is always ideological, even in this perspective Simplexity (continuum simple-complex) Acceptance of failure-success
Impact	Essentialism, culturalism, hierarchies, injustice	Contradictions, implicit injustice, and incoherence	Idealistic positionings but feelings of frustration	Disappointment and ‘vertigo’ Can be viewed as a pessimistic approach to interculturality

A REALISTIC APPROACH TO IC

In this section, I am interested in how the (liquid) realistic perspective deals with intercultural competences. First of all, it should move beyond programmatic and ‘recipe-like’ IC. Simple progression (‘stages’) in the development and/or acquisition of IC is rejected. The (liquid) realistic perspective proposes that, like any other social phenomenon, IC is composed of contradictions, instabilities, and discontinuities and that its main goal is to ‘get used to the rolling and pitching’ of human life (Bergson 1934). In concrete terms this means avoiding ‘fixed points of attachment for thought and existence’ (ibid.) and placing instability at the centre of any intercultural activity: instability of identifications, instability of discourses of culture, instability of power relations, instability of feelings towards each other, and so on. According to Lifton (1993: 1), even if we are ‘schooled in the virtues of constancy and stability’ we ‘turn out to be surprisingly resil-

ient' towards the inconsistency and unpredictability of our sociocultural and economic worlds. Awareness of instability can help people to accept that the world, and especially self and other, are neither programmed nor better than others and urge them to revise their power relations.

Another important issue relating to IC is to get used to discomfort, to appreciate entering risky territory, and to accept that some degree of 'pain' is involved in dealing with intercultural encounters. The current 'industry of Imagineering IC' often wishes to protect individuals from these phenomena by creating 'interculturally correct' situations and/or educational content, which avoid and distract them from real discussions of structural inequality, oppression, and, for example, new forms of segregation. We thus need to create situations of encounters that can help students to test their resistance to discomfort and potential failure, and to learn to be reflexive about what they learn.

As the (liquid) realistic approach to IC takes a critical stance towards the flawed concept of *culture*, the now widely recognized need for intersectional analysis is taken seriously into account in work on IC (Collins 2009). As such, socio-economic and politico-historical categories are given as much emphasis as the usual problematic frameworks of culture, ethnicity, or race. Defined as examining the interconnected nature of social and 'biological' categorizations/identity markers such as language, race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion and so on (Collins 2009), intersectionality is interested in how these elements, when combined together, contribute or not to injustice, inequalities, discrimination, and disadvantage. According to Hoskins and Sallah (2011: 114), work on intercultural competences has often ignored such aspects to concentrate solely on the 'easy' and often 'a-political' aspect of cultural difference. Intersectionality could help us to discuss the wider structural forces of, for example, 'capitalism, racism, colonialism, and sexism' in intercultural contexts (ibid.), to examine the impact of power differentials from a more multifaceted perspective, and to 'individualize' analyses of intercultural encounters rather than generalizing them based only on culture/ethnic identity. Finally, this could allow intercultural learners to get engaged in more political perspectives by intersecting 'fights' that matter to them (e.g. the rights of women) and those related to less significant aspects to them (e.g. race, language).

I have noted elsewhere that most IC models tend to be overly individualistic and thus lack dialogical perspectives (Dervin 2011, see above). One aspect of the (liquid) realistic perspective consists in taking this element into account. IC is co-constructed by individuals in specific

contexts, which means that dialogues need to be central to any approach to IC. For Shi-xu (2001: 290), misunderstanding, non-understanding, communication breakdown, and so on ‘(are) a joint, co-ordinated, commonly consequential effect. No individual person, group, nation, culture, region and such like can alone be responsible for anything or achieve maximally possible success.’ The idea of ‘collective ego’ as proposed by the sociologist M. Maffesoli (1993) is very useful to counter-attack this major flaw. Putting an end to individualistic perspectives can allow us to examine the interdependence between I and others when interculturality takes place. The dialogues between different selves also matter in intercultural encounters. For Watkins (2000: 2), the self is ‘the collection of different characters (or “self- and object representations”) who can be said to populate an individual’s thoughts, feelings, and actions. In other words, the Self is that world of characters whom one entertains and identifies with.’ This is essential in considering IC. Too many models have ‘blamed’ one of the participants for being not competent enough, while her competence depends on the presence of another (physical or virtual individual). For example, one meets someone from abroad and that person bears a striking resemblance with an acquaintance or a friend or shares the same features. This ‘intertextuality’ can have an influence on how interculturality will be constructed between these individuals, how they will treat each other and position themselves. This is why the usual approach which consists in reporting what other people say (Valsiner 2002) as proof of their IC is problematic if one does not make an effort to identify the influence of others—those present in the act of interaction or in the individual’s discourse. Collectivizing IC should be a priority in order to treat people fairly and to allow them to share responsibilities for what occurs in interculturality. As a researcher, it means that I need to include my own voice in my analysis and interpretation of data and to examine my influence on what is happening in front of my eyes when I interview people.

Another major principle for IC contained in the (liquid) realistic approach lies in the centrality of Imagineering (engineering of imaginaries, see Dervin 2015) in intercultural encounters. Jokingly, Mikhail Bakunin (1979: 178) claimed that ‘in all history there is a quarter reality, at least three quarters imagination’. The realistic approach accepts that intercultural phenomena depend on playfulness and dreams, which must be recognized and accepted. Most models of IC ‘available on the market’ fall into the trap of ‘success only’—a problematic feature of our times. The

proposed perspective believes and accepts failure and, in a sense, promotes its beneficial aspects for future learning and self-criticality. Talking about her art, the performance artist Marina Abramovic (2014) explains perfectly what failure could mean in IC: ‘You never know how the experiment will turn out. It can be great, it can be really bad, but failure is so important, because it involves a learning process and it enables you to get to a new level and to other ways of seeing your work.’ Too often IC resembles some kind of technology that is used to control what is happening during encounters and to prevent failure. Jokingly, again, we could also learn from the CEO of Supercell (2013), a gaming company, who explained while revealing his strategy to produce a £2.5 billion company in 2 years: ‘You have to eliminate the fear of failure. If a game goes wrong we throw a party for its developers and give them champagne to celebrate what they learnt. As a company we have failed far more than we succeeded. We have killed five games and launched two. You need to take risks to succeed and for that you must take fear away from that risk.’ Celebrating failure—as much as success—should be a ‘natural’ component of IC in a world obsessed with selective success only. Of course it is important to make sure that everyone faces failure and not just the minority or those who are deemed to be very different from ‘us’.

STUDENT TEACHERS’ INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES: AN EXAMPLE

The data analysed in this section derive from a one-year international teacher education programme in Finland (See Dervin 2015; Dervin and Hahl 2015). The programme recruits around 20 new students per academic year. Providing the students, both from Finland and abroad, with teaching qualifications, the programme places ‘renewed’ interculturality at its centre. As part of the programme, the students follow lectures on ‘critical intercultural education’ and work on a portfolio during their practicum. One activity contained in the portfolio will provide us with data in what follows:

Write down five (5) stories related to the intercultural as you have experienced it during your school practice. If the stories were related to misunderstanding, conflict, etc. explain how these were defused.

I collected all the stories that were handed over, read them through and put aside stories that involved teachers in the schools where 17 pre-service

teachers did their practicum. Out of a total of 85 stories, 25 were about teachers' intercultural (in)competences (about 30 %). The teachers were both Finnish and international, as most of the 17 pre-service teachers did their practicum in international/Finnish schools. The rationale behind the stories was for me to see how the students applied the knowledge, criticality, and reflexivity they had been exposed to during 12 lectures prior to their practicum in the way they told these 'intercultural stories'. The objective of the analysis below is not to judge the teachers that were observed by the pre-service teachers. As we shall see, most of the observations were negative. We need to bear in mind that the stories are selective and that they may not reflect the complexity of what the students experienced in the schools. Besides, it is important to note that the exercise itself might have led to selecting only the 'extraordinary' and ignoring the 'usual'. These stories should be considered as provisory, partial, and most importantly as constructions.

Teachers as the Voices of Intercultural 'Wisdom'

This subsection is the only section that shares positive views about teachers' intercultural competences. In the excerpts below, the teachers give a good example to the pre-service teachers. Their intercultural 'wisdom' touches upon helping students of different linguistics backgrounds, teaching them criticality and taking on a postcolonial stance. In so doing, the teachers are depicted by the pre-service teachers as being 'amateur interculturalists' (see Said 1993) who question ideologies and look for complexity and more justice. The first two excerpts are similar and deal with using extra help from either students who share a language or the international pre-service teacher to support a student in need of help.

(name of student 1) came from (country) and studying at (name of school in Finland). (name of student 2) is Finnish but he was in (same country as the previous student) last four years so he can speak the language. They were in the same class at that school. In math class teachers teach in English. If (student 1) could not understand then (student 2) tried his best to explain it. Even the teacher encourages (student 2) to teach in her language if he feels (student 1) could not understand.

In this first excerpt, the teacher is described as using a Finnish student as an 'intercultural mediator' to support an immigrant student whose

language he can speak. By so doing the teacher agrees to modify his role and lets the door open for instability, as he is not able to ‘control’ what the two students share in the foreign language and has to fully depend on a student. In the next excerpt, a pre-service student who shares the same first language as one of the immigrant students in the classroom is encouraged to use this language to support the student:

When we discussed this with my mentor she suggested that it could help if I tried talking to him in (foreign language) when I saw him struggling. I wasn’t sure it was a good idea though. It seemed to me that I’d be singling him out by doing that and that given his age (13) he might find it embarrassing. She explained that on the contrary it would be fair because she could always assist the rest of the pupils in their mother tongue but he never got that opportunity. In the end I came to talk to him when the whole class was working on individual exercises. I didn’t say much just asked how he was doing with his exercises but the fact that it was in (foreign language) surprised him quite a lot. And it seemed to be a welcome surprise as well.

The pre-service teacher’s first reaction is that of doubt. Having learnt the lessons taught in the intercultural lectures, she raises the issue of potentially singling out the student by speaking in a minor language. The experienced teacher is reported to have presented an argument of justice as a justification for suggesting speaking the foreign language. To the pre-service teacher’s surprise, the strategy seems to work and she notes that the student was transformed by the fact that he could now be supported in his own language. In my lectures, we had questioned the use of so-called ‘heritage languages’ in class and the potential feelings of embarrassment and segregation they could lead to. What the pre-service teacher noticed in the story she shared is that heritage languages can also serve as a way of boosting confidence for some students. By so doing, she was able to put into question one of the ideologies presented in the lectures.

In the following excerpts, the experienced teachers question both the students’ and the pre-service teacher’s assumptions. In the first excerpt, the teacher rebukes students who make fun of the Japanese during a class observation in French. Some Japanese people attended the lesson:

A student greets them and says: ‘Oh! Not all of them understand French. How can they understand then this lesson?’ The teacher said ‘it’s mathematics.’ The boy went on and said ‘so if I go to Japan, I can understand mathematics lesson taught in Japanese’.

The teacher said that it depends and the students started to imitate how the Japanese talk and then laughed at them. The teacher then told him to stop misbehaving and instead that he should learn how to respect the people including the Japanese.

In this excerpt, the teacher is reported as not accepting any act of 'ethnic' bullying and thus taking a political stance by telling the students off. Many students wonder in their stories how teachers should behave in such cases: Should they remain quiet, start a class discussion about such things, or tell students off? In this excerpt, the teacher is reported to be doing the latter. We shall see that in some cases the teachers remain passive when such acts of racism or xenophobia take place in their class.

The final excerpt of this section relates to one discussion between a pre-service teacher and her mentor in an International Baccalaureate (IB) class. The latter has proposed to use a text which the pre-service teacher had found a bit patronizing, as it explained words referring to dolls (*Bratz* and *Barbie*), which she thought were too obvious to be defined:

I found it quite interesting when words that were quite difficult and yet had an important contribution to the message of the text, were not explained. Yet, words, such as *Bratz* or *Barbie* were clarified to the reader. I thought it was interesting that the author had chosen to explain these words to the reader as the text was taken from a book meant for IB teaching. I mentioned about this to my mentor, and she commented, that that was a very western-centred thing to say. I felt some sort of irritation, because I do not see myself western-centred. On the contrary I think I am quite far from being western-centred! (...) she did not get it and I got embarrassed and maybe a bit annoyed. I found my blood pressure hit the ceiling. I decided not to worry about the comment, because I knew that my mentor did not know me that well at that time, and hence, I should not be bothered about it anymore.

The pre-service teacher tells us about the strong feelings she experienced when her mentor accused her of being 'western-centric'—a notion we had discussed and questioned during the lectures. Interestingly the pre-service teacher does not question her own discourse and accuses the mentor of not understanding her. But the teacher was making an important point that could contribute to the pre-service teacher's intercultural training. The excerpt shows that while the experienced teacher appears to be very wise, the pre-service teacher seems to find it hard to be reflective about her attitudes.

This first analytical section has pinpointed acts of intercultural wisdom as they were narrated by the pre-service teachers. These ‘good practices’ show that the pre-service teachers are able to identify just, caring, and supportive attitudes in the classroom.

Teachers as Promoters of Social Injustice

The notion of social justice had been central in the pre-service teachers’ intercultural preparation. Many of the stories reported about teachers make an (in)direct reference to the notion. These stories include explicit/implicit singling out and teachers’ passivity. In the first excerpt, the separation of genders in class is reported. The formulation of the story is interesting as it is in the passive voice—the teacher is there somewhere, but indirectly. In fact, it appears to be a systemic issue in the school rather than an individual teacher’s ‘wrong doing’:

During my time at the school, I noticed that boys and girls often sat separated from each other. The desks were generally divided up into rows of three and every class was divided so that each row consisted entirely of boys or entirely of girls. In fact sometimes it was split up so that one half of the class was entirely boys while the other half was entirely girls. The classroom activity required quite a bit of pair work which meant that some students needed to occasionally be moved around due to their respective partners being absent. However even in these cases boys were always made to go work with boys while the same can be said of girls.

The gender aspect in education had also been discussed during the intercultural lectures and ‘gender-blindedness’ problematized. Many other international pre-service teachers also reported the divide between girls and boys, and expressed their astonishment, as they were given the impression that Finland was one of the best countries in the world in terms of gender balance.

In some stories, experienced teachers are constructed as the motor for consciously singling out certain students. In the following excerpt, students are ‘picked on’ in relation to their religion (Islam) and skin colour:

One of the classes I observed concerned the freedom of speech. The question raised by the teacher was whether the famous Danish cartoon which was considered offensive by many Muslims some years ago should have been censored. All the vocal students were for free speech in principle except for

one. The single person with reservations was a young boy, probably from a Muslim background. He did not get to express it I think even to consider and to form his view during class. He was simply over-ruled by the majority and time soon ran out. The teacher didn't seem to notice that this one boy did not get a square chance in the discussion.

When the pre-service teacher reports this incident, he appears to be clearly troubled by this act of unfairness and subconscious silencing. Although the teacher was probably trying to 'liberate' and 'inspire' his students about the caricatures of the Prophet, he was at the same time dividing the class and excluding one of its members (Simmel 2013: 62). As the pre-service teacher was to teach the next lesson, he decided to start the lesson by giving the floor to the 'Muslim' student so he would be allowed to express his opinion.

A very similar episode is narrated in the following excerpt which took place in a lesson where the linguistic and visual aspects of advertising were discussed:

One of the advertisements had a famous African American rapper with a female model. They were positioned in a rather aggressive if not brutal way considering this was a perfume ad. (...) Issues such as sexual aggressiveness, male dominance and power, subordination and the objectification of women came up and then the teacher turned to one of the students and asked him how he felt about the image. Being black himself now this is what I saw as an interference of culture and the complexity of the intercultural: as of this black student as the only one with the ability – or the prerogative – to answer the teacher. There were after all several other boys who the teacher could have asked for a response. I felt like the boy felt cornered.

Again, a teacher turns to a representative of the 'minority' and asks him about his opinion—as if his voice would represent the voice of other black people. Although the pre-service teacher is not sure of the student's reaction ('I felt like the boy felt cornered'), he seems to be of the opinion that the teacher could have acted otherwise. To conclude his observation, the pre-service teacher argues 'Sometimes putting a student in the spotlight can be a very positive thing for the whole class. But a teacher should still carry the responsibility of knowing what to ask, when to ask it, and whom to ask'. This could be interpreted as a sign that this student has started developing reflexivity and criticality in relation to his own future teaching.

The final excerpt is problematic, as the pre-service teacher is not sure of the outcome of this episode:

I observed a physics lesson in which students were doing experiments in groups A boy (1) from perhaps middle eastern background wanted to borrow an eraser from a boy (2) who seemed genetically Finnish African. Boy 2 apparently said to boy 1 that he does not have one. However boy 1 figured out that boy 2 had one. Boy 1 then said ‘a racist shit go back to Kenya’ The teacher either did not hear or ignored it. No further action was taken.

Through the last sentence (‘no further action was taken’), the pre-service teacher could be sharing his surprise at the teacher’s passivity. Again, many pre-service teachers express their surprise at many teachers letting such incidents pass during their observations.

Teachers Can Discriminate Explicitly

In at least three of the stories, the pre-service teachers share events during which the teachers clearly use discriminatory language towards some students. The two excerpts show such practices around issues of sexual orientation and race.

In the first excerpt, the student expresses surprise at the lack of concern two teachers had about potentially homophobic discourses targeted at two male students:

On two occasions in Basic practice I noticed two different teachers indirectly using the concept of homosexuality as a means for gaining discipline. They for example said ‘could (name of student 1) get hands off (name of student 2) for a while’ – in a little bit ridiculing and hinting manner. The other teacher used it by saying something like ‘I know we live in 21st century and it is ok for two boys to have their hands on each other but could you please do it in privacy’. The teachers did not use this for girls, probably because traditionally it has been more accepted for girls to be physically close and intimate.

The way the pre-service teacher narrates these incidents is interesting. He uses direct quotes to give more impact to what is being uttered, but he also makes comments about how these were uttered (‘ridiculing’ and ‘hinting’) and how these comments seem not to be used towards girls. By explaining all this, the pre-service teacher shows awareness of discriminatory discourses and discourses of ab-/normality in education.

Though he does not comment on the consequences of such behaviours from teachers, one can easily imagine that these could lead to bullying and name-calling.

Reporting a direct discussion with a teacher, the following excerpt shows a lack of consideration for the other and *bovarysm* (see section on culture):

I heard from a teacher that she trusts more on Finnish student than foreign students. She said 'I rely on Finnish student because they rarely lie'. I think she has a single story about foreign students.

Although the teacher does not seem to refer to the concept of culture, one could see in this excerpt some kind of intertextuality with the stereotype and widespread representation that Finns are honest. I problematized the notion of culturalism to refer to such phenomena. In accordance with Frenkiel and Rocca (2013: 14), it is clear that the teacher resorts to this argument as an easy way of creating the dichotomy of Finns vs. the others. One could also find in this story signs of neo-racism. Again, by including a direct quote from the teacher, the pre-service teacher creates a certain impression for his reader.

This final excerpt shares some similarities with the previous teacher's confession. The pre-service teacher tells us that a student who had an Arab name and had lived in England joined a class:

He was bit faster than other students and always tried to raise questions to teacher. Though the teacher has 20 years of teaching experience he was not comfortable with that student and said to me that this student had changed total dynamics of that class.

This excerpt is interesting because the pre-service teacher mentions the ethnicity of the student before explaining that the teacher had some issues with him. Is the pre-service teacher assuming that there is a link between his ethnicity (he even tells us that the student's parents are from Morocco) and the teacher's attitude, which he does not seem to understand, considering the teacher's long experience?

The last two subsections have demonstrated that the pre-service teachers have learnt how to identify 'disturbing' discourses of interculturality and ideologies in the context of education (Holliday 2010). As Wood (2003: 40) asserts: The teachers seem to be watching the shadows of 'artificial diversity' in Plato's allegorical cave. Once again, this section does not want to blame

teachers for being racist or insensitive towards the other. Hopefully, through these stories and observations the pre-service teachers will be themselves ready to question both their attitudes and behaviours in similar situations.

*Teachers Do not Reflect Enough on the Intercultural Content
of Their Teaching*

In the intercultural course, we also spent some time discussing interculturality as an essential component of lesson planning and of the creation of teaching-learning content and material. In a few stories, the pre-service teachers share episodes which show that teachers do not always bear in mind the components of interculturality in their planning. The examples concern civics, English, and physics lessons.

Let us start with a civics teacher. One pre-service teacher reports on a lesson on communism. The teacher asked the students to put all their money on the desks. For the pre-service teacher this is unacceptable because ‘this of course gave everybody in the classroom some idea of the economy and social class of the students’. She adds that the teacher probably did not think about this when she planned her lesson. By including this example, the pre-service teacher shows that he has managed to grasp the intercultural beyond ethnicity/race and to consider that social class and financial situations can also have damaging impacts on how students are perceived by their peers and teachers.

When one of the pre-service teachers discusses a language lesson, she wonders why the teacher proposed an exercise where countries would be compared to animals, objects, and so on. The student asserts that it made her feel uncomfortable—especially if the students had chosen negative or funny words that might have offended someone. She explains:

During one of the classes, the teacher had given the students a paper to fill out. It consisted of sentences like *if Finland were an animal it would be...* And *if Spain were an animal it would be...* here were lots of these comparisons where the student had to think of something that represents the country. In a way I think this was an interesting exercise to see what the students think of their own country and also of Spain, however at the same time there were many stereotypes given.

The student’s reaction is typical of an ‘critical interculturalist’ and should be praised. She even proposes what a teacher could do with such an exercise

to develop the students' intercultural competence—another potential example that the student is developing strategies for her own future teaching:

Obviously the students could put only one word answers, but I think the teacher could have given more explanations or said, yes this is very true, but how about? I think it is important to talk about stereotypes and generalizations because that is how we start to learn about a culture or country, yet we need to go deeper and give more examples than just the first one that comes to mind. If I were to do this exercise I would grab the opportunities to show the students that these responses are multidimensional, and these is not one correct answer.

Her proposal seems to correspond nicely to a perspective that looks into multidimensionality, discussing stereotypes, and generalizations.

The next story was actually told by two different pre-service teachers but from different perspectives. The same biology teacher was giving a class on the heart. He brought a real heart to show to the students:

At the beginning of that class teacher started his class by 'This is a pigs heart; we will investigate different parts of the heart'. After his introduction a Muslim student had stood up and said he could not continue his class, as the heart was from pig. There two more Muslim students and they also joined with that student. The teacher was not aware about the sensitivity and said ok, you can do it later.

This first excerpt shows the religious unawareness and insensitivity of the teacher. As a Muslim herself, the pre-service teacher is shocked by this episode. A similar story is told by another pre-service teacher. Yet this pre-service teacher is surprised when the teacher gives the permission to Muslim students to leave the class:

The teacher took a pork heart from shop and brought to the class to show to students. That sounds a good idea to show students a real heart. 'Muslim students are allowed to leave the class today because the heart is from pork' he said at the beginning of class.

Unlike the first pre-service teacher, this one was 'quite shocked when [I] heard this [I] think [he] did not need to explain from which animal the heart is'. What is interesting about these two excerpts is the 'transformation' and 'learning' of the teacher who was able to move from *insensitivity*

to *care* about Muslim students. These excerpts thus call for caution when examining how and if teachers use intercultural competence in their classroom as one's behaviours, attitudes, ideologies, and so on, can be very unstable and changeable. Otherness thus appears to be an unpredictable figure which can easily shift from her position of 'permanent otherness' (Levinas 1969).

This subsection has described the intercultural preparation of some international pre-service teachers in Finland. The preparation represents an attempt to help pre-service teachers to be 'formed to be reformed' (Bachelard 1938). One of the objectives of the study was to analyse how these teachers took intercultural aspects into account when observing experienced teachers during their practicum. The analysis of the stories concerning the teachers shared by the pre-service teachers shows that, at least in these 25 stories, they have managed to pinpoint 'good' and 'bad'/questionable practices. Although the pre-service teachers were not required to theoretically justify their explanations, it appears that some of the ideas and arguments shared during the intercultural lectures have had an influence on them. What our 'critical interculturalists' show is that they seem to have the power to become aware of, recognize, push through, and present/defend her/his diverse diversities and those of others. Furthermore, they appear to be aware of certain 'intercultural' ideologies. Of course, long-term research on how this knowledge is used in their practices would make these results more reliable. But this is a first important step.

This was not about criticizing experienced teachers for their lack of intercultural competences, but to see if and how, by observing their future position as teachers, the pre-service teachers were able to identify phenomena that they may want to deal with otherwise—or at least deal with and/or discuss. Some pre-service teachers were even able to go beyond the descriptions of the situations and the consequences on the students by proposing alternative scenarios.

All the students who participated in this study are foreigners who in most cases do not speak Finnish. Their future position as foreign teachers in Finland might feel uncomfortable, and it was important that during their practicum they also reflected on this specific feature. Some pre-service teachers have noticed that Finns and non-Finns do not always treat each other fairly in educational contexts. For example, a pre-service teacher explains that 'when something unpleasant happens teachers who are not from Finland start to refer to Finland and the bad weather or the unsocial people, which is not good. But Finnish teachers might also have

stereotypes about foreigners, for example, that American teachers are not clean, or British teachers are lazy.’ By reflecting on the inconsistency and instability of such discourses emerging from all sides—and by avoiding taking sides—the pre-service teachers might be able to move beyond such discriminatory and potentially hurtful discourses.

In the stories, the pre-service teachers did not talk too much about their discomfort in observing the experienced teachers. But orally many shared such discomfort and ‘pain’ in having to witness certain acts of discrimination or mere racism. Some students even told me that they felt somewhat discouraged by the attitudes and behaviours that they had witnessed—leading to reconsidering their career choice. It is important, I feel, to consider that discomfort, anger, and annoyance are part of the process. Recalling her teaching experiences about diversity, social justice, and discrimination, bell hooks (1994: 39) tells us that ‘there can be, and usually is, some degree of pain involved in giving up old ways of thinking and knowing and learning new approaches. I respect that pain. And I include recognition of it now when I teach, that is to say, I teach about shifting paradigms and talk about the discomfort it can cause.’ The more transparent we are about these phenomena the more successful our teaching could be.

Questions

1. Explain the idea of simplicity in your own words. How does it relate to intercultural competences?
2. What is the problem with the usual models of intercultural competences?
3. Can intercultural competences be assessed? Why (not)?
4. Do you believe that some people have managed to acquire intercultural competences? Why (not)?
5. Why can’t we agree on a ‘universal’ and ‘objective’ model of intercultural competences?

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Conclusion

Abstract The conclusion summarizes the main messages of the book. First, Edward Said's representations of the intellectual are used as a way of redefining the roles and positions of the interculturalist in education, preferring the 'amateur interculturalist' position to that of the 'professional interculturalist'. Second, ten commandments of interculturality in education are put forward. These commandments can easily guide readers to 'test' their understanding of the book's theoretical and methodological toolbox.

This book has dealt with interculturality and proposed a renewed way of working on it. This conclusion offers a summary of the most important points made in the book. Ten commandments of interculturality in education are also presented.

SAID'S INTELLECTUAL AS A MODEL

Let me start with a comparison with Edward Said's work on the intellectual. In a series of lectures on the representations of the intellectual (1993), Said reviews two types of intellectuals, which are relevant for discussing the way we see interculturality: the professional and the amateur intellectuals—with a preference for the latter. In what follows, I borrow Said's description of these two figures and transfer them to the world of the interculturality (read: professional and amateur interculturalists). Note that these two figures are ideal-types in the sense that no one is either/or.

We all oscillate between these positions. At some point we might have been more professional than amateur, and vice versa.

This is how Said defines the professional:

by professionalism I mean thinking of your work as an intellectual as something you do for a living, between the hours of nine and five with one eye on the clock, and another cocked at what is considered to be proper, professional behavior – not rocking the boat, not straying outside the accepted paradigms or limits, making yourself marketable and above all presentable, hence uncontroversial and unpolitical and ‘objective’. (ibid.: 55)

To summarize, the professional interculturalist avoids controversy and/or criticality at all costs; s/he ‘sticks’ to accepted intercultural paradigms—and their related ‘gurus’—without questioning them; s/he also contributes actively to imagineering interculturality by recycling discourses of cultural differences, dichotomies, and so on; s/he tries to be as objective as possible; s/he uses interculturality as a ‘technology’ to control self and other; s/he disregards interdisciplinary discussions that could serve discussions of interculturality; s/he easily accepts anthropomorphic concepts such as culture, community, tolerance, respect, East/West, third culture kids, immigrant, diversity, integration, complexity; s/he believes in (cultural) difference only and is not interested in activism and contributing through her/his work to social justice.

The amateur interculturalist represents the ideal position represented by the message of this book, and we should try to set this figure as our main target as often as possible—bearing in mind that we cannot always follow this model. Said defines the amateur in these words:

The intellectual today ought to be an amateur, someone who considers that to be a thinking and concerned member of a society one is entitled to raise moral issues at the heart of even the most technical and professionalized activity as it involves one’s country, its power, its mode of interacting with its citizens as well as with other societies. In addition, the intellectual’s spirit as an amateur can enter and transform the merely professional routine most of us go through into something much more lively and radical; instead of doing what one is supposed to do one can ask why one does it, who benefits from it, how can it reconnect with a personal project and original thoughts. (ibid.: 61)

The amateur interculturalist thus places moral and ethical reflections at the centre of their practice/work and has no qualms in admitting that s/he

does not hold the answer to everything. S/he goes beyond routine and passivity; s/he also questions ideologies and moralistic judgments and is thus interested in differences and similarities, and shies away from the danger of comparisons; s/he is aware of the symbolic violence of interaction and contexts and of power differentials which guide interculturality; and s/he is aware of interculturality being a simplex (simple + complex) phenomenon and tries to approach it from a realistic perspective. Quoting Said again (1993: 23), the amateur interculturalist is ‘someone whose whole being is staked on a critical sense, a sense of being unwilling to accept easy formulas, or ready-made clichés, or the smooth, ever-so-accommodation confirmations of what the powerful or conventional have to say, and what they do’. An excellent illustration of this position can be found in author Taiye Selasi’s answer to a comment a journalist made: ‘I have read that you do not like to be asked where you’re from.’ She responded by explaining that this question is a code for other ‘discussions that are a lot more difficult to have’ such as ‘why are you here?’ (2015: n. p.). The amateur interculturalist questions such ‘normal’ queries, digging out the ideologies and attitudes hiding behind them instead of merely ‘tighten(ing) up a linguistic screw here and loosen(ing) a cultural bolt there’ (Shi-xu 2001: 287).

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF INTERCULTURALITY IN EDUCATION

Commandment number 1: Put an end to differentialist biases.

‘Upon meeting others and during interactions with them, first ask: what is it that I have in common with these other people?’ (Moghaddam 2012, ch. 9). Let us put an end to *differentialist biases*, a common vision in education which focuses exclusively on *differences*, especially in relation to the ‘tired’ and generalizing concept of culture (Abdallah-Pretceille 1986). One such bias is the dichotomization between individualistic and collectivistic ‘cultures’, which is often used to explain encounters between people from the ‘West’ and ‘East’ or the ‘North’ and ‘South’. Holliday (2010) has forcefully analysed the ethnocentrism and moralistic judgments that such differentialism can trigger. The risk in continuing using these elements in such a loose and acontextualized way is that they can lead ‘easily and sometimes innocently to the reduction of the foreign other as culturally deficient’ (Holliday 2010: ix).

Commandment number 2: Move away from individualist biases.

Discourses on the self and the other—identity constructions—are always co-constructed between people. An identity is created and exists because there is another identity that can be compared or opposed to it (Bauman 2004). Therefore, when intercultural actors, but also researchers and practitioners, work on interculturality, their stereotypes, representations, and ideologies inform and influence encounters and thus *identities* (Holliday 2010: 2; Dervin 2012). My identity is based on the presence of others, and vice versa. We thus need to include all those involved in intercultural encounters to explain and understand them instead of just one of them.

Commandment number 3: Failure in interculturality is normal and we can learn from it.

The idea that not everything can be explained as far as the ‘intercultural’ is concerned and thus that it is often impossible to exhaust results when researching it, has not gained much ground in education yet. However, many phenomena that we examine or teach about derive from the playful, the imaginary, and the dreamy, and cannot thus always be rationalized (Maffesoli 1985).

Commandment number 4: Look at exceptions, instabilities, and processes rather than mere structures.

A lot of work has concentrated on structures and on describing how a certain group of people (usually determined by ‘nationality’ or ‘ethnicity’) communicates with another (Piller 2011)—leading to the equation ‘the more you know about their habits, thoughts, etc. the more able you are to “control” them and thus interact in a proper and unproblematic way’. Many scholars argue that this does not reflect the current ‘*mélange*’ (Pieterse 2004; Wikan 2002) and urge researchers and practitioners to look instead at exceptions, instabilities and processes, which are ‘natural’ parts of sociality (cf. Baumann 1996; Bensa 2010).

Commandment number 5: Take into account the importance of intersectionality.

The idea of *intersectionality*, ‘the interaction of multiple identities and experiences of exclusion and subordination’ (Davis 2008: 67), is thought-provoking for interculturality in education. It is already very much a

common practice in the field of intercultural education, influenced highly by critical multicultural education (Banks and McGee Banks 2009; Sleeter 1996). Many scholars argue that it is not just ‘culture’ that guides interactions but the co-construction of various identities such as gender, age, profession, social class, and so on. All these *intersect* in intercultural interaction and thus need to be taken into account (Sleeter, *ibid.*).

Commandment number 6: Place Justice at the centre of interculturality in education.

I would also like to put forward the idea of *justice*: ‘a commitment to combat inequality, racism as well as sexism, and all other forms of prejudice, oppression, and discrimination through the development of understanding, attitudes, and social action skills’ (Räsänen 2009: 37). A few examples have been identified in the literature: For example, in his critical cosmopolitan paradigm, Holliday (2010: 48) suggests increasing the awareness of institutional and cultural racism and power structures.

Commandment number 7: Be reflexive.

When dealing with interculturality in education, let our own feelings, experiences, and history enter our work. Reflexivity can both enhance understanding and interpreting by adding a new source of knowledge.

Commandment number 8: Pay attention to power differentials.

The concept of power should be central to interculturality in education. *Nolens volens* every intercultural encounter depends on power relations related to language use, skin colour, and nationality as well as gender, social status, and so on. Typical of intercultural encounters are relations based around the idea of hospitality. Jacques Derrida (2000) has argued through the concept of ‘hostipitality’ that hospitality can easily turn into hostility. There is, in fact, an inherent power imbalance between a host and a guest—the latter being hostage to the former.

Commandment number 9: Language use is central to interculturality in education.

Working on and/or with interculturality requires the use of a language or different languages as well as non-verbal forms of communication (mimics, silence, gesture, etc.). Disregarding the importance these play in our

field is problematic. For instance, when we translate things such as interviews or excerpts from a book, it is important to explain the choice of certain phrases, words, pronouns, and so on. The use of words is never innocent. We also need to bear in mind that language use is very political and that it usually translates power differentials and symbolic violence.

Commandment number 10: Delve into the hidden; go under the surface of discourse and appearances.

This is probably the most important message of this book. We are all influenced by specific visions of interculturality, what it entails, how it should occur, for what reasons, and so on. What we see as intercultural, or are presented with as being intercultural, often hides elements that we need to deconstruct, criticize and, if possible, reconstruct to create meaningful interaction. As such, if I hear the words culture, community, value, or the name of a country, I start reflecting on their use and on what these words do to my interlocutors and me. I then try to go under the surface of what is said and appearances.

I hope that this book will motivate and inspire students, colleagues, practitioners, and decision makers to provide new answers to the intriguing and important issue of interculturality in education. My hope is that readers will be stimulated to practice ‘reverse thinking’ about interculturality, enter into dialogue, and break away from disciplinary and linguistic borders. In difficult times like ours, where interculturality is a victim of ignorance, ethnocentrism, and misinformation, this has never been as important as it is today.

Beijing, 29 November 2015

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AN ESSENTIAL READING LIST

Here I present briefly a list of articles and books that I believe to be essential reading for those wanting to know more about the ideas and values of interculturality advocated in this book. Note that the documents are presented in the alphabetical order of the authors' names.

Abdallah-Pretceille, M. (2006). Interculturalism as a paradigm for thinking about diversity. *Intercultural Education* 17(5), 475–483.

Martine Abdallah-Pretceille is the most influential scholar of intercultural education in the French-speaking world. Although she has published many exciting books in French, none have been translated into English. However Portuguese, Korean, and Arabic translations are available. In this article, Abdallah-Pretceille summarizes her main argument on interculturality by showing that the concept of culture is a 'thing of the past'. She suggests that we concentrate on the variety of cultural fragments rather than cultures in their entirety. She proposes the concept of *culturality* to replace culture in order to signal its flexible, dynamic, and changing nature.

Bauman, Z. (2004). *Identity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

This short book is based on conversations between the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman and the Italian journalist Benedetto Vecchi. The book represents an excellent introduction to Bauman's work and to his intriguing notion of liquid modernity, which symbolizes our times. The sociologist explains how our identity is undergoing a process of continual transformation today, *the era of identity*.

Bergson, H. (1900). *Laughter. An essay on the meaning of the comic.* New York: Kessinger Publishing's Legacy Reprint Series.

Henri Bergson was a very popular French philosopher in the twentieth century. His father was Polish and his mother English. Although he never used the word *intercultural* in his work, I believe that his writings are very relevant when reflecting on interculturality today. *Laughter* is one of his first books which, in a sense, summarizes well his 'process' philosophy. In the book Bergson examines the process of laughter caused by the comic, its social role and the functioning of (collective) imagination that goes with it. He argues that the comic makes us aware of the rigidity of life and that the resulting laughter urges us to look at things from the viewpoints of flexibility and dialogue—two key terms in the proposed approach to interculturality.

Breidenbach, J. & P. Nyíri (2009). *Seeing culture everywhere.* Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

In this book Breidenbach and Nyíri unpack the concept of culture and show that we tend to misuse and abuse it systematically to label and explain differences, misunderstandings, and clashes. The authors present many interesting examples of how this is done in different contexts. A very convincing call for abandoning the concept in relation to intercultural education!

Holliday, A. (2010). *Intercultural communication and ideology.* London: Sage.

In this excellent book Adrian Holliday proposes to scrutinize the 'inter-cultural' from a critical and reflexive perspective. This involves defusing the powerful ideologies contained in the different uses of the word intercultural. Holliday provides us with many exciting examples to illustrate his perspective.

Krumer-Nevo, M. & Sidi, M. (2012). Writing against othering. *Qualitative Inquiry* 18, 299–309.

Written by two scholars from Israel, this article problematizes the potential danger of othering that researchers face when they write about the 'other'. The authors discuss and exemplify the textual mechanisms that can help us to resist othering, such as using narratives, dialogues, and reflexivity, whereby researchers share their own feelings, experiences, and history in their writings.

Said, E. (1993). *Representations of the intellectual.* New York: Vintage Books.

This book explores the meanings of the intellectual today. Although it does not deal directly with any intercultural agenda, it is very relevant for those who wish to make a difference as interculturalists. Edward Said, the ‘father’ of the notion of Orientalism, argues that intellectuals must be nonconformists who put criticism before solidarity and speak for/with (and not over) the marginalized. In order to strengthen the use of the idea of interculturality, Said’s recommended path is inestimable.

Sen, A. (2007). *Identity and violence: The illusion of destiny*. New Delhi: Penguin.

In *Identity and violence*, Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen is critical of the current reductionist monolithic identity politics which often leads to an ‘us-vs.-them’ dichotomy and to war and violence. He argues that too often people get categorized into groups, collectivities, and/or communities based on a single identity marker (class, religion, sex, culture, etc.) and that one key to peace would be to reject such perspectives.

Shi-xu. (2001). Critical pedagogy and intercultural communication: Creating discourses of diversity, equality, common goals, and rational-moral motivation. *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 22(3), 279–293.

The Hangzhou-based scholar, Shi-xu, proposes one of the best critiques of the mainstream pedagogy of intercultural contact and communication. He proposes to move away from a (cultural, linguistic, translation) knowledge-based approach to a perspective that places power, but also domination, exclusion, and prejudice, at its centre.

Wood, P. (2003). *Diversity: The invention of a concept*. San Francisco: Encounter Books.

The concept of diversity is often used in conjunction with interculturality. In his dissection of discourses of diversity the author shows that the concept is often meaningless, superficial, shallow, and, more importantly, a two-faced ideology that is spreading around the world like a virus.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Accelerated globalization Our world has witnessed many waves of globalization throughout history. The current form of globalization is fast-paced and, thanks to technological innovations, it compresses time and space.

Agency Capacity to think and speak for oneself, to make decisions, and to act independently in a given context.

Analytic stereotype Use of stereotypical beliefs as a basis for doing research and/or approaching someone. For example, selecting research participants according to their nationality is an analytic stereotype.

Anthropocene Alteration of geological conditions and processes by human activities.

Anthropomorphism Attributing human characteristics to concepts, objects, and phenomena.

Bovarysm Pretending to be better than one is.

Culturalism Using culture as an explanation for everything that a representative of another country does, thinks, etc. while ignoring the fact that other reasons might apply. Culturalism also summarizes the ideas of *culture as an excuse* and *culture as an alibi*.

Dialogism In everything that we say there is always a voice that we have heard before and that we quote implicitly or explicitly. An utterance is thus always an answer to or a comment on what someone else has said or asked. Some voices can be clearly identified (as in *she said that...*) or unidentifiable.

Differentialist bias When we think of people from other ‘cultures’ we often refer to them as being different rather than similar to us.

Diversities Each of us is composed of different identities, different diverse characteristics. Hence the word diversities in the plural rather than the singular use of diversity which tends to refer to immigrants in the European context.

Essentialism Limiting self and/or other to a single identity, a single story (‘their essence’).

Ethnocentrism Believing that one’s culture, country, or group is better than others.

Eurocentrism Placing Europe on a pedestal by giving the impression that Europe is at the centre of, for example, academic work, cultural productions, peace processes, and so on.

Facework When we interact with others we need to protect our face—that is, make sure that we are respected and well treated—as much as we try to protect our interlocutor’s face.

Glocalization A portmanteau word composed of *global* and *local* that describes a process through which global phenomena influence local ones and vice versa.

Hegemony Having strong symbolic but also economic and political influence.

Homo hierarchicus Human beings are often characterized as needing to create hierarchies and to categorize people, things, and thoughts.

Hostipitality A portmanteau word composed of *hospitality* and *hostility*, which translates the idea that hospitality cannot exist without potential hostility.

Human rightism A limited, biased, and Western-centric vision and definition of human rights.

Imaginary An idealized, invented, but also often negative representation of a person, a place, an idea, and a thought.

Imagineering A portmanteau word composed of *imaginary* and *engineering* describing certain ways of systematically inventing imaginaries about a particular person, a phenomenon, or an object.

Individualistic bias A limited approach to analysing interculturality that only considers one of the people involved in it, disregarding the fact that what they do is based on the presence of others. It is only through interaction that interculturality can take place.

Intersectionality In order to make interculturality more complex, it is important to intersect identity markers such as gender, profession, social class, and age with ‘doing’ culture, national identity, and language.

Janusian perspective Janus was a two-faced god. 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.

Mélange A synonym for mixing. Cultural *mélange*, whereby a culture is influenced and transformed by another culture, is the rule rather than an exception in interculturality.

Modernity There are different theories as to where and when modernity started. One such theory claims that it emerged from the French Revolution in 1789. Modernity marked the birth of the individual, the nation-state, and the human and social sciences. Before modernity, God was considered as the force that governed people. When Louis the 16th was beheaded in Paris, as a representative of God on earth, God was killed at the same time. People then had to take responsibility for who they were and what was happening to them, and explain/understand the world around them.

Nation branding A trend in world politics and economy to market and advertise for a country. Through nation branding, countries determine and define their specific characteristics. Nation branding is often deemed to be a form of neo-nationalism.

Occidentalism Turning the West into an imagined and ideological place opposed to the East.

Orientalism Imagining the East as an idealized but also stereotyped place opposed to the West.

Othering Turning self and other into an ‘other’ by using stereotypes, representations, and prejudices. Othering often leads to hierarchizing the world.

Peg communities Communities that are characteristic of the twenty-first century. Unstable in nature, peg communities get together when and if needed. No strong bonds are predetermined between their members. Social media represent archetypes of such communities.

Postmodernity Period that follows or is intertwined with modernity. Postmodernity is the era of multiple identities, precarious social bonds, and the questioning of truths. It is also characterized by the emergence of extremisms as a reaction to its unstable nature.

Simplicity A portmanteau word composed of *simplicity* and *complexity*.

As a realistic descriptor of our world, simplicity refers to the fact that each of us has to experience sociality as both a simple and complex phenomenon and that we have to oscillate between the two poles of simplicity and complexity all the time. Simplicity also symbolizes the impossibility of reaching either complexity or simplicity fully.

Ventriloquation Repeating, performing, and mimicking words, discourses, and non-verbal elements (gestures, facial expressions, etc.) seen in other people.

Xenophobia The hatred of the foreign, the strange, and the different.

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