

Workshop: "Eurocentrism and Stereotypes"
Referent: Erbin Dikongué
Veranstaltungsort: Gäste-Etage
Datum: 12.02.2024, 14.00-17.00 Uhr
Protokollantinnen: Franziska Ortlieb, Isabel Sanchez Rodriguez
Teilnehmende: 15 Teilnehmer*innen eines Erasmus-Programms

PROTOKOLL

1. Introduction: everyone positions themselves in the room according to where they come from (Germany in the center etc.)
 - ➔ participants from Spain, Portugal, Netherlands, France, Germany
 - ➔ then everyone positions themselves according to where they were born: now some are also in Egypt, Jordan, Brazil, Chile
 - participants are asked about their feelings about when they changed positions: natural, a bit sad when people were suddenly far away, more people moved than stayed at the same place
 - ➔ shows how many opportunities there are to move to other countries
2. Erbin asks every participant: What are their expectations for the workshop? What are they interested in?
 - ➔ They are interested in blind spots, discovering things they weren't aware of, want to learn more about the map on the wall, how they can spread newly learned knowledge, question their own eurocentrism
 - ➔ One participant wants to learn what eurocentrism is because he doesn't know what the word means
3. Question: Is dictatorship a good or bad system?
 - ➔ Everyone answers with no
 - Should everyone be vegan?
 - ➔ Most say no
 - Question: What will happen if the one person who said yes imposes his belief on everyone?
 - ➔ Oppression, no own choices, dictatorship, no variety, people might try to overthrow it
4. Overview about topics for today: explore impact of eurocentrism, stereotypes
 - ➔ Goal at the end of workshop: find options to overcome eurocentrism
5. Which associations do participants have with the word eurocentrism? (➔ visualized on whiteboard)

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- Power, Imperialism, White, Genocides, Center of world, Democracy, Perspective, Freedom, Europe, Christian/Catholic, Geopolitics, Education, Social manipulation, self-centered
 - ➔ Majority of associations is negative
- 6. Shows goals of the workshop on PowerPoint presentation: deal with new perspectives, recognize and question our stereotypes, develop options for actions, reflect on own pictures in our head and injustice all over the world, sensitize participants against discrimination, promote more social justice and peace all over the world
 - ➔ Names some existing stereotypes against different nations and how they are false
 - ➔ One German participant objects that there is some truth to some stereotypes because of historical background (e.g. history of beer brewing in Germany)
 - ➔ Stereotypes can be true, but generalization is problematic
- 7. Shows two pictures of people sleeping in the street, asks participants what they see
 - ➔ Interpretation: left side: homeless people, refugee camp, right side: maybe climate activist camp
 - ➔ Left picture taken in Leipzig, right in Spain
- Shows more pictures of poverty, trash in the street in European countries
 - ➔ Explains: Many people in Africa can't imagine that these pictures were taken in Europe
 - ➔ Image of Europe as developed and superior, not always the truth
- 8. Question: What are associations that come to mind when you think of history of Europe and Europe's role in the world?
- 9. World map: "Change the perspective" – What do you see?
 - Map is "upside down", Africa is at the center and way bigger than what we are used to from other maps
 - ➔ Usually Europe in the middle, therefore everything linked to Europe
 - ➔ This map represents reality: Africa is correct size
 - ➔ Using this map raises question why Europe has so much power even though it is smaller
 - ➔ one of the reasons: colonialism

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- Eurocentrism = system of norms and values that is used as standard for everyone

→ Example: only five UN members have veto right

→ Associated with power, domination, exploitation and dominance

→ Justifying colonialism and exploitation by claiming other cultures are inferior

10. Participants talk about list of examples of eurocentrism in small groups of five people

- The groups present their results

→ One group talks about Eurocentric beauty standards: there are only slow changes, Western beauty standards and fashion are present all around the world (was not always like that), e.g. nonwhite people bleaching their skin → cultural imposition

→ One participant says she already knew about different maps but is still using the maps she is used to because it's easier → it's okay to use usual maps, just be aware of other perspectives

→ Another group talks about Hellenocentrism as root of Eurocentrism, Greek society seen as birth of civilized world

→ One participant names Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt as other early civilizations, even Greeks looked up to Egypt; he criticizes that in philosophy only Ancient Greek philosophers are studied → marginalization of non-Western philosophers, gives the impression that there are none (even though not true)

→ The third group talks about how different groups are portrayed differently in the media → biased media coverage, many media in Germany only focused on Europe, also related: different treatment of Ukrainian and non-Western refugees

→ Neo-colonialism: Forgetting and using colonialism at the same time → justifying colonialism with need to "civilize" other cultures

→ participants criticize developmental programs where people go abroad to "help" people, share their experiences

→ English as lingua franca: there are more Mandarin speakers but English was imposed on everyone as lingua franca

→ Orientalism: exoticizing or idealizing non-White cultures

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15 minutes break

11. Asks about Consequences of Eurocentrism

- Discrimination
- Internal low self-image / feeling of superiority on European side
- Kills potential/ expression of a country
- Restricted social mobility
- Nationalism, populism
- ➔ Conflicts

12. Plays video: "The danger of a single story" (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie)

- Asks what does video want to say?
 - Try to talk with the people before assuming certain traits of the person
- Makes reference to questions in the introduction: His point of you ➔ has none, open perspectives

13. Mind Map – what do you think about African continent? – real quick

- Slavery
- People of color
- Heat, weather
- Resources
- Diversity
- Music and dance
- ➔ Participant says that you don't have to be ashamed of the stereotypes you have, because it's how your brain works ➔ you should question your boxes ➔ you can change the stereotypes you have

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14. Stereotypes

- Someone says that there are also positive stereotypes → Erbin says they are also negative
- Gives example: sees woman behind me → I'm safe, sees man behind him → feels unsafe
 - i. Can help so you can react quickly
- But: see woman behind me → calls police: not good

15. Shows pictures: some students don't realize that there are buildings in Africa..

16. Talks about the possible solution against eurocentrism: write two solutions for tomorrow