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DAAD-Project Social Work and Refugees 2019: Cultural Prejudices

Hochschule Neubrandenburg
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* DAAD-Project Social Work and Refugees 2019
* Magdeburg Meeting July/ August 2019
* Cultural Prejudices - Definition, Theories, Concepts

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AGENDA

1. Definition
2. Experiences
3. Attitudes
4. Attribution
5. Prejudices
6. Concepts

1.Definition

1.1. Debating

- Jordanian & Palestinian Group, Magdeburg and Neubrandenburg Group (10 min)

- Both Groups together

(10 min)

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1.2. Approaching a definition
Cultural & Social Prejudices

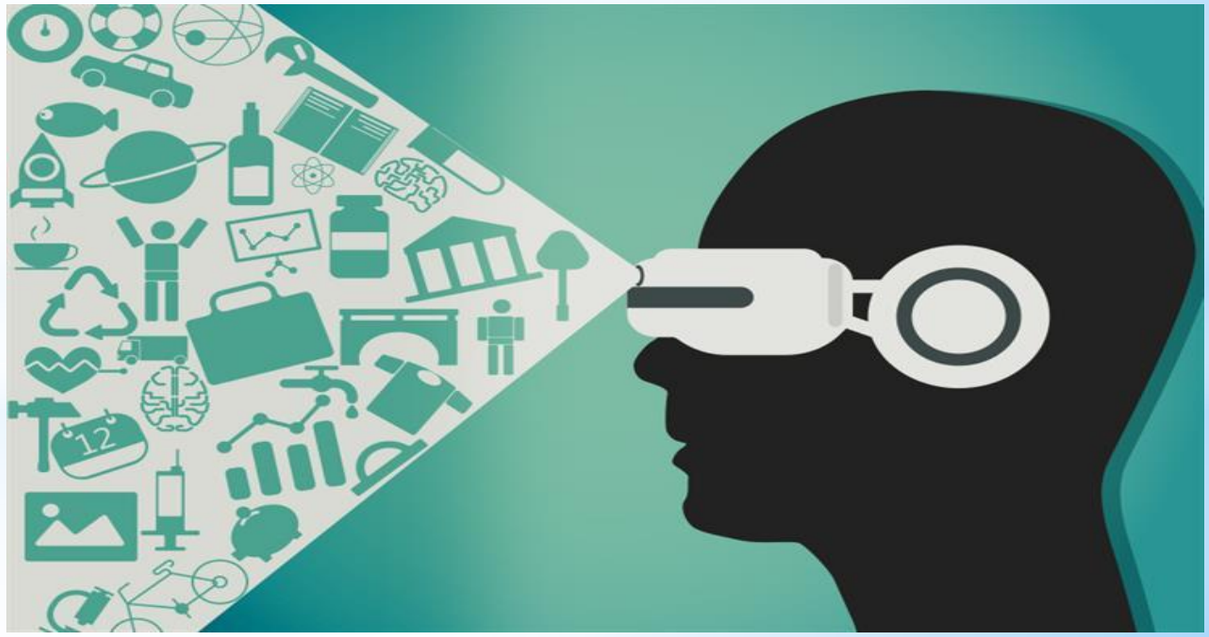
Interaction with other people is organized through selective perception. It relies on personal experiences, attitudes, attributes. Typically, prejudices are based on incomplete informations and they are quite stable. Prejudices put people into a negative category.

Cultural prejudices are also generalizing, based on the opinion of certain members of a group grounded on the previous perception, attitude, and viewpoint of the group, heedless of the particular characteristic of the individual.

2. EXPERIENCES

are based on oberserved and reported real perceptions. Experiences are therefore helpfull for managing every days life.

Experiences are selective and underlie subjective valuing and judgement.



3.1 ATTITUDES

Approach to a definition: Attitudes describe the during your socialisation acquired readyness to react on people or groups in a certain rational, emotional or behavioral manner. Attitudes are valuing people. They can be conscious or unconscious. Attitudes going in the same direction can form a cluster or a system of attitudes. Very stable attitudes are sometimes called stereotypes.

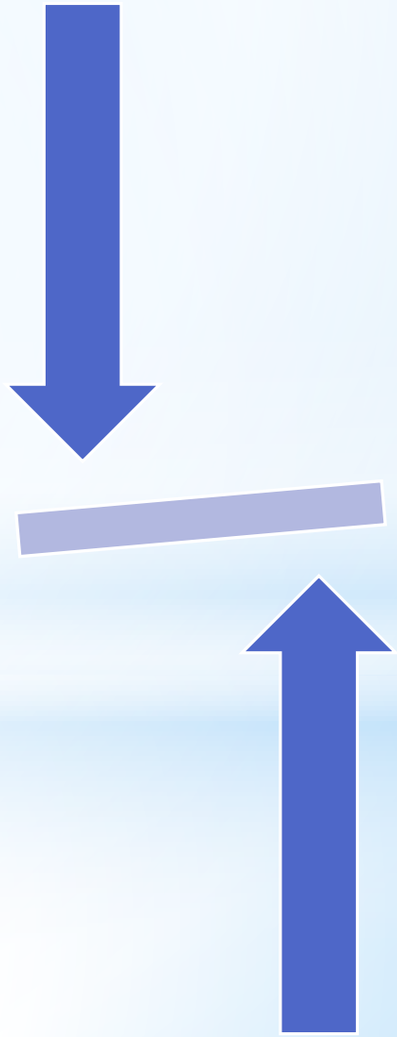
Theory: Theory of cognitive dissonance, **Festinger**, states that people tend to avoid dissonance between their attitudes.

Debate: Are attitudes good or bad? **??**

What do you think about cultural profiling of police?

3.2 FUNCTIONS OF ATTITUDES

- Attitudes have ambivalent functions. On the one hand they can be useful and helpful but they can also be simplifying and repelling.
  - Function of identity
  - Function of adaptation
  - Function of economy
    - Function of simplification
    - Function of isolation
    - Function of defence



3.3. DEVELOPMENT AND STABILIZATION

Attitudes are not inherited but acquired.

They develop by learning and socialization.

- First processes of learning and experiences
- Generalization of similar experiences
- Solidification through observational learning
- Avoiding dissonance (avoiding disharmony, unpleasant feelings)

Attitudes are not always put into reality, this is another step.

3.4 CHANGES OF ATTITUDES

Knowledge about development of attitudes can be used to promote changes of attitudes. But you also have to respect the personal integrity. So interventions are a question of morality and of a humanitarian approach.

- Analysis and evaluation of the previous preconceptions
- Determination of the wanted change
- Making a dissonance to the former attitude
- Transport new social perception

4.1. ATTRIBUTION

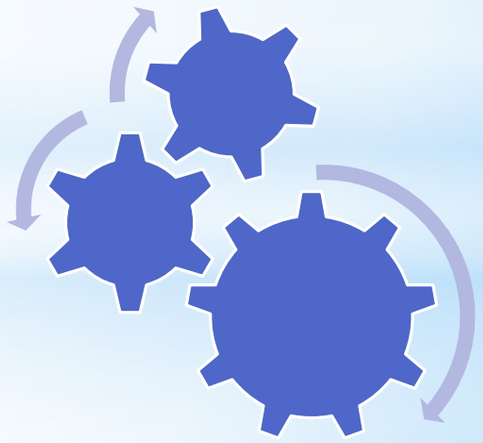
Definition

- Attribution is the action of regarding something as beeing caused by one person or another or circumstances.
- Attribution is the result of personal experiences or attitudes. It describes the subjective „logical“ thinking of a person or a group.

Theory

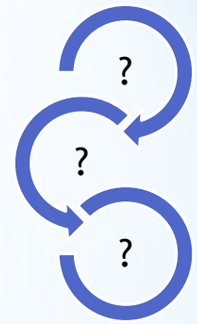
Three types of attribution, Kelley

- To the person (e.g. acting person)
- To the entitiy (e.g. an interacting person)
- To the modality (e.g. about a specific situation)



4.2 MISTAKES OF ATTRIBUTION

Attribution can be problematic,
because people tend to do typical mistakes.



- Ex. 1: Fundamental Attributional mistake: The causes for an event generally are attributed more easily to people than to circumstances.
- Ex. 2 :Self serving Bias: Means peoples‘ tendency to attribute positiv events to their own character, but attribute negative events to external factors. We do not want to endanger our own self image.
- Ex 3. Self fulfilling prophecy: That is a prediction that causes itself to become true due to positive feedback between belief and behavior.
- Debate: Find examples for attributional mistakes!

5.1 Exercise on prejudice

* 1. All the students stand up in line according to their colour of the skin.
Prejudice?

* 2. We are bulidung two groups, the light ones and the brown ones.
Prejudice?

* 3. The brown ones are supposed to be dangerous and hold in a restricted area.
Prejudice?

* 4. The brown ones are underprivileged, so they get 100€ extra.
Prejudice?

5.2 PREJUDICE

Definition

- Made of values, attitudes, stereotypes
- Build of incomplete information
- Relatively immune against new different information
- Treating people in a categorical matter
- With a typical negative attitude
- In order to discrimenate or dominate the other

5.3 Impact

- On a cognitive level (Germans are… Arabs are …)
- On an emotional level (I hate… despise ...)
- On a behaviaral level (violent against ...)

Debate: Find examples

5.4 THEORETICAL APROACH

- **Authoritarian Character, Adorno**

  Also tend to have prejudices; typical for an authoritarian character is

  - **Dependency of a group**
  - **A Tendency to projection**
  - **Dogmatic thinking**

- **„Sündenbockpraktiken“, Allport**

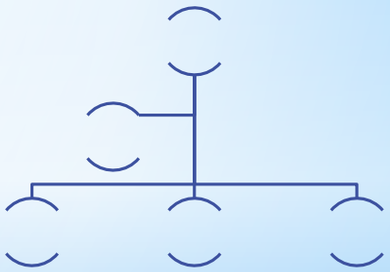
  People tend to find a scapegoat for their own problems

- **„Die Banalität des Bösen“, Ahrendt**

  The evil can also happen by seduction and situation

5.5. DEVELOPMENT OF PREJUDICES

- During the socialization of morality (learning from parents, from groups)
- These predjudices are stabilized, looking for simplicity and harmony
- The attribution to persons is preferred (attributional mistake)
- Personality factors (authoritarian characters are obeying characters)
- In - Groups are preferred to Out - Groups (nationalisim, racism)
- Risk for possible victims: they believe in self fulfilling prophecy
- Structural factors (cultural values, political situation)



Debate what can you do against predujces?

5.6.1 REDUCTION AND AVOIDANCE OF PREJUDICES

Unfortunately there is no simple solution!

You need a bundle of actions!

➢ Generally helpful

- **Girls** are more open towards outsiders than boys
- **Higher education** leads to a more positive outside perception

➢ Legal prevention of prejudices

- Looking for good legal **framework**
  (UN convention, constitution, all people are equal)

5.6.2 REDUCTION AND AVOIDANCE OF PREJUDICES

Mass media strategies

- Campaigns of **positive role models** (football player from different origins in the same team)
- TV-Series without prejudices

Structural amendments

- Joint socialization for German and Foreign kids
- Improvement of relationship to Out - Groups

5.6.3 REDUCTION AND AVOIDANCE OF PREJUDICE

➢ Changing dogmatic thinking, authoritarian character, self bias

Changing dogmatic thinking: more information, strengthen critical arguments, role plays

Changing authoritarian character: Not only believing and obeying, but better arguments

Critical reflection on self bias and on projection of own problems on others

➢ Personal contact between those with prejudices and target groups

- **Especially helpful if the exchange is between people with the same status**
- **Also helpfull if you have common interests like sports**

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Thank You For Your Interest!