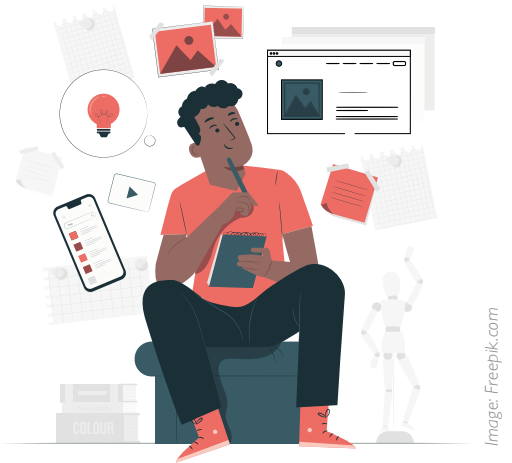


MODULE 1: SELF-REFLECTION ON (CONSCIOUS OR UNCONSCIOUS) PREJUDICES AGAINST REFUGEES/MIGRANTS

Content & Relevance

The transformations associated with migration processes are often perceived as challenges in society. Refugee movements, caused by war, terrorism, poverty, economic and environmental problems as well as general migration movements in the context of growing globalisation and internationalisation, lead to the development of heterogeneous societies. This is accompanied by the risk of exclusion and discrimination when certain individuals or groups of individuals are perceived as different (and of different value). There is a great discrepancy between the questions 'Are all human beings equal?' and 'Should all human beings be equal?'. In reality - whether on the street, at work or in school - not all people consider each other as equals. To establish a spirit of inclusion in a society characterised by migration and intercultural diversity, educational institutions must take up the task of promoting inclusion and dealing reflexively with diversity. At the university level, too, we must focus on uncovering prejudices and stereotypes and criticizing discrimination and racism.

This module aims to promote self-reflection of (conscious or unconscious) prejudices against refugees, migrants and anyone else who is perceived as *different* by offering a series of practical exercises. In that respect, the content ties in with the concerns of university employees and students who want to sensitise themselves to cultural differences and who want to critically self-reflect unconscious prejudices.



Educational goals

The exercises will contribute to:

- Understanding social mechanisms: exclusion and inclusion.
- Reflecting on one's own stereotypes and prejudices.
- Raising awareness for racism and discrimination.

Theoretical background

People who flee or migrate are often judged by their economic benefit for the country they flee to, as we have seen in Europe in recent years. Social hierarchies and an economic value system characterise society.

The causes of discrimination lie in individual minds and are socialisation- and experience-based. Every person lives in their own bubble and has a certain idea of what is *normal*. Everyone categorises their environment and their fellow human beings according to their own experiences. Individual-subjective perceptions that shape each person are usually more unconscious than conscious. Thus, every person has experience-based prejudices against *strangers* and thinks – sometimes more, sometimes less – in stereotypes. Both stereotypes and prejudices as fixed conceptions lead to the social construction of *groups* through labelling or stigmatisation. The difference between stereotypes and prejudices is that stereotypes remain unevaluated and are not necessarily negative, whereas in

the case of a prejudice, the addition of an emotional judgemental component usually results in a negative judgement towards a group of people. Therefore, prejudices result in negative or hostile attitudes and behaviour towards people.

Due to subconscious inner images everyone encounters an unknown person with prejudices and categories. Of course, people are more likely to identify with those with whom they share common interests or characteristics, such as origin, religion, language, appearance, or an interest - all constructed categories of society in which we think and act, but often unthinking. The constructed categories become problematic especially when people who differ from a certain group in a category are perceived as unequal because of an ascribed *otherness* and hostile attitudes towards People of Colour (marginalised group with experience of racism) or other marginalised groups develop, which lead to exclusion because of *otherness*.

Subjective conceptions of normality, categorical thinking and the consequences for marginalised groups are brought together in the model concept of group-focused enmity (GFE). The concept says that hostility to humans is not directed at individuals but at *groups*. Consequently, individuals are marked as unequal based on elected or attributed *group* membership and exposed to hostile mentalities (Heitmeyer & Mansel, 2008). As a result, stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination against people occur because they belong to a marginalised group, or in short, people are devalued because they deviate from *normality*. Thus, *groups* of people are devalued because of ethnic, cultural or religious characteristics and traits, sexual orientation, gender, a physical limitation or social reasons. Behind this lies an ideology of inequality. The differentiation of people into *groups* follows this ideology categorically and qualitatively, so that people who are perceived as *normal* are considered valuable or equal and those who are perceived as foreign or different are labelled unworthy or unequal - whether unconsciously or consciously. This is how *Othering* occurs: a labelled division into *we* and *they*, which is always determined by society. Due to the categorical classification, there is a danger that a strict and impermeable social hierarchy develops in society. Therefore, discrimination takes place not only on an individual level, but also on a structural level, due to hierarchies that are established in society (Zick, Küpper, & Hövermann, 2011; Groß, Zick, & Krause, 2012).

Discrimination often does not occur based on membership in only one *group* or category. Different categories that create inequality often interact (intersectionality). For instance, the discrimination or even oppression of women is not always only due to their gender, but also because of their skin colour, class, or sexual identity. White heterosexual women often benefit from the characteristics ascribed to them, which result from the categories race and sexual identity, although they are discriminated as women, while non-white women or queer women are affected by several discrimination structures (Collins & Bilge, 2020).

The fact that people regard such categories and their attributions as natural leads to strong inequalities in the distribution of power. The people affected by discrimination on the basis of labelling are contrasted with those who benefit from social constructs created by categories. They have privileges, which they often perceive not as privileges but as natural rights. Whenever categories and their power are questioned, resistance initially encounters. Prominent examples of this are the demand for women's suffrage or resistance to racial discrimination in the USA.

However, the categories of difference in which power relations are at work and which privilege some characteristics and discriminate against others, are socially constructed and should be regarded critically. From a constructivist perspective, even the wording itself can lead to subconscious misunderstandings. By speaking of – ultimately only created – *groups* and categories we finally construct

them, which reinforces group thinking, even though there are no *groups* as such and no *others* or *strangers*. The reproduction of lines of difference is questionable, since rejection and discrimination are considered *normal*. One's own prejudices, inner images and seemingly existing normality must be examined, and the construction processes must be illuminated and reflected upon. This reflexive-critical attitude towards prejudices and how to deal with them is based on a constructivist school of thought (Mecheril, 2010; Möller, 2017). Following the idea of German migration pedagogy as a basis for argumentation, static terms like *culture and intercultural* can also be criticised. The term creates an imagination of the outside and the foreign (Mecheril, 2010, p. 65), which illustrates the danger of culturalisation.

The phenomenon of discrimination represents a social challenge, especially because the underlying opinions, ideas and thought patterns are strongly anchored in society and are perceived as a fixed normality, which has also led to the development of a normality of racism (Foitzik, 2010). This makes it even more important in a migration society to reflexively question such constructs and categories as *culture* and to uncover one's own prejudices in order not to put people into pigeonholes of higher or lower rank. The emergence of stereotypical ways of thinking cannot be entirely prevented, which is why it is necessary to learn how to deal with them so that they do not reinforce negative prejudices. In this respect, education that is critical of racism must sensitise more strongly to diversity and intersectionality so that we can overcome the constructed categories.

Therefore, in this module we first want to raise awareness of how societies work. Participants should develop an understanding of how affiliation and non-affiliation are defined in societies and lead to inclusion and exclusion. They will realise that everyone categorises their environment and their fellow human beings and is also personally affected by this. The exercises will show that people are categorised differently and at the same time raise awareness for the constructive character of these categories. Finally, the module will raise awareness for one's own social position and the privileges that come along with that. The module aims to raise awareness of racism as a social problem that has consequences not only for those directly affected, but for all of us in different ways.

Exercise I – Stickers on the forehead²

Introduction & Methodology

The exercise gives participants a first idea of how European societies work. It helps to sharpen the view for social mechanisms like inclusion and exclusion and defining affiliation and non-affiliation. It offers a good starting point for following exercises. Methodologically, this exercise can be assigned to role plays with physically active group interactions.



Image: Freepik.com



Target group(s)

- All 3 target groups
- 10 – 25 people



Duration

- 30 – 45 min



Requirements / needed material

- Coloured stickers in 4 to 6 different colours & sizes

Learning outcomes

- Reflecting on the construction of belonging to a group.
- Talking about feelings of belonging or being excluded.

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2 An impression of the exercise from the accompanying [online tutorial](https://tinyurl.com/4a92dw8y): <https://tinyurl.com/4a92dw8y>

Instructions (explaining the exercise)

1. All participants are asked to close their eyes.
2. The instructor will randomly put a coloured sticker (or sticky note) on the forehead of every participant.
3. The participants are asked to come together in groups without speaking (!). (Let the group mingle for about 5 minutes).
4. When the participants formed groups, participants may look at their coloured sticker (or sticky note).
5. Debriefing.

Optional: The colours can be distributed unevenly. The group activity becomes more interesting if one colour is only given once, but others are given several times.

Tips for reflection / deepening the content

The groups are often formed according to the colours of the stickers, although the colours are not mentioned in the task. It is therefore interesting to consider together why appearance plays such an important role and what that means for the perception of belonging to the society.

It might be helpful to collect keywords on a whiteboard during the discussion.

- How did you feel during the process of finding a group?
- How did you choose a group?
- Which criteria did you choose to form groups?
- What alternative group formations would have been possible?
- Which inclusion and exclusion processes could you observe?
- What criteria for inclusion and exclusion arise?
- How do mechanisms like inclusion or exclusion work?
- To what extent can you relate the game's development to processes in society?
- What role do power structures play in this exercise and our real lives?

Exercise 2 – Soundgame

Introduction & Methodology

In this exercise, participants are asked to reflect on their stereotypes and prejudices and recognise how those guide their actions. Furthermore, participants should also recognise how prejudices and stereotypes are connected to social affiliation and non-affiliation. Methodologically, this exercise can be assigned to interactive group work. This exercise deals with personal interests (music preferences) but is not too intimate.



Image: Freepik.com



Target group(s)

- All 3 target groups
- 10 – 25 people



Duration

- 60 – 90 min



Requirements / needed material

- Speaker
- Laptop/MP3-Player/...
- **Option A:** Collection of min. 100 different songs of different genres
- **Option B:** Access to a streaming service for music
- Sheets with the names of the participants (one sheet per participant)

Learning outcomes

- (Self-)Reflection on construction of prejudices and stereotypes.
- Reflection on experiencing stereotypes.

Instructions (explaining the exercise)

1. The participants choose a favourite song.
 - » **Option A:** All participants will receive the list of available songs and mark their favourite without the other participants seeing it. The lists go back to the teacher.
 - » **Option B:** All participants write their favourite song on a piece of paper and hand it to the teacher. The other participants should not see which song was selected.

2. The teacher places sheets with the names of the participants in the room so that everyone can see them.

3. Then some of the selected songs are played (recommendation: no more than 5 songs) and the participants walk around in the room. Everybody tries to guess who picked the song they listen to. They are asked to stand by the sheet with the name of this person. Those whose favourite song is currently being played should not show a reaction and stand to a different name. After a short pause, the next song will be played without any resolution.

Note: The facilitator should say that it is an impossible task to guess other people's favourite music, but that as we listen, we will have ideas about who might have brought the song or who we think would not listen to it. It is important here to explicitly encourage participants to allow and notice the existence of prejudices and attributions in their minds.

4. For the resolution, the facilitator plays each song again briefly and the person who brought the song briefly stands up. S/he can now, if wanted, tell the group what this song means to her/him and why s/he understands it to be one of her favourite songs. There will probably be some surprises.
5. Reflection

Tips for reflection / deepening the content

The reflection should clarify how prejudices work; in what way we benefit from them and what effects they have for people affected. It is important to emphasise that prejudices are not personal misconceptions but socially shared images about people who are pigeonholed. During the evaluation, the seminar leader should make sure that the self-evident nature of the classifications is questioned.

- How did you decide whose favourite song it might be?
- On what basis did you make the decision?
- Which pigeonholes did you use?
- What aspects did you use for guessing (e.g. sex, gender, origin, language, clothes, hairstyle, shoes, body size, content of the lyrics, ...)?
- How did you feel when other people stood by your name? (During your song? During a completely different song?)
- What surprised you? And why?

Exercise 3 – River game

Introduction & Methodology

The *River game* questions the usual ways in which people create opinions about a fact by reducing the information one would need to have a clear opinion about an issue (e.g. about people, a situation, etc.). This exercise uses the mode of (self-)reflection to critically examine one's own biases. Methodologically, this exercise can be assigned to a mind game or a debate or group discussion. It is important to follow the instructions given in the activity very strictly.



Target group(s)

- All 3 target groups
- 10 – 25 people



Duration

- 60 – 90 min



Requirements / needed material

- White-board & pens OR black-board & chalk

Learning outcomes

- (Self-)Reflection on prejudices and stereotypes.
- Raising awareness for the coexistence of different perspectives.

Instructions (explaining the exercise)

1. The facilitator narrates the story of a female character and four male characters. S/he draws a river and sketches of the female character and two male characters on the left side of the river and two other male characters on the right side, like this:



(Optional: The participants can be asked to give names to the 5 people involved in the story.)

The plot of the story would be:

Mila is deeply in love with Marco, a male person on the other side of the river. To cross the river Mila needs a boat. Thus, she asks Peter (the man on the left side of the river) to help her cross the river with his boat. But Peter refuses Mila's request. She asks another male person on the left side of the river, Tom. Tom is willing to take her across the river but requires from Mila that she would have to spend the night with him at his house. Mila is desperate, so she accepts Tom's condition.

The next day, Tom is taking her across the river. Mila is finally meeting up with Marco. After telling Marco the truth about the night with Tom and her feelings, Marco reacts furiously and rejects her. Mila is hurt and full of sorrows. She turns to the second male person on the right side of the river called Georg. Georg is so angry about Marco rejecting Mila that he goes up to Marco and beats him up. Marco has to go to the hospital and Mila remains sad and is now full of regret.

2. The facilitator asks the participants to build groups. Within the groups, they are asked to discuss the story they just heard. After that, every group needs to come up with a list from 1 to 5 placing at position 1 the person with the worst behaviour in the story to position 5 the person with the least bad behaviour. Following the discussion, every group is asked to describe and explain the decisions made about the lists.

3. After this very important part of the game, the facilitator retells the story in another way:

Mila is deeply in love with Marco, a man on the other side of the river. To cross the river Mila needs a boat. Thus, she asks Peter (the man on the left side of the river) to help her cross the river with his boat. But Peter refuses Mila's request.

Additional information: *Mila is 14 years old and Marco is her physics teacher at school. Peter is another teacher at Mila's school who knows about her feelings for her physics teacher. To protect both of them from any disadvantage or harm, he declines Mila's wish. She asks another man on the left side of the river, Tom. Tom is willing to take her across the river but requires from Mila that she would have to spend the night with him at his house. Mila is desperate, so she accepts Tom's condition.*

Additional information: *Tom is Mila's grandfather, who is lonely after his wife died. So, he asks his grandchild to stay the night at his house, spending a little more time together than usual.*

The next day, Tom takes her across the river. Mila finally meets up with Marco. After telling Marco honestly about the night with Tom and her feelings, Marco reacts furious and rejects her.

Additional information: *Marco rejects Mila because she is his student.*

Mila is hurt and full of sorrows. She turns to the second male person on the right side of the river called Georg. Georg is so angry about Marco rejecting Mila that he goes up to Marco and beats him up. Marco has to go to the hospital and Mila remains sad and is now full of regret.

Additional information: *George is 16 years old and a dropout from Mila's school. They are friends. George has been diagnosed with several psychological problems that are expressed through extremely violent behaviour. Because of his violent behaviour, he has been expelled twice from school and has stayed three months in a local juvenile reform school. He is always looking for a fight and, because of this, he is on the margins of his local community.*

4. Discuss the reasons why participants chose different orders to determine the behaviour of the people and now think differently about their behaviour in the story in plenum. There is no second ranking.

Tips for reflection / deepening the content

The reflection should be about confronting the participants with their beliefs and prejudices they might have had previously. This exercise questions the usual ways by which people create opinions about a fact by reducing the information one would need to have a clear opinion about an issue.

- What do you think about the behaviour of the people involved in the story now?
- On what basis did you form your first opinion?
- Why did your judgement change?
- What are the takeaways from the exercise for our daily lives?
- How does our discussion connect to the topics of presumptions and prejudices?

Glossary

- **Discrimination:** is the term used to describe social disadvantage based on characteristics such as gender, sexual orientation, origin, religion or, for example, disability. Institutional discrimination occurs when an institution as a whole treats people inappropriately or even in a discriminatory way on the basis of their phenotypic characteristics, their cultural background or their actual or assumed ethnic origin. Institutional racism can be manifested in processes, attitudes, and behaviour which, through unconscious prejudice, unawareness, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotypes, lead to disadvantage of individuals or *groups*. The consequences are ultimately general xenophobia or racism, antisemitism, sexism, etc.
- **Group-focused enmity:** the concept provides empirical results to explain the socially anchored rejection patterns. According to this, people are marked as unequal and exposed to hostile mentalities due to chosen or assigned group membership. As a result, the concept includes stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination against people because they belong to a marginalised group, or in short, people are devalued because they deviate from normality. Thus, groups of people are devalued because of ethnic, cultural, or religious characteristics and traits, sexual orientation, gender, a physical limitation, or social reasons (Groß et al., 2012; Zick et al., 2011).
- **Intersectionality:** draws attention to intersections of discrimination and illustrates the respective power structures in which categorical attributions are embedded. It describes that different inequality generating structural categories are entangled with each other. Forms of oppression and disadvantage do not allow for an additive sequence of categories, but are rather mostly interwoven: For instance, the discrimination or even oppression of some women is not only due to their gender. Other factors are skin colour and class affiliation. None of the categories of difference such as gender, ethnicity, class, nationality, sexuality, age, etc. stands alone. They must also be considered in interaction. However, the categories of difference in which power relations are at work and which privilege some characteristics and discriminate against others, are though socially constructed (which must always be kept in mind) (Collins & Bilge, 2020).
- **Otherring:** refers to the construction of the *foreign*, which simultaneously constructs a *we* in difference to a *they* and creates a dichotomy. Groups are distanced from each other by attributing deficits, whereby the *strangers* are excluded - usually to the disadvantage of *others* and advantage of one's own group, which enjoys privileges.
- **Racism:** describes the devaluation of people who are considered biologically different (e.g. skin colour, origin). The labelled inferiority is justified with a qualitative evaluation of physical features and characteristics; racism is therefore also seen as the devaluation of foreign groups with innate inferiority. It is important to note that racism functions based on ascribed characteristics. People are racialised (Zick et al., 2011).

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Exercises:

Exercise 1:

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