WORKSHOP MANUAL

Discriminatory language and narratives in the media

by Firas Hallak and Gabriela Mayungu

Content

1. Introduction

How does discrimination work? How are people affected by discrimination in the media and what effect does this have on them?

The workshop not only tries to address these questions, but also aims to show how media works and how young people can look at media reports in a different way. The aim of the workshop is to give pupils and students a bird's eye view of this when dealing with media, and to take a critical and sensitive stance on the issue of discrimination in the media.

DURATION
approximately 2 hours

TARGET GROUP
young people aged 14 or older

FORMAT
digital and on-site

MATERIALS
The workshop was designed in such a way that it can be conducted both online and face-to-face. Therefore, this manual always refers to both methods when explaining individual workshop elements.

DIGITAL
All students and trainers need an internet-enabled device (tablet or PC/laptop), as well as video conferencing software on all devices with the possibility for small group work and screen sharing (e.g. Zoom). In addition, participants need a note-taking app or pen and paper.

ANALOGUE
For face-to-face sessions, a laptop, projector, speakers, flipchart and moderation cards are needed, as well as pens and paper for all students.

→ All materials can be downloaded here

2. Schedule

DURATION	MODULE	DESCRIPTION
10 min	**Welcome**	Communicate the content and aims of the workshop; Create transparency about the goals
10 min	**MODULE 1** **Names and getting to know each other**	Round of expectations in the plenary: Who are you? What are your expectations of the workshop? Alternative for larger groups: Ice-breaker
20 min	**MODULE 2** **Positioning exercise**	Introductory exercise: enabling participation and asking for the participants' opinions
20 min	**MODULE 3** **"What is media?"** **Interactive input on the topic of media**	Transition; Definition of mediating media; communicate the function and role of the media; at the same time, make a distinction from conspiracy-theoretical media criticism; raising awareness of how media contributes to normativity
BREAK		
40 min	**MODULE 4** **Critical media analysis**	Group work: participants discuss the following questions in small groups in relation to an article, advertisement, etc.: Who or what is the subject of the article? How is the respective person / (social) group described? What are the consequences for the person or group concerned? The evaluation takes place in the plenary.
5 min	**MODULE 5** **How does discrimination work?**	Teaching the function of discrimination, positions of power, interpretative sovereignty over self and other designations
10 min	**MODULE 6** **Meme Generator**	Participatory/positive exit: participants become media makers themselves and create self-determined diversity-sensitive counter-narratives
5 min	**Closing**	Summary and feedback

3. Implementation

Welcome — 10 min

The trainer introduces themselves and briefly explains the topic of the workshop. It is important not to go into too much detail as the first exercise is to introduce the students to the topic.

In addition, the basics of communication should be defined and agreed upon in this part, for example, whether the trainer and the participants would like to be on first-name terms, how questions can be asked and that there should be respectful interaction at all times (this includes, for example, avoiding the use of discriminatory terms).

In the case of online workshops, it should also be clarified whether the participants are familiar with the functions of the program, e.g. the video conferencing platform Zoom. For the implementation of the workshop, it is particularly important that they know the chat function and how to vote.

Digital: *each participant with their own PC/laptop/iPad (smartphones should be avoided if possible)*

Analogue: *Flipchart, circle of chairs*

Get together — 10 min

In order to grow together as a group and activate participants, it is important to give each person a chance to speak. This is followed by a round of sharing expectations in the plenary in order to assess the mood of the room and get a first idea about the current level of knowledge. Potential questions could be:

- Who are you?
- What are your expectations of the workshop?
- Alternatively, with a larger number of participants: Everyone covers their camera. Trainers introduce the game with an example, e.g.
  "All those who, like me, have already taken the dog for a walk this morning".
  People to whom the statement applies turn their camera back on. The trainer names one of the people who has turned on their camera as the next speaker, who then continues with a new example.
  OR
  What weather would I be today?

Digital: *Zoom or similar platform, camera should be available*

Analogue: *Ice breaker also works on site by having students stand up and change places in a circle of chairs.*

Positioning exercise — 20 min

AIM **This exercise aims to enable participation and to get the participants' opinion on the workshop topic.**

EINSTIEG First, the trainer should explain the method of the exercise. The participants position themselves on statements about different forms of discrimination. This method helps participants articulate their opinions on the statements and to make their positioning visible.

EXAMPLES
- "Women are responsible for raising children."
- "BIPoCs' perspective is missing in the media."
- "Anyone can achieve anything they want, they just have to work hard for it."
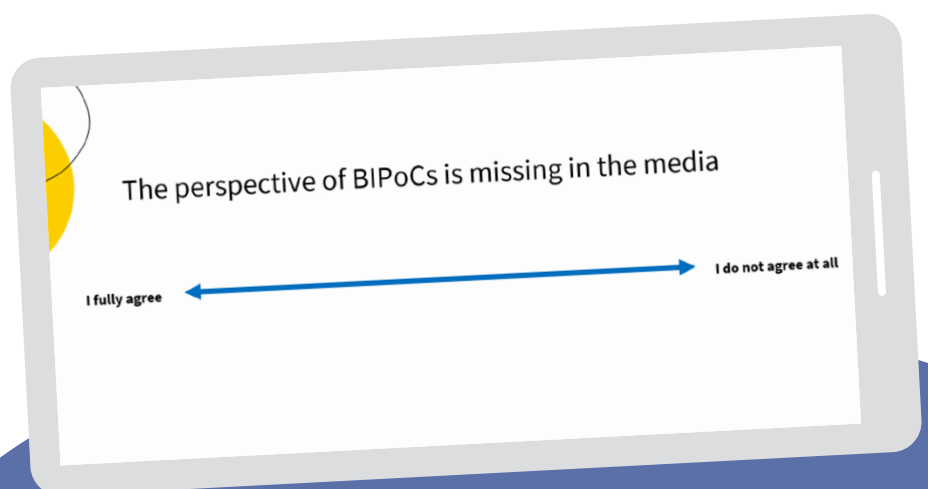
Digital: *The implementation and evaluation is done with the help of the presentation (see appendix).*

For each position, a stamp is made along the voting line in the presentation via Zoom. The participants thus have the opportunity to make their position on the given statement visible. It is also possible to make one's position clear verbally or in the chat.

Alternatively, participants can also vote using the
→ Mentimeter voting tool

Introduction:
→ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQwGklW62v8

Screenshot Menti

Analog: Mentimeter can also be used in an on-site workshop if all participants have access to a computer or smartphone.

*Alternatively, the group can play the **square game:*** For this, four moderation cards must be labelled with the letters A to D in advance of the workshop and hung up in the four corners of the room. They each represent an answer to the respective statement/question.

- I agree with the statement
- I disagree with the statement
- I somewhat agree with the statement
- I somewhat disagree with the statement

During the course of the exercise, the participants answer the questions by positioning themselves in the respective corners or in between.

*DEFINITION **BIPOC***

Black Indigenous People of Colour is a political term referring to the collective life experiences of people affected by racism.

FURTHER READING
Link to more information (in German) on BIPoC discrimination in the media:
→ https://www.bpb.de/lernen/digitale-bildung/bewegt-bild-und-politische-bildung/saymyname/312493/massenmedien-repraesentation-und-diskriminierung

Interactive input on the topic of media — 20 min

AIM **The goal of this input is to familiarize partici-pants with the definition of media.**

They should learn about the function and role of the media in our society, and how social norms are set or influenced by discourse and debate in the media. At the same time, it is important to differentiate between founded media criticism and conspiracy theory.

Digital: By asking the question "what is media?" on Mentimeter, the participants are interactively involved.

The introductory question is used to determine together with the participants what they understand by the term media. The documentation of the results can be done by means of a word cloud in Mentimeter or mind maps via a digital whiteboard.

With reference to the participants' contributions, the trainers then introduce their definition of media. For this purpose, the definition provided in the information box or a similar definition can be used.

Analogue: If the workshop is conducted on site, the train-ers might need a whiteboard or flipchart and, if necessary, moderation cards to document the students' answers to the initial question ("what is media?").

*Both moderation cards an*d the flipchart or whiteboard can be used to visualize the definition of media.

If needed, a break of 10 minutes can be taken after the input.

The term media is derived from the Latin word medium, which translated into German meaning "mediator" of information.

Media usually refers to the mass media of modern society, through which information can be made available to a large number of people – be it books, radio, film or television. In addition, there is digital media such as the Internet, e-books, social media and smartphones. Storage media, such as USBs, CDs or DVDs, is also counted as mass media. The word "press" is used in a broader sense for the entirety of mass media. In a narrower sense, it refers primarily to newspapers, journals and magazines.

Media passes on information to many people through texts, images and sounds. Thus, media outlets have an important function within democratic societies. They are supposed to inform people, contribute to opinion-forming through criticism and discussion, and therefore enable participation. For this reason, media is also referred to as the "fourth estate".

However, this also gives them a great responsibility: they have to research well and report truthfully and in a balanced manner. These and other rules are set out in press codes (German)
→ https://www.presserat.de/pressekodex.html.

Media content is problematic when it influences two things: how members of social groups perceive society and, conversely, how society treats members of these social groups.

Sources:

→ https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Medium_Vermittler_Traeger

→ https://medienkindergarten.wien/medienpaedagogik/infothek/der-medienbegriff

→ https://www.helles-koepfchen.de/artikel/3132.html

→ https://rise-jugendkultur.de/artikel/diskriminierung-durch-medien/

→ https://www.bpb.de/politik/grundfragen/deutsche-verhaeltnis-se-eine-sozialkunde/138737/medien

→ https://www.presserat.de/pressekodex.html

FURTHER READING
Explanatory model normativity from Social Justice (see fig.: socialization circle)

Critical media analysis — 40 min

AIM   The participants critically examine media reports.

Critical analysis of media reports means checking whether media reports are truthful and balanced in their portrayal of the people and situations described.
In addition, the language used should be examined to see if it promotes discriminatory structures.

An example can be the report about the alleged illegal work of more than 300,000 refugees in Germany in 2016. In this example, one can recognize various problematic issues when considering:

- How are refugees reported on in this case?
- Who reports on them?
- Do refugees themselves have their say?
- What is the composition of the 300,000 refugees working illegally?
- Why have many other media outlets taken up this topic?
- What questions does this raise about social structures?
- In addition, one can critically assess the term "illegal work" itself.

"Up to 300,000 refugees work on the black market"

Links to the articles to be worked on within the framework of this method[1]:

→ https://www.ndr.de/der_ndr/presse/mitteilungen/Fluechtlinge-arbeiten-schwarz-fuer-Dumpingloehne-Vermittler-in-Unterkuenften-unterwegs-,pressemeldungndr17548.html

→ https://www.stern.de/wirtschaft/news/schwarzarbeit-unter-fluechtlingen-weit-verbreitet-6678334.html

→ https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/schwarzarbeit-darum-arbeiten-viele-fluechtlinge-schwarz-1.3141622

→ https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/fluechtlinge-in-schwarzarbeit-arbeit-ist-die-beste.769.de.html?dram:article_id=364528

→ https://www.migazin.de/2016/09/15/unserioese-zahlen-weniger-schwarzarbeit-fluechtlingen/

1 We are aware that it might be difficult to work on all articles due to the limited time available. For this reason, depending on the size of the group and the time available, it can be decided which articles should be worked on.

GROUP WORK

The participants discuss the following questions in small groups and then in the plenary with reference to the respective headline. If the content or headline is discriminatory (as is the case in the example above), the trainers have to address this fact right at the beginning. The discussion can focus on the following questions:

- Who or what is the subject of the headline?
- How is the affected person / (social) group described?
- What are the consequences for the person or group concerned?

To deepen the discussion, it is also possible to ask the following question:

- How would you rewrite the headline without using discriminatory content?

Digital: Zoom

- Introduction and task description by the trainers (approx. 5 minutes)
- Small groups work in break-out rooms (approx. 15 minutes)

Analogue:

- *Introduc*tion and task description by the trainers. (approx. 5 minutes)
- Participants work in small groups in the room (approx. 15 minutes)

The subsequent evaluation and discussion takes place in the plenary (online or on site). Each small group presents its results briefly. Approximately 20 minutes are allotted for the discussion.

How does discrimination work in our mind? — 5 min

AIM **To teach the workings of racism, power position(s), interpretive authority over self and others.**

Digital: *The pictures[2] on this subject in the attached presentation are explained by the trainers.*
*Reference is made to the function of racism an*d illustrates how power positions and attributes are attached to certain groups, and the consequences this might have.

Analogue: *The pictures in the annex can be printed out and distributed or attached to a flipchart/whiteboard. The presentation can be used in case there is a projector available in the seminar room.*

DEFINITION **DISCRIMINATION**

Discrimination is a gross violation of human rights. Discriminated people are systematically prevented from exercising their human rights based on individual or group-specific characteristics such as religion, gender, disability, age, skin color, ethnic origin, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, etc.

Affected people experience unequal treatment, exclusion and devaluation associated with a perceived member-ship in a constructed group.

Source (in German):
→ https://www.idaev.de/recherchetools/glossar?tx_dpnglossary_glossary%5B%40widget_0%5D%5Bcharacter%5D=D&cHash=4ee76652f2f01767495570bb3181a668

2 To be found in the annex: power point presentation on slides 11-17.

FURTHER READING

The German-speaking video "What is Othering?" by erklärmirmal!, a digital political education format on Instagram, illustrates how certain people or groups are socially marked as 'other'. It also explains the function of differentiating and constructing groups of oneself and others with regard to social exclusion and power processes.

Link (in German): → erklaermirmal

DEFINITION **OTHERING**

"Othering" means to "other" someone, to make a person the other. This is exactly what happens when we distinguish "ourselves" from the supposed "others". This distinction is based on hierarchical and stereotypical thinking. While one's own "normality" is confirmed and valorized, the "others" appear as less tolerant, democratic, or educated. Othering also occurs in educational institutions, for example when certain young people are questioned as experts of 'their' culture or religion, although their lived experience has nothing to do with it. It creates exclusion and reproduces prejudices and stereotypes.

Source (in German):
→ https://www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de/w/files/pdfs/
juan-faecher.pdf

ON THE ROLE OF **LANGUAGE**

Language is an important communication tool and is constantly changing. Words disappear, change, and new ones are added. Language contains "codes" that are sometimes only clear to a certain group. The same word can mean different things, depending on the context. Language is always linked to power relations and is not neutral. It can be hurtful and exclusionary or promote self-determination and empowerment. In order to establish systems of oppressions, new words were invented to relativize these oppressive ideologies and are still used in German today. For example, "black" has a negative connotation, as in "Schwarzarbeit" ("black work" = illegal work) or "Schwarzfahren" ("black driving/riding" = fare-dodging). This negative connotation triggers figurative and linguistic chains of association in which black people are devalued. A critical-conscious handling of language in youth work requires a professional attitude as well as a questioning of one's own use of language.

Source (in German):
→ https://www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de/w/files/pdfs/
juan-faecher.pdf

Kilomba, Grada (2008): Plantation Memories. Episodes of Everyday Racism. Münster: Unrast Verlag.

Meme generator — 10 min

AIM   **To create a participatory and positive exit.**
The participants become media makers themselves and create diversity-sensitive counter-narratives. With the help of the meme generator
→ https://imgflip.com/memegenerator, they create positive memes on socially relevant topics. Topics and contents from the previous modules can be included in the creation of a meme. Afterwards, the participants can share their memes with the group.

Digital: With PC/laptop/iPad or smartphones.

Analogue: TParticipants use their smartphones

Closing — 5 min

AIM   **Summary and feedback**
The trainer summarizes the workshop and gathers feedback from the participants. Trainers can use the 5-finger method:

5-Finger-Method
- Thumb:
  "What content did I particularly like?"
- Index finger:
  "I noticed that I wanted to get that off my chest."
- Middle finger:
  "I didn't like that so much."
- Ring finger:
  "I'll take that with me."
- Little finger:
  "That came up short. I would have liked to talk more about that."

Digital: Mentimeter for summary and chat for feedback

Analogue: Summary with moderation cards and feedback given with the participants sitting in a circle.

An example of a meme could look like this

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AUHOR
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Gabriela Mayungu studied Sociology and Political Science at the Goethe University and recently graduated with a master's degree in Diversity and Inclusion from the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences. In addition to her job in youth work, she is involved in KONE e.V. and deals with anti-racist and intersectional-feminist contexts.

It is particularly important to the authors to show the relation and continuities between asymmetrical power positions and symbolic-discursive elements in media reporting with regard to social grievances such as discrimination.

4. Glossary

CLASSISM – structural discrimination and stereotyping with reference to socio-economic group membership of people from the working class, poor people, rich people, intellectuals, etc.

RASSISM – structural discrimination of people with reference to race, ethnicities, cultures and religion.

SEXISM/HETEROSEXISM – structural discrimination against people based on their gender as well as the ideology underlying these phenomena. Heterosexism is a system of thought and behavior that establishes hetero-sexuality as the only "normal" form of sexual orientation and relationship.

INTERSECTIONALITY refers to:
- Thinking about different forms of oppression and discrimination as interwoven structural relations of domination.
- Recognizing the individual, institutional and cultural mechanisms and actions that have the conscious and unconscious aim of degrading, devaluing and excluding people.
- Highlighting the interweaving of individual, institutional and cultural levels of discrimination.
- Addressing the complexity of discrimination and the consequence of considering each form of discrimi-nation as horizontal and vertical connections to each other.
- Highlighting intersections where people are affected by several forms of discrimination and where they are interconnected.
- Acknowledging the possibility that people experience exclusion and at the same time have discrimination mechanisms by which they themselves participate in exclusion.

LEVELS OF DISCRIMINATION

Individual level

Personal attitudes, actions; actions that demonstrate prejudice against people and socially constructed groups.

Institutional level

Policies, laws, rules, norms, and customs enforced and implemented by organizations and social institutions (governments and administrative systems, school systems, judiciary, church, health care systems...) that disadvantage certain socially constructed groups and favor others.

Symbolic-discursive and structural levels

Social roles, norms, music, art, literature, rituals, and language in which it is expressed that one social group is above another.

DISCRIMI-NATED GROUPS	PRIVILEGED GROUP	FORMS OF OPPRES-SION
Cis-women; trans*-people; transgender; intersex people, queer people.	Cis-heterosexual men Cis straight men	Sexism
Middle class; Poor people; workers; people without paid labour	owning class	Classism
LGBTIQ+ → lesbians; gays; bisexual people; intersex people; transgender people	Heterosexuals Straight people	Heterosexism
People of Color; Black people; people with (visible) immigrant backgrounds, Muslims and Muslimas, Roma and Sinti,…	White people, white Christian socialized majority people	Racism

Source: Czollek, Leah Carola/Perko, Gudrun/Weinbach, Heike: Handbuch Social Justice und Diversity. Theorien, Training, Methoden, Übungen, Juventa, Weinheim/München 2012

5. Imprint