**Des-
Integrate.**

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With the help of the project "Anti Racist Criticism, A Practical Guide – Post-Colonial Memorial and Learning Sites in Cologne", we try to focus on Germany's colonial history. In doing so, we have created a digital map which shows postcolonial traces in the city of Cologne: www.desintegration.ihaus.org. In this article we reflect upon our ideas on the project and the materials developed for it.

Desintegration: Tracing Colonialism: Memorial and Learning Sites Right on the Doorstep

Context

The debate about Germany's own colonial history in Germany itself is held in very few spaces. Both in academia and in society, this part of German history receives little or no attention. History in Germany is focussed mostly on the time of National Socialism. In doing so, the continuities and structural similarities between the German colonial period and the history of the Third Reich are not seen or negated. We can state: The continuity of racist thought structures, which justified colonization from the point of view of the colonizers, can also be found in the period of nationalism, or rather, this continuity has lasted until today.

The colonial period is thus a powerful event in the history of global violence. The exploitation of the colonized areas did not only involve land, resources and labor. With colonization, ways of thinking, bodies of knowledge and cultures of discussion were also imposed on the local people in the vast majority of cases. Diversity was thus lost, and the dominance of assumptions of the white colonizers continues to this day. The facts created are still evident today, for example, in the form of borders, the system of economic dependence and indebtedness of states - and in the overall white and Eurocentric perspective.

To make new perspectives visible and to question supposed certainties about German colonial history, knowledge is needed. And this knowledge is on our doorstep. That is why we have set out to trace colonial heritage in Cologne and compiled our knowledge and findings. In this way, we want as many people as possible to have access to this information, to use it and to share the knowledge about Germany's colonial history.

We know that to this existing knowledge, insights and perspectives of the formerly colonized must be added. In many cases, however, this knowledge has been lost or is only now being made visible again. We do not (yet) have access to many insights and bodies of knowledge. That is why we try to bring in these perspectives by being aware of the terminology we use. This classification is important to us, because we write from a PoC* perspective. By positioning ourselves as People of Color, we share the common experience of working and living in a white-dominated society. We experience racism based on our external characteristics in our everyday lives as well as in our jobs and in laws. Our birthplaces are partly interwoven with German colonial history, which is why we have personally experienced the colonial period and its effects in our biographies and those of our families, and still do today.

Some Considerations

"By colonialism we mean a relationship of domination justified by a racist ideology of the intellectual, economic, and cultural superiority of the colonizers. German traders, missionaries, politicians and military personnel were involved in obtaining and maintaining colonial influence in different African, Asian and Pacific regions throughout the 19th and 20th century. In most of the territories this involvement was accompanied by employing brute force and violence against the local population." (Conrad 2012, quoted in Digoh/Golly 2015, p. 57).

The historically established relations of power and violence are a colonial heritage and continue to influence the present. We have to be aware of and point out the fact that "white Europeans and North-Americans did not only economically and militarily dominate the globe. They also culturally conveyed their perspectives/ interpretations and manners, their knowledge and their stories as true and superior" (Richter 2015, p. 227). And it was them who can/could decide which reality of life is made visible and thus relevant.

In which way can a post-colonial perspective on our society contribute to the awareness of our historical heritage, stimulate a critical engagement with it, and how can it encourage a reflective new way of thinking?

Looking into history is an invitation to reflect on the extent to which one's interpretations of the world reflect dominant narratives, how these are entangled with one's own entanglement in racist and colonial structures, and what alternative patterns of interpretation are possible.

By giving space (audibly and visibly) to perspectives which have been denied spaces of articulation (and existence per se) over long historical periods, those perspectives themselves can reveal the internal contradictions in colonial structures. They enable reinterpretations of dominant narratives of white European historiography. This change of perspective allows us to engage with colonial structures and networks that continue to operate globally and locally to this day.

The Idea of Engagement: Memorial Sites in a Post–Migrant Society

We were inspired by a Ted-Talk of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie "The Danger of a Single Story" which she held in a conference in Edinburgh in July in 2009. Historical and contemporary events are evaluated differently depending on who tells the story and how it is transported to the public. This has implications for the memory culture of past, present, and future generations. A post-migrant perspective on memory culture includes the possibility that historical events are not viewed detached from the present. And that racism as a characteristic which shapes our society cannot only be fixed at the border of the political extreme right, but can also be found in the "middle of society" and is reproduced again and again. Thus, narratives of formerly colonized areas are also perceived and recognized. This can happen, for example, with street names on our doorstep. For we can also use street names to transport hidden and forgotten histories and thus broaden our perspective. The digital map in no way replaces the examination of the historical conditions of the colonial era, but can be used as an introduction to the topic and method to create references to the present.

In our project, we have processed colonial traces in the form of street names and places in contributions and placed them in text and audio formats on our website. The contributions are available in German, English and French.

The Digital Map of Colonial Memorial Sites in the City of Cologne as a Tool for (Extra-)School Educational Work: Goals and Methodological Approach

The digital map of colonial memorial sites in the city of Cologne (www. desintegration.ihaus.org) ties in with similar projects from throughout the Federal Republic. The examination of German and Cologne colonial history and the question of its visibility in the cityscape offers historical and sociopolitical access, especially for younger target groups.

With the conception of a digital map with text and audio contributions, we have oriented ourselves to new as well as existing projects on the colonial heritage of the city of Cologne. As an example, we used the project "Lern- und Erinnerungsort Afrikanisches Viertel" from Berlin (http://www.3plusx.de/leo-site/). In the project, we analyzed existing contributions and activities around the topic of "Cologne and the Colonial Era" and digitized them accordingly. In doing so, we drew on contributions from the "Kopfwelten" project and the "Virtual" Museum (http://www.kopfwelten.org/kp/orte/) developed as part of the project. With the digital access, we primarily want to contribute to a dissemination of the content and facilitate access to colonial history.

Goals and General Notes on the Approach

The digital map is primarily intended to sensitize the population of Cologne to the topic and motivate them to actively deal with this heritage. Another goal is to reflect on the effects of the colonial era and racism on the present.
The approaches developed in the project are intended as a stimulus for political education work. As with all methods, they need to be modified by multipliers to suit the respective target groups and the local conditions. The suggestions can be implemented independently of each other as well as coherently and depending on the framework conditions at the respective locations in Cologne (for similar projects see: https://desintegration.ihaus.org/netzwerk-wo-gibt-es-aehnliche-projekte/) as well as without going to the locations. The digital map as a method does not replace history lessons on the topic of the colonial era. Rather, it is to be understood as a supplement to expand historical facts by the post-migrant perspective and a possibility to discuss the effects of the colonial era on the present.

The complexity of the topics addressed in the project means that they cannot be "worked through" in teaching units or weekend seminars. Because of the wide range of topics covered, it makes sense to combine the digital map with other learning units on topics such as the economy, migration, globalization, etc., and above all to implement them in an interdisciplinary manner in the school context. It is also a good idea to work with the digital map over a period of six months to a whole year, organized according to different thematic blocks.

When dealing with Germany's colonial history, these questions can be taken up in parallel with the historical analysis:
- From which perspective and against which background is offerered which educationally relevant knowledge to whom?
- Whose perspectives are represented or heard?
- Whose perspectives are not represented?

Further General Information

- Classification of terms used: Especially with the term "Africa", white people lack background knowledge. This is because even in the media, in textbooks, in pictures, historical contexts and complex backgrounds are not presented or are presented too little. When using the materials, it must be made transparent who is speaking out of which perspective.
- Usage of self-imposed terminology
- Use transcriptions when using the audio and video material to clarify foreign words and to make it easier to understand what is being said.
- Create an alphabetical index of foreign words.
- Making references to the present: Where do the products in our refrigerators come from? Where and how are the clothes in our closets produced? Where do our digital devices come from and which materials are in them? What can I contribute to a more just world?
- Thematizing colonial languages: What languages do the target groups speak, what are colonial languages, what are mother tongues?
- What is the history of the colonial period from the perspective of the colonized areas, e.g. thematization of resistance against colonial dominance? What are the effects of the colonial period until today?

Outlook

Projects like the digital map are an example of the different approaches to colonial memorial sites. The postcolonial view of our society contributes to the awareness of the historical heritage and to a critical examination as well as a self-reflexive further thinking. This promotes a critical approach and awareness of the historical conditions of racism as a global system of domination.

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