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Thinkshop Series „De-colonization“ of social thought **15.06.2022**

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Overview Series

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0. Introduction: What happened in the world under the notion of “de-colonization” presented as liberation from colonialism?

- Half a century after the end of colonialism the critique of “de-colonizing” social though presents this critique with its term of a “de-colonization” as an unfinished project of anti-colonialism

- What are the political developments that since world war II until today discussed as this “de-colonization”, presenting these developments of the former colonized world as freeing the world from remains of colonialism or as an unfinished project of anti-colonialism?

    - Most importantly: The transformation of the colonized world – was the transformation towards and into the very society system of the colonizers, into capitalism. Though in many cases established with a political system which is only in a more formal sense the same as the colonizers, but established and supervised by them with their economic, political and military power and made for being part of the capitalist world and made for serving its objectives….

        - It is the very society system of capitalism which during colonialism in the making of the colonized world **practiced capitalism according to its elementary objectives**: without any concessions to the producers of the wealth and beyond its own elementary economic rules, selling and buying, people in the colonies were simply brutally forced to produce the wealth that was then stolen and the political power was the external power of the colonizers, reduced to

its elementary violence forcing the local people to serve producing and stealing the capitalist wealth.
Footnote: It is in fact this difference between the capitalist centres, the imperial nation states of the colonizers and their system consisting of citizens, democratic nation states and a state supervised economy and the society system of the colonized world ruled by and for the objective to accumulate capitalist wealth without any concessions to the inhabitants of the colonies, the imperial societies are given, it is this difference, which is the basis of all the false conclusions, that the society systems of the colonizers and that of the colonized were societies ruled by different objectives. This false conclusion applies in particular to the political system and is responsible for the idealisations of the political system of the colonizers, presenting this political system of the imperial world in de-colonial thinking as violating the objectives of this system, the nation state, though it is this very political system, the nation state of the imperial countries, which created and still create both the political system ruling the colonies as those today in the post-colonial countries, which also violate the elementary rules of the political bodies of the imperial world. The conclusion constituting de-colonial thinking, that the continuation of the existence of colonial like political features in the nation states of the imperial world indicates remains of colonialism and present this as a contradiction to capitalism, this is a false conclusion.

- This tells that capitalist societies not only impose the existence of societies violating the elementary rules of the political and economic system if it suits their elementary objectives, they also use their superior power forcing other societies to not become the kind of capitalist citizen societies if this promises to reach their major objectives, the exclusive accumulation of wealth, excluding their capitalist competitors.

- Just as they do this until today: most of the decolonized states serving the political and economic objectives of the imperial capitalist world do this with regimes denying the concessions nation states in the imperial world make to their citizens and use the people in these countries for their growth of wealth with political regimes merely based on the violence of regimes, established and supervised by the imperial world.

- How did this transformation of the colonized world towards the very society system of the colonizers happen: civil wars and Vietnam

- The winner of world war II was the US, the losers the former main colonizers in Europe – a new round of the distribution of the colonized world among the imperialists was initiated under the leadership of the leading capitalist country, the US. The other winner was the SU, an anti-capitalist empire.

- The way to transform colonies into the society system of the colonizers happened by (civil) wars against colonialism between political parties which were supported by alliances of capitalist countries under the leadership of the US fighting against their political rivals, anti-colonialists fighting against the society system, that created colonialism, against capitalism, aiming at establishing anti-capitalist societies -supported by the SU

- The world under the cold war between capitalist and an anti-capitalist society system, the SU - and its termination

- The odd politics of the SU related to the movements for „independence“ .

- the SU-Marxism: Histomat and its celebrations of a socialism serving the capitalist class of proletarians

- The result of these wars against colonialism: a world of capitalist countries except the SU empire and China – until both were re-transformed back to capitalism.

- The final result after the return of the SU and of China to capitalism: the world ruled by and made to serve the objectives of capitalism.

What then is this discourse de-colonizing our thinking from remains of colonialism about?

A critique coined “de-colonization”, that is, critiquing this world now entirely ruled by the rationale of capitalism, and interpreting this critique as an opposition against remains of colonialism, one can conclude towards some implications:

- Firstly, one can say: The critique of decolonization is a critique that shifted from a critique of capitalism during the fight against capitalism towards a critique that interprets its objects of critique as remains of colonialism and by doing this

    - it neither wants to see colonialism as the product of capitalism
    - nor does it want to see the continuous existence of colonialist phenomena as related to the society system that rules the world today as it did under colonialism: capitalism

Questions:

- How did this happen, the shift from critiquing capitalism towards a critique that makes colonialism responsible, though the world is ruled by fundamentally the same society system, by capitalism?

- What was the contribution of the critique of capitalism in the SU, the HistoMat to this shift from critiquing capitalism towards de-colonial thinking?

One can already conclude:

- Obviously, the notion of de-colonizing thinking operates with a view of the new de-colonized nation states in which this view interprets the continuation of phenomena of colonialism as contradiction to the existence of the nation state status of the former colonies, saying there must be still remains of colonialism – the nation state status is beyond this critique – though the whole colonialism was a creature of the political bodies of capitalism, their nation states.

- Obviously, blaming colonialism for what happens under the rule of the new status of a nation states, keeping them away from any critique of what is happening under their reign, argues for and through the view of these new nation idealizing these nation states and promotes a way of thinking that interprets the world through the view these new nation states have on the world.

- The critique of a “eurocentrism”, advocating other than European views on the world, is the theory point of departure for de-colonised thinking laying the foundations for a construction of theorizing, that operates with and advocates thinking through the views these new nation states of the former colonized world have on the world.

1. **Presentation 1: Eurocentrism**

Presupposing a concept of scientific thinking as if it was a generally shared concept, that scientific thinking is the generation of thought through presupposed politically inspired views constructed by politically constructed entities (such as Europe, the South, North, etc) a concept of thinking not even the disciplinary science practice - they construct their disciplinary thought not through politically constructed presuppositions, but through approaches based on theories - the critique of Eurocentrism is a hypocrisy of a critique that claims to contribute to the disciplinary social science admittedly politically constructed views representing other - made up - political entities, such as those of the "south", as their contribution to a world of social science theories which according to this critical view must consist of theories consisting of a multiplicity of representations of the views political entities (places) have on the world, thus radicalizing the subjectivism (with the help of the very European thinkers such as Foucault or Wallerstein) of presupposed disciplinary thinking. Eurocentrism is the claim of the social sciences of the new former colonized societies to contribute their nationally (called culture) (or even religiously, S. Javad) inspired views on the world to the presupposed theories of disciplinary thinking - they thus do not oppose but to which they want to contribute other, their own presupposed thought.

- The project of de-colonizing social thought departs from what it critiques as "Euro-centrism"

- What is this critique of a euro-centric view saying?

    - Originally the notion of "Eurocentrism" critiqued during the cold war period after colonialism (created by Amin) was a way of thinking that accused the European society model of capitalism claiming to be the center of the world and for adjusting the former colonies to their society model of capitalism. Eurocentrism (despite of its already existing idealizations of the European capitalism with their notion of Europe as the leader of "modernity", Amin) was a critique against spreading capitalism towards the former colonized world.

    - Then in the later debate under the notion of "de-colonization" starting around the end of the 20th century - that is after the entire world with the end of the SU had become all over a world of capitalist societies - the critique of *Eurocentrism* opposed views "centered" on Europe and accused thinkers in Europe to create views about the world they gain from looking at the European societies and, by falsely applying these views on the societies in the former colonized world, they do not understand the nature of the societies in the former colonized world

- In this updated critique of “Eurocentrism” as matter of “de-colonizing thinking” the critique of a “Eurocentrism” opposes remains of colonialism, and is no longer, as it originally was by Amin, a critique of spreading capitalism and it is for this reason that this discourse at the end of the 20th century has been coined as a discourse about “de-colonialization”.

- Presenting this critique of “Eurocentrism” as “de-colonizing thought” presents this critique now as freeing the world, now all capitalist societies, from any remains of colonialism, no longer as a critique of the capitalist society system in Europe and of spreading capitalism to the former colonized world.

1.1 Eurocentrism Politically

Before the critique of “Eurocentrism” became a critique of theories in the debates about “de-colonization” is was a political critique against European policies in front of the colonies

What is the political critique of the European policies accused of being “eurocentric” saying?

- Critiquing policies as *centered* to Europe, the world presented as the dualism of “center and periphery” is already odd, since it presents the relations between the world’s nation states as a matter of gradual differences

- In this image of the world of gradual differences the critique of the center operates with the ideal of equalities of states, and presents with this ideal the exclusive interests in the policies and hostilities between the (European) states and the “de-colonized” parts of the world as an outdated view.

- With this elimination of a critique of imperialism in the political critique “Eurocentrism”, presented as gradual differences, the political critique of “Eurocentrism” ironically shares the images of the European humanism about nation states and about “civilization” (see Aimee Cesare and his “Discourse on Colonialism”), the very ideologies

the colonialists used for their exploitation and oppression of the colonized people.

- As if the world of nation states had overcome their hostilities after they all became “civilized” nation states. Examples: Have the living conditions of the former colonized people improved after they became nation state citizens and are they now really living beyond any interventions of the former colonizers after they also became nation states? Has the return of the SU to a capitalist system changed anything regarding the hostile relations between since then all capitalist states? Rather the opposite is true.

- European policies which continue, if not worsen, harming the now independent countries are in this critique of a European centered politics presented as violating this dreamy vision of equal states?

- And the reason the critique of a eurocentrism offers for conflicts between Europe and the new states are, that there must be still old colonial views, that is that Europeans apply the views on societies they gain from looking at the societies in „Europe“ to the societies of the new states and by doing this they fail to understand the nature of their societies?

- Hostilities between states as the result of not knowing others? The critique arguing for de-colonizing eurocentric views of Europeans interprets the continuation of the exploitation of the now independent nations states as a result of a misinterpretation of the nature of their societies, of a wrong image about them due to their “euro-centric” views?

- By accusing them of euro-centric views this critique wants to “de-colonize” this critique shifts the reasons for what happens today between the imperial nation states and the new nation states towards a view these imperial states created only during their history of colonizers, a view that is critiqued as outdated, stemming from the colonial past, not from what they do today?

- And by doing this, they accuse them to have a view on the new nation states and their societies they should have overcome, an outdated view that does not suit to a world of (equal) nation states any longer?

- Coining imperial policies via their critique of a “Eurocentrism” as old colonial view that is no longer suitable for the relations between nation states presents imperialism as policies from the overcome times of colonialism?

- Thus presenting the world of nation states with the dreamy image of equal states and their mission as jointly taking responsibility about the world?

To conclude: Not only does the transformation of the colonized world into the very society system of the colonizers irritate this critique of “Eurocentrism”. Is this really as natural as this critique wants to see it? The continuation of imperialism, of wars and poverty, the continuation, if not worsening of the exploitation of the now independent new states is, in the political critique of a “Eurocentrism” interpreted as the result of an outdated old colonial view on the new world? A world in which all nation states are imagined as principally equal states, disturbed by a colonial view falsely shifted from the past colonial times to the todays world ? Not any practiced view representing what the imperial world thinks and does today?

1.2 Eurocentrism as a critique of theories

1. What is the critique of a theory critiqued as euro-centric?

- A euro-centric theory is a theory created about social phenomena in Europe which allows to understand the phenomena in Europe - but not beyond

- the critique of euro-centric theories rejects theories but does not critique their explanatory power

- it even certifies the critiqued theories their explanatory power, they explain what they want to explain, but they do not explain anything beyond Europe

- How is this possible, taking for granted that the objects of thinking are the same in Europe and beyond Europe, how can any theory about the same thing be a theory that explains what it wants to explain, but if the same thing is anywhere else beyond where it has been created, then it does not? Example: Unemployment in Europe is caused by companies which fire employees, because their salaries are too expensive. Why should this theory be not applied to explain unemployment in India?

- And how is it possible to know at all that any theory, that has insights about anything in Europe, but cannot explain any social phenomena beyond Europe; as the critique of euro-centric theories phrases, does “not suit” to explain anything beyond Europe? Does this, to say beyond Europe a theory cannot

explain the same thing, taking for granted that it is the same thing, does this not provide already having a theory about the thing that exists beyond Europe? Why then arguing at all about the euro-centric theory and that it does not suit beyond Europe?

- Since in this critique it is not the case that the object of thinking is simply not the same, accusing a theory about the same things for not explaining this, because this object is elsewhere, is odd, no matter if it is the same thing or is not, because in both cases it requires a theory about this thing, if it is a different thing, otherwise one cannot even say that euro-centric theory is a theory about something else, a different thing ; or if it is the same thing it also requires a theory about the same thing beyond Europe to be able to state that the euro-centric theory does not allow to understand this thing beyond Europe; in both cases rejecting a theory is only possible by critiquing its insights based on insights into the same or the thing which is not the same. However, this is what the critique of euro-centric definitively does not do. It rather acknowledges this theory as a valid theory in Europe.

- On top of this: It is anyway an odd idea articulated by this critique of a euro-centric theory to say that a theory cannot be used to explain any phenomena beyond Europe , that is, that in order to create a theory about any phenomena beyond Europe other than European theories are required *for* creating theories. Theories for theorizing? Why this odd pleonasm?

- And this implies another odd assumption: What kind of theorizing is this if one does have to have a theory in order to create theories?

- These theories needed to create theories, do they already exist before thinking about anything?

- What is then this theorizing about? What is this thinking that creates theories through theories one has before theorizing?

- If one knows already the theory one needs to think about anything because one must know, which theory is appropriate for thinking about this thing, and does this not mean again one already knows what it is? What is then the use of thinking about it if one knows before thinking what the object of thinking is?

- Or the same the other way round: How can one know, if one does not yet know what the yet unknown thing is, which theory would be appropriate for thinking about this thing?

2. *What is this critique of Eurocentric theories opposing if the critique of Eurocentric theories is not a critique of their theories but where they are used?*

- With the subsumption of theories created *in* Europe all coined as euro-centric theories abstracted from whatever they say about what ever, the critique of euro-centric theories constructs theories it opposes via this abstraction as representations of a *European* way of theorizing, a way of theorizing that via this subsumption under this politically constructed entity of theories constructs what it wants to oppose: not any contents of any theories, but theories are made towards representations of a way of thinking in a part of the world as representations of an imagined European society only due to being created in Europe

- Which is an entity of theories and a political entity of societies that only exist as this entity in this image created for the demarcation of this entities from other such imagined politically constructed entities of societies and theories

- As said before: The critique of Eurocentric theories even certifies the critiqued theory that is a valid theory, but only in Europe and not beyond and this applies disregarding what this theory tells us to any theory , simply because it is created in Europe about anything European?

- What kind of monstrous determinism is this? Theories created in Europe are euro-centric theories because they are created in Europe? More about this in my second presentation about the place of thinking as creating thought.

- Back to the pleonasm of thinking through theories: The secret behind the critique of the critique of euro-centric theories, which are valid theories in Europe but not beyond Europe, is that in this thinking practiced by the critique of "euro-centric" theories about anything requires theories before thinking for thinking and the critique of the euro-centric theories is that they are not "suitable" for thinking about anything beyond Europe

- Put in other words: The creation of non- euro-centric theories must be thinking that applies already existing theories to thinking and the European theories can only be applied to thinking for the creation of theories in Europe, creating theories about anything beyond Europe requires other theories for thinking than those created in Europe

- What matters for thinking about anything is that a) thinking requires theories for thinking before thinking and b) these theories for creating theories must coincide with the particular nature of the societies they reflect about.

- This raises two more questions:

  a) If one needs to know the particular nature of the society before thinking in order to think about it, the conclusion from this cognitive circle is that those theories for theorizing must be presuppositions about the societies this thinking wants to create theories about. These local interpretations for theorizing must be pre-scientific thoughts about things for theorizing about them.

- B) And this raises the next question b) If these presuppositions are thought before thinking what are these presuppositions and how are they created?

- The example of the creation of a non-euro-centric theory helps to answers both questions – and not only this.

3. An example: how the non-eurocentric thinking creates pre-scientific thoughts for creating theories

"Sociology is most commonly classified in the West into two trends, depending on the starting point: the individual or society, the partial or the whole. This classification is confusing to many Arab researchers who have not found mature European individualism in their societies or coherent nations made up of Western-like stratified societies from which they can start their research. Maybe that is why Arab sociologists believe "Western" sociology is not suitable for their societies and resort to the Arab-Islamic heritage to come up with a "local" sociology. (Ali al-Wardi's work is an example that we will later discuss in detail). A new Arab proposal in this regard is gaining prominence; it calls for a new classification of sociology into two trends: balance and conflict."[1] Faleh Abdel-Jabbar, Insights into the Topic: Arabs and Sociology, Epistemological and Ideological, Characteristic and Seclusion, Synthesis and Openness, unpublished paper

- Creating theories through presuppositions, this is indeed the way disciplinary thinking, the very approach to theorizing of the European disciplinary social sciences and how they create disciplinary theories: for creating theories you must have an "approach", theories through which you think and these "approaches" (that is why the are called "approach") are theories provided by the theory body of disciplinary thinking

- It is not only this very way of how the European disciplinary social sciences create theories the critique of Euro-centrism obviously shares and practices,

- This critique is not only operating with this European approach of theorizing through presuppositions when it argues about theories valid in Europe but not beyond, via this critique of euro-centric theories it introduces this very European social science approach as the most natural way of creating theories now also into the formers colonized world and with this critique this spreads the European approach of disciplinary social sciences across the world thanks to their critique of euro-centric theories

- And it further develops this very European approach to thinking through presuppositions: by introducing presuppositions for theorizing thanks to this

[1] Faleh Abdel-Jabbar, Insights into the Topic: Arabs and Sociology, Epistemological and Ideological, Characteristic and Seclusion, Synthesis and Openness, unpublished paper

critique constructed from *political ideas* about the world complementing presupposed thinking through the presuppositions the theoretical bodies of disciplines provide

- Non-euro-centric theories are theories which must find presuppositions before theorizing for theorizing allowing to create theories in which their social objects, abstracted from everything they are in reality (farmer, housewife, worker, children, students etc etc), all must be presented as nothing else than representatives of any political entities, more precisely as representatives of any global political entities, such as “the European”.

- And only these constructers of these presuppositions construct these political entities: such as “the Arab” across all different people living in this part of the world they all become “the Arab”, obviously a dreamy vision of this sociologist created as the counter-subject to “the European”, who is the dreamy vision of the ideology of European nationalists about their alliance of nation states in their rivalries with other global players …

- so that non-eurocentric theories created through these political entities are interpretations of whatever they think about as the views these representatives of global political entities have on the world: The social world seen from “the Arab” and from “the European” perspective, the world so far seen through the European human now in non-euro-centric thinking complimented by a view through an Arab human, both political constructions which only exist from the view of nation states, more precisely of any imaginary alliances of nation states – later the whole world distinguished in the “the North” and “the South”.

- And who are they these presupposed humans through which thinking creates non-euro-centric theories?

- The Arab in non-euro-centric thinking a *not yet fully developed European*… And this, re-producing nationally constructed stereotypes about any citizens and doing this as multi-ethno-centric thinking is not a coincidence but the consequent result of the application and further developed disciplinary thinking of the European disciplinary social sciences: The “individual” the European represents in this stereotype image of a European is the ideal of any citizenship in all those citizen societies and the naturalized image founding thinking across all disciplines

- And this both in the Arab and the European societies so that the Arab citizen is not coincidentally presented as an uncompleted European, ironically in the critique opposing euro-centric thinking.

4. The hypocracy of the critique of eurocentric theories, its political origin and objectives and its impacts on theorizing

- Indeed: for theorizing in the disciplinary social sciences the co-existence of even contradicting theories is no problem; this is the normality of the concept of disciplinary social science thinking and its relativism of theories thanks to their creation through disciplinary bodies of theories, now in the age of a world of nation states further developed towards politically presupposed thinking for the demarcation of nation states;

  This de-colonization discourse departing from a critique of eurocentrism

  - With this acknowledgment of coexisting theories valid there but not here it introduces the concept of relative theories as the epistemic foundation of theorizing and with this the entire very European approach to social thought and this now across the world, now including theorizing in the new citizens societies

  - And it is this discourse via this critique of euro-centric theories even develops this European approach further: it introduces a way of theory creation explicitly constructed through political presuppositions (The Arab, the European, etc) as a now world wide acknowledged way of thinking

- Non-euro-centric theories are replication of thought, theories created through prejudices subsuming people independent from anything that distinguishes them in their social life under political racist images attributed to people via their belonging to political entities, such as the European, the Asian, the Arab etc . Whatever people really are, my this be a taxis driver, a journalist or a farmer, in non-euro-centric thinking they all become representatives of politically constructed, demarcated humans.

- the racist stereotypes about people consist across all those demarcated citizen societies of the idealization of citizenship, of their society and their political power: such as the “individualist”, the image about citizenship presenting this human as the successful competitor succeeding to pursue its life aims thanks to his ego-centeredness against all other individualist. That all Europeans are such “individualist” these are the abstractions, the inevitable nonsense of creating such political racisms.

- The scientifically arguing critique of Eurocentric views, this critique of theories in its origin is driven by the very political aim to create a type of theories that operates with such racist prejudices in order to create theories as for the sake of representations of political entities

- non-euro-centric thinking aims at creating such theories created through such racist prejudices for political entities, and its this very post-colonial discourse,

which claims via this critique of euro-centric thinking such explicitly politically fueled theories as the theoretical voice of political entities such as of “the Arab” , the “Asian”, the “African etc

- These humans classified via these politically demarcated racisms all consisting across all states of the ideals of the competitiveness of citizen societies is what constitutes the modern version of what since then was discussed as “culture”, a new narrative about citizens serving their demarcation needs of national societies in a world consisting of essentially the same national citizen societies

- This very result of the critique of Eurocentrism phrased with the words of the founder of the critique of “Euro-centrism”:

  “Modernity arose in Europe….Modernity is constructed on the principle that human beings individually or collectively (i.e. society) make their own history.” (Amin…p.7)

- Therefore, because all citizens of national societies are discussed in this discourse all as the very same variations of ideals of citizenship, the human creature of capitalist societies: the individualist, or, the same looked from the society, the collectivist. (See also: Hofstede, etc etc)

- The disciplinary social science world of non-euro-centric theories consists of a multiplicity of presupposed theories constructed through political prejudices from which politically prejudiced theories are constructed, the “provincialized” world of disciplinary social sciences in a world of nation states all consisting of variations of the same idealization of the citizen, the citizen societies or their political body, the nation states.

- And all this has substantial consequences for the position of scientific knowledge in political debates: their end - due to their indistinguishability from an opinion.

Presentation 2: Thinking through space

Intro:
Thinking through space is the epistemological reasoning that scientific thinking must create theories through spaces.

Presentation 3: From the self-criticism of critiques of capitalism towards creating national identities

Presentation 4: Indigenization of theories

Presentation 5: Discourses among indigenized theories

Presentation 6: Overall scientific and political outcomes

6.Overall scientific and political outcomes of post-colonial thinking

- After the world has been made a world of nation states, the social sciences commit themselves to thinking as the demarcation of nation states
- The de-colonization of social sciences is the way to universalize the way of theorizing of citizens societies, of capitalism
- It is anti-critical rejecting any critique of capitalism
- It disempowers social thought as a means of thinking about the world

Series 2: Masterminds of post-colonial global thinking

1. Sociology: Bourdieu
2. Psychology: Foucault
3. Economy: Stiglitz
4. Anthropology/ Cultural Theory: Geertz
5. Political Science: Blondel