

STUBE Hessen-Seminar
16th-18th July 2021 in Fulda

“South-South Cooperation: Equal Partners?”

- Seminar facilitators:** Ms Eileen Paßlack, STUBE Hessen-speaker
- Co-facilitator:** Ms Sandrine Chilatcha Fotio (Cameroon), Intercultural Communication and Business, Justus-Liebig University of Giessen
- Target group:** Students from Africa, Asia and Latin America studying in English in Hessen
- learning goals:** knowledge about different types of cooperation (South-South Cooperation, triangular cooperation, North-South cooperation) and its Pros and Cons; understanding how and why countries work together; knowledge about the role of China in international relations, especially with regard to African countries; knowledge about different forms of development cooperation; analysing the difference between development cooperation of Western donors with African countries and China with African countries; discussing effectiveness and legitimation of political conditions; knowledge about power politics/realism and humanitarian interventions; connecting different wars and state`s involvement; exploring the development of interventions from humanitarian to ideologically driven and thus
- Participants:** The number of registrations totalled 54 and a number of 24 students participated in this English speaking seminar (14 women, 10 men). Out of 24 participants, 14 participants attended a STUBE seminar for the first time. All in all, the number of represented countries was 15. Divided by regions, 4 students from 4 African countries, 12 students from 6 Asian countries, 4 student from 2 states in the MENA-region, 1 students from 1 Latin-American country, and 3 students from 2 European countries participated in the seminar.

Process of the seminar

The seminar took place as indicated by the program. First of all, the seminar-topic was originally planned for the date 23rd to 25th of April 2021. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the seminar was postponed and rescheduled to 16th to 18th July 2021.

Friday, 16th July 2021

The seminar started with a welcome speech for the participating students by the facilitator Eileen Paßlack and co-facilitator Sandrine Chilatcha Fotio. The program started at 6 pm, before dinner. Ms Paßlack and Ms Fotio introduced themselves. The facilitators presented the various offers of STUBE to the participants. Together with the students the co-facilitator developed different rules that need to be followed during the seminar, like respect, punctuality, no side-talking. The co-facilitator then assigned duties like taking pictures to some participants who volunteered. Ms Paßlack introduced the participants to the topic. The first task for the students was to position themselves in the room according to their regional background. They discussed where north and south where and asked each other from which countries they are. Each participant presented the country of origin and answered the question about the biggest challenges of the country. During dinner the participants reflected on the question, which of the other countries should be supporting the country of origin overcoming the mentioned challenges and why. After dinner the participants discussed their thoughts and Ms Fotio introduced the participants to some games to get to know each other.

Saturday, 17th July 2021

Dr. John Njenga Karugia held the first workshop on „**The “Dragon’s Gift”? How China redefines development geographies**“. In his research at Goethe-University Frankfurt and Humboldt-University he focuses on political and economic interactions between Asia and Africa. He has researched intensively on Chinese migration to Africa and African migration to China. His current research focuses on the Indian Ocean. Dr. Karugia started with a brainstorming about "What do you really know, what don't you know and what would you like to know about China". The participants gathered what came to their minds: Power, infrastructure-projects (like the Belt Road Initiative), state control, the social-credit system, a big and emerging economy, communism and state-capitalism, national harmony due to underlining nationalism, and bad working conditions in Chinese factories. They also shared that they do not know a lot about China's domestic policies, the situation of poverty and the social situation in general, attitudes of the Chinese people and if they are happy with Chinese politics, the history of China and China's wars and conflicts and also topics like how to travel and the culture in China.

To get more acquainted with the current political and economic cooperation partners, Dr. Karugia showed a documentary on the history of involvement of western countries in China. Victorian Great Britain imported luxurious and exotic items from China, but China only accepted payments in silver, creating a huge imbalance in trade. To avoid losing money on imported goods, Britain had to sell something back to China, and the decision was made for Britain to sell opium. When diplomatic efforts to introduce opium to the Chinese market failed, the British Parliament approved an alternative: war. There were two wars, one from 1839 to 1842 and another from 1856 to 1860. They are collectively known as the Opium Wars. Moreover, Britain secured control over Hong Kong through the treaties that ended the Opium Wars; Hong Kong was not returned to the Chinese government until the 1990s, and was the subject of incredible international debate in 2019. These conflicts are largely forgotten in the Western world. But in China, the Opium Wars are still symbols of national humiliation at the hands of the Western powers.

As another example Dr. Karugia presented in a second documentary the Belt and Road initiative, which is China's foreign policy initiative. The film explained what we know about this giant plan so far. China proposed the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013 to improve connectivity and cooperation on a transcontinental scale. The project is often described as a 21st century silk road, made up of a "belt" of overland corridors and a maritime "road" of shipping lanes. The affected nations – Djibouti, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, the Maldives, Mongolia, Montenegro, Pakistan and Tajikistan – are among the poorest in their respective regions and will owe more than half of all their foreign debt to China. Critics worry China could use "debt-trap diplomacy" to extract strategic concessions – such as over territorial disputes in the South China Sea or silence on human rights violations.

In a role play, it was then compared how China and how Europe cooperates with African countries. The participants were split in three groups and given a small paper with their role. African countries are interested in cooperating either with European states or China for the need of development aid. While Europe only engages in development cooperation when they can implement democracy (they therefore have 20% interest rate), China apparently offers cooperation without political conditions (it only has 5% interest rate). The group of African countries first discussed with Europe but did not find a solution since the cooperation would have been too "expensive". It then went to the China group but started having doubts for the Chinese offer on cooperation being too "cheap". Dr. Karugia explained that the main difference between China and Europe is that China learned from European mistakes: While the World Bank and IMF tell African countries what they think they need (like schools), China first underlines the same colonial history and that it believes Africans are able to think and decide themselves as long as a funded project is fulfilled. Therefore, China sends engineers and materials so that others recognize China's worldwide influence. Like in Sri Lanka and Tanzania (with the Bagamoyo Harbour), this creates dependencies.

The second workshop was facilitated by Komla Mawufemo Digoh, STUBE-Alumnus and Alumnus from Justus Liebig University Giessen from Togo. To introduce the participants to the topic "**Global Partnerships for Sustainable Development - A North-South Perspective**", Mr. Digoh asked: What do you know about development cooperation? Which country (of the Global North) is the privileged partner of your country of origin? Which type of partnership do they have? Do you know some projects that resulted from this partnership?

A student described a project from GIZ in Ghana. The project is working with public and private partners and has cooperated with local partners to develop the Farmer Business School (FBS), a training programme to strengthen farmers' entrepreneurial skills. In FBS-training, farmers learn how they can improve their planning of cocoa and food production and increase yields and incomes by investing in improved cultivation techniques. Farmers also benefit from advice on good cultivation practice and digital media. Mr. Digoh gave an introduction to the term of development cooperation, a term which is used to express the idea that a partnership should exist between donor and recipient, rather than the traditional situation in which the relationship was dominated by the wealth and specialised knowledge of one side. Development cooperation has three major tasks: supporting and complementing efforts of developing countries to guarantee the provision of universal social basic standards to their citizens, as a means for people to exercise their basic human rights; promoting the convergence of the developing (and particularly the poorest) countries to higher levels of income and wellbeing, correcting extreme international inequalities; supporting efforts of developing countries to participate actively in the provision of international public goods.

Furthermore, the participants were split in three groups and gathered the differences between South-South Cooperation, North-South Cooperation and triangular cooperation and the Pros and Cons of each type. South-South Cooperation on the one hand describes the engagement between two (or more) countries of the Global South and has the advantage that countries can offer their experience due to dealing with similar problems themselves and already having learned lessons on them. Unfortunately, (financial and technical) means are often limited. North-South Cooperation on the other hand describes the cooperation between a country of the Global North and a country of the Global South. Regarding this type of cooperation, there are often more means available though there is a lack of shared experiences. Therefore, there is an increased importance of the third type of cooperation which is called "triangular": It consists of the engagement between the Global North as the pivotal partner with its Development Assistance Committee (DAC) (countries like US, EU, Japan); the development partner/emerging donor as the facilitating partner (countries like the BRICS-states); and the Global South as the beneficiary partner. This third type of cooperation connects the advantages of both types explained above.

Sunday, 18th July 2021

The third workshop was held by Dr. Alex Reichwein who is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Department of Political Science at Justus-Liebig-University Giessen. He started his workshop "**Responsibility and Conflict: Saving our own people?**" by explaining his angle of approaching the topic, which is the one from a white European male who has never lived (for long) outside of Germany, he locates himself in the realist school of International Relations (IR) in political science. That is, realists believe everything to be about power politics. In the first part Dr. Reichwein gave a brief historical overview over the development of humanitarian interventions. He showed how motives are not always or completely of humanitarian nature but also have geopolitical, economical or ideological interests/motives. The participants examined humanitarian interventions and focused on nondemocratic European as well as non-Western authoritarian states, that took the opportunity to intervene in other states after ethnic and religious minorities were threatened by punishment, slavery, or war. The participants discussed the question: Who is allowed to intervene? Only those (Western actors) that secure human rights at home?

Dr. Reichwein illustrated that the only cases where the implementation of democracy by force worked were in Germany and Japan after the Second World War by the US. While the 1990s are

characterized by humanitarian interventions (the Balkan Wars), this changed with 9/11 and interventions being driven ideologically rather than by humanitarian motives. While NATO's intervention in Libya 2011 supported the critical view to see the responsibility to protect (R2P) as an assault on the sovereignty of weak states and as a hegemonic project of the West, not intervening in Syria or Yemen raised the discussion whether the R2P has failed. At the same time, however, there is a tendency among some non-Western powers to legitimize their military interventions in humanitarian terms. Russia's interventions in Georgia 2008 and in the Crimea 2014, where humanitarian reasoning has been coupled with the politics of irredentism, are cases in point. This reshaped the perception that only Western actors are allowed to intervene in a foreign conflict. Other examples of authoritarian interventions are Turkey's intervention in Syria, or Saudi Arabia's and Iran's intervention in Yemen. The seminar encouraged the students to discuss these and other fundamental questions and, thus, to rethink the R2P in light of contemporary politics of human rights protection.

At the end of the discussion, Ms Paßlack thanked all the participants for sharing their thoughts and experiences. She closed the seminar and asked the participants to fill in a short evaluation form. The participants had the chance to share their impressions of the seminar.

Used methods and evaluation of the seminar

discussion and question rounds; teamwork in groups; presenting in front of the other participants; power point-presentation; problem solving methods; film sequences.

Impressions from the seminar:

- I learned a new way of thinking about my country and its relationships to/with other countries. How we're connected, what we share and how it works.
- I really like the input of the guests and participants, specially Dr. John Njenga Karugia
- A very wide perspective about the world politics and political power in the world
- I learned so much, it will take some time to organize all the inputs! I will definitely take home that I have to broaden my lenses to look at the world and can gain so much by spending more time on intercultural communication/contacts. I think the topics of the workshops were great and well taught through.
- Ich habe an diesem Wochenende gefühlt mehr gelernt, als in meinem ganzen Semester. Ich studiere Ethnologie und globale Verhältnisse/Machtstrukturen sind zentral in meinem akademischen Alltag. Jedoch reden wir meistens in einem Kreis an Studierenden des globalen Nordens, andere Perspektiven fehlen! Es war sehr bereichernd mich über eine Vielzahl von Themen zu unterhalten. Außerdem hat es auch einfach echt Spaß gemacht.
- I like meeting these new people! Really miss this offline, face-to-face seminars. Time management: maybe needs to work on the punctuality of end-time, e.g. with time-keepers.
- I like the idea to "invest" on students in a way of knowledge. I got a lot of useful information and I am surely going to share with my other friends too, so in that way we can influence the way we want to see the world
- I learned a lot about development cooperation regarding challenges, limitation, solutions and also great idea exchanges to other colleagues
- Time was too short. Need a day longer or so.
- More interaction during the workshops to reflect the knowledge

09.08.2021

Eileen Paßlack

STUBE Hessen-Referentin