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How to Reduce Violence against Women
Basic Considerations

1 Introduction

The research-team ZKE is one of the partners in the Grundtvig-Project "Domestic Violence Met by Educated Women". The team is working on a questionnaire and on an assistance program. Both the questionnaire and the program base on the Methodical Constructivism. The dialogue method is the eminent feature of this scientific approach.

The program demonstrates the stages of escalation in a conflict (cf. Julia Prieß-Buchheit: A Mediation Program to Prevent Domestic Violence against University Women. In: DAB-Bundesvorsitzende Dr. Patricia Aden (Hg.): KONSENS. Information des Deutschen Akademikerinnenbundes e.V. 3 + 4 / 2014, S. 16 − 19). Stage 9, the extreme position on the top, is called "together into the abyss". On this stage the other person is no partner, but an enemy. The aim is to destroy the person up to a self-destruction. Fighting this battle not infrequently ends in a trauma. But stage 9 is not in the focus of the ZKE- program. On the contrary the team starts with stage number 1, called "hardening". On this stage different opinions between a couple begin to harden. The hardening can lead to a polarization of thinking, feeling and acting in stage 2, if the process remains imperceptible. In stage 3 the partner is expected to share the own opinion. In stage 4 the partner appears as an enemy from an opposite camp. The ZKE-program concentrates on these lowest stages of escalation. The program discusses communication forms and teaches the participants how to interrupt a violent situation as well as how to communicate peacefully. The dialogue method is the basis for an intervention.

The questionnaire provides the team with the qualification to run this program. The questionnaire describes domestic violence on the lowest stages of escalation. The procedure addresses women who are familiar with the dialogue method and who are willing and able to report their domestic situation in terms of a dialogue.

The team describes its Grundtvig-activities in a weblog under

- http://zkewomenprojekt.files.wordpress.com

and invites for discussions. On Wednesday, 11th of December 2013, the Slovenian partners distributed a text entitled "Two comments on the questionnaire". The ZKE-team answered immediately under

- http://zkewomenprojekt.wordpress.com/2014/01/04/discussion-on-the-zke-questionnaire/

Afterwards the Slovenian partners criticized the ZKE-questionnaire once more. In a following conference-meeting a feminist approach was explicitly favored. The Slovenian comment from Wednesday, 11th of December 2013, started as follows: "The questionnaire is based on the methodological constructivism of Kuno Lorenz, however, it does not include social constructivism, which emphasizes, as one of the most evident socially constructed categories, the **gender** (as the socially constructed category) and the **feminist view** of the gender. Consequently the view of the violence against women, which includes the concepts of **social power** and **patriarchy** (together with gender-specific socialization and gender roles), is omitted. And yet, that is of key importance to be able to understand violence against women!" The ZKE-Team answers once more in the following chapters.

2 Conflicting Concepts: Feminisms

Feminism/Feminisms

- There is no such thing as *one single* feminism; rather, heterogeneous positions exist that criticise each other and are distinct from each other.
- Theoretical reference in feminism are the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, Marxism, psychoanalysis, discourse theory, post-structuralism and postcolonial theory approaches.

Positions or movements within feminism:

- There are numerous positions in feminism: liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, Third-World feminism, eco-feminism, radical feminism, bad-girl feminism …
- However, the most common distinction in the literature (see below) is made between equality feminism, difference feminism and de-constructivist feminism (Butler).

Equality feminism	**Difference feminism**	**De-constructivist feminism** (by Judith Butler)
Assumption: All humans are equal by nature. While there is a biological gender (sex), this does not have any social significance. **e.g.:** Olympe de Gouges, Clara Zetkin, Rosa Luxemburg, Simone de Beauvoir	**Assumption:** In contrast to the notion of equality, there is a difference between the genders. The difference is emphasised by placing extra value on characteristics connoted to be female The biological gender (sex) is the starting point of the difference. Female difference should be acted out by creating separate spaces such as women's cafés, women's bookshops, etc.	**Assumption:** Sex is also construed – debiologises both distinctions ➔ Butler does not deny that there are genitals, but the significance derived from the naming and the difference is already socially construed or has a social origin. By naming and distinguishing into either man or woman, this leads to homo-, bi- and transsexuality being described as abnormal and unnatural - Diversity of sexual identities - Biological body is an effect of gender or social construction
Critique exercised by the position: Male gender norm, against which equality is measured, thus the structuring of society The public sphere and the labour market are areas that are dominated by men	**Critique** exercised by the position: Demand: Liberation of the women from the male order, (female) self-determination and realisation.	**Critique** exercised by the position: -Norms of femininity and masculinity -Mechanisms that regulate desire by setting heterosexuality as the norm, naturalising and privileging it (heteronormativity)

e.g. unequal pay In the private sphere the woman bears the main burden of reproduction Demand: Equality = Equal Opportunity and Equal Rights ➜ As there is no difference between man and woman, the same rights and obligations apply		-Dual sexuality ➜ She is concerned with the impact of power and the manner of subjectification that facilitate the realisation and dominance of the idea of biological sexuality.
Sample positions: **Liberal feminism:** Institutionalised gender dichotomy as cause of the (re-)production of different gender norms **Marxist and socialist feminism** Advocates ascribe the different gender positions to the socioeconomic structure (gender-based division of labour in classes) **Radical equality feminism** Advocates ascribe the different gender positions to the exploitation of sexuality, or to the patriarchal control over the female body as an object of lust and a means of reproduction	**Sample positions:** **Psychoanalytical feminism:** Find differences in the psychological development of boys and girls in order to explain why most women participate willingly in the oppression. **e.g.:** Luce Irigaray **Milanese feminism:** From the community of feminists "Diotima". The true difference between the genders must yet be developed. The female should not be ascribed to the male. **e.g.:** Luisa Muraro	**Performance theory:** Gendering is an incomplete process **Demand:** Deconstruction of gender as a category Break through heteronormativity or its mechanisms by means of "gender confusion"

Literature

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3 Explaining Conflicts: Munchausen Trilemma

How can we explain conflicts between different basic beliefs?

"Hieronymus Carl Friedrich von Münchhausen was a German nobleman who took part in two military campaigns. When he returned home he had stories to tell of his exploits, outrageous stories. Some would say untrue stories. One such story told at dinner was an account of Munchausen riding through a forest on his horse and blundering into a swamp where he and his horse became completely stuck in the mud. The Baron's dinner guests were mystified, how did he ever escape the deadly trap that he was caught in?

Munchausen explained that he simply reached behind him and pulled himself out of the swamp by his own hair.

The Baron's story has become the name of a philosophical problem: the Munchausen Trilemma. When we encounter any knowledge we ask 'how do I know this is true'? It turns out that there are only three ways that we can prove if something is true or not: the circular argument (the sky is above the earth because the earth is below the sky), the regressive argument (each step of the argument is based upon another step which is based upon another step and so on forever) and finally the axiomatic argument (the Bible tells us so). Every question that we attempt to answer can only be answered in one (or a combination of) these three arguments. Each one of these arguments has some difficulty" (John Vodonick, „Munchausen Trilemma", http://www.theswampblog.com/munchausen-trilemma/. Accessed: 17.6.2014).

4 Helpful in Case of Conflicts: The Dialogue Model

How can we help in case of conflicts?

"There is no good argument to support the conclusion that calling something 'true' or 'untrue' is helpful in any way. This is particularly confounding when notions of the concept of the truth may change from culture to culture and from time to time. Once upon a time the sun orbited the earth and that truth was theological in nature, Galileo Galilei suffered condemnation because of that truth and recanted his own truth. Once upon a culture a theological imperative mandated the ownership of one person by another. Once upon an economy a family could not move from the land owned by the lord that owned the land. Truth has changed with the time, the culture and the economic environment" (Vodonick 2014). Thus persons following different beliefs in an international project meet as strangers. They talk at cross-purposes.

On the basis of the Methodical Constructivism the philosopher Kuno Lorenz describes four basic ways to deal with strangeness (Kuno Lorenz: Das Eigene und das Fremde im Dialog. In: Peter Rusterholz, Rupert Moser (Hg.): Wie verstehen wir Fremdes? Bern usw. 2005, S. 137–154). The first way is the rejection. Confronted with an unfamiliar standpoint a person refuses to accept the unknown standpoint (e.g a person says: „I do not know your point of view. And I want to know nothing of it"). The second way is to be predominant. The person declares her own standpoint to be superior to an other standpoint (e.g. a person says: „Just my point of view is true. It is superior to your position. Furthermore, there is no more discussion!"). The way number three is called „submission" where a person accepts the new view as the better view (e.g. a person says: „I submit myself to your point of view – even if I do not know it"). The fourth way to deal with strangeness is the dialogue. The dialogue is a model to deal with strangeness in a conflict between an opponent and a proponent with learning one from the other as the main factor (e.g. a person says: „Let's together consider how to end our conflict". Or as in item 10 and in distractor A of the ZKE-questionnaire a woman asks: „Why did you take hold of me so roughly?" and her partner answers: "Let´s talk about it").

The dialogue is the ZKE's model for the project of the Grundtvig learning partnership. The dialogue model serves the diagnosis (the questionnaire) and the intervention (the help programm) in scientific and in everyday matters.