

Fairness or humanity

You cannot have both! Surprised? This is the most important lecture I learned during my stay in Poland as an ERASMUS-exchange-student from Köln. Let me give you an example: Once upon a time there lived a King. His son committed a big crime. As the head of state the King needed to kill his son to remain just. As a parent he wanted to pardon him. How would you decide?

When you enter the old trams there are no special assigned seats for elderly or pregnant women. But every young person gets up for someone in need. Also there is no button for wheelchair-users but people help each other. In Germany you may not need this help but it makes you lonely. It is fairer but is it better?

When I eat in the fabulous Mleczy Bar in Nowy Świat often I see 2 or 3 homeless persons waiting for the leftovers. Sometimes people even buy them dinners. In Germany the ways of getting help seem so various that many people show no solidarity with a beggar's situation. Also the restaurant owner would never tolerate this. Maybe the German way is "better" .But WHY does it still feel right for me to help?

I guess every culture has its own golden middle. You do not have to kill yourself as the King did in the roman saga. Sometimes you agree with the local culture sometimes you are way off. What remains is the fact that you are free and you can choose your culture you like to live in. The ERASMUS-program is the perfect opportunity to sniff into one and find your own golden middle.

Prejudices VS Reality

"In Poland everything is gone in 5min if you do not nail it down." This is the most common –and annoying– prejudice I hear all the time. Even my polish mentor is so convinced of it that she is very cautious. To prove her wrong I hang a 10zł bank note on my door. 24 hours later it was still there.



Need another example?

SEVEN! So many times I already forgot my key (if I did not forget to count as well). On the OUTSIDE of the door! Sometimes for hours!! Still nothing was ever stolen.

When I was in Germany with my polish mentor her bike was stolen but her first reaction was neither "Damn Germans!" nor "F***** Krauts!!". It was: "That probably was a polish immigrant."

"It is easier to destroy an atom than a prejudice." (Albert Einstein)

The ERASMUS-program is maybe the best prejudice-breaker we have. This beautiful agenda makes wars impossible and will inspire me for the rest of my life.

Responsibility and freedom.

If you want freedom you get responsibility. If you like it or not. I just extended my stay in Warszawa because I could not handle so much freedom. Why extend then? -Because I want to do better next semester. So here is my warning: As an ERASMUS-Student never will you have so many freedoms in your life. Never will you have so many possibilities. Enjoy them. Do NOT do things you can do at home. This time is too precious to waste. Because

"The wind will blow though our huts and just one question will remain"