

Group #1

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Each person shared his/her thoughts during our engaging discussion. The results:

- 1) To some extent, the course confirmed our preexisting ideas of area studies. However, the professors managed to somewhat change our understanding of the topic in certain aspects, too. We have realized that area studies, although often defined by politics, do not solely cover issues related to contemporary international relations but also language, culture, and history. It was crucial to learn how particular regions identify with their shared past and how that influences their day-to-day reality. The course has certainly expanded our understanding of the characteristics of geopolitics in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East, as well as shed a light on the European continent from a different angle, allowing us to critically evaluate Europe's impact worldwide.

- 2) In our group, one could notice a strong appreciation for the topic concerning Africa. Apart from devoting slightly too much time to describing book covers of *The Economist*, Vojtěch Šarše's lecture caught our attention because of the way he presented the issue of overgeneralization, stigmatization, and simplification that is observed in countless researches done by scholars or analysts. This, in turn, subconsciously or not determines the way others view Africa, limiting potential ways in which people could comprehend the complexity of that continent in a non-ignorant manner. Additionally, the professor recommended books written by African authors, such as Mongo Beti from Cameroon or Lamine Senghor from Senegal, thus providing us with tools for expanding our knowledge about the history and reality of the various ethnic groups from their perspective. We also wanted to highlight that Markéta Křížová and Jan Hornat's lectures were fascinating and they presented the topic of the Americas in a way that encouraged us to rethink what we had previously known, challenging - at the same time - the stereotypical understanding of the regions mentioned, particularly thanks to the historical insights and thoughtful remarks.

- 3) In our opinion, the idea to demonstrate that area studies can and do encompass the great diversity of approaches was successfully accomplished. We could not comprehend the topic better than by realizing how each of the various studies is interconnected and jointly constitutes area studies. Having an interdisciplinary approach enabled our group to increase the understanding of distinct regions and the area studies themselves.