

Moral Outrage and Political Violence

7-9 November 2016 at Sandbjerg Gods, Sønderborg

Workshop organized by Mette-Louise Johansen (Aarhus University), Therese Sandrup (FFI) and Nerina Weiss (Fafo Research Foundation)

Call for papers

The current refugee crisis in Europe, the wars in the Middle East, state violence against civil society all over the world, neo-liberal abandonment as well as separatist violence and terror attacks are only a few of current events that cause a number of emotional reactions. In this panel we are interested in theoretical, analytical and empirical discussions on moral outrage, here understood as an affective reaction to political violence or the denial thereof. We want to explore the different ways moral outrage is expressed, its relational aspects as well as the ways moral outrage may be understood as a mobilizing force to action.

Our understanding of moral outrage builds on the anthropology of morality (Howell 1997, Parkin 1985, Robbins 2004) and ethics (Badiou 2001, Faubion 2011 Foucault 2000, Laidlaw 2014, Lambek 2015) which explore moral economies, institutional ethics, and how people relate to conflicting moral orders. We find inspiration in Fassin (2015) and Zigon (2007) who, both in their own ways, have explored issues of how do people negotiate and deal with competing, and at times contradicting moralities, including the need to reposition themselves and become conscious of their own being-in-the-world and their relations to others. Drawing also on the body of literature looking at social movements (Tilly 1998) and moral protest (i.e. Jasper 1997) we want to explore morality, and especially moral outrage as a call to action. We are interested in explorations of the different ways moral outrage come to be expressed and what the social implications may be. When may moral outrage lead to violent action and excess and when does it actually enhance rather than diminish the quality of democratic life (Marcus and Mackuen 1993)?

Exploring moral outrage as an affective phenomenon, it is important to reject earlier notions of emotion and affect as irrational and limited to the bodily and sensorial sphere. We argue with Jasper (1997) that emotions are part of rational action. As however, cognitive processes and moral values are socially constructed, also moral outrage is limited to and only makes sense in specific social circumstances. Thus, an interesting aspect for this workshop would be to explore the historical, geopolitical and cultural context of political violence and ask why certain events or forms of political violence are experienced as a moral call for action in one setting, but not in another.

We invite empirical and theoretical studies of moral outrage directed against political violence as well as the denial of political violence and injustice (Cohen 2001). In particular we encourage papers to relate to (some of) the following questions and topics:

- What are the structural responses to moral outrage? And what are the personal and affective responses to it? In what way is outrage a driving force for action and moral or social positioning?
- What role does media and social media play in the creation and countering of moral outrage?
- What kind of relationships, practices and everyday lives are produced through the existence of different moral orders?
- What is the relation between moral panic (Cohen 2001) and moral outrage? When does moral panic justify moral outrage, and when is moral outrage directed against moral panic?

Please send your abstract (max. 300 words) **by July 30st 2016** to Mette-Louise Johansen, Aarhus University: mlej@cas.au.dk. We aim at vivid discussions and knowledge exchange and wish to circulate all papers prior to the workshop. We therefore ask the accepted participants to send their draft papers by **November 1st** (max. 7000 words).

A conference fee of **80 Euros** includes accommodation in single room, full board and conference dinner at Sandbjerg Gods, Sandbjergvej 102, DK-6400 Soenderborg. There might be the possibility to apply for travelfunds, however these are not yet confirmed.