



CFP - INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Between Emotion and Reason:

Exploring the Operational Logic of Morality

(11th-13th May 2023 - University of Tübingen, Germany)

People’s relation to the world changes when they consider something under the auspices of morality. In order to explore this process we understand moralisation as practice, a modulative intervention that triggers those changes of relationship to the world. When using the term moralisation, we draw on recent neopragmatist and praxeological approaches to the sociology of morality, which emphasize the quotidian practical relevance of references to morality. These perspectives allow to ask what happens when “something” is treated as a question of morality. Moralizations rely on implicit or explicit references to rational properties of everyday reasoning that make it appear plausible to wonder why a certain value or a common good (fairness, prosperity, integrity, solidarity, reciprocity etc.) becomes relevant in a specific situation. Focusing on the pragmatics of moralization, we can ask how and when actors refer to moral justifications, values and forms of moral reasoning and which effects they have on social situations. However, moralizations are shaped not only by their rational properties or the ways in which they are rationalized, but also by the emotions they evoke and the rules of feeling associated with them. Solidarity, care, honour, guilt, anger, disgust, fear, envy, or shame are emotions mobilized by moral frames and scripts that interact with the rational properties of moral reasoning.

To give an example, refugee reception might be seen and discussed by some actors within the moral frame of humanitarianism, with its moral imperative to alleviate human suffering, by others in the framework of integrationism, with its moral imperative to facilitate inclusion in the institutions of the nation-state, and by some in the framework of anti-Islamism, with its moral imperative to exclude Muslim immigrants and prevent them from entering a country. The different situational framings are not only coupled to distinct rationales, but also to differing forms of emotion management: With whom do we feel empathy or disgust? Whom do we have to fear? With whom are we in solidarity? Whom do we blame for our problems? Against whom we feel resentment? Who do we feel responsible for? etc.

Within the framework outlined above, the aim of this conference is to invite colleagues to discuss issues that arise around the operational logic of moralization, with particular attention to the interaction of emotionalizations and rationalizations.

Some of the questions we would like to address with the conference are:



How is the relationship of rationalizations and emotionalizations played out in practice? How do moral interventions modify social dynamics? What kinds of dynamics do they trigger? What moral emotions are evoked and how do they affect social dynamics and group formation? What role do scripts of confrontation or scripts of inclusion play in the context of moralization processes? Can we identify groups or types of moral entrepreneurs working for the moralization of social situations or discourses? What are the broader structures of local, national and transnational moral economies that help us better understand recent processes of social change and polarization?

Our own reflection on morality is rooted in urban studies and migration studies, and we welcome contributions from this field of study as well as from other areas of social science research.

The conference will take place May 11-13 at the University of Tübingen. Travel costs will be covered by the CRC 923 ‘Threatened Orders’.

Please send abstracts of 200-300 word until the 10.01.2023 to:

morality.conference.tuebingen@gmail.com