

Workshop May 7th 2024

Constructing mediatized controversies in the public sphere

The research group [Research and Teaching on Controversial Issues](#) is pleased to invite you to a workshop at the University of Bergen, with guest lecturers Ida Vikøren Andersen and Mia Lövheim.

Tuesday, May 7th
Seminarrom 2, Jusbygget (408)

Registration [here](#)

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WELCOME



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PROGRAM

Tuesday, May 7th

- 10.15–10.30 Welcome
- 10.30–11.15 **Framing controversy, distributing agency: Media representations of environmental dissent**
(Ida Vikøren Andersen)
- 11:15-11:45 Group discussions
- 11.45–12.30 Lunch
- 12.30–13.15 **Mediatized Conflicts on Religion in Secular Society: Quran burnings in the Swedish press**
(Mia Lövheim)
- 13:15-13:45 Group discussions
- 13:45-14:00 Summary and reflection

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Ida Vikøren Andersen holds a PhD in media rhetoric from the University of Bergen and is employed at the Norwegian research institute NORCE. She researches rhetoric, political communication, and public debate on societal challenges related to climate and environmental issues. Her research examines debates and argumentation in various media genres, addressing questions related to democracy, the public sphere, and citizenship.

Mia Lövheim is professor in sociology of religion at Uppsala University. Her research focuses primarily on the interplay between media, religion and culture in public debate and identity construction in a Swedish and Nordic context. Lövheim is currently a visiting researcher at CAS (Center for Advanced Studies), working on a project on representations of Koran burning in Scandinavian media. She was recently appointed as an honorary doctorate at the University of Helsinki.



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Presentation abstracts

Framing controversy, distributing agency: Media representations of environmental dissent (Ida Vikøren Andersen)

Recent years have witnessed an increase in disruptive environmental protests that challenge dominant ideologies and the discursive logics of the public. Dissenters' unruly rhetoric tends to spark controversy in the public sphere and attract critique from the seats of power. Journalistic media plays a crucial role in shaping how the public understands and responds to dissenters' agendas and means. In this talk, I discuss how the media's framing of protests and the ensuing public controversies shapes and distributes rhetorical agency in the public debate, explicitly focusing on media representations of environmental dissent. I explore how the media can ascribe rhetorical agency to dissenters by framing their actions as purposeful political actions. However, I also show how dissent is often framed in ways that deprive dissenters of rhetorical agency by painting them as apolitical, irrational, uncivil, or undemocratic. I argue that the prevalence of media representations undermining dissenters' agency reflects journalism's inherent bias towards maintaining the status quo. Specifically, the journalistic ideal of objectivity tends to reflect and reinforce prevailing societal values, and journalists' tendency to prioritize elite sources contributes to amplifying and upholding dominant discourses and power structures.

Mediatized Conflicts on Religion in Secular Society: Quran burnings in the Swedish press (Mia Lövheim)

Public burnings of the Quran in Sweden in the spring and summer of 2023 dominated Swedish and international media. In this talk I will discuss the framing of this event as a "crisis", drawing on the representation of the events in Swedish daily press from April to October 2023. Theories of mediatized conflicts as dynamic and complex are used to analyze how the media framing relates to ongoing social, religious, and political changes in Swedish society, as reported in longitudinal studies of religion in media and political debates in the Nordic countries. My aim is to initiate a discussion of the various roles of the media in an ongoing re-negotiation of fundamental democratic values such as freedom of speech and freedom of religion in a situation of increased religious and cultural diversity, as well as politicization of religion.