

**NEW SOCIOLOGY OF MORALS MEETS OLD SOCIOLOGY OF MORALS**  
**In commemoration of 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of death of Maria Ossowska**  
**ISNS University of Warsaw, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

**Steven Lukes**

**Memorial Lecture. What are moral norms and what makes them political?**

**Gabriel Abend**

**What Morality Is Underlain by**

Maria Ossowska's pioneering plea for an empirical sociology of morality has recently begun to gather new momentum. In this presentation I consider what kinds of empirical objects this sociology of morality can and should investigate. I make a distinction between three levels. Two of them are familiar: the behavioral level and the normative level. But the third one hasn't been well identified and analyzed up to now: the moral background level. By "behavioral level" I refer to ordinary people's behavior, e.g., the social factors that increase the incidence of altruistic acts or decrease the incidence of unethical practices in the economy. By "normative level" I refer to people's moral convictions and society's moral norms, e.g., understandings about the good and bad, the right and wrong, the virtuous and vicious, along with their cultural and institutional incarnations. By "moral background" I refer to the set of second-order elements that underlie and enable the behavioral and normative levels. The moral background includes (but is not limited to) the repertoire of moral concepts that happens to exist in a society; the objects that are taken to be capable of moral agency and hence moral evaluation; and the normative theories on which moral views, judgments, norms, and institutions are implicitly or explicitly grounded.

**Mark Cooney**

**The Pure Sociology of Morality**

Maria Ossowska's pioneering work in the sociology of morality demonstrated that issues traditionally the province of philosophers and theologians can be greatly illuminated by sociological research and theory. Work in that broad tradition, which has enjoyed a recent resurgence, treats morality primarily as a system of ideas, a conceptual code by which social actors distinguish right from wrong. But there is a second approach to the sociology of morality that has yielded an even more original set of insights. In this view, morality is a system of behavior as amenable to prediction and explanation as any other form of human conduct. Morality is thus known not by what people think or say but by what they do, particularly in situations of conflict. The most developed statement of this alternative perspective is found in the theoretical approach known as pure sociology, which explains morality with its location, direction, and movement in social space. Here I illustrate the pure sociology of morality with data on the definition and response to homicide in diverse societies.

**Edoardo Fittipaldi**

**What concept of morality for the sociology of morality?**

**Reflections on Ossowska's attitude towards stipulative definitions and a proposal for a psychoanalytic definition**

Maria Ossowska pioneered sociology of morality but she discarded every attempt to propose a definition for the concept of morality. Nor did she ever propose her own stipulative definition for the term *moralność*. According to her, what matters for a scholar in human sciences is not what morality *is*, but rather what *is regarded* as moral. She maintained that it is possible to be a sociologist of morality (as much as a sociologist of culture, art, etc.) without previously defining morality (or art, culture, etc.). In this paper Fittipaldi first describes Ossowska's rejection of stipulative definitions for her sociology of morality. Then Fittipaldi shows that Ossowska was not fully consistent with her program of not drawing on stipulative definitions, and it is perhaps because of this unintended inconsistency that she was able to produce such extraordinary results as her investigations on bourgeois morality, chivalric ethos etc. Further, Fittipaldi asks whether morality should be perhaps understood in the terms of an *illusio* in Bourdieu's sense. Fittipaldi concludes by proposing a psychological definition of moral phenomena as superegoic emotions and shows why such a stipulative definition is useful both *within* and *beyond* the sociology of morality (e.g. when it comes to make heuristically fruitful cross-fertilizations with criminology or ethology).

**Steve Hitlin**

**Morality across Cultures: Fundamental Moral Sentiments**

This project examines the structural underpinnings of morality and makes the strong claim that societal inequality leads to different forms of morality and the experience of moral emotions. We support our argument first theoretically, with an overview of the highly discussed topic of inequality as it relates to interaction and social psychological analysis, before offering a novel, empirical way of analyzing cross-cultural variation in moral reactions to social action [or 'events']. We draw on insights across sociology and psychology, most concretely affect control theory (Heise 1979, 2007), to compare four advanced industrial societies to empirically explore the implicit understandings, feelings, and meanings that people within a culture share as their national "habitus" and moral emotional background (e.g., Elias 1996; Abend 2014).. Ultimately, we develop a theory that links individuals' moral emotions and actions to national inequality.

**Jacek Kurczewski**

**Sociology of Reconciliation**

Sociology of reconciliation is heavily loaded with moral considerations. Paper summarizes review of some reconciliatory actions undertaken after World War Two in the CEEurope by religious, civic and political authorities and points to the elements of theory of reconciliation developed in the Antagonism and Reconciliation Project directed by the author in 2010-2012 (cf. Reconciliation in the Bloodlands, ed. by J. Kurczewski, Peter Lang 2014). The intense emotional experiences together with the rational calculus need to be mediated through the public re-enactment of unifying normative premises and unifying ex-tasis as the necessary mechanism of altering the reality of co-existence. In the end the relation of the ethics of reconciliation with the chivalry ethos as analysed by Ossowska is discussed.

**Masayuki Murayama**

**What matters in navigating behavior?**

Maria Ossowska was a pioneer of empirical sociology of law and morality. Law and morality, in particular their conflicts, raised serious issues in Japan, as its modernization process required transplantation of the Western law that was considered foreign to Japanese people. While the governing elites tried to construct a nation state by relying on a patriarchal family model, the spirit of the imported Western law seemed to contradict the traditional morality. Well known Kawashima's argument must be understood in this context. Kawashima urged Japanese people to change themselves in support of the post war democracy, while criticizing the traditional morality that seemed to survive in major social institutions. In the field of the sociology of law in Japan, questions of how the traditional morality was created and to what extent it could be effective have been debated since Kawashima presented his empirical hypothesis. In this paper, I present empirical data to test Kawashima's hypotheses that people's normative attitudes would change with a change of social structure and that Japanese normative attitudes would discourage Japanese people from bringing lawsuits and also resulted in the small number of lawyers. The latter hypothesis has been cited to support the existence of the distinctive Japanese legal culture, but our data will show how general attitudes would matter when people face legal problems and try to solve their problems.

**Natan Sznajder**

**Re-Reading "Bourgeois Morality" – Compassion and Human Rights**

This paper will re-read Maria Ossowska's *Bourgeois Morality* in light of current concerns in the sociology of morals with special emphasis on human rights.

The language of human rights provides a framework to begin to understand why pictures of strangers being beaten and tortured concern us. Cruelty, for instance, is understood as the infliction of unwarranted suffering. Compassion is an organized, public response to wrongdoing, as in human rights politics. Taking this language further, compassion is more than "just" sentiment; it is revolt against contempt, torture, humiliation and pain. It is an affirmation of humanity -- the organized campaign to lessen the suffering of strangers -- and a distinctly modern (and bourgeois) form of morality. Ossowska's contribution will be read through the eyes of Hannah Arendt and Martha Nussbaum all trying to come to terms what it means to be moral in the modern age.