

Thank you very much to Redo team for having me here.

I have the pleasure to give some remarks opening up the discussion summing up this remarkable conference. I am ordered to make it sharp and short - I will definitely stick to the "short" part of this title, inviting you to the "sharp part", and hoping that there will be enough space for many of us to participate in this summary section and exchange our impressions.

1. CONTEXT

Let me start with an observation on the salience of the unexpected context in which we conducted this event, a context which stretched beyond the academic conventions.

The form which was visible in the timing and spaces of our debates: the space we are in right now, but particularly the surrounding we visited yesterday. The performative frame of academic debate was intersecting with immersion in the actual sites of the analysed events. We addressed the ongoing, dynamic and shifting process of the commemoration of 22 July events and listened to its main actors, giving them a critical feedback. We also talked to the witnesses of the events. Did not we therefore become in a sense witnesses ourselves? The question follows: what new role does this hybrid academic frame pose on us? Does it come together with special obligation - or maybe limitation - to our academic personas? Are our academic statements here becoming in a sense a testimony, a more or less explicit statement of values we agree to defend?

I leave it as an open question.

2. The WIDER, INTERCULTURAL APPLICATIONS

The other context that cannot be underplayed, as it shaped our mode of participation in this event, is the current state of refugee crisis in Europe. I cannot help the impression, that the questions we are addressing are symptomatic for wider tensions within the systems of liberal democracies.

The concerns about the proliferation of xenophobic attitudes - expressed by participants of the multidisciplinary workshop filmed by Jone's team - only half a year ago sounded to me as prescribed to dynamics within Norwegian society, dealing with its own multicultural tensions. I could not be more wrong, taking into consideration the current trajectory of public debate in Poland and throughout Europe, with striking growth of internet hate speech, crusader-like rhetoric and nationalistic passions expressed on the streets. The phrase "I am not racist, but appears to be paradoxically unifying in a slightly perverted way many members of the EU. Even though these attitudes might address largely imaginary, phantasmatic threat envisioned in the figures of migrants, still - these xenophobic attitudes might constitute a real threat to our democratic political culture.

Was the Breivik's case indeed indicative of a wider, tacit, possible turn in the European attitudes? Should it be diagnosed associated only with national socialism, following Breivik's ideological testimony - or should it be traced in a number of other ideological undercurrents of public debate? By analysing the forms of democracy's resistance to this figure, are not we conducting a reflection on our own potential resistance to such a threat in our own cultural contexts? While analyzing the response of Norwegian case, are not we thinking about the actual design of ritualized political resistance of our democracies to potential danger of a similar kind?

3. RITUAL as a DEMOCRATIC NOTION

As most of our debates revolved around the question of ritual, we luckily avoided the risk pointed out by Ronald Grimes - of being stuck in academic dispute over its numerous definitions. Instead we looked through a number of ritualized communicative gestures - from the Oslo Cathedral practices, through interreligious funerals, mourning notes addressing the deceased ones as well as the personalized national community. We moreover - as already mentioned - witnessed many of these gestures as materialized in the objects left around Utoya, embedded in the projects of the commemorative sites, as well as personalized in the witnesses of 22 July events.

We discussed here therefore the particular role of the ritualistic form of response to the damage to our democratic systems. This brought up another set of questions: To which extent shall we look at the construction of ritual as democratic? And to which extent shall we look at democracy as inevitably based on some ritualistic dimensions - despite all the reflection on the secularization process analysed in Western public spheres?

This raises a set of questions on the design of the ritualistic actions. It seems that as we are leaving the effervescent, inclusive phase, and facing the challenge of coining it into a stable commemorative structures. We seemed to stress a number of times the epistemological shift in thinking about rituals: from modes of remembering to membering, from finding the finalized shape and solution to social conflict into the role of posing questions and involving the wide spectrum of practices. How to encode this processual element within the remembrance structure?

If we think about our functioning in the democracy as based on ritual, are not we arguing against some of the ritualistic qualities? Ritual seems to be to some extent necessarily elevated, placed beyond mundane. It can emerge a state of exceptional effervescence in response to extraordinary traumatizing even. Becoming a part of democratic pedagogy - does it lose its exceptional status? Or shall we look at it as not exceptional at all?

We are also discussing the possibility of making the rituals inclusive enough to protect the individual lines of memory. Are these two tendencies however not in a perpetual conflict? Are the stresses on the collective set of meanings necessarily underplaying the individual inputs? How to ensure the involvement in the live memory - as well as secure at the same time the right of individual's forgetting about some aspects of it?

4. THE QUESTION OF RITUAL'S POLITICIZATION

THE RISK OF EXCESSIVE STRESS ON COHESION was brought up particularly by Chantal Mouffe's agonistic perspective. She stressed the necessity of avoiding the false consensus in the public sphere; the agonism is seen by her as constitutive to the political and often overlooked in deliberative and aggregative models of democracy.

HOWEVER - By leaving space for the agonistic ideological differentiation of the participants, does therefore ritual need to be necessarily political? Shall we renegotiate our tendency to see it as built on a supposedly neutral political framework?

This perspective brings in a set of new questions and challenges. Just to bring a COMPARATIVE CASE from the Polish context - only five years ago we witnessed the moment of inclusive effervescence in the mourning after the crash of President's plane in Smoleńsk, perceived as national tragedy. After a week of cohesion, the mourning dynamics took the form of a growingly politicised practice, blurring the lines between the rituals performed in front of the Presidential palace and the

political rally of the biggest opposition party at that time, and facilitating a partisan divide within the society. We need to remember that blurring the line between the ritual and political can turn possibly undemocratic, divisive turn?

5. THE RITUALISTIC SPACE for the PROFANE

The last remark relates slightly to the topic discussed most within today's panels

As the ritualization - perceived in Durkheimian terms - seems to create the sense of sacredness - can this secularized component be conceived without the parallel idea of the profane? The reoccurring topic in the discussions seemed to be the need to incorporate into the commemorative exhibitions and practices the ideological context of the July 22 events. Which form should it take? How should it be done without building a monument to the perpetrators ideology, however without the impression of its avoidance or strange naturalization of the cause of 22nd July? Again - as pointed by Chantal Mouffe - one should not stick to the idea of easy political consensus over the fundamentally divisive questions; the rituals of imposed unity might only result in the repression, accumulation and final reinforcement of the repressed antagonisms.

To put it shortly - one can sum up the last few section of the comments under the generalized concern: if the rituals play the vital role in the public sphere, and bring up and reaffirm the sacred, collective component - to which extent should it also bring attention to its ongoing challenges?