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Emotions and Society Editorial: Into the twenty-first century

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Mary Holmes, Nathan Manning and Åsa Wettergren

It feels good to be writing this editorial for the first issue of *Emotions and Society*. With a sense of amused irony, the editorial team have reflected on the highly emotional, as well as long intellectual and administrative journey leading to the establishment of this journal. Our collective memory is a little vague but we think it was almost ten years ago that the idea emerged. It was certainly at a European Sociological Association (ESA) Conference in a lovely European city somewhere. Members of the Sociology of Emotions Research Network (RN 11) within the ESA had been happily meeting at such conferences and their own midterms for some years by then and the network was growing each year. The idea for the journal, however, came at a time when the politics and financing of journal production was shifting and many publishers were afraid to take on new journals in a highly competitive market. Peer reviews of the proposal were always excellent, enthusiastic and supportive, but this wasn't enough to sway publishers, who hesitated for economic reasons. And time passed. The editorial team displayed what some emotions scholars might call resilience and others might describe more in terms of solidarity and quiet determination. Perseverance has an emotional flavour, little written about to our knowledge and yet it describes much of our experience with the journal. The shared emotional resources of the editorial team and the hopefulness and support of our wider networks, especially ESA RN11, were vital in keeping the proposal alive. Finally, one day in 2018, there came a phone call with Julia Mortimer at Bristol University Press. After some discussion she asked if we could produce our first issue in 2019. It is difficult to convey the mixture of disbelief, anxiety and euphoria of that moment. It took some time to feel sure that we had finally succeeded. We will perhaps not feel sure until we see this first issue of *Emotions and Society* online and in print. We hope and trust that emotions scholars in sociology, and other disciplines interested in emotions in society, will be as excited as we are to see this journal appear. We know from the response so far that there is a considerable appetite for a publication like this and we hope this journal will become the natural home for authors engaged in an expansive, multidisciplinary dialogue about emotional lives in a social context.

The emotional and affective turn is currently transforming a broad range of disciplines in the social sciences and beyond. It constitutes a fundamental shift in social scientific debates. This is reflected in an ever-growing output of research—an immense range of books, edited volumes and journal articles that is increasingly difficult to overlook. This is especially so for social scientists and humanities scholars working on emotions outside of the discipline of psychology. Sociological, cultural and socio-historical approaches have been central in pushing this increased interest in emotions.

The sociology of emotions has amassed evidence of the fundamental and pervasive relevance of emotions to all aspects of social life. It is for this reason that the sociology of emotions is not merely another specialised sub-discipline but aims at re-configuring the bases of mainstream sociology. Accordingly, it is of principle relevance to sociology at large. The

sociology of emotions offers the potential for enhanced understandings of core problems of sociology, such as power, politics, social interactions and everyday life, macro-micro binaries, social institutions, gender regimes, global social transformations, the state, inequality and social exclusion, identities, and so on. Meanwhile the sociology of emotions straddles disciplinary boundaries and has great potential to stimulate other, sympathetic disciplines and receives inspiration from these in turn.

The uniqueness of the sociology of emotions stems from the fact that it addresses distinctly sociological issues, such as those listed above. In contrast to social psychology, for example, the ambition of a sociology of emotions is not only to understand the impact of the social on the emoting subject but also to use emotions in order to understand and explain social phenomena on all levels of the social, extending to the macro-level and the global sphere. What is more, social psychology tends to adopt rather positivistic approaches to emotions, where the sociology of emotions can contribute a vast array of additional theoretical and methodological perspectives. To be sure, such disciplinary distinctions are not clear-cut. All disciplines engaged in emotions research can benefit from each other. *Emotions and Society* will therefore aim at both advancing a uniquely sociological take on emotions while being aware of advances in other scholarly fields and providing inputs to these fields.

The sociology of emotions has a history of several decades but is deeply rooted in the classics of sociology, such as Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Georg Simmel, Norbert Elias, Harriet Martineau, Adam Smith, David Hume, William James, and others. Mainstream sociology, however, is still indebted to the cognitivist phase that came to dominate sociology after World War II. With the inception of a sociology of emotions a uniquely sociological approach to emotions has emerged that departs from dominant psychological and biological understandings of emotions. While founders of this field started out more than three decades ago, more recently the field has gained tremendous momentum, as apparent in debates around the emotional or affective turn in the social sciences and many other disciplines (for example see Bondi 2005; Clough and Halley 2007; Hoggett and Thompson 2012; Kleres 2009, Lemmings and Brook 2009, Plamper 2009). This has also involved a diversification of theoretical and methodological approaches and terminologies. We look forward to these being explored within the pages of *Emotions and Society*.

Emotions and Society will be a journal that drives scholarly debates forward, demonstrating the fundamental significance of emotions to all aspects of social life and studies of society at large. Our aim in this first issue is to offer a broad entrance to the topic of social emotions. In this vein, this first issue – while being non-representative in the sense that all but two of the contributions are commissioned – spans generations of pioneers in the field. First out with an introductory essay is Arlie Hochschild who began publishing on emotions in the 1970s (Hochschild 1979) and wrote her first book in a series of fascinating and path-breaking empirical pieces on emotion work, feeling and display rules, in 1983. The book, *The Managed Heart*, gave rise to a veritable explosion of research investigating emotion management and emotional labour in service and care work. Since then she has continued to examine emotions in organisations, capitalist enterprise and global capitalist systems of exchange, including gendered emotions, and her latest work, *Strangers in their own land*, explores the emotional underpinnings of the growing polarisation between right and left wing political groups in the US. Hochschild's introductory essay to this first issue

invites us all to consider the power of emotions to anchor political deep stories, or perhaps one could say root metaphors of political ideology. There have been important criticisms of her recent book, arguing that it insufficiently accounts for racialised inequalities (e.g. Bhabra 2017). Yet, Hochschild sets a tone, we hope to resonate long into the future and in future issues, by advocating the importance of investigating emotions in politics and the necessity (for all of our futures) that we get past our own narrowly defined sympathy margins (Clark, 1987) in order to understand political opponents and diminish the growing divisions between us. Emphasizing this hope, Hochschild's introductory essay is followed by another piece on politics, which seems vital in the current moment. Deborah Gould's 'On (Not) Knowing What is to Be Done (in 17 affective registers)' is an empirical piece on the emotions in and around Occupy Wall Street, and the emotional strategies of the political establishment when faced by this and other political grass root challenges. Gould represents the contemporary generation of social movement scholars and activists who recognise the role of emotions in politics because they have lived it and felt it. Gould convincingly demonstrates the fierce downwards resentment (see Barbalet, 1998), ridicule and scorn used to strike back at any adherents of alternatives to politics (and business) as usual. Power in the Modern era has been operating this way for as long as emotion was discursively separated from reason – to position the revolting as emotional, irrational while the establishment claims to rest on rational and non-emotional ground (Kleres and Wettergren, 2017). Gould's contribution further illuminates the relations between knowing/knowledge and emotions, and her analysis indicates that different emotions are linked to knowing (closure) as well as not knowing (opening), echoing the literature on epistemic emotions (see for instance Terpe, 2016).

Randall Collins is the next foundational scholar of emotions in this issue. His vastly influential theory of interaction ritual chains and emotional energy (Collins, 2004) has inspired empirical research on emotions in social movements, emotions and violence, emotions and criminality. Collins radical micro-sociological approach suggesting that interaction rituals and emotional energy constitute the core of social activities and the fundament of social structure has been both criticized and commended for its seductive simplicity. His contribution in this issue features as a theoretical thought piece highlighting the indispensable importance of self-confidence and social recognition – that is emotional energy – and the capacity to energize others, for individual success. Importantly, emotional energy derives from social interactions and thus confident interaction with the world around us is set by previous interaction rituals that gave us that particular recognition, and so on. The individual is in effect built up by the emotional processes of group interactions. This point is taken further to apply to collective identity in Ian Burkitt's following contribution on alienation and emotion.

Burkitt is a longstanding contributor to the sociology of emotions and has developed significant conceptual tools in his relational approach to feelings and emotions. He conceptualises emotions as complexes (see 1997; 2002) occurring within patterns of relationship to other people and the world which shape our embodied understandings of those relationships (Burkitt 2014). In his contribution to this issue, Burkitt can be said to problematise the notion of success and failure and group interactions by adding the crucial perspective of power and class dynamics. Burkitt thus argues that emotions *as* social relations

(see Burkitt 2014) buttress and sustain the self through recognition within socially differentiated groups/classes. Burkitt's contribution further connects to Hochschild's essay by discussing alienation in terms of loss of social connection, the alienation from authorities, social institutions, fellow humans and from self. Burkitt concludes that people's anger and frustration at the political establishment are highly informative emotions pointing to objective structural circumstances that indeed marginalise and exclude them from civic and political participation, and alienate them from social relations, places and objects.

Our final commissioned researcher of emotions in this issue is Peter Stearns who has written extensively on the emotionologies of various periods in American history. He has produced a compelling book outlining a shift, beginning in the nineteenth century, towards anxious parenting in the United States (Stearns 2004). He and Carol Stearns (1986) have also written about the growing discouragement of anger in America from the Victorian period onwards. In addition, his book *American Cool* (1994) describes and explains greater restraint in emotional expression as a major shift in the emotional culture of the American middle class that took place in the early part of the twentieth century. Stearns's contribution to this first issue of the journal deals with the methodological approach to the history of emotions that he argues now allows for grand periodisation of emotions, certainly in Europe and North America. He offers some suggestions about how to characterise the larger processes and patterns of historical change around emotions. This broadly delineates between the period from the mid-eighteenth to early nineteenth century and that of the early twentieth century. The former is characterised in a range of ways in Stearns's careful consideration, but the emergence of a plethora of new emotional standards and increasing emphasis on emotional intimacy within the family are key aspects. The later period included sharper division between those emotions thought 'good' versus 'bad' and more relaxed, less hierarchical emotional relationships. Stearns's contribution illuminates the way that emotion is a matter of structural socio-historical and cultural variations. Entire societies are characterised by emotionologies, emotional cultures (Rosenwein, 2010) or emotional regimes (Reddy, 2001) and Stearns makes a strong case for the value of periodisation in making sense of these.

We also include two articles submitted to us by other, less well-known scholars in the field. Michael Hvid Jacobsen, contemplates why Zygmunt Bauman has been so neglected by sociologists of emotions. This article mounts a strong defence of the value of Bauman's theoretical insights for understanding the cultural and structural shaping of specific emotions. In Ashley Barnwell's piece, a theoretical and empirical approach to emotional proximities is fashioned around how families imagine and register the emotions of the past by focusing on 'family secrets'. The non-linear temporality of these proximities raises some intriguing questions about the nature of emotional interactions. Together these pieces highlight our interest in showcasing both theoretical and empirical work which explores the many facets of emotions in society and examines how society is 'in' emotions. Common to all of the contributions is that they all highlight what is perhaps the most important point about the inclusion of emotion in social scientific research; that emotion provides a link between structure and agency. Emotion is what makes symbolic as well as concrete, and situated as well as abstract, forms of power *matter* to humans. Emotion makes up the individual's perception of self and others, norms and values and relationships, that all contribute to create the social whole that we call society.

While the following issues will settle the shape and standards of *Emotions and Society*, this first issue is a celebration of a field that is already maturing and it offers some key voices to remind us why thinking about emotions and society is absolutely vital. The fact that contributors in this issue represent predominantly Anglophone and especially American research reflects the paths taken by sociological research on emotions since the 1970s. Upcoming issues will endeavour to reflect the diversity of scholars now working in the field all over the globe.

Before we reach the end of this editorial we wish to express our warmest thanks to our dear colleague Jochen Kleres who kept the project of the journal going with us for all of these years but who recently decided to step off the editorial board due to other missions and interests in life. Those of us continuing are sure that this will be the beginning of a marvellous intellectual voyage together and commend this first issue to you with feelings of pride.

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