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Theorizing Emotions: Sociological Explorations and Applications, Debra Hopkins, Jochen Kleres, Helena Flam, Helmut Kuzmics (eds.), Campus Verlag, Frankfurt, 2009, 343 pages, ISBN 978-3-593-38972-1

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Theorizing Emotions presents a collection of thirteen papers from members of the Emotions Network of the European Sociological Association—a diverse group if the breadth of this particular book is anything to go by. As the first in what is intended to be a series on emotions, this book both introduces the topic and locates it firmly within the history and traditions of sociological concerns and theorizing.

Hochschild, who has been an influential voice in the sociology of emotions for over three decades (Hochschild 1983), provides the introductory chapter for the book ('An Emotions Lens on the World'). In it, she presents an extensive, yet concise overview of the history and contemporary importance of studying emotions in sociology. She traces a sociological interest in emotions back to 19th-century thinkers such as Marx, Durkheim and Weber, through influential 20th-century sociologists such as Goffman and into the present, including a brief discussion of her own theories on emotional labour and emotion rules. Other authors in this collection also locate their work in relation to 'classic' texts—see Flam ('Extreme Feelings and Feelings at Extremes'), Becker ('What Makes Us Modern(s)? The Place of Emotions in Contemporary Society'), Kuzmics ('Sociology as Narrative: Examples of Sociological Language in "Classic" Texts') and Scheff ('Shame and Conformity: The Deference-Emotions System'). Taken together, these references to earlier, influential works provide a thoughtful and needed contextualization of the current so-called "emotional turn" within the broader histories of sociology.

A range of contemporary theoretical perspectives are also discussed in this collection. Illouz and Wilf ('Hearts or Wombs? A Cultural Critique of Radical Feminist Critiques of Love') both draw on and critique certain feminist approaches to sociology in their exploration of one particular category of emotion: love. Kuzmics' uses literary theory to argue that classic texts in sociology can be categorized according to specific literary genres. He then attempts to infer particular emotional dispositions to the authors based on their writings. Demertzis ('Mediatizing Traumas in the Risk Society: A Sociology of Emotions Approach') examines trauma from the perspective of the Risk Society. And, Becker takes a Foucauldian approach to examining the place of emotions in modern society. Perhaps not surprisingly, given its rise to prominence in the last two decades, the theories of neuroscience are also to be found in this book, most particularly in Williams' overview of the subject ('A "Neurosociology" of Emotion? Progress, Problems and Prospects') but also in Barbalet ('Consciousness, Emotions, and Science') and in Becker. Damasio (2000) is particularly influential to all three authors. Williams argues that both sociology and neuroscience would benefit from a greater degree of collaboration. However, he outlines the difficulties such interdisciplinary work might encounter. Barbalet also sees as essential that sociologists draw on the findings of neuroscience, particularly in relation to consciousness, in studying emotions.

The book is enriched by its inclusion of a few chapters that focus on the thickening of theoretical understandings through specific empirical research examples. A comparison of women's magazines in Israel and America by Illouz and Wilf reveals that romantic love is not always oppressive to women's interests. Wouters ('The Civilizing of Emotions: Formalization and Informalization') analyses etiquette books in America, the Netherlands, England and Germany, finding differences across borders and over time in emotion regulation. Scheff re-visits data from the Asch Conformity Studies to demonstrate the central role of shame in social conformity. The role of emotions in volunteerism is explored by Kleres through an analysis of interviews with buddies of persons with HIV/AIDS ('Just Being There: Buddies and the Emotionality of Volunteerism'). Goodman, studies the Refugee Rights Movement in Australia 2000-2003 in order to compare the emotional aspects of solidarity at different scales of political organization ('Refugee Solidarity: Between National Shame and Global Outrage'). Finally, emotions as shared and as mediated are explored by Dovel through newspaper coverage of the Pope's visit to America ('Mediated Parasocial Emotions and Community: How Media May Strengthen or Weaken Social Communities').

This collection of papers on sociology and emotions is broad and eclectic; however, it is not comprehensive. One of the most glaring gaps is the lack of emotion in the anthology (for a recent example of emotion dealt with reflexively in sociology see Gray 2008). Kleres, the self-proclaimed junior member of the editing team is the only author to own up to having an emotional life, reflecting in the preface on his emotional experience while shepherding the book to completion. He should be applauded for his courage in doing so. Revealing the emotional vagaries of academic practice can be particularly daunting to academics at the beginning of their careers, given their more vulnerable position in academic hierarchies (Jackson et al, forthcoming). As Kleres points out, all too often the sociology of emotion continues to be presented as if the authors were themselves without feeling. Unfortunately, the collection he has helped to edit is exemplary of this trend.

For me this gap was made all the more glaring by Barbalet's insightful discussion of the role of emotions, often unconscious ones, in the development and practice of science. After reading Barbalet, I was left wondering about sociological passions. Similarly to the scientists he writes about, sociologists are certainly motivated and guided by feelings associated with pattern recognition and aesthetic pleasure—those emotions Barbalet associates with theory building. However, these are not my only motivations. As a little exercise in empirical research, I started to pay attention to what I was feeling as I continued to read through Theorizing Emotions. I paid attention to my physical responses to the words, to the imaginative and remembered images they brought to mind and to the new possibilities for action they opened up. While there was a certain amount of pleasure involved in seeing intellectual disjunctures concerning emotions dealt with and patterns delineated, my strongest reactions were to the empirical research. In particular, I found the injustices documented in Goodman's piece on the plight of refugees in Australia and the actions of people determined to put an end to them to be the most emotionally moving. Though this was of course a highly subjective endeavour, it did enable me to conclude that an emotional reaction to injustices also could be a sociological passion.

There is nothing particularly groundbreaking about this book, indeed, some of it has been published before. Some of the chapters are reprints (Barbalet) or reworkings of previously published texts (Hochschild, Illouz and Wilf, Scheff), one of which appears here for the first time in English (Kuzmics). What the collection does achieve is a consistent argument for the inclusion of a consideration of emotions in the centre of sociological undertakings. The chapters are consistently clearly written and most would be accessible to upper year undergraduates or to postgraduates. Some will no doubt find their way onto the reading lists for courses on emotions in sociology. The Hochschild chapter would be particularly well suited for such purposes.

The last point I would like to make returns to my own emotional response to the book. After reading this collection cover to cover I found myself left with a feeling of uneasiness. The emotional turn in the social sciences is often celebrated for its critical possibilities (see for example, Smith, Davidson, Cameron and Bondi 2009), but as this collection shows, sociology has been concerned with emotions since its inception as a discipline. Moreover, as Hochschild, Becker, and Wouters chapters point out, within societies, cultures and the institutions that comprise them, an interest in emotions is often an interest in controlling and managing them. As a researcher motivated by a passion for social justice, I am left wondering to what extent sociological studies of emotions can be used to counter injustices and to what extent they can be enrolled in furthering them.

(word count: 1285)

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Alette Willis, PhD.
Postdoctoral Research Fellow
School of Health in the Social Sciences
The University of Edinburgh Medical School

Teviot Place
Edinburgh, EH8 9AG
United Kingdom
a.willis@ed.ac.uk
+44 (0)131 650 3891 (fax)