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Editorial

Emotions in Research and Everyday Life. From Feeling to Acting

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.16.1.01>

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Although the issue of emotions is not new as a domain of studies for many scientific disciplines, it remains seldomly exploited within the area of sociology. And yet, it seems clear that no individual and their emotions can be studied without taking into account their social and cultural contexts (Shott 1979; Goffman 1961; 1967; 1974; 2006; Scheff 1990; Ekman and Davidson 1994; 2012; Goleman 1995; 1997; Salovey and Sluyter 1999; Wisecup, Robinson, and Smith-Lovin 2006). Sociologists attempt to investigate how emotions are triggered, as well as both interpreted and expressed through one's participation in various social groups (see, e.g., Collins 1975; 1981; Kemper 1978; 1991; Scheff 1979; 1988; Hochschild 1983; 2009). Initially, attempts were channeled at finding a common definition of emotions, which would highlight their diverse aspects for different approaches. And so, attention was paid to: 1) the cognitive dimension of the situation; 2) stimulation of physiological reactions; 3) giving the reactions names referring to culturally available concepts; 4) expressing and holding feelings back in a culturally adapted and accepted (imposed) way (see: Wisecup, Robinson, and Smith-Lovin 2006). Just as

efforts were made to find a common definition, they were also made to develop a common methodological approach. However, the multitude of accepted paradigms did not allow for the construction of one meta-theoretical framework. Despite many studies on emotions in various scientific domains and contexts, the question regarding their nature remains open. As social sciences develop, we know more and more about emotions. However, due to the fact that emotions remain in the sphere of individual experience, are one's natural and spontaneous qualities, to this day there is no clear indication what they are, when they arise, what they depend on, and how to manage them (see: Pawłowska 2013).

Sociology of emotions deals with social conditions behind the emergence of emotions, their dynamics and timing, and emotionality in the individual and interactional, community and organizational dimensions. It refers to the achievements of many scientific disciplines, mainly psychology, social psychology, microsociology, and cultural anthropology. Explaining emotional behavior and actions, it refers to many sociological theories. At the same time, most of the studies touching on the issue of emotions are underpinned by interactionist approach (e.g., Goffman, Hochschild, Gordon, Thoits, Clark, Shott, Averill, Collins, Cooley, Stryker, Burke, Heise, Scheff, Tangeney, Romans, Blau, Emerson, Johnson and Ford, Lawler, Hegtvedt, Cook, Kemper, Berger, Barbalet, Wentworth, Turner, Hammond, and others). Describing feelings, the paradigm at hand refers to giving rise to an emerging experience, in which social conditions play a role. Those factors prod emotions before their arousal, but also as they unfold (Pawłowska 2013).

Regardless of the theoretical concept adapted, it should be noted that modern everyday life is full of diversity, tension, stress, and uncertainty, which may be due, among others, to the very fast pace of civilization development. It entails that individuals constantly reconstruct and define the emotions of their interactional partners, as well as do emotional work, including managing their emotions. The issue of emotions in everyday life is now considered one of the more promising areas of sociological analyses, since it allows capturing and interpreting the behavior of a social actor on yet another level. This volume presents emotions arising and defined in different social worlds and having a different emotional load. It shows the dilemmas of the researchers of emotions, indicating that what seems to be personal and private not always turns out to be so, and vice versa—what seems collective, external, and general can become personal and impact the role the researcher is about to take in the field. While examining emotions, we, ourselves, often do emotional work. It may be due to reducing stress, as well as the researcher's desire to achieve a balance between distance and closeness when it comes to relations with the study participants.

How diverse everyday emotional life can be and how feelings affect individual activities is shown in the articles included in this issue, which starts with the paper by Jan K. Coetzee, entitled *Narrating Emotions: Towards Deeper Understanding*. The author elaborates on the importance of qualitative research, as well as the interpretivist approach, when it comes to exploring the issues of emotions, for qualitative research can bring us closer to a fuller description and interpretation of life. People's narratives are referred

to as most effective in revealing deeper dimensions of experience and of meaning, which, as postulated by the author, should be read against the background of the empirical reality in which they are embedded. Referring to, among others, the culture and political situation of South Africa, Jan K. Coetzee observes that episodes of emotional sharing can be seen as opening a path for a hermeneutical process towards understanding. Emotional narratives always reflect personal experiences and allow us to understand structural obstacles in the pursuit of social order.

The second article by Beata Pawłowska—*Pride in Teachers' Everyday Work. Conditions and Contexts*—refers to pride as an emotion that allows triggering socially expected behaviors, such as satisfaction and motivation to work. On the example of a group of teachers, the author answers the question of what role pride plays in teachers' career building process and their daily work. The article highlights the importance of pride in the process of creating the employee's identity. Also, it is the only article in the issue that describes a positive emotion, advocating that it is worth examining emotions that contribute to maintaining social bonds—at a level seen by the interactants as constructive and integrating.

Emma Engdahl, in her article *The Disappearance of the Other: A Note on the Distortion of Love*, relates to issues of love that can be toxic and depressing. It can “drain” interaction partners, leading to the silencing of one of them. Referring to various concepts (Hegel, Giddens, Illouz, Honneth, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Bauman), as well as empirical data, the author interestingly guides the reader through the world of love

and points out that, in the modern understanding of the phenomenon, love as a game that can be played without mutual recognition of one another can lead to depression. That distortion of love results in a tendency of not letting go of the lost love objects and a need for strategies to handle the absence of love in intimate relationships.

The paper “*Living with Illegal Feelings*”—*Analysis of the Internet Discourse on Negative Emotions towards Children and Motherhood*, by Emilia Garncarek, illustrates negative feelings associated with being a mother. The author shed light on women's internal struggles with emerging emotions that are not socially accepted. Recognizing motherhood as universally desirable, society expects of women (mothers) to be content, joyful, and proud—thus providing a cultural interpretative framework referring to which women that do not feel socially expected emotions, instead experience frustration, fear, and stress. Such women feel guilt and shame. Those who regret motherhood redefine their identity, which can cause depression, or lead to the breakdown of family bonds. The purpose of the article is to show the socio-cultural conditions affecting the way mothers express emotions and feelings stemming from regretting motherhood.

Asta Rau, in her article *Dealing with Feeling: Emotion, Affect, and the Qualitative Research Encounter*, postulates the study of emotions by examining their manifestations in action. She refers to the work of Margaret Wetherell. The author believes that, when taken together, action and practice imply pattern and order, form and function, process and consequences. It is thus elucidating to see how emotions

as observed, as well as the ones arising in the effect of such observations have an impact on the qualitative researcher and the research they conduct. Endorsing mindfulness as a valuable approach to manage the researcher's subjectivity in the qualitative research encounter, the article may be seen as an invitation to further considerations on studying and—as a result—experiencing—emotions.

It should be stated here that sociology of emotions may become an inspiration for researchers operating in disciplines other than sociology. Embedding the study of emotions in the education area, Renata Górska, in the paper entitled *Emotional Education Discourses: Between Developing Competences and Deepening Emotional (Co-)Understanding*, indicates the importance of emotional education understood as an activity for the emotional development. The author emphasizes the importance of the relationship between emotions and education. Although the considerations presented in the article are of theoretical

nature, by reference to qualitative research conducted based on two different approaches to emotional education—technological-instrumental and humanistic-critical—the author shows how important the permeability of disciplines is. Emotional education can play an important role in developing pro-social attitudes, functioning of individuals in local communities, and building civil society.

In this volume, emotions are recognized as being a central element of human experience, affecting the functioning of social worlds and their internal order. They play a crucial role in bonding processes, as well as may shape the form they take. Emotions are subject to social control and social structuring. They are associated with social roles (see: Binder, Palska, and Pawlik 2009:9-10). I hope that this volume will contribute to increasing the interest of researchers in the field of emotions and, at least slightly, bring about further development of sociology of emotions as an important sociological subdiscipline.

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