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emotions and social movements

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Emotions are spontaneous, self-induced, or externally produced self-feelings. Examples include positive feelings of love, loyalty, pride, joy, and enthusiasm and negative feelings of hatred, sympathy, fear, anger, sorrow, sadness, jealousy, shame, and dejection. Emotions are both embodied and take symbolic forms. A sense of anger or joy has tell-tale somatic signs; often, it finds symbolic expression in voice, gestures, words, and tones, not to mention literary and artistic forms.

Emotions have a distinct social character. They often occur in social situations and arise out of social interactions. A society has its emotion culture, which sets social rules and norms for the appropriate kinds of emotions on specific occasions and for the legitimate ways of publicly expressing emotions. The emotion culture of a society embodies and expresses the values of that society. If a feeling of indignation is directed at an act of injustice, it is because society condemns injustices. Emotion culture therefore resembles a habitus, an embodied cultural and social milieu that shapes feeling and action. Practical action activates emotion culture and is guided by it.

Emotions condition and accompany collective action and social movements. Their absence or presence, as well as the types and intensity of emotions present, underpin every phase of a social movement from emergence to

decline. Preexisting social networks of friends and neighbors are crucial for mobilization – they are networks of trust and loyalty. Events of social injustice may provoke moral shocks, indignation, and anger and thus move citizens to action. Once initial mobilization starts, the emotional dynamics of collective action become complex and fluid. Both movement activists and their opponents perform emotion work in order to shape the outcomes of the movement. Activists strive to build emotional solidarity and a sense of collective identity. Opponents typically attempt to sow fear as a deterrent to collective action. When this happens, movement participants mobilize “encouragement mechanisms” (Goodwin & Pfaff 2001) such as communal gatherings to manage fear.

These “encouragement mechanisms” are among many possible practices used by movement activists to reduce negative emotions and create positive emotional energy. Activists’ emotion work varies depending on whether it is directed at themselves, at the public, or at opponents. The most common practice is rituals. Rituals encompass a wide range of patterned and ceremonial activities such as anniversary celebrations and public parades. As Émile Durkheim long ago understood, rituals create emotional effervescence and revitalize the ritual group. In social movements, rituals are used to build internal solidarity, to move the bystanders and the general public, and to shame opponents. In repressive political environments, activists may appropriate official rituals for mobilization purposes.

Rituals have symbolic components – singing, dancing, and the like. Yet not all symbolic forms are ritualistic. The symbolic expression of emotions in collective action is analytically a distinct practice. To build pride and enthusiasm among participants, to win sympathy from the public, and to arouse anger at the opponents, movement activists tell stories, sing songs, play music, compose poems, chant slogans, and dress up in colorful costumes. These symbolic expressions can be serious or playful. A spirit of play is a familiar part of social movements. Jokes, humor, and parody can undermine the seriousness of power in forceful ways.

Emotions not only influence various phases of a movement, they are also the very stakes of struggle. Structures of power and inequality

shape what emotions are appropriate to what social groups. For example, in bureaucratic institutions, anger is the privilege of the superiors, not the subordinates. The dominant emotion culture in contemporary society is emotion management. As Arlie Russell Hochschild (1983) shows, this culture forces individuals to manage how they feel – to stir up or suppress a feeling as the occasion requires. Such management serves instrumental-rational purposes at the expense of emotional fulfillment. Emotion management is thus a culture of instrumental control over emotions. It has a built-in mechanism against collective action. To free collective action of this cultural constraint, social movements, at least in their more radical moments, operate outside, not within, the dominant emotional codes. They seek to subvert existing feeling rules and mobilize counteremotions. In this way, emotions become the stakes of struggle.

Emotions long took a back seat in modern sociology. They were either ignored or conceptualized as the opposite of rational and purposive action. This was so even in the study of collective action and social movements. Before the 1960s, emotions were used to explain away crowd behavior. The standard theory was that crowd behavior was irrational and pathological, and so were the emotions that drove it. In the 1970s, many students of social movements rejected this line of thinking and its associated categories. They abandoned the concept of crowd behavior and talked instead about collective action and social movements. A resource mobilization theory based on rational actor assumptions was developed. Studies exemplary of this new thinking postulate that individuals' inclination to join social movements depends on the material and organizational resources available to them. Emotions disappear from this picture.

These two theoretical orientations were shaped by the social conditions in which they were born. In post-World War II Europe and the United States, material prosperity, a cozy family life, and law and order were the concerns of the day. Thus when sociologists rejected crowd behavior on the basis of its irrationality and pathology, they were responding to the moods of the times. The new thinking that rejected theories of crowd behavior and gave rise

to resource mobilization models of social movements similarly reflected the social conditions. The tumultuous days of student protests had just gone by. The new generation of intellectuals had first-hand experiences in the protest activities. Not surprisingly, these scholars affirmed social movements as rational, democratic political struggles. In their endeavor to rationalize social movements, however, they went to another extreme and dropped emotions from their theoretical models.

Emotions reentered the study of social movements in the late 1980s. By then, cultural analysis and the sociology of emotions had gained influence. These new intellectual trends reflected renewed attention to the centrality of meaning and human agency in sociological explanation. Among others, the works of Norman Denzin, Randall Collins, Theodore Kemper, and Arlie Hochschild significantly advanced the understanding of the social nature of emotions, opening the way for a new wave of sociological studies of emotions and movements. Since then, many articles have appeared. *Passionate Politics* (2001), a volume of articles based on a conference held in 1999, marked the first major collective endeavor made by sociologists to bring emotions back to the study of social movements. In 2002, the international journal *Mobilization* published a special issue on emotions and social movements. Another edited volume, *Emotions and Social Movements*, was published in 2005.

While the growing literature on emotions and movements is diverse in theoretical and methodological approaches, there are two distinct trends. First, there are many efforts to bring emotional dynamics into the explanation of all aspects of collective action and social movements. Emotions are considered to affect recruitment processes, movement emergence, the internal dynamics of a movement, as well as movement demise. The most exciting current research on this topic is in this area. Second, there is an attempt to incorporate emotions into existing categories of social movement theory, including organization, identity, framing, repertoires, and political opportunity structures. There is a growing understanding, for example, that studies of collective identity prioritize the cognitive dimension of identity at the expense of its emotional dimension.

These two lines of research have greatly enriched the understanding of collective action and social movements. But many challenges remain for students of emotions and movements (Polletta & Amenta 2001). One is methodological. One reason for the neglect of emotions in the study of social movements and sociology more broadly has to do with the fact that emotions, despite somatic signs, are not directly observable. The texture of emotional events consists of fleeting and ephemeral details such as gestures, voices, and smiles, yet these details do not often leave concrete records. Of course, many movements have left behind narratives of various kinds, and so far these have provided a main source of data analysis. But these narratives cannot fully capture the fluid dynamics of emotions. A possible corrective is to rely more on ethnography and visual sociology.

Secondly, in attempting to incorporate emotions into the study of social movements, many analysts tacitly or explicitly treat emotions in an instrumental manner. As Craig Calhoun (2001) cautions, some scholars have simply considered emotions as just another thing for movement organizers to manage or another resource to use against the opponents. In effect, then, emotions are turned into another kind of rational preference. Such an approach falls into the same trap as theories devoid of emotional components. This tendency is rooted in the dichotomizing of mind/body and reason/emotion that fundamentally structures modern western thinking. "Putting emotions in their place," as Calhoun puts it, is to study emotions in such a way as to transcend, not reproduce, this pervasive dualism.

To meet this challenge, one research agenda is to conduct more studies of collective action and social movements in non-western societies. As anthropologists (Lutz 1988) have shown, these societies have different emotion cultures. Emotions may thus have very different meanings and expressions. Do interests have the same kind of influence on collective action as in modern western societies? Is it possible to separate emotions from interests? How do emotions structure social action in such cultures? Exploring these questions will help to uncover ways of transcending the reason/emotion dualism still prevalent in current research. Another

research agenda is to study how social movements are not only suffused with emotions, but also aim to transform emotion cultures. Are there influential movements that target or change emotion cultures? What are their characteristics? How do they compare with other movements in their trajectories? Addressing these questions will contribute to the understanding of both the constraints of the dominant culture of instrumental rationality in contemporary society and the possibilities of emotional emancipation.

SEE ALSO: Collective Action; Collective Identity; Culture, Social Movements and; Emotion: Cultural Aspects; Emotion Work; Emotions and Economy; Resource Mobilization Theory; Ritual; Social Movements

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empire

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In its broadest transhistorical sense empire refers to a large-scale, multi-ethnic political unit (usually with a state at its core) that directly or indirectly rules over, and therefore encompasses, smaller political units that were previously independent. Hence, empire always involves relations of domination and subordination between core and peripheral areas and their populations, which are most often established by conquest and maintained, in the last instance, by the exercise or threat of force. Nevertheless, empire may fall short of direct colonial rule and instead be implemented through informal mechanisms of political control based on indigenous elites and indirect methods of cultural domination and economic exploitation. These formal and informal practices of empire, and the ideologies that justify them, constitute *imperialism*. Both terms have their etymological roots in the Latin *imperium*.

In ancient Rome, the meaning of *imperium* was originally restricted to the authority of

Roman magistrates to act in the name of Rome and its citizens, at home (*imperium domi*) and abroad (*imperium militiae*). With the territorial expansion of Roman rule around the time of Julius Caesar and Augustus, the term came to connote authority abstracted from any particular bearer of that authority; the distinction between *imperium domi* and *militiae* progressively collapsed; and the term took on an explicitly territorial dimension. Rome and the territories over which it ruled were now considered to form a single *Imperium Romanum* (Armitage 1998: xv–xvi). This *imperium* was in principle limitless, embodying a universalist ethos that distinguishes it from modern empires premised on the particularist and territorially circumscribed claims of national states. It also defined itself as coterminous with “civilization,” labeling all those outside its parameters as barbarians and therefore legitimate targets of conquest – a Manichean distinction borrowed from the Greeks, but one that is overtly or covertly a feature of all empires.

The existence of empire in antiquity was not, of course, limited to the Romans. The ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Greeks all built significant empires, as did the Macedonians, Persians, Incas, and Chinese. In fact, the unification of the latter under the Ch'in and Han dynasties in the two centuries BCE eventually realized an imperial dominion that rivaled if not exceeded that of Rome, both in terms of geographical extent and technological dynamism. The ocean-going exploits of the Chinese eunuch Admiral Cheng-Ho in the early 1400s even held out the possibility of a Chinese alternative to European modernity and global expansion, albeit one that was, for reasons that were bound up with China's domestic political economy, ultimately not realized.

If for the moment we leave aside the empires of Christian Europe, the other great premodern empire is represented by the expansion of Islam out of the Arabian peninsula from the seventh century CE, followed by its various off-shoots in the second millennium (principally the Mogul and Ottoman empires). During the course of this thousand year expansion, what had initially been an empire was politically fragmented. From the early centuries of the second millennium it is therefore more appropriate to speak