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Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements

Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta (eds), The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2001, £38.00, paper £15.00, 370pp.

A ‘cultural turn’ has infused the field of social movement research in the last decade, bringing greater attention to bear on the cultural contexts of action, including framing processes, collective identity and group solidarity – yet until now there has been little attention to emotions. This agenda-setting collection, drawn from a 1999 conference, sets out to reclaim a place for emotions at the centre of political analysis and to challenge the instrumentalist and cognitive biases of reigning models.

Although emotions once mattered in the analysis of political protest in terms of ‘irrational’ crowd behaviour, Oedipal rebellions, or identity crises, the editors argue in the introduction that such judgmental psychologizing was thankfully swept away by the rationalistic approaches of resource mobilization theory in the 1970s–80s. However, the emphasis of this new generation of scholars on organization-building, strategy, and tactics went too far in treating ‘rational protestors as devoid of emotions’ (p. 5). Now the field has come full circle and it is again acceptable to discuss why and how emotions are crucial to the origin, spread, and decline of social movements, as well as shaping wider ‘emotional cultures’ and ‘emotional repertoires’.

The key to this paradigm shift is the emergence of understandings of emotions as ‘culturally or socially constructed’ (p. 12). Rather than being conceptualised as individual internal states, emanating from either biological ‘hard-wiring’ or psychological ‘personality structures’, emotions in this constructivist view are intersubjective and relational, and come bundled with cognitive and moral orientations. Contributors thus focus on both the ‘reciprocal’ emotions movement participants feel towards one another (such as ‘the pleasures of protest’) and the ‘shared’ emotions they feel towards other people or towards particular events (such as anger, shame, and outrage) as crucial aspects of the political process (p. 20). The volume is divided into four sections on: theoretical perspectives; the cultural contexts of politics; movement recruitment and internal dynamics; and emotional dynamics of political conflicts.

Part one somewhat disappointingly does not actually offer a strong programme for the kind of cultural sociology of emotions suggested in the introduction. Building on a Durkheimian theory of ritual process, Randall Collins focuses on the idea of 'emotional attention space' in which feelings of solidarity and emotional energy are generated. Craig Calhoun calls for us to avoid dualistic traps by attending to the emotional investments that underpin the relative stability of institutions, as well as more dramatic moments of passionate disruption. Theodore Kemper offers a 'structural approach' to emotions that is somewhat at odds with the rest of the book. And Frank Dobbin advances the agenda of Albert Hirschman's *The Passions and the Interests* (1977) by suggesting that we question where 'rational interest' or 'passionate actor' frames 'come from in the first place, and how we select among them' (p. 80). The friction between these chapters generates more heat than enlightenment.

Part two offers only three case studies of 'cultural contexts': the emotive components of political identities in Italy (Mabel Berezin), the evangelical shift toward immediate abolitionism in the nineteenth-century United States (Michael P. Young), and the power of shame among the US Christian Right (Arlene Stein). It leaves the reader wondering what methodology to use in moving the study of emotions from psychological inner 'feelings' to interpersonal social constructions. At what level can we locate emotions? How do we recognize 'communities of feeling' (p. 93), 'emotional cultures' or shifts in 'temperaments' (p. 112)? Anne Kane's later chapter on emotions as 'situated in elaborate metaphorically conceptualized structures' that can be studied through narrative analysis of "'master" emotional paradigms' (pp. 253–4) might have rounded off this section, raising methodological questions about how to study the 'affective orientations of a collective' (p. 265).

Part three offers a stronger suite of studies on the *internal* emotional dynamics of different types of movements including AIDS activism, the Central American peace movement in the US, Solidarity in Poland, charity organizations, and the animal rights movement in the US. The varied approaches usefully illustrate alternative ways in which one might go about bringing emotions back into social movement research. In a critique of political opportunity approaches, for example, Deborah Gould argues that militant AIDS activism emerged in a context of constricted rather than widening opportunities; and suggests that we have to focus instead on the internal emotional dynamics of the communities in which ACT UP arose, in particular the management of 'ambivalence' within lesbian and gay identities. Colin Barker draws on dialogical approaches to show how emotions work together with more cognitive orientations to create a kind of 'emotional tone'. In narrating the events of the 1980 strike in Gdansk he successfully demonstrates how a 'structure of feeling' emerges and shifts through an intense process of collective action, talk, ritual, and negotiation.

In part four, Arlie Hochschild's approach to the 'management of emotions' emerges as a crucial way of understanding 'feelings as contextual and con-

nected to larger cultural systems' (p. 234). Nancy Whittier productively builds on her idea of 'emotional labor' to show how emotional displays and discourses are managed in relation to legal requirements of demonstrating 'harm' in order to claim compensation for child sexual abuse. Elisabeth Wood attends to the 'emotional in-process benefits' (p. 268) of peasant insurgency in El Salvador, while Goodwin and Pfaff use concepts of 'emotion management' and 'feeling rules' to explore the 'management of fear' in two high-risk movements, the US civil rights movement and the East German civic movement of the late 1980s. This section would have benefited from a more thoroughly constructivist contribution demonstrating how boundaries between friends and foes, strangers versus those 'like us', surface in the first place out of the highly emotive dynamics of political contention.

A concluding overview by Polletta and Amenta rounds off the book by considering both the contributions and limitations of recent work on emotions and social movements. Ways forward include adding emotional processes to existing explanations for mobilization, challenging key tenets of the political process model, and developing a broader historical sociology of emotion cultures. But to achieve any of these will require greater methodological clarity, they suggest, although this is not one of the strengths of this book. With its varied approaches but lack of overall synthesis *Passionate Politics* serves as a welcome marker for the beginnings of a rich new field of research, one which is still open for others to stake out their claims.