

BOOK REVIEW/COMPTE RENDU

Barbara Sieben and Åsa Wettergren, *Emotionalizing Organizations and Organizing Emotions*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 295 pp. \$US 105.00 hardcover (978-0-230-25025-4)

Sociologists have recently shown great interest in emotions, passions, sentiments, and feelings, evinced by the publication of numerous books, articles, and edited volumes. *Emotionalizing Organizations and Organizing Emotions* contributes to this growing body of literature. Sociological interest in emotions follows a considerable period of time during which emotions were assumed to be of scholarly interest to psychologists alone.

Though *Emotionalizing Organizations and Organizing Emotions* stems from a meeting of the European Sociological Association's Research Network on the Sociology of Emotions, it is not intended to be a contribution to sociology proper (if it is proper to invoke the idea of hard and fast disciplinary boundaries). This volume contributes instead to the more specialized literature on organization and management studies, which draws equally from sociology and psychology and is common in the United Kingdom and many Scandinavian countries. Sociologists in Canada and elsewhere who study emotions and organizations will still be keen to read *Emotionalizing Organizations and Organizing Emotions*, as the contributors make several conceptual and empirical contributions to scholarly understandings of these important topics.

Like Hochschild in *The Managed Heart*, most sociologists start the tricky task of defining emotions by pointing to four elementary components: (i) awareness of a situation, followed by (ii) changes in bodily feelings, then (iii) the expression of gestures and finally (iv) a cultural label and discursive framing of the initial components. Yet there is little agreement about how to further define emotions beyond these. In *Emotionalizing Organizations and Organizing Emotions* too, there is a disagreement about the best way to create conceptual refinement. For instance, in his chapter, Stephen Fineman argues that emotions must be understood as socially shaped and governed in organizational contexts. In other words, Fineman writes that he is against the "psychologizing of emotions" that appears in literature on organization and management studies and in the social sciences more broadly. Providing a counter-

point, Yianis Gabriel draws from psychoanalytic theory to discuss what he calls “caring emotions” in contemporary service work. He argues that emotions can be “unmanaged and unmanageable.” Literature on the commercialization of emotions, such as Hochschild’s classic text, tends to overemphasize how emotions are scripted and controlled in work settings, argues Gabriel. Put otherwise, Gabriel contends that most scholarship regarding work, organizations, and emotions presents too “narrow and regimented” an account.

Many of the chapters in *Emotionalizing Organizations and Organizing Emotions* follow Fineman’s argument about the organizational control of emotions. For example, Carmen Baumeler uses Norbert Elias on the civilizing process to discuss informal rules for affect control at work. She also uses Michel Foucault to discuss the disciplining of emotions that accompanies the discourse of “emotionally intelligent employees.” In a notable piece of ethnographic research, Alberto Martin Perez demonstrates how migrants and immigrants queuing for citizenship status cards must manage outward displays of anguish, humiliation, and resignation to avoid being removed from the line or otherwise denied citizenship. In his chapter on telephone-based service work, Versa Leppänen argues that “emotional neutrality has become the normative ideal” in the world of precarious employment. Similarly, Helena Flam, Jeff Hearn, and Wendy Parkin show how gendered emotions concerning sexual harassment are silenced in organizations.

Several other chapters in *Emotionalizing Organizations and Organizing Emotions* follow Gabriel’s argument concerning unmanageable emotions. For example, Nicole Bornheim explores what she refers to as positive emotions that result from providing care in an elderly home. On the theme of unmanageable emotions, Christian Imdorf investigates how “gut feelings” inform hiring decisions in organizations. Paul Poder examines the interactional processes that can engender confidence.

This dichotomy between managed and unmanageable emotions set up by Fineman and Gabriel at the beginning of *Emotionalizing Organizations and Organizing Emotions* is a potentially useful conceptual framing device. The edited volume’s title certainly alludes to this dualism. Yet the dichotomy of managed versus unmanageable emotions can also limit understandings of complex, interactional, historical processes. Andrea Cossu shows how the Italian Communist Party of the 1940s created a set of suppression rules for emotions at the same time as effervescence (in the Durkheimian sense) propelled the movement forward. The dichotomy between managed and unmanageable emotions fails to provide sufficient nuance to help conceptualize this historical case study, so Cossu

draws instead from Jack Barbalet's writings on emotions, which attempt to move beyond the objective/subjective and structure/agency dualisms.

The idea of "unmanageable emotions," which conjures up notions of authenticity and unmediated experience, points to some primordial way of being, a kind of genuine experience; these types of claims are unconvincing to sociologists who focus more on the social organization of emotions. The authors in this volume who follow Gabriel's position tend to invoke the idea of "caring emotions" and "positive emotions" without emphasizing how these emotions are also socially organized, and, in a sense, managed. While Gabriel provides a persuasive argument against thinking of emotions as fully controlled, and Gabriel's own psychoanalytical approach to emotions accounts for relationality with the notion of transference, there must be a way to build a conceptual framework that does not simply boil emotions down to primordial, isolated, states of being, which is the risk one runs by invoking the idea of unmanageable emotions. The sociologists and psychologists who comprise organization and management studies need to refine this dichotomy of managed versus unmanageable emotions, or move beyond it. Cossu's chapter in this volume is a step on the road to conceptual refinement.

Missing from *Emotionalizing Organizations and Organizing Emotions* is sustained commentary on research methods in the study of emotions. In their introduction, the editors review different conceptual typologies but gloss over the issue of research methods. In his chapter on the emotions of hiring practices, Imdorf admits that he is unable to substantiate his thesis without conducting participant observation research; this reader appreciates such honesty when it comes to the limits of social scientific research methods and particular research designs. There are an abundance of conceptual positions concerning emotions in sociology, cultural studies, and organization studies, as the recent wave of publications on emotions, passions, sentiments, and feelings make clear. Yet social science research methods may still be ill equipped to explore the meanings and social organization of emotions, and the topic deserves additional consideration. Now that the resurgence of sociological interest in emotions has created a rich set of theories to draw upon, it might be time for scholars of emotions to strike a theory truce and work toward methodological innovation.

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