

The Sociology of Emotions Seminar at the University of Gothenburg (EMOGU)

Online symposium:

EMOTION IN POLITICS

November 13, **9.00–12.00 am CET**

Zoom Link: <https://gu-se.zoom.us/j/64682536942>

Speakers:

Carol Johnson

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Affective Citizenship, populism and pandemics.

This paper builds on my previous work on affective citizenship and emotional regimes. It focuses on some key issues in the politics of emotion in a time not just of pandemic but of social and geoeconomic change. In particular, the paper focuses on the discursive role that political leaders play in encouraging positive emotions amongst citizens, such as feeling secure, protected and proud in addition to the leaders' (often interconnected) role of encouraging negative emotions such as fear and anger. The paper explores a range of related issues, from the gendered nature of such political leadership to the emotional challenges which social democratic parties face in a time of populism and pandemics. It cites examples from a range of countries to illustrate the points being made.

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Ressentiment and Greek Politics

Some bibliographies of nationalism (e.g. Greenfeld) argue that, in their competitive interdependence, separate national identities have been and/or are established in a climate governed by resentment. Herein resentment is defined as an unpleasant complex moral sentiment with no specific addressees, experienced by inferior individuals including a chronic reliving of repressed and endless vengefulness, hostility, hatred, envy, and resentment due to the powerlessness of the subject in expressing them, and resulting, at the level of moral values, in the disavowal of what is unconsciously desired. Based on available data from the

WVS 7th round, it will be examined, first, whether resentment is a trait (psychological orientation) of the Greek national political culture or it is statistically linked to specific socio-demographic categories constituting, therefore, an element of political subculture(s). Second, a number of research hypotheses will be discussed regarding the relationship of resentment with other emotions, values, social attitudes and orientations. This is accomplished by using a 6-items resentment scale added on the WVS questionnaire.

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What are emotional mechanisms?

The paper offers an account of emotional mechanisms (EMs). EMs are claimed to be personal, often unconscious, distinctively patterned, mental processes whereby an emotion of a given kind is transmuted into an emotion of a different kind. After some preliminary considerations about emotions as felt evaluations, the paper identifies three families of emotional mechanisms. These processes are set in motion when a given emotion (e.g., envy, shame, or anger) generates feelings of inferiority and/or impotence in the subject resulting in a negative self-image. These feelings prompt an evaluative reappraisal of the emotion's intentional target. Based on the reappraisal, the subject comes to feel a second emotion of a different kind, which does not generate feelings of inferiority and/or impotence. Importantly, the second emotion entails a psychological disposition to be collectivized: the subject seeks for confirmation of the revised evaluation by sharing the outcome emotion of the process with others. It is argued that these features set EMs apart from other emotion regulatory processes.

Please NOTE: The symposium begins at 9 am sharp. Please keep your microphones muted when you are not participating in the discussion.