

## CALL FOR PAPERS:

### THE 4<sup>th</sup> MIDTERM CONFERENCE ON EMOTIONS IN BERLIN

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This call for the upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> midterm conference of the Research Network Sociology of Emotions within the European Sociological Association is addressed to both sociologists and historians and aims at stimulating fruitful debates about emotions across these two disciplines. The midterm conference will be housed jointly by the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Center for the History of Emotions and the Cluster “Languages of Emotion” at Freie Universität (FU), both situated in Berlin. It will take place between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> of October, 2012.

Although all high quality abstracts on any emotion-highlighting topic will be given serious consideration, the organizing committee identified several focal areas of investigation in which abstracts are particularly welcome. These areas cover current developments of great social impact as well as questions of superior scientific importance.

At this point one special shared session is envisioned for which speakers will be invited.

#### **Special Plenary Session: Theoretical Explorations**

In this session speakers with diverse disciplinary backgrounds will offer an overview of the research on emotions in their respective fields. But the primary objective is not to take stock of existing research. Rather the session will aim at exploring needs and possibilities for theoretical advances in the future. To this end participants are invited to compare theoretical approaches within and across academic disciplines, to identify gaps in existing research agendas and to ponder ways of moving into new terrains. What can we say about intentions and discourses driving various research agendas—are they still inspiring or have they turned into obstacles to further development? Is a new thrust in theorizing badly needed to counterbalance a plethora of unrelated empirical studies?

#### **Regular Sessions:**

*Specific Emotions:* Even as the sociology of emotions was emerging and the concept of emotion management acquired great visibility, critics argued that one needs to take time to explore different, specific emotions. To date this critique has not entirely lost its validity, despite some notable exceptions. Other disciplines may have explored different emotions to some extent, but this either has not made its way into sociological analysis or takes the form of armchair speculations about specific emotions and is of little use for social analysis. In this session we welcome abstracts that explore the nature of specific emotions with a keen eye on making such conceptualizations fruitful for theoretical or empirical social analysis. Abstracts should focus on ways to explore specific emotions, such as, for example, solidarity, hate, mistrust, compassion or sympathy, etc.

*Emergence and Reproduction of Groups and Collectivities:* Much has been said on emotions binding groups and collectivities by the classics of sociology, but their contributions have not yet led to a coherent research agenda. In a transnational world the question should be addressed anew in

what ways and by what means groups and collectivities emerge and become sustained, paying particular attention to the role of emotions and emotionally grounded stereotyping in this process. What is the contribution of sports, mass media, culture, art, education or politics to evoking and sustaining emotions that in turn generate small group and larger collective life? Which of their specific traits evoke collectivity-generating emotions? Do they evoke similar or different emotions? Do they have the same or different size publics? Is there a division of labor between them or do they perhaps compete or even undermine each other? In a transnational context, what is their emotion-laden contribution to reminding of, reporting on, creating, competing with, loving and/or hating 'the other'—whether situated among 'us' or across the border(s)?

*Emotions and Civic Action:* Research on protest and social movements has become a large and well-established field. On a smaller scale the focus on emotions in social movements has equally gained acceptance. However, emotions also move individuals to become involved in other forms of collective projects that are typically not understood as social movements, such as volunteerism, charity, benevolence, NGOs, the third sector, etc. There is a dearth of sociological research that maps the emotions relevant to non-protest-related collective efforts and investigates how emotions function for these endeavors. Such explorations would also help us define differences and similarities between social movements and other forms of civic action and organizing. We invite abstracts that focus on these issues and deal with such questions as: which emotion signify in different forms of civic action, how do they sustain for instance volunteerism, charity, NGOs, etc. over time and how may they lead to demise? How do they contribute to shifts from one form of civic action to another, such as protest? What are the potentials of different emotional bases for degrees of politicization? Are there some emotions which are specifically mobilized in this context to frame the actions (such as pity for charity)?

*Protest:* How have forms of protest changed in Western and non-Western societies? Demonstrations were a relative novelty in the 1960s in Western Europe and the US after the largely conformist post WWII-era. Today as a form of protest they are widely accepted, having lost much of their contesting symbolic force. Are new powerful forms of contestation emerging? Has face-to-face criticism become more challenging and emotionally demanding? Is the Occupy-Movement offering anything new in terms of emotions and as a protest form? Can any special emotions be linked to demonstrations as compared to the Occupy-movement? Protest waves such as the worker demonstrations/sit-ins of the 1960s in Western Europe, solidarity movements, anti-colonial liberation movements, the 'velvet' revolutions in Central Europe in 1989, and the Arab Spring in 2011/2012 have exemplified emotion-laden novelties, each in a different region at a different time. What are their commonalities, what are the differences concerning emotional regimes and emotions they have called for? How does the changing role of the media impact on emotional processes in social movements? What difference does it make in terms of emotions that recent protest movements were very much stimulated and organized by the internet and internet-based social networks? And in the context of transnationalization: what does it mean if emotions "travel"? Is there a national difference in their expression?

*Body and Space:* By now many agree that it is important to study embodied emotions in space. Whether we take a Foucauldian perspective or investigate what professionals do when they work, we are struck by how practices and discourses create embodied emotions in various spatial bodies-artifacts-constellations. How can analysis of the interaction between emotional patterns and spatial settings further our understanding of social and economic dynamics? What role does the body and its being structured by dichotomies like healthy/ill, normal/deviant, rational/irrational or superior/inferior play for these processes? What concepts and terms are useful and revealing when analyzing these processes? Should we, for instance, refer to emotions as embodied

thoughts, as a specific emotional habitus, distinguishing between affects, feelings and/or emotions? Or should we look for other conceptual tools?

*Visuals:* In this session speakers will share their knowledge about the visuals and the analytical tools that can be used to focus on the emotions they present to their viewers. How should we analyze it? Which theoretical approaches from other disciplines (as for example art history or film studies) can we use? How do they inspire or limit our focus? How can we combine visual analysis with the analysis of discourses? What is the role of precedents, contextualization, historicization? Are there historically or culturally specific ways of forging links between emotions and visual representations? How does one move between protest, popular culture and the classics in art?

*Law:* An emerging argument has it that even an alleged mainstay of rationality, namely law, has paid increasing attention to emotional patterns and practices. Firstly, emotions have been evaluated as extenuating circumstances in criminal sentences. Secondly, with the tendency to widen the court-room into a space for social negotiations, the emotions of the victims gained in importance. And thirdly, legislators and courts increasingly considered community- or gender-specific emotional standards when defining rules, e.g. in family law, or when judging certain behaviors. What strategies and for what purposes were and are emotions evoked in judicial contexts? How were specific trials emotionalized to fight for other (political) agendas? Is it possible to identify a general emotionalization of the judicial sphere? And how are these processes linked to other developments like a general tendency to see emotions from a therapeutic angle? Can scrutinizing these questions further our understanding of the changing role of law within modern societies?

*Finance:* Since the late 1980s ethnographers, sociologists and historians have researched open outcry trading floors, trading rooms and investment banks. These studies often failed to expand their field of vision beyond the immediate observation area. If at all, they only inadvertently paid attention to emotions. Recurring speculation, economic and financial crises call for a more critical take on the financial world and the assumption that economic actors – or markets – are rational or that individually rational action will create collective goods. In which ways do emotions inform market developments and the emergence of specific economic cultures? And how do these in turn evoke emotions? How were practices of actors in the field of economics driven by emotions? How can we use emotions as category to explain cumulative processes/snow ball effects in these field? What can we learn from studying such interactions beyond the assertion that markets sometimes function “irrationally”?

*Post-Atrocities Emotions:* In the past two-three decades resurgence in idealism, calling on societies split by violent conflicts to pursue truth, justice and reconciliation (often cast as a precondition for making a transition to democracy), has re-asserted itself. Both transnationally and in each of the societies whose members had taken part in atrocities, there are attempts to formulate rules for which emotions are prescribed and which are proscribed. Contributions are welcome highlighting in a critical way these emotional regimes and the vested interests behind them. How are emotions and emotional practices used and negotiated in order to come to terms with what has happened, to castigate perpetrators or to heal and forgive? This might also relate to explorations into the emotional dimensions of trauma.

*Researching Emotions Empirically:* Even though sociological and historical analyses of emotions have by now enjoyed a history of several decades and despite the more recent proliferation of emotion research, there is a dearth of methodological frameworks for investigating emotions empirically. We ask for contributions that develop and critically reflect such frameworks. Specific

issues could include: how can researchers deal with their own emotions within the analysis? How can one delineate an emotional culture empirically? How can one approach emotions within a transnational analysis? How can different approaches to empirical research inform a focus on emotions? How would they have to be tweaked?

*Emotions and Power.* Although both power and emotion are essential features of the conduct and constitution of social life, research on these two phenomena—whatever their conceptual guises—has tended to run in parallel, without explicitly engaging the other. It seems to us that the time is ripe for exploring the connections between these two fundamentals of society. To this end we would like to invite submissions that address both, either empirically or theoretically. We are particularly interested in papers that seek to investigate the interrelated role that both power and emotions play in specific arenas or around specific topics. For example, papers that address emotions and power in organisations, in social movements, in politics, in media, in welfare and warfare, in families, in education and so on, are especially sought, though submissions are not limited to these fields of inquiry. Papers addressing emotions, power and gender are also particularly welcome.

Abstracts not exceeding 300 words should be sent by the 1st of May 2012 to Jochen Kleres [jkleres@gmx.de](mailto:jkleres@gmx.de). Please send your abstract indicating whether it is for a specific session listed above. Notifications about the abstracts selected for presentation at the midterm conference will be made by mid-July 2012 at the latest. Also conference fees, more precise conference times, and links to accommodation will be announced in July—but please note that Berlin offers a wide range of accommodation opportunities, including many B&Bs, smaller and large apartments to rent as well as no-money-involved arrangements. The conference venues are:

Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Lentzeallee 94, 14 195 Berlin, and  
Cluster of Excellence “Languages of Emotion”, Habelschwerdter Allee 45, 14 195 Berlin.

The organizing committee:

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