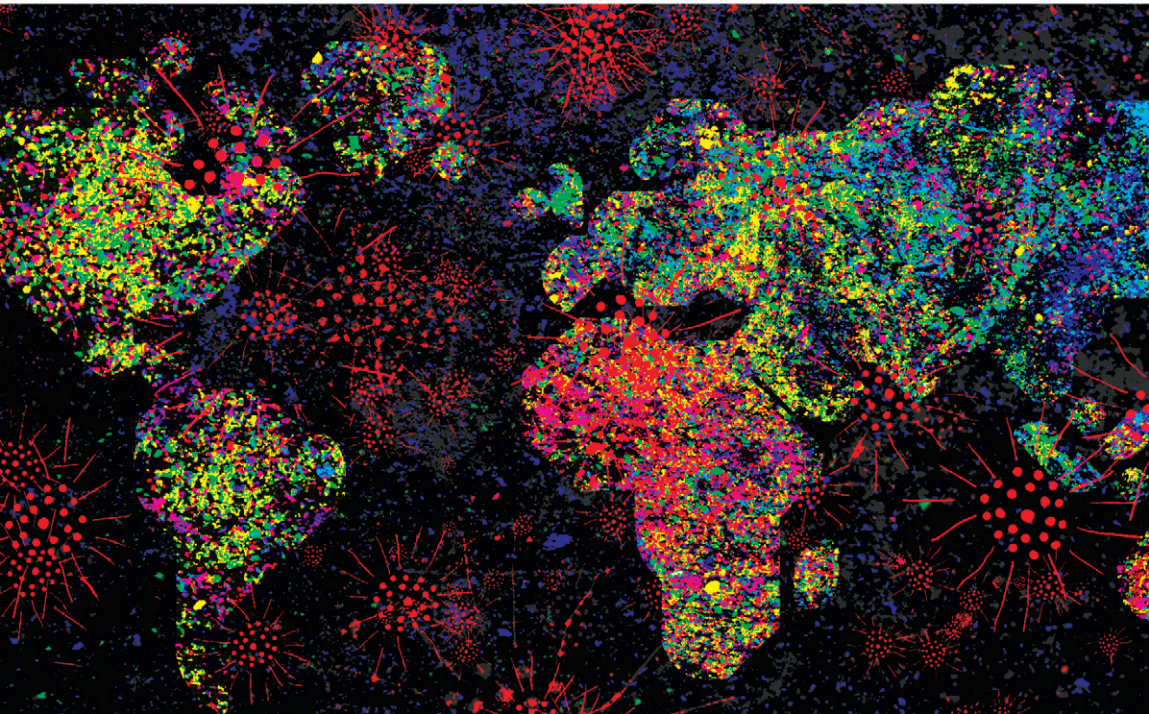
EMERALD**HANDBOOKS**

THE EMERALD HANDBOOK OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF EMOTIONS FOR A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

IMAGINED EMOTIONS AND EMOTIONAL FUTURES

EDITED BY
PAUL R. **WARD**
KRISTEN **FOLEY**



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The Emerald Handbook of the Sociology of Emotions for a Post-Pandemic World: Imagined Emotions and Emotional Futures

EDITED BY

PAUL R. WARD

Research Centre for Public Health, Equity and Human Flourishing, Torrens University Australia

And

KRISTEN FOLEY

Research Centre for Public Health, Equity and Human Flourishing, Torrens University Australia

United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

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Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

About the Contributors

Krystine Irene Batcho is Professor of Psychology at Le Moyne College, USA. Her scholarly pursuits have explored relationships among memory, emotion and psychological well-being. With a primary focus on nostalgia, her research interests have included memory, emotion, identity, resistance, coping, childhood happiness and the psychological impact of stories.

Patrick Brown is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Amsterdam and Director of the research group on Political Sociology. He is the Editor of the journal *Health, Risk & Society*. Patrick's research mainly focuses upon social processes by which individuals, groups and organisations cope with vulnerability and uncertainty – including risk, trust, hope, rituals and faith, among others – and the way these processes shape one another, wider organisational dynamics and the everyday practices of professionals and patients. He has published widely on these topics, including the 2021 book *On Vulnerability: A Critical Introduction*.

Dr Stella Bullo is a Visiting Lecturer at Plymouth Marjon University, UK. Her research is in the area of health communication investigating discourses of women's health, endometriosis, pain communication and cross-cultural discourses of health.

Dr Marianne Clark is an Assistant Professor in the School of Kinesiology at Acadia University, Canada. Her research interests include girls' and women's health with a focus on embodiment as well as the intersections of physical and digital cultures. She is the co-author of *Feminist New Materialisms, Sport and Fitness: A Lively Entanglement* (Palgrave MacMillan 2020) and *The Face Mask in COVID Times: A Sociomaterial Analysis* (De Gruyter, 2021). Her research has been published in *New Media & Society*, *Health*, *BioSocieties* and *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*.

Marci D. Cottingham is Associate Professor of Sociology at Kenyon College, USA. She was previously associate professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands, and a visiting fellow at the Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg Institute for Advanced Studies in Germany from 2019 to 2020. Her research focuses on the sociology of emotion, social inequalities, and health and healthcare. Her book, *Practical Feelings: Emotions as Resources in a Dynamic Social World*, was published in 2022 by Oxford University Press. In it,

she traces emotions across work, leisure, social media and politics, countering old myths to show how emotions are practical resources for tackling individual and collective challenges.

Kristen Foley is a Researcher and Doctoral Candidate at Torrens University Australia. An emerging social scientist with an interest in human flourishing, her doctoral work hinges these interests to feminist questions around care, commercialisation, consumption and contemporary knowledge economies.

Patrick Gamsby is the Scholarly Communications Librarian at Memorial University of Newfoundland in Canada. He holds a PhD from Laurentian University, is the author of *Henri Lefebvre, Boredom, and Everyday Life* (Lexington Books, 2022) and is currently working on a book titled *The Discourse of Scholarly Communication*.

Dr Jasmine Hearn is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Manchester Metropolitan University. Her research focuses on managing long-term health conditions such as spinal cord injury and chronic pain, and pain communication.

Michael Hviid Jacobsen is Professor of Sociology at Aalborg University, Denmark. In his research, he explores theoretical and empirical issues across social theory, the sociology of death, crime, social psychology, emotions, ethics, ethnography, interaction, metaphors, poetic sociology, utopias and qualitative methods. He is the editor of *The Poetics of Crime*, *Nostalgia Now*, *Postmortal Society*, *The Contemporary Goffman* and *Critical and Cultural Interactionism*, and co-editor of *The Sociology of Zygmunt Bauman*, *Encountering the Everyday*, *The Transformation of Modernity*, *Utopia: Social Theory and the Future*, *Liquid Criminology*, *Imaginative Methodologies: The Poetic Imagination in the Social Sciences*, *Towards a Criminology of Emotions*, *Exploring Grief: Towards a Sociology of Sorrow* and *Death in Contemporary Popular Culture*.

Belinda Lunnay is a Post Doctoral researcher who has established a career applying sociological theory to understand the effects of social class on health-related decision-making. She has expertise in using qualitative methodologies to explore class disparities in the moralistic and affective aspects of gendered practices of consumption.

Amir Marvasti is Professor of Sociology at Penn State University, Altoona, USA. His research focuses on the social construction of identity in everyday encounters and institutional settings. He also has an active publication record on the pedagogy of qualitative research. His books in this area include *Qualitative Research in Sociology* (Sage, 2004), *Doing Qualitative Research: A Comprehensive Guide* (with David Silverman, Sage, 2008) and *Researching Social Problems* (with Javier Treviño, Routledge, 2019).

Poul Poder is Associate Professor of Sociology at University of Copenhagen, Denmark. His primary research and teaching interests concern sociological theory, sociology of emotions, violence, conflict, friendship and love. He co-edited a recent book *Resolving International Conflict: Dynamics of Escalation, Continuation and*

Transformation (2019). This book suggests a new framework for understanding conflict as a particular form of situation, interaction and tension; variously influenced by emotions such as humiliation in our globalised world. His work on humiliation also extends to conceptualising daily suffering in social life, published in *Alleviating World Suffering: The Challenge of Negative Quality of Life* (2017 edited by Anderson, R) and his most recent writing on "The end of contemporary love" discusses whether we find ourselves in a dissolution or a democratisation of love. He further has contributed to the theoretical development of 'caring collectives' which emerge during moments of urban violence, and advances thinking about what bystanders do in situations of violence (Bloch, Liebst, Poder, Christiansen, & Heinskou, 2018).

Christopher Raymond, DrPH, MPH, is a public health professional working in the Asia-Pacific region on large-scale health projects around infectious disease control, pharmaceutical quality and conducting social science research around health policy, local knowledge, religion and health equity. He has worked with bilateral and multilateral agencies, including USAID, WHO, GFATM and others on issues of public and private sector capacity building on tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and avian and pandemic influenzas. He earned his Doctor of Public Health from Flinders University of South Australia, and a Master of Public Health from Mahidol University, Thailand. Dr Raymond is currently a PhD candidate at Torrens University Australia focusing on medical anthropology, health equity, ontological pluralism and health policy in Indonesia.

Travis Saylor is a student at Penn State University, Altoona, USA. He is pursuing a bachelor's degree in Psychology with a focus on Clinical and Social Psychology. His studies and research explore changes in cultural values and symbols over time. He has also assisted with research in cognitive psychology, investigating the effects of proactive interference in the visuospatial domain of working memory.

Adrian Scribano is the Director of the Centre for Sociological Research and Studies and a Principal Researcher at the National Council for Scientific and Technical Research of Argentina. He is also the Director of the Latin American Journal of Studies on Bodies, Emotions and Society and the Study Group on Sociology of Emotions and Bodies in the Gino Germani Research Institute, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Buenos Aires. He is, at the same time, a member of the Editorial Management Board of Emotions and Society Journal and the President of the International Network of Sociology of Sensibilities (ReDISS). His latest books are Scribano, A. (2021) *Colonization of the Inner Planet: 21st Century Social Theory from the Politics of Sensibilities*. Routledge, UK; Cerulo, M. and Scribano, A. (2021) *The Emotions in the Classics of Sociology: A Study in Social Theory*. Routledge, UK; Scribano, A. and Korstanje, M. E. (2020) *Imagining the Alterity: The Position of the Other in the Classic Sociology and Anthropology*. Nova Science Publishers, NY USA.

Dr Clare Southerton is a Lecturer in Digital Technology and Pedagogy in the School of Education at La Trobe University, Australia. Her research explores the intersections between social media and digital technologies, and issues related to

intimacy, sexuality, privacy and health. She is a co-author of *The Face Mask in COVID Times: A Sociomaterial Analysis* (De Gruyter, 2021) and her work has been published in *New Media & Society*, *Social Media + Society* and the *International Journal of Communication.*

Paul R. Ward is a Professor at Torrens University Australia. An internationally distinguished and highly influential social scientist, Ward leads a research institute that seeks to move public health away from biomedicine towards a more open-ended future.

Megan Warin is a Professor of Social Sciences and Director of the Fay Gale Centre for Research on Gender at the University of Adelaide. Her research investigates gender and class differences in obesity, public understandings of gendered bodies and obesity science (developmental origins of health and disease and epigenetics), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander views on epigenetics and intergenerational transmission, phenomenological approaches to embodiment and the nature of desire in disordered eating.

Lexi Webster is the Deputy Director of Digital Humanities at the University of Southampton. Her research focuses primarily on corpus linguistics and critical discourse studies, focusing on the implications that identity constructions and cognitive models have on social actors, institutions, and structures.

Kingsley Whittenbury graduated in medicine at the University of Adelaide in 1978 and completed a doctorate in medical pedagogy for social accountability in 2021 at the College of Medicine and Public Health at Flinders University of South Australia. Doctoral supervisors were Prof Paul R. Ward and Prof David Hunter. Dr Whittenbury's career varied between rural primary health care, Australian Indigenous health and medical professionalism education. Post-doctoral interests include medical and health sociology, cybersemiotic communication, biosemiotics, semioethics and Legitimation Code Theory in medical education. He lives on the Adelaide Plains, traditional lands of the Kaurna people. Researcher ORCID: 0000-0002-3871-0433

Janelle L. Wilson is a sociologist at the University of Minnesota Duluth. She is author of *Nostalgia: Sanctuary of Meaning*, and co-author (with Carmen M. Latterell) of *Mathematical Metaphors, Memories, and Mindsets: An Examination of Personal, Social, and Cultural Influences on the Perception of Mathematics.*

Foreword

The SARS-Cov-2 (Covid-19) global pandemic spawned a vast breadth of research – within biomedical science, social sciences and the humanities. Indeed, in the early months of the health emergency, we social science researchers were sometimes castigated for too readily jumping on the coronavirus bandwagon, in an academic dash to bring our particular and disparate insights to bear.

Now, however, with the benefit of time to reflect upon the human and economic cost of the past few years, and the class, ethnic and gender inequalities that the pandemic brought into razor-sharp focus, it is more than timely to reflect on what we may learn from the pandemic. In this Handbook on the sociology of emotions in a post-pandemic world, the editors Paul R. Ward and Kristen Foley have rallied an impressive range of scholars from across the social sciences, to reflect and explore the affective interactions between humans and the wee virus that has caused so much devastation. The chapters in this volume document these multiple interactions. Yet this Handbook will also serve to provide a far broader and lasting perspective on the state of the art of what has come to be known as the 'sociology of emotions'. Some chapters present empirical data from the pandemic years, while others synthesise sociological perspective to develop theoretical understanding of emotion.

Ward and Foley's introduction provides a detailed guide to the chapters that follow, so rather than recapitulate their fine words, I shall use these few prefatory pages to offer some more general reflections on the field, and how the collective trauma of the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic can refine our understanding of what emotions can do.

I'd suggest that foundationally what emotions do is link human bodies to their environment. Emotions are not the only means by which this happens, of course: human bodies interact physically, psychologically, socially and culturally with the world every moment of the day. But the corporeal intensity of emotions may drive powerful shifts in what bodies can do.

However, it would be mistaken to assume that this link between body and environment is a one-way communication, with emotions treated simply as 'felt thoughts' that remind those experiencing them how to respond to events in the social and natural world (for instance, to the victory or loss of a sporting event or election). The communication between body and environment is two-way: emotions also help to produce this social and natural world, and locate humans within it. As Jasper (1998, p. 398) has argued

> Emotions pervade all social life, social movements included. ... Not only are emotions part of our responses to events, but they also – in the form of deep affective attachments – shape the goals of our actions. ... Without them, there might be no social action at all.

In other words, emotions assemble human bodies with the rest of the material and social environment. This perspective on emotion articulates with the recent shifts within sociology that have been described as an 'affective turn' (Leys, 2011). But while psychologists frequently use the terms 'emotion' and 'affect' interchangeably, affect theorists differentiate the two, often applying Deleuze's (1988, p. 123) Spinozist and more-than-human conception of affect as 'a capacity to affect or be affected'. Affects are 'becomings' that augment or diminish the capacities of bodies, say Deleuze and Guattari (1988, p. 256), while Clough (2004, p. 15) argues that affects have the power to switch bodies 'from one mode to another in terms of attention, arousal, interest, receptivity, stimulation, attentiveness, action, reaction, and inaction'. Affects may be physical, psychological, sociocultural, political or economic, as well as emotional. Consequently, while all emotions are affects, not all affects are emotions.

This assessment suggests a sociological project to look at how emotions affect bodies, but also what they do within collectivities, social processes and social institutions, and the interactivity (in both material and interpretive registers) between human bodies and other physical, social and abstract entities in their physical and social environment.

Chapters in this Handbook variously illustrate how emotional affects during the pandemic produced broader outcomes not limited to individual bodies. Citizens' behaviour may have reflected their *trust* in epidemiological or other experts, or alternatively, in social media anti-vaccination messages (Foley et al., this volume); anger was the basis for protests against lockdowns and social distancing (Whittenbury, this volume).

However, while Durkheim (1976, p. 218) might have described protest movements against pandemic inequalities or civil unrest over lockdowns simply as a 'collective effervescence', from the perspective of the model of affect just outlined, the contribution of emotion such as anger, grief or joy to such public manifestations must be acknowledged as part of a wider flow of affect. Alongside emotions, this flow encompasses reasoned argument, law, ideology, social organisation, rights and physical coercion. Within this flow of affect what bodies can feel is a key element of what they can 'do' (Jasper, 1998).

I have been interested in how such broader consequences of emotions and other affects flow through the social world (Fox, 2013, 2015). Deleuze and Guattari (1988, p. 400) described affects as 'projectiles' that produce a chain reaction of further affects: as one emotion produces capacities to do, desire or feel, these capacities in turn create subsequent affective flows. Among the many affects that link human bodies to their social and natural environments, emotions may be very important in producing changes in states of bodies, collectivities of bodies and social organisations. For example, watching a film about inequalities in mortality due to Sars-Cov-2 might

variously generate anger toward government; elicit donations to a health charity or political cause; or turn viewers into campaigners. All of which in turn will lead to further affects, *ad infinitum.*

My own study of the emotions and affects surrounding the London Olympics and Paralympics of 2012 (Fox, 2013) traced a flow that began with the ecstatic responses to the award of the Games in 2005 through to the legacy that transformed derelict swathes of land in east London into first the Olympic Park and now a vibrant and desirable hub for housing, shopping and businesses. Along the way it boosted national pride; improved perceptions of people with disabilities; established the political career of then London Mayor Boris Johnson; brought great economic wealth to property developers and altered the demographic of that part of London as city workers bought up newly-built apartments and houses. It also entertained and lifted the spirits of those attending the Games, or watching on TV.

Other studies have demonstrated how such flows of emotions and affects not only shape an individual response to something in the environment but also contribute to politics and protest, social movements (Bensimon, 2012) and social change (Ahmed, 2004, p. 42; Jasper, 1998; Summers-Effler, 2002).

This recognition undermines any sense that emotions (as part of affective flows) are exclusively private, embodied phenomena. These studies suggest that emotions play an important role within the flow of affect that produces cultures, politics and the unfolding sweep of history. Consequently, sociology needs to attend to emotions seriously.

For a long time, emotions were reason's poor relation, sociologically. But acknowledging them as part of the affectivity that produces the social world reinstates their significance. Reason and emotion are no longer opposed or contradictory, as in many sociological analyses (Leys, 2011), but components together within the broad flow that drives a multiplicity of social processes, from political change to mob violence. Areas ripe for exploration include the interplay of emotion and reason in religion, faith and rituals; the emotions that sustain social continuity associated with national commemorations and celebrations such as May Day, Thanksgiving and monarchs' jubilees; and the part sentiment plays in the movements of stock and commodity markets.

This perspective also suggests that – as affects – emotions cut across dualisms that have been dear to sociology's heart. First, by connecting bodies with the social and physical environment, they elide the distinction between nature and culture that defined humanism (Haraway, 1992, p. 150); established the privilege of white, male, able-bodied humans from the Global North (Braidotti, 2019, p. 159) and enabled the emergence of the 'social sciences' as an area of scholarship distinct from 'natural science'. Similarly, they dissolve associated dualisms such as human/non-human, animate/inanimate, mind/matter.

Second, emotions transcend a micro/macro divide: as just noted, emotions and other affects can link the private inner worlds of humans to the public worlds of politics, economics social institutions, social groups and movements and even nations. Fear, anger and grief may translate into votes that shape a nation's economy, diminish or increase social inequalities and civil rights, or even go to war.

Finally, they dissolve a favoured dualism of sociology: agency/structure. In place of structures, systems or mechanisms at work 'beneath the surface' of social life, emotions and other affects are the means that establish the endless cascade of events that produce the world and human history. Instead of a plucky human agent struggling against the top-down power of an oppressive social structure, power and resistance flow affectively through the quotidian, more-than-human assemblages that unfold ceaselessly around bodies, actions, interactions and events (Fox & Alldred, 2018).

For all these reasons, we need to attend closely to emotions and what they do. So I have no doubt that this Handbook will make a valuable contribution to this task, as we seek to learn from the distress and economic turmoil caused by the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic and its aftermath. It rightfully deserves a place on the bookshelves of academic libraries and social scientists, and upon reading lists for all those who wish to make sense of the complex ways in which the affects and emotions of everyday life produce and reproduce the social world around us.

Nick J. Fox
University of Huddersfield, UK

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Pandemic-Emotions, Ontologies of Uncertainty and Imagining Emotional Futures

Paul R. Ward and Kristen Foley

In editing a book including chapters on different emotions from a sociological perspective, we want to be clear how emotions are conceptualised in sociology. Each one of the chapters does a much more thorough job than us, but it is important to outline some of the conceptual terrain that underpins the whole book. We will not cover the broad literature on the emotions, since they have been covered elsewhere. There are numerous texts which outline the general sociology of the emotions (Burkitt, 2014; Denzin, 1984; Turner, 2007, 2009), the historical development of ideas about emotions (Frevert et al., 2014), as well as the ways in which emotions impact on and are impacted by social structure (Barbalet, 1998; Bendelow & Williams, 1998; von Scheve, 2013). We hope to situate our book at the same intersection: somewhere between emotions, people, history and social life.

An early example of an attempt to develop a theory of the emotions was John-Paul Satre, and although his work is embedded broadly within phenomenological psychology (as distinct from our field of sociology), his notion of 'magic' and 'magic means' (p. 11) is useful in terms of numerous emotions (Satre, 1971). In talking about magic as part of emotions, Satre refers to emotions as often non-rational responses based on non-rational perceptions of an issue, whereby emotions represent, 'a different way of eluding a difficulty, a particular way of escape, a special trick' (p. 41). More recent sociological analyses of emotions such as von Scheve (2013) regard emotions as 'bi-directional mediators between action and structure' (p. 5) – the meat in the sandwich that facilitates both action and structure. This positioning responds to Ahmed's critique (2004) that the sociology of emotions has been too preoccupied with what emotions are and how they form autonomous (Coffey, 2020) and individual responses to the world, and that instead emotions should be studied for what they do (Ahmed, 2004). We consider broadly that emotions feature in the interdependent dependencies of agency-structure networks as per relational sociology (Crossley, 2021);

The Emerald Handbook of the Sociology of Emotions for a Post-Pandemic World, 1–19

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the becomings and flows of affect within relational assemblages (Fox, 2015); and are worthy of sociological imagination (Mills, 1959) because they link private troubles with public issues. There is a long history of scholarship across numerous disciplines which has attempted to both define emotions and then develop a set of core components (Frevert et al., 2014), although it seems that these can be broadly conceptualised as: a physiological arousal, motor expression, subjective feelings, cognitive appraisal and action tendency (von Scheve, 2013). Emotions are generally regarded as episodic, being triggered by a particular event and relatively short-lasting (von Scheve, 2013, p. 14), and having collective affects and underpinnings (Thonhauser, 2022).

Emotions have often been categorised as being either primary emotions (Kemper, 1978; Turner, 2009) (similarly conceptualised as 'reflex emotions' (Jasper, 2011) and 'foreground emotions' (Barbalet, 2011)) or secondary emotions (Turner, 2009) (and/or 'background emotions' (Barbalet, 2011)). Primary emotions tend to be thought of as 'fight or flight' responses to particular cues for action, such as fear, anger, sadness or happiness (Turner, 2009). Secondary or 'background' emotions are seen as less visceral, acute responses and more likely to be reflective and mediated by and through social and cultural milieu, which Barbalet (2011, p. 42) refers to as 'less amenable to strategic or explicit regulation, not only because they have low expressivity, but also because they are unlikely to be consciously experienced by the emoter'. Within our book, we have included chapters on all sorts of emotions, reflecting that they are difficult to order (Jacobsen, 2019) – being concomitantly subjective as well as time- and context-specific. In some contexts, intimacy, love and trust are incredibly important, in other times fear, anger and grief are important; in other times still, boredom and nostalgia. While we are often asked to choose between structure and affect (Barnwell, 2020), we aim in this book to use this exact juncture to explore how the pandemic brought about changes to the prominence, patterning and value of some emotions amidst pandemic living.

The Genealogy of Ideas for the Book: Pandemic-Emotions

The idea from this book came from us being 'humans in the world' – laypeople living in new conditions of uncertainty and fear and trying to both live our lives and make some semblance of 'sense' of it. It originally wasn't a theoretically driven project nor even a strategic move to further debate within the sociology of emotions. It developed from numerous conversations about how living in the pandemic made us feel, think and act – differently. Rather than being sociologists making abstract observations about the life of others, we were living through some of the same circumstances, albeit a more privileged existence – privileged in terms of being academics with social, economic and cultural capital to buffer us from the worst implications of the pandemic, but also academics living in South Australia whereby the pandemic was nowhere near as bad as many other parts of the world. So, we had broad existential questions about how people in other social/economic circumstances might be coping with the pandemic; how the

pandemic may be widening already existing inequities in life chances, living conditions and future capabilities; and what the future might look like for different people in different circumstances in different parts of the world. We wondered how approaching understanding of the lived impacts of the pandemic through culture(s) of emotion might point to how different futures would be felt by (and gravitated towards) different groups in society as we came through the pandemic. Points of turbulence in our emotional lives and collective experiences, we reasoned, may have policy and planning insight. And in/with these thoughts, the ideas for this book were born.

This book explores sociologically a number of emotions and emotional responses impacted by and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding how emotions are socially patterned remains a young and promising feature of the sociological discipline. Rather than solely focussing on a rather dystopian future, filled with negative emotions, the book also covers more positive emotions. In this way, the chapters represent a response to calls that sociology has historically been a rather 'dismal and melancholy science' (Turner, 2018), focussing on the negative consequences of living in the world for particular marginalised and disadvantaged groups. Whilst we certainly do not wish to present a Pollyanna-esque utopian picture of a world, we do want to enable sociologists to explore the impact of COVID-19 on *both* negative and positive emotions – acknowledging that all emotions may have some of both in them. When we set out to understand the various impacts on emotions both now and in the future, we could not predict how dismal, melancholic or optimistic our book would be. The various chapters in this book will help readers to see emotions as sociological objects or subjects, or neither as in a new materialist view (Fox, 2015) – each inflected by social experiences, norms and histories. After seeing emotions as such, the chapters will help to locate each emotion in its own landscape. Think of our book as a Lonely Planet guide to key emotions – it is not an encyclopaedia which gives 'answers', but rather a guide to lived experiences and imagined futures.

We hope this book helps to frame and flavour how emotions can be conceptualised within the social sciences and broadens sociological understanding of the dynamics and structures of affect as they have been experienced by different local/global populations in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. We planned the book in 2020, in the midst of the pandemic and during times when there were major upheavals and loss in different parts of the world. Whilst we use the term 'post pandemic', we suggest the world will never 'go back' to 'normal'. We wanted authors to use their sociological imagination to envision a future – to write about their knowledge of this emotion pre- and during pandemic times and to have a 'best guess' at how the future might look. Given that we invited sociological authors to the table, we've asked for a sociological analysis and gaze into the future pertinent to the particular emotion they write about. Authors of chapters were asked to 'imagine the future' for their respective emotion – what is the evidence or theorising for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on that particular emotion?; how and why might that be stable or change in the future?; what are the social/structural impacts on that emotion? and might that emotion be felt/enacted differently by different social/cultural groups in the future?

Thankfully, all authors were excited about the prospect of thinking creatively and using their sociological imagination to engage with potential and imagined emotional futures in this way.

We hope this book can contribute to advancing a theoretical agenda in the sociology of emotions, through the imagined futures to a specific emotion that invited authors will explore – drawing from empirical evidence of emotional impacts which became stuck to the pandemic and continue to bleed beyond it. Our book is primarily aimed at a broad range of social scientists – whilst we term it a 'sociology of the emotions', we aim for it to be critically important for sociology, social/public/health policy, anthropology, social psychology and public health. Chapters draw on theories from different disciplines (e.g. sociology, history, psychology, linguistics, anthropology) and numerous methodological approaches, to explore collective emotion/s lived by different populations during the COVID-19 pandemic (and its aftermath). It brings together incisive international authors within the sociology of emotions to help the sociological community understand – and know how to feel – about the world that has been through 2020 until now. It will enable students and theorists alike to identify new directions for research, knowledge and practice into emotion, affect and lived experience using a sociological approach.

Emotions and the Ontology/Epistemology of Uncertainty

A number of social scientists used the noun 'uncertainty' to describe life during the COVID-19 pandemic (Bhardwaj, 2021; Brown, 2020; Henderson et al., 2020; Ward, 2020). And yet – many would argue that 'modern' existence is predicated on uncertainty – that the move from pre-modern to current times (we do not want to get into debates about whether we are in post-, hyper-modern, fractured capitalism etc.) is based on living with uncertainty. Modern citizens are socialised to think and act as agents, and in so doing, to consider options about what to do now and in the future – about which we can never be certain (but about which we must nonetheless decide). Simply blindly accepting authority to determine our behaviours is not regarded as 'rational' practice seeing as so much information is available to help guide our decisions. We are persuaded, socialised, nudged and reminded to recognise uncertainties and then act accordingly. Examples may be getting a second opinion from a medical professional, exploring Trip Advisor for reviews on hotels or restaurants or googling different ways to treat or prevent COVID-19. Whilst the term 'sheeple' is often used in a derogatory way to refer to people who 'blindly' follow both societally accepted rules and the 'rule of the mob' (follow the crowd in the same ways that sheep do), these metaphors are based on the principle of uncertainty – that the world is uncertain, that certain agendas are at play which may not be in the best interests of all citizens/groups and therefore, that reflexivity and questioning must be undertaken. Emotions, in this respect, directly intersect with the ontology and epistemology of uncertainty, which are writ large in modern living – emotions help us to make sense of uncertainty and also provide the impetus for us to move past uncertainty. Of

course, this focus on un/certainty is derived from the dominance of enlightened reason in many parts of the (colonial) world – where logic systems are oriented from the viewpoint that certainty is obtainable and controllable (Caduff, 2020). Behind the words and thoughts written about emotions in this book are forms of reason and experiences that arise from the logic/s prominent and privileged within sociology broadly, which carry their own histories (i.e. Anglo-centric, patriarchal and various other forms of privilege).

Beyond this caveat, it follows that uncertainty is at the heart of the future gazing in this book about imagined emotional futures; we obviously cannot be certain about the future (we do not believe that crystal balls have scientific validity), and sociology too lacks predictive powers (Monaghan, 2020). And still – yet – uncertainty is critical for our engagement with emotions as experiences and as sociological constructs. We have therefore asked authors to engage with uncertainty and use their knowledge of the historical and contemporary experience of each emotion, to imagine which future(s) emerge from such analytical and interpretive work. It is certainly a tall order because academics tend not to like to write with uncertainty (although, all statistics is based on rather abstract-yet-agreed level(s) of uncertainty) so the authors within this book have taken a very brave step, for which they should be applauded. Approaching the study of emotions in this way asks sociologists to think differently about drivers of a research agenda – it is unknown what the exact outcomes of this project might be, either methodologically or theoretically, for the sociology of emotions – and the impacts it might have in generating momentum for future research agendas needed in our post-COVID world.

There is a long-standing sociological interest and engagement with the notion of uncertainty (Fox, 1980; Mackintosh & Armstrong, 2020) and research attempting to understand the 'uncertainty work' (Pickersgill, 2020) that people may consciously or unconsciously undertake. With specific reference to research on the sociology of pandemics, Dingwall, Hoffman, and Staniland (2013) said 'emerging diseases are sources of instability, uncertainty and even crises that can make visible features the social order ordinarily opaque to investigation' (p. 1). Of particular relevance is the recent work on *existential uncertainty* (Cribb, 2020), which describes how the perceived inevitability of risk provides justification for, and a tendency to, hiding from uncertainty by managing it defensively, despondently or even via strategic ignorance (McGoey, 2012). Related concepts around uncertainty have been 'floated' for some time, linked to life in late modern society. For example, Crawford (2004) provides evidence for the emergence of a *culture of anxiety*, which has also been termed an *era of insecurity* (Bauman, 1999), *ontological insecurity* (Giddens, 1990) and *existential anxiety* (Giddens, 1991); perhaps, anxiety will be the Western world's lasting legacy (Rebughini, 2021). During COVID-19, we have all been inundated with evidence, argument and commentaries about the risks and dangers of COVID-19 alongside our responsibilities in terms of keeping ourselves and others safe (mask wearing, social distancing, vaccinations etc.). This morass of words/voices (we hesitate to use the term evidence given the abundance of 'fake news' and misinformation on social media) evokes 'uncertainty'. Questions about the 'right' choices and decisions are created when the future is acknowledged not to be a stable 'given' and beyond the accurate

prediction of modern systems. The contested, contradictory and sometimes conflicting nature of 'evidence' on which to base decisions (fuelled on social media by conspiracy theories) has led some theorists to suggest that modern beings live in liminality ('no man's land' (Armstrong, 1993); in the 'grey zone' (Gifford, 2002); 'betwixt and between health' (Crawford, 2004)). The pandemic experience augments and exacerbates this – where the 'full stop' of the pandemic (Caduff, 2020) has forced us to teeter between what was known and what awaits (Jamjoon, 2022). Without an exit in sight (Bell, 2022) trying to breathe mindfully as a sociological community (Will, 2020) feels awkward knowing how much is at stake (Monaghan, 2020).

This temporary and inconsistent time likens to a 'time of interregnum', where previous modes of practising 'life' no longer suit the 'new' (and volatile) conditions (Graham, 2020), arousing a sense of fear. Bauman (2000) captured the 'challenges of human togetherness' that result when extant forms of 'doing life' are 'liquidised' and replaced, albeit subject to social critique and in some cases, to gaps in social order. The consequences of experiencing such liminality unfold in how people begin to question the validity of expert systems, institutions and media outlets, in addition to the intentions and actions of the generalised 'other', in turn, bolstering feelings of uncertainty. Neoliberal and individualist politics drive this uncertainty home, placing both risk and responsibility in the hands of the individual. This 'individualised risk and responsibility' dogma was reflected in the social context of COVID-19 at the time of planning and editing this book, and in the capacity and desire of individuals to access, synthesise and respond to the various and often changing media stories and government announcements. Questions emerged around whether and how people could *find their way* through the molasses of information in order to live a life in the ways they intended. How would their emotions be impacted? This would include more negative emotions such as fear, grief and hate, but also more positive emotions such as love, intimacy and hope. A useful reminder of the longer standing issues at play is provided in Crawford's (2004) elegant analysis of the search for certainty, in the context of the efficacy of medical expertise:

> ...as the map of danger is filled in, safe passage appears all the more difficult; but as the map of safe passage becomes illegible, people do not know what to believe or how to act in order to be safe. (p. 511)

During COVID-19, what maps are available, what does safe passage look/feel like (does it exist?), how do people act or believe in order to maintain physical, psychological and emotional 'safety'? Authors explore these key questions within their chapters.

Situating the Book and Its Content Within Broader Sociological Terrain

Our book explores sociologically how emotions were shaped/impacted/experienced/imagined by the pandemic. To begin this sociological project, we need to also reflect on some broader sociological concepts that impact lives in

modern times. Mirroring sociology's rather dystopian past, some of the most talked about concepts within sociological circles are risk (Adam, Beck, & van Loon, 2000; Beck, 1992, 2009; Crawford, 2004; Douglas, 1992; Luhmann, 2017; Lupton, 2016), fear (Bauman, 2006; Slovic, Fischhoff, & Lichtenstein, 1990), panic (Falkof, 2020; Hier, 2019), crisis (Berlant, 2011; Habermas, 1975; Walby, 2015) and (dis)trust (Luhmann, 1979, 1988; Ward, 2017, 2018a, 2018b). In addition to these meta-narratives, more middle-range theoretical concepts have come into view, such as simulacra (Baudrillard, 1994), agency-structure, blame/judgement/stigma, globalisation/glocalisation (Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994; Giddens, 1990; Roudometof, 2016), uncertainty, liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000), individualisation (Bauman, 2001), fractured societies (Scambler, 2020) and the potential future weakening of social bonds (through fear of other humans as 'carriers of risk' as per Crawford, 2006). Whilst these seemed to be the over-riding concepts referred to in the early, acute stages of the pandemic, more positive emotions started to be discussed during the chronic phase such as hope, love and kindness. Communities on social media began to play out a 'kindness pandemic' whereby people were encouraged to perform 'random acts of kindness'. There was a Facebook phenomenon called 'View from my Window' whereby people posted photos from wherever they are in the world as a way to connect with others socially and provide inspiration for people who could not travel. We need to caveat that this is a rather socially and culturally distinct group who could 'see' positives in life and imagine brighter futures when ordered to stay at home – capitalist safeties (Kay, 2020) and physical spaces (Bhardwaj, 2021) not evenly distributed across the globe. Indeed, *hope* (see Chapter 3) has dark sides and disciplining potentialities, and sparks public roasting when done in the wrong key. Nevertheless, there seemed to be a shift in the emotional landscape of living in the pandemic which opened up space to think about imagined futures for a post-pandemic world as well as what they may look like for different population groups in different parts of the world.

Obviously, a key set of sociological concepts relevant to living during the pandemic gravitate around the political economy of health. There seem to be two major strands here – one examines the nature and logic of government policies in terms of their focus on health and/or wealth of their nation/state, and the other examines the impact of policy on the pandemic (flattening the curve, mortality etc.) and also public trust in government and ideas about how governments may respond differently in future pandemics to maintain public trust. In terms of the political economy of COVID-19, key questions could focus on how different governments have dealt with issues of health versus wealth (physical distancing and closing places where crowds congregate help to reduce the spread of the virus but have an economic impact through closed business, reduced spending, increased unemployment etc.) and what are the long-term impacts of different government responses in terms of the pandemic and economic crisis. Marx's analysis of tensions between governments looking after the health or the wealth of their populations (Doyal & Pennell, 1979; McKinlay, 1975; Navarro, 2002) seems to be writ large in responses to COVID-19 and some of the more visceral and negative responses are captured in the emotional response of *anger* (see Chapter

7). Detailed and contextual analyses of government responses and their impacts on things like mortality/morbidity rates, health service use/collapse and economic crisis/bounce-back are critical in order to provide evidence for future pandemic responses. The relatively rapid normalisation of such extreme containment measures, which paradoxically compromised livelihoods to promote survival, will likely further fracture society (Scambler, 2020) and have consequences that haunt us for decades (Caduff, 2020).

In the early phases of the pandemic, we were bombarded with ideas about 'risk', whether from epidemiologists (who often obtained celebrity status) telling us about risk ratios or relative risks to infection disease experts who talked about reducing the risk of transmission to politicians talking about risks of going into lockdowns or risks for businesses in terms of closing down. Key sociological ideas in this areas come from the continued significance of 'risk society' (Beck, 1992, 2005, 2009; Beck et al., 1994) or even 'digital risk society' (Lupton, 2016) as a way of understanding social structure and social change – how does a global pandemic (i.e. where 'risk' is theoretically democratic and non-discerning – the virus can affect anyone, anywhere – but potentially impacts certain groups more than others due to different living conditions and material circumstances – high density living, precarious employment etc.) lead to a re-shaping of ideas around 'risk society'? Does Beck's notion of 'eschatological ecofatalism' (individuals 'pulling the shutters down' in order to no longer think about COVID-19) make sense during and after COVID-19? The empirical analysis of *(dis)trust* suggests that it does (see Chapter 11). Beck postulates that catastrophes could lead to situations whereby 'the foundations of freedom and democracy are in danger of being undermined' (2009, p. 14); different governments have introduced different types of controls and 'emergency measures' to try to 'flatten the curve' of the pandemic, and the social, political and ethical impacts of such measures on freedom and democracy will be an ongoing area of sociological research, since some measures may continue long term and others may become part of the 'new normal'. On a theoretical level, what are the links between risk, catastrophe and panic in relation to COVID-19? It is clear from analysis of *heroism* and *courage* (see Chapters 9 and 4) that both are contextually constructed. While healthcare workers were portrayed in the US news as *heroic* (see Chapter 9), with the valour accorded to military personnel – a significant shift from their (gendered) portrayal as servient during the 1918 Spanish flu in paper clippings; nuanced forms of *courage* (see Chapter 4) are needed to find love and romance amidst new pandemic risks and conditions – and at times juxtapose the self with the greater good.

With an increase in risk and panic comes a whole host of emotional responses such as fear and a need for trust. A key issue here is the current and future impact of physical distancing and social isolation on social bonds, trust and solidarity – the ways in which the current and future restrictions impact emotional responses, social interactions and civic participation. Does the idea of physical distancing cement notions of other humans as carriers of risk, and thus in need of distancing in the future? Does the communicable nature of viruses and the focus on physical distancing lead to *fear* of the 'other'? (see Chapter 13). Will the post-COVID-19 world be more individualistic as a result of the fear of the 'other'? Or will there be