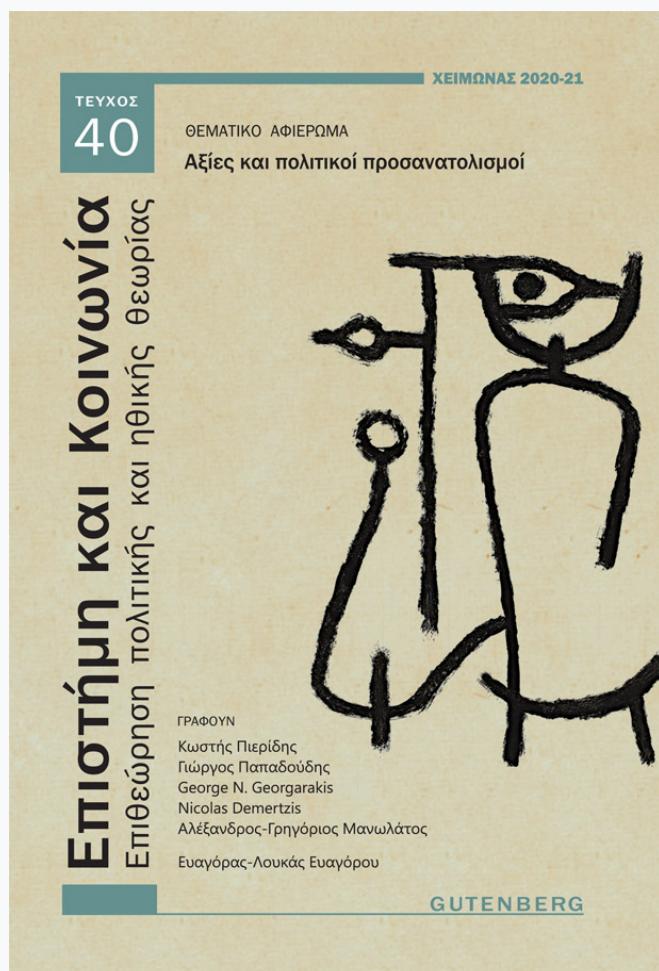


## Επιστήμη και Κοινωνία: Επιθεώρηση Πολιτικής και Ηθικής Θεωρίας

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**What moves social movements? The role of emotions in collective action**

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*Nicolas Demertzis\**

WHAT MOVES SOCIAL MOVEMENTS?  
THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS  
IN COLLECTIVE ACTION

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For many years, the study of emotions as a means of understanding social movements has been treated with suspicion, as emotions in politics were stereotypically associated with irrationalism and the worst moments and aspects of European and world history (i.e., Fascism, Nazism, populism). Even during the 1980s and most of the 1990s, when the study of social movements was at its peak, affective factors were rarely mentioned. This distrust has largely been dispelled over the last twenty years or so, as the sociology of emotions has rapidly developed. Movement analysis could not remain unaffected by this shift, and from the late 1990s on, a growing number of related works have reset the agenda in movement research. Specific emotions elicited within certain movements have been centre-staged: hope, frustration, disgust, contempt, hatred, devotion, fear, shame, rage, resentment, excitement, trust are but a few of the prevalent emotions that are now being used to explain the movement dynamics. In a way, this marks the return of the repressed to the analysis of social movements. Premised on the appraisal theory of emotions, this paper

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will discuss protest emotions as accelerators and amplifiers of social movements.

## *Introduction*

Amongst other things, a social movement is a form of public action. No social movement can exist outside the public sphere, regardless of how it is defined or of the approach taken to studying it. However, public presence entails a certain impression management and a concomitant activation of representations. Therefore, movement activity is endowed with an invincible emotional component which, over the course of recent years, has been increasingly emphasized by analysts and activists alike in the light of the ‘affective turn’, itself embedded in the much broader ‘cultural turn’, permeating the social sciences and humanities in their entirety.<sup>1</sup> Due to this turn, it is no longer sufficient to contend that participation in social movements arises from grievances stemming from the malfunctioning of institutions – an argument formulated by proponents of the theories of collective action and mass society (Tarrow 1988). This argument is now deemed both self-referential and vague. It does not rely on an adequate investigation of the varying ways in which people experience these grievances and, thus, of the spectrum of their emotional experience when faced with adverse social or economic conditions; nor does it grasp the multifaceted ways in which they express this experience (Wilson 1973: 32-3). Additionally, it is not enough to assume that social movements ground their action in moral values which they then defend. Twenty-six years ago, at a time when the social movements literature was flourishing, a renowned analyst pointed out that ‘movements... develop in the process of critical confrontation with the system... [and] pave the way for so-

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1. This turn does not make for a dominant paradigm, a new grand narrative; it rather serves as a universe of discourse and, consequently, as an additional lens for seeing social and political phenomena.

cial transformations mainly by challenging and de-legitimising established social orders, by ‘loosening’ the normative foundations of institutionalised patterns of conduct’ (Pakulski 1991:78, 82). Yet, one can only wonder why and how the fact that the challenging of social orders involves the re-articulation of structures and rules of feeling escaped Pakulski’s notice. Social movement theory remained at that time excessively structuralist and cognitive. Nowadays, such abstract and metonymic uses of the affective factor vis-à-vis the interpretation of political behaviour are deemed obsolete, given that research is now focused on the social genesis and functioning of *specific* emotions that support it. The following analysis seeks to introduce this debate into Greece within the newly emerging field of the political sociology of emotions (Demertzis & Lipowatz 2006; Demertzis, 2006, 2013, 2014, 2020).

### *The return of the repressed to the analysis of social movements*

For many years, the reigning sociological analysis of the self and socio-political relations in all their forms has been mainly cognitive, as if everything that happens within the frame of social relations and processes is restrained to opinions, information, beliefs, objectives, preferences, reasonable choices and calculated interests. In other words, it is as if personal, political and social identity is based entirely on rational thinking and cognitive information processing.

Paradoxically, although there has always been an emotional component in political philosophy, political sociology and social analysis –and despite the specific weight attributed to emotions by most of the founders of Sociology in their work (Kemper 1991: 304-311)– emotions have been systematically researched only in recent years. For many decades, they were either treated as one of many variables affecting political behaviour or –as was often the case— overlooked and understudied. This mar-

ginalisation and/or suppression was largely due to the disdain with which ‘classical’ political science approaches romantic or utopian notions which are supposedly incompatible with the modern public sphere and the instrumentalist, neutral-procedural conception of politics that prevailed during the era of the ‘end of ideologies’ (cf. the 1960s and 1990s) and which was especially popular among opinion leaders, opinion makers and political personnel (Habermas 1970; Mouffe 2004).

Likewise, for many years, the study of emotions as a means of understanding social movements has been treated with suspicion, as emotions in politics were stereotypically associated with irrationalism and the worst moments and aspects of European and world history (i.e. Fascism, Nazism, populism). Even during the 1980s and most of the 1990s, when the study of social movements was at its peak, affective factors were rarely mentioned. Such factors were alluded to, either as a self-evident component of the movements’ activities or as supplementary to their main objectives. Emotions have been noticeably absent from all mainstream theories (i.e., the functionalist theory of collective action, the rationalist theory of resource mobilization, the cultural theory of new social movements, political opportunities structures theory, network society theory) as a factor, which can help explain the emergence, duration, action and decline of movements. Of course, references and interpretive approaches to emotions do exist, especially—if not exclusively—in the context of cultural analyses. For example, Alberto Melluci (1995: 45) contends that the emotional enrichment of a movement’s objectives and beliefs is a component in its collective identity, while Taylor and Whittier (1995: 176-180) focused on emotions, which are elicited in the context of ritualistic movement practices. Similarly, William Gamson (1995) maintains that every narrative framing of movement action presupposes the stirring of suitable emotions, an argument that Tarrow fully endorses (1998: 111-112). Yet, these references come across as a concession to mainstream approaches and seem to be in their shadow. That a prestigious collective volu-

me comparatively analysing movements, and in particular, a section on the procedures involved in the conceptual framing of both movement action and the structures of political opportunities by the media and the movements themselves, does not contain a single reference to the notion of emotion —let alone to specific social or moral emotions which motivate subjects in public space— is telling (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald 1996: 261-355). It would seem likely that the renowned authors of this section —McAdam, Gamson, Zald, Kladermans et al.— connote the existence and triggering of emotions through semantic framing and discursive practices without feeling the need to openly referring to them. Of course, one should point out that the collective-behaviour approach clearly acknowledges the importance of emotionality, albeit in the context of ‘moral panic’ and ‘crowd psychology’. Thus, in the field of social movement analysis, emotions and feelings continue to remain inferior. This does not stem purely from the traditional mistrust of passion and the destructive role it can play, or from the dualism of Logos and Passion inherited from Romanticism; it also reflects the distrust with which the prospect of a socio-scientific analysis of emotions is viewed.

Generally speaking, this distrust has largely been dispelled over the last twenty years or so, as the sociology of emotions —a marker of the ‘affective’ or ‘emotional’ turn referred to above— has rapidly developed. The political psychology of emotions has also been developing in parallel, highlighting the process of opinion formation, voting preference and the evaluation of political personnel (Redlawsk 2006). Movement analysis could not remain unaffected by this shift, and from the late 1990s on, a growing number of related works have reset the agenda in movement research. Their focus was not affective factors in general, but rather the study of specific emotions in the context of certain movements and countries: hope, frustration, disgust, contempt, hatred, devotion, fear, shame, rage, resentment, excitement, trust is but a few of the prevalent emotions that are now being used to explain the dynamics of

a movement. In a way, this marks the return of the repressed to the analysis of social movements.

### *The manifold importance of emotions in the analysis of social movements*

Following many decades of theoretical discourse on, and empirical research into, social movements old and new, it would be wrong to think that a political sociology of emotions applicable to collective action could replace the various scientific paradigms and present itself as another methodological monism or reductionism. Rather, a political sociology of emotions could bridge certain incompatibilities between paradigms (e.g., between the paradigm of resource mobilization and the cultural approach in terms of the motives and reasons why people participate in or withdraw from a movement) and fill interpretative gaps (e.g., the systematic inclusion of the affective dimension into narrative analysis). In any case, its aim is to demonstrate the manifold and paramount importance of emotions in the analysis of social movements. As one of the leading scholars of this new approach has emphatically pointed out: 'There would be no social movements if we did not have emotional responses near and far', either as direct, transient feelings or as more permanent dispositions (Jasper 1998: 405).

Certainly, however, the importance of emotional responses becomes apparent in the context of a 'non-Weberian' approach to emotions – i.e. provided that one does not identify emotions as irrationality or understands emotion as the unpredictable intrusion of passion into the realm of logic, as 'passions' which distort the subject's critical faculties (the ancient Greek view, which has been passed down to rationalists and empiricists). If anything, it is now a commonplace to mention William James's remark, made as early as 1897, that reason and emotion exist on a continuum rather than on either side of an unbridgeable gulf (James 1956); indeed, the very notion of emotion is

associated with cognitive assessments or evaluations (Davou 2006). For over thirty years now, the majority of scholars, mainly philosophers and psychologists have been assuming that emotions include an element of thought or cognitive evaluation, a physical response connected to this evaluation and an accompanying feeling. This feeling is required to stimulate reason and activate cognition. Moreover, it has been convincingly argued that Logos and Pathos tend to interact for the benefit of the former (Marcus 2002: 29, 31; Evans 2004: 144, 180). From this standpoint, it would be incorrect to characterize all emotions as irrational purely because they may often deviate from the mainstream rationality. Of course, altruistic suicide, solidarity or devotion to an idea or institution do not conform with this rationalist view; still, ultimately, there is no point in describing them as irrational —and, in so doing, degrading them— as they are subjectively central to the people experiencing them. How could one describe the joy, satisfaction, optimism and hope that are invariably triggered when one achieves a goal based on a well-crafted cost-benefit analysis? Are these more or less rational emotions? It is possible that certain emotions such as fanatical devotion, excessive love, anxiety or irrational fear impede one's positive reaction or adaptation to the external conditions of one's environment, but that they —along with values and beliefs, with which they are closely interwoven— never stop providing a life orientation for the individual. Thus, the importance of emotions does not lie in the fact that they hinder reasoning by definition, but rather that they co-articulate with reasoning on a permanent and equal, though not always harmonious, basis. The significance of emotions lies in their interpretative ability to untangle the moral dilemmas of action (Marcus 2003: 186-7).

On these grounds, Jasper's exhortation remains entirely valid today (1998: 404): 'If a fear of irrationality has prevented students of social movements from incorporating emotions into their models, the time has come to rethink this stance'. Maybe then, among other things, the complementarity between the

structural model of political (and discursive) opportunities and the political sociology of emotions will be demonstrated *sensu stricto* rather than in the sense of the somewhat vague notion of ‘frame alignment’ (Snow et al. 1986, 1997), precisely because, while political opportunities delineate the condition of the possible for the genesis of a movement, people will not be able to participate in it without feelings of solidarity, loyalty, efficacy, anger, hope, frustration, vengeance, enthusiasm, or devotion (Benski & Langman 2013). Because cognitive-rationalist calculi alone are unlikely to surpass the spectrum of subjective motives indicating how and for how long an individual will participate in a movement. A burst of emotional energy is required in order to transform inactivity into contentious action and mobilization (Tarrow 1998: 122). In this vein, Steven Saxonberg (2013) convincingly challenges the resource mobilization approach in the analysis of oppositional social movements during the transition away from Soviet-type regimes. In his view, it is the transformation of fear into anger, resentment and pride that motivates people to participate in oppositional movements despite all the risks and uncertainties this entails in cases where the regime has lost its ideological legitimacy (Saxonberg 2013).

The long-term involvement of scholars from a range of disciplines in the analysis of emotions indicates that they are more than transitional and ephemeral affectivities which interrupt rational thinking. On the contrary, emotions are continuous, unstable and scattered; experienced in a flow, they form –alongside thinking— an integral part of human experience. Humans cannot be devoid of emotionality and empathy, when dealing with the front stage and the back stage of their life, either alone or collectively. Emotions are simultaneously a result and a determinant of interaction; running through the whole spectrum of human activity, they are not just responses of the self to facts and events of the social and physical environment, they also formulate the purposes and goals of action. As a result, emotions, rules and values are inextricably linked.

We also know that emotions and feelings are the links between the micro (the self) and the macro (society), not in a mechanical sense but through on-going mediations. They are not 'dependent variables' or reflexes which can be reductively explained in terms of social structures and processes (independent variables). They are not by-products of the social systems, they are 'intermediate variables' or at least they can be thought of as mediating mechanisms (Gordon 1990: 149, 169-171; Barbalet 1998: 9; Besnier 1990: 438; Polletta & Amenta 2001: 305) between the body, language, group, institutions, collective action and systems of reference, which call for analysis and syntheses.

It is therefore generally acclaimed that the convergence achieved through the analysis of emotions can contribute to the systematic understanding of the emergence, duration, action, decline and effectiveness of social movements. This is the direction taken by Goodwin et al. (2001), Flam and King (2005), Clarke, Hoggett, and Thompson (2006), Goodwin and Jasper (2006), Goodwin et al. (2004) in a special issue of the *Mobilization* review (2006), as well as van Stekelenburg and Klan dermans (2011) and van Troost, Van Stekelenburg, and Klan dermans (2013). The growing interest in the emotionality of social movements is clear from the fact that whereas in a 1998 text on the persuasive strategies pursued by police in France and Italy for the control of protest movements Della Porta et al. (1998) make no explicit reference to emotions as an analytical term, a few years later Della Porta and Diani (2006) refer to emotions as factors generating collective action, contentious politics, and social movements.

### *A few words on emotions*

Within the relevant multidisciplinary scientific fields (psychology, psychoanalysis, political or social psychology, sociology, history, social anthropology, social and political neuroscience) there is a great deal of divergence regarding the conceptualiza-

tion of emotion and other cognate terms (sentiment, feeling, affect, passion). This is not just a conventional definition problem; this dispersion emanates from deep paradigmatic inconsistencies that call forth similar yet different classifications. The literature on this issue is vast and a detailed presentation exceeds the purpose of this chapter. In the sociology of emotions, the terms ‘emotion’, ‘affect’ or ‘sentiment’—primarily—but also ‘passion’ and ‘feeling’ are used interchangeably. These terms have appeared gradually and at different points of time in the philosophical and sociological discourse, yet they are now used synecdochically. Of course, this does not mean that there is no differentiation among them: ‘passion’, for example, is passive and acts upon the person, while ‘emotion’ is more active and is endogenously acted upon by the individual. Moreover, while sentiment is accompanied by an evaluative cognitive processing, ‘feeling’ is essentially biological (e.g. the feeling of hunger). Elsewhere emotion is differentiated from sentiment on a basis of duration and level of processing: thus, sentiment is of greater duration and conveyed through complex and extended thought processes and appraisal, while emotion is seen as an intense, reflex-like affective activation of a short duration (Davou 2006; Jasper 2006: 16–7). Even so, emotions and sentiments influence public behaviour and shape a climate of public opinion when their cause is political in nature (e.g. an unjust law, a scandal and so on). If we add ‘mood’ as a generalized and diffuse affective disposition with no specific cause or object, we can see that the range of emotional phenomena—emotion, sentiment and mood—relate, respectively, to the short, middle and long duration.

No wonder then that, despite the ‘emotionology’ of our times, neither a generally accepted definition of emotion nor a universally accepted typology are currently available (Demertzis 2013: 4). Still, notwithstanding the elusiveness of the concept (Kleinginna & Kleinginna 1984), many psychologists, political psychologists, and sociologists endorse a componential definition of emotion according to which *emotion* is made up of (1)

an appraisal of an internal or external consequential stimulus, relational contexts and objects; (2) physiological changes and activation of key body systems leading to action readiness; (3) an overt, free or inhibited facial expression, voice and paralinguistic expressions; (4) a conscious subjective feeling; (5) an environmental adaptation function; (6) culturally provided linguistic labels of one or more of the first three elements, and (7) socially constructed rules on how emotions should be experienced and expressed (Averill 1980; Thoits 1989: 318; Gordon 1990: 147, 151-2; Fontaine et al. 2007; Scherer 2009; Turner & Stets 2005: 9; Sieben & Wettergren 2010).

Each one of these components involves a huge variety of dimensions and disputed sub-issues such as the nature of the appraisal, the relation between emotion and motivation, motivation and action, the direct and indirect effects of emotion on political judgment and so on. It should be noted that there is no need for all these seven elements to be present simultaneously for an emotion to exist or to be recognized by others. Nor is it necessary that all these elements are self-consciously experienced.

A distinction should be made between ‘emotion’ and ‘emotions’. Emotion (in the singular form) is an amorphous generic notion (Barbalet 1998:26) which I shall define according to the psychological and sociological literature (cf. Shott 1979; Kemper 1987; Oatley & Jenkins 1996; Ben-Ze’ev 2000), as *the arousal of the human organism, which induces readiness for action and evaluations of objects, relations and situations within a definite time context, and which the subject is aware of without necessarily being able to name it.*

There is a consensus among many sociologists that emotions are not autonomous and innately bio-physiological, but mediate between physiological reactions and cultural norms. According to the ‘mild’ constructionist approach adopted in this paper, it could be claimed that while emotions are not reducible to biology, emotion is nonetheless neither an arbitrary construction nor entirely constructable (Demertzis & Lipowitz

2006: 46). Beyond the undeniable substratum of the biological perspective, the conceptualization of emotions themselves is extremely flexible and subject to historical variability (Thoits 1989: 319; Rosenwein 2001:231). In this respect, emotion can be viewed as a ‘multi-component phenomenon’ (Frijda 2004: 60) and as an ‘open system’ (Gordon 1981). In turn, emotions (in the plural form) are empirical articulations of the subject’s ‘emotionality’ within a specific social, linguistic and cultural context. From this viewpoint, emotions are constructs which result from the interaction of body and society (Kemper 1991: 341).

The diversity and complexity of individual emotions has long led scholars to adopt different taxonomies depending on their perspective, whether this is philosophical, sociological, biological, and psychological. This is because emotion is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, without a classification or taxonomy, it is easy to get lost in the infinite gradations through which it is manifested. These taxonomies differ according to their perspective, but may also diverge within the same discipline. For example, remaining in modern literature and avoiding the temptation to return to the classics, there is a clear difference between the philosophical classifications proposed by Solomon (2003), on the one hand, and Richard Wollheim (1999: 1-16), on the other. Similarly, there is a divergence between the sociological classification Jasper proposes in earlier (1998: 406) and later (Goodwin, Jasper, & Polletta 2001: 11) work, and between both and the classification proposed by Barbalet (2006). But this is not the place to delve into this matter; certain contextual comments will help illustrate a taxonomic logic of emotions.

There are three prototypical characteristics of an emotion: the cause, the emotive concern and the emotive object (Ben-Ze’ev 2000: 13). The cause was first identified as one of the three levels in his analysis of ‘passions’ by Aristotle (*Rhetoric*, B 1, 1378a 20-25). Emotive concern is the psychological intrapersonal condition of the individual while they experience an emotion; it is the ground of one’s evaluative stand; it is wha-

tever is evaluated positively or negatively by the subject while it is experiencing a certain emotion or sentiment; it is anything which is evaluated as important and which acquires moral weight as a result. The emotive object refers to the direction of the actuation of passions; it is the focus of one's attention and one's awareness. The emotive object refers either to the person who is experiencing the emotion or to another person or group of persons.

Usually, the emotive object and the emotive concern coincide in one and the same person: in compassion or love, the person who suffers or is being loved is simultaneously an object of attention and concern. In other instances, however, the two function separately. In embarrassment or shame, for example, the person who feels the emotion is the emotive object, but the emotive concern is targeted at others and at how they evaluate her.

Often, the subject may have no awareness of its emotive concern: in the case of resentment, the emotive object is someone else's improper or unfair behaviour, but we remain unaware that our concern is targeted at the impact of their behaviour on our self-esteem. In any given historical, economic, political, cultural, and idiosyncratic situation and relationship, self-targeted emotions and sentiments such as sorrow, fear, loneliness and hope may be elicited, while other-targeted emotions such as gratitude, respect, jealousy and resentment may also arise. Emotions can be positive and negative, overt and hidden, expressed in a range of intensities, combinations (e.g., in a mix of jealousy and frustration or jealousy and fear), and orders of appearance (e.g., shame followed by anger and love followed by hope). Through infinite variations of the above, emotions open or close the doors of social relations and play a key role in shaping collective action, contentious politics and social movements.

## *Thematic Agenda*

When introducing the problematic of emotions into the analysis of social movements, one must distinguish at the outset two interconnected levels of analysis. The first is the *re-framing of emotional reality as part of movements' strategic planning*. Movement scholars focusing on discursive practices and framings adopted by movements for promoting favoured solutions and shaping collective identities (Mellucci 1995; Gamson 1995) eventually realized that 'every cognitive frame implies emotional framing' (Flam 2005: 24). They thus acknowledge, for example, that the provocation of anxiety and outrage about the greenhouse effect is a necessary condition for successful ecological campaigning. The second is *the inclusion of sentiments and emotions in the internal dynamics of a movement*. As in any collective bonding, a movement cannot emerge or be maintained for long enough in the public sphere without the cementing force of the solidarity, commitment and dedication of its members, but also without anger, aversion or intolerance towards its rivals. Of course, negative sentiments may evolve within a movement and can lead to sectarianism, dissolution or the emergence of a new movement (Eyerman 2005: 42). Thus, in more detail but without aiming at an exhaustive enumeration, the thematic agenda of this new problematic includes the following three points:

a) *Congruence between rational strategies and affective 'raw material'*

Once they appear in the public sphere, social movements necessarily follow rational strategic choices, along with expressive and ritualistic practices. The affective factor is absolutely imperative for their emergence; it is a necessary, and not merely sufficient, condition. Participation in a movement (the anti-globalization movement, for example) is a procedure, which may provide pleasure, stimulate enthusiasm, be triggered by

anger, and succour hope, compassion and solidarity. A permissive political opportunities structure is not enough to give birth to a movement – in the anti-globalization example it is also necessary that the traditional mainstream political parties fail to programmatically address the negative effects of economic globalization. Similarly, a rationally planned public intervention at a local or international level alongside the mobilization of economic, human and material resources is no longer sufficient; self-targeted and other-targeted emotions and sentiments are also required to act as a catalyst and transform the extrinsic-objective conditions into subjective motivation and social sensitivity.

Just as the distinction between reason and emotion has now largely broken down, so is the need to bridge the gap between instrumentalist-rationalist and expressive-affective forms of action in the sense of studying particular emotions or clusters of emotions within specific movement contexts. This approach would help avoid two possible drawbacks: psychological reductionism, on one hand, and methodological individualism on the other.

Fear at the individual level (that of a fearful woman faced by her authoritarian husband, for instance) can lead to paralysis, isolation and helplessness. However, if this fear is channelled into participation in the women's movement, it could be transformed into a force or cause for solidarity and mobilization. Yet, women's intolerance and gender consciousness are not sufficient in themselves for the women's movement to exist and remain for long enough in the public sphere; appropriate movement strategies (alliances, interventions, access to mass media) are required, as are favourable contingencies and the mobilization of various resources. Thus, '(w)hile tactics and strategic actions are central to all forms of collective political action, social movements move because they engage emotions and values' (Eyerman 2005: 50).

b) *Affective re-framing of the political field*

In the context of contentious politics, intellectuals who study movements and intellectuals who participate in movements<sup>2</sup> as well as in the leadership and the very choreography of collective ritualistic action (because a movement's every public act is ritualistic) seek directly or indirectly to re-socialize both actual and potential members of the movement and the general public. In parallel, they seek to impair their adversaries morally and sentimentally. Of course, these three addressees (members, general public and adversaries) are interrelated. For instance, in order to consolidate the 'us-them' division, the sentimental undermining of the opponents and the redirection and enhancement of the members' emotional energy is absolutely essential.

This implies an 'emotional regime' (Reddy 2004) created by the intersection of two kinds of emotions or sentiments: a) reciprocal emotions which actually fuel the movement's 'libidinal economy'; and b) shared emotions which are targeted at the opponent (emotional object) but concern one another (emotional concern).<sup>3</sup> Of course, this whole process, from which —among other things— the culture of a movement stems, occurs in a public space (in a multitude of public spaces, to be precise), and therefore influences and is ad-

2. This is a difference that roughly corresponds to the Gramscian distinction between traditional and organic intellectuals. Intellectuals of social movements are approaching them afterwards and they study them externally. Movement intellectuals are born and bred by the movements themselves. Cf. Eyerman & Jamison 1991: 95-118.

3. I draw this distinction from Jasper (1998, 2014), yet I conceptually infuse it with Ben-Ze'ev's ideas, as referred to above. For Jasper (2014: 348, 250) shared or collective emotion is a case where a large number of people in the same situation feel the same at the same time, whereas reciprocal emotion is the affective commitment towards others we interact with. Yet, shared emotion is not just emotional contagion; it has been argued that emotions are 'collective' if actors have common experiences and these are perceived or defined by them as such within social exchange settings (Lawler, Thye, & Yoon 2014).

dressed at the general public. From this audience, movements seek to recruit new members or to ensure a positive appraisal.

But how is this reframing achieved? What is its dynamic? It is clear that movement activists have to manage sets of moral, cognitive and emotional attitudes. It is equally clear that when movements frame their action, goals and demands via a number of social significations (injustice, destruction, inequality, peace, balance, etc.) this does not happen in purely cognitive terms, as many—if not most—scholars stress (e.g., Eder, 1993: 53–53), echoing the positions of Snow et al (1986; 1997), which were in turn based on the pioneering work of Goffman (1974). For example, it is not enough to disseminate information regarding the negative consequences of global warming; it is also necessary to provoke a range of emotions and sentiments. More specifically, in order to achieve their goals, social movements have to alternate the ‘emotional regime’ of their opponents, namely to undermine the cementing and sanctioning emotions/sentiments that play a role in reproducing every hegemonic power bloc. The sentiments involved therein include gratitude, confidence, trust or even loyalty to power structures and their bearers, (i.e., sentiments that support hegemonic authorities). On the other hand, fear and shame, which control and sanction any possible reduction in the above feelings, are also elicited through the hegemonic bloc: shame for not trusting or feeling the same loyalty towards figures and institutions of authority, and fear of the possible consequences (Flam 2005: 21–24; Sennet 1980: 3–12, 27–41, 92–97; Scheff 1990). Even if it is not always a strategic and well-planned objective, the undermining of these emotions and their replacement with counter- and/or deviant emotions is certainly an organic part of the movements’ *habitus* (Summers-Efler 2002). Emotions of this kind include distrust, contempt, rage, disgust, and hatred towards adversaries, on the one hand, and pride, hope, solidarity and encouragement for the members and their organization, on the other.

The affective reframing of reality does not occur solely through the emotional dramaturgy of demonstrations (banners, slogans, chanting, clashing with security forces); it is also achieved through critical and breaching events aimed at morally shaking opponents and the general public. For instance, the entire strategy of the Adbusters Media Foundation (AMF) is designed to shock the western public and stimulate critical reflexes against consumerism. When redesigning the posters of Benetton or those advertising a women's perfume, irony and humour act as a form of de-stabilization, debunking the enchantment of the advertising code and exposing the discursive hegemony of capitalist hedonism (Wettergren 2005). When the Israeli branch of the international Women In Black (WIB)<sup>4</sup> movement protests every Friday in central locations in Jerusalem against the occupation of Palestinian territories and military conflicts, their demonstrations are sometimes met with patriotic anger and sometimes inspire the sympathy of everyday people whose voice is muted by the force of the majority and the spiral of silence effect (Benski 2005).

Such events bring about cognitive liberation, as social movement analysts have asserted (McAdam 1988; Eyerman & Jamison 1994), but an emotional liberation takes place in parallel which makes it easier for the subjects to participate in collective forms of contentious politics (Benski & Langman 2013). It is not just the case of new and alternative cognitive patterns being devised which discursively frame the public sphere and the politics of contention (Tarrow 1998: 118-120; Keck & Sikkink 1998: 223-226); new rules of feeling are also instituted; namely, a refiguring of the prevailing 'emotional regime' is taking place from which a form of emotional reflexivity—in varying proportions, of course—develops: repressed emotions come to the surface and legitimize their public expression, sanctioning emotions like shame and fear change their object and emotional concern (e.g. instead of feeling ashamed,

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4. Nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2001.

I shame somebody else), subjects understand why and what they feel within their social roles, thus nurturing the ability to distance themselves from them. In this way, emotional reflexivity is not limited to the cognitive self-observation of the subject, but extends to the self-conversion of the subject into agent. In this sense, emotions do not function as inadvertent ‘passions’, but rather as qualities of the self, which —according to Rosenberg (1990)— move within three fields: emotional identification, emotional expression and emotional experience. All the above are necessary conditions for the formation of collective action and the enactment of contentious politics, which is, by definition, a form of emotional politics.<sup>5</sup>

### *c) The role of the Media*

For decades, the public space in which social movements act and present themselves has been highly ‘mediatized’ by all means of communication —printed, electronic, digital— and visual. The mediatization of the public sphere and social consciousness entails opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and values not shaped through individuals’ first-hand experience, but through the media content, from which they often stem. Mediatization is the form the much wider ontological process of mediation assumes in the Age of Media.

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5. An important issue of emotional reframing arises within social movements themselves (e.g., Attac, European Social Forum, etc.), which have to not only ‘think globally and act locally’, but also ‘think locally and act globally’. The combination of global and local in their activities brings back the issue of national differences at an organizational and cultural level. Even if they claim that they are thinking globally, quite often there are strong ethnocentric tendencies revealing their devotion to ethnic origin identities (Rootes 1999: 304-5). This is because, despite the internationalist heritage of the labour and peace movements, local groups find it difficult to renounce their ethnic emotion and transform it into a permanent enthusiasm, commitment and solidarity within abstract systems of reference and organization. As noted by Flam and King (2005: 16-17), deep emotional identification with the nation still imposes limitations to modern internationalist social movements, although this issue has not been systematically assessed in the relevant literature.

Therefore, when one refers to the affective reframing of reality and the alteration of feeling rules and structures of feeling, when one refers to the politics of emotion that is implemented directly or indirectly by social movements and their intellectuals, one should bear in mind that this procedure is—and could only ever be—a profoundly mediatized process. Of course, traditional channels of interpersonal communication and, live ritualistic collective action are not absent, nor could they ever be eliminated (except, perhaps, in the case of the so-called online movements).

However, when movements emotionally address the audience, the general public and their rivals, they increasingly do so through various media. As agents of collective action, if they intend to break through the in any case porous limits of the Political, (new) social movements have no choice but to involve in and expose themselves to modern digital communication. From a historical perspective, spoken and printed discourses correspond to the ways movements in industrial societies communicated.

At that time, activists and intellectuals used printed material as a means of forging a more direct relationship with the public or whoever they were to address, and as a medium for recruitment and mobilization, though one that had to be complemented by a powerful political rhetoric (Mattelart, 1980) in order to be effective. Now, even though interpersonal and printed communication is not altogether extinct, digital media are readily available as a communication platform for the contemporary movements. The highly militant and well-organised demonstrations against the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank which took place in Seattle and London late in 1999 were planned and run almost exclusively online, as have all the other anti-globalization protests which have continued to attract the attention of the international media since (Prague, 2000; Göthemborg and Genoa, 2001) (Dordoy & Mellor, 2001). This has been also the case with the Spanish and Greek ‘Indignati’, the ‘Occupy Wall Street’ movement, the still-born

movements of the Arab Spring and the ‘Black Lives Matter’ movement (Benski & Langman 2013: 259).

Given this, the question is to what extent mediatization affects the quality of the emotional bonds that develop both within movements and between movements and the general public.<sup>6</sup> This is because modern social movements are at risk of being converted, into a marketable spectacle for the mass media or into compartmentalized episodes in the commentaries of the digital social media. The dramatized and fragmentary way in which the movements are presented and the framework within which their activities are interpreted affect not only Media’s recipients, but also the self-image of the movements’ members (Gitlin 1980; McCarthy, Smith & Zald 1996; Tarrow 1998: 114-116). It also affects the internal functioning of movements through, for instance, the emergence of *de facto* leadership figures with media-friendly characteristics at the expense of the movements’ natural leaders. As has been mentioned, by Diani and Donati (1999: 29), developments in the media environment have facilitated the transformation of eco-activists into media campaign professionals.

Before all else, however, I would make a strong case that increased mediatisation is likely to give rise to ‘quasi-emotions’ rather than proper emotions. Embedded in their private back-stages, monitoring movement activities pointing to the emotional reframing of the public sphere, members of the general public and sympathizers alike experience ‘quasi-emotions’, which is to say affective experiences in which the links between emotion, motivation, and action (Frijda 2004; Davou & Demertzis 2013) are broken and which, by suppressing action readiness, are likely to engender cynicism, scepticism or even apathy. According to Meštrović (1997), who coined the term ‘quasi-emotions’, the commercialized ‘post-emotional society’ is a society in which a passionate commitment to personal and collective affairs cannot flourish. Bauman (1991: 261) claims that

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6. For the concept of ‘emotional bond’ cf. Kraemer & Roberts (2006).

this is indeed the case, to the extent that in postmodern consumerist society people act more as consumers than active citizens, more as spectators of politics than agents of collective action.

Consequently, their inability to solve social problems themselves may engender guilt, shame and embarrassment, which in turn serves to reduce the attractiveness of the movements' attempted emotional reframing of social reality. Accordingly, people do not generally get involved in or truly commit to situations and figures they are connected to through the experience of mass communication.<sup>7</sup> Apart from that, however, people may not put into effect action readiness because they might experience and display what have been called 'incongruent emotions' (Benski 2011; Benski & Langman 2013). Incongruent emotions are elicited when subjects experience simultaneously incompatible affective tendencies: for example, people may experience intense fear, which normally leads to 'flight mode' behavior, and at the same time anger, which activates aggressiveness. In such a cross pressing situation, the two incongruent emotions may neutralize or de-activate action readiness.

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7. Thompson would disagree with that, as, for him, 'intimacy at a distance' (1995: 357) is a key component of the formation of the self and sociality in late modernity. Certainly, observing the pain of others through the media does not always follow the logic of the spectacle and does not always give birth to quasi-emotions; it can lead to new forms of social interaction (Alexander 2004: 22, 24) and it may initiate what Luc Boltanski (1999: 3-19), drawing from Arendt, calls 'the politics of pity'. That is, the suffering at a distance by people who do not suffer is possible to induce moral obligation and responsibility for the distant unfortunate. I would claim that it would be too much to expect crystal clear differences in the emotional responses to the visualization of the distant others' sufferings and traumas. What seems to be the case most of the time is the moral ambivalence of the media precisely because things are never or rarely 'either -or' and it is not compulsory for someone to adopt either an ungrounded optimism, or an unnecessary pessimism in this issue. See *inter alia* Demertzis (2011; 2020: 72-89).

## *Concluding remarks*

The last twenty years or so have been marked by a strongly-worded request emanating from almost every branch of the social sciences and humanities: 'Bring emotions back in'. This has been coupled with frequent references to the 'non-emotions period of sociology' (Barbalet 1998: 19). This major turn could not leave the analysis of social movements unaffected. It was mentioned above that, in the past, the study of emotions and sentiments was either absent, incidental and allusive, or entirely dismissive. Emotions were absent from influential analyses of the cultural identity of the new social movements of the nineteen eighties, when the focus was on common interests, rules and values (Eder 1993: 53, 170-171) as well as on the movements' ability to redirect the self-perception of an entire society and the scope of its 'historicity' (Touraine 1981: 84-5, 94-5). The 'cultural' components of movement identity have been almost exclusively positioned alongside consciousness, values and world-images instead of emotions, despite the fact that it is obvious that movements chart their course through the emotions of anger, sympathy, solidarity, envy, fear, awe etc. (Kemper 2001: 58). Given that the struggles of social movements challenge the 'general orientations of social life', as Touraine puts it (1977: 312), how could this be the case without a strong emotional commitment on the part of their members?

Thus, the practical consequence of adopting the aforementioned request is that emotion(s), have now moved from the periphery to the epicentre of social movements analysis. In this context, there are analysts who consider emotions and sentiments not as intermediate variables but as independent variables capable of explaining at least some forms of collective and contentious action. They argue, for example, that there are circumstances under which people may decide to participate in a collective action not due to selective incentives, or on the basis of a calculated expectation of immediate reward, or be-

cause of handed-down commitments and prior loyalties. It is very likely that there are also circumstances in which people enter into collective action purely to win back their dignity, to defend their moral conscience and to restore their compromised ideal Ego. An instance of this could be the evangelical American anti-slavery movement of the 19th century (Young 2004; Eyerman 2001).

Far from methodological reductionism, the open and systematic introduction of the affective into the analysis of social movements can serve to enrich existing theoretical models – and already has (Polletta & Amenta 2001: 304); it may also serve in a complementary manner. If the generic political sociology of emotions is not to be transformed into an emotional political sociology (Demertzis 2006: 104; 2020: 1-23), movement analysis may benefit more from the addition of an affective filter than from its entrenchment in an elusive, catch-all ‘emotionology’ or an inconclusive ‘feel-ology’. There is thus a clear and powerful demand for inter-disciplinary and multi-paradigmatic approaches.

Nevertheless, this is easier to say than do. Something else which the analysis of social movements still confronts –from the viewpoint of the political sociology of emotions— is that, despite the dire need to study specific emotions within the context of concrete societal relations, at both a personal and collective level, emotions are experienced dynamically and combined, not statically and one and a time. This makes it very hard to implement appropriate and reliable methods and to avoid the false epistemological projections that can occur due both to the researcher’s involvement in the eminently sensitive subject of emotions and to culturally specific naming conventions for affective content.

Another challenge that emerges in the analysis of movements is the bridging of political sociology and the political psychology of emotions. The first operates at a collective level and implements qualitative research methods (comparison, interpretation, discourse analysis), the latter at a personal level

using quantitative and experimental methods to analyse political data, voting behaviour and the public evaluation of political elites (Redlawsk 2006: 5-6). This approach can contribute much to the clarification of the ‘emotional reflexivity’ process I mentioned above, as well as to our understanding of how members and/or leaders of a movement process and organize relevant political information.

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