

SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND *Emotion*



Edited by

**JODY CLAY-WARNER
DAWN T. ROBINSON**



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Jody Clay-Warner and Dawn T. Robinson



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PREFACE

Sociologists have long recognized the importance of emotion in the organization of social life. Recent advancements in the field have brought theories of inequality, justice, exchange, and status to bear on the study of emotion. At the same time, some traditional sociological theories of emotion have developed an increasingly structural focus. The result is a rich and growing literature that incorporates these research traditions. *Social Structure and Emotion* brings together many of the prominent scholars responsible for these innovations. The result is a unique collection of new theoretical and empirical contributions that adds to our understanding of the relationship between social structure and emotion.

An introductory chapter sets the intellectual context for the contributions contained in the rest of the pages. The chapters are organized into six sections, each of which is framed by a commentary that provides synthesis and perspective. The first section focuses on the relationship between emotions and status and power processes. Identity work is the theme of the second section. The papers in the third section highlight the role of emotions in social exchange, while the fourth section features two papers on justice and moral emotions. In section five are two papers that bring new insights to the frequently studied topic of emotional labor. The book ends with two papers on negative emotions, one theoretical and one empirical, as well as a section commentary. Together these sections result in a book that is both coherent and diverse and that, we hope, will stimulate further research in the area of social structure and emotion.

This book would not have been possible without a State of the Art Conference Grant from the University of Georgia's Office of the Provost, as well as financial support from the UGA Department of Sociology and Institute of Behavioral Research. This funding allowed us convene a group of eminent scholars to a three day meeting at the University of Georgia in April of 2006 to discuss cutting edge research and theory on the topic of social structure and emotion. This conference brought together established scholars in two of the most active traditions in

the sociology of emotions together with scholars from the more structural group processes tradition. These are scholars who are all actively making new bridges between the study of emotion and the study of social structure. Our invited scholars comprised the intellectual elite in the sociology of emotion – some senior scholars and some ‘rising stars’ – all of whom are actively involved in the production of new knowledge in the area. Early drafts of the papers contained in this volume were initially presented at this conference and later refined based upon feedback from other conference participants and the volume editors.

We are indebted to a number of UGA students who assisted with various organizational and/or editorial duties. First among these is Tiffani Everett, who assisted with both conference organization and management of manuscripts for the volume. Christopher D. Moore, David Johnson, and Callie H. Burt also provided invaluable assistance. We also acknowledge the support of two grants from the National Science Foundation awarded to the volume editors (NSF SES-0729396 and NSF BCS-0519969).

Finally, we thank the chapter authors for their contributions, as well as for their patience in the editorial process. We are honored to be associated with this impressive group of scholars.

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INTRODUCTION

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Key Words: Group Processes, Structural Symbolic Interaction

The study of human emotions has long interested scholars in various disciplines. Early sociologists gave emotion and sentiment a central theoretical role in key works. Durkheim [1912] (2001) described the way that tribal communities experienced intense, shared feelings – *collective effervescence* – as a result of religious rituals that distinguished the sacred from the profane. Durkheim argued that this form of religious ecstasy was a social fact rather than simply an individual experience. For Marx (1983), the emotional lives of the laboring class were important features of class struggle. Marx described the way that a certain separation from one's feelings – *alienation* – could result in a failure to recognize class interest and an inability to resist oppression. Contrastingly, religious fervor could serve to support repressive class systems. According to Marx only when workers learn to identify with their authentic emotions – that reflect and signal their repressed status – can they effectively energize class action. Weber (1947) described how rational bureaucracies develop to purge emotional experiences from institutional spheres and how, in turn, charismatic leaders occasionally rise to fill the affective voids created by highly developed bureaucracies.

Despite the central role emotions played in classic sociological theory, modern sociology largely ignored emotion until about 30 years ago. Within contemporary sociology, however, some of the most interesting theoretical innovations now are occurring at the intersection of social structure and emotion. Scholars are asking how power and status relations affect our emotional lives and how these feelings, in turn, contribute to the development, organization, and stability of social arrangements. Sociologists studying these questions agree on the central role that emotions play in shaping social structure, as well as the importance