

BSA Study Group Sociology of Emotions: Annual report 2016-17

The Sociology of Emotions Group was established in July 2015. It brings together scholars contributing to a growing body of theory, methods and interconnected research on the social aspects of emotions. The group builds on the long history of investigating emotions in society developed by key thinkers such as William James, Georg Simmel, G.H. Mead, Arlie Hochschild, Norman Denzin, Tom Scheff, Theodore Kemper, Randall Collins, Jack Barbalet and others.

The relevance of emotions and affect extends now to sub-disciplines including sociology of work, cultural and economic sociology, sociological theory, politics and social movements, gender, class and race/ethnicity. New kinds of methodology are being successfully employed to better understand emotions in social life, including historical research on cultural and institutional factors shaping emotions, phenomenological and philosophical investigations, quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews and ethnographies and textual and content analysis.

Aims and objectives:

The intention of this group is to provide a platform to encourage research into the social aspects of emotions. The group's objectives are to:

- Explore the role of emotion as a primary sociological concept and force
- Reveal the common emotional components of disciplines and sociological sub-disciplines
- Encourage new and critical sociological/social theorising on emotions
- Employ new methodologies in their exploration
- Understand the role of emotion as it relates to the social research and policy process

Convenor: Dr Mary Holmes, University of Edinburgh

Co-Convenor: Dr Julie Brownlie, University of Edinburgh

Membership

Membership of the emotions study group has grown from 40 at the end of 2015 to Over 80 at the beginning of 2017. Of these, at least 30 are BSA members (data on BSA membership is missing for some group members, so we plan to collect this soon). An active Jiscmail list

for the group exists and currently all those who belong to the list have expressed their wish to be part of the study group.

Members are drawn from a range of institutions across the UK and include postgraduates and academics at all stages of an academic career. Most are sociologists, but we have a number of members from related disciplines.

Activities

In its first full year as a group, the Sociology of Emotions has held two successful events.

- A social evening on 6 April for group members attending the BSA annual conference 2016 at Aston University in Birmingham.
- A one day conference, entitled Emotions in The Social World was held on the 9 September 2016 for group members (and others interested) at the University of Edinburgh. This was a highly stimulating and successful event with 25 people in attendance and 14 papers presented. Feedback from attendees indicated that group members appreciated sharing their current research with interested audiences and the opportunity to network.

Planned activities

- A one day conference is planned at the University of Salford in 2017 (Date TBC). This will be hosted by the Department of School of Nursing, Midwifery, Social Work & Social Sciences and co-organised by group member, Anita de Klerk
- A social event for group members attending the BSA annual conference in Manchester is planned for April 2017
- The Study Group is exploring with the European Emotions Study group the possibility of holding their annual conference in Edinburgh in 2018. This would be an opportunity for UK study group members to strengthen their ties with international colleagues working in the sociology of emotions.

Publications

Mary Holmes and Julie Brownlie are currently co-editing a book series on the Sociology of Emotions for Routledge. Group members have already submitted proposals for consideration in the series.

Summary

The steady and continuing increase in group membership in the last year reflects a successful first year for the group. Our first study group conference confirmed that there is an active membership who are interested in being involved in planning events and activities and this has led to our second study group annual conference being planned at the University of Salford.

Dr Mary Holmes and Dr Julie Brownlie
Co-convenors of the BSA Study Group on the Sociology of Emotions
February 2017.