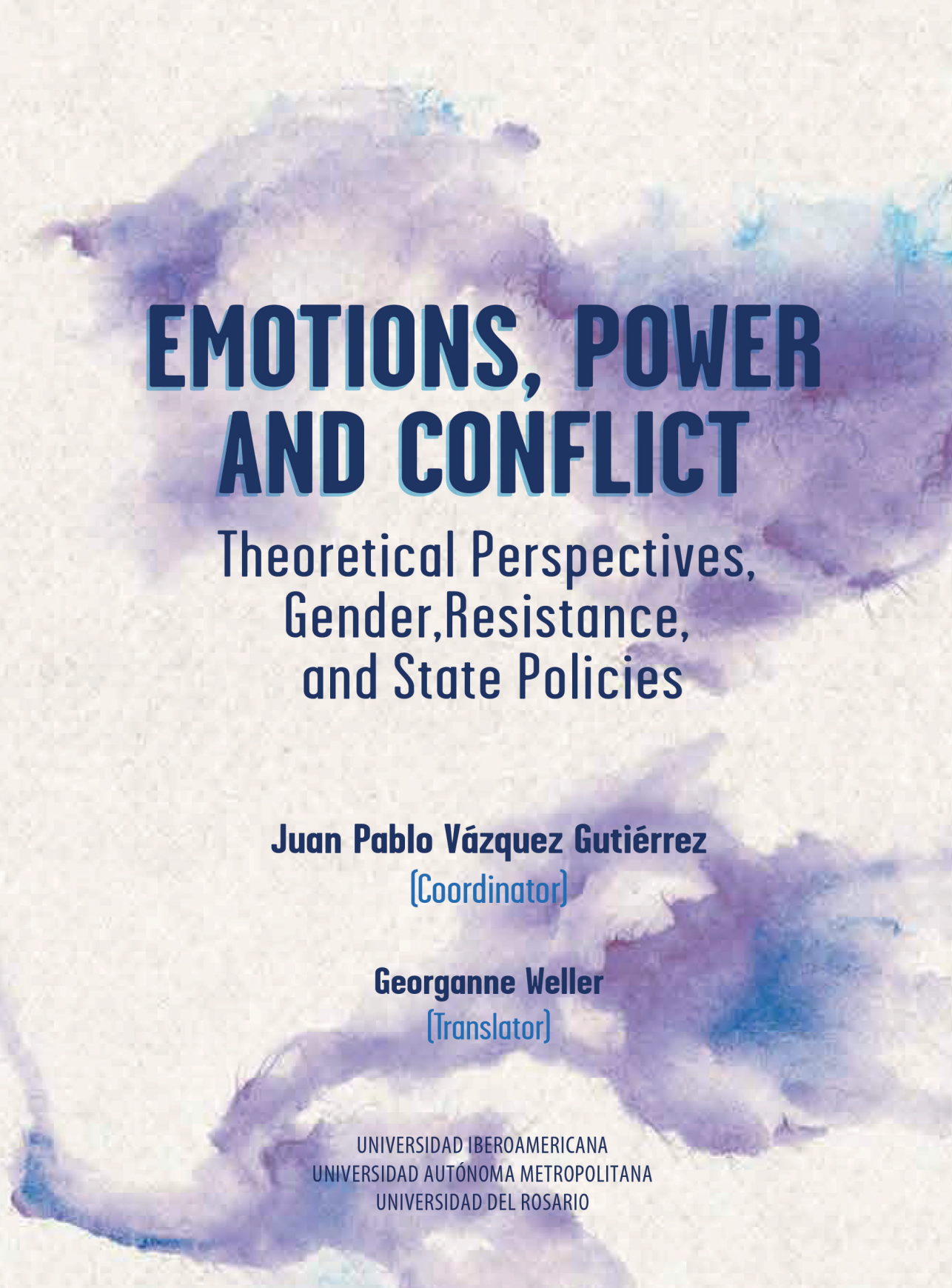




EMOTIONS, POWER AND CONFLICT

**Theoretical Perspectives,
Gender, Resistance,
and State Policies**

Juan Pablo Vázquez Gutiérrez
(Coordinator)

Georganne Weller
(Translator)

UNIVERSIDAD IBEROAMERICANA
UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA METROPOLITANA
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Emotions, Power, and Conflict



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Introduction

Juan Pablo Vázquez Gutiérrez¹
Gabriela Alejandra López Miranda²
José Omar Pérez Baños³

This book is the product of a year of reflection on concepts and problems related to power and conflict, analyzed from an emotional perspective. It marks the initial outcome of an inter-institutional research project initiated in January 2020 by scholars from Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City campus, and Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Azcapotzalco and Cuajimalpa campuses.

Although the original focus was on the role of emotions in social theory, the scope and ambition of this project expanded once we decided to include studies based on the work of colleagues. These colleagues, by incorporating affective aspects as a tool of analysis, shared our concern with issues of power and conflict in contemporary societies.

This book, therefore, draws from diverse methodologies and aims to provide a continuous reflection on the growing importance of emotions in social life. We begin with a broad understanding of power and politics and recognize the significant role the affective turn has played in the social sciences over recent decades. The goal of this introduction is to offer a comprehensive overview that establishes the framework within which these studies can be grouped.

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Goals, Positions, and Framework of Readings

In this book, we aim to adopt a collective and multi-setting approach to power and conflict, with emotional aspects serving as a shared reference. Taking this approach from the very beginning has facilitated the incorporation of a broad array of perspectives and strategies. However, we quickly realized that we needed to be explicit and precise about the key theoretical focal points and positions that form the common core of the articles included in this book. These are the elements we are referring to:

- 1) We do not start with a strict definition of power, nor do we propose to develop a central argument progressively in an effort to reach specific conclusions. Instead, we begin from a series of converging questions with multiple possible answers, always supporting the multi-dimensional and polysemic approaches to the concept of power (Clegg and Haugaard, 2009, p.1).
- 2) A central concern throughout the book is the analysis of emotional expressions of power, as well as their associated forms of conflict and resistance. In this sense, power is approached both as a mechanism of domination and through expressions of conflict, which points to the possibility that where power is being exercised, resistance can also be found (Heaney 2011, p. 260, 271).
- 3) Along with this focus on an emotional approach, the studies in this book share a relational perspective on power (Emirbayer, 2009, p. 296), assuming that all social processes involve cross-cutting dimensions that are not limited to material expressions but also include important symbolic components (Heaney, 2011, p. 271–272).
- 4) Another shared aspect is the avoidance of classificatory criteria that might lead to a radical separation of emotions, sensitivities, and affect (García and Sabido, 2014, p. 21; Ahmed 2014, p. 27–28). While recognizing the differences established between the sociology of emotions, affect, body, and sensitivities, we assume that contributions from these fields are integral to the discussions presented here, as reflected in the notion of the *emotional/affective dimension*.
- 5) Within this framework, and to better understand our approach, the notions of *affective and emotional overtones* refer to the use of an

- affective dimension as a tool for interpreting multiple social phenomena in an emotional/affective mode (García and Sabido, 2014; Lara and Enciso, 2013). This approach can also be applied to the study of classical works of social theory (Abramowski and Canevaro, 2017, p. 11).
- 6) Based on this, we selected certain theories as an initial approach to studying power and conflict from an emotional perspective (see the chapters of Section 1). This reflection continues through various focuses and approaches to the body and gender sensitivities (Section 2), as well as in the analysis of broad collective processes such as social movements, identities, and national conflicts (Sections 3 and 4).
 - 7) There are no dichotomic or unsurmountable barriers between these approaches associated with *cultural overtones* (methodologies of a discursive nature related to textual analysis) or those derived from *affective and corporeal overtones*. The assumption that communicative ties exist and complement each other allows us to analyze discourse and, in general, the textual dimension of the world in an affective mode (López, 2015, p. 11–12). This is equally applicable to the interpretation of classical authors of social theory as it is to the other topics covered in this book.
 - 8) This work places the analysis of the mutual relationship between emotional processes and social structuring within a broader perspective of power. Elias (1978) referred to these processes as a structural characteristic of social relations. Along these lines, we can assume that emotions are structural elements of social life (Heaney, 2011, p. 260). Additionally, specific configurations were analyzed, such as *differentiated emotional worlds* that can shape shared identities or generate conflict (Ariza, 2020, p. 12).

This series of positions establishes the utilitarian profile and nature of this collective work, beyond the diversity of topics, strategies, and levels of analysis presented in each text. In this sense, while each chapter is a self-contained work, the reflections that follow aim to spark what can become an integral part of a broader discussion that cuts across all thematic sections of the book.

Adopting a multidisciplinary and polysemic approach to power, as we present here, is not the same as considering this concept with an undeter-

mined goal, nor does it require an exhaustive review of existing concepts. Instead, we propose an exercise in selective reading of approaches, allowing us to move between traditional views of power—where emotions have been relegated to a residual category or ignored entirely—and perspectives aimed at highlighting the emotional dimensions of power. This approach is introduced in a general manner in the first chapter, titled “Approaches to Power from the Emotional Dimension: Debates and Theoretical Perspectives.” In this chapter, which serves as an introductory overview, Gabriela López, José Omar Pérez Baños, and Juan Pablo Vázquez Gutiérrez underscore the subtle yet significant presence of the emotional dimension in classical social thought and highlight key moments of growing interest in the emotional dimension as an analytical tool for understanding phenomena related to power and conflict. This chapter provides a foundation for the reflections found throughout the book’s four thematic sections.

Thematic Sections and Chapters in This Book

Over the past few decades, the sociology of emotions has become well-established, grounding the relevance of studying affect in social life by considering its production, functions, and social effects (Bericat, 2000, p. 150).

Building on linguistic and cultural perspectives, the affective approach has not only underscored the presence of this dimension in social life but has also positioned it as a “reading device” that enables analysis of the social world through an *affective code*.⁴

These considerations are closely linked to the study of power and conflict. As Bericat notes (2000, p. 151), without a thorough emotional analysis, it is difficult to fully understand phenomena such as nationalism, racism, or identity. Can the same be said of the concepts of power and conflict? The chapters in this book address this question, each proposing, from their specific perspec-

⁴ Bericat (2000) underscores the possibility of different interpretations and distinguishes between a sociology of emotions (focused on studying the social determination and social effects of emotions), a sociology with emotions (used as an analytical tool for social analysis across multiple fields), and sociology through emotions (applying the emotional dimension as a lens for interpreting reality from an affective perspective).

tives, how to engage with the affective dimensions of power and conflict in the context of these four sections.

Section 1

The Emotional-Affective Dimension: Theoretical Discussions

In this first chapter, the selected authors analyze concepts and specific theoretical approaches, as well as the complex relationships between affect, power, and conflict. Together, these articles underscore the relevance of the emotional dimension in two distinct ways: first, in the establishment and maintenance of collective order, considered an effect of social power and symbolic domination; second, in the affective-discursive production of the other as an enemy, representing the rupture of social bonds, social distancing, and the creation of contexts of conflict.

In the first chapter of this thematic section, “The Emotional and Sensorial Dimension of Conflict: Affective Economies of Hate and the Figure of the Enemy,” Olga Sabido begins by analyzing Simmel’s and Ahmed’s affective approaches. Regarding Simmel, she expands on the proposal of relational sociology for studying conflict, particularly the construction of the enemy figure. As for Ahmed, she revisits the relational approach to emotions and sensations, highlighting their explicit relationship to the political sphere. Sabido’s thesis argues that hate is not the origin of conflicts; rather, conflictive, and asymmetrical relations require and cultivate hate. In this sense, affective economies of hate help construct a negative image of the other, portraying them as enemies through sensitivity.

In the second chapter, “Affective Dimensions of Power in Durkheim and Bourdieu: from Moral Authority to *Illusio* as Forms of Symbolic Domination,” Juan Pablo Vázquez Gutiérrez delves into Durkheim’s concept of collective effervescence and the role of rituals in explaining the emotional production of power, expressed in its most consolidated form as moral authority. The chapter concludes with an analysis of Bourdieu’s concepts of symbolic power and *illusio*. Through a comparative review, Vázquez underscores the equivalent roles these concepts play as principles of emotional order, where agents are effectively committed to maintaining social structures.

This section concludes with Adriana García Andrade's text, "Randall Collins: Emotions and Stratification in Interactions Rituals." She explores how rituals of interaction are linked to emotions, inequality, and power distribution. Collins challenges the assumption that all participants in a ritual are equal, instead highlighting the double stratification present: first, between those who are included in the ritual and those excluded, and second, among those participating under unequal conditions. The interaction ritual becomes a field of contention, where participants compete for emotional energy and the legitimation of cultural capital. Collins' framework thus provides a means to analyze power differences from an emotional perspective.

Section 2

Domination and Gender Order in Corporal-Emotional Codes

One of the key tenets of affective sociology, focusing on bodies and sensitivities, lies in the centrality of the participant who experiences their body and affect as core components of social reality (Ariza, 2016, p. 9). In line with this focus, the papers in this section reclaim the body, not as a residual element but as a productive resource of feeling, capable of affecting and being affected within the context of meaningful social interactions. They also emphasize that underlying corporal and affective practices are social principles that classify bodies and regulate expressive possibilities through specific gender orders.

In "Gender and Domination Through the Body, Desire, and Affects: Reflections from a Dispositional Sociology Point of View," Roberta Priscila Cedillo Hernández examines processes of gender socialization and the incorporation of sexual behaviors into a corporal-affective code, drawing on Bourdieu, Lahire, and Wacquant. This chapter analyzes the model of bodily action underlying habitus, the relationship between habitus, libido, and *illusio*, and the socialization processes as they become ingrained in the habitus.

In "The Intersections of Gender and Social Class in the 'Feeling Rules' of Boxing and Ballet," Daniela Sánchez López presents the results of fieldwork with gender minorities who engage in these practices (male dancers and female boxers). The text reveals that the emotional codes governing these practices are tied to both gender and class. One key finding is that participants' most significant emotional management is expressed through affective sexual

relationships, food, maternity, and aspirations for success. Adhering to these mandates is essential for achieving a recognized habitus. Sánchez highlights the importance of the affective dimension in structuring unequal gender and class orders.

Finally, in “Emotional Practices of Mazahua Women: Body Violence and Demonstration of Masculine Domination,” Gabriela Alejandra López Miranda reflects on the emotional practices of Mazahua women in response to the gender violence they experience in their communities. She argues that these emotional dispositions are the tangible result of long-standing masculine domination.

Section 3

Hegemony, Counter-Hegemony, Resistance, and Emotions

The role of affect in social order is crucial for understanding the processes of power. As Turner has pointed out (2007, p. 1), emotions play a central role in shaping ties and commitments with social structures and in overturning orders to produce new collective ideologies. This section uses these premises to review the role of the affective dimension in shaping hegemonic and counter-hegemonic processes within social movements. The concepts previously mentioned assume a relational vision of power that accounts for how dominant classes naturalize their domination by imposing their worldview as “universal common sense” (Popitz, 2017) within complex processes that, weighed on their dominion, cannot avoid the emergence of alternating worldviews.

In the chapter “Antonio Gramsci: Indifference, Hegemony, and Political Power,” Enrique Gutiérrez Márquez explores the relationship between politics and emotions from a two-way perspective: first, through the contextual analysis framing this article, and second, through the integration of Gramsci’s biography and political practices, linked to the analysis of his famous 1917 letter titled “Hate for the Indifferent.” As gleaned from his analysis, this letter is a reflective exercise on the conditions that shape the possibility of expressing one’s thoughts and emotions about the world. Rather than viewing indifference as emotional emptiness, it is the key to constructing concrete schemes of domination. Not taking a stand means rejecting active participation in public life, while passively validating the consolidation of authoritarian forms of

power. In this sense, domination uses and requires indifference, as well as the emotions it conceals.

In the article titled “Socio–Political Resistance and Emotion Work: Challenging the Feeling Rules of Domination and Obedience,” Edith Kuri Pineda reflects on the affective processes that enable people to overcome fear and indifference and construct organized forms of collective resistance. Drawing from a broader review of approaches and key concepts in the sociology of emotions, the author demonstrates how collective resistance in social movements involves a cognitive and emotional (re)configuration, through which processes that challenge the emotional rules of domination and obedience are generated.

The conclusions of this work connect with the chapter “‘Lucio is Alive’: Death and Hope in the Social Study of Emotions” by Marisol López Menéndez. Using theoretical–conceptual tools from historical sociology and a broad documentary review, this chapter draws on texts by Bloch and Desroche to analyze the notion of resurrection (denying death) of heroes such as Emiliano Zapata, Rubén Jaramillo, and Lucio Cabañas, and their influence on the configuration of present–day social movements. This reinterpretation of death, associated with the Judeo–Christian concept of *martyrdom* and the *principle of hope*, is analyzed within a symbolic–affective framework. The case of Lucio Cabañas is examined as a significant emotional factor shaping contemporary social movements.

Section 4

State Policies, Conflicts, and Emotions

The two articles in this final section are closely related, both in their theoretical references and in their subject matter. Despite the specificities of their approaches, both highlight the performative role of emotions and their political effects in the configuration of collective identities, which can be constructed culturally as objects of hate or love, respected as figures of reverence, or reviled. In both articles, discourse analysis is key to understanding emotional policies and regimes of sentiments, which function as strategies of governability over bodies and emotions. Considering these factors, both chapters explore and draw on the work of Ahmed on emotional political economies

implemented by nation-states and how emotions facilitate action, mobilize bodies, and maintain social structures.

In “Pain, Fear, Hate and Revenge: the Circulation of Emotions in the State-Sikh Community Conflict in India,” Fernanda Vázquez Vela analyzes the conditions that led to conflict in India at the end of the 20th century, focusing on two spirals of violence: Operation Blue Star (June 1984) and the subsequent pogroms in Delhi (October–November 1984). Using qualitative methodological tools, she shows how various forms of discourse were produced in this context, circulating and taking on new meanings that shaped emotional orientations and fueled mobilizations. Following Ahmed, she adopts the concept of emotions as facilitators and key components of action. This allows her to explain how the two spirals of violence demonstrated state power and incited violent resistance within the community, generating fear, threats, and the sensation among Sikhs of being “out of the nation,” leading to the development of hate and revenge through the production of stereotypes and prejudices.

In the final chapter of this section, “From Self-Containment to Intensification: Emotional Economies in State Music,” José Omar Pérez Baños explores the relationship between national anthems and emotional sociology to establish a foundation for a sociology of music with an affective focus. His central argument is that the importance of compositions intended to exalt civic emotions does not lie in the music itself or a specific era, but in the particular relationship established between emotions and bodies. He builds on Elias’s concept of “affective valences” to examine how music sustains vast chains of interdependencies, such as those that articulate modern nation-states. The chapter identifies the nation’s boundaries as a challenge to the Eliasian model and suggests that Ahmed’s emotional economic policies offer insights to address this issue by conceiving emotions as forces that shape and delineate boundaries. The chapter concludes with the argument that a systematic comparison of these two approaches can help overcome their respective limitations, while contributing to the study of music from the perspective of the sociology of emotions.

We hope this comprehensive vision of the book helps readers appreciate the central themes and converging interests that connect each chapter.

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1. Approaches to Power from the Emotional Dimension: Debates and Theoretical Perspectives

Juan Pablo Vázquez Gutiérrez¹
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The Emotional Dimension in Classical Social Theory and the Principles of the 20th Century

As Cedillo et al. (2016) argue, the affective turn within social sciences highlights the increasing importance of emotions and affect in the analysis of social action. While this approach has gained prominence in recent years, it has its origins in the foundational works of classical sociology.

According to Illouz (2007), sociology has based its explanations of modernity on the analysis of large-scale transformative processes, such as the rise of capitalism, the institutionalization of individualism, the emergence of democratic political institutions, and the disenchantment of traditional worldviews due to increasing technical rationalization. Within these grand narratives, the affective dimension has often been present, albeit implicitly.

Canonical sociological accounts of modernity contain, if not fully developed theories of emotions, at least significant references to them. For example, Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* depict the emotional expressions of alienation. Durkheim, meanwhile, explained social integration using concepts with emotional connotations, such as solidarity and collective effervescence. Simmel's studies of life in large metropolitan areas examined conflict and social distance, both of which have emotional dimensions. Similarly, Weber examined emotions like anxiety in Protestant asceticism and capitalist

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business logic, as well as charismatic leadership and the dilemmas between rational conduct, values, and emotions (Illouz, 2007).

To offer a broader perspective of the emotional dimension in social theory, it is important to mention classical female sociologists who, while not central to the field's early development, were the first to question the dualities of reason/emotion and mind/body, as well as the asymmetrical gender relations that have influenced the unequal distribution of domestic labor, and the masculinized canon upon which social theory was built. In line with this, Aldana (2020, p. 70–71) identifies key figures: Harriet Martineau (1802–1876), Clara Zetkin (1857–1933), Beatrice Potter Webb (1858–1943), Anna Julia Cooper (1859–1964), Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860–1935), Ida Wells-Barnett (1862–1931), Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919), and Marianne Schnitger Weber (1870–1954).

The Chicago School, with significant publications in the *American Journal of Sociology* between 1896 and 1920, contributed to this debate. Figures such as Jane Addams, Marian Talbot, Florence Kelley, Edith Abbott, Sophonisba Breckinridge, Frances Kellor, Annie Marion MacLean, Julia Lathrop, and Grace Abbott (García, 2010)⁴ addressed issues that had been previously overlooked, indirectly incorporating interest in the affective dimension. Although these thinkers did not develop a theory of emotions as such, they brought up topics that had been previously ignored, indirectly incorporating interest in the affective dimension, their work laid the groundwork for feminist theories and gender studies, which later helped shape the emotional and affective turn.

Solana and Vacarezza (2020) explore the articulation between feminist discourse and the rise of the affective approach, emphasizing how emotions relate to social practices and power dynamics. They assert:

Criticism of romantic love, the defense of an ethics of care, the reclaiming of bodily experiences, and the very idea of society make clear that affective aspects permeate the history of feminism to the present day. For the authors, the long-standing

⁴ Most of these publications referred to studies by these researchers within the framework of the Hull-House and the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA), two essential spaces for building networks among female academics and activists who conducted significant research, interventions, and social reform efforts.

feminist interest in examining affect, emotions, and feelings resonates with the contemporary “affective turn” (p. 2–3).

This central interest in emotions across disciplines is connected to what Rosaldo (1984) called *embodied thought*, challenging the mind/body dualism and reaffirming the feminist concept of situated knowledge, which recognizes the critical role of affect in social life.⁵

The Emotional and Affective Approach in Sociological Research

The development of a sociology of emotions and affect stems not only from theoretical changes but also from shifts in social life. As García and Sabido (2014, p. 11) note, the growing focus on the affective dimension reflects trends driven by contemporary social dynamics—such as the breakdown of community ties, uncertainty surrounding socialization and relationships, increased violence, and collective states of fear and anxiety.

For the social sciences, the emotional dimension gained traction as a topic of interest in the 1970s. This trend is shown by the increasing number of studies that challenge the dichotomies that shaped modern social sciences (e.g., mind/body, reason/emotion, culture/nature) and work to overcome the reduction of the body, emotions, and affect to purely biological dimensions (Bericat 2000).

The sociology of emotions emerged within U.S. sociology through the work of scholars such as Kemper (1978a, 1978b), Heise (1979), Plutchik (1980), Hochschild (1983), and Scheff (1997). These authors highlight the culturally situated nature of emotions, the social meanings attributed to them, their collective expressions, and their role in reproducing asymmetrical social relations (Turner and Stets, 2005, p. 1).

By the 1990s, various disciplines—philosophy, psychology, cultural studies, and neuroscience—contributed to the emergence of the so-called *affective turn*. This approach—which designates a “general physiological disposition that comes before emotion” (Biess and Gross, 2014)—focuses on *affect* as some-

⁵ “That ‘we know’ when we feel, and that this knowledge is shaped by social structures and political orders, must be remembered as one of the key claims of feminism in the 1970s, encapsulated in the famous motto, ‘the personal is political’” (López, 2015, p. 11).

thing preceding emotion and social meaning, something that is felt and perceived in the body. It refers to the possibility of affecting and being affected sensorially by and in relation to other bodies. Scholars such as Tomkins (1984, 1991), Sedgwick, and Frank (2003) discuss affect as something that can be defined and its assignment of positive or negative valences. In contrast, Massumi (1995), following Deleuze, describes affect as something that escapes language and influences both the individual and others (Toye, 2010).

In Latin America, discussions around the emotional and affective turn have gained momentum since the beginning of the 21st century, and networks and conferences in recent years have contributed to their institutionalization.⁶

Questions about Power from the Perspective of Emotions

The concept of power has been the subject of multiple definitions and approaches. As Clegg and Haugaard (2009, p. 1) point out, a brief historical overview of these developments highlights their multi-dimensional, multi-referential, and polysemic nature.

Power has been characterized as a resource, a property, or a sign of the ability to influence others. It is often seen as a by-product of human agency or as a result of structural conditions (Lukes, 1978). It is also relational, historical, and context-specific, seen as a cross-cutting issue in all social processes (Máiz, 2003, p. 74). This expands the concept of power beyond the formal political arena to include a broader domain encompassing daily interactions, personal dimensions, bodies, and sensitivities. Furthermore, the understanding of power has evolved from being exclusively a mechanism of domination (“power over”) to adopting a more productive, collective, and expansive na-

⁶ Sabido (2011), Scribano (2012), and García and Sabido (2014) highlight key moments in the institutionalization of these fields in Latin America. In 1994, a research group in the Anthropology of Emotions (GREM) was established in Brazil. In 2007, another research group on Bodies, Emotions, and Society was formed, followed in 2008 by the National Network of Sociocultural Studies of Emotions (RENISCE). In 2009, a Nucleus Group on the Sociology of the Body was created at the National University of Chile, followed by the Research Group on Emotions and Society (Grei) at Alberto Hurtado University and the Institutional Group on the Sociology of Emotions (IIS-UNAM). Other initiatives included the Nucleus of Social Studies on Intimacy, Affect, and Emotions (Clacso) and the Network of Research on and about Bodies. Finally, in 2014, the Inter-university Group “The Study of Affect and Emotions in the Social and Humanity Sciences” (Flacso/UNGS/UNAM) was established (Ariza, 2020, p. 9, n.6).

ture (“power for”), not limited to generating control processes or conditioning (Göhler, 2009, p. 28–29).

Our objective is not to present an exhaustive overview of these perspectives. Instead, we aim to explore a selection of converging approaches found in the works of the contributors to this book, while linking classical definitions of power to contemporary developments and critiques, particularly with a focus on the emotional dimensions of power.

The Multiple Faces of Power: Classical and Contemporary Approaches

Given the centrality of the concept of power in the social sciences, scholars such as Heaney (2011, p. 259) argue that emotion should play an equally significant role, as it is often implicitly present in reflections on power.

Emotions and affect have been implicitly linked to the political-economic apparatus since the 16th century. For instance, in Machiavelli’s *The Prince* (1532), power stems from fear and insecurity, with its success more dependent on instilling fear than inspiring love (Maquiavelo, 2008, p. 85). In Hobbes’ *Leviathan* (1651), passion, particularly the fear of dying in a natural state, is the driving force behind the formation of the State (Hobbes, 2016, p. 33–42). Rousseau, in contrast, acknowledges in *The Social Contract* (1762) that while fear is central to conserving power in a traditional order, a republican regime requires positive emotions that foster sociability (Rousseau, 2017). Adam Smith, in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), sees likeability as a fundamental mechanism for organizing social and economic life (Smith, 2010).

From this brief overview, following Besserer’s steps (2014, p. 57), we can identify the indirect but significant presence of affective forms, which both articulate society and are part of the power apparatus governing it. Classical studies on power recognize the relevance of emotions, yet often treat them as a complementary or residual category within this discipline. Does the same apply to sociology?

One of the most frequently cited definitions of power comes from *Economy and Society: Sketch of a Comprehensive Sociology* (1922) by Weber. According to this definition, power can be described as “the possibility of imposing one’s own will within a social relation, even against resistance and regardless of how likely it is to succeed” (Weber, 2019). We would like to highlight some of the

most relevant aspects of this definition in an effort to reflect on the emotional dimensions it implies.⁷

First, it is noteworthy that Weber (2019) expressed hesitation regarding the scope and meaning of his definition. As the author himself acknowledged, this is a preliminary definition. Following its presentation, Weber significantly noted that the concept of power is sociologically amorphous and can therefore take many forms. It can manifest in all types of action, enabling an actor to impose their will on others in particular situations (p. 43). This diffuse and complex nature makes power a slippery concept, difficult to address systematically (Guzzini, 2015, p. 103; Dreher and Göttlich, 2019, p. 24).

In light of this difficulty, Weber suggests approaching the concept not directly but through its concrete manifestations—specifically, through the distinct types of domination in which it is expressed (Weber, 2019).

Focusing on specific forms of domination offers several advantages. It allows for a concrete analysis of power (Weber, 2019) and enables a comparative and historical understanding of its basic components. This approach also leads to the study of phenomena like consented obedience, legitimacy, and authority (Gallino, 1995; Popitz, 2017). Despite defining power as the ability to impose one's will even in the face of resistance, Weber's analysis of concrete forms of domination highlights the role of consent and obedience (Heaney, 2011; Guzzini, 2015). For Weber, legitimacy and authority underlie the legitimate exercise of power, which can take three forms: traditional domination (based on habit), charismatic domination (rooted in the recognition of extraordinary qualities), and legal domination (founded on impersonal and rational regulations) (Weber, 2019).

Analyzing each form of domination raises questions about the emotional conditions that enable power relations and their consequences. This, in turn, invites deeper reflection on the emotional foundations of power.⁸

Weber's conception of power as a *probable* result, leaving room for resistance, leads to important questions: What conditions allow for resistance in

⁷ See the discussion on the revision of concepts by two important classical authors (Simmel and Durkheim) in the first chapter, sections 2 and 3, respectively.

⁸ From a different categorical framework, Durkheim expresses a similar perspective on the phenomena of power underlying figures of authority and willful obedience (see section 3 of this book). This line of reflection focuses on the relationship between power and authority, highlighting its emotional nuances and its recurrence in Sennett's treatment of authority (1993), who referred to this dynamic in a thought-provoking manner as an emotional expression of power.

the face of imposition? This question directs us toward Elias' and Foucault's perspectives on power.

The perspectives of Elias and Foucault offer valuable insights for understanding power for several reasons. Both begin with a relational conception of power and focus on the body and sensitivities, considering control and discipline as integral parts of the modernity project.⁹ Both perspectives emphasize the emergence of modern subjectivity and the shift from external social control to self-control, framing power as a positive force that produces subjectivity with a constrictive nature, aimed at regulating the body and sensitivities (Heaney, 2011, p. 266).¹⁰

Elias establishes that power relations are linked to specific social configurations (Dreher and Göttlich, 2019, p. 26) and are the product of a balance of power, which can be described in their concrete expressions within a dynamic scheme (Elías, 1978, p. 131). Consequently, power is produced and contested in various ways, without concentrating on any single participant.¹¹ It doesn't matter whether the differences in power are large or small; the struggle for power is present when there is functional interdependence among people (p. 74). Along these lines, Elías sketches a series of "game models" (pp. 76–103), in which processing and the dynamic nature of these relations are fundamental. Based on these play logics, social order is understood as the result of the intertwining of actions and the unintended consequences that arise from this intertwining. Thus, according to Heaney (2011, p. 267), Elías deserves to be recognized as a theoretician of power, and his omission from the literature

⁹ Another central element in the works of Elias and Foucault is the historical dimension. This dimension, which serves to denaturalize our understanding of emotions, makes it important to highlight contributions in this field by Reddy (1997, 2009), who explores the links between cognition and emotion within the framework of emotional regimes; Frevert (2014) and Frevert et al. (2014), who analyze the norms and rules of feeling and their historical use; Dixon (2003, 2012a, 2012b, 2020), with his pluralist approach to the history of the study of emotions; and Bourke (2003, 2005), with her work on fear and pain. Rosenwein (2001) also contributes significantly with her proposal of the category of emotional communities. Plamper provides an overview of these authors in *The History of Emotions: An Introduction* (2015). In the Latin American context, notable contributions include López Sánchez (2011) on the sociocultural construction of the feminine body, and Pedraza (1999) on bio-political practices and sentimental education (Peláez, 2020:58). In line with this reasoning, see the valuable introductory study by Zaragoza and Moscoso (2017) in the dossier "Emotional and Social Change Communities."

¹⁰ This concept is developed by José Omar Pérez Baños in chapter 12 of this book.

¹¹ As an example, Elias highlights the parent-offspring relationship, where, although the paternal or maternal role entails a significant degree of power, children also hold a certain degree of power over their parents. The same applies to other relationships characterized by a high degree of asymmetry (e.g., those between masters and slaves).

in this field is completely unjustified. As Mennell has noted (2008), “in his thinking, relations of power are at least as central as his famous notion of the civilizing process” (p. 132).¹²

Unlike Hobbes and Weber, who view power as a property emanating from the individual who exercises it, and unlike Arendt, who centers her focus on the problem of the exercise of legitimate power¹³, Foucault concentrates on the ways power is exercised and the effects of control in modern society.

Foucault’s perspective critiques the dominant concepts of power during his time. On one hand, he criticizes the “juridical–discursive” understanding of power as a right or property confined to legal forms that legitimize the actions of the State and its institutions. On the other hand, he critiques the Marxist concept of power, which is derived from the positions of subjects within the social structure and the use they make of their capital. In contrast to these perspectives, Foucault argues that power is not exclusively located in a specific space, nor is its exercise determined solely by economic conditions. It does not operate only vertically, nor is it something that is possessed; rather, it is *exercised* through the interplay of relations, constituting a cross-cutting condition for all social spaces (Foucault, 2012; Ávila–Fuenmayor, 2006).

Similar to Elias, Foucault (1990) views power as an inherent property of all social relations, always in a state of transformation and contestation. This condition of *contestability* leads to another significant thesis in his thinking: *where there is power, there is resistance*. For Foucault, power is associated with the circulation of knowledge and discourse that regulates control over bodies, emotions, and life itself. In this sense, power assumes a discursive dimension. It exists and develops as knowledge–power, as well as biopolitics and biopower.¹⁴ There is no relationship of power without a corresponding establishment

¹² Elias places the relationship between emotions and power at the center of his analysis, beginning with his consideration of the parallel development between sociogenesis and psychogenesis, a central theme in his work *The Civilizing Process* (Heaney, 2011, p. 267). A concise statement of this position can be found in his article “On Human Beings and Their Emotions: A Process-Sociological Essay” (Elias, 1987).

¹³ Unlike the authors who consider violence as a form of power, for Arendt the exercise of violence is proof of a lack of power; violence appears when power is threatened (Dreher and Göttlich, 2019, p. 25, n.30).

¹⁴ The consideration of power as an inherent property of social life is found in Nietzsche’s works and serves as a central reference for Foucault. For Nietzsche (2017), humanity is grounded in the aspiration to exert power over others. Human beings are driven by a *will to power*, which seeks to impose a particular interpretation of the world. Foucault draws on and reinterprets this notion. While for Nietzsche, the desire for truth is a desire for power that asserts the individual, for Foucault, the desire for power is situated within a broader context and structural logic, embedded in fields of knowledge and their associated mechanisms (Dreher and Göttlich, 2019, p. 27).

of a field of knowledge, nor is there knowledge that does not simultaneously involve a relationship of power (Foucault, 2012). Viewed in this manner, discourses are established as producers of subjectivity, shaping bodies and sensitivities through various technologies of power. This array of elements reflects the broad range of topics incorporated by Foucault into his reflections on power, many of which have found support in the sociology of emotions and affections.¹⁵

Another relevant perspective to consider in this overview is that of Bourdieu. For him, power is a dimension present in all social life and can manifest in both material and symbolic expressions. The combined influence of capital and the positions occupied by agents in different social fields constitutes a special type of capital that is symbolic, expressed through parameters such as prestige, reputation, and recognition—representing the most refined expression of power that can be upheld. Bourdieu (2000) defines symbolic power as the capacity of bodies, groups, or individuals to impose meanings as valid, concealing the conditions of their production (p. 93). Directly related to this concept, symbolic violence refers to a specific form of imposition exercised over its agents, supported by their acceptance and complicity (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013). This paradoxical situation arises because individuals, through their actions, legitimize their principles of vision and division of the world that safeguard the prevailing interests while ignoring those of an arbitrary nature (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 221). This acceptance is produced not only through the incorporation of *values and beliefs but also—and above all—through the internalization of structures and affectations for habitus*. This allows agents to recognize social order and the dominant values imposed on them through their own feelings, desires, and hopes, namely, through the acceptance and incorporation of *illusio* within each field.¹⁶

¹⁵ Among the developments influenced by this Foucauldian framework, it is worth highlighting the works of Illouz (2007), who analyzes the production of the modern emotional self, transformed into a subject of therapeutic discourse and the market; studies on the body and sensibilities (Le Breton, 2013; Scribano, 2012; García and Sabido, 2014); the revival of the Foucauldian perspective through Deleuze in the formation of the affective turn (Abramowski and Canevaro, 2017; Lara, 2020; Lara and Enciso, 2013); and, particularly, the work of Reddy (2001), Ahmed (2014), and Besserer (2014), who have introduced the concepts of “emotional regimes,” as well as the notions of “subversion” and “emotional struggles,” as strategies for governing bodies and sensibilities within the framework of the political economy of affects.

¹⁶ In chapter 3 of this book, Juan Pablo Vázquez explores the concept of *illusio* to explain the forms of power that, within the framework of Bourdieu’s studies, can be defined as a *domination of emotions*.

A final perspective to be considered in this section is that developed by Laclau and Mouffe. Their approach to the topic of power draws on a recovery of Gramsci, particularly his concept of hegemony, as well as a reinterpretation of Foucault through Derrida (Laclau and Mouffe, 2011).¹⁷

The primary contributions of Laclau and Mouffe emphasize the discursive and cultural dimensions of domination. This approach has multiple meanings and implications. The logic behind the struggle for hegemony, understood as the outcome of processes of discursive configurations, arises from a network of relations produced by *articulation* processes. These processes of discourse articulation are made possible by the circulation of general meanings of a universal nature (“empty” or “floating”) that, upon acquiring positive or negative social values, facilitate consensus building. These meanings are always temporary and precarious, existing within a space of differences where forms of domination and resistance take shape. From this perspective, power is not conceived as an external relationship occurring between two pre-conceived identities; rather, it is involved in the construction of identities themselves. In this sense, the identities and relations among agents are not of a pre-discursive and pre-cultural nature, but are produced relationally through processes of identification or confrontation via *discursive articulations*.¹⁸ All of this occurs within an agonistic framework, where conflict is seen not as a specific event or situation to be eradicated but as a fundamental principle of social relations (Dreher and Göttlich, 2019, p. 29). Under this framework, the multiple discursive configurations contended for their hegemony serve as a vehicle for emotional orientations and foster affection with others, potentially leading to confrontation.

¹⁷ Gramsci (2011a, 2011b) defines hegemony as the exercise of political, intellectual, moral, and cultural influence by the dominant class to establish its leadership, based on its conception of generalized common sense. From this perspective, processes of coercion and consensus are articulated, along with a complex of alliances among those who are part of a historical bloc (Giacaglia, 2002, p. 153). Gramsci’s perspective is thoroughly explored by Enrique Gutiérrez Márquez in chapter 8 of this book.

¹⁸ The processes of articulation, as pointed out by the authors, have a multidimensional and predetermined nature. The concept of “predetermination” comes from Althusser (1987), who, in turn, takes it from Lacan (Arevalo, 2016; Althusser, 1987, p. 166). The importance of Althusser’s contribution, based on the concepts of overdetermination and the “suture” of social aspects, is fundamental for Laclau and Mouffe. However, the connection with Althusser ends there, as the Althusserian notion of power, associated with the idea of the ideological apparatus of the state (Althusser, 1988), is considered a limited and distant view compared to Laclau and Mouffe’s contributions.

*From Power “Without Emotions” to the Incorporation
of the Affective Dimension*

While Weber sought to avoid the risk of working with an “amorphous” concept of power, Popitz (2017) in his book *Phenomena of Power* clarifies this notion by identifying four general forms of power:

- 1) *Power of action*, expressed in forms of direct violence and coercion, utilizing resources and strategies founded on asymmetry among agents.
- 2) *Instrumental power*, the capacity to promise, restrict, or intimidate through the strategic use of resources, leading to more enduring relationships.
- 3) *Authoritarian power*, based on socio-psychological ties of an emotional nature between those who exercise power and those who are subjected to it, which involves the internalization of domination principles by those who experience it.
- 4) *Data establishment power*, the capacity to manipulate by controlling the environment, such as through information (Popitz, 2017, as cited in Dreher and Göttlich, 2019, pp. 19–24).

Analyzing the forms of power as described by Popitz assumes different types of social relations and has diverse emotional implications. These complexities can be explored by addressing the following questions: What conditions allow each form of power to emerge? What types of emotional relationships are constructed among the participants? What emotional repercussions arise among those subjected to these power dynamics? The reflections on Popitz’s stance can be expanded to include Steven Lukes’ work on power.

Building on Weber’s definition, Lukes (2005, p. 108) incorporates elements crucial for understanding different modalities of power. Specifically, he distinguishes three dimensions, as analyzed by his formula: “A has power over B to the extent that A can make B do something he/she wouldn’t otherwise do.”

The first dimension is consistent with Weber’s definition, referring to the ability to directly influence others’ actions. The second dimension in-

volves indirect pressure on the decision-making processes of others.¹⁹ The third dimension is particularly significant for understanding contemporary forms of domination. It refers to a broader and subtler form of domination, where compliance is achieved through shaping beliefs and desires, rendering the imposition no longer perceived as an external force. In this case, A has power over B if A can shape B's beliefs, either by influencing B's worldview or by imposing internal constraints that benefit A (Lukes, 2005, pp. 143–144).

On this point, Dreher and Göttlich (2019) comment:

This is where Lukes' proximity to Foucault and Bourdieu becomes evident—A not only gets B to do what he doesn't want to do, but also exercises power over B to the extent that A shapes B's thoughts and desires. As a result, B operates under A's control and manipulation, which may lead to B acting against his own best interests (p. 3).

In this third dimension, power operates through control and manipulation, potentially leading someone not to act in accordance with their own interests. Thus, in its broadest sense, power can ensure that individuals are unaware of their own interests, which contributes to their alienation and involvement in hegemonic processes or symbolic domination.²⁰

In line with this, Heaney (2011) states:

The third dimension in Lukes' model of power (power over others) offers more opportunities for considering emotional elements when he writes, "Is it not the supreme exercise of power to have others internalize the desires that [the person exercising this power] wants them to have?" (Lukes, 2005, p. 27). However, this latent possibility is never fully realized, leaving the question: What happens to emotions? Compliance is ensured primarily through the control of

¹⁹ In these cases, power functions by preventing B from successfully reacting to or complaining about his preferences as set forth by A. These forms of indirect pressure (whether material, economic, or legal) are reflected in the second and fourth forms of power mentioned by Popitz (2017) (instrumental and generator of data).

²⁰ Most of the papers included in this book address this topic, exploring approaches to the analysis of forms of emotional, cultural, and symbolic domination that operate through the interiorization of general emotions and the ordering of the body. The relationship between emotions and hegemony, as well as the close connections between affect, symbolic violence, and classificatory systems, are discussed in thematic sections 2 and 3 of this book.

thoughts and desires, but this issue does not seem to be sufficiently questioned (p. 265).

Heaney's observation delves into the core of the issue we aim to highlight—the omission of emotions in the analysis of power. While Lukes' tri-dimensional model has become central to discussions on power, it also reveals certain gaps in the field. Despite Lukes' interest in reflecting on the scope of power, including his insightful observation that exercising power can impose desires on others or suppress them, the topic of emotions is not explicitly addressed. Thus, the affective dimension remains absent from the forms of power Lukes analyzes. As we have noted, despite its significant value, Lukes' analysis lacks a systematic exploration of the emotional dimensions of power (Heaney, 2011, pp. 265–266).

The Presence of Power in the Sociology of Emotions: A Review of Key Contributions

Although emotions have often been overlooked in studies of power, power has a stronger presence among theorists of emotions. In *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, Hochschild (1983) analyzes compliance with feeling rules and the display of emotions, especially in professions that require emotional regulation as part of the job. For example, flight attendants must adjust their emotional expressions according to passengers' demands. These regulated emotional expressions reveal the presence of social power mechanisms, as individuals in asymmetrical relationships can be forced to act against their will. The resulting lack of authenticity is an effect of the domination they experience (Hochschild, 1983, p. 188; Turner & Stets, 2005, p. 37).

Although *emotional management* is central to Hochschild's work, it refers to actions through which this regulation is produced (Hochschild, 1979, p. 561). This process is not merely the repression of undesirable feelings but often involves the evocation of desirable emotions that are initially absent—essentially, the act of “forcing oneself to feel.” Bericat (2000, p. 161) highlights this point, stating that emotional management is a relevant tool of control and a crucial means of maintaining social order. When an individual feels an emotion that diverges from the established norm, they perceive the effects of the dissonance

this creates.²¹ In this context, emotional management becomes political, as it validates the dominant emotional culture and the social order (pp. 163–164).

Regarding emotional culture, Hochschild makes insightful observations, particularly about its diversity. Different contexts and social groups exhibit distinct emotional structures and resources, which reflect power differences. For instance, humor and jokes often reveal a hierarchy, as they are frequently used by those in higher social circles.

The powerful can block hostility and not only secure disproportionate resources such as money or prestige but also enjoy more emotional rewards. The powerful and the powerless inhabit different worlds—not only physical and social, but emotional ones as well (Hochschild, 1975, p. 297).

Another key perspective comes from Kemper (1978b), who, in *A Social Interactional Theory of Emotions*, develops a theory on the intersection of emotions, status, and power. In his view, power and status are basic dimensions of all social relationships (2006, p. 88), with power defined as the ability to influence others (p. 89), drawing from Weber. Power can manifest in various ways, including physical pain, verbal tactics, gestures of intimidation, silence, or deliberate inattention (p. 90). On the other hand, status is expressed as the degree of voluntary consent or deference given to an individual, reflecting the recognition of authority or reaffirmation of existing status (1978b, p. 378).

The consequences of power or status relationships depend on how certain premises are structured: “A is *obliged* by B to do what he does” (the relational dimension of power), or “A acts *voluntarily*, recognizing B’s authority or out of deference to B” (the status dimension) (Kemper, 1990, p. 211). In short, achieving goals through coercion implies the exercise of power, while achieving them through voluntary collaboration reflects the exercise of status (Bericat, 2000, p. 152).²² So, what role do emotions play in this process?

²¹ This type of experience reminds us that, according to Durkheim (2014) in *The Rules of Sociological Method*, we become aware of the obligatory nature of social facts due to the social pressure that results when they are not complied with. As Bericat himself points out (2000, p. 161), social indications of emotional dissonance in the interpersonal arena are commonly expressed through everyday statements such as “you had no right to get mad,” “you shouldn’t feel guilty,” “you should feel happier,” etc.

²² The distinction Kemper makes between processes of power and processes of status mirrors the difference established between the power of action and instrumental power on the one hand, and authoritarian power on the other, according to Popitz’s characterization.

Kemper argues that most emotions experienced by individuals arise from real, anticipated, imagined, or remembered results of interactions. Furthermore, these interactions are emotionally evaluated based on the power or status they confer (1978a, p. 32; 2006, p. 96).

Kemper's framework offers multiple analytical possibilities. Generally, it assumes that when individuals gain power or status, they experience positive emotions (satisfaction, happiness, trust, security). Conversely, losing power or status leads to negative emotions (fear, anxiety, mistrust). A loss of power or status may provoke guilt or feelings of indignation and anger toward those perceived as responsible. Conversely, gaining power or status can boost self-esteem, fostering gratitude or empathy. These interactions are not isolated events but processes that shape structural relationships, influencing emotional climates that can either promote integration or, alternatively, breed social distance, resentment, and conflict (Kemper, 1978a, p. 35; Bericat, 2000, p. 154).²³

Another important perspective on the emotional dimension comes from Scheff (1988, 1990a, 1990b), who analyzes the relationship between emotions and social order through the lens of social bonds, considered central to collective life. Scheff argues that social life requires continuous maintenance and repair of social ties (1990b, p. 1), and that these bonds are inherently emotional. Secure social bonds (which lead to integration) and those that create distance or conflict (unsafe bonds) form the axis around which social life revolves (1990b, pp. 2–3).

Scheff's concept of social bonds, reconsidered through Durkheim's work on social integration—particularly in *On Suicide*—posits that adequate integration strikes a balance between individual autonomy and collective life. Extremes in either direction can lead to isolation or the loss of individuality. Both extremes indicate the state of social bonds and produce various emotional effects: pride arises from stable relationships, while shame emerges when social bonds are threatened.²⁴

²³ In this sense, as Bericat (2000, p. 151) points out, at the first level, affection is an effect of the relationship between power and status, while at the second level, social relations are relations of power/status that simultaneously produce new outcomes of power/status. The status granted provides greater margins of power, and power, in turn, brings status.

²⁴ Firm ties are those that allow for solidarity and cooperation based on mutual recognition. They become weaker when there is distance, isolation, and conflict (Scheff, 1990, p. 4; Bericat, 2000, p. 166).

Scheff's analysis reveals critical insights about social order and power. On one hand, it identifies emotions tied to the production of social order (pride, respect, dignity, empathy) and those associated with social crises and conflict (depression, anxiety, shame, anger) (1990b, p. 5; Bericat, 2000, p. 169). On the other hand, it highlights the role of emotions in shaping mechanisms of social regulation. As Bericat (2000, p. 170) notes, shame is central to a theory of social control, while for Scheff (1988), it operates as an *emotional mediator* through which society imposes itself on the individual, producing internalized obedience (p. 396). This is key to understanding, from an emotional perspective, how the obligatory nature of social life and socialization processes function through emotional mechanisms, ultimately relying on respect for authority.²⁵

As Bericat (2000) points out: "For Scheff, our thoughts and perceptions of social expectations are only the backdrop of social control. We feel that the system (of social life) is somewhat compulsive due to emotions" (p. 170, italics added). In this sense, as a complement to this suggestive quote, Bericat adds that "the integral framework of emotional life (deference, respect, pride, shame) constitutes the subtle but efficient and permanently active social control system that explains why people submit to rules" (p. 170). This statement is a key factor in understanding the nature of social power and also in comprehending the origin and nature of conflict.

The crucial role of shame in producing conflict is another significant contribution of Scheff's theory, which follows Simmel's lead. Shame arises from structurally maintained conditions that, over time, can transform into highly threatening feelings for social integration. These feelings are linked to circuits of shame-humiliation and resentment-anger, which can lead to social distancing, exclusion, and confrontations (Scheff, 1997). It is within this framework, and in a conclusive sense, that Bericat's observation (2000) regarding

²⁵ According to Scheff (1988, p. 396), Durkheim mentioned but did not sufficiently explain the nature of the mechanisms that allow society to impose itself on the individual. While a purely behavioral-cognitive approach apparently did not resolve the issue, Durkheim turned to the moral dimension and the process of internalizing norms as explanatory resources. Overall, the mention of these factors seems to indicate only an efficient and descriptive cause, rather than a full answer to the deeper nature of the phenomenon of respect. This point adds an affective element, referring to the approaches Durkheim made in the final stage of his work concerning the topic of authority. Similarly, his theory provides a broader framework for situating Sennett's famous statement (1980, p. 12) that authority represents an emotional expression of power. For further information on this topic, refer to chapter 2 of this book.

Scheff's work is fitting, particularly his excellent treatment of shame as a principle explaining conflict.

Both Scheff's and Retzinger's work (Scheff and Retzinger, 1991) focus on analyzing the specific emotional chain of shame-anger as detected in social conflicts. In this theoretical approach, there is a maintained causal direction. In other words, conflict is not what produces the rupture of social ties. Instead, as Simmel argues, it is the rupture of social ties that leads to conflict (p. 171).²⁶

Emotions and Power in the Framework of Social Movements and Feminist Perspectives

It is crucial to acknowledge the contributions of the sociology of emotions to power, particularly from the angle of social movement studies and their relationship with feminist perspectives.

As pointed out by Goodwin et al. (2000, 2001), during the 1990s, in line with the emergence of the cultural turn, the emotional dimension began to be included as a relevant analytical variable in the study of social movements (Poma and Gravante, 2017, p. 36).

The consideration of emotions in the framework of social movements stemmed from an initial reconsideration of classical works by sociologists specializing in emotions: Hochschild (1975, 1979, 1983) on emotional aspects and feeling rules; Kemper (1978) with his model of status and power; Heise (1988) with the theory of 'affective control'; and Collins (1975, 1990) with his approach to collective action, rituals, and the production of emotional energy in social movements (Jasper, 2012, p. 49; Poma and Gravante, 2017, p. 37). Collins' studies on collective rituals that generate social energy and mobilization align with Durkheim's classical reflection on rituals as high-intensity collective experiences that create moral community and, in a broader sense, social life.²⁷

²⁶ This same position serves as the starting point for chapter 2 of this book, as developed by Olga Sabido.

²⁷ The analysis of these processes of collective effervescence also has its roots in studies conducted during the 19th and early 20th centuries on the psychology of masses by authors such as Espinas, Le Bon, Tarde, and McDougall (as well as Freud in the field of psychoanalysis). Their contributions played an important role in the early analyses of collective action, as they sought a better understanding of the influences and laws that governed the actions of the masses. They also identified processes that, at that time, were characterized as phenomena of imitation, mental contagion, the unconscious formation of beliefs, the

More recently, and following progress made over the past few decades, authors such as Flam, Goodwin, Jasper, Polletta, and Gould have advanced research that incorporates emotions in a more significant way, adding a cultural dimension (Poma and Gravante 2017, p. 36). As Jasper (2012) notes, “emotions are present at all stages and aspects of protests. They motivate people, are generated by the masses, are expressed rhetorically, and shape the objectives that are manifest and latent in these movements” (p. 47).

Emotions can facilitate mobilization, but they can also act as an end in themselves at certain moments of the organizational process, influencing the success or difficulty of movements’ strategies. As Jasper (2012) points out, “cooperation and collective action have always provided an opportunity to think about social action in a more integrated way. In this sense, the ‘return’ of emotions is a crucial element in advancing this integral comprehension of social action” (p. 47).²⁸ In light of these developments, Jasper (2012) argues that just as the cultural focus in the social sciences allowed for a reconsideration of the mechanisms of social mobilization, the growing emphasis on emotions (the affective turn) has contributed to rethinking the deeper logic behind collective association and contemporary social movements (p. 59).

Finally, it is important to mention the contributions of feminism to the study of social movements from an emotional perspective. Feminism inspired broad critiques aimed at making the role of emotions in social and political life more visible. This emotional analysis, initiated by feminism, was further strengthened by *queer* studies on collective action. Feminist debates on sex and sexuality, within the framework of deep criticism of gender orders, led to new approaches to collective identities and the multiple forms of oppression expressed through language, practices, and sexual bodies (Jasper, 2012, p. 49). Within this framework, feminism has developed important new ways of addressing the concept of power.

release of unconscious impulses, processes of identification and transference, and so on (González, 2020, p. 20; Nocera, 2009b).

²⁸ This brief overview only represents a summary of the broader analysis presented by Edith Kuri Pineda in chapter 9 of this book. The main elements of this framework are closely linked to the papers in the chapters included in the third and fourth sections of this book.

The Interpretation of Power in Feminist Perspectives

Power has been widely addressed in feminist approaches. De la Fuente (2015) affirms that while the second wave of feminists initially focused on gender rights and equality (as part of the first wave), the emphasis shifted toward liberation and oppression, making power a central topic in feminist discussions, especially after studies by Allen in *The Power of Feminist Theory* (1999) and Squires in *Gender in Political Theory* (2000).

When analyzing the evolution of feminist perspectives on power, Fuentes (2015) identifies four ways feminist theoretical literature has addressed the topic, grouping them into two main blocks: *a)* the analysis of power as the capacity to intervene and influence (*power over*), seen as a resource and mechanism of domination; and *b)* the study of its productive and collective dimension (*power for*), linked to practices of freedom and care.

In the first block, De la Fuente (2015) identifies two types of approaches: one that focuses on achieving a more equitable distribution of power between men and women, considering power as a resource to be distributed or contested with a zero-sum logic (Friedan, 1998; Okin, 1989; Nussbaum, 1999); and another that locates power within the patriarchal system itself, which subjugates individuals through mechanisms of domination (Allen, 1999; Delphy, 1982; Millet, 1970; Hartmann, 1980; Firestone, 1970; MacKinnon, 1989). This latter approach goes beyond material elements of power, incorporating intimacy, sexuality, and domestic issues into the political debate.

In the second block, De la Fuente (2015) highlights two fundamental positions: one that views power from a summative and productive perspective (*power for*), linked to practices of sorority and care (Squires, 2000; Mansbridge, 2005; Jaggar, 1995; Gilligan, 1982; Held, 1993, 1995; Ruddick, 1980; Hartsock, 1983). Here, power is conceived as the ability to nurture others, maximize collective work, and construct cross-cutting social relationships that aim to eradicate all forms of domination. The other perspective understands power as freedom of agency, a personal practice and relational policy (initially among women but later extended to society as a whole) aimed at breaking patriarchal logic (Spivak, 2002; Anzaldúa, 1999; Lugones, 1994; Librería de mujeres de Milán, 1991; Diotima, 1996; Jaggar, 1995; Tong, 1989; Butler, 2011).

Butler's perspective is particularly relevant within this framework, particularly in *Gender Trouble* (2011) and *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997). In these

works, Butler analyzes the interrelation of freedom and power through concrete practices concerning the social construction of gender.²⁹ Butler (2011), following Foucault, argues that while no social position is exempt from control, there is always room for action. In contrast to traditional power as imposition or influence (power over), “power to” (power of agency, resistance, and production) offers opportunities to disrupt hegemonic logic, potentially destabilizing the regulatory regimes in which agents operate.

In this framework, freedom is conceived as resistance to mechanisms of domination, which act as normalizing powers in everyday practices that define gender orders. These standardizing practices, which mandate masculine and feminine behaviors, involve discursive interventions in the public sphere and are inherently recursive (Butler, 2011). Despite their highly ritualized nature, the execution of these practices is not entirely mechanical, allowing for unexpected outcomes, errors, or parodies of “the unthinkable” (p. 186). This reproductive potential, combined with the capacity for change, adds complexity to applying Butler’s theories in practice.

Butler’s perspective shares similarities with Mead’s (1939) and Benedict’s (1934) cultural anthropology approaches, linking performative practices with cultural models and scripts.³⁰ At the same time, Butler’s work converges with the symbolic interactionism and dramaturgical theory of Goffman. However, Butler’s decisive focus on the political dimension connects her work with traditional studies on power, while also incorporating the role of the body and emotions in constructing mechanisms of domination and resistance.

In Butler’s work, body and emotional processes are framed through concepts like *performance*. While bodies and emotions often adhere to a “script,” there is always the potential for different practices to emerge through mistakes or parodies. These deviations can blur established guidelines, creating opportunities for change or innovation based on specific conditions (Latorre,

²⁹ This approach forms the basis of the chapters in the second section of this book.

³⁰ In the case of anthropology, it is possible to identify various approaches to the study of the relationship between emotions and culture. An overview of contributions to the study of emotions from an anthropological perspective can be found in the works of Catherine Lutz and Geoffrey M. White, which include ethno-psychological considerations referring to Clifford Geertz’s detailed descriptions of emotionality. These works also discuss Michelle Rosaldo’s study on shame as an organizing factor in social relations among the Ilongot in the Philippines (1980), Lutz’s own work on the social functioning of emotions as the principle that sustains rank and obedience among the Ifaluk of Micronesia (1983), and David Le Breton’s study on affective functions (Lutz and White, 1986). See Peláez, 2020, pp. 56-57.

2005, p. 37). This framework allows for the analysis of creativity or change in social practices, particularly through notions such as *intermediate agencies and hybrid practices* (p. 38–39).

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SECTION 1
THE EMOTIONAL-AFFECTIVE DIMENSION:
THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS

2. The Emotional and Sensorial Dimension of Conflict. Affective Economies of Hate and the Figure of the Enemy

Olga Sabido Ramos¹

Introduction

In January 2018, *The New York Times* reported that, according to anonymous sources, during a White House cabinet meeting with legislators, the then-President of the United States (Donald Trump) stated that his country should not accept immigrants from “shithole countries,” referring to El Salvador, Haiti, and more generally, “African countries.” This statement was made in the context of discussions on granting legal status to undocumented migrants brought to the U.S. as children (Hirschfeld et al., 2018). Although Trump later denied these remarks on Twitter (Kenny, 2018), this incident exemplifies how derogatory statements, steeped in what Kukso (2019) describes as “smelly biases,” can lead to diplomatic conflicts and even wars. Synnott (2003) argues that smell, and its description, serves various social functions, acting as “a boundary marker, a status symbol, [and] a distance-maintainer” (p. 438). Scents also play a role in conflictual relationships, where “evil stinks, and enemies smell” (Synnott, 1991, p. 445).

In line with the overall objective of this book, this chapter aims to revisit the sensorial-emotional dimension of conflict. I will begin by drawing on Simmel’s relational and analytical approach, while also integrating Ahmed’s proposal of an affective turn within feminist theory. I will explore Simmel’s relational perspective, where conceptual and analytical definitions for studying the sociology of conflict are found (Simmel, 2009, pp. 227–305; Coser,

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1956). Additionally, I will re-examine Simmel's programmatic plan, which offers an emotional and sensorial approach to understanding conflict. Drawing from Ahmed (2014), I will address her relational treatment of emotions—where, similar to Simmel, emotions are seen as constituents of bodies that affect and are affected. I will focus specifically on the emotion of hate, linking emotions and sensations from a relational perspective, which has significant theoretical and methodological implications.

Considering the wide range of sensorial experiences through which this dimension of conflict can be identified, I have chosen to focus on the construction of the enemy's odor. To illustrate this, I draw on secondary sources from research in the field of sensory studies (Howes, 2014), particularly those taking a socio-historical approach to odors. My objective is to highlight iconic historical examples where opposing forces attribute unpleasant odors to their enemies, thus justifying various affective states, including hate, with material consequences for both the hated and those who hate. The main thesis is framed within a relational focus, emphasizing that hate does not originate conflicts; rather, conflictive relations foster and cultivate hate. In this sense, affective economies of hate are social forms that help build a negative image of others as enemies through a sensory order.²

Conflict as a Form of Going *Against* Others

In contemporary social thought about conflict, which spans from Marx and his rereading of Hegel to Weber, Simmel, Coser (Collins, 1994), and Bourdieu, there is a general principle associated with domination. According to Collins (1994), in this tradition, the absence of open conflict often indicates a process of domination. From this, the concept of conflict and power emerges, as “a conflict relationship always involves the attempt to acquire or exercise” (Mack and Snyder, 1957, p. 219). The conceptual connection between power and conflict has led to the development of diverse traditions in sociological thought. Here, I will emphasize Simmel's legacy and Coser's reference to him, high-

² This thesis is derived from a position presented by Sabido Ramos (2012). In this case, I have reformulated the proposal by considering the elements that constitute the social form of an enemy, as part of a dialogue within the scope of the feminist affective perspective.

lighting their contributions to the sociological study of conflict in terms of emotions and feelings.

Simmel's concept of conflict is developed in the chapter "Conflict" (*Der Streit*³), published in *Soziologie: Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung* (2009 [1908]). His proposal essentially outlines a program for developing a relational sociology. In *Grundfragen der Soziologie: Individuum und Gesellschaft* (2002 [1917]), Simmel states that sociology must study "the dynamics of affecting and being affected by those individuals who are mutually impacted" (p. 34). If we view this relational principle as constitutive of society, we can understand that humans both *contribute to and are impacted by* social processes. *Being with others* enables us to feel in certain ways and not in others, as our emotions are collectively oriented. In this sense, as I have argued in earlier work (Sabido Ramos, 2020), if we adopt the principle of *Wechselwirkung* (Simmel, 2017)—the exchange of effects—as a way to analyze the dynamic of affecting and being affected, it becomes clear that people exchange not only signs, money, and looks, but also emotions. Thus, we can think of an "exchange of affect" as a fundamental element of *social forms*.

According to Simmel (2009), conflict analysis is embedded within this relational perspective. In his chapter on "Conflict," Simmel presents conflict as a form of socialization, or social form (*Vergesellschaftung*) (p. 227). In other words, it is a way of *being with others*, and in this case, a way of being against others. Conflict involves a constitutive relationality, as it cannot be reduced to an individual entity (p. 277), and it represents a means of opposition to a person, group, institution, or nation. Moreover, conflict often unites individuals or groups who otherwise have no reason to interact (p. 287). Simmel identifies various forms of conflict, including commercial, sporting, scientific, artistic, romantic, familial, political, and even religious conflicts (Simmel, 2009; Zabudovsky & Sabido Ramos, 2014, pp. 45–47). In my analysis, I aim to emphasize two aspects: the importance of emotions in conflict and the figure of the enemy.

Whether as a form of socialization or a social form, conflict can arise from different content. However, what is important is that the form leads to a relationship and an "exchange of effects between the contenders." Although Simmel (2009) notes the existence of inherent personal hostility in human beings,

³ That can also be translated as *conflict*.

this alone does not necessarily result in conflict. Conflict requires the creation of new forms of relationships between contenders, which may involve recognizing certain norms and rules that govern the conflict—from warfare and legal disputes to competitive games (p. 267 and following). In legal disputes, the relationship may evolve beyond its initial content and transcend the original reasons for the conflict (p. 244). Similarly, families may remain in conflict for generations, even when later generations are removed from the original causes. As exemplified in Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, the love between Romeo and Juliet is thwarted by long-standing familial conflict, illustrating the enduring power of such disputes.

For Simmel, the role of emotions in different types of conflict is crucial, not only because aversion, rejection, and hatred are commonly associated with conflict, but because it is the form of the relationship that can lead to these affective states. As he explains, “no serious fight may long endure without the support—even if developing only gradually—of a complex of psychological drives. This is of great sociological significance” (p. 243). Simmel’s reflections on envy, jealousy, and malicious envy are also of “great sociological significance” (pp. 243 and following) for understanding conflict. Beyond the specifics of individual cases, what is important is to show how this perspective highlights conflict as something that cultivates affective states, rather than affective states causing conflict. Emotions sustain the conflict, and thus, temporality plays a key role in determining how long the conflict will persist.

Simmel (2009) introduces the role played by emotions and their relationship to the figure of the enemy. From a relational point of view, this is not a personal relationship, but a form of relationship. According to Simmel, this figure is linked to a second one a priori. In other words, much like the stranger, the enemy is not an entity unto himself but always exists in relation to others. The relevance of these types of social figures lies in the fact that they constitute a source of unification for groups: precisely because they are somehow excluded from the society for which their existence is important—as with the stranger, the enemy, the felon, even the poor.” (pp. 45–46). These figures are analytical resources, and it is possible to differentiate between strangers and enemies. While the stranger is someone who is not part of the group but who draws closer to it, the enemy is someone who opposes the group, who stands *against* it. The enemy might come from within the same group (internal

enemy) or from another group (external enemy). It is also possible to find combinations of a strange enemy in empirical referents (Sabido Ramos, 2012).

Simmel (2009) introduces the notion of social hate to refer to both internal and external members of a group, which arises “because it means danger to the existence of the group” (p. 253). From this stems the relevance of the enemy figure: “Indeed, it may just be really politically shrewd inside some groups to look for an enemy so that the unity of the elements would remain consciously and effectively its vital interest.” (p. 287). At this point, it is necessary to pause and consider the relationship between hate and love. A shared hatred toward an enemy creates a feeling of intense unity among people, reinforcing the collective love within the group. On the other hand, “the deepest hatred grows out of broken love” (p. 251), and in this sense, guilt is another sentiment that plays a role in conflictual relationships. “We tend to hate those we have injured” (p. 236). Hatred for others can mask “the secret sentiment of blame” for having harmed someone, thereby severing the relationship of emotional reciprocity. When conflict arises with someone from our own group or with someone we feel close to, hatred and hostility can become more deeply entrenched: “People who have much in common often treat one another with greater wickedness and injustice than complete strangers.” (p. 250). Regarding the enemy, a wide range of affective states can be experienced, where hate is not an individual emotion but rather a way of relating to others who have been defined as “a danger to the group,” undesirable for the nation (*shithole countries*), or who have failed to meet the group’s expectations.

Simmel’s programmatic reflections on conflict were revisited in the United States during the late 1950s and early 1960s through “conflict sociology” (Mack and Snyder, 1957) or “conflict theory” (Collins, 1994). Despite diverse approaches and theoretical perspectives, the underlying theme involves criticism of Parsons’ explanatory model and his emphasis on a normative solution for social order (Joas and Knöbl, 2009). In contrast to the idea of a stable and static social order, the need was felt to incorporate a dynamic view of social changes and power relations. In this North American context, the work of Coser was particularly significant.

In *The Functions of Social Conflict*, Coser (1956) presents and elaborates on Simmel’s sixteen propositions in the chapter “Conflict.” What Coser appreciates in Simmel is his departure from a normative perspective that views conflict solely in negative terms (Joas and Knöbl, 2009). The conflict theory Coser

proposes is situated in general terms of negativity at a *meso* level, as one of his main theses is that conflict “can contribute to the maintenance of the borders of the group” (p. 8). While addressing the emotional dimension of conflict, Coser emphasizes its sociological orientation, as he believes that “psychic motivations are not enough to explain conflictive behavior” (p. 58). Coser agrees with Simmel that the “impulse of hostility” alone does not explain social conflict (p. 63).

Following Simmel, Coser argues that conflict involves interaction between two or more people. In other words, “Hostile attitudes are predispositions to engage in conflict behavior; conflict, on the contrary, is always a trans-action” (p. 37). For example, in a stratified system based on social classes, lower classes might harbor hostile feelings toward upper classes in the form of resentment (p. 36), or through envy and jealousy, as Simmel alluded to. However, hostility may mix with the attraction of climbing the social ladder and joining the privileged class. That said, this does not necessarily lead to conflict. In fact, affective states such as envy can hinder alliances among subordinated groups. In summary, while unequal distribution of privileges and rights may give rise to hostile feelings, it does not always result in conflict.

Coser (1961) takes Simmel’s analysis further by offering a Freudian interpretation of the emotional dimension of conflict (Jaworski, 1997, p. 85), though he remains firmly within the field of sociology. Coser believes that Simmel was familiar with Freud’s psychoanalytic approach, and this theory should have taken into account that hostile feelings may be directed not only at the source of frustration but also at substitute objects (p. 43). It is in this context that Coser introduces his “safety valve theory” (p. 40 and following). This theory refers to activities, institutions, or rituals that are socially sanctioned and allow for the expression of hostile feelings without completely severing relations between opposing forces. Examples include orgiastic parties, political jokes, rituals like grieving, witchcraft, theater, and other mass cultural phenomena such as televised boxing or wrestling.⁴

All of these references illustrate mechanisms that enable individuals to express aggression, vent frustration, and even cry (Coser, 1956) without necessarily confronting the source of their conflicts or discontent. This hypothesis

⁴ Coser reconsiders Freud’s theory of jokes, pointing out that certain jokes use ridicule against the enemy as a weapon in the form of humor. In this way, aggression or criticism toward superiors or authority figures becomes possible (1956, p. 43).

remains relevant today, especially in understanding the social and emotional functions of diverse social networks like Twitter, where frustrations are expressed online. Along these lines, the costs of this displacement constitute an important area of analysis. In *Nervous States: How Feeling Took Over the World*, William Davies (2018) explores how emotional states expressed on social networks like Twitter are disseminated with greater virality, and how “now we suffer from the intrusion of conflict in our daily lives” (p. 14).

Coser (1956) also notes that hatred of the enemy is not necessarily the key element leading to conflict (p. 66); however, it might be useful to encourage it. This is where the role of propaganda in wars (p. 94) becomes important. For Simmel, as well as for Coser, the notion of hatred is not an individual impulse, but something cultivated socially—how one learns to hate is what matters:

Realistic conflict need not be accompanied by hostility and aggressiveness. “Tensions” in the psychological sense are not always associated with conflict behavior. Yet it might be “useful” to hate the opponent. The propagandist expects that such hatred will reinforce the emotional investment in the conflict and hence strengthen the readiness to carry it out to the end. (p. 60).

Coser (1956) expands on Simmel’s idea regarding how conflict can arise both between groups (external conflict) and within groups (internal conflict). The role of intimacy in these conflicts yields similar outcomes in both cases. When conflict arises among groups with a certain degree of proximity—whether ethnic, political, cultural, or economic—the emotional expressions tend to become more intense. In other words, conflict between familiar groups is “more passionate and radical” (p. 71) compared to conflict with strangers. On the other hand, internal conflicts within a group, where members are forced to repress hostile feelings, can lead to a more radical outburst due to the build-up of these pent-up emotions. Similarly, those who were once part of a group but later broke away tend to provoke stronger reactions, as loyalty to the group has dissolved. In this way, both Coser and Simmel distinguish between internal enemies (such as renegades and heretics) and external enemies.

Like Simmel, Coser (1956) emphasizes the necessity for groups or nations to “search for enemies” (p.104). Some groups need conflict to maintain internal unity, leading to the constant invention of an enemy figure and the search for “hate objects” (p.106). For Coser (1956), “Such ‘searching for the outside

enemy' (or exaggeration of the danger which an actual enemy represents) serves not only to maintain the structure of the group, but also to strengthen its cohesion when threatened by a relaxation of energies or by internal dissension." (p. 106). The enemy is essential because it serves a social function; if an enemy does not exist, it is invented and nurtured as an object of hate.

Building on this relational legacy, the purpose of this article is to explore how the construction of the enemy as an 'object of hate' is not merely an idea but has become embodied for real, material effects to be produced. In other words, hatred must have material consequences both for the hater and the hated, not because hatred directly unleashes conflict, but because we inherit this legacy. Hatred intensifies emotional participation in conflict. With regard to biases tied to smell, Simmel (2009) cryptically links hatred for the enemy in a phrase referring to a German philosopher: "It is noteworthy that someone of such a fanatically exclusive individualism as Nietzsche often said openly of the type of person most hateful to him, 'they do not smell good'" (p. 578). Analytically, Ahmed's concept of affective economies enables us to examine the intersection of feeling and emotion, body and affect, from a relational perspective, which I will address in the next section.

Affective Economies According to Sara Ahmed

The affective turn (Blackman and Venn, 2010; Pedwell and Whitehead, 2012; Blackman, 2012) differs from the earlier Anglo-Saxon "sociology of emotions" of the 1970s (Bericat, 2012; Ariza, 2016). Developed in the 1990s (Cedillo et al., 2014), it has had a significant impact in Spanish-speaking contexts (López, 2014a; López, 2014b; Lara and Enciso, 2013; Enciso and Lara, 2014; Pons and Guerrero, 2018). This shift represents a movement away from the "discursive turn" (Pedwell and Whitehead, 2012, p. 117) and an increased focus on non-verbal dimensions, such as experience, feelings, perception, and memory. These dimensions are interrelated with various non-human bodies (Blackman and Venn, 2010, p. 8) and approaches to *embodiment* (Blackman and Venn, 2010, p. 10), significantly emphasizing the role of sensitive bodily experiences.

For Lara and Enciso (2013), many proponents of the affective turn are influenced by the Spinozian idea of affect as the capacity to affect and be affected (p. 104). The affective turn views affect as a bodily phenomenon (Lara and Enciso,

2013, p. 103). Blackman and Venn (2012) note that this perspective emphasizes the relational and behavioral aspects of bodies, considering how bodies interact and define themselves through their capacity to affect and be affected (p. 9). Another key feature of the affective turn is its intersection with feminism, particularly with feminist concerns about the risk of depoliticizing emotions or overemphasizing the individual dimension of emotions without acknowledging their relationship with power (Pedwell and Whitehead, 2012, p. 116).

Despite the diversity of perspectives within feminist theory, a central concern is how power circulates through emotions and how political forms of being and knowing are produced through affective relations and discourse (Pedwell and Whitehead, 2012, p. 116). Ahmed's work particularly seeks to show "how power functions through affect to shape individual and social bodies" (Pedwell and Whitehead, 2012, p. 121). She addresses questions such as "Why are relations of power so intractable and enduring, even in the face of collective forms of resistance?" (Ahmed, 2014, p. 12).

Ahmed (2014), in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* acknowledges that her proposal was not explicitly part of the affective turn; however, this perspective provided an important intellectual framework for her work (p. 307), especially from a feminist viewpoint.⁵ As she states in the prologue to the second edition, her goal was not to propose a theory of emotions but rather to reflect on "how social norms become affective over time" (p. 204). As noted in *Living a Feminist Life* (2017), Ahmed's work examines exclusion through the lenses of sexism and racism and their intersections. She highlights the feminist legacy, emphasizing that "Female scholars have shown how social norms (such as the family, heterosexuality, the nation, and civilization itself) are effects of repetition" (p. 12), which are embedded in our bodies through affect and reiteration.

One of Ahmed's conceptual contributions is her rejection of the distinction between feelings, emotions, and affect, suggesting that these are not ontologically separate from experience (p. 27, 311–312). Ahmed aligns herself with classical philosophers such as Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Spinoza, proposing that "Emotions, in other words, involve bodily processes of affecting and being

⁵ In this sense, Ahmed acknowledges her indebtedness to the pioneering work of feminist sociologists such as Hochschild and her classic text *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (1983) (Ahmed, 2014, p. 309; Pedwell and Whitehead, 2012, p. 121). On the other hand, her proposal stems from the reflections she developed in *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (2000), where she analyzes the figure of the dangerous outsider (Ahmed, 2014, p. 307).

affected, or to use my own terms, emotions are a matter of how we come into contact with objects and others.” (p.208). Specifically, Ahmed revisits Hume’s concept of “impression,” noting that it implies both perceptual and cognitive acts, as well as emotion (p. 27). She uses this term to describe how bodies are pressured by other bodies, transforming these pressures into impressions imbued with cognition, emotion, and feeling (p. 313).

Ahmed’s arguments also draw heavily on phenomenology, particularly through a “model of emotional intentionality” (2006, p. 2), where she explores how emotions are directed at specific objects (2014, p. 314). For example, to feel hate is to direct that hate toward something or someone. The notion of orientation is central to her work, as demonstrated in *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (2006). Ahmed engages with Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, critiquing them from a Fanonian perspective. She explores how not all bodies have the same capacity to inhabit space, emphasizing the asymmetrical relations that emerge in social contexts (p. 194). Ahmed (2006) questions why certain bodies are more likely to appropriate space, while others are blocked (p. 141).

Under this model of emotional intentionality, Ahmed (2014) examines how emotions involve specific orientations toward people and objects. Rather than asking what emotions are, she focuses on what emotions do (p. 209)—especially how they affect bodies and shape their relations with other objects (people, signs, words, discourse, images). “Emotions involve different movements towards and away from others, such that they shape the contours of social as well as bodily space.” (Ahmed, 2014, p. 209). Later, she clarifies that she integrates this model of emotional intentionality with a model of affect as contact: emotions affect us depending on what we encounter when we make contact (2006, p. 2).

For Ahmed (2014), emotions are relational (p. 8) because they assume contact with people, things, or signs, producing emotions as “effects of circulation” (p. 10). Emotions depend on historical narratives and structural conditions and can even be orchestrated to orient particular affective states within groups or institutions. Hence, emotions do not reside within individuals or objects but circulate among bodies (p. 4). Ahmed’s concept of affective economies⁶ involves at least three analytical dimensions: circulation, temporality, and performativity.

⁶ Here both Freud and Marx are reference points. In a similar rereading, such as Coseriu’s of Freud, Ahmed (2014) resorts to the idea that sometimes emotions involve displacement processes (p. 81) of one figure to another.

Regarding the idea of circulation, Ahmed (2014) reveals her Marxist leanings in this context. According to the author, “I am using ‘the economic’ to suggest that objects of emotions circulate or are distributed across a social as well as psychic field, borrowing from the Marxian critique of the logic of capital.” (p. 45). In other words, just as value does not reside in the merchandise but is a product of circulation, emotions are not found in the subject or object; rather, they originate in circulation and contact. For example, in Trump’s declaration mentioned at the beginning of this article, rejection does not depend on him or the national references he alludes to. If we interpret the statement from Ahmed’s perspective, unpleasantness and rejection are associated with the “shit” that has adhered — or, in her words, “glued to” — negative images, as seen in the case of certain types of “strangers,” such as immigrants who are less welcome than others.

Ahmed (2014) also incorporates the dimension of temporality to reflect on affective economies. From this perspective, for emotions to manifest in one way rather than another, we must consider the “history of contact,” which refers to how relationships with others are constructed over time. For instance, not every body is inherently inclined to be hated, feared, or rejected. As Ahmed states, “It is not simply that anybody is hated: particular histories of association are reopened in each encounter, such that some bodies are already encountered as more hateful than other bodies.” (p. 54). Thus, Ahmed’s emphasis on colonial history enables her to adopt a procedural perspective on racism, asserting that “bodies are shaped by histories of colonialism” (2006, p. 111). This understanding goes beyond mere hate based on skin color or physical traits that do not align with the hegemonic notion of identity.

Once again, affective economies are performative. Ahmed (2014) references Butler’s interpretation of Austin regarding how “performativity is related to ‘doing things with words’” (p. 114). For Ahmed, emotions are performative because they accomplish specific outcomes; they affect our bodies in tangible ways. For example, pain causes us to cringe and distance ourselves from others, while fear of certain bodies can lead to spatial reordering, impacting our interactions and movements. Emotions have material effects on our bodies and the spaces we inhabit. Another significant contribution from Ahmed is her exploration of the relationship between emotions and language through the notion of speech acts (p. 114). It is possible to express, “this is revolting,” for example, in a speech act (p. 150), which is performative because it adheres to

particular bodies or situations. To say “shithole countries” invokes a material disgust associated with specific bodies, justifying a distance from them due to perceived pestilence and an unpleasant odor. This speech act validates national borders from an affective perspective. Similarly, any speech act “It can declare an emotion, which is not the same thing as having an emotion” (p. 116). Nevertheless, its performativity lies in its ability to generate effects and affects on bodies, spaces, political realities, and even laws. Therefore, for Ahmed, “Affective economies are social and material as well as psychic” (p. 45).

In this sense, hate for Ahmed (2014)—much like for Simmel—represents a type of bond, a way of relating to others. Hate is an intense emotion that “implies a feeling of being against” (p. 87). While Simmel views conflict as a form of opposition to others, Ahmed considers hate a key element of this relationship because it is directed against others. It is relational, aiming at others and their efforts to come together. In other words, “Hatred is a negative attachment to an other that one wishes to expel, an attachment that is sustained through the expulsion of the other from bodily and social proximity.” (p. 55). This is why Ahmed proposes the possibility of thinking about the affective economies of hate. This perspective suggests that hate is not merely an emotion that arises from one subject in relation to another but rather a way of engaging with others, subject to regularities and histories of contact. Hate discourse is inscribed in history, allowing certain words and signs to “stick with us” and become more likely to have effects (p. 295). The affective economies of hate can be understood as the ways in which we negatively relate to others, adhering this affective tie to bodies, signs, or images that develop over time.

As we have seen, a relational approach to emotions, such as the one proposed by Ahmed and Simmel, allows us to consider hate not just as an emotion or as being hated, but as a type of bond. As mentioned in previous paragraphs, hate is not necessarily the origin of conflict; rather, it reinforces emotional participation in conflict. Furthermore, like Simmel, Ahmed relates hate to love, suggesting that these two emotions are intertwined. It is important to note that Ahmed is interested in the role hate plays in relation to collective bodies. In this sense, to hate someone else implies that there is not merely “indifference” but “interest” in maintaining the tie through deception, frustration, or a break with expectations and ideals. For example, the ideal of a nation encompasses a specific type of body, meaning ideal citizens (Ahmed, 2014, p. 109).

Consequently, this ideal rejects or directs discourse of hate toward other bodies that do not conform to this standard (e.g., “shithole countries”). Thus, “hate towards others sustains the relationship of love among ‘us’” (p. 51).

Affective economies of hate imply not only a decentralization of the subject in relation to emotions but also the incorporation of a temporal and material dimension. For this reason, the circulation of affect requires history, and behind the affective economies of hate lie histories of love and hate: “It is not simply that anybody is hated: particular histories of association are reopened in each encounter, such that some bodies are already encountered as more hateful than other bodies” (Ahmed, 2014, p.54). For instance, in hate crimes, “What is at stake in hate crime is the perception of a group in the body of an individual.” (p.55).⁷ In this context, hate shapes our perception of bodies. According to Ahmed (2017), racism is also a problem of perception (p. 144), stemming from previously established social agreements that exert structural effects on the bodies that are hated. “You can be stopped by a perception. You can be killed by a perception” (p.145). Material effects are not confined to interactive encounters. “Strangers become objects not only of perception but also of governance: bodies to be managed” (p.145). As I have mentioned in another paper, for the construction of a stranger to be successful, it must not only be imaginary but also felt in the flesh and penetrate the body (Sabido Ramos, 2012) and the nose as well.

Affective Economies of Hate and the Smells of Enemies

Sensorial impressions in people’s bodies, objects, places, or a mix of these can evoke emotions and lead to diverse affective states. In “Digression on the Sociology of Senses,” Simmel alludes to how racial relations, combined with repulsion, result in bodily contact through smell.

The reception of Africans into the higher levels of society in North America seems impossible from the outset because of their bodily atmosphere, and the aversion of Jews and Germans toward each other is often attributed to this same cause (p. 577).

⁷ This can also be seen in hate crimes against lesbians, as illustrated in Maya’s research (2022), which follows Ahmed from a legal perspective.

Nevertheless, from Ahmed's perspective, we can assert that certain relationships 'frame' the meanings we attribute to the bodies of others. As Classen et al. (2003) argue in *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell*, olfactory aversion is more than a mere cause of ethnic antipathy; it is an expression of broader social dynamics (p. 165). Classen (1997a) further states that in the West, olfactory codes have contributed to a hierarchy that privileges fragrant and odorless elites while stigmatizing marginal groups, including Jews, Blacks, and immigrants (Mata-Codesal, 2018), as well as highlighting intersections between class and gender (Peláez, 2016). Economies of hate—such as racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia—along with their intersections, are all shaped by odor stigmatization. In *Filosofía del olfato* (2016), Jaquet argues that “illusions of hate through smell reject the other who stinks. All categories considered despicable or inferior are devalued from the perspective of smell” (p. 105). In other words, speaking aloud about the unpleasant odor of a group or individual can transform into an expression of hate, reinforcing negative feelings against that person or group. Referring to them as stinky, dirty, trashy, or scummy are just a few of the terms associated with certain bodies or their representations. From an approach like Ahmed's, we can contend that labeling a person as bad-smelling is a form of hate—a speech act inscribed within a specific historical affective economy where various forms of circulation, temporality, and performativity stand out. Let's examine some concrete examples.

Undoubtedly, the sense of smell and each person's sensitivity to it are contextual, but what captures our attention is the association of foul smells with the enemy. Nietzsche's enemies, according to Simmel (2009, p. 578), were perceived as having unpleasant odors. Similarly, the Greeks documented their public enemies on pieces of pottery known as *ostraka*, which were used to send these individuals into exile and even as toilet paper (Kukso, 2019, p. 59). Ostrakas bearing the names of Socrates and Pericles were discovered in Athens (Kukso, 2019, p. 59). The term “ostraca” appears to be the origin of “ostracism,” derived from the Greek word “ostrá” (conch), on which the Athenians inscribed the names of the banished (Corominas and Pascual, 1993, p. 322). Thus, condemning someone to ostracism is akin to discarding them like trash.

In *Dark Matter: The History of Shit*, Werner (2013) also references commercial toilet paper imprinted with the face of Osama Bin Laden, the head of Al-Qaeda, as an industrialized manifestation of this type of offense that asso-

ciates the enemy with excrement (p. 175). This serves as an escape valve, channeling the rejection of this figure in the way Coser (1956) describes. In this instance, hate and rejection are not merely inscribed on ceramics or toilet paper, nor was it the situation for those who utilized the ostrakas or the toilet paper. Rather, it serves as both a literal and metaphorical reference to the negative imaginaries attributed to enemies and their labeling as terrorists.

In contemporary political discourse, sexism also triggers these negative associations regarding women's bodies. For instance, on August 7, 2015, Donald Trump referred to the menstrual blood of Megyn Kelly, a host at the presidential debate, after she challenged his misogynist remarks. Trump stated that her questions were "absurd and ridiculous," asserting, "You could see there was blood coming out of her eyes. Blood coming out of her wherever" (quoted by Nussbaum, 2018, p. 175). This reference to menstrual blood serves as a device to disqualify women who challenge patriarchal norms. In various cultures, a bad-smelling woman is viewed as dangerous during menstruation (Douglas, 1988). Historical allusions to menstrual blood and its association with women labeled as 'bad' can be traced through many periods (Classen, 1997b, p. 10), indicating a specific temporality linked to this negative imagery.

In this context, the figure of the witch as a transgressor of moral and social order is also part of the social construction of the enemy. The sense of smell is not only considered the supreme sense of Satan (Muchembled, 2003) but also a means of manifesting societal rejection. During the so-called "witch hunts" (Federici, 2010), the burning of these women at the stake alongside other heretics served not only to dispose of their bodies but also to publicly confirm their crimes through "the stench of their burnt bodies" (Classen et al., 2003, p. 54). In this sense, we can assert that sexism and the construction of the enemy figure find referents in the olfactory perceptions attributed to female bodies within certain socio-historical contexts. As previously mentioned, the links between affective states and specific bodies require established histories of contact, highlighting the analytical relevance of the temporal dimension in affective economies.

For example, the so-called *foetor judaicus*, or Jewish pest, referenced by Simmel, was part of the anti-Semitic discourse that dates back to the Middle Ages (Jaquet, 2016, p. 105) and permeated the economy of hate in Nazi Germany. This notion is evident in the propaganda manufactured by National Socialism. In *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Bauman (1989) states:

Hitler's language and rhetoric were fraught with images of disease, infection, infestation, putrefaction, pestilence. He compared Christianity and bolshevism to syphilis or plague; he spoke of Jews as bacilli, decomposing germs, or vermin (p.132)

As we have noted, propaganda serves as a powerful mechanism for inculcating affective hate learning. Through this "racist policy of smell," Hitler aimed to mark the bodies of Jews as disease carriers—undesirable and corrupt both physically and morally (Classen et al., 2003, p. 173). This strategy justified the annihilation of their bodies, resulting in tangible material effects. As Coser, following Simmel, pointed out, hate is not always the underlying cause of conflict; however, it is often encouraged, as can be seen in the propaganda that circulates during wartime. According to Ahmed (2014), the effectiveness of this discourse is not merely the result of a specific historical turning point; it also reflects the history of contact between bodies, in this case, the contact with Jewish bodies within the realm of anti-Semitism.⁸

The meanings of smells have been prominent in specific contexts of conflict and political violence.⁹ Calveiro (2002) recounts the testimony of one of her interviewees, a victim of the dictatorship in Argentina during the seventies, who recalled a military officer at La Perla stating, "I caught your husband because he smelled—he smelled dirty, like the country folk" (p. 151). Montalva (2013) also highlights the testimony of a political prisoner during the military dictatorship in Chile, who described how military personnel would make gestures of disgust in the presence of prisoners to humiliate them: "The smell of 30 women on top of each other, who had not washed or changed their clothes for weeks, was unbearable. Often, the guards pinched their noses when they entered to humiliate the women" (p. 289). Another prisoner shared, "At night—fall, I would fall asleep, and in the morning they would wake me and tell me I

⁸ The "Jewish plague" was part of the discourse that for centuries justified the enclosure and segregation of Jewish communities. This belief dates back to the Middle Ages, when bad odor was attributed to Satan. The plague of Jewish bodies was seen as God's punishment for the crime against the figure of Jesus (Kukso, 2019, p. 243).

⁹ The relationship between smell and politics has also been analyzed from different historical perspectives. For example, Kukso (2019, p. 193) explains how, in 18th-century France, with the rise of the bourgeoisie, the courts of the *Ancien Régime* led to a transformation in the olfactory perception of bodies and their value in politics. An excess of artificial perfume, makeup, wigs, and powder on the faces of courtesans was soon seen as a display of excessive spending and frivolity. With the advent of the French Revolution, the use of perfume, associated with the Old Regime, became politically charged, with figures like Marat considering such perfumes to be "enemies of the Republic" (Kukso, 2019, p. 243). In this context, the scent of perfume or ointments carried not only class connotations but also political ones.

had to shower with boiling water. I would say I couldn't shower, and they would call me a 'dirty terrorist'" (p. 291). Here, we can observe a negative imaginary attributed to enemies labeled as terrorists. Unlike the toilet paper featuring the face of Bin Laden, this example illustrates the material and affective marking directly on the bodies of the prisoners and their subsequent humiliation.

The relationship between bad odor and physical or moral cleanliness is operationalized in political projects and through state violence. In other words, economies of hate imply political performance since they generate effects and affects on bodies, influencing their mobility in space and even the possibilities for annihilation, extermination, or disappearance. For instance, as noted above, Nazi propaganda defined Jews as "corrupt elements" and "germ carriers" (Classen et al., 2003, p. 172), justifying the necessity for the German nation's purification. Dictatorial regimes framed their crimes within the rhetoric of cleansing the nation. Consequently, the meanings attributed to odor have material effects on the bodies of those identified as enemies, indicating that affective economies are both symbolic and material.

The interplay of odors, enemies, and radical conflicts—such as war—offers another perspective from which to examine the emotional, sensorial, and material dimensions of conflict. In the novel *Zinky Boys: Soviet Voices from the Afghanistan War*, Belarusian author Alexiévič (2016) includes the testimony of a Soviet infantry commander who states, "War is not just about death; there is more. War has its own smell" (p. 117). When sensorial models—defined as ways of engaging our senses and assigning them a specific social hierarchy (Classen, 1997a)—differ culturally among conflicting groups, the sensorial impact can be profound. For example, during the Spanish Conquest of Mexico, conquerors expressed disgust at the sight of coagulated blood in temples, while indigenous peoples found gunpowder "foul and smelling awful," despite its association with death (Ríos, 2020, p. 142).¹⁰

On the other hand, the meanings attributed to olfactory perceptions depend on one's position in the conflict. According to García (2016), Semprún—a writer who was detained and deported to the Buchenwald concentration camp during the Second World War—reflects on the life of the smells of war and

¹⁰ The use of odor as a form of attack has also been present in wartime conflicts. Konrad Kyser, an inventor during the Middle Ages, proposed introducing foul-smelling fodder into wooden barrels to be launched as missiles in his book *Bellifortis*, which was dedicated to the art of war (Werner, 2013, p. 183).

death in his novel *La escritura*. García (2016) quotes Semprún, who notes, “The smell of the crematory oven stays in one’s memory over other sensations and memories. The smell of death in the crematory oven breaks into one’s memory like a lacerating ‘Prost’s syndrome’” (p. 57). Conversely, the phrase uttered by one of the colonels in Francis Ford Coppola’s film *Apocalypse Now* expresses a fondness for the “smell of napalm in the morning” (McSorley, 2020, p. 156).

One of the most frequently cited strategies for demonizing the enemy during times of war is that proposed by Edgar Bérillon, a French doctor who, during the First World War, published *The Fetid Bromhidrosis of the German Race*. In this work, he argued that the smell of German soldiers was so “strong” that even the bills collected from prisoners of war had to be disinfected (Bérillon, 1915, cited in Jaquet, 2016, p. 112; Kukso, 2019, p. 242). He even claimed that all of Germany stank so much that French soldiers could smell the bad odor from their airplanes (Jaquet, 2016, p. 112). As Jaquet noted, “This brilliant diagnosis attempts to make the enemy appear as animals” (p. 114). Although this channel of expression served to support the economy of hate, this “medical” document also functioned as propaganda to encourage and sustain animosity toward the enemy.

The relationship between odor and war has recently been analyzed by McSorley (2020), a sociologist who explores the establishment of “regimes that are sensitive to war,” specifically “olfactory regimes of war,” and how North American soldiers learned to smell the enemy, utilizing both technological means and non-human entities in combat, such as dogs. The author highlights how the military receives immersion training in environments that simulate villages in the Middle East, where engineers design smells associated with “Oriental cooking,” camel excrement, and even blood or burnt meat. The objective is to familiarize soldiers with specific odors so they do not become disoriented on the battlefield (p. 158). It is important to recognize that within the framework of an affective economy, we are not only discussing the meanings that a sense of smell may have in a conflict, but also the material training aimed at generating lessons learned in the soldiers’ bodies.

These military confrontations entail tracing the “footprints of the enemy” or searching for a “trace of the insurgent body” (McSorley, 2020, p. 161) through food and the smell of their bodies. What is particularly interesting is the social construction and the cultural and ideological mediation implied by

this type of training. The author also describes how these training sessions involve developing military personnel's sense of smell in relation to deodorizing their own bodies to avoid detection in combat. For instance, soldiers must forgo the use of deodorants, cologne, mosquito repellent, and smoke; they are even encouraged to take anti-diarrhea medicine to avoid bowel movements, as their diet makes their excrement "smell different than that of the enemy" (p. 159). These methods of inculcation and the learning of hate circulate not only through propaganda, songs, jokes, or images, but also through physical techniques and the use of specific devices.

On the other hand, protests about odors play a significant role in conflicts, as the use of shit or foul smells is particularly subversive (Werner, 2013, p. 173). In a prison in Northern Ireland in 1978, a demonstration by prisoners who felt that their conditions were humiliating led to a peculiar form of protest known as the *dirty protest*. This consisted of soiling the walls of their cells with excrement, refusing to bathe, and allowing food to rot (p. 177).¹¹ Recently, opposition to the government of Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela called for a "shit march," during which "puputov" cocktails—bombs filled with excrement—were thrown in bags, plastic bottles, and jars. Social networks circulated images of some of these jars with phrases such as "For the future," "For our children," and "For political prisoners" (BBC, 2017; RFI, 2017). What is particularly interesting is how the use of foul odors and the identification of the enemy can also serve as forms of protest, where hate intertwines with love for "our children," "political prisoners," or the future. In this type of protest, affective states such as hate and disgust intermingle.

Conclusion

The perspective outlined in this chapter intersects with the affective and sensorial turns, aiming to uncover how conflict becomes part of our identity. I have presented an analysis that maintains a relational focus on emotions, in line with the proposals of Simmel and Ahmed. Additionally, I have linked the study of how people affect and are affected in the works of both authors to the assembly of emotions and feelings. This perspective is particularly relevant

¹¹ I would like to thank Helena López for informing me about this event.

in the context of current debates on the body, affect, feelings, and emotions, as it allows us to articulate various domains that, while specializing, run parallel but ultimately separate.

I have emphasized that conflict often involves opposition to others, where hate—while not necessarily the origin of the conflict—reinforces emotional participation in it. A relational approach to emotions allows us to see how the nature of relationships with others fosters different affective states among opposing forces. In certain conflicts, it may be strategic to cultivate hate through various means to justify and prolong the conflict. The relationship between emotions and power, and how this functions, is part of the feminist legacy I have sought to highlight, aligning with Ahmed's proposal. However, I have also attempted to complement this stance with Simmel's approach, which posits that, despite domination, it is possible to enter into conflict with the dominant party.

Furthermore, I have underscored Simmel's idea that emotions, such as hate, serve as links to others. However, Ahmed's approach allows us to expand her proposal through the concept of affective economies. Affective economies enable us to de-psychologize emotional approaches, as they can be understood as products of relationships among people, objects, and signs that recur historically. Hate economies are integral to forms of asymmetrical relations or norms, which, through repetition, penetrate our bodies. Similarly, linking language with emotions allows us to register speech acts that convey specific emotions with effects that are not only symbolic but material as well.

Racism, sexism, classism, xenophobia, and homophobia all operate through economies of hate, with one ingredient being the stigmatization of the odors of different groups. Expressions of hate often employ metaphors associated with degrading smells (e.g., *shithole countries*). In this sense, speech acts related to hatred toward certain groups circulate, generating negative and despicable images of our enemies. The demonization of the enemy is imbued with the stigmatization of the smell of their bodies, their belongings, their food, or their origins. The material effects on bodies can range from humiliation to annihilation. Moreover, it is also noteworthy to consider how one learns to scorn the smell of others, alongside those who are hated. Ultimately, bad odors and excrement can function not only as mechanisms of attack against the enemy but also as acts of defense. As Simmel's reasoning suggests, in the

face of power, it is possible to submit to the enemy and allow oneself to be dominated, but it is also possible to engage in conflict.

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3. Affective Dimensions of Power in Durkheim and Bourdieu: from Moral Authority to *Illusio* as Forms of Symbolic Domination

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Introduction

This chapter aims to analyze the concepts of power developed by Émile Durkheim and Pierre Bourdieu, centering on the issue of emotions. The analysis presented here is based on premises developed by the Sociology of Emotions and the recent *affective turn* in social sciences.² Within this framework, we explore both authors' notions of power, emphasizing their expressions within a symbolic-affective realm, using the concepts of authority and *illusio* as starting points. The following sections outline the justification, arguments, and structure of this chapter.

Recent developments in the field of the sociology of emotions and affect have had a significant impact.³ These advances, rather than merely suggesting a practical reference framework, encourage reflection on broad theoretical issues central to both classical and contemporary sociological concerns. Within this context, the chapter proposes an approach to power from an affective perspective, as viewed by Durkheim and Bourdieu.

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² This chapter presents the results of the research project "The Sociology of Emotions: Two Theoretical Perspectives (Durkheim and Bourdieu)", conducted by the author between 2000 and 2002. It is connected to two other studies, one of which has been published, while the second is in press. These two works address different levels of how to approach the problems discussed here (Vázquez, 2022).

³ Here, we take into account current developments in the fields of the sociology of emotions, affect, and feelings. Although we recognize the differences between these two approaches, for the purposes of this paper, we have included both since they revolve around the affective dimension. For an overview of these topics, see Clough and Halley (2007); García and Sabido (2014, pp. 20-22); Ariza (2016, pp. 11-12).

Their perspectives involve theoretical approaches that offer explanatory insights into modern societies. While these authors did not explicitly formulate a theory of emotions, an understanding of the affective dimension is nonetheless implicit in their diagnoses of modern societies.⁴ Based on this premise, we maintain that the emotional dimension, even if not directly addressed by these authors, forms part of their perspectives and provides an access point to their reflections on power. In this framework, the concepts of *moral authority* and *illusio* play a crucial role in understanding the theoretical perspectives analyzed. In both cases, these concepts point to a principle of legitimacy of social order, which is emotional in nature. This principle explains why individuals develop an affective commitment to this order, embracing the values underlying collective life as their own. Based on these premises, our review follows two paths: first, reconstructing how both authors approach power by connecting it to the affective dimension through the concepts of *illusio* and *moral authority*; second, dividing the chapter into three parts, with the first two sections presenting the concepts of *moral authority* and *illusio* as they pertain to political and affective dimensions, and the third section offering a brief comparative perspective.

Durkheim: Approaches to Power on an Affective Note

The Question of Politics and Power in Durkheim's Thought

Authors such as Lacroix (1984), Datta (2008), and Chamboredon (2017) have emphasized the relevance of politics for Durkheim, viewing it as the core object of sociology. For them, *politics* lies at the foundation of Durkheim's sociological project. Considering these perspectives, we must begin with a broad concept of power situated within the political domain—not only in the traditional sense—to fully grasp the dimensions of Durkheim's project. Adopting this perspective, which is somewhat peripheral among dominant interpretations, allows us to consider politics and power as pervasive dimensions across all social processes, analyzable through the many asymmetries found in society.

⁴ For a discussion of the affective dimension as seen by Durkheim, see Fisher and Chon (1989), Bericat (2001), and Barnwell (2018). With respect to Bourdieu, see Scheer (2012), Davidson (2008), and Zembylas (2007).

However, this interpretation contrasts with Durkheim's limited engagement with contemporary discussions of power. This apparent omission may be explained by his limited reference to topics typically considered "political" (such as the State, parties, democracy, etc.). Supporters of this view often note that while there are references to these topics in parts of his main works, as well as in texts like *Leçons de sociologie: physique des mœurs et du droit* or his course on Hobbes for enrichment courses (Durkheim, 1950, 2011), these references are specific and rarely connect with the central themes of his major works. Is this an oversight in Durkheim's work, or a problem of interpretation that has failed to connect these seemingly peripheral themes to profound reflections on politics, which may lie at the core of his work? To answer this, the first interpretation to analyze concerns the theme of power as it appears indirectly in his reflections on *moral authority*.

Contours of a Theoretical Problematic: The Links between Power and Authority

To comprehend the role of authority in Durkheim's thought and its relationship to power, it is essential to recognize the centrality of the moral dimension, particularly his focus on moral integration (Ramos, 1999; Bericat, 2001; Stedman, 2001).

According to Ramos (2011, p. 12), Durkheim's work is fundamentally centered on moral concerns. His major works focus on this area, reflecting his teaching, professional interests, and civic concerns. The explicit aim of his first work, *The Division of Labor in Society* (Durkheim, 2014), is part of a broader project to develop a moral science necessary for understanding the integration crisis in modern societies. Along these lines, his diagnostic study on "moral discomfort" is evident in texts such as *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (2013), as well as in various contributions to contemporary discussions. His later work, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1995), revolves around understanding the integrative functions of religion and sacred elements as productive sources of moral community. Together, these themes reveal a *leitmotif* in his work: moral issues are at the center of his thinking, and other themes and problems are subordinate to or understandable within this primary concern. With this foundation established, Durkheim's interest in power becomes clear.

If the topic of power holds a place in Durkheim's perspective, we must trace it within his reflections on morality. But how can we situate this moral dimension? Ramos (2011, p. 12) points out the difficulty in clearly defining this aspect: if moral issues are part of the social world, how do we define their specificity? This question, in turn, leads us to the issue of authority.

In the text *Sociology and its Scientific Domain* (1900), Durkheim defines social life as a series of moral environments surrounding individuals. These environments originate from ideas endowed with the necessary strength and prestige to assert themselves and determine our actions (p. 28; Ramos, 2011, p. 13). This force and prestige derive from a transcendental nature, positioning it beyond and above individual agents. How does this transcendental nature arise? Which social agencies represent and enforce these moral rules? These inquiries led Durkheim to examine religious phenomena, within which he studied the concept of authority. Identifying this transcendental nature and the capacity of moral life to absorb values and ensure respect led him to analyze authority and the elevated production of moral values in religion, through the study of the production of sacred (Ramos, 2011, p. 14). Consequently, authority emerges as a guiding force in moral considerations. If sociology addresses social facts defined as moral realities, then it can be described as a science of moral phenomena. The issues addressed by sociology can thus be reframed within the moral dimension, revealing moral authority as a fundamental factor underpinning social facts within this field of study. As Durkheim noted in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (Durkheim, 1995), the significance of this theme became clear as he framed the study of authority as a primary sociological concern.

I hope this analysis, and those that follow, will clarify my ideas, which have at times been misunderstood. Because I presented constraint as the *external feature* that most readily distinguishes social facts from individual psychological ones, some have assumed I consider physical constraint to be the essence of social life. In reality, I have only ever regarded constraint as the visible, tangible expression of a more profound, ideal fact: *moral authority*. The central sociological question, *if there is one*, is to investigate the various forms of external constraint, identify the different kinds of moral authority, and uncover the causes that give rise to them (pp. 210–211).⁵

⁵ In *The Rules of Sociological Method*, Durkheim reached a similar conclusion and established the spirit of discipline as a central category, with the study of forms of social discipline as the primary object of socio-

Once authority's centrality in sociology is established, what role does power play within this framework? On this subject, Ramos (2011) observes:

Just as Durkheim demonstrated in *The Division of Labor in Society* that "Not everything in the contract is contractual," he similarly shows that not all economic factors lie solely within the realm of economics. Along the same lines, Durkheim's school of thought suggests that not everything within politics pertains purely to power or politics; rather, authority, which stands beyond and above power, endows politics with its moral quality. Without this moral layer, politics devolves into mere discretion and violence. Giddens (1971) recognized this clearly. Durkheim did not disregard politics or conflict, but his attention was directed toward *the issue of legitimate authority* [Emphasis added] (p. 14).

According to this perspective, legitimate power requires authority, forming the foundation of power that is not merely coercive or physically violent. As Ramos points out (2011, p. 15), this insight alone, however, is insufficient; ending the discussion here would grossly oversimplify the problem.

To conclude at this juncture would overlook the topic's complexity, as the alternative proposal—while not unfounded (Lacroix, 1984; Datta, 2008)—suggests that 'power,' seemingly displaced by 'authority' in Durkheim's work, *is in fact central to his analysis*. Following Foucault's conception of power as the capacity to transform social contingencies into lasting structures, one could interpret Durkheim's investigations into social media and the emergence of sacredness as explorations of social power in its purest form—unconditional and constitutive. The Durkheim who explores the origins of sacredness (and hence authority) is also examining *power as a foundational element*, not only as a constituent authority but as *rooted in emotional bases that stabilize and arbitrarily manifest as authority* [Emphasis added] (p. 15).

The cited passage opens a pathway to explore the manifestations of authority and power within Durkheim's work. As we have seen, it emerges as a social power that institutes classificatory systems and obligatory modes of thought,

logical study. "The rules we have set out would... allow a sociology to be constructed which would see in the spirit of the discipline the essential condition for all common life..." (Durkheim, 1988, p. 144).

feeling, and action assumed *by authorities*. The standardized formation of these practices, alongside their continuous reproduction, constitutes an *effect of power* that, due to its moral character, transcends material imposition, embodying a symbolic dimension. But how is this form of power constituted? To what extent does it stem from emotional dimensions? The following sections will trace Durkheim's key explanations of these themes, drawing from relevant passages in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*.

Emotional Expressions of Power and Authority: A Reading Exercise

The concept of authority plays a significant role in Durkheim's work, reaching prominence in his later career when it intersected with his religious theory. He viewed religion as a foundational experience of moral life, serving as an entry point to explore the mechanisms that produce the transcendence of rules, the origins of ascending moral values, and the creation of value spheres and communities of belief. Within this framework, his inquiries into the sources of religious feelings led him to identify the phenomenon of effervescence as moments where sacredness and, by extension, society, are generated. All this forms part of an interpretation of the *moral code*. By focusing on the emotional dimension of power, we establish a specific interpretive framework that allows us to examine effervescence and the production of sacredness through two complementary codes: *a*) as an *affective code* (ac), where effervescence fosters communities and schemes of emotional relationships; *b*) as a *political code* (pc), where collective effervescence generates *institutive social power*, as Ramos suggests (2011, p. 15). In the following sections, we examine selected passages from *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* using both interpretive codes (ac and pc).

a) The definition of religion provided in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* presents a broad characterization based on the notion of the sacred, closely tied to social regulation and integration (Durkheim, 1995). Religion constitutes an original phenomenon as it forms the foundation of the sacred/profane distinction, which serves as a matrix for all other social distinctions. This division establishes the first form of hierarchical and asymmetrical relations, thereby acting as an early form of authority that produces veneration and respect (pc).

b) Durkheim (2011) establishes a reciprocal relationship between the sacred and the social. The sacred has a social origin, as society is the *source of all authority*. In turn, the sacred, due to its authority, contributes to the *constitution* of the social. Religion thus becomes the proto-institutional authority, where society itself creates objects of reverence and respect. Figures of authority gain this status, and the exercise of authority is an effect of power rooted in collective emotions and beliefs that foster emotional bonds tied to respect and voluntary obedience (pc/ac).

c) Durkheim's theory of religion posits a circular relationship between the sacred and the social. Through this lens, religious beliefs inform social life and its institutions (Durkheim, 1995). Conversely, this circularity helps explain religious feelings as a moral force produced socially.

... the idea of force bears the mark of its origin overtly. It in fact entails an idea of power that does not go without those of ascendancy, mastery, domination—and, correspondingly, of dependence and subordination. The relations that all these ideas express are eminently social. It is society that has classified beings as superior and subordinate, as masters who command and subjects who obey; it is society that has conferred on the first that singular property that makes command efficacious and that constitutes power. So, everything tends to show that the first powers the human mind conceived are those that societies instituted as they became organized. It is in their image that the powers of the physical world were conceived. (Durkheim, 1995, pp. 369–370)

The transcendence associated with the sacred-social relationship is a constructed attribute, arising not in isolation but in *relation* to moments of collective *effervescence*. During these moments, collective ideals are periodically refreshed to sustain principles of unity. These moments are essential components of an emotional order (Durkheim, 1995), establishing a symbolic institution of society grounded in an *affective* base. The establishment of shared ideals forms the emotional foundation from which all adherence to normative criteria derives (pc/ac).

d) Moral authority refers to duty and serves as a means of instituting and maintaining it. However, this authority cannot persist without shared values and emotions that justify and underpin the restrictions required by a normative life. Although society is structured on a normative basis, this structure

draws strength from an emotional element derived from the sacred experience. This strength, which Durkheim terms *dynamogenic* (Durkheim, 1975b, p. 74), is generated in ceremonies and rites that recreate the moral ideal. Religion thus emerges not only as a ritual marker of a mythical origin but as a set of emotional practices that anchor collective identity, which is renewed through social bonds. On this basis, society is able to institute social values rooted in the formation of a moral and emotional community of shared beliefs and values (ac).

e) Due to its dynamogenic nature, religious life comprises moral forces that manifest as the sacred (Durkheim, 1995). Religion is both a source of moral life and the original space in which the first notion of force is produced. These forces emerge from representations and feelings, whose origins lie in emotions that sustain them. Religious force, then, derives from the prestige and moral influence of beliefs, which are themselves rooted in values and emotions. The primary descriptors of collective effervescence are emotion and collective energy. In this sense, Illouz (2007, p. 15) notes that emotions are the *energetic component of action* (ac).

f) If the sacred principle expresses an inherent social dimension, and if ritual life can be understood in secular and rational terms, then society consecrates not only people but also objects and ideas, such as liberty, reason, and patriotism (Durkheim, 1995). Along these lines, revolutions may be interpreted as experiences of social effervescence rich in *emotional life*, where shared beliefs arise and are fortified, circulating and amplifying emotions. These are moments where values are affirmed or contested, with the goal of fostering new collective ideals. Emotions provide the energetic core of moral forces that structure social life. The sacred, from its inception, emerges as an *affective intuition*, leading to the recognition of religious force, which is ultimately a transformed representation of society itself. Durkheim's path to a theory of religion is also a path to a *symbolic theory of social facts and the emotional sources of collective life*. From this perspective, moral authority can be understood as an expression of consolidated social power rooted in the action of effervescent social networks (ac).

g) Moral authority is the *support* for the symbolic order upon which the power of representations is established. Its origins are both psychic and emotional, deriving from prestige and the moral ascendancy of collective ideas and representations that draw their strength from generated emo-

tions. Functionally, the exercise of authority forms a link within the political order; genetically, it originates in emotional ties (Durkheim, 1995). Understood in these terms, moral authority serves as an essential function for regulating collective life.⁶ This function assumes an impersonal character that translates into the power of a moral body or entity with the right to impose behavioral norms (authorize, prohibit, regulate, etc.). In this way, authority is integral to the social institution of power and also represents the emotional expression of power embedded within society's normative structures (pc/ac).

In Closing

In this section, we set out to situate the place of power in Durkheim's works and the social processes underlying its production, with a special emphasis on affective elements. To achieve this objective, we reviewed key passages from his book *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Through this text, it is possible to read, alongside Durkheim's "religious turn," both a symbolic and an affective bent. These two orientations derive from the concept of collective effervescence—a phenomenon of emotional and symbolic order that provides the energetic basis for producing collective life and a moral community.

While revisiting *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* offers valuable insights, it remains insufficient for constructing a complete vision of Durkheim's concept of power and authority. In this sense, the task undertaken in this section remains largely preliminary. Focusing on the productive processes of social power, taking Durkheim's late theory of religion as a central axis, has led us to set aside other relevant topics which should be considered if we were to broaden the scope of this chapter:

- 1) *Expressions of social power consolidated in classificatory systems, institutions, and social practices:* Here, an analysis of the obligatory nature of

⁶ "Not only is society a moral authority, but there is every reason to consider it the type and source of all moral authority... Authority does not reside in some external, objective fact, which logically implies and necessarily produces morality. It consists entirely in the conception that people have of such a fact; it is a matter of opinion, and opinion is a collective thing." (Durkheim, 1973, pp. 90-91).

social facts becomes crucial, as it shows how even everyday tasks are permeated by social power that structures social worlds bound to norms.

- 2) *The configuration of emotional regimes and feeling rules*: Within this framework, special emphasis should be placed on the enforcement of normative systems and the forms of authority that govern the affective world.
- 3) *A historical analysis of different forms of authority*: An emblematic example of this within Durkheim's perspective on anomie can be found in *The Division of Labor in Society*, which describes the transition from traditional to modern societies alongside transformations in forms of authority and emotional regimes.
- 4) *The study of tensions and crises of authority in contemporary societies*: Here, Durkheim's views on anomie as a diagnosis of modern societies provide a revealing lens.
- 5) *Relevant perspectives in Durkheim's lectures and writings on morals and education predating *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (particularly between 1906 and 1912)*: These texts contain valuable insights regarding the exercise of authority and the types of bonds it fosters (Durkheim, 1973, 1990, 2011).

In relation to this last area, Durkheim (1973) notes an important research project, not yet fully undertaken, aimed at clarifying the nature of authority in its symbolic and affective dimensions. By authority, he understands a form of influence that imposes upon us a moral power that we recognize as superior. Due to this influence, we act in prescribed ways—not because the behavior appeals to us, nor because we are inclined to it by any innate or acquired disposition, but because authority exerts a compelling influence. Obedience consists in such acquiescence. What mental processes underlie this notion of authority, which generates this compelling force to which we submit? This, Durkheim suggests, warrants further investigation (p. 29).

This quote underscores the ideal (symbolic) character behind phenomena of authority and sheds light on how acts of consensual obedience are produced. Such obedience does not operate out of fear of punishment or a rational evaluation of the advantages of following the rule but rather from a process of

acceptance tied to the prestige or moral authority of those in power.⁷ This perspective raises central questions about how agents contribute to the establishment of power wielded by authority, and the extent to which forms of social imposition are seemingly assumed under their own free will. This discussion directs us toward an affective perspective, where feelings of respect, admiration, or deference play a central role in attitudes toward figures and agencies of authority.

Finally, we wish to highlight that, according to Durkheim's perspective, emotional practices are intertwined with the material world, as part of the processes that generate collective effervescence. These practices shape meaning and simultaneously indicate underlying forms of asymmetry, as well as agencies of power and authority symbolically represented by the concept of God (a figure of authority and power that evolves progressively through secularization).⁸

Meaning construction does not originate in a process of reflection or argumentation but rather from a practical-intuitive knowledge that centers bodies and emotions. Based on this, Durkheim's analysis of ritual experience potentially outlines a theory of social action with symbolic, practical, and affective foundations. It also offers an explanation of the elementary forms of producing power, understood as an institutive and indivisible social power. Nonetheless, considering this indivisible and generic nature of power remains a complex issue within Durkheim's perspective. To approach this topic from a complementary angle, and in an attempt to preserve Durkheim's contributions, we will next examine Bourdieu's perspective on power, taking the concept of *illusio* as a focal point for our analysis.

⁷ Additionally, the quote highlights the importance Durkheim placed on the mental dimension and the (symbolic) ideal of authority processes, which allows us to see that he regarded their study as part of a collective psychology integrated with the sociological study of these representations.

⁸ Authors such as Goffman (2017) and Collins (2014) have made important theoretical contributions regarding the role and significance of daily life rituals. In this book, Adriana García Andrade offers a detailed analysis of the affective dimensions of rituals from Collins' perspective, highlighting their components and emphasizing differentiated outcomes, asymmetries, hierarchies, and processes of social exclusion.

Symbolic Power, *Illusio*, and Affection from Bourdieu's Perspective

Unlike Durkheim, Bourdieu explicitly highlights the role of power, both in its material and symbolic dimensions. In its material dimension, power is objectively expressed through the positions occupied by agents, the capital they possess, and their trajectories over time, depending on the logic of each field. These disparities in capital translate into various positions of power, which in turn enable or constrain agents' capacities to operate within each field (Bourdieu, 1998, 2000, 2018). Seen in this light, Bourdieu's theory underscores the paradox within multiple social systems that formally present themselves as universal and open (e.g., political, educational, and healthcare systems), yet in their operation, these systems reproduce patterns of inequality. Given this paradox, one must ask how these systems maintain legitimacy within their respective fields. Why do agents accept participation in them and submission to their rules? Such questions draw us toward a deeper exploration of power from its symbolic dimension.

From Material Power to Symbolic Power

With the concept of *symbolic power*, Bourdieu refers to the ability to impose a sense of legitimacy while concealing the conditions of production (Bourdieu and Passeron, 2014). Here, we are dealing with a type of power whose primary strength lies in its capacity to name, classify, and legitimize the social world for actors, presenting its truths as necessary. The production of mechanisms to define reality reflects relations of force inherent in the material organization of societies. Even when considering these elements, its origin remains opaque and generally unknown to the agents involved.

On the other hand, Bourdieu describes *symbolic violence* as a specific form of imposition exercised upon agents whose acceptance and complicity are assumed (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013). This paradoxical situation is made possible through legitimate action and principles of vision and division for a world that accommodates prevailing interests, thereby masking its arbitrary nature. Consequently, those who are dominated begin to view themselves in categories shared with dominant actors and groups (Bourdieu, 2007, 2018). In this sense, symbolic power is instituted through a logic that assumes process-

es of misrecognition and recognition. If one is unfamiliar with the relations of force that sustain this power and the objective truth regarding its arbitrariness, then the recognition granted by those who suffer domination—who accept it as valid and as their own—will reproduce the same categories and criteria of asymmetry imposed upon them.

The primary function of symbolic power becomes objectified through the production of classification systems according to which reality is organized (Bourdieu and Passeron, 2014). Symbolic systems are not merely instruments of knowledge and communication but are also instruments of domination and social differentiation (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013). Symbolic systems do not simply reflect social relations and organize the social world; they also participate actively in it (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 90). In this sense, they represent important spaces linked to symbolic struggles over the construction of meaning and the maintenance or transformation of order (Bourdieu, 2018).

Domination through Habitus

The series of dispositions and schemes of sensations, perceptions, and understanding by which agents internalize the social world constitutes what Bourdieu calls *habitus* (Bourdieu, 2015). This concept is key to linking different theoretical categories and overcoming the typical dichotomy between structure and agency. Bourdieu attempts to transcend this dichotomy by advocating the simultaneous production of both dimensions and the primacy of their relations over the tendency to view them as independent (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013). Society comes about and reproduces itself through the production of internalized structures within agents, collective ways of thinking, feeling, and acting by those who comprise society (Bourdieu, 2015). In this sense, *habitus* is a primary generator of enduring practices that are transferable across fields and composed of structures incorporated into schemes of feeling, appreciation, and action (Bourdieu and Passeron, 2014). What affective repercussions lie within this fact?

Habitus is composed of a series of sensitive, moral, aesthetic, emotional, and cognitive elements that are produced socially and bodily and are shared by individuals of the same social group, class, or gender (Bourdieu, 2022). This series of dispositions unifies the individual with their class and groups of be-

longing while differentiating them from individuals in other groups. Since *habitus* expresses the internalization of life's social conditions, this process internalizes hierarchies, distinctions, and logics present across domains of social life (Bourdieu, 2015). Differences in agents' positions within these fields are reflected by varying conditions of access to material and symbolic resources across social strata (capital). To the degree that this series of capitals, beyond their specific value in each field, constitutes a form of power for those who possess it, it forms symbolic capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013). This is not rigorously a specific type of capital but rather comprises capital that grants recognition, status, and power to those who possess these traits (Bourdieu, 2008b). What affective repercussions arise from this fact?

Domination as Seen from the Affective Framework

Strictly speaking, Bourdieu (2017) did not write specifically about the affective dimension, but this was neither an irrelevant nor a marginal topic in his work, as this emotional dimension underpins reflections that led to the theory of *habitus*, first presented in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Fernández, 2005; Dukuen, 2010, 2011). As evidence of this latent presence in his work, let us recall that Bourdieu's (2008a) doctoral dissertation, which preceded his fieldwork in Algeria, was directed by Canguilhem and had as its general aim the "analysis of the temporal structures of affective life" (Yacide, 2013)—a project that remained unfinished but of which a few pages still appear in *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, where Bourdieu analyzes the language expressing emotions and somatic manifestations linked to language (Bourdieu, 2017; Sapiro, 2007a, p. 42).

This piece of information complements a testimony by Bourdieu himself in June 2000, in an interview with Sapiro (2007b), who highlighted an important point: the *decisive factor* during the period Bourdieu dedicated to the theory of *habitus*, as formulated in *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, was his opposition to Sartre's theory, particularly the postulates Sartre developed in *Emotion: Outline of a Theory* (Sartre, 2012; Sapiro, 2007b, p. 59). The need to critically engage with Sartre's perspective and to establish an alternative to the structuralist and rationalist approach to action led Bourdieu back to the foundational elements for constructing his theory of *habitus*. If this retrospective assessment is

taken seriously, we can argue that the theory of *habitus*, at least in its original form, had its starting point in the domain of emotions (Dukuen, 2011, p. 1; Sapiro, 2007b, p. 59–60). Another element that enriches this interpretation is found in the evident parallels between the title of Sartre’s work (*Emotion: Outline of a Theory*) and Bourdieu’s 1972 publication, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*.

The initial presence of the affective theme can also be confirmed in references Bourdieu makes to his research in Algeria from 1958 to 1963, regarding the relations between temporal structures, labor, and domination. Algerian peasants’ economic practices, as Dukuen (2011) notes, are discussed in texts such as “Work and Workers in Algeria,” published as part of the compilation *Algeria 60*, which reflect feelings of honor, guilt, and resignation as responses to the conditions of colonial subjugation, inevitable strategies of resistance, and forms of existence marked by a “habituation to pain” (Dukuen, 2011, p. 3–6; Bourdieu, 2008a).

Upon returning from Algeria, Bourdieu’s next study (Bourdieu, 2004) presents the notion of *habitus* for the first time, referencing the perception of the body among peasants from Bearn in southwestern France. As Dukuen (2011) has noted, “The socially instituted body in the form of *habitus* will be the key to Bourdieu’s anthropology and a central anchor for his theory of symbolic violence” (p. 2–4). From this initial formulation, *habitus* encompasses the production of dispositions for establishing relations with the world. The construction of these relations takes place through both practical and emotional dimensions (p. 2–4). In *The Bachelor’s Ball*, Bourdieu (2008b) examines the relationship between bodies, affect, and forms of domination, highlighting the transformation from traditional landownership systems to forms of capitalist production and its impact on individual and collective experiences. In the final chapter, “The Peasant and His Body,” he analyzes peasant *hexis* and the social perception of the body. During the development of these analyses, the formulation of the concept of *habitus*, with strong corporal referents and an emotional order, as stated in the much-celebrated passage describing a moment at the Christmas Ball—a privileged space for flirting with the opposite sex within the framework of competition among bachelors who have migrated from local towns and acquired urban manners versus those who remained in the country—once again portrays the construction of a negative perception of the body of a peasant.

This modest country dance is... the setting for a true clash of civilizations. Through it, the entire world of the city breaks into the life of the countryside... Just as the dances of the past were expressions of the entire peasant civilization, modern dances are expressions of urban civilization; by requiring the adoption of new bodily practices, they demand a genuine change in “nature”... When faced with such a situation, the peasant has no choice but to internalize the image of himself that others form, even if it is a stereotype. As a result, he feels uncomfortable with it and perceives it as an obstacle. This negative awareness of the body forbids him from dancing, as well as from adopting simple and natural attitudes in the presence of girls... The fear of ridicule and shyness... are related to a keen awareness of one’s self and one’s body... The reluctance to dance is nothing more than a manifestation of that acute awareness of peasantry, which also expresses itself, as we have seen, through mockery and irony about oneself (pp. 113–115, 116–117).

The relevance of these passages lies in their power to highlight the somatization effects of conflicting social relations, as well as the production of classificatory schemes of perception that, being incorporated and lodged in the most deeply socialized body, contribute to forms of symbolic domination that are expressed in ways in which subjugated bodies self-define and project their future horizons (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013). In the microcosm described, we see the application of classificatory systems that standardize discriminatory practices according to gender, class, age, social origin, *status*, phenotype, posture, dress, language, manners, body odor, etc. From this example, we can draw conclusions about the relationship between *habitus*, body, and symbolic violence.

The implicit nature and pre-reflections on the production of *habitus* are emphasized by Bourdieu, as he considers this a matter of learning about and from the body. *Habitus*, along with body *hexis*, exemplifies body performance. In the process of internalizing social life conditions, the body assumes a central role as the bearer of social determinations. Thus, the concept of *habitus* stems from this idea, with Bourdieu using figures that depict it as an expression of social history embodied—indicating that *habitus* represents a productive process of concrete subjectivities inscribed in bodies, identities, and ways of behaving, with these determinations originating from their source (Bourdieu, 2018). The shaping of *habitus*, and its role as a mechanism for internalizing symbolic violence, correlates with the emotional dimension.

Internalization of these forms of domination is expressed through specific emotions and affects, which, for agents in inferior positions within a given field, may manifest as feelings of shyness or shame regarding how they carry their body during social presentations, or as expressions of social resentment or apathy in cases where their condition is marked by signs of discontent.

We learn through the body. The social order is inscribed in the body through this constant confrontation, more or less dramatic, but always giving a prominent place to affectivity and, more precisely, to emotional exchanges with the social environment... The most serious social admonitions are not directed at the intellect, but at the body, treated as a reminder. The essence of learning masculinity and femininity tends to inscribe the difference between the sexes in the body in the form of ways of speaking, behaving, looking, sitting, etc. And the rites of institution are nothing more than the limits of all the explicit actions through which groups strive to instill social boundaries or, what amounts to the same, social classifications (the male/female division, for example), naturalizing them in the form of divisions in the body, bodily habits, dispositions... and collective principles of vision and division (Bourdieu, 1999, pp. 186–187).

The Two Dimensions of Illusio and their Affective Expressions

As Cosley (2005, pp. 13–14) points out, *illusio* is an open and relational concept that develops over time in Bourdieu's works. It was initially used together with the concepts of *interest* and *investment* until it began to be used systematically and recurrently as of 1980. The concept reaches its peak of development in texts such as *Pascalian Meditations* and *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Bourdieu, 1998, 2018). As Bourdieu himself mentions, its most constant and systematic use responds to the need to adjust the notion to his theory of symbolic violence on the one hand, and on the other, to place the term (used now together with the term “social libido”) in a relationship of counter-position with the notions of usefulness or benefits, which are found in economic-utilitarian doctrines. Surpassing its highly flexible nature, at times evasive with respect to the notion, it is possible to establish general elements that will help us situate this notion in an attempt to be more precise about its relations with symbolic power and the affective dimension.

A first approach to the concept, presented in *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*, helps us situate two basic feelings (only distinguishable analytically) from where we can review their roles in the configuration of social order: a) their definition as a principle of beliefs (belief in the value of games in each field and in the fact that these deserve to be played); and b) their conceptualization as a binding principle for the logic of these games and their rules (support for the game, adapting to its normativity).

Having defended my usage of the notion of interest, I will now attempt to show how it can be replaced by more rigorous notions such as *illusio*, investment, or even libido. In his well-known book, *Homo Ludens*, Huizinga says that through a false etymology, one can make *illusio*, a Latin word derived from the root *ludus* (game), mean the fact of being in the game, of being invested in the game, of taking the game seriously. *Illusio* is the fact of being caught up in and by the game, of believing the game is “worth the candle,” or, more simply, that playing is worth the effort. In fact, the word interest initially meant very precisely what I include under the notion of *illusio*, that is, the fact of attributing importance to a social game, the fact that what happens matters to those who are engaged in it, who are in the game. Interest is to “be there,” to participate, to admit that the game is worth playing and that the stakes created in and through the fact of playing are worth pursuing; it is to recognize the game and to recognize its stakes (Bourdieu, 1998, pp. 76–77).

Illusio as a Principle of Belief and as a Constituent Principle of Domains

From Bourdieu’s perspective, the main function of *illusio*, as a principle of belief, resides in producing the conditions of legitimacy of social life. Each domain has a specific form of *illusio* that attempts to strengthen belief in the value and meaning of participating in the practices of each domain and depends on the benefits derived from this participation, considered not only because of utilitarian criteria. In other words, it constitutes the principle of emotional order that “hooks” agents to participate in the practices of each domain. The extension of this principle to all aspects of social life is the equivalent of recognizing that *illusio* is a mechanism of integration of society’s agents (Costey, 2005, p. 18).

Illusio does not operate as an external, abstract, or independent principle of agents, but rather as a form of incorporated belief (Bourdieu, 1998). On the other hand, by instituting itself, each domain defines a *specific form of illusio*; that is, referents and forms of value that, from the point of view of other domains, can appear to be absurd or not very realistic (as is the case with judging religious interest from an economic point of view or the criterion of having income from morals or art). Each domain establishes spheres of interest or the absence thereof and defines its referents in aspirational terms according to goals and ideals (Costey, 2005, p. 17).⁹ In this way, what is considered to be a disinterested act in a domain hopes to achieve objectives that others place value on. The referents of interest turn into the axis of games that have a place in each domain (p. 19). *Illusio* does not come on the scene as a principle with concrete and homogeneous content, but rather as a broad spectrum where the interests of different agents can be accommodated. This characteristic of a high order of generality makes its acceptance possible. In other words, a kind of implicit consensus is not carried out through reflections or in a coordinated fashion (p. 17–20). On the other hand, along with this general nature, the continuity of the domains demands the coexistence of particular types of *illusio* as a principle of emotional order and grants this notion of the role of *social libido* to transform their heartbeats into specific desires, motivations, and interests united in the logic of each domain (Bourdieu, 1998; Costey, 2005, p. 19). As *illusio* activates forms of practical participation in games, it operates as an intuition and desirable orientation, a socialized libido that coordinates and produces its own strategies (Bourdieu, 1998).

Illusio as a Linking Principle to Logic and the Normativity of Domains

A basic function of *illusio* is to guarantee the committed ascription of agents to the rules of the game, under the implicit assumption—which is never

⁹ The referents of value became established based on the logic of each domain, and they refer us to their main tenets, linked to their codes and principles of operation (money, earnings in the economic field; power, and influence in the political arena, etc.) (Costey, 2005, p. 20). Based on this logic, the question of whether the entire array of these aspirations forms part of the totalizing *illusio* can be traced back to the imaginary of “happiness,” with its corresponding references to forms of symbolic power and principles of arbitrariness that shape their construction.

questioned—that it possesses a universal and objective nature. This assumption acts as a founding principle that grounds the domain’s arbitrary nature, concealing its objective truth as arbitrariness. It contradicts the pretension of total autonomy of the domains, as reflected in the belief that these domains operate without interference from the powers that be. According to Bourdieu (1998), there are close ties between the operation of domains and the relations of force at their base. Since domains operate as spaces for play and struggle among agents to obtain capital and positions, they respond to an agonistic and relational logic, which is a romanticized element presented in *illusio* through narratives that provide these imaginary agents with platforms for possible success.

An analysis of *illusio* allows us to understand how symbolic domination functions. It is through *illusio* that an emotional tie is produced with respect to the logic of the domain and its prescriptions, which legitimize positions and differences in power. Despite this, it is not merely the normative ascription that surprises us; rather, its double nature brings together normative prescription and emotional investment, looking toward an expectation of achieving what has been constructed and nurtured from the domain’s arbitrary nature and the mechanisms of symbolic power behind the scenes. Acceptance of the logic of the game implicitly includes acceptance of asymmetries among the players. The concept of *illusio* refers us back to a principle of emotional order that guides the actions of the subjects and shapes their interests in social practices, which, at the same time, “tie them down” to these practices by accepting the *logics of the game* found within them (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013).

From Moral Authority to Illusio: Notes for a Comparative Perspective

In this chapter, we set out to reflect on power in the works of Durkheim and Bourdieu by examining the concepts of moral *authority* and *illusio*. From this re-examination of both approaches, it becomes clear that power is conceived as a dimension present in all aspects of social life. In Durkheim’s writings, power manifests as an established social force consolidated within normative systems, collective representations, and obligatory ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. In contrast, Bourdieu presents power as symbolic, existing with-

in the arbitrariness and logic of various domains, and inscribed in bodies through *habitus*.¹⁰

Although the emotional dimension is not explicitly addressed by either author, it forms a crucial part of their perspectives and serves as a pathway to understanding their reflections on power. Durkheim's theory of the sacred offers a way to study the social production of power and authority through their symbolic and affective dimensions, centering his reflections on the concept of collective effervescence. Conversely, Bourdieu incorporates symbolic and affective elements in his notion of power, contributing to the discussion with an analysis of the effects of domination as *symbolic violence*.

From both authors' perspectives, the exercise of power fundamentally involves emotional pathways, operating within the realm of affect rather than solely through rational arguments or pure violence. In this regard, the affective dimension is not only a means of expression but also a constituent element in how symbolic power is produced and reproduced in contemporary societies. For Durkheim, this occurs through the internalization of the principle of authority as part of a moral order—embodied in the *spirit of discipline*. For Bourdieu, a similar concept emerges, echoing Durkheim's perspective; it not only relates to moral provisions but also to sensitive, physical, and aesthetic elements inscribed in bodies. In summary, this leads to the production of a *habitus* and an *ethos* that manifest as a *bodily spirit* (Bourdieu, 1998).

Within this framework, the concepts of moral authority and *illusio* serve a pivotal function in the perspectives analyzed. In both cases, these concepts refer to a principle of belief in the legitimacy of social order, as well as an emotional principle through which agents commit affectively to this order while adopting the values that organize collective life. Specifically regarding *illusio*, agents “plug into” shared aspirations, guided by the same principles that underlie the asymmetrical logics of the relationships they inhabit. Rather than limiting this form of “domination by affect” to the realm of interpersonal interaction, Bourdieu integrates it into a broader social context, inscribing it within an asymmetrical and agonistic logic of the domains. *Illusio* thus represents a category that encapsulates the emotional mode, incorporating it into

¹⁰ Through this process of internalization, it is possible to reproduce order, but also to create the conditions for crisis and transformation. Although these aspects are not developed in a systematic way by the authors, their consideration can be viewed from a perspective that allows for a renewed reading of Durkheim and Bourdieu, moving beyond interpretations that see their works as solely focused on order and reproduction.

the arbitrariness of domains as valid and an end in itself for agents, leading to emotional investments that “hook them” to unconscious forms of domination, contingent upon their own goals and desires.¹¹ Viewed from this perspective, power and domination extend beyond the logics of economic relations or the imposition of a moral order; they necessitate the inclusion of an *emotional agency* that integrates affective valences into the construction of social reality, alongside traditional models of economic and moral agency.¹²

We began this chapter by underscoring the importance of incorporating an analysis of the affective dimension into the study of processes of domination and power. Beyond the insights this perspective offers, we believe that introducing an affective dimension as a *reading device* can lead to renewed interpretations of Durkheim’s and Bourdieu’s work. This shift is particularly important to counter the prevailing tendency to view their contributions solely in terms of order and reproduction, often overshadowing their insights into social change.

In Durkheim’s case, analyzing processes of collective effervescence enables us to understand both ritualization and the establishment of social order, as well as their transformation. This perspective allows us to consider Durkheim not only as a theorist concerned with social order but also as one receptive to the analysis of social change. As Gane (1988, p. 5) has pointed out, revisiting the concept of effervescence can facilitate the construction of a theory of change and a genetic explanation of social dynamics, suggesting that society evolves not only during these effervescent moments but is also an *outcome of them*.

Similarly, Bourdieu’s perspective is often associated primarily with reproduction. However, there are elements that reveal reflections on social change that warrant attention. While we cannot elaborate further on this aspect at

¹¹ The work of Daniela Sánchez López, Gabriela Alejandra López Miranda, and Roberta Priscila Cedillo Hernández, included in this book, offers interesting studies on specific ways in which *Illusio* operates as an affective mechanism of domination by articulating socially constructed desires and dominant orders related to gender and the body.

¹² The notions of moral authority and *Illusio* can, in the same way, be articulated to construct convergent explanations regarding the emotional production of forms of power. In this regard, we should point out, without detracting from the original meaning of the concepts, that the production of the sacred, understood as having transcendental value, constitutes an original and fundamental form of *illusio*. From a ritual experience, participants make emotional investments and enter into affective commitments to a social order. Conversely, *illusio*, understood as a principle of emotional belief that induces games to be played in every domain—assuming them to be valid and governed by their own rules—helps to validate the forms of power and authority established in each society.

present, we can briefly highlight some useful concepts and references for considering this possibility: *a)* the heterogeneity of habitus, its multiplicity, and even its potential inconsistency in light of the vast variability of social practices; *b)* recognition of imbalances within habitus, hysteresis processes, and the existence of habitus that have been disrupted or fragmented (Bourdieu, 1999, pp. 210–212); and *c)* In this same direction, the incorporation of the notion of *collusio*, understood as a collusion or collective encounter of habitus and sensitivities with regard to shared different expressions of *illusio*, can be oriented toward order or disorder. This means the possibility that circularity can be broken depending on the very misalignment of the logics of social life (Bourdieu, 1999, pp. 191, 195–196, 209).¹³ Taking all these elements into account allows us to consider the possibility that, under specific conditions, habitus—through its practical, corporeal, and affective dimensions—may not solely be directed toward perpetual reproduction but can also encompass valences open to the possibility of transformations in social life.

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¹³ According to Bourdieu, habitus does not necessarily adapt, nor is it necessarily coherent. Habitus has its faults, its critical moments of disorientation and misalignment. In this sense, Dukuen (2011) supports the possibility of breaking with the dominant interpretation regarding the circulation of reproduction and symbolic domination. Along the same lines, Calderone (2004) mentions, “The idea of adjustment, rather than coercion or automatization, also includes the possibility of genesis, which is part of what is social. It is an open system of dispositions, of indetermination in social habitus that allows for genesis and makes symbolic struggles within society possible” (p. 5).

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4. Randall Collins: Emotion and Stratification in Interaction Rituals¹

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As mentioned in the Introduction to this book, both social and non-social sciences have focused on emotions and their impact on social life. Over the past forty years, social sciences have demonstrated that social conditions can generate emotions during interactions, and that emotional climates and regimes influence the structure of society. In these discussions, as Vázquez Gutiérrez, López Miranda, and Pérez Baños (in this book) note, power is implicitly present. The authors argue that it is essential to recognize the “profound nature of power and its roots in situations of an emotional order” (p. 27). In other words, it is vital to view power as “a cross-cutting condition in all social spaces” (p. 29). However, this pervasive perspective does not imply total determination. As the authors mention, power can lead to a probable outcome, but not a definitive one (p. 27). This indicates that, at least during the moment of interaction, there are opportunities for contestation regarding claimed emotions, accumulated capital, and the attainment of certain positions.

From this perspective, we will examine Collins’ proposal of interaction rituals as a framework that can enhance our understanding of how emotions and their relationships to power differentials are enacted by participants (and their dispositions) in each interaction ritual.

Collins’ proposal, like all theories, has faced criticism from various angles. A frequently cited critique is that he neglects to consider structural elements that may influence the development of the ritual prior to the interaction (Bar-

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balet, 2006; Barnes, 2019; Iagulli, 2016; Kemper, 2016). In the following text, I will argue that although Collins does not fully address how “macro aspects” affect “micro aspects,” he does suggest that certain conditions must be met for the execution of the ritual to be possible (before it is performed). Additionally, he demonstrates that during an *in situ* ritual, participants arrive with different positions or dispositions, leading to stratification within the ritual and influencing its execution. To support this argument, I analyzed Collins’ major works and fourteen articles³ in which concepts related to conditions and interaction rituals are discussed. To clarify that participants approach the interactional ritual with varying power positions, I employ Bourdieu’s concepts of *position* and *disposition* to illustrate how rituals of interaction encompass elements that extend beyond the immediate interaction.⁴

In brief, a *position* refers to a pre-existing social space where one occupies an objective role (such as student, teacher, dean, or janitor), while *disposition* pertains to how our bodies have internalized cultural capital that we bring to the interaction. This means we participate in an interaction ritual with particular abilities—or a lack thereof—to recognize, feel, think, attend, and act.⁵

This article is divided into four parts. The first part discusses some of Collins’ intellectual debts related to his primary theoretical proposal: the theory of the chain of interaction rituals. The second part outlines the elements, processes, and outcomes of rituals, which is the most well-known aspect of his theory for understanding how the conditions and positions of the agents can influence the ritual and its consequences. The third part will examine the prior conditions necessary for rituals to be successful (structural issues). The fourth part will demonstrate that interaction rituals are inherently stratified. Specifically, there are elements of economic and cultural power⁶ that agents

³ Only some of his works were read for this analysis. The author has published almost 95 articles in journals, according to Scopus.

⁴ The notions of position and disposition are an explicit critique of interactionism, which seems to include free agents who present themselves before others and achieve things during the interaction (Bourdieu, 1987; and 1990-Book 1).

⁵ Habitus, which we carry within our bodies, is a system of dispositions “to perceive, do, feel, and think in a certain way that is internalized and incorporated by each individual depending on their objective conditions of existence and their social trajectory” (Casillas, 2003, p. 75).

⁶ These categories refer to Weber’s proposal regarding the different types of power in society. Power is Weber’s best-known concept: the possibility of someone else doing what I want them to do, even against their will. Weber also discusses ‘social power.’ When discussing this topic, he states that those who possess social power represent what the group values and enjoy prestige. In this sense, social power can be translated into Bourdieu’s cultural capital. When I speak of cultural power, I am referencing both Bour-

“bring with them” in their bodies, which can shape the performance of the ritual. The article concludes with a reflection on the contributions of Collins’ theory to the study of emotions and power dynamics in the interaction rituals we engage in daily.

Intellectual Debts: Status Groups

It is essential to note that Collins was clear about his theory throughout his career. He followed in the footsteps of Weber, Durkheim, and Goffman, though he also referenced Mead and Garfinkel. However, Weber was the cornerstone of his analysis, particularly through the concept of status groups. Durkheim and Goffman became primary references for his later theorization regarding the rituals of interaction.

To understand this, we must return to Weber. In a brief section titled “Division of Power in the Community: Class, Status and Parties” from *Economy and Society*, Weber (2009) states that all national communities exhibit inequality, which is not solely economic, as Marx suggests. For Weber, power—the capacity to impose one’s will on others—can be exercised economically (through classes), socially (through status groups), and politically (through parties). Thus, it is possible to analyze society from the perspectives of those who possess economic power and those who do not; those who hold prestige and those who do not; and finally, those who wield political power (which, in this context, refers to the ability to influence community actions) and those who lack it. For Weber, having economic power does not necessarily equate to having prestige or political power. This distinction aids our understanding of how power operates within ritual interactions, particularly social power.

Collins argues that inequality in society is fundamental, and Weber’s categories are relevant for capturing this reality. In his first book, *Conflict Sociology*, Collins asserts that power within each status or class group is maintained by the distribution of “resources for emotional production” (Collins, 1974, p. 21). In other words, from the very beginning, Collins sought to link the social

dieu’s notion of cultural capital and Weber’s concept of social power. Thus, agents bear dispositions that allow them to act, perceive, and feel their surroundings from certain categories their peers value (Weber, 2009; Bourdieu, 2001), giving them a strategic position to influence others’ actions. Therefore, having a strategic position to influence action means having power.

production of reality with emotions. Society can be viewed as a process involving individuals in a network, grouped by how they utilize economic and cultural resources to preserve what they value. This preservation occurs through chains of interaction rituals that generate emotional energy. Both individual and collective emotional energy (or effervescence) imbue social symbols with meaning, facilitating specific ideas, practices, and positions that benefit those with greater resources—those who can manipulate or provide the resources necessary for repeating practices and maintaining valued meanings. Although this intriguing idea suggests a macro-level investigation of society, Collins did not pursue it further in his theoretical development.⁷ He dedicated the rest of his career to micro-situational analysis, focusing on the dynamics of micro-interaction rather than on how material and cultural conditions influence the success of interaction rituals.

This focus is evident in his article “Situational Stratification: A Micro-Macro Theory of Inequality,” in which he posits that it is necessary to translate Weber’s dimensions of “class, status, and power” (Collins, 2000, p. 20) for micro-situational analysis. The dimension Collins emphasizes most is status group.

In his book *Interaction Ritual Chains*, Collins (2004a) discusses classes from a micro-situational perspective; in other articles, he refers to power as the ability to issue commands, whether these commands are recognized immediately or over time (Collins, 2000). Even though he addresses class and power, it appears that ‘status’—the category concerning culture and values—serves as the underlying substrate in all interaction rituals. The nature of the rituals, whether related to economic exchange (classes) or hierarchical dynamics involving leaders and followers, underscores the primacy of status. For instance, one cannot purchase something without acknowledging that a plastic card can be valued as a medium of exchange, which implies shared cultural capital. Collins further explains that class can be observed through the networks of exchange in which individuals participate. One such circuit is the

⁷ At a macro level, Collins does not resolve something that Weber did not either: how some groups have a higher status than others. In other words, they have a higher possibility of consumption, better-paid work, and characteristics that are more sought after than others. Bourdieu’s proposal attempts to explain this missing link. Using the category of class and its Marxist origin, he states that there is a struggle to impose what is (culturally and economically) valuable. Those with more resources have a greater ability to maintain the standards of what is considered good and valuable, associated with what they believe to be good and valuable.

working-class network, which is “shaped by the labor markets and information networks and the contact that sustains them” (p. 267). However, he also notes that success within an occupational network (i.e., obtaining a job and earning money) depends, at least partially, on having acquired “the generalized cultural capital of that group” (p. 86). In other words, there must be a connection between the economic exchange of capital and the cultural capital possessed. I concur with sociologist Barnes (2019), who states that for Collins, “Status groups are at once the major units of analysis in [his] macro sociology and the sites of most of the human activity he describes and seeks to understand in his micro-sociology...” (p. 28). Collins himself (2019a) appears to confirm this in his response to Barnes when he remarks, “If status group is a concept that combines micro-interaction, emotion, and cognition (also known as ‘culture’), this is indeed a central block for macro stratification” (p. 125).

In his interpretation of Weber, Collins (2000) contends that it is challenging to delineate the boundaries between status groups since “[t]hey are based on social rituals” (p. 26), which do not have a strong focal point (as the rituals Durkheim describes). Thus, a status group that is “recognizable through visual signs can only exist when daily life is highly formalized” (p. 26). In our daily lives, we encounter various conditions of sociability that range from informal to highly formalized, and situations that are open to public observation, rather than concealed from non-members of a status group—as Weber seems to assume (Collins, 2009, p. 364). Nevertheless, it is evident that all rituals, from small exchanges between a cashier and a customer to religious weddings, entail sharing cultural means, or cultural capital.⁸ The success of an interaction that transcends mere purchasing (as in the relationship between a cashier and a customer) is achieved when

... actors [in an interaction] give voluntary compliance to other actors. It is marked by willing deference, acceptance, and liking. It involves the voluntary provision of rewards, benefits, and gratifications without threat or coercion. (Kemper and Collins, 1990, p. 34)

⁸ As we will see later, the notion of cultural capital is very similar to Bourdieu’s concept, although Collins is more precise about certain issues.

As Goffman points out, interactions—including monetary ones—presuppose rituals of deference. In a buy/sell relationship, success involves not only obtaining the purchased service or product but also the deference of being a recognized and respected individual, which means being a part of a social group. This explains why a cup of coffee served half-heartedly, or one that comes after another customer who arrived later, feels wrong. The coffee was available, and I paid for it, yet there was no acknowledgment of me (the customer) as a person. In Collins' theory, this ritual was unsuccessful, and the customer is unlikely to return to that coffee shop. In this regard, rituals are integral to status groups, where honor (in Weber's sense) is achieved in any interaction that entails the giving of deference to the participants.

*Durkheim and Goffman: The Ritual as an Emotional
and Cognitive Binding in Society*

In his book *Interaction Ritual Chains*, Collins (2004a) presents the notion of ritual as originating from Durkheim. He follows closely the development of ideas outlined in chapter 7 of *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1995). His analytical framework aligns with Durkheim's concept of interaction rituals, how they function, the effects they produce, and their impacts on society. For Collins, Durkheim's most significant achievement was stating that social symbolizations, manifested in both material forms (such as shields, flags, bottles, and dances) and cognitive forms (thoughts and ideas in the minds of social subjects), arise from the interaction of physically present bodies. Society is maintained and recreated through these rituals, which unite participants and reveal to them, through bodily sensations and signs from others, that "they are part of something greater than themselves."

In other words, the foundation of society is not normative or rational but rather emotional in nature; it is felt in the body. According to Collins (2016), Durkheim illustrates that "the base of human solidarity is grounded in pre-rational trust" (p. 57). He uses these ideas to argue that Durkheim's theory establishes a connection between society and biology. Collins asserts that human beings are animals, and therefore, "the basic variables that explain social interaction can be found in animal ethology" (p. 57). In this regard, we share

with other animals a biological tendency to live alongside others of our species.⁹ Collins (2016) states,

[t]he only difference is that human beings have symbols that can invoke unseen realities and hence carry the past into the future. Religious and other moral ceremonies thus serve to attach the animal bonds of emotion to symbols, which enable people to carry their solidarity in their heads even when they are not together physically (p. 58).¹⁰

Durkheim's treatment of rituals has been recognized and studied in anthropology for addressing events that are infrequent, sacred, and transcendental in non-Western communities. However, Goffman, according to Collins, brings the concept of ritual into the analysis of contemporary society (Walby and Spencer, 2010, p. 96). For Collins, Goffman's most crucial contribution is demonstrating that rituals are daily events that preserve the notion of sacrality in "the individual" as something deserving respect to maintain sociality. Thus, Goffman posits that all interactions, from the most ephemeral to the most formalized, are rituals of interaction. Collins retains the notion of interaction rituals but integrates the idea of chains. He argues that examining ritual interactions as part of a chain is essential for a clearer understanding of social production. In other words, social interactions are not merely stagnant compartments that begin and end with their own logic; rather, whenever there is a previous interaction, there will be a subsequent one. Therefore, our façade, personality, knowledge, and identity—what Collins would describe as our *self*—are products of a chain of interactions that have shaped who we are at this particular moment. In the next section of this chapter, I will elaborate on what the author derives from Durkheim and Goffman and how his contributions provide a clearer understanding of his proposal.

⁹ Studies on the synchronization between humans, without any rational or conscious mediation (such as synchronization of gestures, turn-taking in conversations, hormonal synchronization, heartbeats, breathing rhythms, and brain waves), have increased in recent years. However, studies in sociology (Barchas and Mendoza, 1984) were already being conducted in the 1980s.

¹⁰ This allows for a connection with neuroscience studies and the processes that occur between humans, which go beyond the conscious level or are not rational or intentional.

The Three Stages of the Theory of Rituals of Interaction (TRI): Ingredients, Process, and Effects

One of Collins' primary contributions is his description of what constitutes a ritual of interaction. As previously mentioned, the author offers a fresh interpretation of Durkheim's ideas regarding rituals and identifies three stages: the ingredients necessary to facilitate rituals, "the process by which a condition of collective effervescence or collective consciousness is built up; and the results or products of a ritual" (Collins, 2004a, p. 33).

Ingredients: Corporality, Delimitation, a Common Focus, and an Emotional Experience

The first ingredient that Collins (2004a) addresses is "the physical assembly of the group" (p. 33). In his analysis of Australian societies, Durkheim observes that there are times of the year when the population disperses and others when they come together: "The very fact of concentration acts as an exceptionally powerful stimulant" (Durkheim, as quoted in Collins, 2004a, p. 34). Thus, Collins derives the conclusion that "society is, above all, an embodied activity" (p. 34).

Goffman (1963, parts 2 and 3) adds to this ingredient empirical evidence showing that there is reciprocal influence when bodies are present, whether in a focused interaction (where conscious attention is directed at others) or an unfocused interaction, where affectation is always present: we sense the presence of others and adapt or modify our behavior accordingly. Collins (2004a) emphasizes that bodily proximity is crucial, as it requires the participants' nervous systems to be "mutually attuned in rhythms and anticipations of each other,"¹¹ and in that moment, "social interaction is driving the physiology" (p. xix).

The second ingredient, implicit in Durkheim's theory but emphasized by Collins (2004a), is the delimitation between those who participate in the ritual and those who do not (p. 48). To participate in a ritual means to be included,

¹¹ Studies on social and affective neuroscience have demonstrated the synchronization of bodies. See, for example, Fareri and Delgado (2018) and Levy and Feldman (2019), but there is still no consensus on the effects produced in the short or long term.

and this inclusion or exclusion can occur through physical barriers (such as a location accessible only to those with a ticket, an invitation, or registration) or symbolic barriers, like being close to a conversation but not understanding it, lacking information about it, or perceiving gestures from others that indicate one is not part of the ritual. The ritual's third ingredient or condition is what Goffman (1963) refers to as focused interaction. In other words, individuals in the ritual are not only present physically, spatially, or symbolically but also direct their "attention on the same object" and share a common focus (p. 48). The fourth ingredient for a ritual to take place and be successful (achieving social and individual effects) is that participants "share a common mood or emotional experience" (Collins, 2004a, p. 48).

The Process

For Collins, the ritual process involves feedback from these ingredients, particularly the last two. He follows Durkheim in asserting that shared attention and awareness are fundamental to the ritual process. Durkheim clarifies that awareness is opaque to others, meaning we cannot know if we share the same focus of attention or emotional experience. We infer that we are sharing a focus of attention when we observe others uttering "the same cry, pronouncing the same word, or performing the same gesture in regard to some object." It is "the homogeneity of these movements that gives the group consciousness of itself" (Durkheim, as quoted in Collins, p. 35). Regarding a shared emotional experience, Durkheim notes that this leads to a type of electricity that transports the participants in the ritual "to an extraordinary degree of exaltation" (p. 35). Thus, seeing others shouting simultaneously as you do, gesturing similarly, not only fosters a sense of belonging to something larger than oneself but also transforms into what Durkheim calls electricity and Collins refers to as emotional energy.

For Collins (2004a), the homogeneity of gestures, shouts, and words produces a focus of attention on something, meaning that unfocused interaction becomes focused interaction, leading to an encounter, as proposed by Goffman. As mentioned earlier, Durkheim believes that we infer that others feel the same emotion from their actions (though we cannot know this for sure); Collins appears to argue that participants in a successful ritual share both cogni-

tion and emotion (p. 48). To support this, he claims that sharing a focus of attention has a binding effect. He draws on Mead's theoretical proposal of the self and the generalized other. Collins (1989) states that "[t]o focus on a particular social action is to take the role of the other: to participate imaginatively in how others are constructing the prayer, flag salute, or joking conversation" (p. 18). Sharing this focus has binding consequences when participants feel more confident that "both are carrying out the same activity," while also being "reflexively aware that each is aware of what the other is doing" (pp. 18–19). For Collins, Mead neglected to acknowledge that this process is not only cognitive but also "has an emotional dimension" (p. 19). Thus, we are not only aware of what others do and why they do it, but we also understand what they feel (as there is an emotion associated with the activity). According to Collins, who refers to sources from psychology and sociology¹², emotional and cognitive intensification does not solely occur through consciousness but is instead part of a biological process of rhythmic entrainment. The synchronization process with others leads to "a recycling of emotional rhythms; each individual becomes entrained in the other's emotional rhythm, and the micro-level of emotional coordination, I am hypothesizing, becomes progressively greater" (Collins, 1989, p. 19). Thus, joint attention and shared emotion result in "mutual entrainment," leading to "a shared emotional/cognitive experience" (Collins, 2004a, p. 48), or what Durkheim described as collective consciousness (pp. 48–49).

At this point, when bodies and minds synchronize in actions and emotions (when this is achieved), collective effervescence emerges. For Collins and Durkheim, this physical/social/cultural event (involving human bodies in interaction convened by symbols) produces various societal effects.

The Effects: Symbols, Membership, Emotional Energy, and Morality

For Durkheim, one of the most evident effects of rituals is the generation of "group emblems [as] markers of group identity" (Collins, 2004a, p. 36). Durkheim notes that Australian native peoples use plants or animals as names for their clans. The plant or animal becomes an emblem of the clan, taking

¹² Now we could also provide sources from neuroscience (see note 11).

center stage at the heart of the rituals. By being situated there, participants connect the emotional sensations produced (e.g., effervescence) with the central object of attention, making it representative (Durkheim, as quoted in Collins, 2004a, p. 37).

Collins (2004a) thus asserts that “[w]hat is mutually focused upon becomes a group symbol” (p. 37). This object becomes charged with the social feelings produced in the ritual. It becomes reified and materializes ephemeral feelings into something that can prolong them. Objects enable us to remember the sensations produced during the ritual and bring them back to life; those material things (or ideas) imbued with feelings, or, in other words, the symbols of the group’s rituals, are revered and defended from “disrespect of outsiders, and even more from renegade insiders” (p. 49). Goffman would argue, as Collins mentions, that the sacred object of a ritual in contemporary society is the individual. Thus, in all interactions, we find the sacred object defended against disrespect, representing one of the pressures we face to maintain conformity in everyday interactions. Goffman (2010) sees rituals not as occasional occurrences but as daily events, essential for sustaining society (pp. 74 and ss.).

It can be stated that those who recognize “the object” and imbue it with feelings and meaning are part of a group. They belong; they recognize each other by acknowledging the sacred object. As noted, anything can become a symbol with specific meaning and value for the group. In this regard, Collins (1989) asserts that those who repeatedly attend rituals of the same nature share cultural capital (p. 20).

Here we can observe a connection between Weber’s notion of a status group and what is formed in Collins’s successful interactional rituals. For Weber, status groups are cohesive because they value the same things, ideas, and practices. For Collins, a successful interaction ritual involves people valuing the same things, ideas, and practices, and feeling part of a group that cherishes those values. Additionally, we can see a reference to the cultural capital proposed by Bourdieu: the acknowledgment that valuable ideas, practices, and objects are shared by individuals within a social space, which can be exchanged for economic goods or social capital. Collins (2004a) adds that what is symbolically valued acquires its worth within the group’s ritual, and this value is not only cognitive but also affective.¹³

¹³ Collins (2004a) states that Bourdieu’s and his conceptual frameworks differ; he emphasizes micro-situa-

Collins (2004a) is convinced that one of the effects of rituals (which also generate shared cultural capital) is membership and group solidarity.

He reconsiders Wacquant's study (2004b), *Body and Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer*, to illustrate the logic of membership and solidarity generated through participation in recurring rituals. For Wacquant, even though his study demonstrates how bodily capital is generated—through ability, techniques, and muscles—it is not merely a matter of transforming a body into that of a professional boxer. Solidarity is produced in and through social interaction within the group (Collins, 2004b, p. 55). While it is true that Wacquant learns various techniques and engages in amateur boxing (cultural capital, bodily capital), what he truly accomplishes is becoming part of the group that trains at the “Stoneland Boys Club.” He becomes a team member (Collins, 2015, p. 16). For Collins, this exemplifies what the continuity of rituals produces: membership.¹⁴

Following this, Collins identifies what he calls individual emotional energy. As Durkheim states:

There are occasions when this strengthening and vivifying action of society is especially apparent. In the midst of an assembly animated by common passion, we become susceptible to acts and sentiments of which we are incapable when reduced to our own forces; and when the assembly is dissolved and we find ourselves alone again, we fall back to our ordinary level. At that point, we can measure the height to which we have been raised above ourselves (as cited in Collins, 2004a, p. 39).

In the quote cited by Collins, Durkheim emphasizes that individuals perceive their experiences in the ritual as something beyond the ordinary. Collins (2004a) posits that this feeling serves as motivation for later action, which he refers to as *individual emotional energy*—“a feeling of confidence, elation, strength, enthusiasm, and initiative in taking action” (p. 49). This concept of emotional energy has been the subject of much discussion (Felson, 2009; Iran-

tional processes, while Bourdieu focuses on abstract macro-structural processes. As Collins explains, “[m]y use of the concept ‘cultural capital’ or ‘membership symbols’ refers to all items of culture shared through interaction rituals, which thus shift in local significance with situational processes over time” (p. 390).

¹⁴ If what is produced in rituals is membership, we agree with Collins. However, he equates membership with solidarity, which are related concepts but not synonyms. The author should at least explain what he means, but he does not do so.

zo, 2010; Schwalbe, 2007). Collins (2007) acknowledges that the term is ambiguous but confirms that he chose it to bridge disciplines.¹⁵

The final effect of the ritual is shared morality. Collins once again turns to Durkheim, who states that the sacred object inspires respect “without regard for any consideration relative to their useful or injurious effects” (as quoted in Collins, 2004a, p. 40). Durkheim’s idea of morality is fundamentally sociological. Good and evil are not intrinsic qualities; rather, the group ascribes these qualities in the ritual. The object represents the group, and those who feel part of it—because the ritual was successful—will defend it. This includes objects, words, ideas, and people who can be emotionally charged under a halo of goodness or evil and be viewed as good or harmful by the group.

Given this, Collins asserts that all interaction involves an emotional investment from participants. Furthermore, whether this investment is reciprocated or not, it can generate cognitive content that facilitates future encounters seeking emotional energy. However, what prior conditions are necessary for the ritual to serve as a medium for producing emotional energy? And how is this related to power?

Conditions of Possibility for Successful Ritual: Ecology, Motivation, Material Resources, Cultural Capital, and Physiology

In the previous section, I outlined the components that form a ritual. These components can be thought of as essential for a ritual to occur in a given situation. However, Collins’s article “Stratification, Emotional Energy and the Transient Emotions” (1990) presents various conditions that must be met before the situation arises. In other words, there are structural factors to consider. Although his later works do not delve deeply into these elements, I believe they are crucial for understanding the likelihood of a ritual becoming a success story, enabling the processes and effects he describes.

¹⁵ In Collins’s words: “I chose emotional energy because its associations are with Durkheim, who interchangeably used ‘moral energy,’ ‘moral force,’ ‘moral sentiments,’ along with ‘sacredness’ and ‘collective effervescence’ [...] Human energy is bodily; we can observe it in other people’s bodies and feel it in our own. Emotional energy bridges the physical/physiological and mental realms—another reason the concept points us in the right direction for theory and research” (p. 215).

First, he mentions “ecological factors,” which encompass the physical site of the meeting, its capacity, acoustics, climate, and the possibility of regular access to the same space. Second, he discusses “motivational factors,” which encourage individuals to attend a ritual for the first time or return. This is related to the emotional energy generated beforehand in similar rituals, which leaves “traces of bodily memory,” to paraphrase Giddens. Third, he refers to the “material resources” that certain individuals may utilize during the ritual as “material supports to focus attention” or special effects “to generate certain emotions” (Collins, 1990, p. 35). Additionally, in other texts, he notes that the shared cultural capital (cultural symbols) of the participants “is one of the ingredients that contribute to the success of an interactional ritual (and the lack of such possession is a condition for failure) in building up collective effervescence” (Collins, 2004a, p. 75). Under these premises, those who share symbols from prior rituals (with pre-existing cultural capital) will direct their perceptions toward a focus of attention (what the group values) and can be swept away by the rhythm and emotions of the ritual. The group’s cultural capital exists prior to the *in situ* ritual and derives from earlier conditions for successful implementation. Finally, one material condition pertains to the participants’ bodies. Collins (2004a) argues that specific physiological conditions must be met for the production of emotional energy, stating that someone suffering from depression will have less chance of achieving emotional energy during a ritual. He also acknowledges that certain substances “can pump up” emotional energy, at least temporarily (p. 150). It is no coincidence that many successful interaction rituals involve substances such as alcohol, drugs, or even food, which physiologically generate a sense of well-being that can be associated with the interaction during the ritual and foster effervescence in relationships with other bodies.

An example of the importance of these material preconditions for a successful interactional ritual can be found in Bernal’s (2020) research on raves in Mexico. Bernal shows that these events are typically organized on the fringes of legality. Organizers seek locations far from cities and sometimes under adverse ecological conditions (no roof, limited bathroom facilities, and no sleeping arrangements). Attendees must be highly motivated to participate, as this may involve sharing a car with strangers (arranged through Facebook) or navigating dangerous circumstances (poor highway conditions) to reach the event site. Organizers play a crucial role in enticing people to

attend by hiring specific entertainment, performances, and placing artworks in the center of the dance floor. In other words, the rave environment partially depends on how the organizers utilize their resources. Furthermore, the ritual involves consuming MDMA, LSD, marijuana, and tobacco—substances that promote a lack of inhibition and enable participants to dance for extended periods.

Thus, in addition to the symbolic aspects ingrained in the minds and bodies of participants, there are material conditions that facilitate a unified perception and the possibility of synchronizing during the ritual. Consequently, another implicit variable of power emerges: resources. In terms of Weber's perspective, this equates to economic power. Who has the financial means to purchase high-quality MDMA or simply glue? Who has access to well-lit auditoriums, pleasant environments, and food and drink to "motivate" attendance at the ritual? From this viewpoint, those who possess these resources have a greater likelihood of converting all this input into emotional resources and, subsequently, symbolic resources (increasing the chance of transforming this into cultural capital and, ultimately, economic power).

Stratification in Rituals

From the description of interaction rituals (their ingredients, processes, and effects), one might deduce that participants engage under identical circumstances and therefore experience the same outcomes (emotional energy, a sense of belonging, emotional meaning toward certain symbols, shared morality). However, in several of his writings, Collins emphasizes that there is stratification within the rituals themselves. We can identify two types of stratification. The first is between those who participate in the ritual and those who are excluded (such as those who are not invited, lack a ticket, or are not part of the executive board). The second is between those who are included but participate under unequal circumstances.¹⁶ For Collins, these dynamics

¹⁶ We can speculate that this double stratification proposed by Collins is an inheritance from Weber's notion of status groups. Weber argues that there can be a differentiation within a status group between those who are positively privileged with honor (those who possess qualities valued highly in the group) and those who are negatively privileged. However, he also notes that different status groups may value different or even opposing elements (Weber, 2009, p. 687 and following).

form the basis of social conflict: the included against the excluded; those who possess power (economic, political, or cultural) prior to the ritual, controlling its emotional and symbolic production, versus those who are powerless or possess minimal power.

Stratification between the Included and the Excluded

Within this context, we can observe two sub-forms of stratification. Those included in the ritual can obtain resources (cultural and social capital) that are unavailable to those outside these circles. Inclusion is contingent upon both material and symbolic resources. How many groups do you belong to? How many interaction rituals have you participated in? Collins states (1989), "Not all individuals have the resources to enter all groups, and in some, they may be pointedly excluded or subordinated." Therefore, "the pattern of micro-interactions is constrained by the macro-distribution of the larger population, its material resources, and the ties (both coercive and prestigious) which have been built up by prior interactions" (p. 20).

However, being included in a ritual does not automatically lead to high levels of emotional energy and trust. Each group and each ritual generates varying levels of emotional energy, depending on the group's power relative to other groups (Collins, 1981, p. 1002). This power is determined by "the amount of physical property it successfully claims access to, the sheer number of its adherents, and the amount of physical force (numbers of fighters, instruments of violence) it has access to" (p. 1002).

Included but Unequal

Stratification within the ritual can be analyzed from two perspectives in Collins' theory, both of which refer to pre-existing structural conditions that exist before the participants enter the ritual. The first perspective concerns the positions of the participants, which are determined in advance. The second perspective analyzes the *self*, examining how individuals are intrinsically stratified. In other words, what characteristics are incorporated, or, according to Bourdieu, what dispositions do people bring to the ritual? Both consider-

ations influence the ritual's development, facilitating the sharing or expropriation of emotional energy and generating cultural capital.

Position-related Structural Conditions

In general terms, this situation indicates that in any ritual, there will always be "leaders and followers" (Collins, 2004a, p. 41), with some participants in subordinate positions and others in leadership roles. For example, in a business meeting, the boss assumes the role of leader, which allows them to control the flow of conversation, command attention, and ensure they are listened to. According to Collins (1981), simply participating in the ritual as a leader or subordinate results in different levels of emotional energy received. He states:

"Taking a dominant position within an IR [interaction ritual] increases one's emotional energies. Taking a subordinate position reduces one's emotional energies; the more extreme the subordination, the greater the energy reduction." (p. 1002)

Furthermore, leaders can "batten on the energy that all the participants have mutually produced" (Collins, 2004a, p. 125). However, the roles of leader or subordinate are not solely determined by organizational hierarchy. For Collins, the leader's position is characterized by "a combination of emotional and cultural resources" that can be leveraged in any encounter (Collins, 1981, p. 1002). One might also consider economic resources; those who organize the ritual and possess economic power can design the space to focus participants' attention on specific areas, thereby controlling what Collins calls "emotional technologies" through managing entrances and exits, understanding the ritual's purpose, and employing cultural techniques. All of this results in varying positions among those who arrive as leaders and those who enter as followers in subordinate roles.

Structural Conditions of Individuals (Dispositional Conditions)

In his most recent book, *Charisma, Micro-sociology of Power and Influence*, Collins (2020) presents a study of how the disposition to become a charismatic leader can be cultivated. He notes in other works that certain participants tend

to draw attention to themselves; these individuals are often more popular (and thus invited more frequently to status interactional rituals) and are able to emotionally dominate the ritual. In essence, we observe “micro sources of power” (p. 114) in these individuals. A micro source refers to the accumulation of emotional energy that these participants bring to the next interaction ritual. The greater or lesser ability to be included and to possess emotional energy often results from participating in rituals that carry greater economic and cultural power, where they have held leadership positions or have been granted respect, appreciation, and consideration. This accumulated appreciation enhances their sense of security and confidence for future interactions. This feeling of security can manifest as what we refer to as *personality*, understood not from a psychological perspective but rather from a sociological viewpoint, as a wealth of “significant formative experiences [in social interaction, in rituals] that shape individuals” (Collins, 2004a, p. 43), viewed as the accumulation of interaction rituals (of meanings, ideas, techniques) within the individual.

For example, in the aforementioned business meeting, an employee in a lower organizational position but the son of a CEO from another company—who is familiar with the symbols of such meetings and has received emotional energy from everyday interactions as a leader (as a customer in a restaurant, not as a waiter; as a guest in a hotel, not as an employee; as a student, not as a janitor)—could lead the ritual and leave with even greater emotional energy than his boss. Collins (2014) suggests that when “the attention is focused on some persons more than others,” this produces increased solidarity and emotional energy for some participants and less for others (p. 301).

Another micro source can also be identified in interaction rituals concerning membership. Feeling part of the group (within the interaction ritual) or being excluded from it involves not just physical presence (being at a concert, in class, or at a meeting) but also participating in the focus of attention and experiencing and producing effervescence (collective emotional energy). An individual who does not share the focus of attention with others (due to a lack of shared cultural capital) cannot interpret or understand (in Mead’s sense) why others act as they do, nor can they empathize with the feelings of others. Consequently, they do not receive “emotional energy, moral solidarity, or symbolic attachment” (Collins, 1990, p. 38). This individual will feel like an outsider, even while physically present in the interaction. They will remain in

a subordinate position, unlike someone who understands the ritual's rules, knows where to direct their attention, and comprehends the symbols that carry cultural and emotional significance. An example of this is a university class at the bachelor level, where the professor takes on the role of leader, while the students are subordinates; the professor decides what will be discussed in class, selects the readings, and determines the flow of the discussion.

However, there is also a stratification among the subordinates, which becomes evident during the interaction ritual. For instance, students who do not grasp the reading or understand the professor's comments will find it more challenging to stay engaged, as the content lacks meaning for them. This leads to boredom and a loss of energy, making them outsiders despite being in the classroom and part of the ritual. In contrast, students who understand some of the reading and can make sense of the professor's remarks will be able to focus their attention and engage with the ritual, potentially even leading it by asking questions that resonate with their peers and garnering approval from both fellow students and the professor. These students are likely to leave feeling enthusiastic or, at the very least, not bored or drained of energy.

Another form of stratification in the ritual, as perceived by the participants, is the figure of a charismatic leader—a popular person at the center of the gathering, the conversation, or the political demonstration. In his latest book, Collins (2020) examines the concept of a charismatic leader from a social gestation perspective. In other words, what interactional elements contribute to the emergence of charisma? According to Collins, a person becomes charismatic when they can maintain at least one of the four descriptors listed below:

- 1) *Frontstage* charisma: This refers to a person who knows how to navigate face-to-face interactions in formal situations, drawing attention and excelling as a “speech maker.”
- 2) *Backstage* charisma: This describes someone who manages interactions from behind the scenes and effectively “builds networks” (2020, p. 2).
- 3) “*Success-magic*” charisma: Here, Collins builds on Weber's notion of charisma, which involves individuals viewing someone as possessing supernatural power. In a secular context, charisma stems from achieving “a string of successes, especially against the odds. Such a leader becomes regarded as unbeatable” (2020, p. 97).

- 4) *Reputational* charisma: This emerges as a result of the previous three descriptors. Participants enter the interaction ritual aware of the charismatic reputation of the other. In this sense, charisma is both a disposition and a position.

For Collins (2020), the key point is that one is not born with charisma. It is “a style of interaction that has to be developed” (p. 99). To support this assertion, he conducted a historical study of various individuals considered charismatic (such as Lawrence of Arabia, Joan of Arc, and Marilyn Monroe) and, from this analysis, identified different types of charisma and how they are constructed.

The conclusion drawn from this discussion is that individuals who have experience in other rituals with accumulated emotional energy—those who possess sufficient mastery in the realm of cultural capital (attention, interpretation, techniques)—and those who bask in the glow of charisma (from prior successful interactions) will be better positioned within a ritual. They are likely to leave with more emotional energy, power, cultural resources, and potentially even economic resources.

Final Reflections

In this article, I have demonstrated that from the outset of an interaction ritual, differences in power among participants can be observed and that the emotional output is often contested. In this sense, the ritual is not an equalizing phenomenon that allows all participants to leave feeling comfortable and reaffirming their identity (along with their emotional energy). Nor is it merely an instrument of domination in which one individual automatically controls others due to their position or dispositions. Collins’s perspective is complex, and the phenomenon of power does not imply that the outcome is predetermined. We are not puppets; rather, to paraphrase Marx (2022), “we make history with conditions that precede us” (p. 10). An interaction ritual is also a battlefield for obtaining the maximum amount of emotional energy possible and positioning one’s cultural capital as the most valuable asset. Observing a ritual of interaction allows us to connect cognitive and emotional elements regarding how what is symbolically valuable is produced. It also prompts us to

consider how these symbols, once produced and reproduced, are transferred non-consciously to us and are associated with emotions.

In everyday ritual interactions, various forms of cultural capital are reproduced in a non-cognitive yet emotional manner (for example, gendered cultural capital is examined in the article by Daniela Sánchez López in this book). A case in point is an informal meeting where one participant says to another, “Don’t be a fagot,” leading to laughter from others, albeit with some discomfort. This scenario exemplifies the reproduction of cultural capital, as certain individuals were excluded in that moment, and differential positions among participants were established (the speaker assumed a leadership role, while those who laughed became followers, and those who barely laughed or did not laugh at all were excluded from the ritual and the generated emotional energy). Conversely, if someone had said in that same situation, “Hey, watch your language,” a different type of cultural capital would have been reproduced, the laughter would have ceased, and the emotional energy would have shifted among participants.

In other words, Collins’s framework can help us analyze how differences in micro-interactive power and the reproduced cultural capitals can extend to meso and even macrosocial scales.

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SECTION 2
DOMINATION AND GENDER ORDER IN
CORPORAL-EMOTIONAL CODES

5. Gender and Domination Through the Body, Desire, and Affects: Reflections from a Dispositional Sociology Point of View

Roberta Priscila Cedillo Hernández¹

What is of interest to sociology is the socially differentiated treatment that the social world reserves for individuals, whether they are female or male, women or men. This also includes the effects of a differentiated socialization process for both sexes (their behaviors, attitudes, and tastes). If the social world treated individuals of both sexes the same way, social sciences would have little to say on the matter.

—Lahire (2001)

Introduction

Over the past few decades, we have witnessed a growing scientific interest in emotions, feelings, and affect. In the realm of social sciences, this field has transitioned from being a marginal object of research to forming a broad area of study that continues to strengthen on various fronts (Ariza, 2016; Bericat, 2000; García, 2014; Sabido, 2011; Gorton, 2007; Pedwell, 2012). Several key moments have shaped the establishment of this field. The first occurred in the 1970s when specialized fields of knowledge emerged, setting the parameters for what would become the philosophy, anthropology, history, or sociology of emotions and feelings. The second moment was marked by *affect studies*, which developed in the 1990s. This stage differed from the first, as it focused not just on emotions and feelings from specific disciplines, but also on the shared exchange of corporeal-affective effects, heavily influenced by cultural studies and neuroscience from a multidisciplinary perspective (Cedillo et al., 2016).²

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² Here, we provide a detailed summary of the social and intellectual reasons behind this change.

In this emotional and affective shift, feminist movements have served as a crucial reference for the social sciences (Cedillo et al., 2016; García, 2014). The second wave of feminism, in particular, questioned the boundaries between the public and private (domestic) spheres³, asserting that *what is personal is political*. This assertion opened new lines of discussion and research concerning domestic work and caregiving, sexual harassment, abortion, the right to seek pleasure, and the pursuit of romantic relationships, among many other topics that precede and contribute to the historical, anthropological, and sociological studies of emotions, feelings, and affect as specialized fields.⁴

One of the most significant feminist theoretical discussions linking emotions, feelings, and affect with forms of patriarchal domination pertains to romantic and heterosexual love.⁵ In this chapter, I will primarily focus on this connection while also considering other concerns and analytical frameworks. I will concentrate on the processes of gender socialization and the incorporation of sexed *habitus* into corporeal-affective codes⁶ from a dispositional perspective. This perspective, as I will elaborate later, encompasses the studies of Bourdieu, Lahire, and Wacquant, as I believe they provide sufficient analytical resources for developing a distinct framework that clarifies the relationship between gender domination and its subjective incorporation through feelings and affect. This is the primary objective of this article.

³ Feminist discussions on this pairing made the androcentric aspects and their associations more visible, as the public and private spheres were seen as “masculine,” with the former referring mainly to political and professional activities, while the latter referred to an environment of devotion free from the concerns associated with the former. This became possible only after attending to household duties and other tasks that are part of the logic of what is considered “feminine” and, therefore, what women do (Serret, 2008).

⁴ It is worthwhile to read the broad-ranging study that Olga Sabido Ramos presents regarding the affective turn and feminist theories in chapter 2 of this book, in which she highlights two key points that converge in the affective turn and feminist concerns. These are a relational and processual perspective on the corporeal and sensitive nature of human beings, as well as the relations between power and emotions.

⁵ Jónasdóttir identifies two axes that have shaped this debate: the first sees love as an ideological device that contributes to the oppression of women, while the second, which presents its own proposal, focuses on the power of love and recognizes that it is a relational phenomenon linked to the human need to love and be loved. The author, while acknowledging that this power generates dynamics of oppression and exploitation, particularly in connection with the prevailing economic system, also mentions a potential for emancipation to the extent that it is a matter of productive energy that should be studied in greater depth as part of an intellectual and political commitment. To learn more about how love has been studied through the lens of feminism and the author’s proposal, see Jónasdóttir (2014, 2018) and Gunnarson (2018).

⁶ I will emphasize the adjective, as this qualification indicates the process of naturalization underlying this category.

I have divided the chapter into four sections. In the first section, I outline my understanding of dispositional sociology, which is not merely a label used by the sociologists I consulted, with the exception of Lahire.⁷ In the second section, I summarize the diagnosis provided by this perspective regarding masculine domination and also offer a brief assessment of the critical reception of this perspective among some feminist theorists who have engaged in dialogue with it (Da Silva and Witz, as cited in Adkins and Skeggs, 2005). In the third section, I identify the conceptual contributions of dispositional sociology in addressing affectivity as an analytical dimension and how it relates to forms of domination. I specifically focus on three aspects: *a*) the model of corporeal action underlying *habitus*; *b*) the relationship between *habitus*, *libido*, and *illusio*; and *c*) the body-to-body processes of socialization that contribute to the formation of *habitus*. Lastly, in the fourth section, I outline an analytical framework from this perspective concerning gender socialization processes and the incorporation of sexed *habitus* into a corporeal-affective code, considering two key points:

- 1) The analytical reconstruction of the network of socio-affective interdependencies as the starting point for gender socialization processes.
- 2) The affective dimension of a sexed *habitus* in relation to subjective hopes and desires.

With this, I uphold the spirit of this collective book, which explores not only the significance of emotions for the constitution of social life but also the relationship between these emotions and phenomena of power and domination. In this chapter, I aim to delve deeper into this relationship through the processes of gender socialization and the subjective appropriation that occurs, all from a dispositional sociological perspective. This leads me to reflect on how masculine domination infiltrates bodies through the logic of feeling, as we will now examine.

⁷ Even though Wacquant (2015) mentions that Bourdieu, whom he identifies as the main referent of this perspective, proposed a dispositional theory of action.

A Bet on Dispositional Sociology

Today, the issues of individuality and social identities have emerged with considerable force within sociological discussions, particularly concerning recent debates in France. Corcuff (2013) and Martucelli (2017) highlight the emergence and development of various sociologies that, while differing from one another, focus on the socialized individual as their object of study, albeit from different concerns than those in classical sociology.⁸ Corcuff (2013) identifies three main concerns among these new sociologies:

- 1) The singularity of the individual, which refers to individualization, adopting specific forms in individualist societies where individuality is highly valued;
- 2) the hypothesis of greater individualization of individuals in contemporary “individualistic” societies; and
- 3) a plurality of constitutive resources characterizing each individual, which becomes more pronounced in increasingly differentiated societies (p. 105).

Corcuff (2013) categorizes Bourdieu, Dubet, and Boltanski in the first group. He divides the second group into three parts: a critical pole that includes the works of Sennett, Lasch, and Ehrenberg; a more comprehensive pole, which includes Honneth and Ferreras, as well as Beck, De Gaujelac, and Kaufmann; and finally, in the third group, we find Boltanski alongside Thévenot and Lahire, who follow Bourdieu’s work but offer certain critiques.

It is worth devoting more attention to this third group, as it emphasizes two key categories central to the objectives of this chapter: dispositions and socialization. Corcuff (2013) asserts that dispositions are acquired within highly differentiated societies, where the unity of these dispositions is often called into question. This leads to proposals from the aforementioned authors. This classification aligns with Martucelli’s (2017) observations when he identifies Kaufmann and Lahire as dispositional sociologists whose aim is to “describe in the best possible way the processes of socialization that have allowed a plural-

⁸ Classical sociology tended to view the duality of individual and society as a pair of opposites, where the individual resists social forces. In contrast, the dialectical relationship between the two is highlighted here.

ity of dispositions (ways of doing, seeing, and feeling things) in an individual” (p. 55).

Lahire’s work (2005) is part of a new sociological project that, in his own words, attempts “to go beyond the mere ritualistic invocation of the past, taking as its object the constitution of a social mode of the past” (p. 152), along with the ways in which this past unfolds, transfers, updates, or deactivates the present (Lahire, 2011, 2005). In fact, this author refers to his own work as dispositional sociology, thereby building a bridge with Bourdieu’s work, which defines habitus as “a system of dispositions” (Bourdieu, 2022, p. 58). He introduces a dispositional perspective that serves as the basis for his own work, focusing on the individual and oriented toward plurality rather than the unity of acquired dispositions.

Another relevant contribution in this context comes from Wacquant, who, despite never having collaborated with Lahire and even criticizing him at times, provides continuity to Bourdieu’s work. It is mainly in *Body & Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer* (Wacquant, 2004) that he addresses several issues concerning sociology based on dispositional actions, albeit in his own terms, as he refers to it as Corporeal–Mental Sociology (2013) or sociology of flesh and blood (2015). This proposal is articulated through the dialectical logic introduced by Bourdieu between agency and structure, but Wacquant refines the epistemological, theoretical, and methodological considerations regarding human beings and their relationships. Thus, social structures are not merely objective states; they are also internalized in the form of “dynamic webs of forces inscribed upon and unfolded deep within the body as perceptual grids, sensorimotor capacities, emotional proclivities, and indeed as desire itself” (Wacquant, 2015, p. 243). He conceptualizes agents through six properties: symbolic, sentient, suffering, skilled, sedimented, and situated (Wacquant, p. 3). Consequently, his sociology of flesh focuses on reconstructing the domains of socialization through which we acquire dispositions, as this is the only way to study the “action of construction.”⁹ For this reason, despite their differences, which I will address later, all three can be categorized within a dispositional perspective that I will discuss in this chapter.

⁹ In methodological terms, Wacquant (2013) proposes an ethnology of flesh, where the researcher is both a subject of knowledge and a live research tool.

The Ordering of Gender in the Dispositional Mode and its Critical Reception by Feminists

If we consider what Bourdieu, Wacquant, and Lahire have to say about gender, we can appreciate that these relations have been addressed in two main ways: first, as a form of social ordering, and second, as a sociological variable that accounts for the distinctive practices between men and women. In the first instance, gender serves as a central referent in Bourdieu's book *Masculine Domination* (2007). In the second, he combines this variable with a class variable in works such as *Distinction* (2015), while Wacquant and Lahire mention particular forms of masculinity, such as the boxer (Wacquant, 2004), or the sexed *habitus* that underlies different attitudes and practices, such as scholastic achievement between boys and girls (Lahire, 1995, 2001, 2014). I will focus more on Bourdieu's work, as he provides the theoretical framework that guides both Lahire and Wacquant. However, I will also offer some critical observations regarding the work of the latter two authors. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of how feminists have received this type of diagnosis.¹⁰

Throughout his work, Bourdieu paid attention to gender ordering and the types of relations that exist between men and women derived from this consideration. As Yacine notes (2007, 2017), this interest primarily stems from his training in anthropology. When Bourdieu transitioned from philosophy to anthropology, he did so with doubts about French structuralism, and this shift occurred during his time in Algeria in 1955 (Martínez, 2007; Tovillas, 2010). It is no coincidence, then, that two of his early studies—his article “Bachelorhood and the Peasant Condition” (2008) and *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (2019)—center on relations between men and women as a crucial issue. Nevertheless, it was not until 1990 that Bourdieu published a dedicated article on this topic. This article was later revised into a book, published in 1998 under the title *Masculine Domination*. According to Yacine (2007), in this later work, the author shifted from a global analysis of relations between the sexes to exploring “the genesis of masculine power” (p. 71).

¹⁰ Here, I will apply the same logic, as the principles of dialogue between dispositional sociology and feminist theories have concentrated on Bourdieu's work.

In this book, and drawing on his ethnographic work in Algeria, Bourdieu (2007) revisits his observations about the Kabylis, characterizing them as part of “a social analysis of the androcentric unconscious” (p. 5), which he argues continues to persist in contemporary Western societies. He contends that the Kabylis’ ritual myth system illustrates how the social world is symbolically organized around a series of oppositions that uphold men’s superiority over women, to the detriment of the latter. Gender operates as a key distinction that renders the social world intelligible, first and foremost through our bodies. This type of “symbolic violence” creates gender hierarchies and inequalities that present themselves as “natural.” In other words, these hierarchies are ahistorical, as they obscure and neglect the historical conditions that shape the new schemes of perception, thought, and action we employ daily.

However, this is not all. Not only does this androcentric principle organize societies both objectively and subjectively, but activities, objects, resources, moments, and spaces are all marked by the distinct binary of what is masculine (superior) and what is feminine (inferior). This underpins the sexual division of labor that precedes the social division. Furthermore, individuals are classified according to an arbitrary interpretation of biological factors, thereby acquiring one of the available sexed *habitus* through a broad and silent process of socialization. Consequently, learning to act as a man or a woman relies on the *internalization* of the androcentric principle as a scheme of perception, thought, and action, alongside the inculcation of a bodily hexis which, if well-founded in identity, serves to distinguish men from women.

What about the works of Wacquant and Lahire? Both authors align with and affirm Bourdieu’s theories regarding gender. They recognize gender as a principle that organizes the social world, influencing activities and differentially distributing various resources, thus becoming part of a *habitus* characterized by different dispositions and practices for men and women.

With respect to Wacquant, it is important to note that he recognizes gender as a lens through which to view the social world in his *historical anthropology* of neoliberalism. He associates dominant bureaucratic sectors with masculinity (high State nobility with the right hand and State masculinity) and subordinate sectors with femininity (low State nobility with the left hand and State femininity) (Wacquant, 2010, 2012). Notably, his study on the boxing *habitus* describes how young boys in a Chicago gym learn cognitive, sensory,

and affective schemes that transform their relationship with their own bodies. They also adopt a group moral and a type of masculinity that sets them apart from women, who are effectively excluded from the gym, as are some men (Wacquant, 2004).¹¹

Lahire, for his part, agrees with Wacquant in his educational research. For instance, in *Masculine-Feminine: Domestic Writing* (Lahire, 2014), he indicates that these practices are perceived through a gender lens that associates public roles with masculinity and domestic roles with femininity. Consequently, males distance themselves from domestic concepts such as passion, while females often become their mothers' helpers in managing various household chores.

One unintended consequence of this domestic order is the development of reflexive abilities that increase the likelihood of academic success for female students, who transfer what they learn in family socialization to the educational setting (Lahire, 1995, 2014).

So far, Lahire has acknowledged the consequences of practices shaped by a gendered social world. However, in *Heritages sexués: incorporation des habitudes et de croyances*, Lahire (2001) posits that the sexed *habitus* uniquely matches Bourdieu's definition of the category.¹² In other words, he approaches the issue from a theoretical perspective, identifying sexed *habitus* as the only one that is systematic due to the multitude of agents and scenarios of socialization that perpetuate the symbolic binary of gender, even amid class, ethnic, religious, and other differences.

In summary, both authors build on the foundations laid by Bourdieu, employing the symbolic principle of gender to explain the distinctive practices of men and women. However, this diagnosis of gender relations and the processes of incorporating a sexed *habitus* have attracted criticism from contemporary feminists, particularly regarding Bourdieu's work.

First, he has been criticized for not paying enough attention to feminist discussions, even though these discussions have significantly influenced social theory by proposing novel objects of study, such as the corporeal-affective

¹¹ For Wacquant (2004), the boxers regulate their behavior through the sacrifices they make in three areas: eating, social, and sexual habits. In other words, "above and beyond their instrumental object, they function as a ritual of separation from and rise above mundane noise." Professional boxers separate themselves from the temptations that captivate other members of society.

¹² What continues to catch our eye is that Lahire is critical of the definition of *habitus* as a unified system of dispositions, a definition that prevails in Bourdieu's work.

turn in social sciences (Bericat, 2000; Cedillo et al., 2016). In this context, Bourdieu has contributed by proposing a model of action anchored in a histor-ized corporeal experience.

Beyond this concern, critiques of Bourdieu's work center on his gender diagnosis and some conceptual problems that arise within his theoretical framework for feminist studies. One notable critique is presented in the monograph *Feminism after Bourdieu*, coordinated by Adkins and Skeggs (2005) and published by the *Sociological Review*. Here, I will outline a couple of criticisms found in this journal to provide a balanced view of how Bourdieu's work was received.

Concerning the diagnosis of relations between men and women, it has been argued that Bourdieu exaggerates the importance of a doxic order of gender. Witz, for instance, criticizes the simplistic transfer of gender analysis from an orthodox and homogeneous society, such as the Kabylean, to heterodox and highly differentiated societies like France. This approach poses serious limitations for analyzing the latter, particularly regarding the proliferation of identity references, both gender and sexual, that are currently evident (Witz, 2004, as cited in Adkins and Skeggs, 2005).

Similarly, Skeggs echoes Da Silva, emphasizing that while Bourdieu acknowledges the family as a decisive factor in the acquisition of gender identities, it operates within established boundaries due to the androcentric principle he describes. As a result, from a sociological perspective, Bourdieu views the concept of family as a universal norm (Da Silva, 2004, as cited in Skeggs, 2005).

On one hand, Bourdieu's emphasis is on action that is fundamentally corporeal, where individuals are fully engaged in the world they inhabit, leaving little room for reflexive processes that underlie gender identities (Skeggs, 2005).

Furthermore, there are significant conceptual issues to consider. Bourdieu faces criticism for the ambiguity surrounding his definition of gender (Adkins and Skeggs, 2005).

To the above, one must add problems of a conceptual nature. Bourdieu is criticized for the ambiguity surrounding the definition of gender (Adkins and Skeggs, 2005). Within his general theoretical proposal, it is unclear what role gender occupies. Is it a vector that crosses the entire social space, as Bourdieu himself seems to suggest

when he states that it is a constitutive principle of the social order? Or is it, perhaps, a field that generates a particular type of capital where resources are accumulated to perform femininity or masculinity, as Skeggs (2019) claims? Or is it rather a sexuated habitus, as he argues in *Masculine Domination* (2005)?

These criticisms are also applicable to the works of Lahire and Wacquant, as they follow Bourdieu's diagnosis. Indeed, if we were to place Lahire in a position of self-examination, we might argue that the conceptual adjustments he suggests concerning the term *habitus* could similarly apply to gender, even though he does not acknowledge this.¹³

While these critiques are valid and warrant consideration in the latter part of this article, I would like to introduce another critique related to the processes of socialization and affectivity. Although Bourdieu maintains that gender identities are acquired over time through a prolonged process of corporeal socialization in which the androcentric principle is instilled (the *illusio* of masculine primacy), he does not develop this topic sufficiently, nor does he consider the role of the affective dimension. Moreover, I find that he provides limited conceptual resources to address this issue. Nonetheless, articulating this critique necessitates reviewing certain elements of dispositional sociology, which we will do in the third part of this article.

Habitus, Socialization, and Affectivity

Various elements in Bourdieu's dispositional sociology trace the connections between emotion, disposition, and domination. In this section, I will focus on the model of corporeal action that underlies *habitus*; then on the relationship between *habitus*, *libido*, and *illusio*; and finally, on body-to-body socialization, where dispositions are examined in detail concerning this already mentioned link.

By defining *habitus* as "durable, adjusted dispositions that are the condition of their functioning," Bourdieu (2022, p. 57) introduces a dispositional perspective that refers to the capacity of bodies to commit themselves to the world. In this corporeal state, *habitus* is acquired and becomes second nature.

¹³ For a broader discussion on the internal plurality of sexed *habitus*, see Cedillo (2016).

It is a power inscribed in bodies that can only be realized through interaction with the world and exposure to it. These bodies become reservoirs of experiences and practical knowledge accumulated over the years, which are (re)activated and redefined in concrete situations.

With this, Bourdieu attempts to free habitual dichotomies of the Western intellectual tradition: body/mind and reason/emotion. *Habitus* emerges as a model of bodily action that operates unconsciously, but this does not mean that actions lack meaning. By functioning as sedimentation from the past, habitus is invested with practical sense, seeking to navigate the world it inhabits and of which it is a product. Thus, Bourdieu (1999) aims to articulate a type of bodily knowledge that is not only cognitive but also evaluative and emotional. *Habitus* serves as a classificatory scheme that passes judgment on the world and is capable of evoking emotions and feelings.

This bodily knowledge is acquired only after a prolonged exposure to the regularities of the social world through silent yet highly effective work, where socialization agents play a crucial role. This type of socialization relates to the imitation of that which is prestigious—an idea that Bourdieu borrows from Mauss, who posits that learning bodily techniques stems not just from imitating those who successfully execute them, but also from imitating those who possess some form of authority over the learner (Mauss, 2020, p. 92).

From this arises the idea that the category of *habitus* connects emotions and dispositions in two ways: a) as an affective investment in the social order, and b) within the framework of the processes through which agents acquire it, as affective links are established between those who are socialized and the various agents of socialization, which are fundamental for the effective inculcation of *habitus*.

Regarding affective investments, Bourdieu employs two terms: *illusio* and *libido*. The first refers to the desire to participate in the social game, whatever it may be, while the latter pertains to a series of desires that emerge specifically within a social game. This distinction becomes evident when Bourdieu (2018) notes that *illusio* “is a way of being in the world, of being concerned about the world, meaning that an agent can be affected by something far removed or even absent from his life but that forms part of the game he is playing” (p. 179).

In fact, for Shapiro (2020), *illusio* originates from Bourdieu’s game theory, where he identifies the initial desire to participate in the game as a psycholog-

ical interest that establishes the doxic belief in the value of what is at stake, thus founding investment in the game (p. 170).¹⁴ So far, we see this as an issue of affective investment.

This investment entails a commitment or implication concerning what is attractive (figures, objects, etc.) in a specific social game. This is particularly clear in the case of gender relations, where Bourdieu points out:

Because differential socialization disposes men to love the games of power and women to love the men who play them, masculine charisma is partly the charm of power, the seduction that the possession of power exerts, as such, on bodies whose drives and desires are themselves politically socialized (p. 79).

Thus, there is a commitment to social codes that become terms of affective energy lived as socialized *libido*: “disposes men to love the games of power and women to love the men who play them” (Bourdieu, 2007, p. 79). Wacquant (2016) echoes this understanding by distinguishing three dimensions of the term *habitus*: conative, cognitive, and affective, within which he mentions inverted affective energies in social games.

On another note, regarding the connections between disposition, emotion, and socialization processes, Bourdieu (2008) suggests that there is a natural predisposition in human beings to learn, which relates to bodies opening to the world (both in a phenomenological and historical sense) as we acquire dispositions. Thus, the definition of disposition is fundamentally about our bodies’ exposure to the regularities of the social world.

With a Heideggerian play on words, one might say that we are disposed because we are exposed. The body is (to varying degrees) exposed and endangered in the world, facing the risks of emotion, injury, suffering, and sometimes death. Consequently, it is compelled to take the world seriously (and nothing is more serious than emotion, which reaches the depths of our organic being). This exposure enables the acquisition of dispositions that represent an openness to the world, that is, to the very structures of the social world from which they are incorporated (Bourdieu, 2008, p. 140).

¹⁴ The original in French reads: “Le concept d’*illusio* désigne l’adhésion originare au jeu, l’intérêt, au sens psychologique, qui fonde la croyance doxique dans la valeur de ce qui est en jeu, et par conséquent l’investissement dans le jeu”.

This leads us to assert that what is social is part of the logics of feelings due to a dynamic of mutual recognition, where it is evident that social order is painful. In fact, in *Pascalian Meditations*, Bourdieu (2018) states that learning any disposition is fundamentally based on the search for recognition (p. 166). In this sense, he incorporates the term libido into sociology, as we noted earlier. Aware of the preceding psychoanalytic tradition, he encourages sociology to collaborate with psychoanalysis:

... to analyze the genesis of investment in a field of social relations, thus constituted as an object of interest and preoccupation, in which the child is increasingly implicated and which constitutes the paradigm and also the principle of investment in the social game (p. 166).

Thus, Bourdieu's concept of libido (2018) becomes socialized. Psychic drives are channeled through social games, within the symbolic framework in which individuals are situated, especially on the domestic scene:

The work of socializing drives is based on a permanent transaction in which the child makes renunciations and sacrifices in exchange for testimonies of recognition, consideration, and admiration ('How well-behaved he is!'), sometimes expressly solicited ('Look at me, Daddy!'). This exchange, involving the whole person of the two partners—especially the child, but also the parents—is highly charged with affectivity (p. 167).

This premise was also recognized by Wacquant (2013, 2015), who argues that humans are beings who feel and suffer. The same can be said for Lahire (2013), whose theoretical position centers on socio-affective interdependencies that constitute the frameworks of socialization allowing us to learn dispositions.¹⁵ Here, prestigious imitation and the agents who are imitated play integral roles in the dynamic of mutual recognition that influences and shapes the concrete dispositions of *habitus*.

¹⁵ Lahire develops this idea by following in the footsteps of Elias, for whom human beings not only have social links but also affective ones. Thus, our social relations are imbued with affective valences that we attribute to others. For Elias (2008), this is a constant, universal feature. References to Elias can be found in Lahire (1995, 2019).

In dispositional sociology, we find a relationship that connects disposition, learning, and emotion through a model of socialization centered on prestigious body-to-body imitation. However, we can expand beyond the affective dimension and processes of domination by highlighting that social aspects are incorporated through affective transactions with others. The recognition of oneself and others is essential for engaging in any social game, which allows me to add to the discussion of different social orders. Asymmetries become embedded in the bodies that experience these emotions.

The practical acts of knowledge and recognition reveal the delicate boundary between the dominant and the dominated, triggered by the allure of symbolic power. Through this process, the dominated often unwittingly—and sometimes unwillingly—contribute to their own domination by tacitly accepting the limits imposed upon them. This acceptance frequently manifests in bodily emotions such as shame, humiliation, timidity, anxiety, and guilt, as well as passions and sentiments like love, admiration, and respect. These emotions become particularly potent when expressed through visible manifestations such as blushing, stuttering, clumsiness, trembling, anger, or impotent rage—numerous ways of submitting, even against one's will, to the dominant judgment. This submission often involves internal conflict and division of self, leading to the insidious complicity of a body that slips from the control of consciousness and will while responding to the censures inherent in social structures (Bourdieu, 2007, pp. 38–39).¹⁶

As demonstrated, we have two ways of connecting emotions and domination with dispositional sociology. However, as previously stated, this connection is still in its early stages. Therefore, it is essential to highlight additional elements to further enrich this discussion, aligning with my own research interests.

¹⁶ This agrees with arguments put forth by the German sociologist Popitz (2017), who confirms that authority is a specific form of power. For him, authority is a link that subjects a human being to another through recognition. On the one hand, whoever assumes the figure of authority depends on recognition from others, those who attribute superior qualities to him. On the other hand, whoever is subjected to a figure of authority also seeks recognition, as this affirms their own worth. Here, Popitz mentions that the mutual recognition within the link of authority is influenced by an affective dimension that can range from acceptance to rejection and humiliation.

Affectivity and Learning from a Sexed *Habitus*

How can we articulate these elements within a theoretical framework that allows us to treat affectivity as a lasting foundation of gender identities and, consequently, enrich our dispositional diagnosis? I propose to achieve this through two interrelated axes:

- 1) An analytical reconstruction of the network of socio-affective interdependencies as a starting point for processes of socialization by gender.
- 2) The affective dimension of sexed *habitus*: subjective desires and hopes, which will help us define a commitment to gender ordering.

Thus, both affective investments in social orders, body-to-body socialization, and the connections that can be formed in relation to dominations—as addressed by Bourdieu—can be explored in conjunction with the contributions of Lahire (2011, 2013, 2019) and Wacquant (2004, 2013, 2015, 2016) to dispositional sociology, but now specifically concerning gender, understood as a code that permeates the bodies, emotions, and affections of individuals.

For these reasons, I begin this section of my article by clarifying my understanding of gender and its connection to processes of domination. I draw on Scott (2018), a feminist historian who defines gender as “a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power” (p. 42). She identifies four dimensions where this operates: symbolic (archetypes of masculinity and femininity); normative (the meanings attributed to the gender binary in specific societies); institutional (how gender organizes various social spheres such as political, artistic, and religious contexts); and subjective (the identification with and assumption of binary gender roles). I am particularly interested in the subjective aspect, as Scott (2018) posits that this dimension is analytically intelligible through “a range of activities, social organizations, and historically specific cultures” (p. 44), which historic biographies have demonstrated.

This definition enables us to establish a primary link between gender and domination by understanding that, as a code, it constitutes and gives meaning to the social world. By emphasizing the subjective dimension of gender, Scott highlights the socio-affective networks within which individuals live and po-

sition themselves in relation to the gender binary, thereby aligning this perspective with the proposal I am presenting.

Regarding the analytical reconstruction of the network of socio-affective interdependencies as a launchpad for gender socialization processes, Lahire has outlined the theoretical coordinates and methodologies that position the affective dimension as a key element in acquiring a *stock of dispositions*¹⁷, as this occurs in specific situations within the framework of social relations, which are ultimately affective relations involving the desires, concerns, and suffering of those involved: in the author's words, their existential conflicts (Lahire, 2019). Consequently, the sociologist opted to reconstruct the *matrices of socialization* (2013) that individuals navigate, which encompass both the *frameworks of socialization* (universes, authorities, and institutions), *modalities* (methods, forms, and techniques of socialization), *time* (the duration, intensity, and pace of socializing actions), and *effects*, meaning the acquired dispositions (Lahire, 1995, 2013). These matrices aim for an analytical reconstruction of the socio-affective network of interdependencies that, in theoretical terms, challenges the distinction between primary and secondary socialization by positing that individuals engage in various socialization environments simultaneously. This perspective also critiques the notion of prestigious imitation as the sole method for acquiring dispositions, thereby introducing a dynamism to this theoretical model that seems to have been lost in Bourdieu's reasoning.

¹⁷ One of the main criticisms Lahire makes of Bourdieu's work is the unity underlying habitus, according to Bourdieu. For him, far from being a system of dispositions that unifies a person's practices, habitus is a stock of dispositions acquired through multiple simultaneous processes of socialization, which can sometimes be contradictory and which continuously lead to excisions. Thus, what for Bourdieu was an exception, for Lahire constitutes the norm. This aligns well with what Martín Criado (2013) discusses regarding "The problematic genesis of habitus" for Bourdieu. Criado points out that the strict version of habitus—the one that stresses in its definition that it is a lasting and transferable system that unifies agents' practices—is partly due to the image Bourdieu formed of the Kabyle during his first stay in Algeria and to a bet he made as a French sociologist. Martín Criado refers to the image of the Kabyle that Bourdieu sketched out, which was influenced by his structuralist schooling, mainly by Lévi-Strauss, and by the conditions prevailing when he conducted his initial fieldwork in the region. This is because Bourdieu interviewed intellectuals determined to reconstruct Kabyle culture, as well as elders who were spokespersons for their most important traditions. The result was a coherent, uniform, and original Kabyle culture that would appear in Bourdieu's first theoretical formulations, such as *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) and *The Logic of Practice* (1980). For Martín Criado, this image contradicts the findings of Bourdieu's own work in Algeria (*Travail et travailleurs en Algérie*, 1963) and *Uprooting: The Crisis of Traditional Agriculture in Algeria* (2020, with Abdelmalek Sayad), where he coined the term *hysteresis* to explain the misfit between objective conditions and dispositions. According to the Spanish sociologist, Bourdieu left aside this latter perspective to make the strict version of habitus a tool that would distinguish him from colleagues who opposed this view in the field of French sociology (Martín Criado, 2013).

Thus, the study of gender socialization processes I wish to highlight involves this multiplicity of universes, authority figures, and institutions: families, schools, peer groups, media, etc., along with the diverse modalities through which these influences are exercised. This raises questions that can only be addressed through concrete research.

Methodologically, Lahire employs a qualitative perspective, conducting detailed ethnographies of the various social settings individuals participate in, alongside interviews with the major agents of socialization involved. This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the coordinates by which people acquire dispositions, ultimately providing a detailed portrait of the matrices where they have been socialized. In his work on academic achievements and failures among lower-class students (Lahire, 1995), as well as those who learned to write at home, he discusses the reflexive abilities that girls acquire as passion when transitioning from a domestic to a school environment. In contrast, boys tend to reject home schooling because they identify more closely with their fathers' activities (Lahire, 2014).

On the other hand, Wacquant (2004) clarifies that the social game only functions if we believe in it. According to him, the term *habitus* encompasses three analytically distinguishable dimensions: the cognitive (the system of classification that enables perception and thought), the conative (related to bodily abilities), and the affective (the desire to participate in the social game). The latter refers to a socialized *libido* where desires and hopes are at play. Therefore, social ordering—and, in this case, gender—is not a mere *reproduction* of objective structures; rather, it entails an affective commitment, a collective *illusio* (*collusio*) (Sapiro, 2020), sustained by affective investments and dispositions acquired through socialization. The affective disposition of a sexed *habitus* can be viewed as a fundamental investment in individuals, where affect and disaffect mutually influence one another. Wacquant emphasizes this argument by identifying the acquisition of a boxer's *habitus* as a tangible manifestation of masculinity that distinguishes men from boys.

Thus, the reconstruction of the socio-affective interdependencies framework through which we continuously position ourselves and internalize the symbolic gender binary involves investing our affective energies in socialization processes. This investment becomes a driving force for our identities, shaping dispositions that are not merely experienced as coercion, but rather as desires, wishes, hopes, and also as suffering, shame, or blame—elements that

account for a socialized libido within a collective *illusio* surrounding gender ordering.

This is evident in the research included in this section of the book, specifically the chapters authored by Gabriela Alejandra López Miranda and Daniela Sánchez López. Both authors focus on how emotional dispositions (in López's case) and sports (in Sánchez's case) are acquired within socio-affective networks that contribute to legitimizing ethnic inequalities and asymmetries (López), as well as class and gender disparities (Sánchez). López emphasizes the practical consequences of symbolic beliefs and representations that attribute meanings to the feminine body within a Mazahua community. In contrast, Sánchez provides insights into the culture of pain inherent in sports, where sacrifice is viewed as the path to individual success (the primary desire and simultaneous source of concern and suffering for male and female athletes). This dynamic varies according to the articulated socio-affective framework, influenced not only by the demands and institutional organization of the sport but also by the gender and class connotations that permeate professional boxing and ballet, alongside the emotional management and subjective costs associated with the roles of a female boxer or a male dancer.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the significance of a dispositional sociology that encompasses the works of Bourdieu, Wacquant, and Lahire. I have highlighted that this discussion has roots in French sociology and addresses how individuals navigate highly differentiated societies. I refer to Lahire's work as a sociological project centered on two key concepts: socialization and dispositions. This is further linked to Bourdieu and Wacquant, relating to a theory of dispositional action in Bourdieu's case and a focus on bodily and mental sociology in Wacquant's.

Additionally, I emphasized the main analytical resources that provide a dispositional perspective on the relationship between emotion and domination. The concepts of *habitus*, *prestigious imitation*, and *illusio* contribute to a theory that examines how we live as socialized beings. Finally, I outlined the two axes that can function from a dispositional sociology perspective as a starting point for gender socialization processes and the affective commit-

ments inherent in this ordering, as they seek empirical research to elucidate the network of socio-affective interdependencies and the emotional investments of individuals who are gendered. These axes aim to contribute to one of the central concerns that runs through this book: the analysis of domination and power phenomena within an emotional framework regarding masculine dominance.

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6. The Intersections of Gender and Social Class in the ‘Feeling Rules’ of Boxing and Ballet

Daniela Sánchez López¹

Basically, I spent a lot of time constantly fighting with myself. It was also an environment of can you or can't you do the job? If you can't, I'll take the next person.

—Joel, professional dancer

Trainers are rough on you, and it's like today I don't want you to be so rough on me. Today, I want you to tell me, 'You were OK, don't worry; we'll go on tomorrow.' But not him. He says, 'It's under pressure that you function best, and if I treat you gently, you're going to think that all is OK when it's not, and that is hard.

—Elizabeth, professional boxer

Introduction

In this text, I explore the gendered and class-defined emotional rules that structure the fields of boxing and ballet. These norms are both gendering and class-defining, as they shape bodies and subjectivities specific to these spaces. As mentioned in the introduction to this book, emotions are structural elements of social life; thus, their analysis is fundamental to understanding asymmetrical relations in diverse fields.²

This chapter is based on an ethnographic investigation conducted during 2018 and 2019, culminating in my M.A. thesis, *Training Gender, Taming Class: The Production of Bodies and Subjectivities in Boxing and Ballet* (Sánchez, 2020). Both of

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² This chapter is part of a section that seeks to understand the interrelations between the body and affect, and how these two dimensions are shaped by social orders such as gender and social class.

these practices are marked by profound gender and class distinctions. However, these distinctions are contingent and traceable in history, even though they may seem natural to contemporary common sense. My objective is to analyze, through an ethnographic approach, how these markings arise, are maintained, and validated through daily practices, with an emphasis on the emotional dimension.

In the first part, I outline in detail what I understand as “feeling rules” and analyze how these are produced and maintained through class and gender *performances* in training and on stage. In the second part, I analytically describe the long-term emotional work molded by practice. This emotional labor spills over from these spaces into intimate relationships, eating habits, maternity, expectations of success, and more. Navigating these dynamics is an emotional undertaking not explicitly taught and enforced outside the gym and dance floor. Nevertheless, it remains a fundamental aspect of professional practice and the formation of a habitus for male dancers and female boxers.

The purpose of delving into this subject is to reveal the significance of the emotional dimension within the mechanisms that structure an unequal order of gender and class in these practices. It is essential to observe that assigning specific emotions to men, women, or particular social classes serves as a justification for maintaining hierarchies, power differentials, and processes of domination, exclusion, and inequality that extend beyond boxing and ballet.

Highlighting the emotional dimension in becoming a dancer or a boxer is crucial; by analyzing a community’s affective rules, we can understand its social structure and how this structure reproduces inequalities. Being compelled to hide or display emotions associated with femininity or masculinity illustrates that the gender order is also reproduced affectively, revealing how something considered deeply personal can illuminate the reproduction of exclusionary spaces regarding gender and class. Therefore, in line with the other chapters in this book, I analyze the role of emotions in the configuration of power and conflict through the observation of daily life in these two physical practices.

Methodology

I chose a comparative approach to highlight the similarities and differences in social spaces that share characteristics in terms of body discipline but are per-

ceived very differently due to their social positioning. These practices seem to operate under extreme dichotomies: strength/body, men/women, masculinity/femininity, rough/delicate, contention/violence. My interest lies in understanding how these dualities are constructed daily within institutions and how they are embodied.

A comparative analysis is relevant because the approaches used to study these practices have often contrasted, despite their shared characteristics. Research on boxing tends to emphasize social class, while studies on ballet often overlook the broader structures that shape this practice outside the dance hall (Sánchez, 2020, pp. 11–19). My proposal allows us to analyze these practices through the same dimensions and questions, thereby highlighting analytical avenues that have been marginalized in the studies of each field.

Through an ethnographic approach, I was able to delve into both fields and become familiar with the experiences of their practitioners. My methodology is rooted in feminist ethnography, which recognizes that research studies are products of situated perspectives shaped by our subjectivities (Castañeda Salgado, 2010, p. 221; Guasch, 2002, p. 11). Feminist ethnography aims to “highlight the experiences of oppressed, subaltern, non-hegemonic subjects” (Castañeda Salgado, 2010, p. 222). Consequently, I decided to focus on minorities within ballet and boxing, particularly on gender minorities, which facilitated the clarification of my research questions. Thus, the subjects included in my study are female boxers and male dancers.

Participant observation was not confined to a specific location. In line with the multi-site ethnography proposed by Marcus (1995), I followed my participants along their relevant paths of practice. I accompanied them to training sessions, fights, and performances at various locations. In addition to participant observation, I conducted semi-structured and in-depth interviews with 14 individuals, seven of whom were classical ballet dancers (five male and two female dancers and professors) and seven from boxing (five female boxers, one male trainer, and one female trainer). Regarding the spatial focus, the observation sites for boxing were in downtown Mexico City and the outskirts near Tlalnepantla, while for ballet, I visited locations in Polanco and Coyoacán.³

³ These are neighborhoods that are upper-middle and upper class in Mexico City.

Who Are My Interlocutors?

This study employs a snowball sampling technique. The criterion for selection was that all subjects should be boxing and ballet professionals residing in Mexico City or the surrounding areas. The characteristics of both activities imposed additional criteria, such as age homogeneity. I also aimed to include a diverse range of social classes. However, due to the specificities of both fields, social class tends to be relatively homogeneous within each one.

Ana, Claudia, María, and Elizabeth are all professional boxers. To be considered a professional boxer, one must compete without a protective face device, which is used by both male and female amateur boxers, including those competing in the Olympics. Ana and Claudia are 24 and 25 years old, respectively, both from the state of Coahuila, and they share the same trainer in the State of Mexico. María, who is 28, has been a lightweight world champion since 2016. She lives and trains in a municipality near the State of Mexico and has two children, both under 11 years old. Ana and María completed high school and began boxing without attending university. Claudia started studying business but put her university education on hold to train full-time.

Elizabeth, a 37-year-old boxer, lives in a municipality in the State of Mexico, near Texcoco. Both her father and brother are also boxers. She won a world title but lost it and is currently working to regain it after an accident kept her from training for a year. Both Ana and Claudia receive financial support from their families, while María supports her two children with her income from fights and sponsorships. All face economic challenges, as female boxers' salaries are typically ten times lower than those of their male counterparts, even after winning numerous fights. None of them have another source of income outside of boxing.

Andrés, Joel, and David are 26, 28, and 27 years old, respectively, and all are members of a classical dance company in Mexico City. Andrés is part of the corps de ballet, Joel is a soloist, and David is a first soloist.⁴ They began dancing at a young age, between 8 and 10 years old. They attended specialized arts schools for their primary education and continued there until earning their bachelor's degrees. Throughout their careers, they have received numerous

⁴ In a dance company, positions are organized hierarchically. From the lowest rank to the highest: dance corps, coryphaeus, soloist, first soloist, and principal or first dancer.

scholarships abroad, allowing them to live in various cities in the United States and Europe. Andrés lives with his parents in eastern Mexico City and commutes an hour and a half to his job in northwestern Mexico City. Joel and David live alone, close to the historic downtown area of Mexico City. All three have family members involved in dance or other artistic activities.

Insiders and Outsiders: The Symbolic Construction of These Fields

In ballet and boxing, there are two types of spaces: those for training (gyms and dance studios) and those for events (arenas and theaters). Both environments are symbolically constructed as places that favor certain types of individuals. Factors such as gym costs, wall decorations, the languages spoken, what can be sold or not, acceptable behaviors, collective expressions of emotion, and the physical presence in these spaces contribute to a symbolic and material acceptance or rejection of specific individuals based on variables such as class and gender. This positions ballet and boxing as contrasting social spaces.

Placing posters of women in bikinis in boxing gyms, asking about the intimate relationships of female boxers during press interviews, and the low presence of women in gyms are not definitive forms of exclusion, but rather subtle ways of symbolically constructing these spaces as hostile to women. They are built on the assumption that women do not belong in these environments, necessitating that they earn their place. Similarly, the costs of ballet academies, their locations in affluent areas like Polanco or Coyoacán, physical and emotional containment, and the prevalence of white, tall, and slender bodies serve not as insurmountable barriers but as indicators of who can be a dancer, or at least who will find it easier to succeed.

This symbolic construction is evident in the bodies that occupy these spaces. As sociologist Cedillo (2020) notes, "Attire, voice, and the way a person uses space are all criteria for belonging to one gender while excluding the other" (p. 72). These elements frame ballet as a domain for the middle and upper-middle classes and boxing as a lower-class masculine activity. In both fields, there is an institutionalization of gender and class differences and inequalities. I refer to institutionalization because there are schematic structures and behaviors that are widely shared and validated through daily actions (DiMaggio, 1997, p. 270).

The institutionalization of gender and class inequalities is evident through mechanisms such as portraying women's fights as a "lighter" version of what men do and through the symbolic construction of spaces that define who are intruders and who are welcome. In both practices, there is a division of labor by gender that results in an imbalance in access to creative jobs or decision-making positions, which is influenced by physical and emotional traits associated with gender differences. Female boxers earn as little as ten times less than male boxers in the same categories, while female ballet dancers earn the same as their male counterparts but work longer hours.

In both practices, there is a persistent emphasis on broadening the differences between men and women. This is evident in the training sessions, where contrasts emerge in ideals of the body, dress, movements, gestures, narratives, characters, and artifacts. If we consider these mechanisms as auxiliary, both practices demonstrate a *performance* of complementarity that is explicitly gendered—ballet emphasizes femininity while boxing positions women as an aesthetic and emotional complement to masculinity in the ring.

Moreover, both fields impose a mandate of heterosexuality. In ballet, men often assert their heterosexuality publicly, yet the homosexuality of some male dancers is "respectable" only if it remains "invisible" during their performances. Conversely, female boxers face pressure—particularly from the media—to exhibit their heterosexual "availability," leading many who are lesbians to conceal their sexuality, at least at the onset of their careers. These elements contribute to the institutionalization of gender and class inequalities in boxing and ballet. The following paragraphs will analyze these inequalities in their emotional dimension.

Production and Reproduction of Emotional Rules in Training and Presentation Spaces

A boxing match is a disciplined overflow of emotions, characterized by a portrayal of anger both in the ring and among spectators. However, both male and female boxers experience nervousness, fear, and euphoria during a match. The concern and expectations of their team, family, or friends are palpable during the faceoff. Tension escalates in the final rounds of a fight, where blows become less precise but are delivered with greater determination to remain

standing. This tension dissipates when victories and defeats are announced. For instance, María shed tears upon hearing her name called as the “new world champion,” raising her gloves in a sign of victory.

In a match featuring novice male boxers, I sat next to the family of one fighter. His mother and brother shouted encouragements like “You can do it!” and “Hit him hard!” When the other boxer was declared the winner, the first boxer’s family felt dejected. He left the ring without speaking to anyone and went straight to the locker room to change clothes. When the second fight commenced, he sat in a chair in the back, angry and alone, with his arms crossed. His family avoided engaging with him, waiting for him to “get over it.”

These emotional expressions reveal gendered ways of responding to victory or defeat, reflecting a gendered order where crying is associated with femininity and anger and isolation with masculinity. Both fighters reacted according to these gendered assumptions about how to *correctly* respond to their circumstances. Nonetheless, throughout their fighting careers, boxers learn that only victories allow for emotional displays; in defeat, one is expected to appear minimally affected and simply move on.

In this section, I describe the specific feeling rules for each practice and how they are shaped by gender and class, influencing the expression or suppression of certain emotions. Both boxing and ballet require practitioners to develop skills for expressing and containing emotions in alignment with the norms of each field. However, ballet is typically associated with emotional restraint, while boxing is associated with aggression, reflecting a quest for distinction tied to social class.

In both fields, a power hierarchy exists that correlates with different emotional personalities. The position a person occupies within this hierarchy constrains and facilitates the possibility for emotional expression. Feeling rules are established for various roles within boxing and ballet, sustained by underlying assumptions about gender and class.

In discussing feeling rules and emotional work, I draw on the concepts developed by Hochschild (1983). She is an American sociologist who introduced these ideas in her book *The Managed Heart*. Emotional work refers to the management of emotions to create observable facial and bodily expressions that conform to the feeling rules of a given workplace. Feeling rules are collective patterns for managing emotions dictated by these spaces, prescribing how individuals should express emotions based on their positions. Standards exist

to determine the “right” emotional expression for each relationship or role. While the distribution of power in these relationships may be unequal, acts of emotional management can also serve as sources of inequality (p. 18–19). I wish to emphasize that “the ways of feeling and perceiving one’s body and experiencing emotions also reflect a gendered order” (Peláez, 2020, p. 114).

Peláez (2020) notes that feeling rules are “agreements about how to feel or behave in specific situations” (p. 117). Every field is a site of inequalities related to diverse identity markers, which is why feeling rules function more as impositions on emotional behavior than as genuine agreements. These rules represent collective knowledge that becomes socialized and internalized by participants within the field. This collective understanding constructs a “regulation and normativity of bodies,” organizing them in a hierarchy where gender is a primary differentiating factor, thus producing a structure based on perceived differences (p. 118, 121). For instance, those in leadership positions are expected to contain their emotions and demonstrate emotional stability—traits stereotypically associated with men—which justifies their greater representation in these roles.

To the extent that each field establishes, at least to some degree, its own feeling rules—impositions for those who participate in them—an assimilation and training process is necessary for emotional expressions to conform to these rules. Hochschild (1983) proposes analytically differentiating natural feelings from instrumental ones. Instrumental feelings are consciously managed to align with the emotional rules of a specific field, requiring management in such a way that they appear natural. Paradoxically, the appreciation of these natural expressions fosters a culturally imposed need for an instrumental approach to emotions (p. 22).

According to Hochschild (1983), this instrumental approach to incorporating feeling rules transitions from superficial to deeper performance when there is a self-induced effort to meet the expectations of the field that is perceived as real and natural (p. 35). In this sense, emotional work does not mean merely disguising negative emotions; rather, it involves developing the capacity to no longer feel them or to feel them in a way that is appropriate for a specific position within the field (p. 8, 32).⁵ Thus, emotional work entails more

⁵ This emotional labor and instrumental approach can generate feelings of alienation from one’s own emotions, as in the case of the flight attendants that Hochschild interviewed.

than just showing certain emotions in ways that are institutionally accepted (superficial performance); it also reflects the sophistication of some institutions in their deep acting techniques, dictating how to imagine and feel (p. 49).

Why are emotions managed in these environments? Emotions are significant in workplace settings because they serve as a resource to fulfill the primary objective of generating profit (Hochschild, 1983, p. 55) and achieving permanence. Managing emotions in ballet and boxing is crucial because mastery of these emotions allows individuals to remain in these spaces and build a professional career, necessitating the ability to feel in ways that align with their role in a specific field (p. 32).

In interviews and social media, a common theme among my informants, including famous dancers and boxers, is the continual expression of motivation and the determination to persevere. No defeat seems insurmountable, and they appear unaffected by injuries or lost fights, nor do they become excessively elated by their victories. In both fields, there is a stoic and cautious management of emotions. One must remain neutral, constantly working with feet firmly planted on the ground, resisting being swept away by the moment, and always looking toward the future. I found it challenging to break through these expressions during my interactions with them in interviews, as presenting themselves this way is part of a collective identity. Nonetheless, I gradually became acquainted with the wide range of emotional nuances that operate within these environments.

In both practices, there is a division between what is displayed *backstage* and *frontstage*. Goffman (1959) posits that there are, metaphorically speaking, two spaces concerning how individuals present themselves in daily life: the stage and behind the curtains. He argues that, in the presence of others, individuals are motivated to manage their behavior to leave a favorable impression. This management of impressions can be implicit, reflexive, unconscious, or practical. However, it is closely related to roles, status, or the position the individual hopes to maintain or attain (p. 4, 15). Goffman refers to these impression management techniques as *performance*. The *frontstage* is where these *performances* occur, representing the effort involved in managing expressions to create an impression that their practices embody certain standards that are institutionally approved (p. 2, 107).

Both dancers and boxers must maintain an inspired persona before an audience, as their achievements are perceived as significant accomplishments

that validate the narrative that anything is possible with sufficient effort. Consequently, certain aspects are emphasized while others are suppressed. The latter are revealed in what Goffman calls *backstage* or behind the curtains, where *performances* are practiced, constructed, and prepared, allowing the male or female performer to relax, lower their guard, or not strictly adhere to the script. In other words, they can slip out of character (p. 112). From my perspective, slipping out of character is impossible since these dispositions are deeply ingrained. However, the metaphor effectively illustrates that behavior is managed according to the situation and is relational, aiming to achieve a specific impression on others.

Press conferences, fights, and recitals are part of the *frontstage*. Training environments function as liminal spaces where expression management is also essential to make a good impression on directors and coaches. Despite this, these spaces also involve training and preparation for *performance*. I found myself in an intermediate space between the *front* and *backstage* after establishing rapport.

While the *frontstage* amplifies motivation and resilience, the *backstage* reveals suffering, anger, and demotivation. Claudia (a boxer, 24 years old, from the State of Mexico) states:

You cry during training, you suffer, you get mad; there are happy moments and moments when you ask yourself, ‘Can I really be a boxer?’ Because there are days when you can’t get anything right. Now, I have been working as a professional boxer for seven years, but I still make a lot of mistakes and more every day.

This statement does not belong to the *frontstage*, where the discourse must reflect an almost natural motivation to continue working. Thus, emotional fortitude and stoicism—virtues traditionally viewed as masculine—are regarded positively in both practices. When female boxers lose, their public discourse suggests that defeat is inconsequential; they simply need to keep working. It was challenging to penetrate these expressions since my fieldwork involved individuals who were highly socialized in the feeling rules of both practices, as illustrated by Elizabeth (a female boxer, 37 years old, from the State of Mexico), who said: “Even if I am falling apart inside, I have to appear firm on the outside.”

This strength of character is socialized hierarchically, from trainers and coaches to boxers and dancers. However, there is also a horizontal vigilance

concerning the competition experienced in these spaces. As David, a 27-year-old dancer from Mexico City, noted: "This is an environment where you either can or can't. Can you do it, or should I get someone else?" Male and female participants replicate this dynamic by demonstrating, not only through their bodies and technique but also through their attitudes, that *yes, they can* persist against all odds. Any expression of fatigue, lack of motivation, concern, or suffering is viewed negatively, interpreted as a sign of weak character and a lack of commitment to the practice. María (a 28-year-old boxer from the state of Querétaro) shared that her trainer is "harder, stronger, more energetic, [often saying] 'that was bad.' During training, it's rare for him to say 'You were good today.' It's always 'Your hand was low, you did this wrong, everything is wrong.' Always."

The trainer functions more as a constant reminder of the work that remains to be done rather than acknowledging what has been accomplished. According to María, her trainer is tough on her because he believes that boxing is a sport for men, which he equates with being "rough" and treating trainees harshly. "This is a sport for men; it's hard, there are many blows, so you have to endure it," her trainer tells her. However, María mentions that she "doesn't function that way," and there are days when she prefers a gentler approach, wishing he would tell her, "That was good; don't worry, there's always tomorrow." This difference in positions stems from the perception that boxing is a male sport that demands masculine traits.

Despite the vertical imposition of these rules, there is room for negotiation, with women often being more proactive. Generally, in terms of demands and "harsh" treatment, men accept it as a given and protest less. When I asked María if she ever complains about this treatment, she responded:

Oh, no, I cry easily. I don't even want to be touched because it hurts, but at the gym, I do try to talk it over [with my trainer]. 'Hey, you know what? It hurts a lot; I can work with my other hand and let this one rest.'

When speaking with her trainer, María engages in emotional work, actively mediating a situation that affects her; however, this mediation falls within a gendered framework. Male boxers have fewer opportunities to complain about how "roughly" they are treated, as doing so would signify weakness and feminization, which is detrimental to their identity. As sociologist Reay (2004)

noted, women engage in emotional labor more than men, taking on the responsibility of maintaining emotional aspects in their relationships and actively responding to others' emotional states to alleviate distress (p. 59). Nevertheless, men must carefully navigate the gendered implications of enduring "rough" treatment. They are expected to exhibit masculine traits such as resilience and fortitude, adhering to the established norms. This necessitates a gendered emotional labor that involves suppressing affective expressions that do not conform to hegemonic masculinity, such as crying.

Ballet and boxing trainers are tasked with maintaining a "cool head" to assist their trainees and prevent them from being overwhelmed by their emotions. They must be emotionally stable and capable of imparting that stability to their pupils. Trainers typically adopt a "hard hand," being strict and emotionally reserved. The mothers of ballet dancers and boxers, as described by my informants, are unconditionally supportive, empathetic, and "complement" the strictness of the trainers. This creates a sexual division of emotional labor, justified by the perceived possession of differentiated emotional qualities based on gender.

Beyond the feeling rules and emotional management of participants, there is also an emotional education conveyed to those who attend fights or recitals. On the other side of the ring or stage, institutions also establish emotional codes for the audience, dictating appropriate and inappropriate behaviors in these spaces. The transmission of these guidelines employs both explicit and implicit mechanisms. In ballet competitions, for instance, voice recordings instruct the audience not to applaud until the end of the performance, to remain silent, and to show support through hand gestures. In ballet, the audience is kept in the dark, with only the stage illuminated.

There is a significant height difference between the stage and the audience. The proper way to express that it was a wonderful experience is to stand up and applaud loudly, but without shouting. The dancers only smile, take each other by the hand, and bow as a gesture of appreciation. In contrast, boxing matches are accompanied by loud music, which prompts shouts of support that must be loud enough to be heard over the music. The announcer must speak in an eloquent tone and manner. Both male and female boxers enter the ring full of vitality, running around, waving their hands, and inciting cheers and shouts. These mechanisms guide emotional expressions aimed at the audience (Hochschild, 1983, p. 50). The previously mentioned codes reveal visible

differences related to class hierarchy, as they correspond to a search for distinction among the upper or intellectual classes. This distinction is justified by their ability to contain their emotions and remain silent and reflective in their artistic enjoyment. In comparison, the joy of the lower classes is portrayed as exaggerated and immediate (Bourdieu, 2010).

Emotional restraint, understood as the absence of emotional outbursts, is connected to class-defined masculine and feminine attributes. Why does boxing allow for gestures and shouting that display physical effort, while ballet emphasizes the smile as the primary facial expression? In ballet, gracefulness and dancing ability should appear effortless; in boxing, shouting and grunting are indicators of bravery in physical exertion. This is because both practices frame these expressions as natural attributes of femininity and masculinity specific to a social class position. Emotional restraint in ballet references a "refined" femininity, while emotional expressions in boxing relate to a highly physical and "aggressive" masculinity.

So far, I have outlined the feeling rules present in spaces explicitly devoted to the training and performance of both practices, and how they are related to hierarchies and power dynamics within them. However, these rules shape the lives of those who practice beyond the gyms and stages and demand a configuration of the self around the affective mandates of these practices. I will now analytically describe this process.

Emotional Work Outside the Ring and Dance Floor

Emotional management within training environments and regarding power hierarchies is fundamental for male and female participants. Nevertheless, regulations that occur outside these spaces are even more significant for their identities as dancers and boxers. These practices profoundly shape the identities of dancers and boxers, altering their relationships with their bodies and emotions in an effort to instill the physical, emotional, mental, and visual frameworks required for their trades (Cedillo, 2020, p. 73). Sacrifices made outside of training spaces—such as strict diets, pain management, precise sleep routines, sexual abstinence, and challenges in maintaining sexual-affective relationships or friendships—occur in the kitchen, in interpersonal relations, and during free time. These sacrifices enable them to learn to control

their bodies with greater precision, to mold them, and to feel the effects of discipline. In turn, this brings them satisfaction and recognition both inside and outside their fields for their determination. Both practices function as small-scale civilizing machines, producing individuals capable of profound self-coercion in all areas of their lives (Wacquant, 2004, p. 67–68).

To manage her emotional work, Ana, a 24-year-old boxer from the state of Jalisco, consults a “mental coach.” He helps her learn how to respond to harsh criticism without taking it personally and serves as someone she can confide in. One issue she discusses with him is her fear of failure. Ana enters the ring thinking, “I can’t lose because if I do, my sponsors will abandon me, and I’ll lose a good salary. I mean, I step into the ring with that pressure.” When facing these thoughts, she must perform the emotional labor of suppressing these feelings, as the feeling rules are echoed by her trainer, who advises her, “You can’t go into the ring with that pressure because you’re distracting your mind from the goal, which is to win.”

In addition to managing their fear of failure, female boxers must also confront the tangible fear of entering the ring to be hit by the other contender. Claudia expressed this sentiment when she said,

You have to be strong physically and mentally to know that they are going to hit you; that’s what it’s all about. You’ll probably leave with many, many blows. It is scary, and yes, you are afraid if the other contender is bigger or appears stronger than you, but as you fight, you start feeling more confident. You know how you have trained; you know what you’re doing.

Confidence is the product of hours of physical, mental, and emotional training. Mental and emotional control, although learned, can become so deep that it leads to a level of disconnection from the body. Elizabeth recounted,

This happened to me in my last fight. I felt a strong blow from my rival, and then I got hit in the eye, and everything went white. At that moment, I thought, well, this is difficult; I didn’t know what to do. But during the recovery time, I went out again; I didn’t give up. I went out again, but the referee stopped the fight, and I was about to give up. I thought that if I quit, I would be giving up all my sacrifices to reach this point, so I said no, I’ll get up”

Elizabeth describes an experience where she was on the verge of losing consciousness. Such episodes are common among boxers and dancers. Her narrative illustrates the emotional justification that motivates them to stand up. During recovery times or the countdowns made by referees, there is a significant emotional deliberation, both by the boxer and her team, to keep her on her feet. When a body cannot remain upright, courage emerges from motivation, sacrifice, suffering, and the latent hope of victory. Therefore, a corporeal sense of balance, pain, and finely controlled movements is essential. However, an equally important display of emotional learning is the ability to stay on their feet, whether in or outside the ring. Remaining upright is also a demonstration of affect, as falling would mean cutting short months of collective effort.

For female boxers, facing the reality of having to give and receive blows, it is crucial to work through their feelings of fear and transform it into "the driving force." To this end, boxers create profound meanings for their training that justify their efforts and sacrifices. For many of them, this motivation stems from a desire to support their families and include them in their journey of sporting success. This represents a form of retribution for the emotional and material support they have received throughout their careers.

María's constant concern is to endure blows that may endanger her life without providing adequate compensation for her children. "It's about the fact that I can't lose and lose again. I want to be the champion; they're not hitting me for nothing. I do not leave them for nothing." In other words, she weighs the risks she faces against her role as a mother and caretaker. Regarding the balance between risk and reward, I argue that there is a gendered sense of guilt associated with "failing" as mothers by pursuing the demanding vocation of boxing. Guilt is gendered because it results from a process of socialization that dictates that motherhood requires sacrifices, and that a mother's children should be her priority. By prioritizing her practice, María feels pressure to exceed expectations and assert that all her sacrifices are for her children, as this is the only way she can socially justify what she perceives as shortcomings in her motherhood.

I don't see myself arriving and saying, 'Do you remember that I wasn't at the birthday party because I had to train? Well, I lost.' Maybe they wouldn't complain, and perhaps for them, I will continue to be their mother, but for me, I cannot accept that

I have missed 10 Mother's Days, birthdays—I have missed everything for this goal I have at home now [the golden belt].

Her efforts represent a form of compensation that does not align with the ideal model of motherhood. As she sees it, she strives to be the best boxer to atone for not being the best mother according to societal expectations.

The experience of guilt in ballet operates differently. Here, guilt is related to the level of competition and the subjective evaluation of dancers' performances. Joel, a 26-year-old dancer from Mexico City, shared his experience of becoming a soloist. After returning to the dance troupe following a year in another group abroad, he found that everyone was happy to see him back. Months later, promotions were announced, and Joel moved from the corps de ballet to soloist, skipping the intermediate steps. "I wasn't expecting this at all and even felt guilty because I saw that all my fellow dancers were using more difficult techniques or executing more challenging steps," he recounted. This perception of guilt, stemming from feeling undeserving of the promotion, reflects a broader sense of underperformance. Faced with ongoing criticism from his teachers and intense competition, both male and female dancers internalize the belief that it is impossible to meet the external expectations that turn into internal ones.

I feel that I was not giving as much as before. This had more to do with my anxiety about needing approval from the teacher and the directors, to continue being cared for—the favored one. If you have privileges, you have to deserve them. So, I feel the heavy burden of trying to please my fellow dancers, the director, and myself.

Joel's account reflects the constant need dancers have to please those in authority and satisfy their scrutiny. He admits that this is "a heavy burden" and went on to say that, at first, it was very difficult for him. However, over time, he became accustomed to it. As his career progressed, the demands of the directors became part of him, and he molded his performance accordingly, despite experiencing moments where he felt "like the worst dancer in the world" and doubted his worth. Nevertheless, he pressed on, stating, "Now I think back on that and say, 'how silly.' I was very depressed and in bad shape." Shame appears to be linked to individual depression—a sense of inadequacy that he alone felt. As he later pointed out, "This ultimately turned out to be a fairly

widespread feeling in the dance company, experienced differently by everyone, but similar in many ways.”

Although this is a generalized process, dancers experience it on an individual level, stemming from a culture characterized by the question, “Can you or can’t you? If you can’t, then I’ll choose someone else.” Thus, rather than feeling support from colleagues, Joel perceived “certain envy” when he was promoted. “All their faces changed. I felt like it went from ‘It’s great to have you back, marvelous’ to ‘And why you?’” This dynamic shows that feelings of inadequacy are fed not only by vertical competition but also horizontally among peers.

In ballet, the emotional atmosphere is even more challenging when considering that male dancers often receive family support, especially from male figures, only after proving their talent and dedication to join the company. Andrés, a 29-year-old dancer from Mexico City, experienced support from his father and siblings only after he demonstrated legitimate proof of his talent. However, by that point in his career, managing emotions had become more difficult, as the early stages of socialization in ballet were behind him.

Growing a Thick Skin: The Normalization and Management of Pain

When Eneida, a 42-year-old dancer from Mexico City, told me about the injury that forced her to leave the dance company, I couldn’t help but show signs of shock and pain. Near the end of a class, she realized she was tired but chose to continue. “I jumped, and my Achilles tendon just popped.” She could not undergo surgery because the healing process would result in a loss of the range of motion required to stand on her toes. She noted that it is more common for male dancers to injure this tendon because they jump more, and she had witnessed fellow dancers lose this tendon “in class or during a performance.” She recounted this as if it were a commonplace event.

During boxing championships, it is common for contenders to have blood all over them. Their uniforms are splattered with blood, and during the awards ceremony, they raise their hands in victory despite their evident struggles. There are smiles on their faces, accompanied by swollen eyes, noses, and open wounds.

In both practices, a culture of pain normalizes and glorifies this sensation as a sign of effort, improvement, growth, resistance, and commitment to their profession. Indifference to pain is upheld by masculine values such as endurance and competitiveness. In both activities, there is an underlying stigma associated with complaining about pain, taking breaks, or resting.

Pain is perceived as a sensation that both limits and enables: it signals that whoever is in pain is putting forth *sufficient* effort, but it can also hinder progress if it leads to a serious injury. Due to the intense competition, it becomes necessary to ignore or hide pain or injuries to avoid jeopardizing their careers. In boxing and ballet, the culture of pain persists due to a desire to “defeat” the body, to overcome the obstacles it imposes, and to achieve perfection. These obstacles are often thought of as mental; physical performance is entirely dependent on an individual’s mental state and their willingness to challenge, control, and command their body through their emotions.

In this culture of pain that is reproduced in these environments, there is an effort to ignore the body when it hurts and to mentally dominate this feeling, as ignoring it is seen as a measure of what they are willing to do or sacrifice for their vocation. This represents a collective sensory reinterpretation, as practitioners are socialized within a sensory community that holds a particular concept of pain. Thus, there is a collective retraining of ordinary sensory habits through constant somatic work (Vannini et al., 2012, p. 27). During this learning process, practitioners develop an instrumental relationship with this sensation. In other words, instead of pain signifying weariness or muscular overload, it indicates that they are on the right path, making it a positive and enjoyable sensation. Similar to what Becker (1991) described regarding marijuana users, both boxing and ballet involve a reflexive physical engagement that cultivates an appreciation for sensory experience within a specific context. “There is a social [and affective] interpretation of an ambiguous physical experience” (p. 42).

Pain management also highlights inequalities when examining the differing demands placed on men and women. Contrary to the common belief that men have a greater resistance to the pains of boxing, men actually enjoy the privilege of letting their injuries rest, as they face less pressure from their trainers. As María noted, male boxers who injure their hands can skip training, while female boxers simply bandage their injured hand and continue hitting the bag with the other one. Female boxers view “bearing it” longer as a positive

trait and a source of pride, as it demonstrates their embodiment of values such as endurance and their claim to legitimacy in the sport.

In ballet, the intense competition dancers face makes it nearly impossible to heal their injuries properly. Allowing injuries to heal means missing auditions or losing the chance for a scout to notice them. My interviewees indicated that it is commonplace for dancers to perform while injured. "You have to dance because it is very important for you and the company, so you have to learn to live with this." In other words, this is a daily, normalized practice, a shared understanding among dancers regarding pain and injuries. Female dancers consistently struggle with foot injuries due to their pointe shoes. Nonetheless, these injuries are somewhat appreciated as they serve as bodily signs of identity as a dancer.

In this context, it is essential to differentiate between pain and injuries. Pain is viewed positively, while injuries are to be avoided, hidden, or ignored out of fear that they could end one's career. This perspective reflects a symbolic dimension of pain, as it pertains to two sensory communities that share a similar interpretation of what pain signifies: work, perseverance, progress, or an obstacle to their career. Therefore, participants must reinterpret pain according to these standards or somatic rules (Vannini et al., 2012, p. 30).

Elizabeth highlights an important distinction in injury management. While dancers have a therapist on site, boxers tend to ignore their injuries unless they deem them serious, leading to cumulative wear and tear. Elizabeth elaborates:

Going back to the point of boxing being a sport for the poor, one might say, 'Oh, tomorrow it will disappear or it has gone away, or I'll take a pain pill and that will relieve me,' and I let it go, let it go, let it go. But then it hurt too much; it was a pain that wouldn't go away, and you start losing confidence in yourself. So I said, 'No, if I punch her, it's going to hurt me more than her.'

Despite the existence of a pain culture in both practices, ballet has financial resources allocated through institutions for the ongoing treatment of injuries. In contrast, the lack of financial resources in boxing increases the necessity to endure pain. This issue is exacerbated for female boxers, who earn salaries ten times lower than their male counterparts.

Although there is a perception that resistance to pain is a masculine mandate, it is female boxers who must embody this resistance due to economic pressures and their trainers' demands. As Claudia puts it, "I think you become accustomed to saying, 'Well, yes, it hurts, no problem.'" Thus, institutional mechanisms contribute to the perpetuation of inequalities in the management of bodies and emotions.

Weight Management

During the boxing training sessions I attended, the *coach* weighed both male and female boxers. Everyone peeked at each other's weight and expressed annoyance if they were far from their goals. Weight—the number displayed on the scale—is a frequent topic of discussion.

In contrast, weight and the maintenance of a slender figure in ballet are individualized topics that are not openly discussed; the exact weight of the dancers is rarely known. In this practice, a collective representation of an ideal body determines weight management and the dancer's figure. This makes body maintenance a labor subject to the scrutiny of directors and instructors, as well as a self-perception shaped by comparisons with other dancers. In other words, there is no clear or agreed-upon criterion for an ideal weight, making body management a silent and subjective process.

While weight categories in boxing relate to achieving equilibrium among contenders and their levels of strength, in ballet, weight and slenderness are more closely tied to aesthetics. In both practices, weight and body shape carry moral significance; gaining a few pounds is viewed as a lack of effort and discipline—a failure to exhibit enough determination (McRobbie, 2015, p. 7). Both activities involve a collective management of weight through feelings of frustration and shame, particularly when trainers or teachers publicly criticize someone's figure or inability to lose weight.

These practices are influenced by gender expectations surrounding women's greater capacity to discipline their habits. Similarly, both female and male dancers demonstrate a greater ability to adopt a healthy diet as a lifestyle compared to their boxing counterparts, which I argue is a class distinction.

Andrés frequently mentions that female dancers are the ones who adhere to diets. This is both reality and fiction. While it is true that the bodies of

female ballet dancers are closely monitored due to established standards, male dancers are also subject to scrutiny and must comply with expectations of slimness. Their eating habits outside the realm of dance can also be considered a regimen or at least a conscious effort to manage their diet. This focus on body management through food intake is a fundamental aspect of this practice, not only for female dancers. However, as the demands on women tend to be greater, there is a perception that only they follow diets. David states:

There are people who tend to gain weight and have to be more careful, but with women, this is more apparent, and they have to follow a diet. They can't really eat everything, and it can be a hormonal issue as well, right? There are people who have had weight problems for a long time, and that can lead to psychological issues, stress... and this wears you down. Men seldom face this problem.

This stress is compounded by the teaching staff in the dance company, who, as David recounts,

call you in and tell you, 'You know your weight isn't OK; you have to lose weight or lose your job.' The director of the dance company and all the teachers are present during these uncomfortable moments, as you are put on the spot.

Management of weight and body shape is in the hands of directors and their perceptions. They are responsible for reproducing the ideal through their practices of policing the techniques and figures of both male and female dancers, often using shame and public reprimands.

For female boxers, transforming their diets into a lifestyle is more challenging, despite their dedication. They cannot indulge in the tastes they acquired during their early years of socialization. Ana, for example, understands that her title "is worth more than any craving," and thus "I lose my desire." However, she struggles with "unhealthy" food, while other female boxers have even lost their appetite because they constantly think about weight management.

It is important to note that economic constraints in boxing prevent access to nutritionists, while dancers often have these resources readily available. Both boxing and ballet demand a continuous performance of weight manage-

ment, yet the unequal conditions differ substantially in terms of the overall support each participant receives.

This leads to a paradox wherein both professional activities uphold a strict regime, despite the pressures each individual faces. The need to meet these demands creates an environment where participants are pushed to self-discipline and control their bodies in ways that conform to the professional standards of their respective practices.

Intimate Relationships

Boxing and ballet also shape the nature and possibilities of sexual-affective relationships. For male and female boxers, sexual relations are prohibited days before a fight because, according to trainers, sex is physically demanding and a mental and emotional distraction. In ballet, however, it is common for male and female dancers to date each other, due to a shared understanding of the responsibilities this profession entails. In contrast, such relationships are not very common in boxing. Female boxers have expressed that finding a partner is challenging, as men often have high expectations and do not provide the emotional and domestic support that boxing requires. María, a single mother separated from her partner, stated:

I focus a lot on my sport. Having a relationship with someone else now feels like a waste of time for me. I do not have time for someone who argues over anything. I am very temperamental; I get angry easily. Even the smallest things can make me mad, and at the same time, I throw a tantrum (chuckles). So, in other words, if I have to fight with somebody or go out with somebody... no, I prefer to train. My priorities in life are my children and my training.

María views relationships as a waste of time because they require time, effort, and emotional management that she would rather reserve for her profession. It is significant that heterosexual female boxers struggle to find someone who provides relief and understanding rather than additional emotional labor and strain. Similarly, Ana finds it complicated to manage friendships, as she perceives them as distractions:

A lot of people don't understand, and I have lost friends for this reason. At times, I don't even want to talk over WhatsApp; I just want to be calm. People ask me, 'Why don't you answer?' and my response is, 'Because I am tired, because I don't have time, because I'm on a diet.'

It is important to note that female boxers face more challenges in managing their relationships, as this reveals the underlying mechanisms of a much greater demand for emotional availability and labor from women.

The environments of ballet and boxing emerge as spaces that not only teach the respective arts but also instruct participants in how to embody and express gender—masculinity and femininity—as well as socioeconomic class. These practices are institutionalized, embodying ideals, norms, and expectations in highly trained bodies, not just athletically but socially. In both boxing and ballet, individuals learn how to carry their bodies according to their roles: as a female dancer, male dancer, female boxer, or male boxer, each position comes with its own technical, emotional, class, and gender dispositions.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have described how gender and class structure the emotional norms present in boxing and ballet. I have argued that there is a collective training in emotional expressions, leading both dancers and boxers to display their feelings in ways that are institutionally sanctioned. However, this emotional management is even more crucial outside the confines of training, as it deeply and profoundly regulates the daily lives of male and female practitioners concerning guilt, injuries, intimate relationships, pain, and diet.

Regarding emotions, I have shown that, in line with Hochschild (1983), embodied learning inherently involves affective labor, with a framework of gender and class determining the potential for expressing or suppressing certain emotions. The significance of this lies in the fact that these emotional codes help to legitimize an organization and stratification of the fields that are detrimental to women. These emotional norms serve to justify structures of inequality, naturalizing hierarchies that position gender as a cause when, in reality, it is a consequence of socialization. Thus, the power hierarchies that

exist in both practices can be analyzed through the emotional qualities assigned to each role and who is perceived as capable of embodying them.

Female boxers must navigate the tension between their professional and personal lives, internalizing guilt over what they perceive as a domestic “shortcoming” in their child-rearing. Their strategies for fitting into a masculine space include exerting extra effort in their training, distancing themselves from emotional expressions deemed feminine, and consistently testing their commitment and belonging through disciplined and stoic management of pain and concerns about their weight. Conversely, dancers face individual struggles with the demands of competition. Masculinity in ballet is expected to manifest not only in the body but also in the stoicism required to confront the immense demands of their practice and injuries. In ballet, guilt is associated with the high level of competition and the subjective criteria applied by teachers who evaluate their performances. Dancers often perceive anxiety or discouragement as personal shortcomings rather than valid responses to harsh institutional demands.

Regarding the intersection of emotions and social class, I have highlighted the necessity for affective self-control in both practices. However, the association of ballet with restraint and boxing with aggression reflects a quest for distinction among higher and more intellectual classes based on emotional attributes. Through this lens, I have analyzed the contrasting emotional environments present in ballet and boxing.

Under the affective and corporeal logics of both spaces, a masculine domination is reproduced, understood as a “symbolic domination that privileges masculinity at the expense of femininity and serves to amplify [and naturalize] differences between men and women” (Cedillo, 2020, p. 71). Nonetheless, discussing the reproduction of structures of domination and logics shaped by a masculine perspective can obscure agency, as male and female participants in these spaces do so because they reap various material and symbolic benefits. They earn a salary and cultivate a passion, pleasure, autonomy, economic independence, and personal satisfaction within their immediate environments, as well as the opportunity to become advocates for non-hegemonic femininities and masculinities, whose complex existence simultaneously reproduces and challenges the established order (Mennesson, 2000, p. 21).

Ballet and boxing are practices that generate a specific habitus, formed not only from the bodily dispositions related to each activity’s techniques but also

from gendered and class-defined affective dispositions that intertwine with the technical and everyday aspects of the fields. As Mennesson (2009, p. 176) notes, these are practices and institutions that are both gendered and gendering—not due to an inherent connection between femininity and ballet or masculinity and boxing, but because they are pedagogical spaces that amplify differences and inequalities between men and women and among social classes, thus justifying their existence a priori. Consequently, ballet and boxing not only teach a specific set of techniques but also a particular way of carrying the body, managing feelings, and navigating the demarcations of gender and class.

In summary, this chapter contributes empirically to the collective aims of this book and emphasizes that understanding the dynamics of power and conflict in various social spaces must be intertwined with an analysis of the emotional dimensions and affective norms at play. Particularly in this thematic section, it is essential to explore the interaction between emotions and corporeality, as both are living products of unequal social relations, where social class and gender play pivotal roles.

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7. Emotional Practices of Mazahua Women: Body Violence and Demonstration of Masculine Domination

Gabriela Alejandra López Miranda¹

Introduction

This chapter aims to analyze the emotional practices of Mazahua women in the context of gender violence within their communities. To achieve this objective, we utilize the concept of emotional practices (Scheer, 2012; Bourdieu, 2009, 2000) and argue that emotional dispositions stem from masculine domination—essentially, a history that is reflected in living bodies.

As one of the chapters in this book, it seeks to explore the role emotions play as part of social practices, examining the intersection of gender order, masculine dominance, and the construction of emotional and corporeal practices among Mazahua women. We aim to address cultural considerations within emotions and their role as a structural element of social life.

The emotions that Mazahua women associate with experiences of violence are the result of their socialization processes within the existing social structures. Therefore, it is essential to analyze the mechanisms that facilitate the naturalization and legitimization of this order.

Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* (2009, 2000), which informs Scheer's (2012) concept of *emotional practices*, is instrumental in our analysis as it considers bodies and emotions as sites for the production and reproduction of social structures from a socio-historical perspective.

The methodological approach unfolds in two distinct phases. The first phase focuses on analyzing myths within the Mazahua community, as reconsidered by Galinier (1990) and Figueroa (2019). Myths serve as a means of

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transmitting experience and shaping perceptions of reality. They reflect the history embodied in living individuals and manifest in the emotional practices of Mazahua women, making their analysis vital.

In the second phase, drawing on the work of García et al. (2020), we reflect on a series of testimonies from Mazahua women who have endured gender violence and identify the emotions they associate with these experiences, notably fear, shyness, shame, and blame.

Ultimately, we explore the connection between the emotions women associate with specific situations of violence and a formed community habitus, alongside other elements stemming from oral tradition myths.

Social Order and The Body

The connection between emotions and social structure is inescapable; both bodily and emotional experiences serve as a synthesis of social structure. For Bourdieu, as quoted by Galindo (2008), corporeal practices reveal the history of individuals and the types of interactions observed in specific social spaces. The body is not merely “an environmental condition of communication but also a communicative instrument” (p. 89).

Through socialization, individuals internalize a social structure to the extent that it becomes embodied in robust, automatized cultural schemes—essentially, practical beliefs.

Practical beliefs are not mere states of mind or, worse yet, strokes of luck granted by established dogmas and doctrines (referred to as “beliefs”); rather, they are corporeal states that reflect the immediate steadiness established in the practice between a habitus and its corresponding domain (Bourdieu, 2009, p. 111).

In this sense, the body serves as an operative feature of social meanings manifested in a wide variety of details, such as the way one dresses, speaks, and holds oneself. These expressions reveal processes of cultural inculcation. As Galindo (2008) points out, this bodily *hexis* becomes a permanent disposition that influences even the most mundane activities.

Bourdieu (2009), in his studies of Algeria, observes that Kabyles exhibit a series of classificatory systems even in simple practices. He analyzes both the

discourse and practices of his informants as “performative evidence of naturalized arbitrariness” (p. 114). For instance, the division of labor by gender reflects a bodily disposition that corresponds to sex, a result of practical classificatory retranslations assumed in practice.

The body is shaped by the relationship between *modus operandi* and *opus operatum* (Bourdieu, 2009). This practice arises from a dialectical relationship, where objective structures are internalized by the agent, becoming embodied. The agent knows without needing to reflect on that knowledge and acts guided by their habitus. In other words, this consists of “dispositions that are profoundly inculcated by possibilities and impossibilities, freedoms and needs, opportunities and prohibitions inscribed in the objective conditions of society” (Scheer, 2012, p. 201).

As Cedillo (2007) points out, the body is not neutral; it produces meaning and conveys emotions such as love, hate, tenderness, and scorn. This is how we communicate and make sense of the world. The way we apply makeup or dress, according to Cedillo (2007), contributes to the expression of our subjectivity and conveys information about ourselves. The position we occupy in the social hierarchy (social class, origin, capital) indicates that the body serves as a producer of meaning.

Emotion, Body, and Society

Thus, the body functions as both a container and producer of social meaning, including emotions. To understand how Mazahua women shape their corporeal and emotional experiences when encountering gender violence in their communities, we adopted the category of “emotional practices.” Scheer (2012) asserts that emotion, as conceived by Bourdieu, intertwines body and mind, structure and agency, expression and experience.

From this perspective, practices not only generate emotions but also entail a practical commitment to the world. Emotions arise from corporeal dispositions shaped by social and historical contexts. Myths are part of the Mazahua community’s history and can be identified in elements that shape this learning process.

According to Scheer (2012), “emotional practices” engage the body and mind, language, material artifacts, the environment, and more. He emphasizes

the connection between this proposal and Bourdieu's habitus, positing that the body is not a static, universal entity producing emotional or historical responses; rather, it is socially situated, adaptable, plastic, and therefore historical.

Scheer (2012) also reflects on how emotions are understood and the relationship between mind and body across various disciplines, leading to several important conclusions. He cites the thesis of philosopher Alva Noë, who argues that thinking, feeling, and perceiving "is not something that the brain achieves on its own. Awareness requires the joint operation of the brain, the body, and the world" (p. 196). The body, within its context and social environment, collaborates with the brain in thinking and, for our analysis, in feeling as well.

Scheer (2012), like Bourdieu (2009), connects the physical body with social structure, asserting that both contribute to the production of emotional experience. Subjects (or agents) are not pre-existing to practices; rather, they are products of them. Emotional practices encompass not only habitual movements executed automatically by the body but also learned distributions that are culturally specific and habitual, focusing attention on internal thoughts, feelings, and perceptions (Scheer, 2012, p. 200).

Where we live and the position we hold in the social realm shape our thoughts and actions. The ways in which Mazahua women respond to violence, utilizing their bodies and the emotions associated with these experiences, reflect their societal position, the gender roles they adopt, and the narratives surrounding women's bodies—elements that have been passed down through generations via various cultural means, including myths.

The body serves as both an actor and an instrument. It is not merely a collection of organic materials and processes but a knowledgeable entity that retains information about past experiences through ingrained processes, contributing this knowledge to human activity and consciousness. The body is profoundly shaped by habitus, a system of cognitive and motivational structures aligned with social standing (Scheer, 2012, p. 201).

Emotional practices thus reveal the "practical sense" (Bourdieu, 2009) of a community, in this case, the Mazahua community. For Scheer (2012), recognizing emotions as part of the body's thinking integrates the history of feelings into the study of socially produced subjectivities.

By framing emotions as “practical sense,” Scheer (2012) highlights the active or passive roles of those who experience them. This point is crucial, and we would need another chapter to fully articulate this concept; however, we feel compelled to initiate a discussion on the potential for agency in the face of the incorporation of social structures. While the emotional dispositions of Mazahua women result from a long process of naturalization of gender roles, making transformation unlikely, other possibilities for change do exist.

We will examine testimonies from young and single women in the community who, unlike women aged 40 and older, exhibit a more critical and reflective stance regarding violence against their bodies. They acknowledge feelings of fear and sadness, often discussing these incidents with a sense of blame or shame. Similarly, they identify these acts of violence as manifestations of the “machismo” prevalent in Mazahua communities.

Rejecting a linear model of emotional processes also necessitates a reorganization of the discussion regarding whether emotions, as a practice, imply active participation rather than a passive emotional experience. These emotions involve various bodily capabilities: facial expressions, neuronal activity, cognitive processes, tearing or sweating, fluctuations in heartbeat and breathing, gestures, postures, and movements. These can occur along a continuum, ranging from conscious and deliberate actions to unconscious responses, altering the course of their expression (Scheer, 2012, p. 207).

Despite the existence of masculine domination within indigenous communities, which Bourdieu (2000) characterizes as “symbolic violence,” it is essential to identify possibilities for transforming this order. Through testimonial interviews with Mazahua women, we can observe elements indicative of the denaturalization of this domination.

We believe that viewing emotions as practices enables us to articulate the material and corporeal dimensions of emotional processes without resorting to the ahistorical and universal assumption that the body is solely conditioned by evolution. “From a theoretical perspective on practice, emotional stimuli that may seem purely physical are, in reality, profoundly socialized” (Scheer, 2012, p. 220).

From Myths to Emotional Practice as a Result of Violence against the Bodies of Mazahua Women

To confront the ahistorical and universalistic assumptions that Scheer (2012) discusses, it is essential to identify the unique features of the Mazahua community, particularly concerning the dynamics of masculine domination and how these dynamics influence the emotional practices of Mazahua women in response to the violence inflicted upon their bodies.

To this end, we will consider two important reflections: the first is the work of Galinier (1990), who uses a series of Mazahua myths to define the type of symbolic thinking that operates within the community. The second is the work of García et al. (2020), which compiles testimonios from Mazahua women in the municipality of San Felipe del Progreso, State of Mexico, who have experienced gender violence.

The primary objective of this section is to analyze how femininity and women's bodies are represented in Mazahua myths, in order to identify whether there is a relationship between what is conveyed in the oral traditions of this community and the emotional practices of Mazahua women who are victims of violence.

Mazahua Myths: The Basis for Perception and Social Action

Figueroa (2019) argues that myths provide a foundation for the axiological values of the Mazahua people. These myths are not merely creative figures in oral literature; they are elements that continue to shape social perceptions and serve as the basis for social action and an explanation of historical processes. According to the author, these assessments provide substance and meaning to cultural practices. They form the symbolic and categorical constructs that reveal an understanding of the world, encompassing nature and life itself.

Myths are integral to the peculiarities of the Mazahua community. They serve as foundational elements for socialization processes, meaning that the narratives concerning celestial and terrestrial bodies—both masculine and feminine—are closely related to the practices and relationships between the sexes within the community. As Figueroa (2019) notes, these myths offer an assessment of the world.

If our aim is to analyze how Mazahua women shape emotional practices in response to the violence they endure concerning their bodies, it is crucial to identify the social mechanisms that influence this configuration. One approach is to examine what can be uncovered in the community's myths and what they represent, as they provide insight into the shaping of perception and social action.

In the narratives transmitted from generation to generation, we can identify the ways in which perceptions of different scales of reality are formed. Social experience—understood as a construct supported by personal experiences—relates to culture, imagination, and perspectives of the present and future. Oral tradition focuses on how experience is transmitted and, above all, how reality is conceived (Figueroa, 2019, p. 22).

Figueroa (2019) emphasizes that the history of the Mazahua group is far from clear due to a lack of documentary information. He refers to several versions of their origins, among which Soustelle (1993) stands out, stating that “The name the Otomis give to the Mazahuas is pejorative: *nyampáni*, which breaks down into *nya* and *páni*, a term currently used to designate a ‘horse,’ but historically used to refer to ‘deer,’ implying that they speak like animals” (p. 15). Consequently, “Mexicans simply translated this word into Náhuatl as *mazatl*, meaning ‘deer,’ adding the possessive *huac* to denote ‘those who possess deer’” (Sánchez, 2007, p. 169). Some believe they are called this because they hunt deer, which is why they are known as the “deer people.” Ultimately, the Mazahuas now refer to themselves as *jñatro*: “those who speak the language.”

Myths carry profound meaning and creativity for the Mazahua people. They encompass elements of ritual and symbolic life, as well as everyday existence. According to Figueroa (2019), their function is to express, highlight, and codify beliefs. The cosmovision contained in these narratives allows us to analyze how they understand the world, nature, and social relations over time, along with the social consequences of incorporating this history, which is the focus of this article.

Historically, we can observe complex constructions imbued with structural meaning that reveal perceptions of communal life and local history. Orality opens symbolic paths for a profound experience of facts and their meanings; hence, these narratives

transmit knowledge of culture, significant events, and the community's history (Figueroa, 2019, p. 115).

*Symbolic Representation of the Bodies of Mazahua Women:
An Order of Masculine Domination*

Examining the available material on emotions and gender within the Mazahua community enhances our understanding of a group that has not been studied in depth and sheds light on their oral traditions and history in the context of the changes brought about by contemporary society.

Galinier (1990) asserts that the Mazahua community has not garnered much interest in anthropology. Nevertheless, there are many significant aspects to explore regarding this ethnic group. Despite migratory processes, urbanization, changes in productive activities, and proximity to urban centers such as Toluca and Mexico City, “the Mazahuas continue to be a significant indigenous group” (p. 251).

The French anthropologist argues that certain elements distinctly identify the core of Mazahua identity. He describes this as a “specific type of symbolic thinking,” which requires “listening not only to ‘daytime discourse’—that is, all comments made by other members of the group regarding social order—but also to ‘night discourse,’” which subtly reveals, upon closer examination, what has been left unsaid about their culture, including topics that are often repressed, such as anxiety, violence, and death (Galinier, 1990, p. 253).

This reference is relevant to our analysis in two ways: first, it relates to particular ways of thinking and a history unique to the Mazahua people, and second, both their thought processes and history are linked to a series of emotions that can be identified in the symbolic representations of this group, as described by Galinier (1990).

One of the fundamental elements of Mazahua thought is the relationship between living flesh bodies and celestial bodies, as well as the gender attributes associated with both. As Galinier (1990) notes, there is a dialectical relationship that maintains close links of complementarity between celestial identities: the moon possesses feminine attributes, while the sun embodies masculine qualities.

Galinier's intention (1990) was not to analyze the gender relations manifest in Mazahua myths, yet we can identify in these symbolic representations particular conceptions of gender. The moon, associated with femininity, is depicted as a threatened body, especially during an eclipse, which signifies a need for water—a fertilizing substance attributed to males, specifically the sun, which responds to this need from their female counterparts.

Feminine characteristics represent a threat, associated with the night and the “humid cavities” that consume heavenly bodies, animals, and even men.

A common practice among pregnant women is to conceal a knife in their waistband to protect the baby they will bear. Indigenous discourse reveals that the moon is an insatiable heavenly body, symbolizing hunger (*zanta*), a word of the same origin as *zana*, meaning “moon.” Consequently, moon dwellers are deemed dangerously insatiable and are often compared to an open mouth. Moreover, a full moon evokes various erotic symbols, marking the fulfillment of love (*tsizizana*) and representing a fully open orifice—the mouth. During an eclipse, the moon “eats” (*si'izana*) the fetus through a distant action, causing various mutilations that may even result in a deformity such as a harelip, referred to as “eaten by the moon”: *oza e zana*. This celestial body is universally recognized as a depredating or devouring entity (Galinier, 1990, p. 258).

The symbolic representations of the Mazahua people form part of classificatory topics that become habitus. They concretely manifest “naturalized arbitrariness” (Bourdieu, 2009), stemming from a structure that materializes within the body, which influences disposition in the world. What, then, is the connection to our argument? Myths are elements of this incorporated history that manifest in the practices of the Mazahua community, including physical and sexual violence against women, and in how women respond to this situation, shaping their corporeal-emotional experiences, or, more precisely, their emotional practices.

In the following sections of this article, we will observe that many testimonies from Mazahua women who have experienced sexual violence articulate feelings of blame, shame, fear, or sadness in response to these events. It is not overly speculative to consider that this interpretation is linked to a form of social conditioning, where history becomes embodied, serving as a pathway for symbolic representations—namely, myths.

We highlight the practical consequences of how these indigenous Mazahua women incorporate these narratives in which feminine bodies are depicted as hungry beings, insatiable, malign, and dangerous.

According to Galinier (1990), the notion of femininity is encapsulated in celestial forces—the moon—and infraterrestrial forces such as land and water, characterized by their shared trait of consuming other bodies.

Speculations regarding the symmetry of masculine and feminine bodies manifest as a duplication of the sun and the moon. Indeed, the unity of men is contrasted with the duality of femininity, based on the existence of genital organs endowed with the capacity for metamorphosis by retracting into the body, similar to the moon. On the other hand, the moon's cannibalistic nature as a celestial body is symbolically expressed in sexual acts. While men's desire is manifested through a "drop" of vital force in the penis, women's incorporation of this force leads to a subtly progressive change in their partners (p. 260).

Feminine bodies are characterized as those that draw in the essence from their origins and, in sexual acts, reduce others to mere skeletons. Observing how the feminine body is portrayed in these symbolic representations and aligning with the theoretical framework presented (Scheer, 2012; Bourdieu, 2009, 2000), we can see that what is inscribed in these representations has material consequences, reflecting in concrete practices within the community.

In myths, the "aggressive" qualities attributed to a woman's body are expressed through a term prevalent in many narratives: a "serrated vagina" (Galinier, 1990, p. 260). This term first identifies a negative and dangerous construction of a woman's body that simultaneously naturalizes asymmetrical practices between the sexes and legitimizes violence, as evidenced when a father tells his son, "*When you try to take a woman, ya di pale ko. di ki ko erramient. tal kispí a zibi i muru ni zu,*" which translates to "I am old. I have tools. I am going to saw the teeth of your woman's vagina" (Galinier, 1990, p. 260).

Both Figueroa (2019) and Galinier (1990) have indicated that myths play a fundamental role in guiding and explaining the practices of a community. The idea that women's bodies are bad, threatening, and represented as "serrated vaginas" is connected to the feelings of shame and blame that arise from experiencing physical or sexual violence. They have internalized that during sexual interactions, the violence and threat do not originate from someone

else, but from themselves, with representations of feminine bodies intertwined with notions of the moon, earth, water, and the archetype of a witch.

The act of suction that women exert over men is reflected, as we have seen through the moon, but this threat is even more explicitly crystallized in the enigmatic figure of the witch. Women observe children whose blood is enticing to them and, during evening hours, approach the bonfire to take their legs and eyes, depositing them by the fire. They then vanish as a ball of fire that streaks across the sky. Regardless of the circumstances, the need for blood is primarily associated with women, conferring a dangerously ominous character upon them. While women are the bearers of life, they are also the ones capable of taking it away (Galinier, 1990, pp. 260–261).

It is clear from the preceding discussion that women's bodies and feminine beings are described as "highly dangerous," often represented through sexual metaphors.

The foot (*kwa'a*) that the woman removes confirms the comments of the indigenous informants, symbolizing a penis, or true sex. The eyes are sometimes referred to as *murú*, meaning "testicles," a term that is phonologically similar to that used for a cross-eyed individual; in other words, it refers to a feminine eye—a witch *murú*—that rids him/herself of masculine traits to carry out a predatory action. Subsequently, the individual adopts a bisexual form, embodying both woman and man.² This transformation seems inevitable, as it is affirmed in all testimonies: women change sex at regular intervals, and this mutation is linked to their need for blood (*khi*), which is manifested in the form of sperm. What the Mazahuas refer to as the "need" of women signifies her insatiable desire, described metaphorically as her "mouth" (*ne' e*). Children are then viewed as an extension of the penis, termed "little devil" (*s'imbante*); thus, the need for blood/sperm becomes a substitute for the penis. The *s'imbante*, whose head is the fragile element metaphorically described as a gland (*nyi'i*) (Galinier, 1990, p. 261).

² This is a very interesting idea with respect to gender, and we need to delve deeper into this subject in upcoming studies. Even if a witch can represent both the masculine and the feminine dimensions, according to myths, she becomes dangerous when she loses her masculine features, meaning that the practices related to depredation, suction, and annihilation of the other are carried out, always because she is female.

This male/female opposition is reflected not only in the body but also in the spaces through which the body moves, within the geography of the region.

The *Mazahua* region is bordered by two prominent mountains: Jocotitlán Hill to the northeast and the snow-capped Toluca Mountain to the southwest. It is rumored that the first is male and the second female. Indeed, the upper part of the body is associated with God and is called *insa'* a *palesito*, meaning “half of the Catholic priest.” The lower part is the domain of the devil, *insa'* a *ke peko nampephi*, which translates to “half of the work force.” This type of opposition is inscribed within a dialectical relationship between what is pure and what is not, reminiscent of Jocotitlán Hill and the snow-capped Toluca Mountain, where the former is linked to a principle of purity, while the latter is associated with the devil (Galinier, 1990, p. 263).

Gender Violence and Emotional Practices of Mazahua Women

The resonance of the feminist movement has brought discussions about women's situations and violence against them—simply for being women—more prominently onto the public agenda than ever before. Gender violence is a widespread phenomenon in society; however, as García et al. (2020) note, “Violence against women in indigenous contexts represents even greater challenges due to the triple discrimination they face as women, Indigenous people, and individuals living in poverty” (p. 17).

The purpose of this chapter, as outlined in previous paragraphs, is to specifically analyze violence against the bodies of Mazahua women and the ways in which they define their emotional practices. The emotions attributed to these situations are a result of a history reflected in their bodies—a *habitus*. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize the mechanisms that naturalize this order and foster feelings of fear, sadness, shame, or blame.

In this section, I will reference the work of García et al. (2020), who examine the institutional, community, and partnership dynamics that prevail in situations of gender violence within indigenous contexts. While their primary focus is not to identify how Mazahua women shape their emotional practices in the face of violence, their analysis includes a series of testimonies from Mazahua women that illustrate how they emotionally construct their bodily experiences.

Reflections on indigenous women in the Mazahua region of the State of Mexico are both interesting and necessary for several reasons. Violence against them is a problem that affects society as a whole, but is particularly prevalent in indigenous communities. The State of Mexico is home to various ethnic groups; however, according to data from the State Council for the Integral Development of Indigenous Groups (CEDIPIEM, 2020), the Mazahuas represent the largest ethnic group in the state. Despite this, as Figueroa (2019) and Galinier (1990) have pointed out, there are few studies focused on this region. Thus, identifying the emotional practices of Mazahua women in light of gender violence is a significant topic for the social sciences.

García et al. (2020) state that the Mazahua region is extensive; however, San Felipe del Progreso is one of the municipalities where most of the population is concentrated. Therefore, the testimonies presented in their study are from women residing in this area. Their research outlines a series of challenges faced by Mazahua women, revealing the structure of masculine domination that shapes relationships between men and women in the community, including land ownership, education, and unpaid labor.

Most women in this municipality maintain subordinate relationships with men. The context—a lack of public utilities, traditional social structures based on a division of labor, and the reproduction of traditional roles—determines the lives of both men and women. Regarding education in the municipality of San Felipe del Progreso, a 2010 report indicated that 12,122 individuals aged 15 and older could not read or write, with 76% being female and 24% male (García et al., 2020, p. 27–28).

The authors argue that gender asymmetries were evident throughout their study, and that women are subjected to violence and stigmatized in various ways if they do not conform to traditional roles. García et al. (2020) interviewed 20 women from the municipality of San Felipe del Progreso; 15 of them were married and the rest single. These semi-structured interviews reveal how the women experienced and interpreted the masculine domination in which they find themselves.

Throughout this reflection, we maintain that emotional practices are the result of their history. In other words, the ways in which female bodies are imbued with meaning in these symbolic representations have practical consequences. Thus, in this section, based on the testimonies and experiences of

women from the community, we will attempt to explain the connection between what is expressed in oral traditions regarding the female sex and how this impacts the emotional practices of those who experience gender violence.

Myths serve as a means to convey worldly experiences and play an important role in the processes of reinterpreting classificatory schemes within social practices. As noted in previous paragraphs, a significant characteristic of oral tradition for the Mazahua people is the strong relationship between earthly and celestial bodies, primarily linked through feminine and masculine elements. The moon is associated with females and symbolizes sexual and erotic order, while the sun is male, despite the fact that, in this interaction, the moon is often depicted as a devouring and predatory entity.

In other passages, we mention that women possess a “serrated vagina,” which warns of danger to men who engage with them sexually. This could be linked, for example, to processes of legitimization and naturalization of sexual violence against women.

As previously discussed, the representation of female bodies as part of the moon is augmented by the elements of soil and water, as well as the presence of a witch—feminine bodies that pose a danger to the community, necessitating caution. The myth surrounding the witch is particularly intriguing as it reflects the complexity of gender expressed in the tales of Mazahua communities, a topic we will not delve into in this article. It is significant in that the narrative suggests both masculine and feminine traits can be embodied in the figure of the witch; however, what is relevant to our study is when the witch discards her masculine features and becomes a threatening figure.

Based on these elements identified in Mazahua myths, I will highlight some passages from the work of García et al. (2020) that will aid in exploring the relationship between the emotional practices of Mazahua women who experience gender violence and the feminine qualities reflected in oral tradition. One of the most frequently mentioned factors in testimonies of Mazahua women is their fear of experiencing sexual violence in the community.

Most of the interviewed women reported having experienced some form of sexual aggression, such as unwanted touching, lewd looks, whistling, and flirtation, along with fears of being raped or even murdered. It was observed that the most vulnerable group for sexual harassment in the community includes adolescents, young adults, and women who are walking alone (p. 147).

For the researchers, it is important to note that “The young girls socially condemned this sexual harassment because it made them feel ‘uncomfortable,’ and they criticized older men for their harassment of young girls” (García et al., 2020, p. 149).

How can this be interpreted in light of our analysis? What does it imply to feel uncomfortable in such situations? Why do women who feel uncomfortable about the judgment passed on their bodies bear the shame, rather than the men who judge and exercise violence? One possible answer can be found in the analysis of previous sections. On one hand, there is an ingrained social history, and on the other, the narratives in myths regarding feminine bodies—which, often unconsciously, lead women to feel a profound fear of being raped and experience shame and blame when it occurs.

A factor that encourages violence is the tendency to blame women for sexual harassment, while no one questions the acts as abuses of masculine power or holds the men who harass accountable. Married women often hold younger women responsible for flirting, citing their clothing choices (miniskirts, tight-fitting pants, low necklines, or shorts) and their behavior as “indecent,” asserting that they are simply trying to “get along” with men or that they laugh off flirtation, which suggests they are giving a “come on” and, therefore, “are not respected.” Ignorance surrounding flirting is one of the forms of sexual violence that contributes to community violence (García et al., 2020, p. 149).

In response to sexual harassment, women often blame other women or themselves, feeling guilt or shame regarding specific situations. Their reactions, as noted by the researchers, range from ignoring the harassers or downplaying their comments to walking more quickly, lowering their heads, or altering their attire out of fear that confronting these men could expose them to even greater risks of physical or sexual aggression.

Regarding sexual violence, most of the women interviewed said they had heard rumors, but few mentioned specific cases.

These types of problems remain “private,” as women fear being judged by their own community, worry about “what will be said,” feel ashamed of having experienced such situations, and, above all, are afraid to discuss the issue (García et al., 2020, p. 150).

Once again, emotions emerge in the stories told by the women. In the face of sexual violence, their responses include fear and shame about being judged by the community. This highlights the Mazahua community's perspective on the violence exercised against their bodies.

What we have observed thus far are the emotional practices of women, which result from a process of indoctrination and socialization. It is no coincidence that in the community's symbolic representations, such as myths, women's bodies are described in negative terms—as malign and threatening—which is reflected in the practices and interactions between the sexes within the community. Both harassment and sexual violence, as well as feminicide—the most extreme form of violence against women's bodies—remain concealed within the community.

Femicides are motivated by gender-related factors. The brutality of these assassinations, characterized by physical violence (such as strangling, hangings, beatings, shootings, and drownings) and sexual violence (including rape and the public exposure of naked bodies), reflects extreme hatred towards women for not conforming to established roles, for not obeying their partners, and for making decisions about their own lives. Even more alarming is the social justification for these crimes, often rooted in the belief that the victim was “wild,” driven by jealousy, or transgressing traditional roles (García et al., 2020, p. 153).

The researchers highlight that a prevailing belief in the community holds women responsible for what happens to them in these situations: “a cultural burden injected on a personal and social level that is hard to overcome” (García et al., 2020, p. 154). This cultural burden manifests both in practice and through the myths embedded in the community's history.

Conclusion: Symbolic Efficacy and the Emotional Practices of Mazahua Women

What the community “says” about female bodies has significant repercussions for how women “internalize” and “incorporate” notions regarding their bodies. Symbolic representations and oral traditions play a crucial role in the process of socialization and in the internalization of ideas and practices concerning female bodies within the Mazahua community.

I argue, based on the reflections made previously, that Mazahua women's responses to gender violence are linked to emotions such as shame and blame, which are connected to the representation of their bodies and feminine characteristics in myths. In other words, their emotional practices stem from the incorporation of this historical narrative and the social order inscribed in Mazahua myths.

These emotional practices of Mazahua women concretely illustrate what Bourdieu terms "naturalized arbitrariness" (2009, p. 114). As Cedillo (2007) has noted, the bodies of Mazahua women produce meaning that arises from their representations in social spaces, resulting in emotional experiences that can manifest as blame or shame. Mazahua women "understand" their bodies to be malign, predatory, and mysterious, leading them to speak little about them. They tend to reveal their bodily disposition only when they feel free and more open.

Cedillo (2007) further emphasizes that the way we present ourselves physically expresses our subjectivity and reflects the position that subjectivity occupies in social spaces. In other words, the bodily *hexis* of indigenous women not only speaks to their individuality but also reveals much about the Mazahua community and the ways in which knowledge about bodies is learned and taught.

Emotions such as shame, blame, shyness, and anxiety, along with various interpretations and practices, are closely tied to the social structure. The manner in which Mazahua women use their bodies, both in public and private spaces, is influenced by a series of institutions that have shaped these emotional practices from a hegemonic and patriarchal perspective.

In the representations of femininity made by the Mazahua community, we observe a masculine domination over Mazahua women's bodies. This dominance is one of many factors within the community that justify and perpetuate unequal relationships between men and women, affecting both private spaces of sexuality and public spaces where decisions are made.

In conclusion, it is essential to recognize that the reflections presented here aim to analyze the construction of emotional practices among Mazahua women, revealing how they emotionally react to gender violence.³ This reac-

³ It is necessary to mention that when we speak about gender violence in indigenous contexts, we must consider that these patriarchal forms of violence have roots in colonial times. As Segato (2010), Paredes (2017), and Guzmán (2019) argue, the starting point for these authors is the body of women, since it is in

tion is the result of historical processes that manifest in their bodies as influenced by an objective social order, which shapes their thinking, perceptions, and actions. This effort contributes to the consolidation of an emerging field: the sociology of emotions, which enables us to analyze social practices with an emotional focus and observe their functions and the social effects they produce.

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her body that historical, material, and political violence is contained. Both Paredes (2017) and Guzmán (2019) propose community feminism as a transformative alternative, as it is within this framework that indigenous women who experience gender violence can build mechanisms to resist and transform that order of domination. Therefore, the authors address processes of women's autonomy through decolonization and despatriarchization, since machista violence has existed in indigenous communities since the Spanish Conquest. This is what we call "ancestral patriarchy"—violence against women that, in 1942, was fused and strengthened by colonial violence in a process known as the "patriarchal meeting point."

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SECTION 3
HEGEMONY, COUNTER-HEGEMONY,
RESISTANCE, AND EMOTIONS

8. Antonio Gramsci: Indifference, Hegemony, and Political Power

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Introduction

In line with the other texts in this book and the overarching framework of this collective project, the idea underlying our efforts is to offer reflections on the emotional dimension, power processes, and their relationship with conflict in contemporary societies. This chapter seeks to deepen the analysis of the emotional dimension in Gramsci's work and connect it with themes of power and conflict. Our aim is to examine the historical context, his personal life, and intellectual pursuits, which are essential for understanding Gramsci's contributions to the themes of indifference, hegemony, and political power.

The academic exercise we propose involves analyzing some foundational elements of Gramsci's explanatory framework, linking these to key categories central to his thought. This chapter attempts to address at least two questions: first, whether a convergence can be identified between Gramsci's theoretical approaches and the emotional dimension; and second, whether it is possible to construct an explanatory framework that integrates these approaches.

From our perspective, it is crucial to analyze the renewal of Marxist thought in the early 20th century, which underscored the role of socio-cultural processes in constructing political domination and hegemony.² Gramsci's

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² Gramsci's reflection on the role of emotions in the processes of political domination is closely related to his reflections on culture. In this sense, they are useful both as classical works in political sociology and

work, often debated for its theoretical rigor, represents a fundamental contribution—not least because for him, common knowledge, religion, art, and culture are key components and emotional forms of these practices, constituting vital elements in the development of hegemony, domination, and political resistance.

This chapter explores the relationship between politics and emotions through the lens of Gramsci's writings, aiming to situate the emotional dimension within what he termed "forms of domination." This Marxist approach allows us to position categories for analyzing the emotional dimension within political processes, where symbolic power, conflict, and collective resistance play significant roles. Notably, one of the "materials" setting Gramsci's work apart from other thinkers of his time and later is his use of letters, mainly addressed to loved ones, where glimpses of his emotions, theoretical-political reflections, and ideological frameworks are visible.

Theoretical Framework of Reference Constructivism and the Sociology of Emotions

This chapter aims to analyze some of Gramsci's concepts for studying social and political phenomena. We focus on aspects like indifference, hegemony, and political power, analyzing their implications for the sociology of emotions and their socio-historical constructions. Methodologically, we aim to build on his concepts to link them to the emotional dimension, illuminating contributions to the study of emotions and their relationship to the power-conflict dynamic.

as key texts produced within the framework of the School of Cultural Studies. For a broad review of these fields, see *The Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935* (Gramsci, 2000) and *Antonio Gramsci: Critical Assessments of Leading Political Philosophers* (Martin, 2002). Other works of interest along the same lines are those authored by Muralidharan (2013) and Trigueros (2019).

Constructivist-Structuralist Perspectives and the Sociology of Emotions as Analytical Tools

In this section, we consider two broad dimensions: establishing general elements of the constructivist perspective, and linking this reflection to elements of the sociology of emotions that enrich this first dimension. As Giménez (2002, p. 2) notes, the constructivist-structuralist perspective allows integration of work by scholars like Bourdieu (2004, 1997), Elias (1965), Giddens (1990), Berger and Luckman (1991), and Cicourel (1973).³ While this does not constitute a new school of thought, it provides a “space of problems and concerns” around which an increasing number of scholars work (Corcuff, 1998). For our purposes, the constructivist perspective is essential as it aligns with the sociology of emotions in emphasizing the importance of historicity. As Giménez explains, this involves three main postulates: a) the social world is built upon what was constructed in the past; b) social forms from the past are reproduced, appropriated, displaced, and transformed in daily practices and interactions of individuals; and c) working with past heritage opens many possibilities for building the future.

In the context of the sociology of emotions, the constructivist perspective explains that within historical processes, social realities are simultaneously objectified and internalized. This process creates objective worlds expressed in rules and institutions as external, yet constraining, elements that also serve as supports for action. Other texts describe subjective, internalized worlds, formed by sensitivity, emotion, perception, representation, and knowledge (Giménez, 1999, p. 2)—an interplay between the internalization of external realities and the externalization of internal experiences.

Our theoretical-methodological proposal is linked to constructivism because it provides a useful tool for simultaneously interpreting Gramsci’s personal life, historical context, and his work within a complex reality. This approach allows us to analyze general and institutional frameworks across extended periods without limiting our observations to the actions or behavior

³ In another interpretation, we can identify authors who recognize the existence of tensions within social spaces. In this regard, we can refer to the work of Elias and Dunning, *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process* (1986), as well as the text by Elias and Scotson, *The Established and the Outsiders* (1994). These works discuss the dynamics of life in certain social spaces, where agents who are part of these spaces from the beginning interact with those who later join these domains. Thus, the dispute between the established and the recent arrivals is a dimension of mobility within social interaction.

of individuals in social spaces. This approach enables us to link what various authors view as a complex analysis of reality, encompassing structures and functions, individual and collective perspectives, and micro and macro elements (Bourdieu, 1997; Giménez, 2002, p. 3).

On the other hand, the sociology of emotions allows us to incorporate elements that Kemper's interrelational theory (1990) aptly highlights, suggesting that most human relations are nourished by and meaningful within the context of social relationships. In other words, the nature of emotions is influenced, and sometimes even constrained, by the social conditions in which we feel and exist. The relationship between emotions and the social context is not mechanical; rather, it is observed in both individuals' bodies and social relationships: loneliness, envy, hate, fear, shame, pride, resentment, nostalgia, sadness, satisfaction, joy, anger, and frustration—all emotions tied to specific social conditions (Bericat, 2000, p. 150).

The connection we aim to establish between the constructivist perspective and the sociology of emotions lies precisely in viewing emotions sociologically, as expressions intertwined with history and cultural differences. This connection exists, for example, between the emotional dimension and realms such as politics, social spaces, and culture, as well as in the concrete expression of power processes like hegemony, domination, and conflict, which reveal emotions, beliefs, and values in tension within communities and institutions (Nussbaum, 2013; Collins, 2004; Boyns and Luery, 2015; Ahmed, 2014; Novales-Alquézar, 2016; Lamas, 2022).

Thus, both the constructivist perspective and the sociology of emotions help us explain, at least partially, the functioning of micro and macro levels, individual and collective experiences, and the relation between emotions and the social context, observable both in individuals' bodies and in social interactions.

Gramsci: Political Theory and Emotions (Power, Hegemony, Indifference, and Emotions)

As Rodríguez de Lecea (2017) remarked in *The Small Intimate World of Gramsci*, his death created a stir in the “great and terrible world,” as Gramsci himself put it. The Executive Committee of International Communism published a

lengthy press release in *l'Unità* titled “Gramsci’s Assassination Reaches the Heart of All Italians, the Sacred Fire of Freedom!” The release noted that even after his death, his name remained inscribed in gold letters on the banner of the working-class struggle in Italy, Spain, France, and worldwide against fascism and oppression.

One of the clearest places where Gramsci analyzes emotions, the body, individuality, history, context, and political action is in his 1917 letter *I Hate the Indifferent* (1999 [1917]). In this letter, he takes a political, ideological, and practical stance. We reproduce the letter here, as it encapsulates much of his intellectual work, expressing the general context and social and historical moment through his perspective, offering insights into the mind of a thinker shaped by, yet shaping, his time:

I hate those who are indifferent. I believe that to live means to take a stand. Those who truly live must be citizens and partisans, not indifferent or apathetic like parasites, cowards, not truly alive. This is why I hate the indifferent. Indifference is the dead weight of history. It operates powerfully throughout history, passively yet effectively. Fate, the unforeseen, distorts plans and ruins even the best-conceived programs. It is the raw material that erodes intelligence. Evils that defeat us do so because so many abdicate their will, allowing the passage of laws that only revolt could repeal, giving rise to men who only riots can unseat. The masses remain passive, and fatality overtakes all—the compliant, the dissenters, the knowledgeable, the unaware, the active, and the indifferent alike. Some weep, others curse, but few ask, “Could my efforts have changed this?”

I also hate the indifferent because they irritate me with their eternal whining. I ask them how they’ve carried out their daily responsibilities, what they’ve done or left undone. I feel justified in being unsparing, in withholding pity, in refusing to weep with them. I take sides; I am alive. I feel in my companions’ conscience the pulse of cities of the future they are building, so that the social chain does not rest on just a few. Nothing happens by mere chance; it results from citizens’ deliberate effort. No one merely watches from the sidelines, observing others’ sacrifices and bloodshed. I am alive; I take a stand, and this is why I hate those who do not speak out, why I hate the indifferent (Gramsci, 1999 [1917]).

This letter reflects on the conditions of a specific historical moment, as well as on the broader meaning of being alive, or, in Gramsci’s terms, exercising cit-

izenship through active, engaged participation. This vibrant concept of citizenship identifies apathy and indifference as some of the most burdensome obstacles in history. These attitudes reflect a concrete cowardice that, within the realm of political projects, enables certain individuals and groups to pursue organizational and political interests without concerning themselves with transforming oppressive social conditions. In fact, some argue that this behavior stems from the very consolidation of modern capitalism and its inherent contradictions.

Gramsci precisely identifies indifference as the driver that allows for the establishment of extreme forms of domination, which can only be overturned by radical, sometimes violent change. Indifference, in this view, is a tool used by elitist and authoritarian governments to cloud human intellect and enable the consolidation of power by groups whose authority persists with the complicity of the indifferent, who later regret not acting for change.

For Gramsci, indifference is essential to the establishment of concrete frameworks of political domination and broader social and cultural hegemony, which together shape the norms and legitimacy of public life. Choosing not to take a stand is, therefore, a renunciation of the opportunity to participate in shaping the public life of the society we live in. This letter thus provides insight into Gramsci's theoretical and analytical ideas regarding concepts that explain the construction of this historical block and the "war of positions," among other ideas.

As Levrino (2013) notes, Gramsci's letter, "I Hate the Indifferent," is among his strongest texts on struggle, capturing much of his thought, context, and reflections on the presence and impact of emotions. In short, the letter outlines a path toward fairer human conditions and justice for those excluded from dominant discourses on liberalism, democracy, and capitalism. Levrino also observes that when historical events confronted Gramsci with one of the most violent and unjust governments of modern history, he became a fervent opponent of Mussolini and Fascism's oppressive mechanisms.

To contextualize Gramsci's work, we must consider some key aspects of the Marxist approach, which examines political reality as a dialectical phenomenon whose essential component is class struggle (Farr et al., 1999). As Uriarte (2001) points out, all class struggles are, at their core, political, and reflections on politics have passed through at least two developmental stages. The first, the "Classical Period," refers to concepts developed by Marx and

Engels (Marx and Engels, 2010 [1848]) and later by thinkers such as Lenin (1992), Gramsci (1973, 1997), Luxembourg, and Liebknecht (2009), who framed the legal aspects of power dynamics (as cited in Flores, 2004). The second stage, the “Contemporary Period,” applies Marxist categories, such as class, ideology, alienation, and surplus value, which have greatly influenced the conceptual and methodological foundations of the social sciences (Portelli, 1979). An example can be found in Afanásiev’s work, *Scientific Management of Society: The Experiment of Soviet Economic Management in the 1920s*, where general systems theory is used to enhance mechanisms of social control, defining Marxist sociology as offering a structural–functional conception of society (Farr et al., 1999; Pereyra, 2002).

Gramsci (1973, 1978) is identified as a thinker who understands social dynamics and explains the process of group or social class struggles for social legitimation and hegemony from their points of view, revealing complex intellectual, cultural, social, historical, and particular interest processes as intrinsic elements in social spaces⁴, though many fail to understand or recognize them. In addition, he identifies sociopolitical tensions as the true catalyst that recreates an internal space for settling conflicts, as Hobsbawm (2002) mentions—domains where true fights and struggles continue between conflicting interests and projects in dispute for control and sociopolitical hegemony.

In Gramsci’s view, society is not simply a mechanical assemblage of separate elements but rather a dynamic entity characterized by an internal structural order shaped by historical contradictions. This perspective emphasizes that hegemonic structures develop through an interplay of economy and politics, achieved through both ideological and moral reform. These elements should be understood as stages within a theoretical–practical totality, separate from positivist views and the ideal of value–neutral science.

Hegemony, in Gramsci’s framework, involves the interconnectedness of theory and political practice and the relationship between political and civil society, conceived not as a mere sum but as a tension–filled articulation in the

⁴ Undoubtedly, social spaces operate as social containers of sportive relations, where we see the articulation of a power dispute for power’s sake, portrayed by social subjects who gather in these spaces and who are also bearers of projects and interests. The political game expressed within these social spaces is the driving force that leads to tensions between the participants and their projects, as they function as interested parties hoping to update matters—first, by increasing their transformative capacity; second, by attaining a better position within social spaces; and third, by obtaining a greater amount of capital compared to what they initially had.

space of the State, guided by the hegemony of a specific social group within national society. For Gramsci, when a social group achieves hegemony, it becomes “national,” seeking to universalize its interests, ideological vision, and cultural practices within society (Kohan, 1999).

The national state, as a universalizing force, strives to stabilize societal imbalances by linking class and territory. While this is not the primary focus of our chapter, we contrast Gramsci’s view with contemporary perspectives on hegemony, such as those proposed by Laclau and Mouffe (1985), who redefine the concept as a dynamic process of articulatory practices rather than a product of established structures. Laclau, for instance, argues that social order is always a product of these practices (as cited in Blanco and Sánchez, 2014, p. 403)⁵, marking a distinction from Gramsci’s approach. For Gramsci, hegemony still centers on a foundational social class within classical Marxism’s political framework (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985).

One of Gramsci’s key contributions to political theory is his study of education, which examines the social organization of culture and its connection to politics and economics (Gramsci, 1973, 1978, 1997). Gramsci critiques “traditional intellectuals,” whose work represents the worldview of the dominant class, facilitating cultural hegemony (Boccardo, 2018). He proposes “organic intellectuals” from all walks of life who genuinely represent diverse social perspectives and encourage a broader understanding of social reality.

Gramsci’s concept of the “war of positions” refers to the gradual disruption of hegemonic forces within political and cultural spaces, requiring continuous support from the masses. This long, challenging journey could ultimately lead to decisive and stable victories if a collective political will emerges, autonomous from dominant forces, and radically democratic—capable of constructing a new society while resisting the status quo (Boccardo, 2018).

A final concept that Gramsci linked to the war of positions is that of passive revolution, which is undoubtedly one of the most relevant yet complex

⁵ Blanco and Sánchez (2014) highlight the fact that Laclau rejected the idea of a political subject constituted a priori, whether defined in terms of class or other essentializing categories. If political aspects are primary and constituent of social aspects, no social class or actor can have ontological privilege. The hegemonic articulation does not stem from a specific logic of a unique social force. In fact, they refer to an original text by Laclau and Mouffe (1985, p. 142) where they use the following phrase: “The problem of power cannot, therefore, be posed in terms of the search for the class or the dominant sector which constitutes the center of a hegemonic formation.”

and problematic among the concepts he developed while in prison, as noted by Modonesi (2017, p. 53). This concept suggests that a hegemonic crisis does not necessarily lead to revolution. The outcomes are varied, depending on how different social groups are able to react and readjust. In other words, revolution depends on the nature of the relations that emerge among the forces in contention. Modonesi (2017, p. 56), citing Portantiero, explains that a passive revolution refers to the bourgeoisie's effort to counter the unsustainable conditions of accumulation due to populism by reorganizing the State. Depending on each society's characteristics, this process may vary in success as it attempts to initiate a process of revolution–restoration.

Modonesi notes that in the late seventies, Aricó, in his lectures at the Colegio de México, defined passive revolution as a “process of structural transformations initiated from the summit of power, allowing the dominant class to accommodate some demands of the subaltern class to preempt or avert a revolution.” This is more of a capacity to “implement reforms to pacify, co-opt, eliminate, or exhaust the resistance of the dominant class” (Aricó, 2011, p. 67, as cited in Modonesi, 2017, p. 58).

Gramsci left behind a remarkable body of work, consisting of his 34 *Prison Notebooks*, in which he reviewed Marx's thinking in a way that modernized the Communist legacy and adapted it to the realities of Italy and Europe in the 20th century. A central theme in these notebooks advocates for broadening the social base of Communism to encompass all types of workers, including intellectuals. His theoretical contributions had a powerful influence on the democratic adaptation of Western Communism, which emerged in the sixties and seventies.

Antonio Gramsci: Intimate Referents Historical Context and Sociopolitical Framework

Structural constructivism and the sociology of emotions provide valuable tools for analyzing Gramsci's works. In this section, we use these frameworks to interpret his intellectual work by examining structural referents and historical context within a sociopolitical framework, as well as his intimate world. Our analysis begins with his letter *I Hate the Indifferent*. Here, we reflect on “the internalization of exteriority” and “the externalization of interiority” and the emergence of emotions within asymmetrical social relations.

First, we propose a brief yet significant analysis to understand the private life of our subject. This analysis, as with the theoretical section, includes some of Gramsci's letters, where we see the life of this Italian scholar materialize across past, present, and future. These letters also help construct what we might call a "structural space" alongside the subject. Following this, we provide a brief historical overview as a sketch of "structural history"—a framework for identifying the macro and micro levels, individual and collective dimensions, and the interplay between emotions and the social context—essentially the body of individuals shaped by social relations. This overview captures what we call Gramsci's sociopolitical framework, offering an intermediate view of the relationship between social context and emotions. This section will highlight certain elements of political participation, allowing us to further explore this framework and touch upon essential aspects of Gramsci's political thought.

Gramsci's Intimate World

It is crucial to consider long-standing historical developments—referred to in sociological terms as macro-history—alongside elements of Gramsci's personal life and political context. In the following passages, we aim to identify key moments from Gramsci's private life that connect these macro and micro dimensions.

Exploring the private lives of great thinkers is often intriguing, and Gramsci's life is especially captivating. Much of his work, as we have noted, came from letters written during his time in prison or at various stages in his life to people as diverse as family members, friends, and political allies. His life was also enriched through writing articles, stories, personal reflections, theoretical pieces, and extensive thoughts on political action and life. Nevertheless, most of his intellectual legacy was composed in prison in the *Prison Notebooks*, where he explored topics central to Marxism and socialism, such as the relationship between structure and superstructure, ideology and science, and thought and political action. If approached strictly, one might argue that Gramsci's work lacks the structure and planning typically expected of academic political theory.

The following discussion is not intended as a biographical or psychoanalytical analysis. Those interested in comprehensive biographies and discus-

sions on Gramsci's personal and family background are encouraged to consult other sources referenced here. Nor do I intend to delve into trivial details of Nino's personal life or suggest an analysis grounded in trauma psychology. At best, my aim is to highlight certain facts that allow for a personal-level analysis within the social world—history viewed through a grand narrative alongside intimate history, his reflections on the social and political world, or, as Giménez (2002) put it, the way the external is internalized and the internal externalized.

With these clarifications in place, it is worth noting that Gramsci was born on the Island of Sardinia in 1891, where his childhood was marked by poverty and social exclusion, as was the case for many other peasants there. Here he experienced the deep divides between Italians and continental Sardinians and the mistreatment suffered by Sardinian peasants at the hands of continental Italians (Rodríguez de Lecea, 2017).

Gramsci's father, Ciccillo, came from a relatively affluent family, possibly of Albanian origin near the Greek border. He married Giuseppina (Peppina) Marcias and worked in civil registration in Ales, where Nino was born, later transferring to Sòrgono. While serving in this role, Ciccillo was imprisoned for embezzlement, sentenced to five years in prison in 1898 when Nino was only seven. His mother, the primary figure in his life, tried to shield him from this event, but years later, in a letter written from prison to his sister-in-law Tania, Gramsci mentioned the trauma he experienced upon learning about his father's incarceration.

My mother was unaware of many things about my life and the hardships I endured. Sometimes I remember her as a part of my life, limited and distant, but now I recall her joyfully, free of worries. These memories soften old age by allowing her to forget the serious tragedies and deep bitterness she experienced. If she knew that I was aware of all I know, and that these events have left scars, it would poison her last years of life (Gramsci, 1999, p. 329, as cited in Sacristán, 1970, p. 329).

After his father's imprisonment, Gramsci distanced himself, rarely mentioning his father except indirectly or casually. There was no exchange of letters between them, and Gramsci did not include his father in his memories of yearning for family from prison. Instead, he briefly mentioned his father's imprisonment in letters to his mother, referring to it with a degree of shame,

as it was not the result of a political struggle he might have respected. This stance contrasts with a letter from November 20, 1926, where he expressed pride in being a political prisoner, viewing his incarceration as a testament to his active commitment, his refusal to be indifferent, and his willingness to face the consequences, even at the cost of his life, to uphold his honor and dignity.

Letter to my Mother

Dearest Mama,

I don't want to keep repeating what I usually write about my physical and moral state just to calm you down. For my own peace of mind, I hope you won't be afraid or upset, no matter what my sentence may be. Please understand, even emotionally, that I am a political detainee and will remain a political prisoner, but I will never be ashamed of this situation or, at heart, of my arrest and imprisonment. In a way, I've wanted this because I've never been willing to set aside my beliefs, which I'm prepared to give my life for—not just endure imprisonment. This is why I cannot help but feel at peace and satisfied with myself. My dear mother, I wish I could give you a big hug so you could feel how much I love you and how much I'd like to comfort you about this upsetting matter, but I couldn't have done otherwise. That's how life is—very hard; sometimes children must give their mothers deep heartaches to uphold the honor and dignity of humanity.

I am about to leave for Rome, and now it is safe. They authorized this letter precisely to inform you of my transfer, so from now on, please write to me in Rome until I notify you of any other move.

Yesterday, I received a certified letter from Carlo dated May 5. He writes that he will send me your picture, which will make me very happy. By now, you should have received a picture of Delio⁶ that I sent by certified mail about ten days ago.

A big, tender hug, Nino

San Vicente Jail (Gramsci, 1928)

Gramsci poured all his affection on his mother, Giuseppina (Peppina), and she became a pillar of support for him and his family. After the arrest of her husband, she sold some land and rented a room to the community veterinarian.

⁶ Carlo Gramsci, brother, Delio Gramsci, the oldest son of Antonio and Julca.

She sewed shirts in the evenings, the only time free from tending to her children (Rodríguez de Lecea, 2017). Although Gramsci had basic schooling, some biographies note he read everything he could get his hands on, “including Boccaccio” (Fiori, 1978⁷, as cited in Rodríguez de Lecea, 2017), and Peppina did her best to ensure all her children could study. She was a decisive, guiding presence for Nino and his siblings. “Who knows if we would be alive if it weren’t for her,” Nino said years later (Fiori, 1990; Rodríguez de Lecea, 2017). Peppina Marcias passed away on December 30, 1932. The family hid this fact from Nino for a time, even as he sent a greeting card to his mother for Saint Joseph’s Day in 1934.

Gramsci was the fourth of Ciccillo and Peppina’s children. The oldest three were Nannaro (Gennaro), Grazietta, and Emma; the younger ones were Mario, Teresina, and Carlo. As they grew, they each followed different paths, including in their political views and stances toward the Mussolini regime and Fascism. Gramsci’s oldest brother, Nannaro, lived and worked in Paris and gave Nino his first political materials, including several issues of *Avanti*, bought while Nannaro was in military service in Turin. Later, they lived together in Cagliari, while Nino “studied,” though he was plagued by ill health and hunger due to extreme poverty (Rodríguez de Lecea, 2017). They lived in a boarding house in a small, humid room with just a small window overlooking a well. He described this in a 1927 letter to his brother Carlo, explaining how difficult living conditions never deterred him from political action and that his incarceration was likely not the harshest experience of his life. He tried to assure Carlo that as a student, his conditions had been even more challenging, though neither experience was tragic, just circumstances that had to be faced.

Dearest Carlo,

I received your letter dated August 30 and the certified letter of September 2. Thank you sincerely. I don’t know what Mario wrote to you, but I feel he alarmed you too much, and while I thought your visit had calmed Mother, I was wrong. Your August 30 letter is very intense. I plan to write more often to convince you that your mind-set is not suitable for a man (and now you’re not so young). I had started by skipping my morning coffee, then delaying lunch to skip dinner, and so on, until I was eating only once a day for about eight months. By the end of my third year of high school,

⁷ Most of the data collected for this study come from this source.

I was severely malnourished. When the school year ended, I heard about a scholarship at Colegio Carlo Alberto, but the exam required mastery of everything from three years of high school. During the three-month break, I had to study intensely. Only Uncle Serafino realized my fragile state and invited me to stay with him in Oristano to tutor Delio. I stayed for a month and a half, and it nearly drove me crazy. I couldn't study for the scholarship because Delio took up all my time, and combined with my poor health, it wore me down.

I managed to escape. I had just over a month left to study. I left for Turin almost like a sleepwalker with 55 liras—after spending 45 of the 100-lira payment on a third-class ticket. In Turin, there was an exhibition, and a room alone cost me 3 liras a day. I had 80 liras in credit for a second-class ticket, but that wasn't enough to cover my stay, as the exams lasted two weeks, costing 50 liras for the room. I don't know how I managed to survive the exams; I fainted twice or three times, and afterward, the real troubles began. It took my family two months to send the papers I needed to enroll at the University. Without enrollment, I didn't receive the 70-lira monthly scholarship. A porter found me a guesthouse for 70 liras with credit. I was so discouraged that I almost let the police send me back. That guesthouse took my whole scholarship, and I spent the winter in a light coat meant for Cagliari. By March 1912, I was so sick that for months I stopped speaking because I jumbled my words when I tried.

Why am I telling you all this? To convince you that I have been in desperate straits before without losing hope. All this built character. I believe that even when all seems lost, you have to go back, work steadily, and start from scratch. You have to rely on yourself and your own efforts, with no expectations or disillusionments. You shouldn't strive for anything beyond your means, but commit fully to what you know you can achieve. My morale is excellent. Some see me as a devil, others as a saint. I don't want to be a martyr or a hero, only an ordinary man with profound convictions who won't compromise for anything (Gramsci, 1927).

Immersed in personal, social, and historical concerns, Gramsci often wrote to his mother about the social conditions of his homeland, aware of the unique tensions that marked his life, relationships, and society at large. He reflected on political, social, and economic aspects, cognizant of the advance of capitalism and its consequences for the Socialist struggle.

To Mother

I wanted to know if Ghilarza, with its new administrative status near the Tirso dam, is growing into a town. Is there more commerce, some industry, or are people moving from traditional work to something different? Has construction developed, or do only a few people live from renting out property? This interests me, and if you write to me about it, I'd be very pleased. You know that boredom is my worst enemy, even though I read and write all day (Gramsci, 2003).

Gramsci's rebellion unfolded in a series of progressive stages, from the personal level to the broader societal, with a significant intermediate step influenced by regional nuances, particularly his attachment to Sardinia (Rodríguez de Lecea, 2017). He explained this progression in a letter to his wife, Giulia Schucht, two years before his detention and incarceration, reflecting on the unjust conditions that nearly forced him to abandon his studies—unlike those who were better off. This experience led him to recognize the necessity of regional autonomy in defense of local interests. Yet, with his exposure to urban life and the modern world, he came to realize that regional independence alone was insufficient; true liberation required freedom from the oppression of hegemonic groups.

What saved me from being a stiff rascal? The instinct of rebellion, which from the beginning was directed against the wealthy. I, who had received top marks in all subjects in primary school, could not continue my studies, while the sons of the butcher, the pharmacist, and the businessman could. This resentment extended to all the rich who oppressed the Sardinian peasants, and I thought then that we had to fight for national independence for the region. Then I became acquainted with the working class in an industrial city and understood what Marx truly meant when I read him out of intellectual curiosity (Gramsci, 1999, p. 154).

Again crossing the boundary between public and personal life, Gramsci married Giulia Schucht in 1923, and they had two sons: Delio (Delka), born in 1924, and Giuliano (Julik), born in 1926. Gramsci never saw his second son, Julik, born in Moscow on August 30. Just two months after parting from his family, Gramsci was arrested, disregarding his parliamentary immunity, and was sentenced by a special court to 20 years and 5 months in prison (Rodríguez de Lecea, 2017). Biographies note how his extended imprisonment strained his

family relationships. He suffered alone, isolated from the world and gravely ill, often pleading with Julca to write, share news of his sons, and send photographs. Gramsci experienced another health crisis, and his condition rapidly deteriorated until his death.

We end this section with a passage from one of his final letters to his wife, where the full humanity of Gramsci's writings is clear, particularly the importance of family and the affection he found in them. Expressing his longing, he reflected on the importance of caring for his children and nurturing hope in the potential for political change that new generations would represent.

Dear Julca,

We must shower our children with affection as loved ones, and in them revive all the best, all that is most beautiful, that remains in our memory. I embrace you with much tenderness (Fiori, 1990, p. 60).

Gramsci's Socio-Political World

To understand the relationship we propose about Gramsci, encompassing historical, conceptual, and emotional dimensions, it is essential to consider power and conflict as core dynamics that shape his militancy, political action, and theoretical thought. In this sense, Gramsci's contributions as both a journalist and activist, often addressing diverse topics with systematic reflection rather than an academic slant, stand out in the analysis of political action, culture, and educational pedagogy.

In 1911, Gramsci left Sardinia to study at the University of Turin in northern Italy, a city undergoing rapid industrialization. Chroniclers note that he spent this time among Socialists, Sardinian immigrants, and rural workers recruited to work in urban factories. To fully grasp Gramsci's work and emotions, it is necessary to understand the complex historical frameworks of the period, at the end of the Victorian era, when Europe and the world were on the verge of significant change. For instance, the Russian Revolution against Tsar Nicholas II had commenced, culminating in the Romanovs' assassination amid the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). Bulgaria declared independence from the Ottoman Empire; Cuba gained independence from the United States; the United Kingdom signed the Entente Cordiale with France; World War I

began, and the United States later joined the Triple Entente. Subsequently, the Weimar Republic's rise and the Treaty of Versailles imposed military and economic sanctions on Germany, while the Austro-Hungarian Empire fragmented into Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. Additionally, the First, Second, and Third Internationals were established, the latter in Moscow.

Gramsci joined the Italian Socialist Party in 1913, leaving the classroom to write for Socialist newspapers and rise through party ranks. Alongside Italian Socialists, he aligned with Lenin's ideas and joined the Third International. His activism focused on establishing workers' councils and organizing strikes to wrest control of production from capitalists, benefiting the working classes. Although he did not complete his formal education, Gramsci's university studies brought him closer to Marxist thought, particularly the concept of "praxis philosophy," which advocates class consciousness and the working class's liberation through social struggle. He joined the Council of Turin's factory movement to support the April 1920 strike and the occupation of factories.

For traditional liberal democracy, the core structure rests on parliamentary support. In contrast, Gramsci argued that proletarian participation depends on factory councils as a foundation for building a new State. In 1922, Gramsci traveled to Moscow to represent the Italian party at an International meeting. His socio-political career brought him into contact with influential intellectuals, such as Lukács, who shaped his thinking. By 1926, as a party leader facing Mussolini's rise, he aligned with Italian Communists and joined the Internationalist Socialist school. At this point, he was imprisoned in Rome and sentenced to twenty years, which he did not fully serve due to ill health.

Elected to the Italian Parliament, Gramsci proposed a general strike to the opposition, observing the lack of will to act, which he attributed to the ruling classes' fear of proletarian control. He held that Fascism was not the universal expression of the ruling class but rather the result of political alliances between urban and agrarian bourgeoisies that empowered the upper bourgeoisie. This imperialist tendency, he argued, reflected the industrial and agrarian classes' need to seek solutions to Italy's social crisis outside the nation, even as it represented an oppressive and reactionary force, potentially paving the way for a revolutionary resolution to Italy's social and political contradictions.

Final Reflections. Historical Context: Modernity and the Struggle for Social Hegemony.

From our perspective, certain elements have not only defined an era but also created conditions for Gramsci's action, work, and reflections. As Wallerstein (1996, 2001) suggests, the phenomenon of modernity emerged alongside expectations that opened new spaces for human activities, yet brought several paradoxes to the fore. In this context, it is not merely coincidental that the ruling classes displayed a heightened interest in dominating not only power but also the realms of art and science—an aspect that pervades Gramsci's reflections. This is because the ruling classes understood that these spaces serve as essential tools for rational control, enabling them to anticipate changes and, therefore, sparking serious disputes over control from different fronts.

In Gramsci's time and continuing today, as Wallerstein (1996) proposes, rationality and modernity form a reference framework for constructing a new era in which emerging social classes and new accommodations foster an open struggle for control and leadership within societies. This extends beyond the social sphere to the economic, political, and cultural realms. As highlighted throughout this document, hegemonic groups or leaders for the first time confronted the question of how to rationally manage the ongoing transformations across various spheres of human life (Wallerstein, 1996, pp. 25, 7).⁸ For the groups in power, maintaining dominance or hegemony over societies became imperative, requiring tools to perpetuate their systems and forms of control, or, in some cases, to manage processes of change within social spaces (Wallerstein, 1999).

These deep contradictions were integral to modernity, intersecting profoundly with Gramsci's reflections, as Berman (1988) observes. He notes that the turbulence of modern life and its inherent contradictions manifested through a life enriched by diverse sources—the monumental discoveries of physical sciences that transformed our understanding of the universe and our place in it, as well as the industrialization of production that trans-

⁸ The texts of those we are referring to classify the so-called new cultural institutions, which, among other things, transformed all the scaffolding that had been conceived up until now. Among them, we could identify the statement by the author in which he says: "The French Disturbance—the French Revolution—by establishing ideologies, the social sciences, and movements also created a restriction and distortion of this process of change, while at the same time creating obstructions that the world has become aware of over the past few years" (Wallerstein, 2001, p. 25).

lated scientific knowledge into technology. This reshaping of human surroundings, the destruction of past environments, the acceleration of life's pace, and the generation of new forms of collective power led, naturally, to class struggles.

The link between modernity, reason, knowledge, and capitalism drove massive demographic shifts, displacing millions from their ancestral homes and propelling them into new lives across the globe. This brought about accelerated urban growth, often chaotic; dynamic systems of mass communication that interconnect diverse societies and peoples; increasingly powerful states, bureaucratically organized and constantly striving to expand their reach; and mass social movements of people and communities challenging their political and economic leaders for control over their lives (Berman, 1988).

A significant number of transformations occurred in both Europe and America, amplifying the political upheavals of the time and constructing unprecedented new relationships and sociopolitical realities within the modern world (Wallerstein, 1988). For the bourgeoisie—or, more precisely, the hegemonic representatives of capitalist states and ruling social classes—at least two conclusions emerged, particularly after the French Revolution. First, they recognized the genuine threat posed by “the dirty masses” as represented by figures like Robespierre, who demonstrated the potential of ordinary people seriously considering competition for state power. The idea of a state in which peasants, extremists, or women wielded influence—marching, protesting, even taking up arms—was seen as unthinkable. The global bourgeoisie (Wallerstein, 2001) sensed that something fundamental was changing, affecting the structure of the capitalist system, as well as politics, institutions, and social organization.

Second, for the first time, structural realities that had dominated for centuries were being transformed: *a*) the global capitalist system was recognized as precisely that, a capitalist system; *b*) the world economy's division of labor was constrained by an interstate system theoretically composed of sovereign states; and *c*) liberal ideology, as the dominant and hegemonic force, assumed control by defining the boundaries of state, market, society, and personal life.

However, as in Gramsci's time, we once again seem to face a worldwide, perhaps inevitable, process that undermines past social gains, essential

democratic liberties, and fundamental human rights, as Levrino (2013) points out. In this debate, as Levrino also suggests, a lingering ambiguity remains, with some intellectuals appearing to embrace the hegemonic discourse, seeking to live comfortably and “without fear,” as Gramsci put it, indifferent to the increasingly harsh and distressing social asymmetries of everyday life. This situation, however, is not due to apathy or scorn but is rather the result of a particular achievement of the liberal neo-conservative vision, one that has espoused the “end of the history of ideologies”—a vision that ultimately alienates intellectuals from popular causes and the pursuit of justice. Only a handful of sincere intellectuals, such as Gramsci, have warned us of the dangers that lie ahead, urging us, as he did, to despise indifference (Levrino, 2013).

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9. Socio-Political Resistance and Emotion Work: Challenging the Feeling Rules of Domination and Obedience

Edith Kuri Pineda¹

Introduction

Social movements are key players in contemporary socio-political issues and a driving force behind cultural, political, economic, and institutional change. These movements embody resistance and confrontational challenges. In this context, the construction of socially fractured meanings plays a vital role; no social or political action exists without intentionality or meaning. So then, what is resistance? What role do feelings play in its articulation? How do emotions shape the establishment of movements, recruitment dynamics, and participation? And what kinds of sentiments contribute to demobilization?

This article explores these questions by drawing on sociological perspectives on collective actions and social movements—including works by Melucci (2002), Tilly (2009), Moore (1978), Scott (1990), and theories of framework—and by engaging theorists in the sociology of emotions, such as Hochschild (1979, 2003), Jasper (1998, 2011, 2018), and Collins (2004). Building bridges between these approaches, this chapter is divided into three parts. The first section develops the recursive ties between social reality and emotionality. The second examines resistance as a challenge to *the feeling rules of domination and obedience*. Finally, the third part analyzes how emotions, along with values, beliefs, and reasoning, contribute to the rationality of mobilizations at various stages, emphasizing that the emotional experience of collective action members is dynamic and shaped by social interactions and confrontations with opponents.

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Emotions and the Social World: An Indissoluble Relationship

Over recent decades, the *emotional* and *affective turns* have been prominent in empirical research and theoretical reflection. Often, emotional and affective phenomena have been considered equivalent, while other perspectives have distinguished between them analytically, viewing affect as a social foundation that predates cultural and historical meaning and is shaped by physiological factors (Cedillo et al., 2016). In this chapter, we will address the emotional dimension of resistance and social movements, highlighting their relational, processual, and contextual nature, without implying an analytical distinction where there is a clear categorical divider between what is emotional and what is affective.²

Discussing emotions takes us back to “the awareness of bodily cooperation with an idea, thought, or attitude and the label attached to that awareness” (Hochschild, 2003, p. 75). Jasper (2018) defines emotions as a modality of *feeling-thinking*, emphasizing that emotions enable individuals to process information from the world more quickly than conscious thought, serving as a vehicle of communication with those with whom they need to coordinate or respond. From a sociological standpoint, feelings permeate social life, influencing our goals and the means by which we pursue them, given that these means carry emotional resonance.

Halbwachs (1947) argues that social structures condition not only what to feel and how to feel it but also how to codify and express these feelings. Following this approach, Hochschild (2003) introduced the concept of *feeling rules*—the set of social conventions that dictate in which spaces and under which circumstances individuals may or may not experience certain feelings without guilt or shame. These rules may be followed or even broken. Some are universal, while others are specific to particular social groups that vary depending on actors’ social positions—such as class, gender, or ethnicity—and have a dynamic cultural and historical character.

If emotions result from various forms of social relationality, it can be argued that power and domination—whether along ethnic, gender, or class lines—shape individuals’ sentimental experiences. Speaking of power refers us to asymmetrical social relations involving access to and control over goods,

² There is a theoretical discussion in which an attempt is made to distinguish between emotions, feelings, and affect. In this chapter, I will use the terms “emotions” and “feelings” as synonyms for stylistic purposes.

knowledge, and resources—both material and symbolic—that are withheld from others to influence and control their behavior and, sometimes, their subjectivity for the benefit of those in power. Therefore, power is neither a substance nor a rigid, irreversible social expression. Its dynamic nature implies fissures where resistance can emerge. According to Popitz (2017), power is an inherent component of social ties and, as such, is a construction open to questioning and change. Thus, all exercises of power entail a confrontation with freedom and the autonomy of others. A liberated conscience, therefore, implies a questioning of asymmetrical relations. In the following section, we will discuss how power, domination, and oppression—by encompassing relations of command and obedience—invoke *rules of feeling*, which are transgressed through various forms of resistance.

Resistance: Challenging the Feeling Rules of Domination and Obedience

In his seminal work, Moore (1978) argues that rebellions are grounded in an emotion with an axiological basis: grievance. All feelings of injustice and affront arise from a breach of social rules. Through a transhistorical and analytical lens, Moore emphasizes that all relations involving command and obedience constitute a social contract, whether explicit or implicit, in which the dominant groups are expected to provide security, peace, and protection to their subordinates in exchange for obedience and the legitimacy of power. Nepotism, deprivation of material goods, procedural violations in authority selection, and frustration with their efforts are, for the subordinate group, among the primary sources of grievances.

Moore does not limit his analysis to identifying what triggers grievances as a core element in acts of rebellion. He also examines the elements that underpin the moral authority of suffering, which enables resignation to domination and thus inhibits rebellion. These elements include co-optation, the breakdown of supportive links among subordinates, and fragmentation. Class, ethnic, religious, and gender differences in a stratified society hinder empathy, solidarity, and organized resistance.

What Moore (1978) establishes allows us to infer that all command-obedience relationships harbor a range of functions and obligations with emotion-

al and value-based resonance. I argue that there are culturally and historically constructed *feeling rules of domination and obedience*, where subjects feel pride and satisfaction in exercising power, while the oppressed are expected to accept this asymmetry with respect and submission.

Popitz (2017) points out that different forms of power rely on two interrelated elements: threats—associated with punishment—and promises—associated with reward—each of which resonates emotionally, evoking fear on the one hand and hope on the other.

The ability of human beings to exercise power over others implies that they exploit the malleability of others' fears and hopes to impose their own will on others' aspirations and aversions, influencing what people seek or avoid, what they do, and what they omit (Popitz, 2017, p. 67).

Following Popitz, I assert that power relations create a *horizon of expectations, fears, and hopes* for both those who exercise power and those who adhere to it. Subordinates fear humiliation, embarrassment, or neglect, generating expectations—whether positive or negative—based on the specific nature of their relationship with domination. They develop a sense of hope for rights, recognition, and ultimately a break from oppression. Meanwhile, those in power fear losing their status, being ignored, undervalued, or challenged, while they hope to maintain bonds of obedience, respect, and loyalty. In other words, they seek to preserve acknowledgment of their command and rely on maintaining their status.

If power and domination are social constructions, then resistance must also be understood as such. I define resistance as a range of actions, practices, and discourses created by subjects in materially and symbolically subordinate positions, aiming to subvert class, ethnic, and gender domination. This includes subtle and anonymous acts of defiance (Scott, 1990), such as theft, rumors, and threats, as well as social movements that emerge in public spaces with demands, speeches, and methods of struggle that openly challenge adversaries. Socio-political mobilizations are one form of resistance, though not all forms of resistance qualify as social movements, which represent collective action centered on shared identities, meanings, objectives, and methods of struggle outside the institutional sphere. According to Melucci (2002), social movements are defined by three interrelated elements: a) the presence of con-

flict, b) solidarity, and c) the rupture of compatibility limits with the status quo. Unlike other forms of resistance, movements directly confront adversaries and publicly fight for their survival and demands. In sum, resistance is a broad construction involving rationality, political culture, discursive practices, and social action.

Resistance involves a process of interpretation and cognitive reformulation regarding the *feeling rules of domination and obedience*. Values closely tied to emotions influence this process so that what was once tolerable or accepted becomes unacceptable. This dynamic of (re)signification represents cultural work (Moore, 1978), in which actors, from a value-based perspective grounded in historical and cultural definitions of justice, interpret and may challenge a social order that they find oppressive. Questioning these rules, of course, involves *emotion work* (Hochschild, 2003, p. 94).

I refer to the act of trying to change in degree or quality of an emotion or feeling... note that emotion work refers to the effort —the act of trying— and not to the outcome, which may or not be successful (Hochschild, 2003, p. 94).

The fear, humiliation, and shame experienced by dominated groups can transform into indignation and anger. When combined with self-confidence, solidarity, and the belief that injustice can be remedied, these emotions can lead to collective actions that openly challenge power.³

The *feeling rules of domination and obedience* require actors to feel and behave according to certain expectations. Often, these norms operate through what Scott has termed the *public transcript*—the overt discourse between those who dominate and those who are subordinate. These interactions are ritualistic, with participants displaying language and body language appropriate to their social positions. The performativity of power serves to endorse, legitimize, and reify power relations, even within dominant sectors. Can subordinates genuinely respect those in power? Or are these rituals merely hollow performances, acts of survival in the face of limited alternatives? Categorical answers are elusive. However, the *public transcript*, permeated by the *rules of*

³ Gravante and Poma (2018) analyze the emotional preparation strategies of the members of a collective actor in defense of natural resources in Mexico. As these authors have rightly pointed out, Hochschild's concept has not been fully addressed in studies on socio-political mobilization.

feeling of those who dominate and are obeyed, is part of what Roseberry (1994) references in his reading of Gramsci on hegemony:

I propose that we use this concept not to understand consent but to understand struggles: the ways in which the words, images, symbols, forms, organizations, institutions, and movements used by subordinate populations to talk about, understand, confront, accommodate to, or resist their domination are shaped by the process of domination itself. What hegemony constructs, then, is not a shared ideology but a common material and meaningful framework for living through, talking about, and acting upon social orders characterized by domination. That common material and meaningful framework is, in part, discursive: a common language or way of talking about social relationships that sets out the central points around which contestation and struggle can occur (Roseberry, 1994, p. 360).

This common material framework is a contested space, a shared language where subordinates appropriate and test the limits of power, an activity also undertaken by dominant groups. Hegemony, then, is a historical cultural matrix that involves both dominators and the dominated, allowing the latter to use figures, institutions, discourse, symbols, and norms established by the dominant to resist. This framework is not a monolithic, polished ideological form where the role of the oppressed is confined to passive obedience to ruling-class dictates. On the contrary, adherence to the rules of domination and obedience frequently involves the type of *emotion work* described by Hochschild.⁴ As Scott (1990) states:

For most bondsmen through history, whether untouchables, slaves, serfs, captives, or minorities held in contempt, the trick to survive, not always mastered, has been to swallow one's bile, choke back one's rage, and conquer the impulse to physical violence... (Scott, 1990, p. 37).

According to Scott (1990), the *public transcript* maintains a dialectic relationship with the *hidden transcript*—a space where actors can express themselves openly in the absence of opponents. This sphere is vital for the formation of resistance and social mobilization, as it provides a relative margin of autono-

⁴ In this book, consult Enrique Gutiérrez Márquez's text on hegemonic relations and emotions.

my without which resistance would be impossible. I argue that the *hidden transcript* constitutes a material and symbolic space for social interaction among subordinates, where, free from adversaries, they share sadness, indignation, resentment, fury, and frustration, fostering a process of identification and solidarity. It is precisely within this *hidden transcript* that social critiques of the *rules of domination and resistance* arise, manifesting as hegemonic fissures. Both *public* and *hidden discourse* are charged with emotions rooted in social relations of power and camaraderie.

The *hidden transcript* is essential for the formation of resistance and what Scott (1990) calls *infrapolitics*, which encompasses a series of practices and anonymous discourses shaped indelibly by power relations. Examples of this form of political expression include individual and collective acts by dominated groups, often expressed ambiguously or anonymously in public spaces. Numerous forms of *infrapolitics* reveal a moral rejection, with emotional implications, of the conditions imposed on their lives and the entities they hold responsible.

Thus, *infrapolitics* forms a canvas on which a culture of rebellion is portrayed. Here, we see signs of what could become open collective revolt against domination—a rupture of the *rules of feeling of domination and obedience*.

The significance of *infrapolitics* and the *hidden transcript*, as speculative counterparts to the *public transcript*, lies in their ability to reveal how diverse forms of resistance to power develop socially, from subtle acts of defiance to large-scale social movements that openly confront adversaries. As Scott (1990) suggests, “How can we understand the open break represented by the civil rights movement or the black power movement in the 1960s without understanding the offstage discourse among black students, clergymen, and parishioners?” (p. 199).

I argue that socio-political mobilizations, as forms of resistance, possess both visible and invisible dimensions. Scott’s concept of the *hidden transcript* reflects a space where individuals share grievances, feel a range of emotions, engage in *emotion work* as described by Hochschild, identify sources of blame, articulate demands, and deliberate the pros and cons of mobilization and organization. Consequently, social movements operate within both *public spaces* and the *hidden transcript*, each providing a crucial platform for analysis. In the following section, we will examine the role of emotions in the formation and maintenance of mobilization, as well as the factors that inhibit it.

Emotions in Movement

The earliest studies of collective action focused on the irrational and pathological aspects of this form of social action, identifying panic and anger as contagious and potentially dangerous emotions that could trigger violent behavior. This perspective was often elitist, rooted in the longstanding dualism between body and emotion, and thus reinforced the primacy of reason. Despite the conceptual shifts that followed, reason retained its status as a primary heuristic for explaining why individuals choose to participate as collective agents. A clear example of this is the theory of rational choice, which is grounded in the idea of self-interested individuals who act based on cost-benefit calculations, where material incentives play a significant role. Recently, however, this perspective has been refined to consider moral incentives as additional drivers of socio-political participation.

The theory of rational choice has faced substantial critique, most notably from Elster (2012), who argued that the cost-benefit model is overly simplistic. Elster's critique not only challenges the reason-emotion dichotomy but also links emotions to other sources of meaning, such as norms, desires, and beliefs. Beliefs, he suggests, shape emotions, which are not inherently irrational; rather, they can be rational or irrational depending on the beliefs underlying them. The rationality of emotions thus depends on their alignment with the evidence available to the actors. That said, rational beliefs can prompt irrational emotions, and vice versa. In this way, emotions and beliefs have a mutually influential relationship and serve as a compass for social and political actions.

Elster (2012) argues that the interaction between interest and emotion does not fit within a theoretical framework that treats these factors as competing forces. In Elster's model, reason and emotion are not antagonistic; indeed, when indecision prevails, actors can rely on emotions to make decisions.

Following Elster's lead, Petersen (2008) explores the instrumental use of emotions in political conflicts, such as that between Serbia and Albania: "It is worth understanding that there is a strategic logic behind certain acts, one that rationally uses existing passions" (p. 159). Petersen argues that arousing certain emotions while suppressing others can shape group beliefs and control emotional responses among participants, making the strategic expression of emotions a powerful tool in conflict.

I contend that reasons, beliefs, values, and emotions constitute the underlying rationality of collective action. This rationality pertains to the meaning that individuals assign to their actions within interactions, the underlying motivations, and the “why” behind socio-political engagement. In essence, it speaks to the intentionality intrinsic to social action.

A suggestive perspective on the relationship between emotions and social movements emerges when we consider the word “e-motion,” which implies movement. This perspective reveals the dynamic nature of emotional experience and how it can invigorate those who feel it. Similarly, the term “social movement” implies transition and action – a space where individuals, social and political relationships, demands, rationalities (beliefs, values, ideas, emotions), discourses, organizations, identities, material and symbolic appropriation of spaces, deliberative and decision-making mechanisms, internal conflicts, leadership structures, and methods of contention all come into play. Consequently, both collective action and emotions share a dynamic and legal nature.

Discussing the link between social movements and emotions requires distinguishing between:

- 1) *The internal dimension of the collective actor.* In this context, emotions emerge and are shared through the social interactions within the movement. This network of social relations serves as a critical space for fostering emotions like trust and solidarity, as well as identity formation. As has been noted, the internal life of movements, although sometimes set aside analytically, is essential for understanding the construction of collective action. Key elements include the development of leadership, the reproduction or challenging of traditional gender roles, and other dynamics. Within this sphere, internal conflicts may evoke emotions like envy, jealousy, and anger. This internal dimension aligns with what Scott (1990) terms the *hidden transcript*.
- 2) *The external dimension of the collective actor.* This dimension concerns how social movements express their messages in public spaces, with discourse that resonates emotionally and axiomatically. For example, the slogan “You took them from us alive, and alive we want them back,” championed by the Eureka Committee in Mexico amid the forced disappearances of urban and rural guerrilla members in the

1970s, has symbolized a demand for truth, justice, and memory with strong emotional and ethical implications. Such public expressions by collective actors can serve as pathways to build socio-political alliances with other groups, as well as elicit responses from adversaries and the broader public. This external dimension corresponds to Scott's (1990) concept of the *public transcript*.

The excision of these dimensions stems from an analytical need, as both levels are empirically interconnected. The sentimental experience of collective subjects and their allies, adversaries, and audience is shaped by a field of confrontation woven together by actors and their opponents (including face-to-face interactions). This field of confrontation encompasses not only political but also symbolic aspects, along with emotional and value-based components. Thus, encounters between movements and their adversaries inherently challenge established *feeling rules of domination and obedience*, creating a battle of sentiments (Besserer, 2014).

To analyze the world of meaning behind collective action, we turn to framework theory. Reconsidering Goffman's (1974) *framework* theory highlights how parts of social reality, often unnoticed, are interpreted by social movements, which, through this interpretation, become socio-politically visible. Providing a framework involves a selective exercise in perceiving reality, foregrounding specific events that subjects deem inadmissible. In interactions, members of collective actions interpret a fact as problematic—*diagnostic frameworks*—and evaluate possible resolutions—*predictive frameworks*—that give purpose to their mobilization—*motivational frameworks*.

A key concept in this approach, with emotional and value implications, is the *framework of injustice* (Gamson, 1992), which explores how movement members interpret reality through a pre-existing moral code, culturally and historically constructed, where notions of justice, legitimacy, and morality are defined. According to Chihu (2006), *frameworks of injustice* should evoke indignation among movement participants and the public. This concept traces back to moral shock, as proposed by Jasper (1998), describing emotional responses to unforeseen events that trigger offense—when framed within a value code—and can foster potent mobilizing emotions, such as anger. *Moral shock* involves cognition, leading individuals to interpret events through a values-based lens, thereby motivating decisions and organization.

For Collins (2004), the connection between feelings and values is shaped by defining value elements as cognition infused with emotion. Jasper (2018) argued that morals *depend* on an emotional element to resonate socially and politically, asserting that *moral emotions* are fundamental in constructing social movements. Thus, the axiological resonance of socio-political actions arises from evoking emotions. *Moral emotions*, like indignation and injustice, lie at the core of the *framework*. The intimate connections between moral values and collective action often crystalize explicitly in demands—fair wages, socioeconomic equality, gender equality, political freedom, respect for human rights, etc.—that drive action.

Actors perceive a situation as unjust based on cultural, political, and historical contexts, as well as experiences shaped by gender, class, and age. However, we should not overstate the sociological role of offense, indignation, and *moral shock* in mobilization: the social construction of movements arises from a constellation of social relationships and interpretive processes. Feeling offended alone does not suffice to prompt participation as a socio-political actor. It is also necessary to attribute suffering to specific conditions, establish social networks, and feel confident in the transformative potential of mobilization—that is, actors must perceive themselves as agents, challenging the *rules of domination and obedience*, and the associated emotional values. They engage in a dynamic of cognitive work, accompanied by *emotional elaboration*, where power is *dereified* and *denaturalized*, leading them to interpret these circumstances as susceptible to modification. This involves transforming beliefs and emotions, as moving from submission to rebellion requires converting shame, fear, and humiliation into indignation and anger, revealing the cognitive aspect of emotions.

Social movements serve as arenas for social and symbolic interaction, where shared meanings are constructed—beliefs, reasons, emotions, values—that constitute the rationality behind collective action. They act as references for political, emotional, and value-laden experiences that often solidify participants' identities, conditioned by conflict with adversaries as well as internal disputes and bonds. Thus, movements can be seen as *spaces of emotional interaction*. The role of emotions in their construction is neither incidental nor secondary.

Social movements are emotional movements. Insurgency does not begin with a program or political strategy. These may emerge later, as leaders develop, either from within or outside the movement, to advance political, ideolog-

ical, or personal agendas that may or may not align with participants' original motivations. But the origin of a social movement begins with transforming emotion into action. According to the theory of affective intelligence, the emotions most relevant to social mobilization and political behavior are fear (negative affect) and enthusiasm (positive affect) (Castells, 2015, p. 13).

I argue that socio-political movements are *meaning-making agents* where emotions serve as bridges for communicating diverse ideas and beliefs. Jasper (2011) categorizes types of sentiments in collective action:

- 1) *Urges*: Bodily impulses that are hard to ignore, such as sexual desire or hunger.
- 2) *Reflex Emotions*: Immediate reactions to social and physical environments, like fear, anger, surprise, or irritation.
- 3) *Moods*: Distinguished by their stability over time, they can manifest in various contexts without a specific object. Moods can energize reflex emotions and be altered by them.
- 4) *Moral Emotions*: Rooted in moral codes, expressing rejection or approval and marked by their stability.
- 5) *Affective Commitments*: Stable feelings like love, hate, trust, solidarity, loyalty, resentment, attachment, and respect, directed toward people or, in some cases, places.

Jasper (2018) asserts that *moral emotions* and *affective commitments* are central to movements and lay the foundation for other action-motivating sentiments like anger. Similarly, Petersen (2008) points out that emotions of *predisposition*, which are stable throughout history, such as scorn and grudges, are support mechanism of *occurring emotions* of an ephemeral nature. This illustrates that one emotion can trigger another.

Moral emotions and *affective commitments* are crucial both at the outset and in the continuity of movements, often overlapping. For example, someone deeply identified with a community might feel *moral shock* when interpreting a major project as a threat to that place. The resulting distress signifies a rupture of the community's *ontological security*⁵—its sense of trust and normalcy,

⁵ Ontological security: "Confidence or trust that the natural and social worlds are as they appear to be, including the basic existential parameters of self and social identity" (Giddens, 1984, p. 377).

fundamental to social continuity. *Moral shock*, therefore, is anchored in love for a place and a social structure shaped by space and time. Reflexive emotions, such as anger, fear, and surprise, rest upon *affective commitments* and *moral emotions*, interpreting the project as unjust.

The recruitment process in socio-political movements partly depends on *frame alignment*, linking public orientations with collective actors' values, meanings, ideological beliefs (Snow et al., 1986), and feelings. Frame resonance, which has a cognitive echo, also implies emotional resonance. Empathy plays a central role, serving as a bridge to understand another's oppression. As an intersubjective bridge, empathy can foster a form of immediate resistance: solidarity. Discussing this emotion requires distinguishing between internally constructed collective action and displays of support from external actors, where empathy functions as a communicative channel. Solidarity is more common among those who share similar living standards, indicating an identification dynamic. Consequently, empathy and solidarity are crucial in recruitment, mobilization maintenance, and political alliance building.

Trust, an essential emotion, is critical in both the recruitment and maintenance of collective resistance and movements. Trust in fellow members or family can influence decisions to a) invite others to participate in protests and b) join mobilization themselves. Jasper (2018) highlights that trust-based social relations support collective action, enabling better coordination and internal management of political differences. Trust is especially significant given the uncertainty and risks often inherent in mobilization, especially in regimes where authoritarianism and state violence respond to protest. Participation may also mean a departure from daily life and its *unproblematic* nature, making trust among activists fundamental. Over time, emotions like fear, insecurity, and sadness, shaped by the conflict and socio-political pressures, can be mitigated by trust, hope, and security, directed toward both companions and the actions undertaken.

As with all emotions, trust must be understood in a relational context. This means it is a constructed arena of confrontation between socio-political subjects and their opponents, reflecting the emotional experiences of its participants. For example, there is a lack of trust among movement members toward certain media outlets, adversaries, political institutions, and some authorities, in contrast to the trust they place in their own organizations, other media, and allies. It is important to note that both trust and its antagonistic manifesta-

tions—like all emotions—are felt not only by the participants in the movement but also by their opponents and even by the audience, in a dynamic manner.

If participation in a movement entails risks and uncertainties for its members, what additional feelings, besides those already mentioned, contribute to sustaining their involvement? Happiness is one of these feelings, arising from various socio-political practices and playful activities, such as performances, dancing, and singing. Pride—considered a *moral* emotion by Jasper—involves an evaluative exercise regarding one's own actions. For participants in a social movement, pride can serve as an identity reference, stemming from a memorable accomplishment and the assurance that they have done what is right, thus having an axiological basis. Additionally, hope plays a significant role in recruitment and ongoing participation. This emotion, projected into the future and sustained in memory, represents a condensation of temporalities; hope is tied to an interpretive effort concerning present conditions and implicitly acknowledges the participants' capacity for agency. The social construction of hope represents an emotion that propels collective organization, without which it would be challenging to maintain resistance and achieve mobilization. In summary, happiness, pride, and hope shape the pleasure of participating in protest. Consequently, emotions not only contribute to socio-political mobilization but also form an integral part of the objectives of the action, given the experiential intensity involved.

Thus, feelings play a crucial role in articulating collective action and in the recruitment and retention of members. This can be attributed to the fact that such resistance encompasses a wide range of emotions, spanning from grievances to anger, and from sadness to satisfaction. I argue, based on Collins (2004), that social movements cultivate a broad spectrum of *emotional energy*.

This socially derived emotional energy, as Durkheim posits, encompasses feelings of confidence, courage to take action, and boldness in initiating change. It is morally infused energy that not only makes individuals feel good but also elevates their sense of doing what is most important and valuable. I would further argue that this emotional energy has a powerful motivating effect on individuals; those who experience such moments often desire to repeat them (Collins, 2004, p. 39).

The pleasure of protesting acts as a living reference that fuels actors' desire to experience it once more. Similarly, *emotional energy* serves as a "readiness for action" (Collins, 2004, p. 118) and possesses a cognitive component. This flow is constructed intersubjectively through various *rituals of interaction*, which include a) physical co-presence, b) demarcation from others, c) a focus of shared attention, and d) a collective emotional state. According to Collins, the effects of these *rituals* foster group solidarity along with individual emotional energies such as enthusiasm and strength, as well as the creation of sacred objects that symbolize the group's moral values. I believe that movements establish *ritual chains of interaction* that unfold over time and space, where *repertoires of confrontation* (Tilly, 2009)—meaning the methods of struggle employed in public spaces to make the mobilization objectives more visible and to force adversaries to withdraw—such as marches, meetings, assemblies, strikes, sit-ins, and blockades, are *rituals* that produce diverse emotions while also helping to articulate them. The effects of these *rituals of interaction* within mobilization aid in the formation of a collective identity, solidarity, and the construction of sacred symbols—such as leaders, emblems, and demands—that help interpret socio-political participation and defend the group, constituting actions of high moral value.

Rituals of interaction within a framework of resistance manifest in both *hidden discourses* and *public transcripts*. As previously stated, the emotional experiences of participants depend on their positions within the structures of domination and obedience.

Individuals in weak positions do not express anger in the same way. It is only when they possess sufficient resources to mount some resistance (or at least have a social space where they can voice symbolic threats) that these weaker individuals, who typically accept the status quo, may feel anger. This arises from the principle that the essence of anger is the mobilization of energy to overcome an obstacle. When there is enough social support to generate emotional energy, individuals can respond to frustration (in this case, being dominated) by mobilizing anger. Those who are too weak do not react with significant anger to domination but may instead succumb to depression (Collins, 2004, p. 127).

Collins's insights resonate with Scott's theory (1990). Subordinates can freely express themselves within a "different social circle"—the *hidden transcript*—

and we might add that in this sphere, they can manifest their grievances and anger. In the *public transcript*, those who are dominated must do an *emotional work* according to the *feeling rules of domination and obedience*. Both resistance and the construction of social mobilization necessitate an *emotional work* that transforms fear into anger or contains and controls it; this labor also involves changing shame—a low *emotional energy* that demobilizes—into indignation or even pride. This *emotional work* is present throughout the various stages of collective action.

If the pleasure of protest is a significant factor in maintaining participation, emotions such as frustration, blame, fear, and shame can, conversely, be demobilizing. Scheff (1990) states that pride and shame are basic emotions indicative of the state of social relations. Shame can expose weak ties and is triggered by how others perceive us. Recognizing that social relations form the foundation of collective action, shame represents an obstacle to mobilization that needs to be transformed or eliminated. Jasper (2018) argues that this sentiment undermines anger and leads individuals to isolation, a situation that is highly demobilizing. The social and symbolic power of shame can be strategically employed by movements to morally and politically discredit their adversaries through *repertoires* such as *escrache*. Fear, on the other hand, if not completely eliminated, should be managed through *emotional work*. In a strategic context, fear serves as a political tool often used to discourage participation and to isolate members of movements through various mechanisms, both legal and illegal, with state violence frequently being a recurring method.

In Table 1, we present a scheme of the emotions present at various stages of a social movement's life. The aim is not to offer an exhaustive typology but rather to synthesize the concepts addressed in this chapter.

Table 1. Emotions in Social Movements

Emotion	Before	Onset (recruitment)	During (conserve mobilization)	After
Anger				
Moral shock (surprise, insult, indignation)				
Love (attachment to a place or other people)				
Loyalty				
Empathy				
Solidarity				
Trust				
Fear*				
Sadness				
Pleasure in protesting (happiness, pride, satisfaction)				
Hope				
Pride				

Source: Author's own design.

* As previously expressed, fear is a demobilizing factor that participants in movements must contain, control, or transform into another sentiment through emotional preparation. Nevertheless, fear can be present at several stages of participation. The instrumental use of sentiments in the political sphere shows that “not simply the evocation of emotion but the laws governing it can become, in varying degrees, the arena of political struggle” (Hochschild, 1979, p. 568). Thus, what has been termed the *feeling rules of domination and obedience* are integral to socio-political conflict.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analyzed the role emotions play in the social construction of resistance and collective mobilization. Since feelings are conditioned by

social relations, culture, history, and power, they are not mere passive reflections of reality. Instead, they impact the constitution of reality by being part of the dynamics that shape meaning, which is oriented toward social and political action, along with beliefs, values, and reasons.

Building on Hochschild (2003), I have pointed out that power relations encompass *feeling rules of domination and obedience*, which include roles, rights, and obligations, depending on the positions agents occupy within axiological and emotional frameworks. Various modalities of resistance implicitly question these norms, drawing from an *emotional work* perspective where shame, fear, and humiliation are transformed into anger, security, and, at times, pride—feelings characterized by high *emotional energy* (Collins, 2004)—that can lead to socio-political mobilization. I argue that just as resistance involves *emotional work*, for subordinates to adhere to the rules of domination and obedience when direct rebellion is not an option, it also entails *emotional labor*. This involves efforts to contain emotions as a strategy for survival and negotiation with dominant sectors.

Emotions are elements that permeate social movements by filtering media stimuli and objectives of action. *Moral shock*, anger, and affronts trigger mobilization. Solidarity, empathy, and trust foster recruitment, while hope, pride, and the pleasure of protesting help sustain it. In contrast, shame and fear are barriers to participation, highlighting that *emotional work* is a critical issue for organizational purposes.

An essential aspect of the cultural dimension of social movements is collective identity, defined as a social construct—a process rooted in social relations, practices, and a sense of belonging that delineates *us* versus *them*. This identity is constructed in both space and time, exhibiting a dynamic yet stable character. According to Jasper (1998), a core element of identity resides in the emotional realm, where its strength lies. He documents the concepts of *shared emotions* and *reciprocal emotions* within collective action. The former refers to sentiments participants feel regarding the conflict, which they share with other militants—such as feelings of offense and anger—while the latter pertains to emotions directed toward comrades—such as loyalty, affection, and trust. I contend that *a)* both modalities contribute to developing empathy and solidarity, which are vital emotions for identity, and *b)* by sharing emotions such as fear, humiliation, and shame—emotions that can be deeply demoralizing—individuals engaged in interactions perform *emotional work* that facilitates par-

ticipation. Both *shared* and *reciprocal emotions* constitute collective identity, which is an *emotional identity*.

If recognition and *hetero-recognition* are essential for identity formation, then the confrontational space established between movements and their adversaries implies the existence of identity boundaries, both political and symbolic, with emotional and axiological implications. Thus, love and trust in our fellow movement members contrast with hate, anger, and mistrust of our adversaries. This dynamic engages in an axiological process of qualifying and disqualifying, identifying the good and the fair within *our* struggle, as well as the unjust and harmful traits of our opponents.

Just as social movements require political resources for their formation—such as organizational structures, deliberative and decision-making mechanisms, *repertoires*, negotiation abilities, recruitment, pressure, and allies—they also need symbolic resources like values, beliefs, emotions, and reasons that guide their actions, shape their collective identity, and underpin their *framework*. A significant area for theoretical and empirical research lies in examining the roles of sentiments and the *feeling rules of domination and resistance* in shaping the political culture of movements and their opponents. We must analyze the emotional dimension of politics and the political dimension of sentiments.

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10. “Lucio is Alive”: Death and Hope in the Social Study of Emotions

Marisol López Menéndez¹

“Lucio is Alive”, reads graffiti hastily scrawled on the porous wall of a viceregal building at the corner of Mexico City’s main square, the nation’s most significant symbolic site of power. This graffiti, painted in July 2016, briefly occupied the space before the diligent cleaning services that maintain the historic district of Mexico City erased it.

Figure 1. Graffiti: “Lucio is Alive.”



Note: Graffiti on the wall between 5 de Mayo and Monte de Piedad streets in the historic center of Mexico City. Author’s photograph.

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Lucio Cabañas was a teacher at the Ayotzinapa Rural Normal School who became a guerrilla leader and founded the Partido de los Pobres (Party of the Poor). He was killed in a confrontation with the army in December 1974. Much has been written about Lucio and his movement, and his figure continues to evoke mnemonic forms that reach beyond academia. For example, a large mural on one of the school's walls in Ayotzinapa depicts him. In 2001, his remains were exhumed from the municipal cemetery in Atoyac, Guerrero, where he had been secretly buried by the army.

Twenty-eight years after Cabañas's death, a monument was erected in his honor, and his remains were transferred there. DNA testing confirmed his identity (*Proceso*, 2002). The image of Lucio as a symbol of collective hope and demands for justice grew stronger after his death, particularly when the federal government declared the guerrilla movement over. This did not merely signify that the armed factions in Guerrero were left leaderless (Genaro Vásquez, the other prominent guerrilla leader from Guerrero, had died in 1972); it symbolized the perceived end of armed struggle as a pathway for national transformation.

The phrase "Lucio is Alive" encapsulates a space for hope, illuminating political questions and reshaping the meaning of death. Hope, which the French sociologist Desroche (1979) describes as a "rope hanging from nowhere," serves to explain the warrior's "non-death" and, more broadly, the recurring phenomenon of heroic figures transformed into symbols of resistance. This transformation functions as an emotional interpretation of death and the memory of these figures, viewed as ritualized events and reconfigured as narratives that bring new significance to death and suffering within the political sphere.

These spaces reshape social mobilization, organizing it around structured memories of loss and narratives where death transcends individual existence. In the words of French historian Delumeau (2012), this is an escape from the "land of fear" (p. 29).

As we can see, this resignification of death is one way of constructing alternate realities regarding the fear of death and other forms of existential loss, including disappearances, forced migration, and death itself. As Popitz (2019, p. 99) has noted, fear and hope constitute a duality that underpins power and compliance.

The notion of a "seed" that sustains moral and cultural projects beyond the lives of specific individuals is ancient. The Judeo-Christian tradition draws

on such narratives, as seen in stories like those of Masada and Maccabees IV, as well as the records of early Christian martyrs.

In this chapter, we explore hope as a collective concept (Desroche, 1979) and a mnemonic device that transcends the fear of death through narratives and rituals grounded in the body: death, often violent and inflicted by state powers, is the physical end of a person but the beginning of an emotional anchor for followers who assign charismatic qualities to the hero. The hero is framed within narratives reminiscent of Judeo-Christian martyrdom, especially regarding the public nature of his death. Photographs and narratives about his death are essential, as is clarity about his commitment to the cause that led to his assassination. Another key element is the violence inflicted upon his body and the ability to bear witness to it. Buck-Morse's (1999) perspective in *The Dialectics of Seeing* helps us understand the dual role of witness and testimony: a photograph of a tortured body serves as a vehicle for the event, allowing the spectator to become a witness and testify, thus rekindling the collective memory of Judeo-Christian martyrdom through imagery.

The text is divided into three sections. The first discusses the role of sacrifice in constructing hope in modernity. The second outlines some correlations between the body, emotions, and power from the perspective of martyrdom. The third examines the secularization of hope through religious and cultural forms within a Christian framework.

In this chapter, we aim to explain the phrase "Lucio is Alive" as a means of transcending death to create a space for social change, constructing and rearticulating utopias and emotional communities rooted in hope.

It is essential to highlight that the forms of emotional expression, the publicity surrounding death, and the specific characteristics of the martyr in question are distinctly modern. They generally adhere to the differentiation of spheres and their relative autonomy. However, a word of caution is warranted. Martyrdom—an emotional phenomenon that intersects with politics and religion—rarely aligns neatly with these traditional separations. It is simultaneously a religious and political phenomenon, where separation is often irrelevant.

Sacrifice, Hope, and Utopia

As proposed by Rosenwein (2006) in *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, the study of emotions, their origins, their norms, and their consequences form an inseparable part of the social process and its transformations (p. 2).

Along these lines, Rosenwein introduces the concept of *emotional communities*, “groups in which people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and assign similar value to certain emotions” (p. 2). For the case at hand, the primary emotional community arises from political solidarity with the cause for which Cabañas died: justice for impoverished peasants in Guerrero and the creation of a more just, egalitarian, and relatively peaceful society. In this way, the notion of an emotional community complements the ideas of hope and utopia. While it is true that the fear of death generally serves as a basis for the legitimization of authority (Popitz, 2019, p. 79), as shown in the social contract theories from Hobbes to Rawls, sacrifice warrants examination as a counterpoint, understood as a foundational element of modern political order rather than an aberrant or extra-political means of entering the public sphere.

Sacrifice operates as a regulatory element that enables hope: a limit marked by the abandonment of the body to achieve utopia, whether that entails constructing a just, egalitarian society or defending religious principles.

The martyrial framework I propose acknowledges bodily destruction as a principle organizing public life, embodying sacrifice in the name of utopia. In his book *The Spirit of Utopia*, Bloch (2000) links sacrifice to hope.

So the basic metaphysical phenomenon of true Christian charity remains this: that it lets one who loves live completely within his fellow, without sublating his soul or the soul of him whom he loves but into the We, into the salvation of all these souls, the preserved And and About Us no longer marked by anything alien to us. (Bloch, 2000, p. 212).

For Bloch, economic necessities are undoubtedly important but secondary. Ultimately, human motivations are directed toward moments dominated by religious feeling: these decisions are not only free and voluntary but are also guided by “spiritual structures” (Bloch, 1995, p. 72).

These structures have been the focus of a compelling typology proposed by Desroche (1979, p. 90). The “Messianic Kingdom” can be religious, political, socio-economic, familial, naturist, or cosmic, depending on specific aspira-

tions. Additionally, there exists a typology based on leadership, where a historical figure appears as a messiah not by self-designation but through attributes conferred by followers or successive generations.²

Another typology corresponds to an absent historical figure: a messiah who has come but went unrecognized, or one who has yet to arrive and remains in hiding, awaiting recognition; one who came and left but is expected to return (resurrection); or one who is elsewhere but whose place must remain unfilled (Desroche, 1979, p. 89).

This spectrum has intermediate points represented by vicarious figures: the prophet, the precursors, etc. Here, "Lucio is Alive" refers to a leader who cannot depart, who is bound to the social mobilization that acts in his name. In this utopian sense, the leader has ceded his death to his followers to continue defending the cause, even after proof of his death—unquestionable in the case of Cabañas.

It is important to clarify that, unlike many of his comrades and followers, Lucio did not suffer a forced disappearance. While his remains were buried clandestinely and his family lacked information on their location, the photograph of his body was published in the national press the next day, as seen in this image from *La Prensa*, published on December 3, 1974.

Figure 2. News of the death of Lucio Cabañas.



Note: Photograph from the *La Prensa* newspaper (December 3, 1974), Mexico's National Periodicals and Newspaper Library.

² It is important to distinguish this particular type of leadership from Weber's notion of charisma, where the leader claims his ability to lead. In many interpretations, this is considered the most important characteristic of charisma, but Desroche's proposal shows that the forms of messianic leadership are not necessarily presented in this way.

In “Lucio is Alive,” death is not denied exactly but presented as a factor that vindicates the deceased. In this sense, the hope for continuity of the cause and its eventual triumph is solidly linked to the premises of Judeo-Christian martyrdom, which arises only when three main actors converge: the martyr, their followers, and the State or the ruling *status quo*.

As previously noted (López Menéndez, 2015, 2016), this triad produces hagiographic narratives that symbolically support diverse social identities, often ones that fluctuate, forming specific types of emotional communities. Thus, martyrs may be vindicated by groups with different, even opposing political agendas. This necessitates consideration of the complex politics surrounding the figure of the martyr—those who proclaim the martyrdom of the deceased and mobilize in his name, such as participants in protest marches or religious processions, publicly expressing solidarity with the cause for which the person gave their life. Inscriptions like “Lucio is Alive” demonstrate a form of participation in the deceased’s cause and, moreover, a denial of his death as a disappearance (López Menéndez, 2015, pp. 6–7).

Body, Emotions, and Power: Lucio’s Death

As Martha Nussbaum has pointed out (2013) in *Political Emotions*, the role of non-cognitive elements in public emotions cannot be overlooked (Nussbaum, 2015, p. 400). Feelings and bodily states are part of emotional experience, and as the U.S. philosopher argues, all emotions embed themselves in the body to some extent.

The visceral nature of emotions often manifests in the significance of images, which provide references that elevate the body into the political realm and transform spoken testimony (the narrative) into a space where the pain of death is conveyed in a raw and realistic way. This characteristic is particularly crucial given the complexity of the martyr as a cultural, political, social, and religious phenomenon.

Martyrdom is connected to the modern revolutionary myth through the metaphor of spilled blood—a revolutionary symbol of attaining paradise on earth. Bloodshed, one’s own and that of others, constructs a symbolic link that harkens back to the sacrificial myth mentioned earlier: sacrifice represents

human suffering that is never futile. Witnessing pain and bearing witness to it implies sharing in the bond created through blood.

Briefly examining Münzer's millennialism, Block (1995) noted how appealing it was for peasants to join a particular collective religious imagination that distinguishes between economic hardship and what he called "another need" (p.72), where resistance and liberation are means through which collective identities are recognized, mourning is processed, and shared emotions and losses are comprehended.

This affective structure is anchored in the stark discrepancy between ideas and reality—utopia—as identified by Ricœur (1986) as central to Bloch and Mannheim's views on Münzer's anabaptism (p. 295). The gap between ideas and reality is reconciled through the concept of descent from heaven to earth, the creation of a "kingdom on earth" that appears to be grounded in nothing, like a rope hanging from nowhere, mediated by leaders who serve as guides and means of rearticulating with the present.

In this sense, Lucio's figure frequently appears in narratives on peasant struggles in Mexico, often associated with the legacy of the Mexican Revolution of 1910 (Ávila, 2016, p. 154). The death of the guerrillero remains a point of contention, yet the very fact that differing memories focus on his suffering and agony is highly significant.

In the post-Tridentine tradition of martyrdom, terrestrial torment and the rupture (real or imagined) of the body are conditions for approaching divinity: torture, death, and martyrdom form a triad that helps us understand the approach to transcendence (Kissane, 2019, p. 25). In secularized utopia, one tendency prevails: the first version of many accounts holds that Cabañas' death occurred in a confrontation between his group and the federal army.³ According to the official version, a soldier shot him in the jawbone, while another claimed it was in his left torso, fracturing three ribs (Castellanos, 2007, p. 159).

A second version stated that he was shot first in the back, followed by a coup de grâce. A third version alleges that after being wounded, Cabañas told the military he would not "give them the satisfaction" and shot himself in the right cheek (Castellanos, 2007, p. 159).

³ Lucio was found by one of the Brigades for Justice, the armed wing of the Party of the Poor. This confrontation occurred in the Costa Grande region of the state of Guerrero on December 2, 1974.

The testimony of one of Lucio's comrades on the day of his death is noteworthy. This man, whose name is withheld for security reasons, recounts in *El Guerrillero* (published in 1974 by comrade "Ernesto"):

I saw Lucio fall close to me. I don't know where the bullet hit, but he fell instantly, twisting and convulsing, vomiting blood in spurts. I didn't see anything more because I felt a hot blow in my thigh and ran as best I could—like everyone else—to save myself. When the leader falls, courage and fear become collective (p. 235).

The importance of corporeality must not be ignored. Lucio's corpse, clean and bloodless, was displayed on a metallic slab within the military quarters in Atoyac de Álvarez. As with Che Guevara's body seven years prior, the press was invited to document the death, authenticate it, and make it public. As seen in Figure 2, one of the many images from those days, the body was exhibited to eliminate any popular notion that "Lucio is alive," thereby grounding the people's imagination in the reality of his death and diminishing hope for the guerrillero's survival.

Countless times, both before and after, the powers that be have sought to publicize such deaths and disfigurements to extinguish hope regarding a hero's survival. After the skirmish that took his life, the army transported Lucio's body to Atoyac, where high-ranking officials filmed his autopsy. According to Aviña (2014, pp. 160–161), however, the clandestine burial only strengthened the belief that Cabañas might still be alive, as seen in graffiti in Mexico City. The peasant vision of justice and dignity embodied in Lucio transcended his physical disappearance, despite evidence to the contrary, as Bloch's structure of hope persisted.

Yet, as the martyr tradition demonstrates, a dead body can be dangerous. According to López Limón (2009), in the biographic manuscript of Lucio Cabañas, the guerrilla leader's body was discreetly buried in an unmarked grave in Atoyac cemetery in the early hours of December 3, 1974. The military feared a repeat of the scenes following Genaro Vázquez Rojas' burial, when thousands of peasants surrounded his gravesite to greet Raúl Gallardo Benítez (p. 35). Lucio's remains were later exhumed and reburied at another site.

Martyrdom relies on entirely different principles than heroism: unlike a hero, who may survive or die as a collateral result of the cause, a martyr makes their death the cause itself. Death and meaning are intertwined in bodily suf-

fering, which, rather than dissipating the struggle, consolidates it. Military pragmatism suggests that displaying the body would discourage followers. Yet martyrial logic suggests the opposite: that hope for resurrection is embodied in the broken body, generating an emotional structure that reinforces the cause. Tertullian stated in the 3rd century that martyrs were planted by the church, emphasizing their greater power and influence after death than before it (Tertullian, 1842).

In this way, the tortured body and torture itself assume a performative role. As Cavanaugh (1998) has noted, the effect of torture aims to discipline the populace based on a state-imposed code of conduct (p. 2). The resulting fear seeks to dismantle other *social entities*, removing intermediaries between individuals and the State. The shattered body becomes a metaphor for the torn social fabric.

In his analysis of torture and forced disappearances during the Pinochet dictatorship, Cavanaugh (1998) highlights these disappearances as a social offense that denies mourning and eliminates the possibility of martyrdom (p. 16). This is because, without the chance to witness torture and death, individuals are condemned to a void, with remembrance indefinitely suspended. Perhaps this is why Joan Baez turned to verses from Pablo Neruda's *Canto General* for her Spanish rendition of *We Shall Not Be Moved*. The renowned American folk singer translated into Spanish this protest hymn popularized by Martin Luther King Jr., embedding it within the context of Chile's fierce repression following Salvador Allende's ouster in 1973.

Baez condensed lines from *The Heights of Macchu Picchu*, which read as follows:

Rise to birth with me, my brother.
 Give me your hand out of the depths
 sown by your sorrows.
 You will not return from these stone fastnesses.
 You will not emerge from subterranean time.
 Your rasping voice will not come back,
 nor your pierced eyes rise from their sockets.

Translated by Nathaniel Tarn

(Source: <http://faculty.washington.edu/tgeist/Spanish321-09/Textos/Neruda.pdf>.)

I come to speak for your dead mouths.
 Throughout the earth,
 Let dead lips congregate,
 Out of the depths, spin this long night to me
 As if I rode at anchor here with you.
 And tell me everything, tell chain by chain,
 And link, and step by step;
 Sharpen the knives you kept hidden away,
 Thrust them into my breast, into my hands,
 Like a torrent of sunbursts,
 An Amazon of buried jaguars,
 And let me cry: hours, days, and years,
 Blind ages, stellar centuries.
 And give me silence, give me water, hope.
 Give me the struggle, the iron, the volcanoes.
 Let bodies cling like magnets to my body.
 Come quickly to my veins and to my mouth.
 Speak through my speech, and through my blood.
 (Source: www.poemhunter.com/poem/canto-xii-from-the-heights-of-macchu-picchu.)

In this powerful poem, Neruda conveys the importance of voice—the testimony of suffering and physical pain—as a source of hope for survivors. It is not by chance that, within Christian cultures, the live testimony of Jesus’ suffering serves as a foundation for resurrection.

As we will examine in the next section, this “heuristic of pain” translates to the secular world and enables narratives of martyrdom outside purely religious contexts. These narratives exist independently of martyrs sanctioned by the Church—particularly the Catholic and Orthodox traditions—and even by some Protestant denominations.

Hope, Utopia, and Secularization of Religious Cultural Forms: Secular Martyrdom

Contemporary social movements are filled with martyr narratives, giving these figures a crucial place in history. Martyrs support both the consolidation of nation-states and forms of social resistance against authoritarian regimes. Latin America, in particular, offers rich ground to explore the martyr phenomenon, especially through "political technologies of memory." These devices institutionalize memories of past atrocities, embedding them into the public sphere as demands for recognition and into the political sphere as calls for justice (Bernasconi, 2019).

Martyrdom, with Judeo-Christian roots, is one of the most significant "sacred migrations"⁴ (Cavanaugh, 2011) that uphold the modern institutional framework. In the 20th century, numerous examples emerge—from Oblate to García Lorca and Antonio Machado during the Spanish Civil War; from the Scholl siblings to Horst Wessel in Nazi Germany⁵; from Jean Moulin in the French Resistance to Jan Palach in Prague; from Mahatma Gandhi in India to Evita Perón, Che Guevara, and Sebastián Acevedo in Latin America. These figures are recognized as secular martyrs, remembered by their followers with religious reverence despite their political motivations.

Generally, secular martyrs are individuals who sacrificed their lives for political beliefs and are commemorated in a manner reminiscent of religious rites. Desroche's typology, noted above, is relevant here, as martyrdom often transforms denied death into a transcendent symbol, emphasizing the cause for which the person sacrificed their life.

Secular martyrs typically emerge during the birth or reconstitution of modern nation-states. Figures from both political spectrums—right and left, liberals and conservatives, revolutionaries and reformers—have been sanctified as martyrs by those who construct powerful narratives around their deaths. As discussed, three core elements typically blend in a martyr narrative: the martyr, the persecutors (representing established powers), and the communi-

⁴ In this context, sacred migrations are processes associated with the consolidation of Western nation-states, where belief in the sacred is reconsidered to imbue the state with a religious aura, as Cavanaugh and others have argued.

⁵ It is almost unbearable to include these names in the same sentence, but this underscores the crucial importance of understanding the ubiquity of secularized, modern, and highly political martyrs.

ty of followers who ensure that the event resonates beyond individual tragedy. Together, these elements create a coherent narrative that establishes martyrs as symbolic figures of collective identity and shared history. In these narratives, the martyr holds a defined symbolic place within the “us” while highlighting the “them,” embodied by agents of violence against the oppressed.

Entire historical eras are marked by a special reverence for religious ideals—not always aligned with ecclesiastical institutions—that inform martyrdom. As López Menéndez (2016) argues, the martyr phenomenon permeates social mobilization, acting as a catalyst and mechanism for social cohesion during times of intense social upheaval. It is unsurprising to find martyrs in nearly all modern revolutions, across opposing factions.

Returning to Popitz (2019), martyrdom strips those in power of the exclusive right to kill. A martyr’s death, undertaken voluntarily, conveys agency and transforms unjust death into liberty and affirmation. This transformation allows the martyr—Lucio, in this case—to serve as a powerful symbol, evoking emotions like indignation and outrage. Thus, martyrs are often revived symbolically in contexts beyond their own time, inspiring new generations and challenging the *status quo*.

In Figure 3, we see how Lucio’s legacy was invoked in the call for justice for the 43 students who disappeared from the Isidro Burgos Normal Rural School in Ayotzinapa. The image, captured in December 2014 on the 40th anniversary of Lucio’s death, heads an article by Mondragón (2014). Covering a funeral service in Atoyac, Guerrero, Mondragón titled it “Lucio is alive, the struggle goes on,” linking the professor’s death to the tragedy of the recently disappeared students.⁶

According to Mondragón (2014), first-year students at Ayotzinapa spoke at the event, declaring:

The struggle of Commander Lucio Cabañas in the 1970s continues today: for freedom, for education for all, against the repression of the poor. Lucio Cabañas was

⁶ During the night of September 26 and the early hours of September 27, 2014, a series of violent incidents occurred in the city of Iguala, Guerrero, where at least nine people lost their lives, and 43 students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Normal School, who were passing through Iguala to seek transportation to Mexico City, were disappeared. This case remains unresolved, although independent investigators have pointed to the involvement of the army and other state police forces in the disappearance and subsequent execution of the young men. To date, only three of the missing persons’ remains have been identified through DNA analysis.

“assassinated 44 times,” but his figure endures in the hearts and names of students. These young students are not only angry; they are dignified and honored to revive Cabañas’ spirit. (no page number)

Figure 3. Some 43 gone missing



Note: Image taken from the web page of “Subversiones. Agencia Autónoma de Comunicación”, published on December 4, 2014 <https://subversiones.org/archivos/110477>.

Conclusion

Following Gramsci, Desroche (1979) argues that religion can be seen as history’s greatest utopia, a mythological attempt to reconcile its contradictions (p. 24). These contradictions are expressed through hope, which, as Desroche notes, “hangs like a rope from nowhere,” enabling feelings of indignation and frustration to transform into new utopian ideals. In this chapter, by examining the case of Lucio Cabañas—a celebrated rural teacher who became a guerrilla leader in 1970s Mexico—we propose a reading of martyrdom that aligns with this emotional structure of hope. First, we analyze the connections among sacrifice, utopia, and hope as per Bloch and Desroche’s theories. Next, we address torture and the torn body as constitutive elements of martyrdom, shaping the emotional reorganization of death.

Finally, we argue that premodern religious martyrdom assumes secular forms, allowing it to participate in the political arena and become instrumental in social change within Western modernity. Again, the case of Cabañas exemplifies how collective demands are reconstituted, with indignation merging with utopian visions that anchor hope in resistance against death.

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SECTION 4
STATE POLICIES, CONFLICT, AND EMOTIONS

11. Pain, Fear, Hate and Revenge: the Circulation of Emotions in the State-Sikh Community Conflict in India

Fernanda Vázquez Vela¹

In many of my interviews, I heard the same words repeated: “Nothing was the same after *Operation Bluestar*.² We Sikhs³ have always felt persecuted, unsafe in our own country.” The conflict between Indira Gandhi and Sikh leaders in Panjab⁴ began in the late 1970s and extended until the end of the 1990s. In previous studies (Vázquez Vela, 2010), I demonstrate that the army’s incursion into the Golden Temple⁵ (from June 3 to 7, 1984),⁶ known as Operation Bluestar, initiated the first spiral of violence, followed by two more: the 1984 pogroms in Delhi, and the persecution of Sikh youth in Panjab. These three spirals established a form of communication—a relationship of violence—

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² Blue Star and Bluestar are used interchangeably in literature about the conflict. In this chapter, I use Bluestar to emphasize the idea of a military operation as a unifying concept of action aimed at maintaining order, but particularly for asserting State control through violence.

³ The word *Sikh* originates from a Sanskrit term meaning “student,” “disciple,” or “apprentice” (Pániker, 2007, p. 339).

⁴ The reflections presented here are part of a broader work on conflict in Panjab, conducted with an anthropological and historical approach. The research includes data gathered during two fieldwork periods in India, in 2008 and 2018, employing ethnographic methodology, discourse analysis, and historical analysis. Sources include interviews about experiences with violence, primarily from widows, as well as official discourse, journalistic articles, and reports.

⁵ The Golden Temple is located in the city of Amritsar, in the northern state of Panjab in India. It is the most important sacred site in Sikhism. It is also known as Hari Mandir Sahib — the Temple of the Divinity, or God of the Beloved — or Darbar Sahib — the Door to God or the Divinity, which can also be translated as the “Divine Court” — (Pániker, 2007, p. 329).

⁶ There are controversies regarding the dates when the Indian army began attacking. Some witnesses mention shots being fired starting on June 3, but the government states that they surrounded the temple on June 5 and combat began on June 6. For an account of this operation, see Tully and Jacob (2006) and Vázquez Vela (2010).

contrary to the idea that violence in a conflict stems from a lack of communication.

In this chapter, as in the rest of the studies in this book, I aim to underscore the importance of an analysis that considers emotions within a specific cultural context. Without this perspective, it is challenging to understand how power, conflict, and the onset of violence are interconnected in this case. I am interested in revealing the emotions that spread and lead to violence, constructing particular bonds while simultaneously generating other emotions.⁷ I also examine the structure of messages, how they are responded to, and what they produce: enemies, threats, suspicion, laws, new identities, types of memory, and a distinctive language. We find the emergence and movement of emotions such as fear, frustration, alienation, hate, revenge, and pain intertwined with these elements.

Twelve or thirteen days after the army's incursion, the Golden Temple reopened after a confrontation between the Indian army and the group labeled as "terrorists" led by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. Jasbir Kaur,⁸ a resident of Amritsar, recounted her experience to me: "When I entered the Temple, the smell was overwhelming. I trembled from an aching heart. It was painful to think of all the devotees who died there, and I started crying. I cried without stopping" (personal communication, May 28, 2008).

Although the bodies had been removed, and Sikh soldiers had been tasked with cleaning and reestablishing normal rituals at the Temple, Jasbir described the lingering smell of blood that still hung in the air. "I felt my heart tighten. I couldn't stop thinking, why us? Why did they destroy our most sacred place? Why massacre innocent people in such a godly place?" (personal communication, May 28, 2008). For her, this was only the beginning. She sensed that the violence would not end there. Four months later, she awoke to news that Sikhs were being attacked in Delhi. "We began to hear they were burned alive, their homes seized, and women raped. I was very afraid and thought the worst: they would come for us. I felt that I didn't belong here, that I was to blame for something, but I didn't know what" (Kaur, personal communication, May 28, 2008). She felt that they were being hunted. After the attack on the Temple and

⁷ For a discussion of the emotional and sensorial dimensions of conflict, please consult the chapter by Olga Sabido Ramos in this book.

⁸ With this quote from Jasbir Kaur's experience and voice, I would like to pay a small tribute to her. She and her family were central to my research in Amritsar, and I regret her passing in 2014.

the carnage in Delhi, many young people joined armed groups in Panjab, known as militants, who sought to resist the State's actions. The government enacted laws granting the police and army power to arrest anyone suspected of terrorism. For fifteen years, Panjab became a battlefield, ultimately filled with countless graves. Reportedly, 30,000 young people lost their lives. "It was like a prolonged hunt. Many families were left without children or without a male head of the family. I can't rid myself of the smell of blood; there was so much hate in the air, so much fear, so much desire for revenge" (Kaur, personal communication, May 28, 2008).

Jasbir Kaur's words are evocative. She vividly conveyed her experiences and the emotions that accompanied them. Through her story, we can almost smell the blood and feel her pain, tremors, sadness, and fear. Her anguish emerged from her body as tears. Her account revolves around the news circulating after Indira Gandhi's death and the way this event was seen as an act of revenge. What happens makes her feel "guilty", "that she doesn't belong" and that there is an "atmosphere" full of emotions shared with her community. These violent events left a deep wound, not only for Jasbir but within the Sikh community in India and abroad. To this day, these experiences are remembered as a painful chapter in a series of traumatic events they have endured over time.

There is no doubt that emotions are an integral part of our daily personal and social lives. Over recent decades, there has been growing interest in understanding the role of feelings from social science and humanities perspectives. Thus, this chapter contributes to this book's exploration of power and conflict, particularly by examining the emotions that trigger violence. To achieve this, I employ what Sara Ahmed calls "affective economies," a concept that emphasizes that feelings are not confined to subjects or objects "but are produced as effects of circulation [...] The circulation of objects allows us to think of the 'sociality' of emotion" (Ahmed, 2014, p.8).

Building on Ahmed's (2014) work in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, the following pages demonstrate that emotions create bonds in multiple ways, shaping perceptions, judgments, and identities, bringing people closer together or pushing them apart, and prompting actions—including violence. My argument is that, within the conflict known as the "Panjab Crisis," fears, threats, feelings of exclusion from the nation, frustration, hatred, and revenge were constructed through stereotypes, prejudices, and expectations about Sikhs and

the Hindus in power. These constructions circulated in various forms across India: through discourse, rumors, images, mass media, and actions from both sides, permeating the atmosphere. The results were alienation, distance, the cultivation of emotions such as shame and hate, a relationship based on violence as a form of communication, and the emergence of more orthodox identities. Without distinguishing positive and negative, good or bad emotions, I aim to illustrate how they divide us, lead to killings, erase the other, and diminish them. Thus, I will focus on just two of the three spirals of conflict-related violence experienced by Sikhs over the last few decades of the 20th century. The first is Operation Bluestar (June 1984), and the second is the Delhi pogroms (October–November 1984).

At present, there is a rich and varied body of theories and research on emotions and affectivity. Interestingly, for a long time, a positivist framework dominated their study. Viewing emotions as opposed to reason, as an amorphous, ill-defined realm driven by impulses, made it challenging for the social sciences to engage with these topics. However, with movements such as feminism in the 1960s, the sexual revolution, and movements for diversity (Cedillo et al., 2016, p.16)⁹, there arose a questioning of the division between emotion and reason, or public versus private spheres, both connected to gender differences. These developments called attention to the need to stop naturalizing centuries-old dichotomies and their hierarchical structures in research.

For the first time, the phrase “the personal is political”¹⁰ includes *emotions*, recognizing them as *political* too. In other words, emotions are public and socially structured. Shifting from a psychobiological to a sociocultural focus on the study of emotions has been crucial. This open approach allows us to move beyond binaries that have previously shaped how we view and discuss emotions.

The *affective turn* in the social sciences and humanities is not only theoretical but also *methodological*. Moving away from a medical and positivistic perspective, this shift opens the door for inquiries through qualitative approaches, emphasizing interpretation, symbolism, meaning, social and cultural factors,

⁹ We could also identify as enabling events the discussions emerging from subaltern studies, critical theories, the rise of histories of emotions, as well as “phenomenological and post-phenomenological theories of corporality, cybernetics, and theories of inorganic, non-Cartesian traditions of philosophy, aspects of psychology and psychoanalysis, and neurological theories” (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010, as cited in Abramowski et al., 2017, p. 9).

¹⁰ This is how Carol Hanish titled her essay, published in 1970, as a slogan for feminist movements.

experience, and language.¹¹ This approach prioritizes description over fixed, unyielding explanations. Contingency thus becomes essential in understanding phenomena and individuals, with their ambivalences, contradictions, and paradoxes. This perspective supports nuanced interpretations of people's behaviors and emotions within specific contexts, using a wide range of methods. Accordingly, this work advances the study of emotions through narrative and discourse analysis.

How we name things, articulate ideas, and make ourselves understood is all conveyed through discourse. Historian Barbara Rosenwein (2006) argues that emotions and emotional norms shift according to social, political, economic, or religious contexts. Thus, examining the connections between emotions and discourse helps us see how meaning changes or becomes contested (p. 19).

This chapter builds on Sara Ahmed's (2014, p. 12–16) concept of analyzing the “emotionality of texts.” The main objective is to reveal the emotional intentions behind public discourses, particularly those from the state or militant movements, which aim to establish messages that foster legitimacy for their actions. Additionally, this analysis examines how these discourses “stick” to people's narratives, shaping ideas, evaluations, and judgments about issues or individuals. Discourse is central to understanding the politics of emotions, as it forms the frameworks through which we understand and interpret the world. Thus, analyzing the tools used to produce and distribute these discourses—whether newspaper articles, official speeches, state rituals, military operations, laws, institutional actions, investigative committees, or rumors—becomes essential.

In this chapter, I examine these tools through content analysis, focusing first on the emotional constructions they contain, as well as the language and expressions they use. I analyze rhetorical devices, particularly stereotypes, metaphors, and hyperboles, to identify how various “figures” connect and persist over time through historical associations (Ahmed, 2014, p. 13). In other words, I explore the antecedents that foster this emotionality. Thirdly, I con-

¹¹ Also see Barbalet (2002), Clough et al. (2007), Greco and Stenner (2008), Gregg (2006, 2011), Gregg and Seigworth (2010), and Beatty (2013, 2014) for theoretical and methodological discussions on the topic. Additionally, consult the following authors for information on the anthropology of emotions and ethnography: Rosaldo (1980), Abu-Lughod and Lutz (1990). For discourse analysis and power, consult Hutchinson and Bleiker (2017) and Lutz (1990).

sider the context of these discourses' production; fourth, their distribution; and finally, their effects, as reflected in responses, subsequent discourse, events, narratives from interviews, or in violent actions.

The chapter is divided into five sections. In the first section, I discuss the implications of India's nation-state construction and how it marginalizes certain communities by promoting a "Hindu civilization" through discourse, cultural and political practices, and public policies. The second section examines three stages of discourse between Indira Gandhi and the Sikh community during the 1980s, highlighting the intensification of emotions through stereotyping. This dynamic creates a communicative relationship, where each side responds to the other's narrative. Concerns about the "fragmentation of the nation" and the search for "solutions" escalate into military operations, leading to violence. In the third section, I explore how the State employs legitimate violence via military operations, deeply impacting the Sikh community. The operation was rich in symbolism, sending a message not only to Sikhs but to any group considering dissent. The fourth section describes the hate and revenge that followed the attack on the Golden Temple, including the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the subsequent violence against Sikhs in Delhi. Finally, the fifth section analyzes rumors as tools for spreading emotions within an affective economy.

The Construction of Emotions and the Distancing of the Other Insiders and Outsiders in the Nation

This chapter draws on arguments related to affectivity, viewing affect as a force arising from encounters, which can also be described as:

Intensities, potencies, or capacities experienced within the body, though originating neither solely in the body nor solely in the environment but in their interaction [...] Affects are thus understood as bodily capacities to affect and be affected, motivating us to act or, conversely, inhibiting our actions (Solana, 2017, p. 91).

While some scholars distinguish between emotion and affect—considering emotion a social and cultural sensation and affect a biological and physiological phenomenon (Probyn, 2005, p. 11, as cited in Solana, 2017, p. 91)—I follow

Ahmed in avoiding this separation, instead using affect as part of what emotions do. Emotions both move and invoke their etymological roots, encompassing not only sensations directed toward something or someone but also reflecting the complexity of social and cultural mediation. In other words:

Rather than viewing just the affecting and affected body, we ask why certain things accrue value over time [...] This involves exploring the histories behind emotions, examining how things acquire emotional significance (p. 97).

Emotions operate relationally, linking and circulating in social spaces, with a collective aspect that permeates interactions. This intersubjective nature creates “worlds” infused with affectivities and feelings that circulate in unique ways (Ahmed and Schmitz, 2014, p. 98). Emotions embody *ideas and values*, inflected by *previous experiences* (their own or those of the community), which generate judgments, such as “to hate or to fear implies the anticipation of something” (p. 99). These judgments affect the body, and it is crucial to attend to visceral reactions, asking what lies behind emotions (p. 99). With this aim, we seek to understand how emotions “circulate between bodies, examining both their ‘stickiness’ and their movement” (Ahmed, 2014, p. 4).

Through the concept of *affective economies*, Ahmed (2014) explains how emotions function as a form of capital. They are generated, circulated, and distributed within a social and psychic network (p. 44), converting into affect through movement, circulation, and exchange between symbols and objects (p. 45). Analyzing emotions as cultural practices reveals how they are structured within affective circuits that involve ideas, judgments, and actions. Thus, feelings are a collective, social issue, constructed through interactions rather than residing in people or objects.

By conceptualizing emotions relationally, we see how they shape what Ahmed (2014) calls the “surfaces and limits of individual and collective bodies” (p. 1, 19). Throughout this book we can see the different forms it takes. In this chapter, I emphasize ideas, judgments, and repeated actions that shape these surfaces through contact and connection. This process defines who we are, what we feel, what we share, what we value, and ultimately, what allows us to belong—contrasted against what we are not, what we view as different or distant, and what evokes fear, disgust, or disdain. Emotions construct labels and stereotypes and guide us in approaching or distancing ourselves from oth-

ers (p. 4). This mechanism fosters hierarchies of value, where certain bodies are valued more than others, creating bonds for some and exclusions for those deemed less valuable by the dominant group. When value disparities arise, power and inequality become evident.¹²

In India, especially for the Sikh community, the “Panjab Crisis” marked a pivotal point. It reshaped their boundaries, affecting their identities, community life, and their perceived role within India. This scenario also illustrates an exercise of power through State-sanctioned violence, accompanied by questionable practices. The government employed laws and policies to control dissent and manage India’s diverse ethnic, religious, linguistic, and regional differences. Conflict fueled discourses steeped in fear, hate, threats, and frustration, with violent outcomes reflecting the emotionality embedded in these narratives, evaluations, and judgments. The emotions that were constructed excluded Sikhs from the nation for many years. State and Sikh leaders used these emotions to assert power, resist, or legitimize actions. Stereotyping and the circulation of emotions became central to both sides.

At the core of the conflict lies the Sikh perception of exclusion from India’s political sphere, including decision-making in the Panjab and national politics. For the government, there was a fear that any form of dissent by a religious community could lead to territorial fragmentation. Behind these emotions was a drive to define India as a unified cultural entity, shaped by colonial experiences and modern ideals of a cohesive nation bound by shared culture, language, and history.

The vision of India’s identity, articulated by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, became secular nationalism. This approach avoided engaging with issues of religion, language, caste, and community, opting instead for separation from these complexities (Nigam, 2006, p. 15).

The *idea* of India¹³ was not expected to lead to a dissolution of identities into a single blend, but to establish an overarching *Indian* identity that would remain supreme. A crucial component of this vision was religious tolerance. Secular nationalism, in this sense, did not entail the separation of religion and politics but envisioned the State as a neutral space, functioning as a mediator among communities (p. 15). However, British rule left various legacies in India,

¹² For theoretical reflections on power and domination according to Durkheim’s and Bourdieu’s perspectives, please consult the article by Juan Pablo Vázquez Gutiérrez in this book.

¹³ For a discussion of the construction of this idea, see Khilnani (1999).

one of which was the division of society into distinct communities based on categories such as religion, creating the divisions of majorities and minorities along with their political standings. Minorities, both in perception and in reality, often feel that a “Hindu” majority dominates the sphere of power and decision-making, marginalizing others through a nationalism imbued with Hindu symbolism. This is reflected in language policies like the imposition of Hindi as a national language, territorial divisions that split cultural and linguistic communities within the federation, and local policies across states.

The language established by India’s political elite has largely catered to the Hindu ethnic group, creating a political “center” and several peripheral groups that strive to adapt at local, state, or national levels to engage in the decision-making process. There appears to be resistance to acknowledging the vast ethnic and cultural diversity within the nation (Singh, 2000, p. 33). Sociologist Tharailath Koshy Oommen¹⁴ argues that Hinduism has been positioned as an umbrella encompassing all Indian-origin religions, a perspective he calls *expansionism*. This view portrays Sikhism, Jainism, and Buddhism as *forms* of Hinduism, rather than as distinct spiritual paths. Simultaneously, Hindu *exclusionism* rejects foreign-origin faiths, such as Islam and Christianity (Oommen, 1990, pp. 47–48), framing them as imposed religions. The discourse encompassing both practices is one of Hindu “tolerance” toward all religions, which does not necessarily imply full acceptance or integration. According to political expert Gurharpal Singh (1992), Hinduism is established as a “meta-ethnicity” in the Indian nation (p. 41), where the concept of “unity in diversity” highlights Hindu myths, symbols, and epics. This meta-ethnic discourse, along with policies and practices, often excludes Muslims, Christians, and even Sikhs, fostering a national belonging that does not fully include all groups, thereby limiting forms of identity.¹⁵ These constraints have intensified the formation of identities that solidify their differences as a form of resistance. Policies, actions, and ideas are resisted, often appearing as resistance against Hinduism or caste structures when the true aim is to gain recognition and inclusion.

¹⁴ To connect this author’s reflections on nation, differences, and citizenship, see Oommen (1986, 1995, 1997, 2002, 2004).

¹⁵ The chapter authored by José Omar Pérez Baños in this book explores how emotions of conflict are shaped through State music. In his study of national anthems, Pérez engages in discussions on the sociology of music, a dialogue between Elias and Ahmed, and examines the relationship between a nation, its rituals, national anthems, and emotionality.

This is where emotions of belonging—or of feeling excluded—impact both individual and collective identities (Ahmed, 2015, p. 19). Expectations, behaviors, and identities form around the notion of who belongs and the defense of those at risk of exclusion.

When confrontations with minorities arise in India, they are typically viewed as a “crisis” or “political perversion,” suggesting a failure of Nehruvian secular values, rather than as an issue of governance, political inclusion, or adequate negotiation of differences and emotions. Additionally, grievances were often ranked by the State: linguistic claims were perceived as less threatening than those based on caste or religion, which were seen as conflicting with the idea of a *nation* (Upadhyay, 2007, p. 4). Defenses of these identities are therefore often viewed with fear, as threats to the nation as it once was.

For Ahmed (2014), “fear does not merely originate within individuals and then direct outward; rather, it operates to forge relationships between groups, bringing them together or driving them apart in visceral ways, felt as sensations on the skin during encounters” (pp. 62–63). In India, fear both structures the relationships between those who wish to belong to the nation and simultaneously distances those who express political dissent, as this dissent may be seen as a first step toward territorial separation. The perceived threat of fragmentation is heightened by a historical reference point: the 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan. The partition carries an enormous emotional legacy—fear, hate, and frustration from the trauma it left behind. It divided territories, families, and communities, unleashing unprecedented violence and setting a tone of hostility and mistrust that has impacted bilateral relations to this day. This memory is identified as a primary source of tension between Muslims and Hindus. Consequently, there is a persistent fear that the simple expression of dissent could again lead to fragmentation. This discourse of fear can be politically useful to the State, as those in power have the ability to prioritize discussions that suit their interests, while marginalizing those that do not. This power hierarchy can reinforce the narrative of fear to legitimize certain actions.

The experience of Partition also left many people feeling a lack of belonging to the nation. Some are viewed as bodies outside the nation—suspect, to be monitored and rejected. Since 1947, Muslims in India have frequently been subjected to mistrust, fueled by the perception that they were responsible for the separa-

tion.¹⁶ They are often depicted as a homogenous group, as if all Indian Muslims were the same. Traits like betrayal or responsibility for Partition violence are cast upon them. Post-independence, Muslims have been accused of “terrorist” actions, regardless of the distinct concerns raised by Muslim communities in regions like Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, or Assam, where they have high poverty rates despite being the majority.¹⁷ A similar dynamic emerged regarding Sikhs during the 1980s and 1990s.

Intensification of Fear: from Separatists to Terrorists

Indira Gandhi’s two periods in power (1966–1977 and 1980–1984) are marked by centralization and frequent interventions in state matters, which, without political channels to address grievances, gave rise to conflicts. Notably, there was conflict between the Sikh leaders in Panjab and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who exchanged inflammatory public speeches with leaders from the Akali Dal (Panjab’s Sikh political party) and extremist Sikh leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. Here, we can see the stereotypes and emotions around *us* versus *them*, the emotions they convey, and their resulting effects.

The Anandpur Sahib Resolution, published in 1973 (with versions in 1978 and 1982), outlined demands that were generally negotiable. Revindications included topics such as the distribution of water with neighboring states, territorial borders, sharing the capital (Chandigarh) with Haryana, greater autonomy and less interference by the central government, as well as matters of religious recognition and specific practices (curiously, the religious demands were the only ones granted). Regarding the first demands, there was never governmental will to consider them.

From 1980 to 1984, the rhetorical exchange went through three phases (Kumar, 1998, p. 134). Here, I highlight the key analytical points from these phases. I hope to present some rhetorical figures,¹⁸ after which there is an in-

¹⁶ To explore this argument further, see Shaban (2018).

¹⁷ The reader can refer to the figures provided by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in India at <http://socialjustice.nic.in/UserView/index?mid=76672>.

¹⁸ As with hyperbole, which exaggerates one aspect of something to an extreme degree, exaggerated stereotypes, ideas, or images primarily aim to bias others against a person or group. An allusion refers to something or someone without explicitly mentioning it. Similes or comparisons establish a relationship of similarity between two elements. A metaphor shifts meaning, generating an analogy or association be-

tensification in the ways of naming, stereotypes, and the emotions they evoke. These figures lead to the “sticky situation” that Ahmed (2014) emphasizes: “how to get them to come together depends on past histories of association” (p. 13). In this way, a construction of Sikhs as a threatening, separatist, and terrorist community was portrayed. On the other hand, for them, the central government was a “Brahman” (Hindu) court seeking alienation. These discourses generated a lack of trust, fear, threats, and frustration, emotions that fueled hatred, which further alienated them and led to violent actions from both sides.

The Anandpur Resolution did not contain anything indicating that this region aimed to separate from India. Nevertheless, in the days that followed, speeches frequently used the word *qaum* (a community that remains united¹⁹) and demanded recognition as the *qaum Sikh* (Sikh community). This term, due to a misinterpreted translation and metonymic use, was rendered by the government as “nation.” In reality, while they could arguably be construed as a nation, what they were asking for was recognition as Sikhs and greater political autonomy in Panjab, but still within the Indian state. Despite this, the government’s quick interpretation was that the Sikhs, as a minority religious community in India, sought *separation* and the creation of another Pakistan. (Following this interpretation by the government, the idea of establishing Khalistán later emerged within the diaspora community). The fear underlying this interpretation stemmed from concerns about another possible Partition. Consequently, the Sikhs began to be perceived as a threat and as a community outside the nation. This fear distanced them from the rest of society and “functions to align the corporal and social space” (Ahmed, 2014, p. 70). Fear, as an emotion that sharpens our experiences and heightens perception (Robin, 2004), can lead to either inaction or intense action. The construction of fear is a powerful instrument of control, commonly used as “a technology of governance, whereby the sovereign power uses fear to compel others to accept its authority” (Ahmed, 2014, p. 72).

In the first and second phases, Indira Gandhi demonstrated the importance of maintaining “India’s unity and integrity” at all costs, much like her father, Jawaharlal Nehru. She also reinforced a set of unwritten rules guiding

tween elements that are similar. Metonymies involve semantic changes, where something is designated by the name of something else (Fernández, 2007).

¹⁹ To learn more about the meaning of *qaum*, see Vázquez Vela (2010, pp. 93-95).

policy in such situations, including a rule that no demands for “religious” recognition would be considered (Brass, 1988, p. 170). On the occasion of the 36th anniversary of Independence in 1982, she downplayed and diminished the importance of petitions from minority groups. During the second phase, she began to use more specific labels and terminology. For Indira Gandhi, “the roots of the problem rested on the Anandpur Sahib Resolution” (Gandhi, 1984, p. 85). She characterized it as divisive and a smokescreen for the Sikhs’ true intentions. Through this hyperbole, she conveyed that the Sikhs were not credible interlocutors for negotiation, as their demands were neither acceptable nor legitimate.

The discourse of the Sikh movement, during its first phase, built a bridge between its religious nature, the history of past oppressions, and the abuses Sikhs faced at that time. They emphasized their unwavering *loyalty* and the *sacrifices* they had made throughout India’s history and in building the nation.²⁰ These connections to the past reflect a sense of exclusion—a feeling of being left out—and a pressing need to demonstrate that they, too, were an integral part of India. “The Sikhs bore all of this suffering, with the hope that in a free India they could live with honor” (Singh, 1991, p. 283). The enormous tragedy for them was that, despite their loyalty, their demands were ignored and perceived as a threat. “This is nothing less than betraying solemn faith to ignore them and many other commitments with the Sikhs; what is even worse is to accuse them of anti-patriotism or separatism” (p. 282).

The failure to address their demands caused frustration among Sikh leaders. This was a ripe moment for a more aggressive political movement eager to make its voice heard. In response to this sense of injustice, resistance emerged.²¹ Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale (1947–1984) had been on the scene since 1978.²² Through his rhetoric and actions, he promoted the most orthodox devotion to Sikhism and established a new identity based on the vision of a “true Sikh” (Khalsa Sikh). This identity grew in confrontation with Indira Gandhi and the Hindus. In this climate of rhetoric, emotion, and violence, he sought to extol

²⁰ This type of argument, for example, referred to the valuable role they played during what they describe as the “tyrannical Mughal mandate” against the Afghan invasion, as well as their combat against the British for independence, which lasted until the period of the Partition (Singh, 1991, p. 282).

²¹ See Edith Kuri Pineda’s chapter in this book, which points out that feelings of injustice and affront are tied to the way social roles are not fulfilled, highlighting the need to reshape such relationships.

²² He was a type of preacher in the Sikh seminary known as Damdami Taksal and gained popularity in the early 1980s.

Sikh values as a form of resistance. For him, “the full-fledged Sikhs, the *Khalsa*, are those who should govern” (McLeod, 1995, p. 88–90). Thus, the *Khalsa*²³ (the pure ones) inspired the practice of Sikhism and, consequently, military action against the government. In a few years, Bhindranwale transformed from a teacher and preacher of his faith to a saint-soldier²⁴ of Sikhism.²⁵

Bhindranwale’s speeches employed similes, metaphors, and hyperboles that resonated with the spirit of Sikhism, drawing on a sense of past persecution. He succeeded in organizing a small army committed to enforcing his interpretation of justice in Panjab through his own methods. He later fomented a series of violent demonstrations, deviating from the tradition of peaceful protest maintained by the *Akali Dal*. His speeches were provocative and became highly relevant to Sikh youth, inspiring them to become heroes of their time, to take up arms to defend their faith, and eventually, to defend their territory—Khalistan. His followers’ ties to Sikhism transformed, becoming more orthodox under Bhindranwale’s conceptualization. This shift reveals how the emotions of conflict shaped these identities.

During the second phase of violent exchanges, Bhindranwale’s speeches became more confrontational. For the first time, he cast the conflict as a battle between Hindus and Sikhs, portraying the Indian state as a Brahmanic Hindu State indifferent to Sikh welfare and, instead, intent on their extermination (Bhindranwale, 1983, as cited in Sandhu, 1997, p. 236). His words impacted the community, fueling a fear of annihilation. Even though there was no basis to claim that such extermination was actually desired, fear “projects us from the present into the future” (Ahmed, 2014, p. 65) and was essential to unify a group toward a common goal.

In response to a perceived threat, Bhindranwale used a section of the Golden Temple to house his small army and store weapons. Rumors began circulating—a topic we will revisit in this chapter when discussing the role of rumors in stirring emotions—that they were stockpiling arms and preparing for an attack on the central government. These rumors alarmed Indira Gandhi,

²³ “An order or religious fraternity established by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. The Sikhism that gravitates around this fraternity tends to define orthodoxy” (Pániker, 2007, p. 333).

²⁴ The term “saint” is used in the context understood in India, referring to someone who teaches and integrates the community into their teachings. “1) A good person, kind, saintly, and familiar with the truth; 2) a member of the *sant parampara*; 3) a recognized teacher of Sikhism” (Pániker, 2007, p. 338).

²⁵ This is due to a reinterpretation of the army organized by Guru Gobind Singh during the 17th century to oppose the Mughal mandate.

who immediately sought to isolate the movement and generate, through rhetoric, a sense of enormous danger, a greater threat, to justify the actions that would follow.

The third stage of discourse revealed an open campaign by the state to build consensus against what was increasingly seen as “terrorism.” The stereotype of Sikhs as separatists was compounded by their portrayal as terrorists, heightening fears around Sikh political affiliations. This fear extended to the Sikh community as a whole, rendering them a perceived threat. Additionally, the notion of a “dirty hand”—Pakistan’s alleged support for the movement—emerged, suggesting that the “system was infiltrated” and constituted a grave threat. Circulating narratives claimed that Pakistan supported the Sikhs as a form of “revenge” not only because India had annexed Jammu and Kashmir during Independence and Partition but also because East Pakistan (Bangladesh) had gained independence from West Pakistan with India’s support. The central government stated that Indian intelligence had uncovered the “plot.”

Fear was met with State Violence, Impressing Pain upon the Community, and the Nation

The notion of a “plot” conveyed a gravity that could have sparked a fourth military confrontation with Pakistan—the first having occurred in 1947, the second in 1965, and the third in 1971. These discourses heightened the perception of a genuine threat, opening the door to legitimize the actions to come. It is essential to emphasize that constructing fear can lead to significant repercussions, including the establishment of public policies, imposition or repeal of laws, or the rise or fall of political groups (Robin, 2004).

The first action to re-establish *law and order*, allegedly disrupted by “terrorists,” was Operation Bluestar. Following this, a series of laws were enacted to legitimize extrajudicial killings in Panjab. The objective of this operation was “to control extremist, terrorist, and communal violence” (Government of India, 1984, p. 552), to ensure public safety and restore peace. However, it was an unprecedented action that demonstrated the overwhelming power of the state through violent means. Such military operations are typically used to combat an external force of comparable strength, like an army, yet in this case, it was only

a militant group within a religious site in India. The symbolism could not have been more powerful. Operation Bluestar can be analyzed as a form of discourse; every military decision is a stance and communicates a specific message.

On June 1, 1984, the army imposed a curfew in Amritsar and cut off electricity and water, bringing the city to a standstill. Indira Gandhi addressed the nation the next day, stating, "I am addressing all sectors in the Panjab and ask them not to shed more blood or hate" (Singh, 1984, p. 62); however, orders had already been issued to military officials, and the strategy was set. Seventy thousand soldiers mobilized against a group of between 300 and 400 militants, an overwhelming display of state force.

On June 3, the anniversary of martyr Guru Arjun Dev, the fifth spiritual teacher, was being observed. As every year, the Temple was crowded with devotees, and it was on this day that the army chose to confront Bhindranwale's group. Some sources report that between 6,000 and 10,000 people were trapped inside the sacred site (Mahmood, 1996, p. 94). The choice to storm the Temple sent a powerful message not only to the Sikhs but also to other movements in India: the state would show zero tolerance toward such organizations and would "eradicate" them as a threat through violence.

On June 3rd and 4th, intermittent gunfire exchanges escalated, culminating on June 5th, when a larger force of armed soldiers entered, triggering intense combat. The night of June 5th was among the most intense in the conflict. On June 6, tanks were ordered to enter the sacred site, causing further destruction to both people and historic architecture. The Akal Takht, symbolizing Sikh political authority, suffered severe damage. The library, which housed hundreds of handwritten copies of the Guru Granth Sahib, signed by historic gurus, was set aflame. All was lost, symbolizing an attempt to erase cultural memory. On that day, the Indian army took full control of the Temple, and the next day, the bodies of Bhindranwale and his closest followers were found. From June 7th to the 10th, the military cleared the Temple, removing the bodies of devotees as well as militants and soldiers.²⁶

²⁶ The exact number of deaths remains unclear. One estimate suggests that 1,600 devout individuals lost their lives (Tully and Jacob, 2006, p. 185). Unofficial figures, however, report over 3,000 deaths, in addition to 400 militants, including Bhindranwale. The government's report records 1,592 militants arrested and 554 deaths among militants and civilians (Government of India, 1984, p. 169), alongside an imprecise figure for army losses. While official statistics put army casualties at 83, unofficial sources claim the number could be as high as 700 (Nayar and Khushwant, 1984, p. 102).

The *White Paper on the Panjab Agitation* was the government's tool to establish its version of events and its stance regarding the conflict with the Sikhs. This document sought to become the "historical truth" about what occurred. It attributed the violence to the militants, arguing that "sacred sites had been turned into terrorists' quarters" and that "atrocities committed by the terrorists" had necessitated intervention (Government of India, 1984, p. 560). The document as a whole attempted to legitimize the army's violent actions.

Regardless of varying interpretations, Jasbir Kaur's testimony at the beginning of this chapter conveys a sentiment that Sikhs share to this day: profound pain and a sense of persecution. For many, this operation represented proof of an intent to erase Sikhism. As Ahmed (2014) notes, violence is inflicted not only upon specific bodies, in this case on those in the Temple, but is also felt by the entire community, which is "torn apart" (p. 34). The operation damaged the community's relationships with the outside world, the government, society, and the nation, marking this profound grief. On one hand, the grief united Sikhs within India and in the diaspora (considering internal heterogeneity), and on the other, it separated them from the broader society.

Many Sikh leaders saw the operation as the final blow "in the war against the Sikhs," a calculated act intended to cause "the maximum possible harm," marking the Sikh community with pain. It was deemed a *ghallughara* (holocaust, destruction, or extermination) (Santhokh Singh Shahryar, personal communication, June 20, 2008). From this perspective, certain groups elevated Bhindranwale and the militants to the status of martyrs (*shaheed*) within Sikhism. This violent event became part of the community's tradition of martyrdom. Today, Sikh museums honor Bhindranwale in their halls of fame as one of the most notable *shaheeds*²⁷ (martyrs), and for some, the Khalsa identity he championed became a way of life, a form of resistance to ongoing violence. As Brown, quoted in Ahmed (2014), suggests, "the subordinate subjects invest in wounds in such a way that they take the place of identity per se. Political demands become demands for the wounds inflicted against someone or something" (p. 32).

²⁷ To explore the term *shaheed* (martyr) further, particularly in the context of identity construction related to Bhindranwale, consult Vázquez Vela (2020).

Revenge and Hate: The Assassination of Indira Gandhi and the Sikhs in Delhi

Many Sikhs wore black turbans as a sign of grief after the attack on the Golden Temple. “Their anger was against Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Sikh President Giana Zail Singh” (Singh, 2006, p. 89). There were demonstrations both inside and outside India, expressed through various forms: newspaper articles, letters to the Prime Minister and the President. “By invading the Golden Temple, your army tried to rob the nation of the saintly soldiers who lived in divine simplicity, happily. You have made us feel that you were successful in pushing us to a point of absolute frustration” (Singh, 1992, p. 171).

On the morning of October 31, 1984, Indira Gandhi was assassinated. “Who did it? The Sikhs, who else? You should stay at home for a while” (Singh, 2006, p. 89). This was the conversation that Khushwant Singh, a Sikh journalist and writer, had with a friend moments after the event, suggesting that Sikhs, like him, might be in danger. This was something anticipated. Indira Gandhi had received threats, and that morning, they were realized. The Sikh community felt wounded and compelled to seek revenge for many Sikhs. Philosopher Wendy Brown describes revenge as a “reaction” that arises when there seems to be no other possible course of action. It creates an identity tied to the history that caused it, while simultaneously protesting what happened (Brown, as quoted in Ahmed, 2014, p. 33).

Two guards at the first security fence, Satwant Singh and Beant Singh, put their fingers on the trigger. “I have done what I had to do. Now you do what you have to do,” said Beant Singh seconds after firing (Grewal, 2007, p. 36). Satwant Singh recounted how the idea originated: “Beant was wearing his turban. He turned toward me and told me that the Sikhs were very angry over what had happened in Panjab. He said that Mrs. Gandhi was responsible for this disaster and should die. I agreed with him” (Santhanam and Khayal, 1984, p. 43).

Alongside revenge, there was also hate. Hate is an intense emotion. “It implies a feeling of ‘being against somebody,’ which in a phenomenological sense is always intentional. Hate is always a loathing of something or someone” (Ahmed, 2015, p. 87). By that afternoon, a crowd had gathered outside the hospital where her body was taken. According to reports, people chanted “Indira Gandhi Zindabad” (Long live Indira Gandhi). No one was Sikh. Quite the con-

trary, rumors began that Sikhs were celebrating the assassination of Gandhi. Once her death was confirmed, the crowd began shouting, “We will seek revenge, blood for blood” (Singh, 2006, p. 91). Soon, Hindus began attacking Sikh-owned shops, stopping cars, and forcing people out to beat them. However, these demonstrations were initially isolated. No one anticipated what would unfold between the night of October 31 and the early hours of November 1.

In some neighborhoods, mobs carrying sticks, torches, and kerosene began setting homes alight, specifically targeting Sikh residences. When the mobs ran out of properties to destroy, they immobilized Sikhs and set them on fire. These attacks continued until November 3. As Suri (2015) aptly observed, the government failed to protect the Sikhs—not only politically through decisions and inaction but also administratively, as police only arrived days later, allowing the massacres to proceed (p. 4).

All the interviews I conducted with the widows corroborated this description. There was a clear pattern in the attacks, with violence being organized. Some of the widows even recognized members of the Congress Party (Indira Gandhi’s party) as instigators who provided the necessary resources for the attacks. “The Sikh ‘community’ was the first in independent India to be labeled as ‘dangerous’ and ‘violent’ and deemed in need of discipline” (Vázquez Vela, 2010, p. 141). The violence during those days became a message to discipline not only Sikhs but other minorities in India. For example, similar violence occurred in Jammu and Kashmir in 1986 and 1989; Meerut in 1987 and 1991; Delhi in 1987 (between Hindus and Muslims); Muzaffarnagar in 1988 and 2013; Mumbai in 1989, 1993, and 1994; Gujarat in 1985, 1990, 1998 (against Christians), 2002, and 2006; Ranalai in 1999 (against Christians); Assam in 1992 and 2012; Kandhamal in 2008 (against Christians); Bihar in 2018; and most recently in Delhi in 2020 (between Hindus and Muslims), to name a few. Reflecting on “hate crimes,” Ahmed (2014) observes that we should examine how violence towards others involves “forms of power that are visceral and bodily, as well as social and structural” (p. 56). The pogroms in 1984 inaugurated an administrative form of violence in India. Before 1984, we find inter-community disturbances; afterwards, we see more structured strategies, methods, and tools that the State deployed following the disturbances against the Sikhs.

Several such tools were used—for example, the way violence was framed; the State’s inaction before, during, and after the violence; and tools like laws,

operations, commissions of inquiry, or official reports on violence. In this section, I will briefly mention how these tools were framed. The State classified these events as “riots,” presenting them as spontaneous expressions of anger by an undefined mass against a perceived opposing force. In this case, Hindus were angry because Sikhs had killed their “mother.” By labeling it a “riot,” any participation by state institutions—either by action or omission—was erased, and the blame dissolved into a faceless demonstration, making it challenging to pursue justice. This approach has led to repeated riots in India.

After these events, what the victims sought most was justice. In addition to the pain of losing loved ones, the 1984 widows and the Sikh community as a whole were further tormented by the State’s decision to classify the events as a *riot*. Rajiv Gandhi, Indira Gandhi’s son and successor, justified the violence: “We know that the hearts of the Indian people were full of anger and that for a few days, people felt India was shaking. When a big tree falls, the earth shakes a bit” (Phoolka and Mitta, 2008, p. 3).

Reports represent another tool legitimizing the *actions* of power. The Indian intelligence agency organized a special group to investigate Indira Gandhi’s assassination. The Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) report claimed that the act was orchestrated from abroad by Sikh extremists who “brainwashed” the guards, with the intention of “avenging the ‘sacrifice’” (Rao, 1984, p. 3). This report alleged that an “extremist vision” had “contaminated” the guards. By portraying this as a contagious disease, RAW suggested it needed to be purged. RAW statements implied that Sikhs were a homogeneous group supported from abroad, constituting “treason” and “disloyalty” to the nation and its “mother.” The actions of the people who labeled all the community, becoming *the other*, should not be trusted and who could be attacked.

Affect and Rumor: The Spread of Emotions

When journalist Khushwant Singh’s friend called him on the morning of October 31, 1984, the identity of Gandhi’s assassins was still unknown. This information was not made public until the next day, yet his friend confidently assumed it was the Sikhs. Rumors spread throughout Delhi, creating a chain of emotionally charged reactions that facilitated, legitimized, and incited violence.

Rumors were part of an emotional economy, circulating as speculative, yet seemingly factual statements. Often rooted in past events and connecting with the present, these narratives intensified the experience of current events. Other times, they were sheer imagination, what Bhabha (2002) called “social fantasy” (p. 246). These rumors sustain myths and legends that pass through generations, creating “truths” about events, situations, groups, or *the other*. Typically, they are rife with prejudices, assigning value judgments, rankings, and labels. This web of ideas “occupies a region of language capable of making us feel that we experience an event rather than simply acknowledging it as external” (Das, 2007, p. 108). Rumors are anonymous, indeterminate, and without a clear source, making them a shared belief. For Homi K. Bhabha (2002), their significance lies in their “performative power of circulation,” making them contagious, spreading from one person to another (p. 243). As they circulate, they create a sense of belonging, becoming part of our anxieties, fears, and worldviews. Bhabha (2002) refers to this as “psychic affect” (p. 232): “psychic affect and social fantasy are powerful forms of identification and political agency” (p. 246).

After the assassination of Indira Gandhi, rumors were an integral part of the crisis that led to the event and then spread like wildfire. It was rumored that events reminiscent of the Partition were happening again. For Veena Das, one of the first rumors was that violence had erupted in Panjab against Hindus (2007, p. 121). Other rumors included reports that trains arrived in Delhi carrying lifeless bodies of Hindus, that Sikh militants were poisoning the city’s water, or that, because Indira Gandhi’s guards had assassinated her, a defecation of Sikhs from the police and militia was imminent. Furthermore, if even the prime minister could not be kept safe, no Hindu was safe. These speculations fostered the idea that the Hindu community was vulnerable and already under attack. Simultaneously, the Sikhs were cast as vengeful, violent, and dangerous people.

Soon, the atmosphere of mistrust and fear overtook the city. These rumors, in effect, authorized mobs to attack Sikhs and contributed to the wider society’s immobilization, whether out of fear as a means of self-preservation, or because they felt the Sikhs should pay for what had happened. Rumors intensified the mass hysteria (Singh Babbar, 2005, p. 69). “Many Hindus and Sikhs were found constructing images of themselves and others where the subjectivity of the experience had been abandoned, influenced by rumors that

floated in the air” (Das 2007, p. 111). Rumors circulated that Sikhs were celebrating Indira Gandhi’s death in the streets, passing around sweets and dancing, suggesting they had achieved their revenge, with more to come. It was also said that they were organizing and stockpiling arms in Sikh temples (as had happened in the Golden Temple) to prepare for nocturnal attacks. In the chaos, they would supposedly seize the opportunity to announce the separation of Khalistan. “In this production and circulation of hate, images of perpetrators and victims were frequently interchanged, depending on each side’s perspective, helping to alleviate the memories of traumatic events and daily violence” (p. 111). In reality, however, the most vulnerable community was the Sikh community. According to official statistics, three thousand people died over those three days, while unofficial sources report over twelve thousand deaths.

Final Considerations

Understanding violence requires understanding the emotions involved. What I aim to show throughout this chapter is that both violence and emotions are not irrational forces running through people, driving them to harm others, but should rather be seen as collective constructions. In this sense, I describe emotions that lead to violence, emotions that are built on appraisals and actions. Emotions arise from our encounters and past experiences; they are “sticky,” circulating among us, and it is through their circulation and repetition that we can observe how they shape what Ahmed calls “the surfaces of individual and collective bodies” (Ahmed, 2014, p. 1). Each context has a unique way of expressing and circulating emotions. This circulation either draws us closer or distances us, enabling acceptance or rejection of others, and allowing us to help or diminish another.

I used the conflict in Panjab to illustrate how emotions are constructed and intensified. Fear, revenge, and hate strengthened a relationship where communication and re-adjustment between parties manifested through violence and the emergence of more Orthodox identities. I do not expect to provide a final word on this topic, but rather to explore which emotions emerged and how they functioned within the conflict. On the one hand, I attempt to highlight the tools used to spread these emotions: discourse, laws, operations, and

rumors, among others. We have seen here how language, words, and rhetorical devices were used, and how these tools could be tied to and reinforce particular emotions. On the other hand, I emphasize the “stickiness” of emotions—their tendency to adhere based on personal, common, or distant past experiences, and how we appropriate them, how they make us feel and prompt us toward action or inaction. The focus has been on illustrating what emotions do, their affectivity and sociability.

The construction of Sikhs as separatists, terrorists, and threats shaped both their identity and their relationship with the rest of India. Fears of a situation resembling the Partition between India and Pakistan increased their isolation and left them marginalized from the nation, while simultaneously casting them as a suspicious and threatening community—traitors to the cause. These stereotypes legitimized, sanctioned, and facilitated state power and actions, while also strengthening unity within the Sikh community, both in India and abroad. This experience of violence contributed to a tradition of martyrdom and helped form a more Orthodox religious community, with some Sikhs fervently defending what they perceived as theirs and under threat, even by force of arms.

Operation Bluestar and the Sikh massacre in Delhi were unprecedented acts that displayed state power through violence and were met with violent responses by militant groups, culminating in the assassination of Indira Gandhi. These represent a mode of relationship, a form of communication in which discourse carries messages, ideas, judgments, and thus emotions, where fear, hate, and revenge circulated, ultimately leading to violence. These spirals of violence opened a deep wound in the Sikh community, marked by profound grief, as they tore into the most intimate aspects of the community: their beliefs, their spaces, their bodies. They also became tools of discipline, later applied to other communities in India.

It is not surprising that after these two spirals of violence, many more young people organized in Panjab, full of anger. Nor was Rajiv Gandhi’s response unexpected as he succeeded Indira Gandhi, creating new operations and laws authorizing the persecution of “terrorists.” More than 30,000 young people died over the next fifteen years. Jasbir Kaur captured this sentiment well: the smell of blood lingered, as the atmosphere remained saturated with fear, frustration, hate, and revenge.

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12. From Self-Containment to Intensification: Emotional Economies in State Music

José Omar Pérez Baños¹

Introduction

Within the *affective* and *emotional turns* that emphasize the relevance and growing interest in studying feelings, affects, and emotions (Cedillo et al., 2020, p. 1), Elias' work stands out for its development of a relational perspective on these topics.² This relational approach makes his work significant for the discussions in this book. However, it is worth underscoring its importance and relevance for this chapter by noting that, although sociology is inherently relational, Elias does not lose sight of the human universality³ that fosters connection with others. This recognition leads him to introduce the concept of *affective valences*, which is central to studying figurations.

Like any scholarly work, Elias' contributions are not without issues and gaps. The ones I would like to address stem from assumptions shaping his understanding of emotions. The purpose of this text is to help address these issues by reflecting on national anthems as a subject of analysis, discussing them in light of recent developments and critiques of Elias' work from an emotional perspective. I argue that this endeavor can simultaneously contribute to advancing this field, by incorporating the procedural dimension of Elias' analysis into these premises. Throughout the chapter, I suggest that these

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² As we will see later, this will impact the way emotions and their importance in maintaining social structures can be explained sociologically.

³ Elias (2008) recognizes the natural mutability of human beings as a constant, social, and universal characteristic of the human species (p. 121-130). These assertions stem from a broad theory of evolution, with emergentism serving as the foundation for understanding the universe. More broadly, his theory critiques the separation of nature and society (culture) (Elias, 1994b).

compositions are not merely the products of a contingent relationship among economic, political, and social figurations to which other symbols and representations “adhere”; they also prompt us to consider the role these compositions play in emotional orders, the communities that sustain them, and the conflicts that can arise both within and between them.

Engaging in dialogue with Elias’ work, supported by systematic arguments derived from this research perspective, presents a unique opportunity to further develop his theories. Specifically, his theory of civilization, as defined by Scheff (2005), offers a valuable foundation for this systematization. Moreover, this dialogue also revitalizes Elias’ ideas in the context of contemporary phenomena where emotions play a central role. I propose music as the core of this dialogue for a simple reason: these compositions are created within projects aspiring to achieve cultural unity and, through that unity, the construction of a national identity—a cultural *us*. This is why I find it important to retain the two terms coined by Buch (2008) to refer to these compositions: *State music* and *music of all*. These terms underscore two essential aspects: they recognize a new subject whose legitimacy they depend on (Buch, 1993), and they do not belong to any one national affiliation (Buch, 2008).⁴

In today’s context, where national revindications (in the German sense) coincide with growing expressions of rejection and repulsion toward the “undesirable” behaviors of others, republican anthems might appear anachronistic. Yet, they have played an important role in articulating these expressions and reveal that rituals aspiring to national unity are unequally inclusive.⁵ This reflection prompts me to review the explanatory strategies developed around these compositions, as some assumptions prove problematic in accounting for the role they play today. It is particularly important to examine the explana-

⁴ It is worth clarifying the meaning of “nation” here. According to Quijada (2003), the term links two traditions that are difficult to separate: the French and the German. The French tradition refers to the nation as a population unit within a given territory, with a common economy and laws, a public and widespread education system, and a single civic ideology. The German tradition, on the other hand, refers to the ethnic or genealogical concept, emphasizing a shared historical memory. National anthems are part of the pedagogy of the national project in the French tradition, which is why they are considered state music attempting to *essentialize* a nation according to the German tradition (p. 288-299).

⁵ One consideration that makes national anthems relevant for sociological studies of emotions lies in the figure of the martyr they frame. As Marisol López Menéndez notes in her study of Lucio Cabañas (featured in this book), martyrs “acknowledge bodily destruction as a principle organizing public life, embodying sacrifice in the name of utopia.” Are these patriots in Latin American or Lusophone anthems not the anonymous martyrs whose celebrations connect the past and the future?

tions regarding their function and origins. The *body* of work discussed here references the context of their origins, the rationales behind their creation, the stylistic and poetic resources they use, and the establishment of interpretative frameworks, yet there are few studies on how these compositions relate to the emotional and bodily dimensions of the individuals who embrace them as part of their identity.

In this chapter, I aim to contribute to this aspect through the following approach: a brief presentation of the arguments of these studies, an exploration of the sociology of emotions as proposed by Elias, and how these ideas project into the sociology of music. I will then present some critiques of his work that, in my view, allow for a dialogue with other approaches to emotional aspects, particularly regarding Ahmed's *political economy of emotions* and how it broadens the explanatory power of the civilizing theory. The chapter concludes with a proposal for a review and systematic comparison of his works, with the hope of advancing beyond criticisms facing these theories and enriching the study of music within the perspectives that inspire this book's chapters.

National Anthems and Political Communities

Anthems can be classified into two categories: monarchical and republican. In this discussion, I will focus on republican anthems, as they encompass a set of statements related to the origin and legitimization of modern nation-states. Republican anthems serve as a platform where citizens of a republic come together to sing, and through this act, they specifically focus on those with a republican nature, as they embody a system of declarations that are limited to the formation and validation of modern states. In this regime, citizens of the republic engage in singing an anthem, and by doing so, they "recognize each other as equals and united, fused in a transfigured 'we' due to lyrical emotion, presented as a political *subject*" (Buch, 2013, p. 23–24. My emphasis).⁶ Only in

⁶ This change of regime involves what Nisbet (1967) identifies as a central concept in sociology: the problem of authority and its national legitimation, which acquire a new dimension through the lens of studies on emotional and sensory-corporeal aspects. As Juan Pablo Vázquez Gutiérrez states in his article in this book, the emotional dimension plays a fundamental role in relationships with authority, and this is not limited to the mere exercise of power.

these anthems do we find the challenge of legitimizing them for a certain period, as they do not operate under the cosmogonic horizon of pre-modern stages.

Within this challenge, anthems are part of a strategy to gain recognition for those involved in their creation. They can utilize diverse resources that encompass not only musical and poetic structures (with a strong emotional component) but also the aesthetic dimensions of the people.⁷ In an effort to incorporate the study of national anthems with some premises of the emotional turn⁸, and based on this, a sociology of music *with* emotions, it is important to identify how this type of composition has been studied. This starting point deserves brief reflection, as at times the field of sociology concerned with music can be accused of addressing everything except music itself, and this chapter aligns with that observation.

Revisiting a distinction made by Bericat (2000) about the dimensions that can be covered by a sociological approach to emotions, we can identify three fields of sociology that are interested in the musical phenomenon: the sociology of music, sociology *with* music, and sociology *in* music. Depending on which one you choose, we can discuss music more or less comprehensively. In the first case, sociology explains music in relation to its context, the ideas, and the material conditions that determine it. Thus, music appears as a “product” of its circumstances. In the second, music enables us to account for an emerging phenomenon, namely society. Finally, sociology with music begins with the premise that this phenomenon acts as a catalyst for social processes.

Most of the research reviewed here focuses on anthems, taking into account the political context from which they arise and the values of the regime regarding how statements are made. When the historical dimension is considered, this explains the genesis and transformation of anthems in light of changes in these political regimes and the triumph of one political community over another, as can be seen by studying anthems such as the Russian anthem

⁷ As Didi-Huberman discusses the problem (2016).

⁸ At this point, it is important to clarify the following: the use of conceptual tools developed by Ahmed does not imply directly subscribing to the premises of the approach upheld in this book. As Olga Sabido Ramos points out in her contribution to this volume, Ahmed’s work unfolds through different paths and is rooted in distinct interests, which ultimately bring it closer to this approach. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that this chapter represents an exercise in understanding the political economy of emotions triggered by national anthems.

and those of all the countries that made up the Soviet bloc (Brooke, 2007), Vietnam (Gibbs, 2007), or the *Lusophone World* (Cusack, 2008). Psychology, which studies these compositions, has focused strictly on musical structures and the ability of these structures to convey symbols and political values on their own (Winstone and Witherspoon, 2016). In this analysis of function, the sociology of anthems has sought to identify itself as an incommensurable form for compositions that respond both to the political context and to the level of sociocultural integration, classifying them according to a simple or intricate musical form (Cerulo, 1989, 1993). This function is fulfilled both inside and outside political bodies, but in both cases, its importance in the construction of a community is recognized—internally through the use of personal pronouns that distinguish *them* and *us*, and externally by communicating degrees of cultural heterogeneity and sociopolitical modernity.⁹

Regardless of the methodological strategies each of these proposals develops for their study (from recording personal pronouns used in anthems to comparing their formal structures to the hermeneutics of musical structures in light of political regimes), they all share two fundamental assumptions: *a*) anthems are incommensurable musical forms, and *b*) they are capable of constituting and representing a political community over time.

On this last point, I would like to focus my discussion: when speaking of community, the classic works of Anderson (1993) and Gellner (1988)¹⁰ provide the foundational framework for understanding the symbols produced under the guidance of this community known as the nation-state. Both view nationalism as a set of expectations shared by a population tied to a territory with well-defined borders¹¹, in which written culture and the development of

⁹ The methodological decision to study anthems as distinct compositions raises the question of whether this work should be considered sociology of music or sociology of anthems—an object with well-defined boundaries that distinguish and separate it from other forms of music. This distinction is not insignificant within the framework of sphere differentiation, as it compels these approaches to examine whether what they observe is a political phenomenon or an artistic one. I would argue that, for these approaches, politics serves as the organizing center of society and is, therefore, capable of explaining the characteristics and functions of anthems.

¹⁰ Hobsbawm's (2012) reflections on the "intervention" of tradition carry considerable weight in the formulation of both proposals.

¹¹ As Bayly (2004) notes, territorial limits were not a problem until the emergence of modern nation-states. Here, we find examples that show how music helps explain sociological phenomena: with the exception of notable cases like "The Star-Spangled Banner," republican anthems often include territory and its defense as a central theme. This reflects a particular historical moment and the types of relations that prevailed at the time. Latin American anthems also provide a good example of this (Crespo, 2019).

exoeducational mechanisms—defined by a central authority—are crucial for its consolidation.

Anderson posits (1993) that nationalism can only be achieved in modern societies where differentiation prevents a single center (as religion once did) from organizing all aspects of life. For the author, the establishment of national symbols is a response to a rupture with three premises that dominated the horizon of pre-modern societies: written language as a means to access ontological truth, the belief that society was naturally ordered in a hierarchical fashion, and a comparison of history and cosmogony.

The task of these new symbols is twofold: to substantiate central characteristics of the nation, such as race, skin, or lineages, under the criteria of “natural” and therefore “disinterested,” and to call for sacrifices in the pursuit of national interests (Anderson, 2006).¹²

Homogeneity, classification schemes, and territory are facets from which the object of the anthem is constructed, along with an explanation of its form, content, and function: anthems are the product of a project aimed at creating a “we.” They also serve as conditions for their success, and without recognition from the political community behind them, anthems, when recognized, manage to legitimize the projects behind a feeling of “we.”

To what extent do these explanations lead to a circular argument? For anthems to form the basis of the fundamental characteristics of a nation, to be part of standardized communication, and to constitute a political community, they must first be recognized. But this is precisely what they lack: recognition by the political community that seeks legitimacy. How is this obtained? The legitimacy of a political project, like the recognition of its symbols, is not solely a consequence of the intention behind it, nor is it within the reach of its representation. That desire must be backed by resources to establish a balance of power that will allow it to impose and sustain itself over time—an aspect that becomes particularly relevant in contexts of conflict that reveal long-standing asymmetries, not only political but also *ethno-symbolic* (Smith, 2009). Anthems such as those of Ukraine (Yekelchynk, 2003), Bosnia–Herzegovina

¹² Gellner (2006) closely aligns with the arguments put forth by Anderson (2006), who views nationalism as a correspondence between political and national unity. For this correspondence to be possible, it is essential that the education of individuals is carried out by specialists, rather than by the group to which they belong. This can only be achieved through an exo-educational system (Gellner, 2006, p. 53 and following).

(Kolsto, 2006), Japan (Hidetoshi, 1988; Tateo, 1999), or the now-extinct Yugoslavia (Pavković, 2020) indicate the importance of the past of each of the nations involved in their design and survival, highlighting that they are products of *state policies* that confront national differences present in their respective territories.¹³

In light of the issues addressed in this book, each contribution is indirectly relevant; they allow us to reflect on a type of composition that became significant in contexts that contradict the basic premise of nationalism: integration and cultural homogeneity. Nation-states undergo a process where the perception and vindication of differences can coexist with isolationist policies that marginalize them. Their relevance is indirect because all of them acknowledge that anthems possess an emotional component, as their words appeal to the courage and pride of patriots or the tenderness of their mothers—a patriotic division of labor that is also gendered and reveals emotions (Lauenstein et al., 2015). However, recognizing this emotional dimension does not mean that it plays a significant role in explaining their success or failure; it merely acknowledges that they are a fundamental component that rationalizes states in *questioning* their citizens. What effect does an anthem have on them when listening to it transcends their interest?

The Sociology of Emotions and Music by Norbert Elias

Emotions, particularly in the context of anthems, have not received significant attention in the broader study of music. This aspect tends to be associated with the ontogeny of the species and its psychological components. In sociology, the impetus for its study has not yet adequately reflected the study of music. The sociology of soundscapes (Pérez Baños, 2018) opens the door to its incorporation, given the importance that this concept holds in figuration according

¹³ The chapter authored by Fernanda Vázquez Vela preceding this one highlights the significance of ethnic differences in the development of national identity and the emergence of state policies aimed at articulating that identity. It also discusses the case of the Sikh community, where emotions “adhere” to other characteristics that define the “other,” who was never able to fully integrate into that national identity. The dispute over the “correct” interpretation of national anthems in the United States, such as the case of Kaepernick, or the singing of the Mexican anthem during protests and sporting events, represent—albeit with due distance—an example of this “adherence” to characteristics that not only describe the other but also evoke emotions.

to Elias and his interest in a balance of powers. Therefore, it is essential to present the main arguments surrounding emotions, the assumptions that underpin these arguments, and the problems they pose, as these give rise to the construction of communicating vessels between the sociology of emotions and the affective/emotional turn. This study takes the shape of a theory of civilization and its unfolding over time, highlighting a civilizing process that regards human emotions as its raw material, or more precisely, as the structure and guidelines for their control. In the *words of the author, this theory*

equally comprehends a model of possible relations between the long-term changes in the individual structures of mankind (in the sense of consolidation and differentiation of emotional control) and the long-term changes in the compositions that human beings are capable of building in the direction of a higher degree of differentiation and integration. In other words, this refers to a differentiation and prolongation of the lines of interdependency and a consolidation of “State controls” (Elias, 2000, p. 451).

How does this relationship work? To answer this question, we must turn to the concept of *figuration*.

[A] more realistic picture of people who, through their basic dispositions and inclinations, are directed towards and linked with each other in diverse ways. These individuals form webs of interdependence in various figurations, characterized by power balances of many sorts (Elias, 2012, pp. 14–15).

By “basic alignment,” the author refers to “the deeply-rooted emotional need of every human being for the society of other members of his species” (Elias, 2012, p. 371). These relationships lead to *affective valences that may be satisfied or not by the various figurations that constitute individuals (families, schools, states)*. With this categorization, Elias (2000) invites us to abandon the image of a human being as a *homo clausus*¹⁴, someone unreceptive to others (a *robin-sonade*), but, above all, to recognize the importance of the emotional dimension in establishing long-lasting ties between *I* and *we*, since valences “have

¹⁴ Sabido and García (2014, p. 21) find in this element an anchor for their reflection on the body and effectiveness in contemporary societies.

always seemed indispensable in binding together not only small tribes but large social units like nation-states" (p. 374).

Thus, this basic inclination of human beings is not immediately deployed. The same relations of interdependency establish that when *dikes* are deployed, there will be coactions that *sublimate* these automatisms, which can be of two kinds: those that individuals impose on a figuration among themselves simply by virtue of being part of it, and those that are introjected by individuals and imposed upon themselves as a result of continuous exposure to the former. Consequently, a *psychic economy* through which individuals relate to others—a way of behaving and feeling towards others—emerges from the networks of interdependency they belong to.

All human beings belong to a figuration and therefore experience coactions. The particular aspect of the civilizing process characteristic of the West lies in the amplitude and regularity of coactions that enable the existence of a legitimate monopoly of violence, such as that which unfolds in nation-states. Under this process, we can identify two consequences. One relates to the transformation of the bond between thought and action: with an increase in coactions that control reactions (instinctive or reflexive), the transition from thought to action is no longer immediate; the space created between the two is filled with reflection. The second consequence is the emergence of two emotions characteristic of this process: shame and modesty. Each channels us towards forms of regulating, experimenting, and feeling our relationship with others, and their appearance indicates that they are the product of social relations that *regulate* individuals' natural inclinations. In the civilizing process of individuals, they control acts, and thus mold individual practices. This phenomenon can be observed in Louis XIV's court (Elias, 2005), where both emotions facilitate strategic actions aimed at winning the king's favor, or throughout German history (Elias, 1996), where shame became a matter of dispute for hegemony (Scheff, 2005). The figure of *homo clausus*, which is critiqued in light of *affective valences*, is the end product of this contentious process that fosters the experience of an isolated *me* from the exterior, someone who does not interact with the world—the idea of a *thinking statue*; the *me* feels isolated because, as time passes, one has less room for impulsive action (Elias, 2000, pp. 470–74). This is a legitimate feeling, but sociologically unsustainable.

Another notable characteristic of the Western civilizing process, which brings us back to the theme of this chapter—anthems—concerns the means

through which affective bonds arise in long chains of interdependency, such as those that articulate the nation-state. Here, the *affective valences* are not established face-to-face, but indirectly, through symbols such as flags, anthems, or national emblems.

Norbert Elias's Sociology of Music

To clarify the type of sociology that Elias represents regarding emotions and their role in his explanation of music, I will provide three examples in which the author elucidates this phenomenon within the framework of the civilizing process. The most illustrative example pertains to the genesis of *gentil minstrels* who possessed no land; their lyrics reflect the relationships they established in the courts where "within the restricted court circle, and encouraged above all by the presence of the lady, more peaceful forms of conduct became obligatory" (Elias, 2000, pp. 245–46). The author explains this emergence as a consequence of the transformation in the balance of power, which rendered these long-standing gentlemen the servants of the court. During this period, we observe a separation of desire and action through reflection: fewer opportunities for power coerced and transformed their psychic economy and manners (the way of communicating with them) within the framework of a romantic ideal. Another example can be found in his study of Mozart's life (Elias, 1993), where he focuses on Mozart's psychogenetic and artistic development in light of his relationships with his father and the European courts. In this study, the conditions of listening are problematized, examining the role played by aural sensitivity in the virtuoso's artistic trajectory, and the conflicts he faced in gaining access to the courts, all explained in terms of processes of control and self-control.

It is a sociology of musicians rather than their music, focusing on the mechanisms that shape the ways people feel and experience the world, as well as the psychic economy of *genius*. An example of sociology *with* music can be briefly found in his book *The Germans*, where the author uses musical taste as an indication of communities' self-awareness and the ways they relate to one another. By re-examining the opposition between civilization and culture, he highlights the role of music in the self-awareness of Germans (Elias, 1996), particularly the middle class, for whom it represented a space of choice, free from state intervention until the rise of Nazism.

In these three examples, we can appreciate the relevance of his work with—in the *Emotional Turn*: he explains that emotions, utilizing a conceptual arsenal of sociology (such as figuration, process/development, coaction, and differentiation), are seen as a constituent of society (affective variation, psychic economy). His sociology consistently concerns itself with emotions and bodies, and his sociology of music is a *sociology of music from emotions and the body*.

A sociology of anthems, based on *figurations*, is thus interested in accounting for the bodily controls required by state rituals, the affective valences involved in the compositions, and the processes that contribute to the constitution of these symbols. Up to this point, Elias' explanation aligns closely with the ideas generated by Hobsbawm, Anderson, and Gellner regarding community. However, *affective valences* transform the strictly cognitive explanation of an *imagined community*, which is anchored in shared expectations and formal education, into an emotional community whose existence is felt at a symbolic level and is interdependent. Anthems contribute to the consolidation and maintenance of a sense of “we,” strengthening the affective bond between individuals and the group. This also serves to reinforce opposition to *others* who do not belong to the nation. Anthems play a fundamental role in uniting people for common purposes, such as “the common defense of their lives, the survival of their group in the face of attacks by other groups” (Elias, 2012, p. 370). Through their message and music, they activate the *furor hegemonalis* that invokes a sentiment of incomparable value (Elias, 2010).

Based on the above, I assert that the modern state involves not only bureaucratic and military rationalization but also emotional rationalization. Thus, it constantly needs to update what the author calls “national sentiment,” a phenomenon that arises from the insatiable need for social myths that demonstrate the incomparable value of one's own nation. With that being said, I would confidently assert that the modern state not only entails bureaucratic and military rationalization; it must continuously update what the author terms “national sentiment,” a phenomenon responding to the unquenchable need for social myths (Elias, 2010). Within the framework of these relations, anthems, as symbols of the state, establish an affective bond among the individuals that form part of it.¹⁵ In this process, anthems embody a my-

¹⁵ Anthems are part of rituals that, following Durkheim, serve to revitalize the meaning of belonging to a group. However, this participation is not homogeneous, as Adriana García Andrade points out in her analysis of Randall Collins' work (chapter 4 of this book). Participation in a ritual is conditioned by four

thologized notion of “us,” significantly influencing the maintenance of affective valences within the state. Anthems possess a strong emotional component, not only due to their lyrics but also because of what they represent: a community that satisfies affective valences. Furthermore, beyond their role in state rituals, anthems are sometimes utilized as tools to fulfill the *sociogenetic law* of society as a whole: the realization of the civilizing process on an individual scale (Elias, 2000, p. 416) through coercion and emotional ties during state rituals.

This is sufficient to argue that Elias stands at the opposite end of the cognitivist approach to studies of *affect* (which stems from the work of Spinoza, Deleuze, and Bergson), which discusses affects and conceives them in anti-intentional terms (Arfuch, 2016; Lara, 2015) and focuses on bodies that affect and are affected (Ticineti and Halley, 2007, p. 16). However, I feel it is important to mention the sociology of knowledge, which cannot be understood without considering the psychic economy and affective valences that underpin figurations.¹⁶ This clarifies that in the conceptual dichotomy of involvement/detachment, useful for highlighting the extremes of a continuum along which individual behavior and thought glide, no knowledge is entirely distanced (rational) or compromised (irrational, emotional?). The proximity to either extreme depends on the structure of interdependency and their coactions. It also allows us to understand that a cognitive structure includes an emotional structure (or vice versa); the presence of one does not negate the other, and the dominance of one over the other influences how individuals understand and perceive the world (Elias, 2007).

Returning to anthems, when studied from this relational perspective, the compositions illuminate the problematic nature of the opposition between emotion/control (a variant of irrational/rational), as their intonation evokes and channels contained emotions (Elias and Dunning, 2008). The issues in-

factors: the physical gathering of the group, boundaries between those who participate and those who are excluded, interaction focused on the same object (in this case, an anthem), and sharing the same state of mind. These considerations are particularly relevant for the purposes of this article: Organized state rituals are events that exclude certain individuals, failing to generate the same level of attention for everyone. Another aspect that makes anthems a relevant object for the sociological study of emotions is the figure of a given martyr.

¹⁶ This is why I believe Elias aligns more closely with the school of thought that views emotional aspects as the expression of affects shaped by the cultural dimension (Lemus, 2020, 2014). For this reason, I think it is important to pause and consider the sociology of knowledge, where the level of emotional auto-coactions is linked to the type of knowledge that society generates.

volved in distinguishing between affects and emotions also become apparent, as I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. A bond between nature and culture comes together in terms of conditions of possibility: anthems symbolize an *affective valence* organized in the form of a nation-state.

Civilization without Emotion

The sociology of emotions makes a significant contribution by challenging the notion that emotions are peripheral or incidental to society; it thus rejects the assumption of an actor who is exclusively driven by ideas or perceptual schemes (Bericat, 2000, p. 145), which are strictly rational. Within this context, Elias' analysis aligns with these premises: no action is taken as an object of study, but rather figuration (with its affective valences and balances of power), explaining social order as a product of a process that is not planned and does not constitute a contract among individuals. His theory of civilization posits that emotions are part of a *fundamental inclination* of individuals and the society that acts upon them. Thus, it reproduces the repressive hypothesis found in authors such as Kant, Freud, Durkheim, and Weber, or in even older traditions like Christianity, namely: for social coexistence to be possible, human nature (which Elias identifies with *inclination*) must be dominated by reason (Kant), culture (Freud), socialization, or rationalization (Weber) (Girola, 2002).

In Elias' theory of civilization, this hypothesis unfolds over a long period, where we can observe a reflexive escalation that leads to the appearance of

a human being capable not only of viewing their historical journey from a distance and recognizing the non-intentional marks left by figurations but also of observing their own observation and controlling their control. Ultimately, the adventure of the witch apprentice evolves into a reflexive meta-escalation, enabling humanity to learn from history and achieve a higher degree of control over what they have discovered (Ramos, 1994, p. 52).

In this model, emotions gradually give way to detached thinking. Whether this is interpreted as the disappearance of myths or their confinement to spaces of controlled emotion, the escalation invariably involves greater control over emotions. The assumptions guiding Elias' court model (Elias, 2012) suggest

this. However, the social intelligence and mental fortitude underlying this model are difficult to find in empirical studies on the heirs of the court (Duindam et al., 2011).¹⁷

Despite the importance of these criticisms, which concern both the empirical and suppositional aspects of this work, I maintain that Elias' relational model retains its relevance in several respects: its critique of traditional dichotomies such as individual/society and nature/culture; its approach to emotions within the framework of the emotionalization of society (Swan, 2007; Wouters, 1986, 2011); and what Zabludovsky (2007) refers to as "contemporary problems of sociology," including migration, globalization, individualization, gender, and stratification. However, it is important to acknowledge that Elias's theory of civilization, by emphasizing emotional control and detached thinking as characteristics of the civilizing process, still exhibits a tendency to prioritize reason over emotion, which can be interpreted as a form of dichotomy between the two.

From Self-Contention to Intensification: Political Economy of Emotions in Anthems

Elias' work represents a sociology of emotions and, at certain points, a sociology *with* emotions, given the importance of *affective valences* as part of his theory of civilization. This does not exempt it from problems at two levels: empirical and presuppositional. The issues I would like to address in this final section pertain to the presuppositional level, specifically regarding his conception of *affective valences* and the origin of the *repressive hypothesis* to which his work can be attributed (via Freud). If we recall, *affective valence* indicates a *natural inclination* of individuals to relate to others, which is constitutive of their very nature, a *universal* characteristic that defines the human species; this dimension originates in the individual's organism, where the raw material can be found. This does not contradict a relational approach, as the author is interested in how relations constitute *figurations* that control these inclina-

¹⁷ Another important issue for the sociology of emotions lies in the historiographic practice that continues to revolve around the state (Ramos Torre, 1994). This, in itself, is now a significant problem, especially in contemporary societies that seem increasingly unable to manage risk and, consequently, the psychic economy of the population.

tions and give rise to emotions. However, his theory does not understand them relationally.

Rosenwein (2001) describes these aspects as a hydraulic model: the definition of emotions as liquids within individuals, shaken up and desiring to be released—an idea rooted in medieval medical notions about moods (p. 11). For authors like Ahmed, this assumption represents a primary obstacle to understanding affects, as it conflates theoretical distinction with an ontological condition (Ahmed, as cited in Solana and Vacarezza, 2020, p. 3). This difference justifies a dialogue between Elias and Ahmed through their respective economies, as it reveals the key to their positions. In the series of reflections shaping the *affective/emotional turn*, Ahmed's work serves as a turning point in two ways: both through adscription and his theoretical stance. As Sabido points out in her article in this book, Ahmed develops arguments within feminism and later incorporates them into the *affective turn*. This progression seems logical given feminism's interest in examining relations of domination grounded in emotional aspects; however, both the author and her theoretical convictions have distanced her from that tradition. This distance is related to conceptual definitions and foundational premises. Ahmed uses *affect* and *emotion* as synonyms, but within a framework that rejects the anti-intentional premise or pre-signification. This positions her closer to the interest of social sciences in general (and Elias' work in particular) in explaining emotions as a relational phenomenon. Nonetheless, I identify three noteworthy differences that deserve further exploration: the relationship between emotions and communities through *intensification*, the bond between them and the problem of legitimacy, and the issue of *adherence*.

The first aspect to consider is the role that emotions play in the formation of communities, which depends on whether we perceive them as something internal that leads to something external. This perception articulates a "we" versus "others" distinction, which can obscure defined boundaries and precise locations. The first response is grounded in the theory of civilization, assuming transformations and socialization within the internal sphere to incorporate these elements (as seen in the repressive hypothesis and the hydraulic model). The second response draws from Ahmed's (2014) political analysis of emotions, which advocates for abandoning the conventional narrative and shifting focus from understanding *what an emotion is* to understanding *what it does* (pp. 27–28). In this economic framework, emotions "do not positively inhabit any–

body or anything,” meaning that ‘the subject’ is merely one nodal point in the economy rather than its origin and destination (Ahmed, 2004, p. 46). Emotions “stimulate” subjects, bringing figures together and influencing the proximity of subjects to objects, mediating the relationship between the psychic and the social, and between the individual and the collective (2001, p. 11).

An interest in affects compels us to investigate their gradation, which Ahmed (2014) refers to as intensification. Within a political economy, affects not only circulate but do so with varying intensity: one can feel more or less pain (or love, hate, etc.), and this fluctuation makes us aware of the boundaries of our bodies and our communities. This notion echoes Elias’s critique of the Cartesian image of the isolated individual, as his arguments challenge the ontology of the subject. Nevertheless, I believe Ahmed surpasses mere criticism by refusing to understand emotions through the inside/outside distinction upheld by the hydraulic model. Thus, it is no longer a matter of believing that a community (which is assumed) controls the emotions of individuals; rather, the community arises from the alienation produced by differing emotions.

This perspective reveals two insights: these boundaries are less stable and more contingent, connected to “the sociality of being ‘with’ others, of getting close enough to touch,” and they are the product of affective responses that emerge through contact or the potential for contact (Ahmed, 2014, p. 28). This emphasis on intensification illustrates how the political economy of emotions blurs the distinction between subject and object. It also paves the way for rethinking the nation—not as a series of values or a homogeneous cultural dimension constructed through an educational apparatus—but as processes of intensification that stem from the circulation of emotions.

Love for the nation is thus intertwined with how bodies inhabit the nation in relation to an ideal. The nation is a concrete manifestation of how some bodies have moved toward or away from others, a movement that helps create boundaries and borders, and contributes to what we can now refer to as ‘national character’ (i.e., what the nation is like) (Ahmed, 2014, p. 133).

As I mentioned several paragraphs ago, this framework allows us to conceptualize the State as an emotional reordering that encompasses not only the administration of territory but also violence. Within this context, the emotions

expressed in anthems (love/hate) function as Ahmed has described in the case of Fascist narratives, creating a fantasy in which mundane matters are threatened by imaginary ones (Ahmed, 2014). These “others” can reside within the same political unit (they need not even be migrants, merely different fellow citizens). By breathing life into this fantasy and mobilizing it, individuals consent to forms of power that shape the nation. In brief, they legitimize these powers (2001, p. 10). This is the second aspect I find relevant in Elias’s work, as it repositions it within the realm of politics¹⁸—an aspect that appears complicated to approach through an oblique concept of power, particularly those that shape the nation.

Anthems do not form or consolidate communities solely through their meaning “as if such flags could only signify national love” (Ahmed, 2014, p. 74), nor through the *ways we listen to them* (Pérez Baños, 2018). Anthems do not reference anything pre-significative, as some studies of *affect* suggest (Lara, 2020). Here we arrive at the third problem: that of adhesion (Ahmed, 2014, pp. 89–92). The *melodies* of anthems concerning people *adhere* to figures or objects of hate: invaders, unpatriotic citizens, dissidents, snobs (or vulgar individuals), their attire, skin color, etc. “Imaginary” communities are thus emotional communities whose surface layer comprises all the figures that adhere during a particular melody (the son who is a soldier, the protective father, the nurturing mother, the greedy enemy), whose legitimacy derives from their capacity to mobilize. This characteristic helps us understand what sustains subjects in certain positions and what prompts their adhesion (Abramowski and Canevaro, 2017, p. 12).

This notion challenges previous definitions of anthems, including those based on *affective valences*, which have been defined by their capacity to symbolize a community. Within this political economy of emotions, national anthems draw their strength from: 1) their ability to intensify feelings beyond State rituals and 2) their *adherence* to other symbols.

The discomfort caused by the actions of Colin Kaepernick in the United States or Alex Lora in Mexico stemmed not from a lack of protocol (implicit or explicit), but rather from their actions adhering to figures that are typically absent from anthems, making people uncomfortable because these figures do not align with the nation’s ideals.

¹⁸ And in opposition to the problem of legitimacy.

Comfort arises from encounters between multiple bodies, promising a ‘sinking’ feeling. Ultimately, it is pain or discomfort that redirects attention to the surfaces of the body. To be comfortable is to feel at such ease with one’s environment that it becomes difficult to distinguish where one’s body ends and the world begins. One fits in, and through fitting, the surfaces of bodies fade from view. The disappearance of this surface is significant: in moments of comfort, bodies extend into spaces, and spaces extend into bodies. The sinking feeling involves a seamless space where one cannot see the ‘stitches’ connecting bodies (Ahmed, 2014, p. 148).

How can we study anthems from this perspective? How can we account for the sinking or discomfort that anthems provoke? These are methodological challenges that need to be addressed, but the potential to develop theoretical tools for this purpose—and to build on the developments presented throughout this book—encourages exploration of the necessary strategies to achieve this goal.

Conclusion

Elias’s work represents a pioneering effort to incorporate emotions into discussions about the structuration of social order and the development of perception and thought schemes. However, this model is underpinned by the hydraulic model of emotions, which is criticized by authors such as Rosenwein and Ahmed, who paradoxically maintain an anachronistic definition of emotions. Nevertheless, as argued in this chapter, the relational and processual dimensions of his theory of society allow for a dialogue between his work and developments that conceptualize emotions as articulatory rather than containment-oriented.

I take republican anthems as a starting point for reconstructing Elias’s work within the framework of the sociology of emotions. This approach will enable us to identify *affective valences* as foundational to a relational proposal in his theory of civilization, as well as highlight the problematic assumptions he makes. By focusing on anthems, I aim to demonstrate that the study of these compositions transcends music: this inquiry challenges distinctions in the discipline, such as those concerning functional differentiation (Is it music or politics?). Dichotomies such as nature/culture, individual/society, and emo-

tion/reason have also put at odds the affective/emotional and corporal *turn* in criticism. Anthems embody the tension between political intentions and artistic criteria, between self-control and emotional ties within communities framed by a state apparatus and its aspiration for a unified culture.

These compositions prompt us to question the limits of a nation: Are they physical or emotional? State-centrism in the theory of civilization seems to suggest that territory defines the limits of what is national. However, unequal reactions to this notion—evidenced by various bodily dispositions when an anthem is played (kneeling or shouting)—suggest the need to observe emotional parameters to explain these responses. Therefore, Ahmed’s *political economy of emotions* is of fundamental interest in overcoming critiques of the theory of civilization. This chapter’s main contribution is this dialogue, which merits systematic comparison between the two proposals, as they share sources and interests. One fruitful outcome of this dialogue lies in the historical dimension of Ahmed’s *political economy*, which, as Wetherell (2015) notes, is overlooked in Ahmed’s choice to isolate emotion from any practical context of action (pp. 158–159). This presents a promising starting point for practical and systematic dialogue between both authors, where the theory of civilization can restore the historical and relational dimensions of affective and emotional domains.

Finally, I believe this dialogue can also enrich the study of music from an emotional perspective. What characteristics should it possess? Considering the sociology of voiced landscapes and their proposals to understand music in its relational dimension, Ahmed’s economic framework of emotions compels us to rethink the criteria underlying landscape construction. We must abandon the internal coherence of certain rationalizations that underlie cartographic practices and investigate the emotions that intervene in the diversity of objects binding together to shape these *soundscapes*.

These tasks indicate that we need to outline a research agenda that revisits Elias’s works, recognizing that emotions articulate his research agenda and methodological strategies. Furthermore, beyond the sociology of music that his works enable us to develop, the possibilities he offers to expand the concept of landscape call for a sociology of emotions that considers the musical phenomenon. This should engage with the ongoing work surrounding the role of emotions in the study of music, classifying how they function across various dimensions and building bridges between the sociology of emotions and relat-

ed approaches in sociology, psychology, philosophy, neurophysics, media studies, and other disciplines (Juslin and Sloboda, 2011).

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