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Secure states: towards a political sociology of emotion

Mabel Berezin

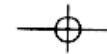
Abstract

Emotion and politics is the study of the non-cognitive core of politics. Emotion and politics presents its own special set of difficulties. First, emotions are experienced individually but politics is by definition a collective phenomena. This means that the social analyst has to attempt to understand how an individual micro-level instinct, an emotion, contributes to collective macro-level processes and outcomes. Second, emotions are ontologically in the moment. Emotions and sound have similar properties. Music or noise either soothes or jars the central nervous system. Emotions too affect the central nervous system and even social scientists have begun to acknowledge the relevance of neurobiology to their studies. The physicality of emotion suggests that a robust analysis of emotion demands a multi-disciplinary approach, and not that emotions are outside of the purview of the social sciences. This chapter begins from the position that much theoretical, analytic and empirical work remains to be done in the study of politics and emotions. It represents a first attempt to explore, from multiple angles, how emotions matter to politics. The chapter proceeds on four levels: first, it develops the concepts secure state and community of feeling as analytic frames that unite politics and emotion; second, it explores how emotions are embedded in political institutions; third, it takes up the issue of emotion and collective action; and lastly, it suggests the conceptual issues that a political sociology of emotions might address.

Politics and emotion

Sociologists have begun to recognize that emotions are as constitutive of macro-level social processes as they are of individual psychology (for example, Barbalet, 1997, Berezin, 1997a, 1999c; Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2001; Massey, 2001; Turner, 2000). Sociologists are not alone in their recent attention to emotion. Between 1999 and 2001, major works on emotions have appeared in political science (Elster, 1999; Braud, 1996) history (Reddy, 2001), moral philosophy (Nussbaum, 2001) and neuroscience (Damasio, 1999). The recent outpouring of cross-disciplinary scholarship on emotions makes arguing for their importance *jejeune*. Emotions clearly matter—but how?

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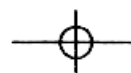
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This chapter discusses emotions in the political sphere. Certain assumptions govern a macro-sociological approach to emotions whether the particular focus is politics, economics or culture. Stability, institutionalization, routinization, as social theorists from Weber to Parsons have emphasized are the core social processes of modern society—that is, post-1789 Europe. In the *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), Friedrich Nietzsche distinguished between the Apollonian and the Dionysian—the rational and the expressive. Nietzsche viewed the rational as the Achilles heel of what some analysts label western Eurocentric society. Nietzsche is pointing to the central tension of modernity—the tension between emotion and its expression (laughter, tears, rage) and rationality, or as Weber ([1920] 1976) elaborated in his discussion of the Protestant ethic—the passionless, methodical, and relentless pursuit of order through work.¹

Modernity's commitment to routinization, or as Weber articulated it, legal authority, relegated emotions to the shadows of both theory and history. The market and the nation-state, the twin public institutions that embed the economic and the political in modern social life were a-emotional, in theory, if not in practice, from inception. The private sphere was the legitimate social space for emotion. Beginning in the 18th century and continuing into the 19th, cadres of intellectuals (novelists, essayists, letter writers) buried emotions in an ideology of sentimentalism located in the private sphere of the family and bourgeois courtship rituals (Reddy, 2001; Watt, [1957] 2001; Habermas, [1962] 1989, pp. 43–51). When not being sentimentalized, emotions were demonized or neutralized. Civilization, as Freud ([1930] 1961) argued, requires the suppression of collective emotion. Durkheim ([1915] 1965) recognized the emotional dimension of social life when he described the rites and rituals of aboriginal tribes; yet emotions receded when he formalized his approach to social categorization and knowledge. Durkheim's ([1897] 1966) approach to suicide as a social, and not a psychological, phenomenon gave birth to the modern social science of deviance.

Social analysts who study the political, whether they are sociologists or political scientists, view emotions as extrinsic to the study of politics. The issues that engage these social scientists, the nation-state, the law, voting behavior, and political parties are predicated on a conception of rationality. Emotions, if considered at all in socio-political analysis, take the form of deviant behavior patterns—authoritarian personalities (Lipset, 1960) or backward peasants who cannot adjust to modernity (Banfield, 1967).² Emotion has lurked in the interstices of classical political sociology and carried more positive valences than contemporary analyses would suggest. Scholars, who study the modern nation-state, whether from a culturalist or institutionalist perspective, have overlooked Weber's argument that a 'political community' derives its force as well as its legitimacy from its 'emotional foundations' (Weber, 1978, p. 903). Students of democracy have given short shrift to the fact that John Stuart Mill did not see much hope for the 'free institutions' of representative democracy without a significant degree of 'fellow-feeling' among co-nationals.³ Ironically, it is rational choice theorists puzzling over issues of risk and trust, as frequently

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exemplified in studies of political violence, who have made the initial contributions to a political sociology of emotions.

This chapter begins from the position that much theoretical, analytic and empirical work remains to be done in the study of politics and emotions. It represents a first attempt to explore, from multiple angles, *how* emotions matter to politics. The chapter proceeds on four levels: first, it develops the concepts *secure state* and *community of feeling* as analytic frames that unite politics and emotion; second, it explores how emotions are embedded in political institutions; third, it takes up the issue of emotion and collective action; and lastly, it suggests the conceptual issues that a political sociology of emotions might address.

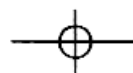
Parsing political emotion

The study of emotion and politics is the study of the non-cognitive core of politics. Emotion and politics presents its own special set of difficulties. First, emotions are experienced individually but politics is by definition a collective phenomena. This means that the social analyst has to attempt to understand how an individual micro-level instinct, an emotion, contributes to collective macro-level processes and outcomes. Second, emotions are ontologically in the moment. Emotions and sound have similar properties. Music or noise either soothes or jars the central nervous system. Emotions too affect the central nervous system and even social scientists have begun to acknowledge the relevance of neurobiology to their studies (eg, Turner, 2001). However, this simply means that a robust analysis of emotion demands a multi-disciplinary approach, and not that emotions are outside of the purview of the social sciences.

Aesthetic philosopher Suzanne Langer (1951) drew the connection between music and emotion when she described music as a 'morphology of feeling' and argued: '... the forms of human feeling are much more congruent with musical forms than with the forms of language, music can *reveal* the nature of feelings with a detail and truth that language cannot approach (199).' Codifying, managing, mobilizing emotions transforms them into culturally accepted behaviours, situates them in time and space and, depending upon the context, adds a political dimension to the emotion. A person or a group in a fit of joy, fear, anger, overcome by laughing, weeping or fighting is not simultaneously mobilizing, managing or codifying. Emotion as immediately experienced is socially ineffective, destabilizing and a-political. We have only to think of the difference between a riot and a revolution.

Elster (1999) persuasively demonstrates that to understand the relation between emotion and social life requires the dis-entangling of cause and effect. For example in the case of civil wars, there is always a question as to whether escalating violence based on longstanding hatred is the cause *or* the effect of present conflicts. In Italy during the period between the fall of Mussolini's fascist regime and the end of the Second World War, members of fascist and communist squads engaged in large-scale vigilante murders of each other (Pavone,

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1991). Justification for murder varied depending upon which side you were on, ie, you were saving Italy either from fascism or from communism. Civil wars also provide an opportunity for persons or groups who did not like each other much to begin with to get even with each other in the name of the cause. The moral high ground is quickly lost; and more importantly, the relation between collective cause and collective effect is virtually impossible to pull apart. Do I hate you because you are a fascist or do I hate you because I have always hated you and now have an opportunity to kill you without censure? Or to take a slightly more positive example, do I pay my taxes because I love my country and want to see distributive justice for all its citizens; or do I pay my taxes because if I do not, I will be fined and pay even more? The preceding counterfactuals suggest that in the political realm effects or manifestations, ie, emotions expressed in actions, provide a more fruitful avenue of analysis than triggering instances—which may, but only may, represent the official public narrative.

If there is any point of agreement in the new study of emotions, it is that they are so constitutive of social, and by extension, political life that they cannot be ignored. To borrow from Weber, emotions govern non-rational but not irrational action. To the extent that action is oriented toward others, it is social; to the extent that action is oriented toward institutions, it is both social *and* political. What is required is that we develop a working definition of emotion as a process that places in bold relief the capacity of emotions to infuse both the social and the political spheres.

Emotions, whether positive or negative, are physical *and* expressive responses to some sort of destabilization. One of the earliest definitions of emotions comes from Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (1991) that describes emotions as, '... those things by the alteration of which men differ with regard to those judgments which pain and pleasure accompany, such as anger pity, fear and all other such and their opposites (141).' Aristotle's definition is worth citing, because it shows that one of the earliest social analysts who thought of emotion incorporated the concept of de-stabilization and difference, ie, 'alteration.' Emotions are a response to threat, ie, the fight or flight mechanisms that biologists frequently emphasize. Threats can also be positive. The rhetoric of sexual love in various languages highlights de-stabilization. In English, we fall in love; in both French and Italian, love is a thunderbolt—*coup de foudre* or *culpo di fulmine*, respectively. Social beings do not live continually either on the precipice or in social stasis. Marriage institutionalizes sexual attraction. Social actors do not live completely without affect, which is what a case of perfect stability would be, nor in a state of perpetual affect. Individuals experience social life somewhere in between the predictable comfort of routine (stability) and the discomfort that contingent events (instability) pose.⁴

Recent work in neuroscience supports an action approach to emotion. Damasio (1999) argues that emotions are neurological phenomena that to some degree are always more or less present—whether the individual is aware of them or not. Emotions in this sense generate feelings of which an individual is more or less conscious (Damasio, 1999, pp. 37; 50–53). What Damasio describes as

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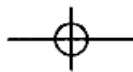
'feeling made conscious' is what social scientists tend to focus upon in their discussion of emotions. While Damasio recognizes that 'learning and culture' give emotion meaning, context, location in time and space, is not his primary interest as a neuroscientist. Nevertheless, it is ours as social scientists. Neuroscience verifies for social science that emotion represents a material state of human nature, an extension of the body that is necessary to consider. Emotion even from the purely biological perspective is relatively uninteresting until it manifests itself in the 'conscious' recognition of feeling. From a sociological perspective, as opposed to psychological or psychoanalytic perspective, we may argue that emotions are unproblematic until they result in social or collective action. What is interesting from a social science perspective is *not* that we have emotions but the mechanisms that transpose these emotions into some sort of action or institutional arrangement—that is the moments in which we do and do not act emotionally. If we focus on action, rather than emotion *per se*, we direct our attention to the *when*, the temporal dimension of emotional display that is central to all social life but particularly crucial for understanding the relation between politics and emotion.

Recasting emotion in political terms: the secure state and the community of feeling

An even cursory glance at the emerging literature on emotions makes it clear that scholars have a difficult time coming to terms with precisely what an emotion is (Lutz and White, 1986; Thoits, 1989). Kemper (1987) lists four primary emotions that he combines to come up with twenty-three secondary emotions. Turner (2001, p. 74) arrays the manifestations of four primary emotions on scale that ranges from low to high intensity. Jasper (1998, pp. 406–407), whose primary interest is in social movements, distinguishes between affective emotions such as love and hate and reactive emotions such as outrage and grief. He adds a third category that he labels 'moods' that includes defiance, enthusiasm and envy. The abundance of available literature that catalogues emotions suggests that naming emotions is perhaps not the most fruitful analytic task.

A political sociology of emotions should avoid cataloguing—but not completely. Some emotions are more relative to politics than others are. Alternatively, if emotions are a response to instability then some emotions are more likely than others to emerge in the political sphere and have discernible political consequences. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle (1991) argues that the moral persona of the speaker is as important a part of the rhetorical power to persuade as any intrinsic worth of the argument offered. Persuasion is ultimately about the distribution of individual and collective resources. The constraint and deployment of emotions is an essential component of rhetoric and by extension politics. Aristotle identifies ten emotions that he considers fundamental to human nature and thus fair game in the rhetorical repertoire. Of these ten, anger, calm, friendship and enmity, fear and confidence, pity and indignation, may be recalibrated

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in terms that apply to modern political organization. The remaining four, shame, favour, envy and jealousy are more applicable to discussions of feudal or tribal forms of political organization.⁵

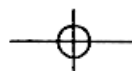
Anger, enmity, fear and indignation are different forms of reaction to threat; whereas, calm, friendship, confidence, and pity are responses to security. The first group articulates with the feeling of pain; the second with the feeling of pleasure. Or to put another way, the first group may excite hate; the second may excite love—in the sense of *caritas* rather than *eros*. To be analytically useful, these emotions must be systematically recast in terms that aggregate their potential political effects. This article develops the ideal types of the *secure state* and the *community of feeling* as analytic prisms that refract specific historical events and movements in terms that render emotions politically meaningful.⁶

The secure state

Political scientists regard the Treaty of Westphalia, signed in 1648, as the beginning point of modern international relations and the sovereign territorial state. The Treaty arguably marks the beginning of security as a political concept—but security signifies much more than the merely political. Security with its attendant feelings of confidence and comfort is the emotional template of the major form of modern political organization—the democratic nation-state. The territorially bounded state inspires confidence and loyalty in its members, citizens, by providing internal (police) and external (military) security. In exchange, citizens develop an emotional bond that makes them willing to defend the security of the state under threat and to forfeit income to taxes. Patriotism and civic nationalism are the positive descriptors of this feeling of attachment (Viroli, 1995; the collected essays in Nussbaum, 1996). The *secure state*, in theory if not in practice, generates a feeling of social compassion that permits communal empathy, and generosity (Nussbaum, 2001, pp. 401–440). In market societies, voluntary associations fill the emotional space of social compassion; in societies committed to redistribution, the state provides social welfare.⁷

The opposite of the secure state is the insecure state. The paradigmatic *secure state* is the modern nation-state; in contrast, the insecure state is a polity that may assume many forms. For example, an insecure state may be a state in dissolution or in formation. A contemporary example is the former Eastern Europe that has experienced a range of emotions from the benign to the malignant in the period of transition. Fear and lack of confidence are the hallmarks of political insecurity. The cause could be an internal threat as residents of established nation-states respond to the influx of immigrants from Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe; it may also be a response to a real or perceived external threat. At the analytic level, violence from the purely symbolic to the physical is the effect of the collective experience of the emotion of insecurity. Aggression from war to ethnic cleansing is a manifestation of fear of external threats; xenophobia, resentment and discrimination are manifestations of threats to internal security.

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The *secure state* and its opposite the insecure state is an ideal type that situates virtues and vices that usually occupy political theorists and moral philosophers within a set of political institutions. This analytic approach explores emotion as a latent structure of affect within a macro political structure—the state.

Communities of feeling

In contrast to the *secure state*, *communities of feeling* are a-structural. The *secure state* channels emotional energy within the polity; *communities of feeling* generate emotional energy in support of or against the polity. Scheler (1992, p. 54) uses the term to signify emotional connection. Shared private grief is his example. Scheler's view of *community of feeling* has two weaknesses: first, it assumes participants understand the emotions that they are sharing, or the objects about which they are becoming emotional; and second, it does not fully appreciate the collective nature of emotion. In previous work (Berezin, 1997b; 2001), I have argued that *communities of feeling*, whether staged or spontaneous, serve to intensify emotional identification with the polity and derive emotional power from their transience. They bring individuals together in a bounded, usually public, space for a discrete time period to express emotional energy. *Communities of feeling* borrow from Raymond Williams' (1977: 133; 132) concept, 'structure of feeling' that he describes as a 'social experiences in solution.' Williams contrasts 'feeling' to discursive elements such as 'world-view' and 'ideology' which are linguistic and textual. 'Structure of feeling' underscores the indeterminacy of emotion: 'we [Williams] are concerned with meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt, and the relations between these and formal or systematic beliefs are in practice variable (including historically variable), over a range from formal assent with private dissent to the more nuanced interaction between selected and interpreted beliefs and acted and justified experiences.'

The indeterminacy of emotion is particularly salient in the political realm. Nation-states use parades, holiday, public rituals, and rallies to generate *communities of feeling*. In the mid-1930s in Italy, the fascist regime staged a series of large rallies in Rome—for the sole purpose of creating emotional energy (Berezin, 2001, pp. 90–92). The absolute political effects of such rallies are completely indeterminate. *Communities of feeling* as a political strategy may be a bankrupt endeavour. The emotional energy produced may be negative as well as positive. Yet, no matter what the outcome, political spectacle is as old as politics itself—suggesting that political élites believe in the emotional energy that spectacle generates.

If the emotional effects of staged *communities of feeling* are indeterminate; the effects of spontaneous *communities of feeling* are even more so. Effective emotional politics appropriates rather than generates emotional energy. Examples of appropriation abound. Kertzer (1980) described how the Italian Communist Party fed off the ritual energy of the Catholic Church to recruit party

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members and to sustain commitment among them. More recently, British Prime Minister Tony Blair attempted to feed off the emotional energy generated by the thousands who flocked to London when the Princess Diana died. He was quick to label her the 'People's Princess'—no doubt hoping to infuse his Labour Party with Diana's charisma. The Socialist Prime Minister and the Conservative President vied for public space as they quickly appropriated the spontaneous outpouring of exuberance in Paris on Bastille Day 1998 when the French celebrated their victory in the World Cup (Berezin, 1999c).

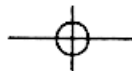
In the fall of 2001, in response to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre, a group of American Senators stood united on the steps of the Capitol building in Washington and spontaneously broke into a chorus of *God Bless America*. In contrast to Europe, where politicians appropriate free-floating emotional energy, in America the market appropriated the emotional energy around the song and recordings were suddenly bestsellers. *God Bless America* has a history *vis à vis* emotion and politics. It is not an American political anthem. Irving Berlin composed the song for a Broadway play staged in the 1930s. Kate Smith, a popular singer, sang it at the end of War Bond Rallies during the Second World War to mobilize citizens to invest in the war.⁸ In his study of mass persuasion that focused on the War Bond Drive, Merton (1946) found that people bought the Bonds because they found both the singer, and by extension, the song—comforting and maternal. Security embodied in maternal affect is a form of emotional energy that in the War Bond Drive created a politically effective *community of feeling*—effective because people bought the Bonds.

Embedding emotion in political institutions

The modern nation-state is the historical analogue of the *secure state*. Territorial sovereignty and membership criteria gave rise to unique legal institutions that bound individuals to the modern nation-state. The political institutions of the modern nation-state inscribe emotion in the polity and the rights and duties of citizenship channel collective emotional energy towards its maintenance.

The process of state formation began, some scholars argue, as early as the 16th century depending upon the part of Europe one considers. Elias (1994) in his history of the development of social control in Europe, *The Civilizing Process*, began in the 17th century with an analysis of etiquette books. Elias excavated the development of a rising bourgeois class for whom the containment of emotion, or what he calls the 'economy of affects,' was crucial for achieving social power and status (p. 27). Elias documented the first stage of a process that aimed to suppress overt display emotion. However, the development of the modern nation-state with emotion firmly embedded in diverse institutions did not begin to occur until the 19th century and in some instances took until the 20th to complete. Laws governing nationality were first enacted in the 19th century as part of European civil codes (Hansen and Weil, 2001).

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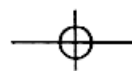
The nation-state is better thought of as a project rather than a fixed entity. 'Project' denotes ongoing actions where collective actors institutionalize new norms, values, and procedures (Berezin, 1997). Nation-state projects are historically specific forms of political organization that wed bureaucratic rationality (the infrastructure of the state) to the particularism of peoples and cultures (the nation as community). Modern nation-states are vehicles of political emotion. Citizenship defines legal membership in modern nation-states. Conceptually, citizenship has evolved from a conception of rights attached to persons (Marshall, 1964) to a discussion of rules of inclusion (Brubaker, 1992) and relational processes (Somers, 1993). Focusing upon citizenship as a boundary-making device attenuates its affective dimensions. Citizenship is more than simply a juridical relationship. It also signals an emotional bond that arouses feelings of national loyalty and belonging in a politically bounded geographical space (Berezin, 1999a.).

The institutions of the nation-states move the epistemological—citizenship as category—towards the emotional—citizenship as felt identity. Berezin (1997) argues that competition and necessity intertwine identity with institutions. The success or strength of the nation-state as an identity project depends upon first, the other identities with which it must compete; and second, the strength of the competing institutions that buttress those identities. A central paradox underlies nation-state projects. Without loyal members, ie, citizens who identify with the project, a state will be at a comparative disadvantage in international relations and competition. On the other hand, a state cannot create new identities from whole cloth. The existing identities from which it borrows or appropriates its cultural and emotional claims can, unless eliminated, at any moment re-emerge to undermine the nation-state project.

Political sociologists customarily turn to Weber's writings on legitimation and domination when they wish to write about the modern nation-state. However, Weber's writings on political community are far more useful when one wishes to elaborate the relation between the nation-state and emotion. Weber ([1922] 1978, pp. 901–926) defines political community as a form of association that governs social actions among 'inhabitants of the territory' who share culture and bonds of solidarity. The political and the territorial are fungible—necessary, but not sufficient for creating a 'political community.' Political community is not reducible to either economics (ie, market activity) or politics (ie, territorial control). Weber argues that 'joint memories' shape ties that run deeper than the 'merely cultural, linguistic or ethnic.' Without a shared history, we have politics but not community. Following the logic of Weber's argument, we may add that time is an essential dimension of political community. Time is as necessary as space to the formation of political community—or the emotional dimension of attachment and shared experience.

Discussions of nationalism have subsumed the emotional dimensions of political community. The literature on nationalism is voluminous and growing. In the late 19th century, students of nationalism such as Renan saw the nation as a biological entity—a community of attachment among groups with shared

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bloodline. Much of the scholarship in recent years has focused on putting this primordial conception to rest. However, in denying the blood connection, scholars have gone excessively over to the constructed view of nationalism. Revisionist scholarship has de-emotionalized political community. Constructivism has as difficult a time accounting for the recent resurgence of ethnic nationalism as primordialism had in accounting for the multi-ethnic nation-state.

This is not to say that the territorial narratives that national and local cultural entrepreneurs fabricate are unimportant. To borrow Benedict Anderson's now familiar formulation (1991: 7), the modern nation-state is an 'imagined community' that creates a spirit of 'fraternity' that creates a feeling of 'attachment' to the state in the form of 'love for the nation (Anderson, 1991: 141; 143). Nation-state is a two-pronged institutional and conceptual entity. The state is in the 'business of rule' and focuses upon bureaucratic efficiency and territorial claims; the nation is in the business of creating emotional attachment to the state. 'Imagined' community was a novel concept when it first appeared in 1983. Its principal battle has been won and scholars generally accept to some degree the constructed dimension of 'nation-ness.' However, scholars have either glossed over or simply assumed 'political love' without delving into what sociologist Robert W. Connell (1990: 526) has described as the 'structure of cathexis' or the 'patterning of emotional attachments' to the polity.

Calhoun's (1997) account of nationalism that connects kinship to the institution of the nation-state bypasses some of the analytic and empirical difficulties of the essentialist versus the constructivist position. He argues that nationalism borrows its rhetorical frames from the language of kinship. Biology dictates that everyone participates to some degree in kinship relations. Because kinship is nearly universal, family metaphors resonate emotionally and lend themselves to building a shared national identity (Berezin, 1999b). The physicality of territory, from the family home to the neighbourhood to the nation-state, underscores propinquity in space and duration in time. Propinquity and duration generate familiarity or comfort and create a form of cultural and emotional attachment to and identification with the place that an individual or group inhabits.⁹ Viewed from the prospective of comfort, emotional attachment to place, what the Germans call *Heimat* is not irrational particularism but an ingrained emotional response to temporally durable environmental factors. Jusdanis (2001) makes a similar observation when he argues for a 'necessary nation.'

Hunt (1992: 196) in her analysis of the 'family romance' of the French Revolution suggests that the emotional metaphor of family is vacuous if not situated in a specific cultural and historical context. Historical and theoretical accounts demonstrate that 19th century nation-states did not just come together due to the elective affinity of compatriots but were forged from wars as well as the suppression of local and regional cultures and institutions. Eugen Weber's now classic study of nation-state making in 19th century France, *Peasants Into Frenchmen* (1976), described this process of successful institution building in detail.

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Nation-state projects require two kinds of activities to create emotional attachment and identity. The first sort of activity is the compulsory participation in institutions that affect all citizens. These activities typically are the military, the schools and the national language. For this reason, the suppression of regional language and dialect is usually the first item on the nation-state building agenda. Fighting, learning, speaking, as collective actions create a shared culture of participation. The second activity is consumption—the consumption of national images, words and symbols in newspapers, art, literature, theater. National languages, literatures and education systems as well as museums, monuments and music serve to keep the spirit of national belonging alive (for example, Mukerji, 1997; Corse, 1997). Production and consumption serve to imprint the nation cognitively and emotionally upon the identities of its citizens. If France is the archetypal successful 19th century nation-state project, one has only to cross the Alps to Italy where the Fascist regime tried to complete the failed work of 19th century institution building (Berezin, 1999b).

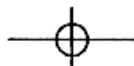
Emotion and collective action: ritual, social movements and violence

The modern nation-state contains emotions within political institutions. Emotions of membership are rarely transparent except under conditions of threat from internal or external forces. A reservoir of national emotional energy, as well as military conscription, helps to convince citizens to fight for their country during war time. A perceived internal enemy makes some citizens rise to defend their turf. For example, the standard explanation for the electoral success of right wing parties in contemporary Europe is the increase in the number of resident immigrants (see Eatwell, 2000). The political emotions so far described are *intra-institutional* responses constitutive of the *secure state*.

A range of political emotions exists that are *extra-institutional*. *Communities of feeling* are emotional responses to events that lie outside institutionalized politics. In contrast to the *secure state*, where the form is invariant and the content is historically specific, ie, the modern nation-state, the *community of feeling* displays variation as to form and content. Whereas the *secure state* and the modern nation-state speak to the issues of law and emotion; the *community of feeling* speaks to the issue of collective action and emotion. Rituals, social movements and mass violence are the three forms of collective action most germane to issues of political emotion.

Emotion is the pivot upon which political ritual turns. As Geertz (1973: 449) argues in his discussion of the Balinese cockfight, ritual display serves as a kind of 'sentimental education' in its use of 'emotion' for 'cognitive ends'. Ritual is performative as well as representational and we attenuate its political significance if we restrict its impact to the cognitive. Discursive ritual knowledge is ultimately indeterminate. Public political ritual is performance; and performance, whether it occurs in the tightly bounded world of the theater or the more permeable social space of a public piazza, is a highly elusive entity because its

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effects are experiential. The experiential, or performative, nature of ritual points us in the direction of action.

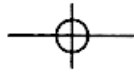
In Kertzer's (1988) monograph on ritual and politics, he defines ritual as 'symbolic behavior that is socially standardized and repetitive. . . . Ritual action has a formal quality to it. It follows highly structured, standardized sequences and is often enacted at certain places and times that are themselves endowed with special symbolic meaning. Ritual action is repetitive and, therefore, often redundant, but these very factors serve as important means of *channeling emotions* [emphasis added], guiding cognition, and organizing social groups (9).' By taking an action approach to political ritual, Kertzer suggests that rituals are formalized manifestations of emotion. He does not distinguish between rituals that occur with state sponsorship and those that occur in opposition to the state.

State-sponsored rituals are temporary moments of exit from ordinary life that dramatize emotional commitment to the standard institutions of the polity. National holiday, festivals, parades, commemorations are periodic attempts to fan the flames of institutionalized political passions and commitments. These types of ritual events are part of the woof and weave of modern political institutions and they occur in nation-states independently of the ideology of the regime in power. Studies of public political ritual range widely in time and space. Examples include: the 'theatre state' of 18th century Bali (Geertz, 1980); the festivals of the French Revolution (Ozouf, 1988); the rallies of Weimar Germany (Mosse, 1991); the myths of state socialism (Verdery, 1999); strategies of patriotism in 19th century America (Bodnar, 1992); commemoration rituals in America (Spillman, 1997); public rituals in Fascist Italy (Berezin, 1997).¹⁰

In my study of twenty years of Italian fascist public ritual, I identified five components of ritual activity that combined and re-combined forming a ritual repertoire aimed at intensifying emotional identity with the fascist regime. These components were: first, the *myth of the founding event*; second, the *forging of enemies and heroes*; third, the *appropriation of the commonplace*; fourth, the *merging of sacred and secular*, and fifth, the using of *categories of persons as symbolic icons*. These ritual actions are commonplace in the modern polity. Nation-states have founding myths from the storming of the Bastille to the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Enemies and heroes forge bonds of solidarity and intensify feelings of community—us against them. The American politician who regularly shakes hands with the crowds appropriates the everyday. Even nation-states such as the United States that are committed to the separation of Church and state have references to the deity in their political rituals. The American president takes the oath of office with his hand on the Bible. Modern monarchs with their schedule of public activities are recurrent examples of public individuals who are institutionalized national symbols.¹¹

Public political rituals are *communities of feeling* that serve as arenas of emotion, bounded spaces, where citizens enact and vicariously experience collective national selfhood. Ritual action communicates familiarity with form and this familiarity may be as simple as the recognition that one is required to be present at an event. Familiarity and identity are co-terminus. The repeated

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experience of ritual participation produces a feeling of solidarity—‘we are all here together, we must share something;’ and lastly, it produces collective memory—‘we were all there together.’ What is experienced and what is remembered is the act of participating in the ritual event in the name of the polity.

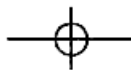
Ritual eliminates indeterminacy in social space, the carefully staged crowding of bodies in public spaces, but this does not presume that ritual eliminates indeterminacy as to meaning. Ritual by acting out emotion includes indeterminacy. Public political ritual creates an open interpretive space. Solidarities and memories—the identities of subjects who have gathered under similar circumstances—may be extremely fluid. Emotion may obliterate the old self but there is no guarantee as to what form the new self or identity might assume.

Collective actors with grievances against the state may easily appropriate the same repertoire of ritual actions learned from state sponsored events to use against the state. It simply requires the channeling of emotional energy in a new direction. Social movements scholars have taken the lead in emphasizing the importance of emotions to political sociology (Aminzade and Mc Adam, 2001). Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta (2000) remind us that the sociological study of social movements, originally the purview of social psychology, began with emotions. Beginning in the 1970s, structuralist approaches to social movements that emphasized organization and opportunity overshadowed and finally eliminated social psychology (for an analysis, see Tarrow, 1998). When psychology crept into collective action studies, it did so under the rubric of rational choice. Olson’s *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965) is the classic analytic work that looks at collective action from a rational choice perspective.

The collection of essays in *Passionate Politics* (2001), underscore the importance of bringing emotions to bear on the study of social protest. Focusing on laughter, shame, anger, fear and emotional narratives of various stripes, the contributors individually and collectively argue for the importance of emotions to the analysis of social and political mobilization. The concluding essay of the volume (Amenta and Polletta, 2001) is a plea for methodological and conceptual rigour and a warning that it is far too easy to slip into description in the study of emotion and social movements. Goodwin’s (1997) study of the Huk mobilization in Thailand analyzes how movement leaders exploited ‘affective’ or ‘libidinal’ ties between movement members to strengthen the organization. Goodwin’s study is important because it is a first step towards theorizing the mechanisms through which politics and emotions combine in social movements. By pointing to ties deep within the group, ie, within couples, Goodwin identifies personal commitment as a form of dyadic solidarity that has an emotional spillover effect to the political project at hand.

While social movements scholars are on the tracks of emotions, students of violence have had a head start. What could be more emotional than hatred and fear of so intense a nature that it leads to forms of mass violence from genocide to ethnic cleansing to group executions? Yet, emotions are not the dominant frame in studies of violence (for a review of this literature see Brubaker and Laitin, 1998). Among the scholars who concern themselves with violence,

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those who take a formal analytic approach, ie, those that concern themselves principally with rationality, have made the most headway. This is in part because violence appears to be emotional and not rational and consequently requires explanation.

Many studies in this genre such as Gambetta's study of the Sicilian mafia (1993) and Gould's studies (1999; 2000) of blood feuds in Corsica focus on honour societies in which shame is to be avoided at all costs and revenge is a normal articulation of justice. These societies have a pre-modern form of social organization that avoids the legal institutions of the modern nation-state. Justice in 20th century Sicily and 19th century Corsica was meted out alongside of, and in opposition to, the national legal system. Family honour is central in these types of societies—but the seeking of revenge, if it is to be effective, cannot be a simply individual act. As Gould (2000) argues, an eye for an eye is a problem of collective action. Gould argues that the amount of violence Corsican vendettas produce depends upon the strength or weakness of intra-group solidarity. Gould (1999) finds that the more fragile group solidarity is, the more likely the group is to respond with violence in order to instill fear and protect the group from further threat. Conversely, groups with a reputation for solidarity do not resort to violence as frequently—presumably because they are less likely to be attacked and the cost of revenge is high. Intensely solidaristic groups engage in 'contingent collectivism' or to put it more colloquially they choose their vendettas carefully (Gould, 2000).

Although on the surface, it appears that Gould has de-emotionalized revenge, probing more deeply suggests that his studies re-enforce the issue of emotion. The general assumption is that emotion in vendetta is a product of hate and anger, but a closer analysis of the cases that Gould presents suggests that the dominant emotion revolves around the threat to group security. If security were not at issue, there would be no need for 'contingent' revenge. Similarly, if security were not at issue, every act of aggression against the individual would be viewed as an insult to the family and action would immediately follow. What Gould's studies suggest is that is not only the honor but also the security of the family that is at stake. In the public sphere, even the relatively pre-modern and rural public sphere, security and confidence in continuity and stability located in the emotional sphere of the family takes precedence to free-floating anger.

Laitin's (1995) study of nationalist violence in the Basque region of Spain presents findings that can be re-interpreted in a similar vein. Laitin asks why a high level of nationalist violence characterizes the Basque region in contrast to Catalonia which has a low level of violence but an equally strong sub-national culture. Catalonian culture was assimilated into the national political culture through strong trade union organizations that also happened to preserve the Catalonian language and culture. The Basque region, on the other hand, had a more rural form of social organization characterized by high levels of youth association. At the appropriate moment, nationalist activists could draw on loyalties forged in formal and informal youth associations to support outbursts of nationalist violence, which tended when they occurred to be of a spectacular

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nature. Associational life in the Basque region was solidaristic, whereas associational life in Catalonia was interest driven. The Basque region was not more violent than Catalonia because it was organizationally more suited to it (the rational analysis) but arguably because friendship bonds that the rural society fostered produced an emotional spillover, not unlike the 'libidinal ties' that Goodwin described, to the political arena. The Gould and Laitin studies are examples drawn from a range of similar studies that are occupy rational choice theorists. These studies can be re-interpreted to suggest that emotion is a component of violent activity. The emotion, however, is not hatred but the emotion of solidarity that prior emotional ties provide.

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In an essay on 'Patriotism,' Roberto Michels (1965, p. 157) observes that, 'Variety is strange to most persons.' What Michels is discussing under the rubric of 'patriotism,' scholars today would discuss under the rubric of nationalism or national identity. He discusses the need to create a 'homeland', a secure space, to overcome the multiple differences that separated every little European village and town from each other. His observation on 'variety,' is germane to the evolving discussion of emotion and politics within this chapter. Michels was writing during the 1930s when totalitarian regimes in Russia and Europe appeared to be eliminating variety energetically. If, however, one abstracts from the historical moment that engaged Michels, he is underscoring a point that was not lost on 19th century nation making élites—constructed similarity produces security, stability and loyalty.

The observation that security and stability are related is not a defense of the *status quo*. Rather, it is a fact of human psychology that has implications for the relation between politics and emotions. As argued at the beginning of this chapter, emotion and its manifestations are linked to the proportion of stability versus instability one experiences. This holds from the micro level of human interaction to the macro level of political activity. In a sense, emotions operate as protective physiological cues that warn us individually or collectively that something is in flux. What this points to is that there is a relation between trust, risk and emotion. Without risk, or the threat of de-stabilization, emotions lie dormant. The American philosopher, William James (1956) held that rationality was a sentiment—or an emotion. He argued that familiarity with objects and events produced a feeling that they were rational. James argued that all humans need a sense of a 'relation of a thing to its future consequences.' The need, as James put it, to have 'expectancy defined' is the core of the 'sentiment of rationality.' Coleman's (1990) conception of 'trust' that incorporates the idea of futurity resonates with James' conception of rational sentiment. Coleman (1990, p. 99) argues that trust is essentially a bet on the future. As Coleman is a rational choice theorist, he is interested in how individual actors assess risk—that is, how they place those bets—or how they make rational choices. However, no matter

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what one's tolerance for risk is, whether one is proven correct in the risk that one takes is something that in most social interaction—only time will tell. Thus, all trust has a temporal dimension to it. However, it also has a cultural and emotional dimension to it. The individual and collective experience of trust and risk is a matter of degree and not absolutes.

Familiarity is a better guide to individual and collective action than a calculus of rationality. Recent work on prejudice by Sniderman and his collaborators (2000) underscores this point. Sniderman was interested in what makes groups so dislike other groups that they are willing to act against them. His hypothesis was that the colour of skin would be the dominant source of prejudice in societies that were predominantly white. Using the United States as his model, Sniderman conducted a controlled experiment in Italy, which had recently experienced an influx of white immigrants from the former Eastern Europe and black immigrants from Africa. To Sniderman's surprise, he found that Italians disliked Eastern Europeans more than they disliked Africans—or, that skin colour with its attendant emotions of fear and race hatred was not an isolatable source of prejudice. Pushing his data further, Sniderman examined the voting behavior of his sample, particularly their support of parties with anti-immigrant platforms. There has recently been an increase in the electoral success of right-wing parties in Italy as in the rest of Europe. Sniderman found that at the political extremes of left and right—a small proportion of his sample as well as the population at large—race hatred on the right and radical egalitarianism on the left influenced political behavior. But, extremism on either end was not driving elections in contemporary Europe. His startling finding was that individuals in the majority supported order, stability and continuity independently of where they placed themselves with respect to political ideology. In other words, it was a general commitment to the familiar coupled with a fear of instability, and not a generalized feeling of hatred, that predicted prejudice in sentiment and action. Emotions played a part in anti-immigrant politics but, as in the case of the earlier discussion of the vendettas, not the emotions one would expect.

Sniderman's research re-enforces the idea that security and insecurity are important political emotions because the fear that insecurity generates that is the interaction between trust and risk actually lead collectivities to act on their emotions. But how can we extrapolate from this finding to the larger political arena? In the modern political sphere, the institutions of the nation-state, the *secure state*, adjudicate risk. Institutions provide a framework of expectations or 'futuraity.' Parsons (1954) articulated this when he argued that institutions are, 'patterns governing behavior and social relationships which have become interwoven with a system of common moral sentiments which in turn define what one has a "right to expect" of a person [or group, or corporate body] in a certain position (p. 143).' The law, the police and the military keep the territory of the state secure; enforced common language and schooling protect the national culture. Citizenship, membership over time, produces feelings of belonging, loyalty and trust; citizenship law specifies who will participate in the national *community of feeling*.

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The fundamentally sociological question of a mechanism remains. Under what conditions will political emotion from patriotic fervour to ethnic violence erupt? The short answer is that when the institutions that govern the polity are threatened, change or dissolve—political emotion will manifest itself in some sort of action. This is a claim that requires systematic and comparative empirical investigation. We can briefly speculate for the remainder of this chapter. Threat includes the obvious of war or external attack. As the recent events on September 11 in the United States demonstrated, attack has the potential to generate a wellspring of national loyalty. One of the reasons that the *secure state* needs to resort to various *communities of feeling* described is to keep political passion alive in the absence of threat. When the state institutions are weak or have a weak hold in the local social structure, as in the case of the vendetta, political passion follows its own logic. When institutions change, as in contemporary Europe where European union is redefining the nature of the nation-state, emotions may manifest themselves in popular protest. When the institutions of the state collapse completely as they did in the former Eastern Europe, there is no buffer to contain political emotion and violence can ensue.

However, political emotion does not only have negative valence. Just as neuroscience has argued that emotions are physiological and relate to the body, they also relate concretely to those secure spaces ie, the home, the neighbourhood, the nation-state, where emotions of all sorts are experienced. The spatial dimension of politics is one of the reasons that kinship metaphors are so salient in political culture. The *secure state* can also be the empathetic state—in which it is possible to live in community and generosity with one's fellow citizens. A developed political sociology of emotions should take as one of its principal tasks the elaboration of the mechanisms that trigger security and its opposites.

Notes

- 1 For an alternative formulation that focuses on the hidden emotion of rationality, see Barbalet (2000).
- 2 In contrast to these early studies in political psychology, Eliasoph's (1998) study of political apathy and Herzfeld's (1992) study of indifference and bureaucracy take as their problem the absence of emotion.
- 3 Cited in Kraus (2000, p. 143).
- 4 Sewell (1996) in his discussion of an 'eventful sociology' underscores the importance of contingency for historical explanation. An appreciation of contingency is also important to an understanding of the relation between emotion and politics.
- 5 Shame implies honor. For a discussion of how rational forms of political organization such as the nation-state incorporate honor in the notion of 'patrie,' see the recent edition of the lectures that Lucien Febvre gave at College de France between 1945 and 1947 (Febvre, 1996).
- 6 In Weberian terms, ideal types are constructs derived from empirical phenomena but not reducible to them.
- 7 On the comparative development of voluntary associations, see the collection of essays in Wuthnow (1991).
- 8 Eyerman and Jamison (1998) have recently pointed to the importance of music as a tool of political mobilization.

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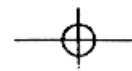
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- 9 For a benign interpretation of this phenomena, see Entrikin (1999); for a critique of the uncritical acceptance of this view, see Calhoun (1999).
 10 Kertzer (1988) and Berezin (1997a) provide samples of available studies.
 11 Kantorowicz (1957) is the classic study.

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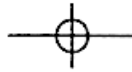




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