

13th Conference
of the European
Sociological Association

(Un)Making Europe:
Capitalism, Solidarities,
Subjectivities

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ABSTRACT BOOK

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Emotions and solidarity: the emancipative value of shame

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The aim of this paper is to mark an original sociological way of access to the study of shame. The main theoretical hypothesis of this work is about the distinction between two forms of shame: the first is called "vergogna del me" (Me shame), the latter "vergogna dell'io" (I shame).

The hypothesis will be developed around the idea that shame is bounded to a double kind of significance: objective and subjective. Referring to Mead's social theory's distinction between two components of the Self, "Me" and "I", the author will argue that "vergogna del me" (Me shame) points out a form of shame sociologically relevant, objectivated and socialized, that concern the violation of a given core of social significance. "Vergogna dell'io" (I shame), on the other hand, points out the subjective dimension of shame. This second form of shame can be shortly defined such as a social compression of intersubjective sources of resubjectivation.

Once the author have shortly discussed about the distinction between "vergogna del me" (Me shame) e "vergogna dell'io" (I shame), he will focus on a form of "vergogna dell'io" (I shame) called "vergogna dell'io critica" (critical I Shame). After a theoretical definition, the author will propose a case study dedicated to this form. In this case study the author will try to emphasize the normative and emancipative role of shame along with the social introduction of this kind of emotion inside the participation to social movements in a case of eviction. The aim of the case studies is not to offer a strictly empirical check, but to test the hermeneutical capability of the concepts on the social events studied in the case study.

RN11 | Session 03a Theorizing Affect and Emotion III

Empathy and intuition: on the heuristic function of emotions on the study of mental illness

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Conventionally, rigour and rationality are essential for the quality of research, opposing emotion and the disorganization related to it – as if our thoughts would be paused by what we feel. These assumptions have limited the problematization on how emotions – as empathy and intuition – can be useful in research. In my PhD, though, I was confronted with the importance of discussing emotions not only as an obvious human trace but also as heuristic tools for producing a more accurate description of the realities we study. I claim, as others, that reason and emotion are not separated entities: both making up our abilities to think and

know, and both having emotional and logical underlying features. Hence, ignoring both the benefits and downsides of emotions is a theoretical and methodological error endangering scientific outcomes. Specifically, this calls for keeping an emotional log throughout our research to systematically (i) use emotional information to further understand the data, e.g., if a 'yes' is a 'yes' or a 'no'; (ii) discuss emotions' influence on how we act as researchers and relate to our interlocutors; (iii) theorise on the boundaries of the emotions we come across in our work. Generically, it calls for the emotional training of social scientists not only as a personal resource, but also as an essential tool to figure out the social world, since much of it is enacted emotionally. To support these arguments, I will use examples from my latest research experience with participant observation in a psychiatric department of a general hospital in Portugal.

Disdained or Psychologized: Towards the Sociological Definition of Boredom

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The vast majority of sociologists (sociologists of emotion included) have neglected the emotion of boredom in their research and theoretical contributions. This affective state is either openly disdained as trivial and conceptualized in a common sense manner or perceived as merely individual phenomenon of no social significance. Boredom seems to be exclusively the domain of psychology or philosophy (in its existential dimension). As a consequence, sociological reflection upon boredom is scarce and limited to several, unrelated papers in the last four decades and one book by Orrin Klapp (1986) *Overload and Boredom*. Nonetheless, only two papers contribute significantly to the definition of the phenomenon in question (Barbalet 1999; Darden and Marks 1999).

The presentation aims to collect dispersed definitional motives from literature and to propose the sociological definition of emotion in question based on the qualitative research on boredom among students and university teachers. The methods employed in the study include: focused group interviews with students (n=32), internet survey among students (n=364), individual in-depth interviews with teachers (n=30, in progress) and participant observation during university classes, scientific conferences and university staff meetings (about 400 hours). The primary theoretical approach employed to analyze data will be symbolic interactionism by Erving Goffman (dramaturgical approach). Boredom will be presented as socially-dependent, dynamic phenomenon, the quality of interaction and interpretation of the social experience. The presentation will be concluded with a proposition of Author's definition of boredom.