

Affects and effects: Perspectives on emotions in social and cultural studies (gender studies)

International Summer School from 23.07. - 27.07.2018, LMU Munich

Be it „The Promise of Happiness“ (Sara Ahmed, 2010), „Cruel Optimism“ (Lauren Berlant, 2011), „Scham/Shame“ (Neckel 1993), „Depression“ (Chetkovic 2012), „Affect Labor“ (Hardt 1999), „Cold Intimacies“ (Illouz 2007) – in the past years, affects and their effects have become an extensive research topic in social and cultural sciences, in gender and queer studies as well as in anthropology: In this respect, affects are explored for example as somatic feelings, as a political driving force, as historically conditioned and as a hinge located between the social and the private. Furthermore, affects are investigated as a social mode, as a dimension of consumption (and production) or in the light of wilfulness and everyday practices. The emerging multidisciplinary field of “affect studies” (u.a. Baier et al 2014; Gregg/Seigworth 2010; fzg 20_2/2014) includes a wide range of empirical studies, theoretical perspectives and various concepts of emotions/feelings/affects. Affect studies address many important socio-political and cultural questions: labour relations and the commodification of feelings (‘emotional labour’), sociality and (de-)legitimation of feelings (such as shame, disgust, angst, grief, safety, excess, lust, pleasure, frustration, vulnerability) or tropes such as „Angry Black Woman“ or „snowflakes“. Affect Studies contribute to our understanding of political apathy and populism, racism, sexism and the relation between feelings and social difference. Affect studies look at ways in which feelings/emotions can be emancipatory or rather paralysing and regressive.

At the same time, it remains unclear whether research on affects in social and cultural science is new after all. In fact, human and cultural sciences, feminist theory and empirical social sciences offer a long history of “affective” involvement, e.g. through notions of embodiment or social psychology, psychoanalysis, etc..

This loose conglomeration of ideas, theory and empirical evidence is the starting point from which we wish to investigate affects and effects. Additionally, gender studies will host an intersectional emphasis. In so doing we hope to make use of the interdisciplinary perspectives which offer insights into the social and political dimensions of feelings.

For this reason, we would like to invite graduate students (MA/PhD) with research projects in the field of gender studies to apply for the LMU Munich Summer School “affects&effects”.

We invite applicants to discuss “affects&effects” around the following themes: the social relevance of feelings/affects, their production, perception, and (de-)legitimation; somatic situatedness of feelings, (re-)production of emotions; hope, anger and disappointment as political dimensions; theoretical frameworks and analysis (e.g. the difference between affect, emotion, feeling).

In particular, we hope for applicants contributing to discussing methods, i.e. asking how affects/emotions can be researched and empirically acknowledged in their own right. We therefore invite participants who work on methodological, conceptual/theoretical and empirical questions concerning materiality and the mediality of feelings.

The following themes are exemplary for the wide range of dimensions:

- **Work/Labour:** Emotional labour has become a key competence – particularly, but not exclusively, with regard to the service sector. Service workers are expected to emotionally labour their clients, i.e. to actively generate specific feelings in the client by managing their own. Meanwhile, emotional labour as much as emotion work constitute (sociological perspectives on) labour relations. At the same time, feelings alone are considered to be work. This applies especially to family and relationship work: care work is significantly built upon as well as directed towards affects. Consequently, emotion work is considered to be the common ground of productive and reproductive labour. Recent publications account for this common ground by combining diverse theoretical strands and key concepts such as “immaterial labour” (e.g. Negri/Lazaratto/Virno 1998), “affective capital” (Sauer/Penz 2016) or “invisible heart” (Folbre 2002). How do we think about work and feelings both theoretically and empirically? How can we differentiate between those two? How are feelings/affects and work/labor gendered from an intersectional perspective?
- **Politics:** Particularly with regard to a growing number of alt-right groups and parties, researching the role of feelings such as angst, shame or disappointment for political mobilisation seems crucial. What meaning do emotions have for social movements as well as for the political system? Do political configurations relate to specific affective regimes? How do these relationships change over time (cf. Elias 1939, Frevert 2000, Gotto 2014)? The effects of affective political enactment might be reflected in proliferating show time of politics and politicians. A growing demand for ‘strong leaders’ – i.e. a decisionistic style of politics – indicates an entanglement of affective and rational political patterns. What meaning do feelings and affects have for policies, expectations and the making of the political itself? What is the role of gender in this respect?
- **Bodies/Sexuality:** Bodies and sexuality (as well as ‘Leiblichkeit’) have played an important role in gender studies research for decades. Among other disciplines, sociology of the body has systematically researched the somatic dimensions of a social, political, cultural, historic and economic reality. Somatic sensations are either uplifted as being real and authentic or degraded as simply mirroring normative imperatives. Either way, it seems as if emotions/affects/somatic sensations are not adequately researched. The question arises, whether the contemporary ‘school of affect theory’ may be able to take previous works into account?
- **Movement/Touch:** Research of affects mainly looks at how the body perceives and produces encounters and phenomena of everyday life. Not only do bodies experience and interpret affects, they also do create affects. Accounting for this specific entanglement we ask: how do the experience and the creation of affects relate to each other? What kind of movement produces which kind of affects? Sports, dance and other ‘moving cultures’ may serve as an empirical ground for researching

affects. Another analytic dimension looks at how bodies are moved by affects. What feelings touch and move bodies? How can we observe the somatic dimension of feelings? In what ways can we talk about limits and trajectories of affective movement? How can we research the somatic-affective dimensions of feelings such as elation, flow, and boredom? Additionally, we would like to look at affective effects of transcendent and/or calm bodies (meditating, dreaming, waiting) as well as un-moving bodies (unconscious, dead). What are gendered dimensions of these (un)moving bodies, e.g. 'beautiful body (corps)' (Bronfen 1999) or of violence (SWS/ASA 2009)?

- **Media/Mediality:** Media both produces affects, and is an arena for affective exposure and conflict/negotiation. Media uses a wide range of affective strategies in order to seek attention: drama, scandals, impact, etc. An analysis of affects may look at the following dimensions: feelings (love, jealousy, grieve, melancholy) in media (books, tv shows, social media, radio, movies), feelings of media reception, affective dynamics such as hate speech, shit storms, moral panic or 'artificial' emotions in virtual reality. In addition, it is interesting to ask who is entitled to feelings when it comes to human-animal or human-robots relationships. Here too, gender relations matter. How can we research mediated affects and the mediality of affects? What kinds of methods have proven to be successful? What kind of challenge does empirical research of affects face?

Participants of the summer school will be given the chance to discuss their own research projects/topics with high profile international academics and fellow graduate students (MA/PhD); the summer school is organised around daily workshops in which your own projects will be discussed, framed by lectures from selected specialists in the field of affect studies. Some of the speakers will also participate in the project-based workshops. Participants will receive credit points; participants commit to stay for the whole week.

Confirmed speakers include:

Prof. Dr. Barbara Duden (Hannover), Prof. Dr. Marie-Luise Angerer (Potsdam), Dr. Yv E. Nay (Basel), Dr. Antke Engel (Berlin), Dr. Pascal Eitler (Max-Planck-Institut Berlin), Prof. Dr. Cornelia Koppetsch (Darmstadt)

The summer school is bilingual (German/English). Accommodation (double room with breakfast) will be provided, no fees apply for participation. LMU graduate students have privileged access, but we invite graduate students (MA/PhD) from all universities, national and international, to apply.

We kindly ask you to apply with an abstract of your research (interests) (300 words) and a short CV (1.5 pages max.) to be sent to the following address affekte@soziologie.uni-muenchen.de, no later than **January 31st. 2018**. Participants will be informed about their application by March 2018.

Concept and organisation by the department of sociology and gender studies, LMU Munich, Prof. Dr. Paula-Irene Villa: <http://www.gender.soziologie.uni-muenchen.de>. For questions please contact jana.fritsche@soziologie.uni-muenchen.de.
