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## **Rationality, responsibility and rage: the contested politics of emotion governance**

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*Chapter for 'Emotion States: governing with feeling in policymaking, practice and participation', ed. E.Jupp, J.Pykett and F.Smith (Ashgate)*

### **Introduction**

Analyses of contemporary governance face a particular challenge. The current period of austerity and retrenchment means that the state appears to be shrinking, leaving citizens to assume responsibility for things it had previously provided. But at the same time, the state seems to be playing a more expansive role through its concern with the well-being and happiness of its citizens. In health, education, social care, neighbourhood work, in equality policies and policies concerned with environmental sustainability, human feelings and relationships are now at the centre of governing strategies.

This concurrent process of shrinking and expansion generates significant contradictions that are explored in this chapter. I begin by challenging the idea that governing with or through emotion represents a fundamental shift in governing logics. In *the politics of theory* I locate emotion governance in contested theorisations of neoliberalism, states and persons. But these 'big theory' questions cannot, I suggest, be understood without a simultaneous focus on the *politics of social practice*. The chapter draws on both registers to explore tensions in the concept of emotion governance itself. I show how emotion governance derives in part from social movements, and highlight the ambivalent politics that results. In *border work as social practice* I draw on my own research to show how new logics of governance were generated, in part, by women with a background in social movements. The dynamic tension between activist perspectives and governance logics challenges any sense that emotion management is an accomplished effect of new regimes of power. Rather it is actively negotiated in particular spaces and places.

Yet such negotiations have to be understood in the context of particular ideological climates. The chapter concludes by tracing how a *politics of rage* increasingly

characterises austerity governance. This serves to sideline social movement perspectives, and to accentuate emotional registers of stigma, blame and shame.

### **The politics of theory: neoliberalism, states and persons**

Contemporary social theory offers a series of rich metaphors intended to capture shifts in the technologies of governing (from government to governance; from social democratic to social investment; from welfare to workfare states, and so on). It is tempting to 'add' emotion to such forms of analysis, thus signalling a further shift from one mode of governance (in which personal and public are clearly distinguished) to another (in which states seek to reach out to the interior world of citizens). There are many emergent policy streams that seem to support the idea of such a shift: for example the emphases on personalisation and coproduction (Cahn, 2000, Hunter 2007, Needham, 2011); on well being or happiness (Dolan, 2014; Johns and Ormerod 2007; Layard 2005); on finding solutions to 'troubled' families or family breakdown (Davies, 2015) on preventing racial hatred and urban conflict (Jones, 2015), and many more. Such approaches draw on vocabularies of care, relationships, well-being, cohesion and happiness that suggest a radical departure from traditional welfare policies. But they are traversed by political ambiguities. They can be viewed as politically progressive, as a product of social movements – especially feminism - that foregrounded issues of personhood and what Williams terms a 'moral grammar of welfare 'from below"' (Williams 1999, 668). But they might also be understood as new forms of governmental power, congruent with the retrenchment of welfare states and new psychological orthodoxies. Underlying this paradox are contested conceptions of neoliberalism, of the state, and of the person that I briefly review here.

Neoliberal ideology is suffused with personal and social registers of governing that privilege - and seek to constitute - the self governing subject, the responsible community, the developmental and entrepreneurial self (Brown 2005, Brown and Baker 2012, Rose, 1999). Neoliberalism, argues Rose (1999), is a discourse of community, of morality. Muehlebach (2012) takes this further, arguing that neoliberalism requires, and seeks to constitute, compassionate, ethical and feeling citizens; what she terms 'moral neoliberals':

The subject I am interested in performs two kinds of labors of care at once: it feels (*cares about*) and acts (*cares for*) at the same time. This subject is one that the state and many other social actors... imagine to be animated by

affect rather than intellect, by the capacity to feel and act upon those feelings rather than rational deliberation and action (2012: 8).

The idea of moral neoliberalism, she argues, valorises feminised forms of work that the state no longer provides, thus mediating the effects of its own withdrawal. But the sentimental image of community, morality, care and solidarity also provide an anti-capitalist imagery that serves – paradoxically - to buttress neoliberal rule.

But how does this relate to actual processes of governing? Larner (2000) warns that neoliberalism must be understood as a ‘hybrid political imaginary’ rather than a unified and coherent political philosophy (2000: 12). It is versatile and malleable, actively appropriating projects and forces that appear be oppositional (a theme I return to later). The free market ideology of neoliberal economics is only loosely aligned to the neo-conservative emphasis on family and community. The neoliberal project of constituting new forms of self governing, responsible and perhaps moral citizens offers a range of discourses in which self and society, individual and community, are imagined and coupled in rather different ways. And governments pursue a range of political projects through diverse, and often incompatible, policy programmes. These different registers (neoliberal ideology, governmentality, policy) suggest different possible resolutions to the relationship between governance and emotion.

What of the state, the key actor in and instrument of governance programmes and policies? Dominant images of the state – especially in social policy and public administration - reference its institutions and structures, its concern with the relationships between means and ends, between policy ‘levers’ and desired effects, between governmental or bureaucratic incentives and policy outcomes. Any acknowledgement of emotion is squeezed into the ‘implementation’ stage of a seemingly logical, sequential policy cycle, where apathy, bloody mindedness and other negative emotions (of staff or citizens) are assumed to get in the way of successful policy implementation.

Alternative conceptualisations of the state view it rather as an assemblage of discourses, practices, projects and technologies, all traversed by competing political forces and political projects (Newman and Clarke 2009, 2014). The emphasis here is on a multiplicity projects and policies that are not necessarily coherent or consistent. This idea of multiplicity offers one resolution to the paradoxical relationship between governance and emotion: some facets (such as economic management) may remain

traditional and hierarchical, while others may turn to new strategies of governing – fostering relationships, engaging citizens in new projects of self-development. A rather different way of highlighting multiplicity is offered by Davina Cooper. The state, she suggests, has multiple identities and different facets: ‘Bodies, work, purposes, powers, effects, responsibilities and form that combine, connect and become hierarchically ordered’ (2014: 66). She also directs attention to the emotional life of the state itself: she writes of an ‘emotionally contactful’ state that is itself touched by wider events and that seeks to touch others, reaching out and engaging in ‘attentive understanding’ in order to embrace subjects (2014: 62). The supposed rationality of state action, then, can be viewed as a well rehearsed performance in which technical practices – action plans, implementing, monitoring – takes place alongside other modes of contact that may involve encouraging, training, modelling, partnering and ‘reaching out’ to particular groups. And the state itself is suffused with emotional repertoires (disappointment, progress or frustration, rage and hatred) that undercut the veneer of purposeful action.

As well as contested conceptions of both neoliberalism and the state, unpacking the paradoxical relationship of governance and emotion requires an engagement with contested views of the person: as rational actor, as deliberative subject, as a bundle of behaviours, as an embodied ‘feeling’ subject. The process of governing has tended to privilege economic theory, resulting in dominant conceptions of welfare users and provider organizations as rational actors following market and other incentives (e.g. Le Grand, 2006). This offers a thin conception of human subjectivity – people are assumed to weigh up the cost and benefits of choice options and behaving according to the incentives that policy offers. There is now a substantial literature that acknowledges flaws in the rational actor model, a literature that has helped inform the turn to behavioural economics and its focus on ‘nudging’ citizens towards making the right choices (Thaler and Sustein, 2008). However ‘nudge’ theory continues to offer a thin conception of the person, one who neither thinks, feels nor deliberates with others (John et al 2013; Jones et al 2013). Nudge strategies are assumed to work by bypassing the conscious mind to target environmental factors (‘choice architecture’) assumed to shape behaviour. Even where the desired effects of policy are saturated with emotion words – happiness, well-being, care, relationships – the means of ‘delivery’ remain instrumental, suffused with economic logics and behavioural change technologies. This focus on behaviour rather than feelings signals something of a perverse alignment of governance and emotion. They belong to different discursive registers: as Tessa Jowell (UK Minister

leading the Sure Start programme) commented, emotion talk seems not to belong in the corridors of power 'You don't talk about love in government': Gerhart et. al, 2011). And they are not additive: it is impossible to add emotion on as an afterthought to rational-instrumental conceptions of how policy is formed and delivered, other than through an often token acknowledgement of 'emotional labour' at the 'front line'.

The analyses of neoliberalism, of the state and of the person I have traced here offer images of multiplicity and of ambiguity that undercut any idea of wholesale shifts in governance regime. Rather there is a need to explore the entanglements of emotions and governance through the specificities of social practice in specific sites and spaces of governing –the theme of the next section.

### **The politics of social practice**

Recent years have seen some governance scholars turn away from 'grand theory' of shifting regimes towards a concern with how such regimes are interpreted and enacted. An 'interpretive turn' (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003, 2015; Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003) has informed a range of social policy research. These point to the potential displacement of existing policy discourses: social cohesion rather than social diversity and multiculturalism (Jones, 2015) active, responsible citizenship instead of welfare dependence (Newman and Tonkens 2011), personalisation rather than universalism (Needham 2011), consumerism and choice rather than solidarity and interdependence (Clarke et al 2007), and so on. As well as tracing general discursive shifts, such studies also show how policy meanings are translated and negotiated.

However as I have argued elsewhere, interpretive studies raise some troubling issues about the relationship between meaning-making, centred on the idea of the deliberative subject, and a post-positivist concern with questions of personhood, identity and subjectivity (Newman, 2012b). Anthropological and ethnographic studies can offer a richer account of subjectivity and agency. For example Catherine Kingfisher's study of 'welfare mothers' living in poverty in two contrasting sites (Aotearoa, New Zealand and in Alberta, Canada) shows how they engaged with processes of neoliberalisation. In both places poor single mothers were 'subjects of state interference designed to alter who they were as persons' (Kingfisher, 2013:

141). As such they were subject to discursive patterns based on stigmatising framings of welfare recipients. But these discursive patterns were subject to processes of translation by both welfare workers and by the mothers themselves. Her research shows, for example, how the women in her studies negotiated contradictory welfare ideologies, navigating the tensions between neoliberal and neoconservative prescriptions: the former requiring that they adopt identities as independent worker-citizens, the latter focusing on their role as primary caregivers and dependent housewives. Other scholars have turned to psychosocial theory to explore the emotional and relational dynamics of policy formation and enactment (Hoggett 2006, Hunter 2015, Froggett 2002, Hollway 2006, Lewis 2000). Yet others have drawn attention to the significance of affect and emotion (Wetherell, 2012) and to the importance of 'body work', showing how bodily practices and affective responses are inextricably entangled (Twigg, 2002, Twigg et. al. 2011). Such work offers a more fine-grained analysis of how particular regimes of governance are enacted: of how subjects respond to and engage with new governmentalities of personhood, and how individuals and groups generate new emotional or affective repertoires. They also bring to the fore some of the 'self work' that takes place as individuals seek to manage conflicting imperatives of governance or resolve the contradictions that are generated.

In an engagement with such questions Wetherell (2013) contrasts the work of Hochschild (1983) and of Anderson (2009). While Hochschild focuses on how actors regulate spontaneous and authentic emotional reactions ('the managed heart' of her title), Anderson's work centres on 'affective atmospheres': assemblages of technological, material and discursive practices. But while Hochschild highlights the *accomplishment* of emotional management, Anderson emphasises the *emergent* properties of such assemblages. This is in line with recent developments in geography and other social sciences, where assemblage is used to bracket essentialist conceptions of human agency and to challenge deterministic notions of change. But, Wetherell concludes,

Neither 'feeling rules nor 'affective atmospheres' are sufficient... to grasp the intertwining of emergent and accomplished affect. Flows of affect and emotion turn out to exceed simple characterisations as demonstrations of mostly active management or of mostly passive constitution.... A way forward is to think about the relationship between unbidden affect and the active management of affect through the lens of social practice instead (Wetherell 2013: 222).

Programmes of emotion governance, from schemes to intervene with 'troubled families' or the coproduction of 'community well being' to schemes to promote 'active citizenship' can be understood in such terms: as attempts at active management, the imposition of new 'feeling rules', that are cross cut with what Wetherell terms 'unbidden affect'. But relationship between them can only be teased out through studies of social practice. In the next section I explore ways in which new 'feeling rules' are generated and negotiated, in the process highlighting the ambiguous role of social movements in the politics of emotion governance.

### **Border work as social practice**

To engage with the politics of social practice I want to revisit a piece of my own research: a 3-year study of the labour of women who had taken activist commitments into their working lives (with work encompassing informal, unpaid labour as well as paid employment). The initial study was based on interviews with 60 women across four generations, followed by a series of discussion groups and follow-up interviews. Participants were all based in England, but many had experience of political action in other nations. The research examined women working in community politics and campaign groups; in government and local government; in policy and the professions; in the voluntary sector and NGOs; in higher education, think tanks and research organisations. However these categories are fluid; most participants in the study had fractured working lives that traversed different and spheres of action. The research was completed in 2012, and reported in a series of publications (Newman 2012 a and b, 2013 a and 2014). I have since extended the data through both follow-up and new interviews asking how activist women working within and beyond the state were negotiating the politics of austerity governance (Newman 2013b).

The study begins to suggest how emotional registers of governing emerged out of activist, especially feminist, movements. Many of the participants had worked to bring more relational, person centred and therapeutic registers into their engagements with policy and practice. They were, then, involved in *generating* and *embodying* new governing rationales, albeit in small scale, local or marginal spaces. Several had developed partnerships between government/local government bodies and 'communities'; their work was that of tutoring community representatives to 'speak to power' while fostering an emotional response among government actors in the interests of bringing about change. Others had promoted citizen involvement exercises that acknowledged, translated and mediated the affective and emotional

responses of citizens (anger, dismay, hope) into language that policy actors might hear and pay attention to. Some had shaped new initiatives that were oriented towards a more relational and therapeutic style of intervention; Sure Start<sup>i</sup>, carer support groups (and later policies), self help groups, well being programmes and so on. Some spoke about their own management or leadership style as explicitly participative, relational and person centred. Many spoke the language of 'empowerment'; for example through promoting forms of community mobilisation that aimed to reduce dependence on state funding and support.

Each intervention can be understood as challenging the personal/political boundary, opening up more of the self to governmental intervention (however benign). Each can be linked to the long reach of feminist politics, and its capacity to reshape governmental language and culture. Many became mainstream orthodoxies of governing, especially in the Blair years in the UK. But this does not imply that new emotional registers were an accomplished effect of policy. Tensions between rational-instrumental, means-ends policy styles and emotional registers were played out in evaluation programmes and funding regimes, in organisational hierarchies and in gendered labour processes. We might argue about how far later trends had rather different origins and were consistent with a more top down governmental approach (see for example Dolan, 2014, on the 'happiness' agenda). . But the links between radical (often feminist) politics and governmental innovation continue: both norms of 'coproduction' and arguments for a more relational approach to welfare – even a relational state (Cook and Muir 2012) - have their roots in left-leaning professionals, feminist inflected think tanks, activist organisations and campaigning groups.

However such links between activist projects and changing forms of governing can invite a celebration of human agency, and offer a too optimistic image of what can be achieved in particular 'spaces of power'. By drawing on Wetherell's notion of practice it is possible to suggest both the emotional and affective registers of policymaking and to highlight ambiguities in the enactment of new policy regimes. Practice based approaches, Wetherell argues, emphasise 'reflexive embodiment' rather than rule following;

[P]eople adjust their affective conduct moment to moment, moving in and out of a sense of the self and the body as object, and as active subject. .... Affective performance, as part of working life, or indeed in any context, is likely to be more heterogenous, patched together, customised and interspersed with a wider range of embodied practices with no clear cut divide

between the performances which mark 'public self' and those which distinguish 'time off'. (Wetherell 2013: 226).

This perfectly captures the experience of the women participating in the research. Their practice was flexible and creative (Newman 2013b). Yet, as Wetherell emphasises, this creativity was 'loosely determined' by what had gone before (2013: 234). As such participants in the research were both the object (of shifting governance regimes) and subject (crafting new developments and styles of policy and practice, informed by an activist, often feminist, sensibility).

The practice that I drew from the study is that of 'border work'. Most of those I interviewed were not in positions of formal power and did not have linear 'careers': new practices and projects tended to emerge in interstitial, informal spaces where activist or non-profit commitments encountered governmental experimentation and innovation. Their work cannot be understood as taking place 'after' policy, in the spaces of implementation or in the use of discretion by 'front line' workers; it was integral to the generation of new governing rationales. Affective performance thus offers a rather more expansive concept than that of emotional labour. It is based on a conception of the person as carrying and performing multiple identities; as at the same time an activist and paid worker, as an insider and an outsider, as a stranger and professional, as an individual, making her own decisions and compromises, and as part of collective entities. Such performances were patched together: in the language of some, this was expressed as stitching or knitting, of crafting their work and their own, reflexive self. And in this patching, as Wetherell notes, there was little divide between public and private selves. The transcripts show how notions of work, politics and life, of care for others and care for the self, were weakly bounded, stitched together in particular ways at specific moments (see Gregg, 2011 on the weak boundaries that enable work to enter into the 'intimate' spaces of home and personal life). Material conditions and personal responsibilities shaped the capacity to sustain such work. They often occupied marginal positions, engaged in forms of labour that rendered their work particularly precarious (Gill and Pratt, 2008).

One of the most interesting – and difficult – features of the study was that of hearing participants describe how developments they had worked for became mainstream. They often spoke of how things they had worked for over many years had been 'stolen', re-inscribed with new meanings and inserted into neo-liberal governing rationales with which they had little sympathy. This included their efforts to develop more human centred, relational and emotionally sensitive modes of engaging with

citizens, users and communities. Reference was made earlier to Cooper's (2014) conception of the state as touching, reaching out, paying attentive understanding. This was the work of many of my participants. But rather than being implicated in the accomplishment of emotion management, by drawing on Wetherell I want to suggest a less deterministic approach – one that views emotion governing as a social practice generated by embodied subjects in ambivalent relationships with neoliberal power. The 'affective performance' of participants in the study required them to manage cycles of disappointment, despair and anger as well as periods of promise and hope. Many were involved in difficult negotiations with dominant ruling relations, struggling for change and then often watching that same change come to mean something different as it was taken up into mainstream policy – in the words of one, 'having the feminism stripped away'.

### **Austerity governance, populism and an affective politics of rage**

Although I have emphasised the importance of the specificities of social practice, strategies of emotional governance cannot be divorced from wider political and ideological climates. The work of the participants in the study described above was situated in a changing political landscape. The welfare state was being challenged both by governments (in projects of state retrenchment) and by many professionals and activists (promoting the delegation of power to citizens and communities and more personal and relational styles of governing). This perverse alignment of activist struggles and austerity policies generated strain for those who had dedicated much of their lives to public/political work. The following extracts all referred to the period following the banking and financial crisis of 2008 and beyond as 'austerity' became the new orthodoxy:

We are all scrabbling for crumbs. I'm working with some other folk to set up a kind of social enterprise to keep the work alive, but it's a real struggle. We are trying to fill the gaps, to do some of what the state should be doing. But I don't really want to have to act like a business (advice worker, ex-voluntary sector, 2015).

I've always believed in challenging the power and authority of the state, and have tried to help disadvantaged groups take ownership of their lives.... But the 'co' of coproduction is now a fallacy; the state won't keep their share of the bargain, most forms of funding and support have gone (social worker, 2015).

These extracts suggest something of the pain associated with austerity governance – not only personal pain in seeing services participants had built up disappear, but also in witnessing the increased poverty and social divisions that they saw opening up. Some spoke about the pain of reversals when services they had fought to establish were cut or projects of participation and inclusion became marginalised. Others agonised over the dilemmas they faced as activists struggling to find a voice, and a space for action, in a political climate in which the legitimacy of the state itself was being challenged, and feminism, antiracism and other movement struggles demonised:

[As a black woman] it's always been a struggle. In the 90s it was possible to get funding and I worked on community projects for a while. Now there's no money anyway unless it's a crisis. And anyway I'm not sure what I have to offer any more (independent trainer, ex local authority equality worker, 2013).

But some of the most troubling responses reflected a process of revaluing the achievements of the past or agonising about where to place current energy:

Looking back there was a sense of hope – we almost believed that governments could act in our interests. And I wonder if I was right to encourage that. Seeing hope turn to bitterness was really painful (local authority worker responsible for community engagement, now redundant, speaking in 2014).

It's all gone – all the things we built up over the years have gone. I'm now part of a group campaigning against the cuts, trying to defend services. I sometimes wonder whether all those critiques we did from the inside [of government bureaucracy] were a good idea - they sort of prepared the way for what's happening now (past chief executive, government agency, speaking in 2013).

Earlier I spoke about the ways in which actors with backgrounds in feminist and other social movement struggles had helped generate new governmentalities. These last two extracts hint of the personal agonies at stake as those interviewed reflected back on how far their working lives had helped pave the way for political disaffection and state retrenchment.

This political and ideological climate of austerity governance not only served to legitimise cuts and state retrenchment; it also enabled the surfacing of political rage against the movements that had supported the transformation of state welfare. Feminism, in particular, became the target of dismissal and abuse (see Fraser 2009, McRobbie 2009 on the anti-feminist backlash in the US and UK). This is changing the 'affective atmospheres' in which negotiations about governing take place. It also feeds into an anti-statist rhetoric that serves to discredit the institutions that enshrined the equality politics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The state, of course, has always been regarded with ambivalence by those struggling for social and political change. Nominally the formal guardians of equality, government bodies have frequently been revealed as complicit in forms of sexual and racial abuse, seeking to protect perpetrators from public blame and shame and to shore up the legitimacy of flawed institutions. This came to attention in the UK in 2014/15 with a series of sexual abuse scandals in which public bodies were shown to have failed to protect vulnerable people in their care. The ambivalent sexual and racial politics of the state was also highlighted in the 2014 Rochdale scandal surrounding the rape and exploitation of young women by mostly 'Asian' taxi drivers<sup>ii</sup>, and the 'Trojan Horse' scandal in which members of Muslim communities were charged with attempting to 'take over' the governance of local schools in Birmingham<sup>iii</sup>. In each case the institutions of governing (police, local authorities, social services and others) were presented by mainstream media as feeble, incompetent and even cowardly in the mainstream media.

The prevalence of avoidance, repression, blame and shame signals a malign, rather than beneficial, emotional dynamic of governing. This dynamic feeds into the erosion of trust and popular detachment from Westminster politicians and institutions of government, from the EU and from traditional political parties. As well as detachment, some commentators argue that citizen responses to the polity are marked by 'disaffected consent' (Gilbert, 2013:18) while others suggest there is evidence of increasing popular anger and rage. Jonathan Freedland, commenting on the UK government's proposals to scrap the human rights act in 2014, argued that:

Anger about excessive powers supposedly wielded by Strasbourg judges, Scottish MPs or the European Union is not really about institutional arrangements. It is instead an outlet for a much more visceral rage, the furious sense that the world is not as it should be – and that someone far

away must be to blame. This is the pool of fury that UKIP drinks from, and which the Tories want to channel their way. (Guardian 4-10-14, 39).

Questions of rage, passion, fury may appear to be 'outside' governance. They link the personal to the political, bypassing a public world of formal institutions, laws and policymaking. However I want to argue that citizen responses to the polity, and governmental attempts to shape citizen feelings, are fundamental to an understanding of a politics of affect. Contemporary politics is characterised by populist right-wing appeals that vilify the social movements associated with an expansive concept of state welfare. A politics of rage is integral to governmental attempts to summon 'the people' as a unified entity attached to a particular representation of the nation. It is also fundamental to understanding the abuse of welfare recipients and others who refuse to comply with notions of responsible citizenship. Such stigmatising practices are intensifying as austerity governance has deepened. Governments, together with a complicit and willing media, have sought to summon up feelings of disgust, rage and indeed hatred for marginal others and to bind 'ordinary', hard working and responsible citizens into a hegemonic 'we' – whose feelings of attachment are strengthened by fear of the other, fear of slipping across the divide that separates.

In such a climate the gap between the dispassionate registers of technocratic governance and the affective registers of political ideology are deeply troubling. It creates the space for the rise of political parties of the right, and for an intensification of populist styles of political rhetoric and action. Austerity governance reaches deeply into the emotional lives of citizens, appropriating and reworking sentiments of community, morality and responsibility – and the movements that generated and sustained them.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has challenged the idea that emotion governance represents a new, all encompassing governmentality. It has shown how the current policy emphasis on relationships, responsibility and the politics of personal lives derive, in part, from new governmental projects, but also from feminist theory and practice. As such emotion governance represents the site of active appropriations and negotiations with dominant logics of rule. Rather than assuming a wholesale shift from one regime of governing to another, then, my interest has been in how different governing regimes may be overlaid and entangled, or perhaps in conflict, and to the ways the

contradictions are managed. This was illustrated through the research cited earlier, and situated in Wetherell's focus on social practice. But rather than referencing these as 'macro' (theories of neoliberalism, the state, governmentality and so on) and 'micro' (ethnographies of practice) I want to hold them together through what I have described as a politics of 'border work'. Border work, in the sense I have used it in this chapter, involves forms of 'affective performance' that unevenly patch together different identifications and allegiances; public and private selves; and personal and political attachments, with considerable psychic strains and discomforts.

And such strains and discomforts are intensifying in conditions of austerity. The political climate described in the final is one that generates rather different emotional registers of governing from those associated with an expansion of state concern with happiness and well being – but is inextricably entangled with them. What emerges is not a single logic of governing but different streams or strands that are loosely articulated with each other. The articulations inherent to a politics of austerity governing include:

- A politics of rationality in which practices promoting enhanced governmental attention to feeling, care and well-being are subordinated to an assertive insistence on the primacy of the economy. Politics is reduced to questions of technical competence in 'balancing the books', 'reducing deficits' and prudent economic management. Here governments strive to summon up a public mood of sacrifice, forbearance, patience, and the security of a promised return to 'business as usual'.
- A politics of responsibility, negotiated through an uncomfortable negotiation between activist concerns and projects of state retrenchment. Progressive concepts of coproduction, personalisation and community become appropriated and transformed as they confront the governmental promotion of a new moral economy - an economy in which individuals are encouraged to 'feel' responsibility for the well being and health of the self, the household, the community and indeed the nation;
- A politics of division and rage that pervades and pollutes the 'affective atmospheres' surrounding and reshaping the conditions of such negotiations. We can see new affective registers actively summoned by politicians: the scapegoating of migrants, the demonization of welfare recipients, and the intensification of the language of security/insecurity in an effort to shore up social control and legitimate governmental intrusion into personal lives.

These three strands – and others not considered here - exist in difficult and problematic alignments, which take different forms in specific locales (nations, regions, localities). They summon up different emotional repertoires and different imaginaries of belonging, morality and responsibility. The ambiguous relationship between them opens up the possibility of the kinds of border work discussed earlier in this chapter. As I write many actors are struggling to manage the material and emotional consequences of austerity while also seeking to stitch together creative solutions and new possibilities (New Economics Foundation 2014). They are exploiting cracks and fissures in dominant governing rationales, and seeking to ‘perform new worlds’ within the confines of present constraints (Newman, 2013b). Such words are rooted in an attention to human relationships, connections and emotional lives, But the analysis offered in this chapter confounds any notion that ‘emotion governance’ offers a new positive regime of relational engagement between state and citizen. Equally it cannot be considered as a cynical replacement for well funded state services. Rather, it is the site of contradictions, tensions and possibilities that are the focus of different forms of ‘border work’.

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<sup>i</sup> Sure Start was a UK Treasury-funded programme designed to support the development of young children and their families in areas of poverty and disadvantage. Initiated in 1998 under New Labour, it privileged partnership working and involved high levels of local governance autonomy, though these features were compromised in later iterations of the programme.

<sup>ii</sup> In 2012 there was extensive media coverage of the conviction of 9 male taxi drivers for the rape and abuse of teenage girls, together with conspiracy and trafficking charges, in Rochdale, England. The outraged reporting tended to point to the abuse of white girls by men of Pakistani or Afghan origin, reporting that amplified anti-

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Muslim sentiments and helped stoke anti-immigration political campaigns. But it also highlighted flaws in the responses of social services and other agencies that were accused of avoiding action for fear of being viewed as racist (see David Trilling 'How the Rochdale grooming case exposed British Prejudice', *New Statesman* 15 August 2012).

<sup>iii</sup> This refers to the alleged plot by Muslim groups to infiltrate the governing bodies of selected schools in Birmingham. Four separate enquiries were launched, including those by Birmingham City Enquiry and the Department of Education, while Ofsted inspections led to the removal of some head teachers and renewed concerns about school governance. Reports in the local paper, the Birmingham Mail, feature claims and counter claims couched in the language of 'feuds', 'lies', 'extremism', 'plots' 'suspensions', 'confrontations', 'rows' and other emotive terms ('Trojan Horse investigation of Birmingham Schools', [www.birminghammail.co.uk/all-abouttrojanhorse](http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/all-abouttrojanhorse), accessed 17.11.14).