Beyond the deliberative subject? problems of theory, method and critique in the turn to emotion and affect

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Abstract

This paper explores some of the issues for policy scholars arising from the increasing attention paid to 'emotion' and 'affect' in contemporary social science. One such issue is in the focus placed on detailed ethnographic methods and interpretive forms of analysis, and the problem this raises for drawing out connections to changing regimes of governing and wider shifts in policy and politics. A second lies in the modernist traditions of policy studies, traditions which privilege the rational actor and deliberative subject. This paper uses my own recent research to tease out some issues of method and of theory in conducting a research project that seeks to connect individual working lives to some of the major cultural and social change in Britain over the last 60 years. The paper begins by outlining the project and some of the issues raised in interpreting 'emotion', then goes on to show how I tried to link ethnographic data to wider questions of policy and power. The final section offers two different critical repertoires that have the capacity to link emotions and emotion work to analysis of shifting governmentalities and material conditions of work. Throughout my aim is to enhance the possibility of interdisciplinary conversations by introducing concepts and analytical framings from beyond the traditions of policy studies.

Introduction

The 'Interpretive turn' in policy analysis speaks to some of my own concerns about the poverty of rational-instrumental approaches to policy analysis, but also raises some troubling issues about the relationship between ethnographic studies of meaning making, centred on the idea of the deliberative subject, and a post-positivist concern with questions of personhood, identity and subjectivity. A focus on the emotions – and the emotional repertoires at stake in policy and work - compounds these difficulties, raising questions about the relationship between subjectivity,

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agency and performance. However such a focus potentially offers a richer frameworks of analysis. The emotions are what Shona Hunter calls 'the connective tissue of governance'[1], acknowledging some of the passions which individuals bring to the policy areas they work on or the services they deliver. Emotions are also constitutive, generating or strengthening commitments, identifications and loyalties. But they also generate contradictions; for example as different emotions – of hope and despair, of anxiety and faith, of optimism and fear – collide. Such contradictions are particularly evident in responses to the current climate of austerity politics: responses that contain an often unstable mix of dismay, disaffection and grudging acquiescence to government actions.

A focus on the emotions, as I will show, has the potential to enlarge interdisciplinary conversations. However public policy analysts might beware of inventing or reinventing concepts from within their own existing repertoires rather than learning from elsewhere. This has led me to have some concerns about the ways in which the emotions have been taken up in policy analysis. One is the construction of a binary distinction between emotion and cognition, affective and discursive modes of expression. A second is the separation between emotional or interpretive accounts and more material forms of analysis. This paper teases open some of these concerns, trying to extend the forms of analysis on which policy scholars might draw and to open out alternative critical framings. However it is also a 'practical' paper grounded in problems and issues confronted in my own recent research.

The research on which I draw is a 3-year study of what happens as activist commitments are taken into working lives. I have used this research elsewhere to tease out some of the dynamics of neoliberalisation and to question narratives of incorporation and depoiticisation (Newman 2012 and forthcoming a, b). Here my focus is on problems of methodology and analysis: on how, that is, data gathered through one form of interpretive approach (institutional ethnography) can illuminate the emotional and affective registers of policymaking and the enactment of new policy regimes. The value of a ethnographic methods and interpretive forms of analysis, in my view, is that they offer a more fine grained analysis of how particular emotional regimes of governance are enacted; of how subjects respond to and engage with new governmentalities of personhood; of how individuals and groups

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[1] ESRC seminar on Third Party Governance, 12-13 March 2012, De Montford University

generate new emotional or affective repertoires; and above all, it brings to the fore some of the 'self work' that takes place as individuals seek to manage conflicting imperatives of governance or resolve the contradictions they generate. An interpretive approach can also offer critical perspectives that challenge the dominance of rational instrumental conceptions of policy, and the causal epistemologies on which it replies. It implicitly critiques linear conceptions in which policymaking is viewed as occurring prior to implementation, opening up new theoretical work on translation and assemblage (Newman and Clarke, 2009). This in turn offers a challenge to the central role in policy analysis of the street level bureaucrat or front line worker.

 However such approaches raise at least two difficulties for *critical* policy scholars. The first is the difficulty of 'going beyond' the detail of ethnographic data to explore how it might speak to broader patterns of social and political change. Is the role of ethnographic work to add texture to predefined theoretical constructs, or to raise new questions about the enactment of politics and power? That is, how is the relationship between 'context' and 'agency' to be theorised? The second is the predominance of modernist constructs in policy studies. Interpretive approaches, despite the focus on discourse, have not been strongly influenced by post-structuralist, post-colonial or psychosocial theory. The depiction of personhood, then, retains something of the individual rational actor approach that have been challenged elsewhere (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000; Roseneil and Frosh, 2012; Wetherell and Potter 1992). This paper, clearly, cannot engage with this broad canvas of methodological and theoretical work. Rather, it uses my own recent research to tease out some issues of method and of theory in conducting a research project that seeks to connect individual working lives to some of the major cultural and social change in Britain over the last 60 years. The paper begins by outlining the project and some of the issues raised in interpreting 'emotion', then goes on to show how I tried to link ethnographic data to wider questions of policy and power. The final section offers two different critical repertoires that have the capacity to link emotions and emotion work to analysis of shifting governmentalities and material conditions of work.

The research study

The research study on which I draw here was informed by a concern with the strained and contested relationship between activism and neoliberal forms of rule, and how this relationship is mediated through gendered labour. It was based on

interviews with over fifty women across four generational cohorts. Some had begun by working in community projects and brought the experience and skills gained into government and local government. Others had successfully translated campaigning work into jobs in voluntary and non-profit organisations, NGOs, research organisations and 'think tanks', getting more or less entangled with new governmental pressures and policy opportunities in the process. Yet others had brought political commitments into professional and public service occupations. Some had served - for a while - as local or national politicians, others moved between activism, the civil service and the academy, and others became civic or social entrepreneurs.

I focused on women's working lives for at least three reasons. First, changing material conditions of work are gendered in their effects, such that women have often found themselves bridging the boundaries between formal and informal labour, between a focus on public and personal lives, between organisations characterised as belonging to state, market or civil society, or between mainstream and marginal organisational spaces. Second, I focus on women's lives because of the significance of the women's movement in the formation of contemporary politics and culture, transforming institutions, policy and social theory. Third, the exploration of neo-liberal governance from the standpoint of women managing the contradictions these shifts produced adds something important to the understanding of governance and processes of social and political change. While gender may be a category ripe for deconstruction, the experience of embodied women is often 'outside', marginal or fragmentary in relation to economic and political power – and this may be a source of innovation, a way of bringing different perspectives and experiences into productive alignment.

Other texts have recounted women's experiences of some of the political and social shifts I am concerned with here: biography and autobiography have been important ways not only of enabling particular women to have a voice but also of shaping the emergence of collective identifications and political histories (Brah, 1986; McCrindle and Rowbotham, 1977; Maitland 1988; Segal 1985; Rowbotham, 2001). But as Swindells (1989) has argued, testimony can easily slide into nostalgia and biography into individualism. This is partly why I did not follow a strictly biographical approach. The interviews combined political biography (Mulinari and Räthzel, 2007) with explorations of the changing material conditions of working lives. They also sought to explore collective, as well as individual, engagements with power and to assess

how the women I interviewed – and those they worked with - helped shape the shifting shifting politics and culture of Britain, influencing policy, remaking governance and changing the 'rules of the game' within dominant institutions. Each of the accounts linked individual experience to the changing social/political context of the times through which participants lived and the changing governmental practices that they encountered – and sometimes shaped – in their work.

In thinking about how to analyse such connections I turned to Dorothy Smith's work on institutional ethnography. Institutional ethnography, Smith argues, is a method of enquiry that works from the actualities of people's everyday lives and experience to discover the social as it extends beyond the local and the everyday. She describes the process as 'mapmaking':

> …a method of enquiry into the social that proposes to enlarge the scope of what becomes visible from that site, mapping the relations that connect one local site to others. Like a map, it aims to be through and through indexical to the local sites of people's experience, making visible how we are connected into the extended social relations of ruling and economy and their intersections. And though some of the work of enquiry must be technical, as mapmaking is, its product should be ordinarily accessible and usable, just as a well-made map is, to those on the terrain it maps (D. Smith, 2005: 29).

This offers a spatial metaphor that implies a series of maps with different scales, legends and features. Such mappings enabled connections to be made across different institutional and political sites: those of community activism and governmental projects of community mobilisation or containment; between social movements or political campaigns and shifting professional and policy logics; between activist commitments and organizational projects of culture change and participative leadership; between forms of knowledge work and new governmentalities of reflexive personhood, and so on.

Smith's work was also helpful in thinking about how to be respectful of the specificity of the lives and stories of each of the participants in the research while also going 'beyond particularity' to map change across different scales and periods   Smith suggests that, rather than beginning with the researcher's theoretical categories, an institutional ethnography would 'begin in the actualities of the lives of some of those involved in the institutional process and focus on how those actualities were embedded in social relations, both those of ruling and those of the economy' (2005:

31). Through such work the 'problematic' of the research would become specified. The problematic isn't constructed from what is specific to an individual, but from what happens as accounts move from individual experience to explore the social relations in which that experience is embedded. This approach enabled me to work across the duality between conceptualizing those I interviewed as embodied, subjective and often reflexive subjects and, at the same time, part of an objective, universalising set of relations.

Smith's methodology was suitably adapted because of the need to work across organizations, scales and projects. In trying to respect the approach I did not set out with a pre-given set of themes onto which I mapped individual experience. Instead, as the connective and generative work began to fall into clusters, I sought out other participants who might be able to add depth to a particular experience or to illuminate it from a different standpoint. But Smith's institutional ethnography had a wider value in 'making visible' the aims and outcomes of the research to those whose experiences I was trying to capture. Indeed one aim of the research was to engage in a process of collective sense making – or mapmaking – that enabled peer learning and intergenerational conversations. Nevertheless there was a need to recognise that maps, while appearing to be objects that authentically represent what is real, have to be subjected to cultural analysis that troubles the representations offered.

While not explicitly an 'interpretive' study, then, interpretation was key to the analysis. The stuff of interview is language, which cannot be regarded as representing a fixed and objective reality but which is socially produced, not only in the interaction between interviewer and respondent but in the discursive repertoires, narratives and cultural scripts on which each draw. My focus, then, was not only on the 'facts' of what happened but also on how encounters were performed and understood, and on how individuals 'storied' their lives. Such stories were of course open to multiple readings. One was emotional – how it felt to be in a particular role at a particular time in a particular place. A second concerned readings of affect, hinted at in the points of interest that generated most energy in the process of recall and most force or excitement. Another reading explored reflections – how such experiences were interpreted and understood from the vantage point of the present. This is a cognitive rather than affective self, one who struggles to construct meaning and make sense. It is also a dialogic self: participants were constructing stories and narratives through interactions both with embodied others (peers, colleagues, and me as interviewer)

but also with socially circulating theories, narratives and a wider sense of a collective history (Holland and Lave, 2001).

These multiple readings – of discourse, of emotion, of affect and of dialogic reasoning – offered a rich and multilayered set of data. It offered hints about how the self was performed – relationally and materially - at different ages and in different circumstances. It showed how the self was not a unitary subject, but was formed relationally across multiple axes of difference. But it also showed how that self went about constructing coherence out of changing and often conflicting experiences. I was not concerned with trying to reveal the aspects of selfhood that participants might choose to keep hidden. But I was interested in accounts of conflicts and contradictions that had to be managed, of struggles that had to be overcome, and, conversely, of how new energies were generated and mobilised. I also focused on break points and strains: how and in what ways the activist or outsider found herself on the inside, how and why the participant fled a particular place or job, how someone decided to shift from being an employee to trying their hand at being an entrepreneur, consultant or researcher, and so on. These spoke to something of the changing material circumstances of work and the shifting spaces of power at particular cultural and political moments. This meant that as well as paying attention to how the self was performed I also brought a more material interest in how, in both their political and working lives, participants confronted hard, objective realities, and in how their knowledge about and experience of such realities – racism, inequality, poverty, exclusion - shaped their politics. The tensions between a focus on performance and on material reality, and between dialogic reasoning and cultural representations, were resolved in different ways as I tried to balance the need to generate theoretical work and my aim of making the research something of value to those whose experience it records. Indeed such tensions formed the substance of one element of the research itself – that dealing with the paradoxes confronted by those engaged in different forms of 'knowledge work'.

Emotion, affect and performance: problems of interpretation

As I noted earlier, the transcript were subject to multiple readings in order to surface cognitive, affective, emotional and dialogic understandings of the self and self work. Each has potential flaws. Cognition relies on participants own accounts of what happened, and our capacity to interpret someone else's processes of meaning making. Reading for affect relies on the analysis of non-verbal, embodied

expressions, on somatic rather than cognitive processes. But we are then faced with issues of attribution (can we identify directly what the research subject is feeling from tics and mannerisms, pauses, laughter and tears?). And dialogic readings of interview material require us to try to puzzle out processes of meaning making as they happen, and to identify the absent presences of others - past selves, imagined antagonists, collective peers, hidden interlocutors, and of course the interviewer herself – within the dialogue as it unfolds. Reading for emotion presents even greater difficulties. What is present in the interview process is not the emotion itself but a subject's representation of a past world. So statements such as 'I felt' are not part of a neutral, realistic account of what happened. But neither are the interpretations of interview transcripts by the researcher: As Wetherell notes, 'Neither the ordinary member of the public or the research psychologist can claim neutral unmediated access to what is 'really' going on' (2012: 100).

One of the approaches I took was to look for the stories that were told in the interview and what they might indicate about possible emotional responses to the events described. This was helpful, and led to some interesting follow up questions and subsequent conversations that took place as participants read transcripts, amended quotations and commented on the analyses offered in draft chapters. But narrative and story are not unproblematic, taking us back to issues of representation noted above. Wetherall (2012) argues that narratives mobilize communal and cultural repertoires of sense making, For example one of the issues that arose in this project was differences of generation. Older women offered more complete, rehearsed narratives, and they were more embedded in connections to taken for granted assumptions about the characteristics of a particular period ways (this was the cold war, that was '68, then there was Thatcherism, then there was Blair); their stories, it often seemed, had been told before, to others or just to themselves, and had been honed in the telling. The stories of younger participants were less sure, with more uncertainties (about what was going on) and ambivalences (about how to place oneself in it); their life projects were still in the making and their stories still being worked on.

The approach I adopted is what I decided to call the study of *emotional registers of discourse*: where emotion words occurred ('I felt', 'we got angry', 'it was satisfying', 'It was unbearable') and how they are framed. But I did not try to attribute feelings to my respondents, nor analyse the emotions they reported in the context of their particular biography. My focus was on how discursive analysis might point to particular

framings of the self-work taking place. This reading led to one of the major findings of the project: the significance of what I came to term 'border work', a concept developed to encompass frequent references by participants to being inside and outside:

> Being outside is really difficult – its beneficial to have a position inside. But if I am working outside I can do things quicker, I can invest time and energy in what I really believe in (freelance curator)

> My ideal is to remain on the edge of academia, working on projects that keep me thinking but that don't take my whole life. Knowledge work is not the academy; the kind of work I do is not really valued. It's not that I don't have the right language but that its not the kind of language I want to use. But I don't know whether I can always stay marginal (young researcher)

> And so through all the career steps I took I became more interested and more adept to understanding the sort of face between campaigning for justice of one sort or another, and the reality of the public policy decision making, and how you meet in the middle. I sort of learnt - but I didn't want to be shouting from the sidelines all my life. I wanted to try and actually change things, and so I was drawn [to name of organisation] for that reason (think tank member)

> You can't be in the West Highlands without being very aware of the social structure of the history of the clearances of crossing, of absentee landlords, and my family had, certainly my grandparents were extremely poor, and my mother you know there were periods of time when they were close to starving, so all of that has had quite a background in . . . and there isn't any question but that you would consider yourself, you know *on the other side* NGO director; my emphasis)

> Well I think I was an outsider, I mean I think there's no question, it's very hard to . . . particularly somebody like me to be a real insider, and I think that was helpful. I think what sometimes makes things work in the Civil Service is if you have a clear idea of what you want to do, and then you can sort of fight for it (equality worker)

As these extracts suggest, border work sometimes concerns performing crossings between different organizations, sectors, nations, institutions, but also denoted the borders between what was viewed as an authentic politics 'outside' and dominant ruling relations. It also referenced issues of working across differences of class, race and sexuality. The multiple readings of the transcripts suggested something of the self work involved; borders were not only those between sectors or institutions but between different identifications and loyalties. Across their accounts the notions of 'we' and 'them', of inside and outside, were rather slippery, and this slipperiness intensified as participants worked in ways that rendered boundaries more permeable in order to extend the influence of social and political movements on dominant ruling relations. But they also sought to stay in touch with the places where, in the words of participants, 'reality bites', to build bridges between policy actors and the 'grassroots', to link community based actors and those in poverty to resource streams, and to enlarge opportunities for 'voice'.

As such, in the context of this research, border work has be understood as political rather than geographical: the 'inside', 'outside', 'edges', 'middles' and so on referred to by participants were less concerned with defined places as with political possibilities. They were spaces of agency, of power: but also spaces of ambiguity, discomfort and emotion work. It became evident that border work could produce profound discomfort as different identifications – as insiders *and* outsiders, as both different *and* part of the dominant order – are lived and performed. Being 'inside-outside' – of the nation, the organization, the polity, activist networks, the academy - clearly brought feelings of both inclusion and exclusion. Participant accounts also referenced affective dimensions of border work: being 'shocked' and finding it 'difficult', taking risks and finding things 'bizarre or 'weird'; being proud and 'fulfilled'; not being able to 'bear' one sector while feeling 'stifled' by another; of being viewed (and perhaps viewing the self) as compromised because of decisions made. Paying attention to such representation of emotion and affect suggests some of the forms of 'self work' at stake. Participants draw discourses and repertoires from different worlds, forming new configurations of what 'work' means and how it was to be conducted. Indeed it is this capacity to span different worlds and identities that generated the spaces of power with which I was concerned. The transcripts suggest multiple and partial positionings of the self: 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.

Reading policy through emotional registers

The 'border work' described above can be anlaysed in terms of a rich body of work in public policy literature and in international development: Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) on 'working across boundaries', Lewis (2008) on boundary crossers, P. Lewis Milligan and Conradson (2006) on the 'cross sectoral dance', and many others. But I want to draw attention to the potential contribution of rather different literatures. This section moves beyond the interview transcripts to assess how the kinds of 'work' they depict can contribute to broader studies of policy and governance. That is, it offers concepts and frameworks through which the 'micro' analysis of interpretive techniques might inform – and be informed by – concerns about shifting policy rationales and changing configurations of power. Each is necessarily only briefly discussed, and does not to justice to the relevant literature. But my aim is, as I outlined in the Introduction, is to enhance the possibility of interdisciplinary conversations.

Throughout the extracts we can see hints at the emotion work (Hoschild, 1979; see also Hoggett, 2000, G.Lewis, 2000) at stake as participants engaged with dominant rationalities while holding on to their personal and political commitments. We can also see how cognition and emotion are not easily distinguishable. But notions of affect take us further, drawing attention to non-cognitive, somatic responses to the world and raising questions of how 'experience' can be represented other than through language itself (though language is not dismissed: Wetherall, 2011).   The turn to psychosocial methods in studies of policy and governance (Froggett 2002, Hunter, 2012) also offer rich resources for engaging with what Hunter terms 'impossible governance'. Such perspectives, drawing on Kleinian psychoanalytical concepts, would explore notions of being both 'inside' and 'outside', of 'fitting in, or 'bending' while also holding on to ones politics and values, of 'watching', 'holding oneself apart', while also being 'engaged', as suggesting a form of psychic 'splitting' that can result in melancholia. Psychic and organizational splittings may be dynamically connected, as in one participant's account of the rupturing of established teams in the client-contractor splits of the 1980s, and the 'unfinished business' associated with the personal and organizational damage that resulted:

> *Tendering was a focus of horrendous projections, with the splitting between*
> *clients and contractors – the rupture of teams that had been together. There*

is unfinished political business about all this. There was a feeling of becoming the enemy within – part of the loony left – there was no legitimate language. We were not acknowledged as part of history.

This goes beyond conventional views of emotion work to draw attention to the psychosocial dynamics of work and organisation, and has formed a productive form of analysis, especially in theorizing equality work (Hunter, 2012) and analyses of how 'difference' is embodied and lived (G.Lewis, 2000).

However I also want to suggest the potential contribution of rather different literatures, not least because of the spatial dynamics of the research (its focus on boders, boundaries and 'spaces of power'). Buckingham et al (2006) note how debates about liminality as a spatial relationship emerged in feminist geography as a means of conceptualizing women's activity spheres, spheres that were understood relationally rather than through the binary of public/private. Liminal spaces, here, are viewed as spaces that can be used strategically by women to develop capacities and resources – for the benefit of self, community or other women – sheltered from the wider public gaze (Staeheli, 1996; Ryan 1992; Fincher and Panelli, 2001). Such 'liminal' spaces are often not recognized in literatures on public policy or the public sphere; they offer a particular gendering of politics, one in which women's agency connects the personal and political through a focus on the everyday, the local, the pragmatic (cf the 'everyday maker': Bang and Sørenson, 1999). Many of the spaces of power with which I am concerned are precisely those through which connections between the personal and political are made. We can situate the work of many of the 'community activists', the policy entrepreneurs, the organizational actors and the knowledge workers in such liminal spaces, spaces that confound neat divisions between public, private and personal. The idea of liminality has also been used to describe spaces 'on the edge', outside the norm (see Roseneil, 2000 on Greenham Common) and spaces in which normal categories are disrupted. These include collective practices that transcend conventional definitions of public and private: attempts to create new 'commons' by the use of public land for collective garden and allotment projects, the creation of 'public' cultural artifacts and performances in privately owned property, or the generation of new temporary public facilities - from libraries to universities to deliberative events – within large scale demonstrations or occupations on private land (as in the Occupy movement). But participant accounts show how what happened in such spaces of power was not just concerned with the 'here and now', the personal, the everyday, but was deeply engaged in generating

what Rose (1999: 280) terms 'fantatised futures' - new ways of living, working and doing politics. And Buckingham et a argue that liminal space is 'much more than an intermediary space between private and public – it is variously private, communal and public depending on the motivations of the women using it' (2006: 896). So rather than viewing spaces of power as the 'in between' spaces summoned up in some versions of liminality, I want to argue that they are formed relationally and are traversed by multiple forms of power. It is their (political) ambiguity rather than their (spatial) liminality that generates new spaces of possibility

A second, and rather different, contribution from feminist geography continues this theme of political ambivalence. Larner and Craig's (2005) work on strategic brokers describes actors who work across sites, agencies, and scales and who 'spend a great deal of time building and maintaining relationships because no policy or strategy is now complete or legitimate without evidence of consultation and/or collaboration'. They also work to 'avoid overlaps, sort out niches, and create wider platforms to legitimate the work of their organizations'. And 'they are geared towards *process* issues', facilitating, mediating and negotiating, nurturing networks and deploying cultural knowledge and local knowledge 'in ways that enable traditionally "silent" voices to be heard' (2005: 417-8 passim, original emphasis). These are more than boundary crossing actors: they are involved in reconstituting the categories of contemporary governance and generating new forms of agency. Interestingly Larner and Craig note how the majority of the strategic brokers in their studies of community activism and local partnership working in both the UK and New Zealand were women. They acknowledge Hoschschild's work on emotional labour, but also locate the dominance of women in such roles in a twin process: the 'mobilization of un- and underpaid labour, and the expansion of governmentalising ambits into feminised and domesticated realms' (2005: 419). An important feature of the work of Wendy Larner and her collegues (e.g. Molloy and Larner, 2010) is the way in which it links analyses of gendered labour markets to analyses of the rise of new state forms – literatures that often do not speak to each other.

A rather different perspective – drawn from work on international consultants and brokers – is that of *translation* as a form of border work. Translation appeared as a practical discourse in some of the interviews in my study – a way in which women described what they did. They evoke the sense of translation as an active, agentic process, requiring the labour of summoning, mobilizing, assembling, and then – most importantly – that of combining elements into new configurations. Translation forms a

valuable counter to notions of the flow of ideas across boundaries; attention shifts to the local and particular settings in which ideas are received, translated, mediated and adapted into new practices (e.g. Czarniawska and Jeorges, 1996, Czarniawska and Sevón, 2005; Freeman, 2007; Lendvai, 2005; Salskov-Iversen et al, 2000). The image of 'source' and 'recipient' is rejected in favour of chains of association in which difference produces the possibility of the transformation of both: 'translation involves creating convergences or homologues by relating things that were previously different' (Callon, 1980: 211). It is such creative reframings that offer new possibilities of public action and forms of political agency. This is a helpful way of engaging with the 'border work' of participants: rather than viewing them simply as boundary crossing actors, they are engaged in a creative processes that opens up new potential pathways and that generates new emergent practices. It suggests how processes of translation, brokering and alignment may be *productive* of new forms of identity and agency, including the constitution of forms of political subjectivity.

However translation, with its roots in ANT, does not fully engage with notions of political ambivalence nor capture the ways in which actors manage the contradictions they face as they work across multiple allegiances and loyalties, and wrestle with dominant and subordinate forms of power. Here I want to turn to a second way of conceptualizing power and agency. The notion of *contact zones'* as elaborated in post-colonial theory suggests ways in which actors engage with dominant and subordinate formations of power and forms of subjectivity. Contact zones are described as 'social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination – like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today' (Pratt, 1992: 4). They are non-innocent settings in which power differences between coloniser and colonized are formed through historical patterns of racialized subordination and exploitation. As such, contemporary tracings of historically embedded forms of power and oppression may resonate through contemporary struggles (see also Askins and Pain, 2011).

Viewing the emotional registers of border work in this way brings different insights into some of the mappings proposed earlier. Inside-outside spaces challenged institutional (colonial) power by learning its language and translating counter or oppositional voices in ways that could be seen to fit with dominant projects. Such spaces were also spaces in which dominant orders could be modernized and transformed through contact with the subordinate (the colonized). They are zones in

which participants sought to reconcile conflicting interests, build alliances, reconfigure relationships, align conflicting discourses, re-signify existing symbols, retell old narratives and develop new ones. Their work was also that managing – or not –the contradictions produced by changing relations of rule, working the borders between 'community' activism and governmental programmes of civic renewal; between political commitments and transformations in professional and policy regimes; between knowledge work and governmental power; between public and personal lives.). But this opens up questions about how to understand the dominant; rather than a single order of rule it shows how it is constituted as multiple, with some would-be hegemonic political projects deliberately welcoming in counter projects in order to render them agents through which dominant orders could be transformed. The results are zones within which tracings of new hegemonic projects may emerge alongside residual orderings of power (Newman forthcoming a)

Reframing 'emotional labour'

The previous section began to offer resources for linking interpretive accounts of affect and the emotions to analyses of shifting regimes of power. I want to end by offering two rather different critical standpoints for those seeking to connect the micro analysis of emotion and affect with wider critical repertoires. The first, drawn principally from sociology but also referencing some strands of governance theory, centres on critiques of the rise of what has been termed the 'therapeutic' culture (Hoggett, 2009). Affect here is not simply a series of non verbal cues that might be analysed in the research process. It is integral to shifting strategies of management and governing that seek to elicit attachment and identification to the other – whether the other is a politician, a party, an enterprise, an organization, a nation. The therapeutic culture is one that valorizes emotional rather than deliberative forms of expression: which privileges felt experience over rational claims to truth, and which installs intimacy and authenticity as key cultural reference points. While work on emotional labour offered a new focus on the gendered dynamics of the workplace, especially of care and service occupations, the rise of the therapeutic culture – or cultures – brings emotions that were previously viewed as properly belonging to the private or personal domain into the public domain, challenging the integrity of the latter as a domain of rational communication. This brings gender back in, drawing attention to the significance of emotional labour and the importance of what happens on the 'front line' which is often largely peopled by women. But there is also a danger

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or reproducing the male female, rational emotional, civiilsation/natural dichotomies that have pervaded social scientific and political thought since the enlightenment

The therapeutic turn raises some key problems for analyses of the policy process –a process situated at the juncture between politicians who increasingly use expressive, personal repertoires in order to gain popular appeal (see Hoggett's analysis of Blair and Iraq: Hoggett 2009) and organizations privileging charismatic leadership styles and strategies of 'culture change'. The former seek to engage with 'ordinary people' in ways that foster personal attachments between people and politician, party or government (Clarke XX). The latter elicit affective responses of workers, fostering identification, commitment and loyalty (see Hopfl on HRM as a form of governmentality: Hopfl XX). What, then is the relative value that should be placed on policy as a product of rational debate and technocratic expertise, or as a domain pervaded by narrative and story? And how should we conceptualise policy strategies which draw on affective and behavioural repertoires to persuade or nudge populations to adopt desirable forms of action? Finally how should we analyse strategies of coproduction that bring more of the person, and personal responsibility, into encounters with policy and public service actors? Many such strategies are deployed for what many would regard as 'progressive' ends, but how should we regard the wider personalization of public policy? Such policies have   frequently drawn on activist struggles: the disability movement's struggle for independence and feminist claims for recognition and voice, but has appropriated them for governmental strategies of inclusion, responsibilisation and choice (Newman and Tonkens, 2011).

A second critical standpoint is drawn principally from feminist cultural studies of the shifting character of 'work' in post-industrial economies. This shows how work for many has become a means of affirming identity while also acknowledging the increasing vulnerability to exploitation of those for whom the boundaries of paid and unpaid work have become increasingly porous. What is striking in the research cited earlier is the way in which many participants actively crafted their own work and career path: they each had a sense of possible futures and each was highly aware of the dilemmas they faced in making choices of where and how to work. The participants in my research had complex and fractured working lives, developing and adapting to the reconfigurations of sectors, organizations and government programmes, moving into and out of very different spaces of power and accreting

experience, networks and skills on the way. However working on edges and borders made them highly vulnerable to shifts in the economy.

Contemporary sociological theory has offered a number of different phrases or concepts to capture changing career paths and the growth of entrepreneurial work: portfolio careers (Handy, 1989), social entrepreneurship (Leadbeater, 1996) the information society (Castells, 2000), the 'new precariat' (Ross, 2009, Standing, 2011). The latter is a term that has, in particular, been used to depict what are viewed as new forms of cultural work:

> Precariousness (in relation to work) refers to all forms of insecure, contingent, flexible work – from illegal, casualised and temporary employment, to homeworking, piecework and freelancing. In turn precarity signifies both the multiplication of precarious, insecure, unstable forms of living and, simultaneously, new forms of political struggle and solidarity that reach beyond the traditional models of the political party or trade union. This *double meaning* is central to understanding the ideas and politics associated with precarity; the new moment of capitalism that engenders precariousness is seen not only as oppressive but also as offering the potential for new subjectivities, new socialities and new kinds of politics (Gill and Pratt, 2008: 3; original emphasis).

The labour of many of the participants in the research described above can be described in terms of precarious labour: temporary, intermittent and precarious jobs; long hours and 'bulemic' patterns of working (periods of high intensity followed by periods of no work); the collapse of the boundaries between work and play; and passionate attachment to the work itself (Gill and Pratt, 2008: 14). But one might question, given its resonances with accounts from multiple generations, the novelty of precarious labour; it seems that many women in my study from 'older' generations have combined work and politics in this way. Women have always done immaterial and affective labour, but the focus on precarious working practices only came to attention as it began to impact on male workers in the post-industrial flexible job market (Fantone, 2007). Many of the ideas on which notions of a new precariat are based – those of the knowledge economy, risk society, 'immaterial labour' and a post fordist econonomy that has displaced older forms of organising – have been critiqued by feminist commentators (Macdowell 2009, McRobbie, forthcoming). But such concepts nevertheless offer a vocabulary that can speak to some of ways in which participants described their working lives.

Conclusion

This paper has both drawn on and sought to extend the concept of emotional labour in a number of ways. It has, for example, drawn on Hoschild's work but has extended the analysis from a focus on 'front line' service workers and care workers to a focus on those working across borders and boundaries – not only those between organizations and sectors but also those arising at the interface of activist commitments and governmental programmes and projects. This in turn shifts the focus from the ways in which emotion work may be used to extend the profitability of capitalist enterprises by creating positive service relationships and enhancing customer experience and loyalty to one in which emotion work is viewed as integral to the management of contradiction and the generation of new spaces and possibilities. These too, of course, can be viewed as 'functional' for capital, smoothing its edges and creating innovations that can be the source of its renewal and expansion. However, as I argue elsewhere, the outcomes are more ambiguous. My focus here has been on the 'self work' at stake in managing and containing contradictions, opening up the potential value of psychosocial forms of analysis but also pointing to the value of methodologies that surface a 'dialogic' self and trying to capture the forms of reasoning which invoke both present and absent 'others' in recounting and resolving dilemmas.

The paper has also offered a number of different ways of framing emotions and emotion work in policy studies. They are drawn from very different literatures, and I want to emphasise that concepts cannot simply be 'lifted' and transported into another disciplinary home without cost; translation, as noted earlier, is an active, creative process and, in squeezing concepts to 'fit' a tradition of scholarship dominated by the legacies of institutionalism and administrative science, much is likely to be 'lost in translation'. In particular the tension between positivist social science (which privilege a rational and deliberative subject) and post-structuralist concepts of personhood and identity is not necessarily resolved. Concepts of discourse, in particular, remain highly contested: there is a deep divide between the traditions of 'conversational analysis' and forms of discourse analysis inflected through post-structuralism. Although both are concerned with language and meaning-making, they differ in terms of how far language is viewed as *reflecting* meaning or as *constituting* reality. Similarly there are deep divisions in the use of notions of representation in the traditions of political science and in cultural theory. These divisions do not however prevent productive conversations nor offer new

theoretical and methodological possibilities (see discussion in Wetherell 2012). However they do hint at the problems arising where 'emotion' or 'affect' simply added to already existing concepts - the street level bureaucrat or front line worker, for example – without acknowledging the ways in which they potentially rupture the traditional framings of those same concepts. By looking beyond policy studies to other literatures I hope this paper might provoke a broader range of interdisciplinary conversations.

The paper ended by offering two critical standpoint from which contemporary policy and governance might be interrogated. They are of course interrelated. The rise of the 'therapeutic culture' has implications for the character of work in the proliferating array of spaces concerned with eliciting new governance subjects and forms of subjectivity: those enacting 'behaviour change' strategies, inculcating work commitments among potentially recalcitrant welfare subjects, fostering personal capacities through training and empowerment programmes or seeking to engage the passions of others, all work the boundaries between public and personal in troubling ways. The therapeutic turn also shifts projects of 'self work' to citizens charged with responsibility to both manage their own lives and to provide for the welfare of themselves and others. However the places and spaces of critique – in politics, in government, in the academy – are themselves shrinking and becoming increasingly precarious. As Melissa Gregg (2012) argues, academics must acknowledge the affective dimensions of their own labour (how it may be pervaded by fear and anxiety but also be a prime source of fulfillmemt and satisfaction. The 'immaterial' basis of knowledge work means that the distinctions between work and non work are difficult to draw (Lui, 2004). Like that of many of the women I interviewed, such labour transcends the boundaries of organizations and sectors, and of paid and unpaid work. It is increasingly 'precarious' - subject to short term contracts and impossible (and contradictory) performance demands. Here, as elsewhere, a focus on studies of the emotions and emotional or affective labour needs to be situated in an acknowledgement of the shifting material characteristics of work – including work in the neoliberal academy.

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