

Emotions in Interactions of Contemporary Polish Society

The book attempts to define the role that emotions nowadays play in interpersonal interactions. It discusses how feelings and their expression are used by members of contemporary Polish society to shape mutual relations and determine the course of interaction.

A starting point for the analysis is the concept of **social practices**. Adopting the perspective of the theory of social practices transforms the analysis of emotions into the analysis of society – research on emotions becomes research on the structure of meanings around which interpersonal interactions are organized, and the structure of relations emerging from these interactions. Furthermore, the question about the role of emotions in social life turns into the question about the aim and the way of using emotions by members of a given society.

The empirical analysis covers social practices organizing the course of interactions, divided on the basis of typology of interactions formulated by Anna Giza-Poleszczuk into three spheres of social life: a “**coexistence sphere**”, which includes transient, unique interactions in the public space, an “**expansion sphere**”, which encompasses interactions between individuals in given social roles in the institutional space, and a “**discourse sphere**”, that is interactions directed at sharing views and values in the communication space. Each of them is assigned one characteristic area of impact: urban space, workplace, and communication related to determining collective identity.

The study showed that the coexistence sphere transforms from the dimension of transient, affectively neutral interactions with strangers into the space of building or protecting self-esteem. Emotional expression participates in the regulation of the course of individual interactions. The expansion sphere transforms from the dimension of affectively neutral relations, regulated by bureaucratic procedures, into the space of interpersonal games, during which emotional capital is generated, and, as a result, the current structuring of social relations within the organization. The discourse sphere transforms from the communication space directed at agreeing on senses into the sphere of axiological conflict. On the one hand, certain emotional factors impede the process of agreeing on senses and block the emergence of collective identities, on the other jointly experienced emotions allow local and temporary sharing of senses and socialization of individual actions.

Thus, it can be said at the most general level that today emotions serve to reorganize the society, whose main feature is disintegration of existing interactional patterns.