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Version: Accepted Version

Article:
Emery, J., Powell, R. and Crookes, L. (2023) Class, affect, margins. The Sociological Review, 71 (2). pp. 283-295. ISSN: 0038-0261

https://doi.org/10.1177/00380261221150076

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MONOGRAPH TITLE: Class, Emotions and the Affective Politics of Social Inequality

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION: Class, affect, margins

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Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to John Flint, Cath Lambert, James Rhodes, Karen Throsby and anonymous reviewers for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this introduction.

Introduction

Class is firmly back on both social scientific and political agendas, bound up in debates over culture wars, socio-spatial inequality and their political and social effects (Paton, 2021). This collection of research papers and interventions is about *feeling* class (Skeggs, 2012). While academic attention to class has fluctuated in tandem with wider social struggles, it invariably returns from relative quiet periods with a renewed vigour, reasserting its usefulness in understanding and connecting unequal social transformations. More contemporary debates allude to the multiple embodied, emotional and affective dimensions underpinning and shaping class relations. Feminist perspectives led explorations of class as a moral relation, operating and lived through moralizing processes and (re)compositions of judgement, value and (dis)identification (Ahmed, 2004; Sayer, 2005; Skeggs, 2004, 2005; 2012; Skeggs and Loveday, 2012; Halewood, 2022). For Skeggs (2012: 283):

> If we add affect to this analysis we can see in even more detail how class relations are experienced and felt as bodies move through social space and time as enhanced or cramped.

Contributions here look to extend this body of work toward reconsidering the affective and emotional dynamics of social life in a period of social polarisation and fragmented class politics.

Taking account of both the broadness of the affective turn across the social sciences and the interdisciplinary directions from which contributions come to meet in this collection, no one conceptualization of affect was prescribed or applied. Drawing on debates early in the affective turn, the idea was not to delimit affective investigations of class, but instead to open-up and explore the breadth of how class-affect relations can be approached with the explicit aim to advance interdisciplinary dialogue around class and social inequality (Wetherell, 2015; Bondi, 2005; Emery, 2018). In this light, contributions draw upon a range of literatures associated with the affective turns in their respective disciplines, as well as works transcending disciplinary boundaries. This connects and enriches nascent work on class that centres affective dynamics in novel and insightful ways (Bottero, 2019; Meier, 2021; Crean, 2018; Walkerdine, 2016).

Though not always foregrounded, affective dynamics pervade in understanding the work that class does, and in nuancing the relational (re-)making of classed identities, formations and selves (Lawler, 2005; Skeggs, 2004). We mourn, celebrate, love and feel loss and joy in classed

registers (Crean, 2018). Class shapes everyday and temporal haptic, auditory, visual and olfactory experience. Class might be felt through urban encounters as a haunting spectre of judgement and normative evaluation (Skeggs, 2009). Our affective memories, histories, nostalgias and past traumas are class contingent (Meier, 2021; Walkerdine, 2016). We might not always recognise or identify classed affect. The valence of feeling might be intense or mundane, sharp or routine, embedded to the point of unrecognition, or, most often, misrecognition, yet 'still pervades our inner worlds and outer practices' (Reay, 2005: 912). As such, affective dynamics of class condition our relations with, and experience of, the world - much like the concept of habitus, where social and symbolic structures of society are reflected in bodily dispositions, sentiments and orientations in ways that condition action and expression (Wacquant, 2019).

The feeling of class is of course intersected by other subjectivities and identifications that sharpen or soften in specific situational moments and spatial arrangements (Crean, 2018; Skeggs, 2012). Embodied and emotional registers are not reducible solely to class, rather the *feeling* of class is traceable and identifiable in vastly complex, socially diverse and historically contingent affective relations. Importantly, it is these affective relations that underpin so much of the perceived crises of our time – the politics of inequality, xenophobia, resentment, anger, disillusionment, disregard, solidarity etc. Understood relationally, individuals and communities always occupy a position in social space relative to others expressed discursively, economically, socially and symbolically (Wacquant, 2016).

Yet political and media discourse often asserts that class does not exist, that feeling something or a certain way does not make it true or legitimate (Tyler, 2013). The same processes of victim blaming and rendering invisible are applied to other subjectivities, and can be seen as a principal strategy in sustaining everyday structures of class and racial inequality (Goldberg, 2009). This is another reason why intersectional understandings (that must always include class) are critical. Here we place class front and centre. But we do so with an openness to the variegated and fluid identifications, encounters, and affects of class relations over time on the one hand, and a diversity of theoretical and methodological entry points into reconfigurations of class on the other.

A pathologizing of class-related feelings - whether related to the alienation of the urban margins or the "hysteresis" associated with a disruption between habitus and one's position in social space - attempts to render them a personal malady, a self-deficiency unreflective of the supposedly classless and meritocratic societies we inhabit (Walkerdine, 2020). Yet, if the affective turn has taught us anything, emotions and feelings are socially, temporally and spatially contingent. These contingencies are apparent throughout this collection, drawing out in stark empirical detail the roles that history, memory, place and landscape play in ordering and shaping the shared feeling of class. It remains the case that objects, events and spaces are felt differently depending on an individual's class position or circles of (dis)identification. Yet these feelings are also often shared in classed emotional registers (Manstead, 2018).

Such emotional registers of class, like collective affects and affective atmospheres, help explain why we feel at home or estranged in certain spaces that we may never have been before. They inculcate us in relational, and sometimes solidaristic, networks of similitude, experience and embodiment; or conversely they might instil disidentifications, aversion and a desire for distance and separation, especially evident where class intersects with race (Gibbons, 2018; Roy, 2019; Wacquant, 2008). Some of the contributions here (Copestake; Simpson; Bhowmik and Rogaly) render affective solidarities explicit, highlighting the hitherto neglected sensorial and embodied roles of music, humour and sociality in fostering cross-class ties. Others highlight how such affective solidarities can be threatened or fractured by competing forces which can weaken collectivities (Clark; Virdee; Addison; Lulle).

In turn, these fractures remind us how emotional and affective registers of class are produced through relations of resistance, contestation and prescription. They are shaped and intervened in by wider structures of emotional and affective regulation. As Norbert Elias (2000) meticulously detailed, we are continually instructed on what and how to feel in certain situations, and what emotions should and should not be evoked from what behaviours and actions. And these instructions and behavioural expectations shift over time alongside wider social transformations. In less pernicious form, we are prescribed legitimate forms of enjoyment, happiness, anger, sorrow, contentment and so forth. More perniciously, feeling rules and emotions are weaponized to control and regulate recalcitrant behaviour. Shame, humiliation and stigma are emotional states that have long been central to this class-based affective governance – where shame is often understood as the 'master emotion' shaping conduct and changes in behavioural expectations (Scheff, 2014). In recent years, punitive welfare systems have returned to instrumentalised shaming and stigmatisation processes to deter claimants and force the unwell into work (Tyler, 2013). As Bourdieu (1986: 511) stated,

> If there is any terrorism it is in the peremptory verdicts which, in the name of taste, condemn to ridicule, indignity, shame, silence . . . men and women who simply fall short, in the eyes of their judges, of the right way of being and doing.

Of course, this cuts across class and takes gendered and racialised forms, and has long done so. In Early Modern Europe, shaming practices were part of everyday popular justice at the local level. Accompanied by 'rough music', mock parading of 'cuckolded' men or 'insolent' women remind us that feeling rules are not always imposed 'top down', but often more horizontally. Equally, the pervasion of forms of 'lateral denigration' – the internalisation of stigma and dissociation from neighbours and community – and accompanying class 'disidentification' reminds us that such behavioural prescriptions are a common feature of everyday intra- and inter-class life (Wacquant, 2008; Skeggs, 2004).

Elite governance of feeling, though, reveals the distinctions of class relations in stark affective terms. In class-ridden societies and geographies, the feeling of class is often at its most intense in relational moments of encounter and habitus *clivé* - where our class position is exposed, rendered explicit (Friedman, 2016). Research evocatively documented here highlights, for

instance, the discomfort or distaste of being engulfed by an alien atmosphere anathema to your class (Strong, this issue), the embarrassment and shame that surfaces in People Who Use Drugs (PWUD) when confronted by 'respectable' others (Addison, this issue), and the 'psychosocial degeneration' that comes from being unhomed by classed processes of displacement (Watt, this issue).

These are uncomfortably difficult topics in and out of academic settings, but nonetheless important issues for social scientific enquiry. At the outset of one of her lesser cited texts, *Where We Stand: Class Matters*, the Black feminist scholar, bell hooks (2000: vii), articulated these feelings, writing that class is 'the subject that makes us all tense, nervous, uncertain about where we stand.' The negative feelings that arise from discussing or self-reflecting on class partly explains its decline as a unit of social analysis in the latter part of the 20th Century. This is also related to a longer-term process of taboo in terms of expressions of social superiority or inferiority (Wouters, 2007), but that process may itself arguably be undermined by the digitisation of society and the curation of the online self. However, the discomfort of class discourse is interrelated with concurrent recompositions of class formation, discourse and analysis that also explain its demise at particular points. It remains worthwhile to reflect on these ebbs and flows.

In what follows we advocate for a renewed critical discussion on class trajectories and transformations across social sciences, everyday life and political economic agendas. We are prompted here by the contributions themselves, which inspire a (re-)exploration of the interrelations between fields of action in their approaches to class. The discussion is structured around three processes central to contemporary class relations: reconfigurations of class(es); the (de-)homogenisation of meanings and feelings of class; and the reconstitution of margins and inequality. We then introduce the individual contributions and outline the structure of the edited collection.

Reconfigurations of class

Deep and global processes of class reconfiguration are transforming how we categorize, recognise and understand class. One such process of reconfiguration is on the level of everyday life. From at least the 19th Century, class categories were reassuringly rigid and affixed to employment typologies, explicitly linked to job types and industrial indexes. Across much of the industrialising world, schemas devised by sociologist John Goldthorpe and colleagues held sway. In the US, with its history of embracing industrial capitalist ideology and rejecting aristocratic class systems, classification is further dichotomised in popular and political parlance around 'blue' and 'white' collars. The working-class laboured with their hands, the middle-class with their brains. Working-class jobs were dirty and injurious, middle-class jobs clean and safe. Understanding class and social stratification has always been viewed through an embodied and emotive lens.

Thompsonsian perspectives might see such classificatory systems as putting the cart before the horse (Thompson, 1965). Rather, (working-)classes are a product of struggling into consciousness a respective shared economic experience in relation to others. Industrialism birthed a multitude of industries, jobs and roles (and collar colours), internally variegated in skill, responsibilities, divisions and pay. Class consciousness coheres people around a commonality of experience and feeling in relation to other classes (Chaterjee, 2016). Regardless of inception, there can be little doubt that working-class politics and popular understandings of class constitution and stratification were tied to occupational types, normally those of heavy industrial work, and normally the jobs of men.

Within 'advanced capitalist societies' processes of deindustrialisation and the widescale closure of factories, mines, mills and dockyards significantly disrupted these understandings and challenged immutable identities. As did the concomitant dissolution of institutional and organisational socio-political structures for large swathes of the working-class labour movement. Deindustrialisation and the rise of service industries obfuscated what it meant, and what it means, to be working-class. Localised ontologies of class, rooted in occupational and industrial cultures, made little sense without the steelworks, the shipyard, the pit etc., leading to intergenerational fractures in class identification (Walkerdine and Jimenez, 2012). The supposed feminisation of labour has exacerbated these fissures, with working-class masculinities challenged by new forms of employment, giving rise to conflicting feelings of shame and emasculation (Nixon, 2009).

These processes were also felt at the spatial and social level, and papers here restate the critical value of tracing the histories of such processes to understanding how class is continually reconfigured. As Satnam Virdee documents (this volume), a 'pattern of heavy defeats across a range of industries…. combined with the technical decomposition of class through deindustrialization destroyed the spirit and combativity' of working-class communities. Andy Clark's contribution provides a broad account of the widespread effects of deindustrialisation on working-class life through the case-study of 'Tunbrooke', a deindustrialising community in Scotland.

Deindustrialisation and corrosion of the socio-political structures of class conscience were political projects administered through economic means, not to erase processes of class from social life – an impossible task in capitalist societies – but to fragment political action that sought to limit 'accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey, 2021). This is emphasized by politically and socially driven processes of class reconfiguration and the governance of socio-spatial inequalities that have flowed into post-industrial restructurings, such as welfare cuts, state-induced financialization and the uneven effects of austerity policies. Much like deindustrialization, critical to the veracity of these processes is always accompanying forms of class fragmentation and stigmatization along lines of race, gender, nationality, place, and lifestyle.

The social mobility agenda is an apposite example as it illustrates how class is understood and lived and is linked across political, social, cultural and economic processes. We were told that in an age of equal opportunity we could unshackle ourselves from our class position and overcome class stratifications. Though such pronouncements have been exposed as, at best, an overstatement of the meritocratic fluidity of class stratification, the myth of social mobility no doubt filtered into peoples' valuations (Friedman and Laurison, 2020). Rhetoric around social mobility was accompanied by an intensification of gendered and racialised class stigmatisation on both sides of the Atlantic, combining to effectively exonerate capitalist elites and policymakers for the structural disadvantages of post-industrial landscapes. For example, the myth of the 'underclass' took on a life of its own and served as a 'terministic screen' obfuscating the drivers of inequality through a racialised and classed policy gaze from afar, centred on imagined behavioural assumptions, 'cultures of poverty' and problem neighbourhoods (Wacquant, 2022). These discourses grease the wheels of a dissolution of welfare and social assistance, which Watt examines in his contribution in the context of social housing and estate regeneration in London (see also Allen, 2008; Allen and Crookes, 2009).

Yet at the same time global urbanism is increasingly shaped by new circuits of finance, communication and culture in a reconfigured form of 'cognitive-cultural capitalism' – a global urban imaginary that valorises creativity, technological advancement, knowledge and diversity (Wyly, 2015). For Wyly, this is seen most clearly in the practices and purported values of corporations such as Apple, Facebook and Google for example. And at the extremes we may speak of a new global super-rich 'capturing' cities and infrastructure alongside the ascendancy of finance (Atkinson, 2021). All this reinforces the notion that class is constantly being reconfigured internationally in the contemporary period, and by forces beyond the state.

De-homogenisation of class

We think it fair to suggest that social scientists struggled to apprehend the period of wider flux and reconfiguration of class and class landscapes from the 1970s (Chaterjee, 2016). Without industrial jobs to categorically anchor the working-class, academics were left adrift, grasping to find new explanatory frameworks (Tyler, 2015). This flux, however, allowed for more de-homogenised and pluralistic understandings of class. Alongside the rise of identity politics, class identities were no longer immutable, lifelong and tied to the workplace but instead new ideas held sway, which privileged mobility and consumption in the 'reflexive project of the self' and the aestheticization of everyday life (Giddens, 1991; Bauman, 1998; Featherstone, 1991). Yet this shift to consumption and culture was initially based narrowly on middle-class lifestyles and experiences, and especially the 'new middle classes' as agents of gentrification and urban transformations (Skeggs, 2004; Butler and Savage, 2013). In this context, Bourdieu's relational framework of cultural, social, economic and symbolic capitals was adopted and reinvigorated class studies. Bourdieu's work extended analysis from work and the workplace and into the home, the street, education, the arts, leisure spaces etc. Bourdieu's writings were

reinvigorated by ground-breaking analyses of class relations that connected explicitly to gender, race and the state (Adkins and Skeggs, 2004; Wacquant, 2008).

Though Bourdieu's framework of habitus, field, social space and multiple capitals contributed greatly to analysis of class relations, it does lend itself to a reification of class formation as an exclusive club that inculcates from birth, with cultural capital often assigned as the preserve of the educated middle-classes and realised (and convertible) dependent on a form of distinction from those below (Bourdieu, 1984). This neo-Bourdieusian view is apparent in everyday class identifications - unmoored from the contemporaneity of jobs, work or economic position - that allow, for example, 'self-made' billionaires (and their children) to continue claiming working-class status (Higgins, 2021).

At the same time, there are certainly embodied and affective elements in class reproduction that, while indeterminate, are seemingly indelible. The contributions of Emma Copestake, Kat Simpson, Rowan Jaines and Valerie Walkerdine all attest to how class(ed) identities and socialities are intergenerationally transferred. Such processes are frustratingly difficult to capture through traditional social scientific methods, requiring imaginative, speculative, affective and creative approaches. However, place, family and community, as well as multiple forms of affective and embodied memory play central roles. Notwithstanding the important ways such intergenerational affective dynamics shape contemporary class formations and relations, they are also fundamental to present-day class dis/identifications and senses of belonging at the personal level, something many of the contributors here, including the editors, know all too well. As such, intergenerational or historically-rooted class identifications should not be dismissed or derided in favour of a socioeconomic determinism or classification based solely on individuals' current circumstances or position. Paton (2021) is surely right in claiming, though, that the:

> … privileging of the identity politics of class over issues of economic inequality…, along with the privileging of paid labour over social reproduction, produces a narrow framing of class which has proliferated in media and political discourses.

Bourdieu is notably absent (or at least implicit) in the papers that follow, reflecting accounts that seek to go beyond asymmetrical relations of class domination and subordination in capturing contemporary complexities and realignments. Speaking to *The Sociological Review* agenda to 'undiscipline' Sociology, contributions come from a broad range of fields to further enrich the scholarly de-homogenisation of class and extend analyses beyond the urban (Clark, Jaines, this issue). An interdisciplinary conversation on class embraces the myriad psychological, material, spatial and temporal dynamics that constitute class in everyday life, working to develop, expand, connect and critique social scientific conceptions. A critical engagement with common abstractions in seeking to rearticulate them and move beyond them also entails questioning the continuing salience of some dominant concepts.

Emphasising and attending to the intersectional nuances, ambivalences, contradictions and fluid identifications that characterise contemporary class relations has never been more vital. The swell of far-right sentiments and organisation within and outside formal or accepted political institutions continues to 'recast the real injuries of class through the politics of racist resentment' (Virdee, 2019: 24). In the Global North, the narrow framing proliferating in media and political discourses that Paton warns of focuses on the so-called 'white working-class', often veiled in a rhetoric of a largely undifferentiated 'left behind' (Rhodes, 2011; Rogaly, 2021). It is worth remembering that racialized narratives and explanations for class injustice are always mobilized more in moments of growing inequality. Here, following Rhodes (2011), we seek to foreground heterogeneity in capturing contemporary divergences and multipicities that challenge 'fixed constructions' and empty signifiers.

Reconstitution and historicization of the margins

Tyler (2015: 496) pointedly states, 'the problem that "class" describes is inequality.' The problem of inequality is at the same time one of the most pressing challenges of our time as well as being deeply emotional and psychosocially fraught. It suits those that seek to invalidate class-based affective networks as divisive, and replace them with an illusory representation of sameness, of a commonality of human feeling (e.g. nationhood). In doing so, they can conceal the deep class inequalities and injustices that benefit them. Near the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, wealthy celebrities, led by the actor and model Gal Gadot, were rightly derided as being tone deaf when they attempted to force this message with a collective rendition of John Lennon's 'Imagine', each posting a segment of them singing a line. It is a nice thought, but the world does not 'live as one.' Despite what some may claim, we are not, and never have been, 'all in it together.' Nothing exposed this lie more than state responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. Almost without exception – from Brazil, to Kenya, to Indonesia and across Europe – governments and elites reacted to a global health emergency by syphoning money to themselves, allocating Personal Protective Equipment procurement contracts to their friends, jumping vaccine queues, flagrantly breaking social restrictions, and seeking to further punish marginalised segments of societies by withholding vaccines and provisions.

We are conditioned not to feel class until we are supposed to: when it makes sense to vilify and blame a strata of society for its ills. Much sociological research has investigated the stigmatisation and attempted regulation of working-class behaviours and cultures. As Skeggs (2012: 276) states, '[i]deas about what constitutes different classes are often moral battlegrounds, as struggles over "dignity" demonstrate.' Feminist research on emotional management and performance in the workplace, and emergent work on the affective politics of precarious forms of employment, points to the ongoing processes of social polarisation and advanced marginality taking place globally. Set in train and contextualised by different political economic settings, processes of socio-spatial inequality are swelling the margins of societies with deeply emotional consequences.

That said, the focus on the contemporary urgency of inequality would be diminished if it was to evacuate the fruitful historicization and orientations to spaces of everyday life currently animating class analysis. As Back (2015: 833) states, presentist class analysis 'skims the surface of class culture without accounting adequately for either the residue of history in it or its place-based qualities.' Many of the contributions here act to address these concerns of ahistoricism explicitly. To conceptualise the enduring effects and impacts of industrial decline, Clark deploys Linkon's (2018) 'half-life' thesis, which suggests that the effects of deindustrialisation can be felt and recognised in a range of (psycho)social conditions long after the shock of workplace closure. Linkon's is one of a number of conceptualisations that have grappled with the tangible and intangible resonance of deindustrialisation and its causality of contemporary conditions (Emery, 2018). Where Clark and Linkon differ is that, far from halving in its toxic intensities, deindustrialisation seeded ever-worsening social struggle in 'Tunbrooke,' evidenced in many cases of abandonment and relegation. Watt also highlights a reconstitution of margins through the lens of housing commodification and 'regeneration'. As Watt claims, drawing on Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012), post-War social housing, though never perfect, nonetheless provided a material and psychosocial home for residents. Continued neoliberalisation of the housing system involving the dominance of finance and the privileging of homeownership in obliterating previous understandings of 'home', has resulted in 'psychosocial degeneration.' In the case of the estate where Watt's research focuses, this takes four forms: bitter frustration, distress and anger; chronic stress; displacement anxiety; and dehumanisation.

Watt's analysis is characteristic of many of the papers collected here in the sense that it describes a pole opposite to that of emergent work on elites and capital accumulation. Adkins, Cooper and Konings (2021: 561) argue that:

> class can no longer realistically be identified as a simple function of wages from labour (working, middle and upper class) or professional status (blue collar, white collar, pink collar), and must instead be rethought in terms of asset ownership and intergenerational transfers.

In their analysis, property ownership and inflation is 'a structural feature of the current phase of capitalism and has been central to the production of a new social structure of class and stratification that is characterized by a logic of its own' (Ibid: 549). Moreover, globalized assets in the form of property function in social reproduction, enabling children of asset and property rich parents a head start. Higgins (2021) extends this analysis to inherited, dynastic, wealth, which the state is directly implicated in, allowing beneficial taxes and ushering in a 'property-owning democracy' that often transforms into multiple home-ownership for some and a rentier generation for others. Here a relational affective approach is useful to understanding what happens when unequal class cultures meet, mix and interact in everyday space. Sam Strong centres in on love and shows how these interactions and relations can be emotionally fraught and extend across affective registers, yet also endure.

Outline of the papers and collection

The papers that follow are structured into three thematic sections central to contemporary research on social class. The first section – *Inhabiting Marginality* – covers a broad range of topics oriented to the affective dynamics and experiences of life at the geographical and social margins. Aija Lulle draws on long-term research with Latvian migrants to the UK to challenge simplistic understandings and pejorative discourses on post-socialist class and labour mobility. Lulle suggests that Latvian migrants experience and feel class in complex spatiotemporal ways that contest the representational frameworks imposed on their lives. At the same time, participants are shown to be navigating ongoing neoliberal and marginalising transformations taking place internationally in pursuit of a good life. Relatedly, embedding analysis in a historical framework of deindustrialisation and industrial ruination, Andy Clark ethnographically explores the multiple toxicities that have arisen as a result of industrial decline in a working-class community in Scotland, signalling to processes of class and community disidentification, criminality and drug use. Michelle Addison extends the focus on drug use to consider the stigmatising experiences that PWUD face in their everyday encounters with strangers and health care professionals. Through a framework of 'ugly feelings' (Ngai, 2005), Addison documents the class dimensions of this stigma and the deleterious impacts such encounters have on the mental health and wellbeing of vulnerable people.

The second section –*Home, Landscape and Place* – centres on work attending to deeply geographical issues of land(scape), socio-spatial inequality, material ruination and demolition. Couched in interview and archival research in the agricultural fenlands of eastern England, Rowan Jaines artfully demonstrates the importance of place and place-histories to nuancing the spectral labours of agricultural workers and the land they work. Place specificities are also critical to Sam Strong's analysis, which seeks to extend our understandings of inequality, beyond mere quantification, through its feel in everyday encounters and social relations. Focussed on the London borough of Kensington and Chelsea, a geography of extreme socio-spatial inequality, Strong articulates the love story of a couple from opposing margins of society – one from a marginalised social housing estate and the other from the affluent enclaves that the borough often invokes. The concept of love provides an affective lens through which to explore the spatial and temporal contingencies of sociality and social relations. Also centred in research on a London housing estate, Watt's conceptually and ethnographically rich paper examines the multiple psychosocial and emotional impacts that so-called housing regeneration imparts on its often reluctant and stigmatised subjects. Amid the many processes of harm that residents subjected to neoliberal regeneration experience, there is a continued and durable spirit among some participants to retain their estates as a 'psychic envelope' which protects and enables belonging. These sentiments chime with accounts in the field of housing studies that bemoan the homogenisation of working-class experience as ubiquitously injurious and middle-class housing orientations as universal (Flint, 2011; see also Watt, this issue). An overemphasis on damage and injury (often abstracted to "structural change") can also be pernicious in the sense of "over-critique" (Kilminster, 2013) which precludes possibilities and

divergences, and renders invisible informal relations of care and empathy (within and across classes). Back (2015: 832) articulates this neatly, writing:

> Tales of social damage, hopelessness and injustice always make for a good sociological story. But the cost is we too often look past or don't listen to moments of the repair and hope in which a liv[e]able life is made possible.

The contributions in section three – *Cultures of Solidarity and Care* – listen intently to such moments of repair and hope. Back's comments are evoked in Kat Simpson's uncovering of the affective relationships between past and present in the context of education in a former coalmining community, where we are invited to 'think beyond the loss, violence and suffering to recognise that the "goodness" of the past also remains affective and is haunting the present.' Emma Copestake articulates this 'goodness' through the analytical lens of laughter, documenting how laughter was central, both to the production of solidarity in the working lives of dockworkers in Liverpool, but also in maintaining solidarity among dock-working families faced with industrial decline. Moushumi Bhowmik and Ben Rogaly explore the affective power of music, song and singing in fostering class solidarities across national, racial and religious distinctions. As Bhomik and Rogaly highlight, pursuing and furthering such affective and embodied practice – whether through music, laughter or memory – has rarely been more important than in the current troubled and dissenting times. Satnam Virdee traces these 'lines of dissent' in the context of the UK to posit a history of the present that deftly connects multiple events, processes and ruptures to narrate the interrelations of race, class, (de)colonisation, deindustrialisation and austerity in understanding class decomposition and its political effects. Throughout this *longue duree*, intersectional class solidarity is continually shown to have been a threat to political economic systems, and, as such, undermined and fragmented.

If Virdee's contribution provides a fine-grained genealogy of the UK's present moment compiled from careful empirical readings that will correspond to those in different national contexts, Valerie Walkerdine's afterword returns us to the 'ephemeral realm' signalled by Jaines and Simpson. In this realm, histories are not solely the sequential and interrelated events stitched into explanatory narratives, but embodied accumulations lived through intergenerational and classed bodily dispositions and affective atmospheres in the spaces and moments of everyday life. Affective histories are required to posit and unravel eruptions of these affects in contemporary life, regardless of how visible or recognised affective flows and practices may be. However, as Walkerdine warns against, this project cannot replace more traditional political and economic histories, but 'operate on different registers at once – the economic and political but also the production via this of complex feelings and affective practices of togetherness and antagonism'.

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