

Summaries

Problems of Historical Causation in Emotions research.

Peter N. Stearns

Basic emotional norms can and do change, and with this important aspects of emotional experience and social reactions. The problem of causation is being dealt with by means of three cases: the civilizing process of the 17th and 18th centuries; the Victorian emotional style; and the mid-20th century. No single factor seems adequate to explain either the range of emotional standards or the underlying style. Multi-factored causation and a mixture of both structural and cultural ingredients do not result in any tidy model of explaining emotional change, but in a set of guidelines or leading questions in approaching the whole task of analysis.

'Because you just have to!' The Spread of Compulsory Education

Geert de Vries

Why do children go to school? 'Because you just have to!' is their own answer. Sociologically speaking, children are in the right. The spread of schooling over the last two centuries is the result of a figurational constraint that people have increasingly exerted over each other and themselves. From the sixteenth century onwards, political elites aimed at extending the supply of education in order to unify their own nation, to strengthen their interior position, to discipline the lower classes, and to bring about economic modernization. The use of education to these ends was suggested by the example of the Roman Catholic church, by the symbiosis of ruling elites of emergent states in Northwest Europe with Protestantism, and by the entrepreneurship of educational professionals and progressive factions of the bourgeoisie. When elementary schooling exceeded a certain threshold, and when the Industrial Revolution transformed production relations and created anonymous labour markets, employers started treating educational credentials as screening devices, thereby stimulating school attendance. Credentials give information on the abilities of prospected employees; they enable employers to legitimize differences in payment; they help professionals to close their profession; and they protect employees against outsiders. By the end of the nineteenth century, rising standards of life permitted lower classes to aspire to education, while new jobs were increasingly credentialled. This gave rise to an upward thrust in school attendance, spreading through the entire educational system in the twentieth century. The higher classes defended themselves against this threat by attending secondary schools, colleges and universities. Education became the central arena of class-struggle. In the twentieth century, educational expansion became both demand-driven and self-propelling. Two problematic consequences are credential inflation and a tendency towards meritocratic inequality.

...And the Sea Takes. Texelian Fishermen in Adversity and Misfortune
Rob van Ginkel

Fishing is a perilous occupation. Since the 1830s, scores of fishermen from the Dutch island of Texel lost their lives at sea. An even greater number were involved in accidents in which their vessels were shipwrecked, often leaving them and their family at the mercy of charitable institutions. This article describes and analyses the coping mechanisms to such disasters and late 19th and early 20th century attempts to arrive at mutual insurance and widow's and orphans' funds. Though informal collective action came about easily and rapidly, it was much harder to maintain institutionalized solidarity.

Pluralisation and the Culture of Negotiation in the Family
Manuela du Bois-Reymond

This article pays attention to a new phenomenon in youth and family research: modern families become more complex in structure due to changed partnership relations which affect, among other things, the communication between the generations. On theoretical as well as empirical grounds the emergence of what is called a negotiation household is being discussed.