



Power, Politics and the Emotions: Impossible Governance? (Social Justice)

Shona Hunter

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How can we rethink ideas of policy failure to consider its paradoxes and contradictions as a starting point for more hopeful democratic encounters?

Offering a provocative and innovative theorisation of governance as relational politics, the central argument of *Power, Politics and the Emotions* is that there are sets of affective dynamics which complicate the already materially and symbolically contested terrain of policy-making. This relational politics is Shona Hunter's starting point for a more hopeful, but realistic understanding of the limits and possibilities enacted through contemporary governing processes. Through this idea Hunter prioritises the everyday lived enactments of policy as a means to understand the state as a more differentiated and changeable entity than is often allowed for in current critiques of neoliberalism. But Hunter reminds us that focusing on lived realities demands a melancholic confrontation with pain, and the risks of social and physical death and violence lived through the contemporary neoliberal state. This is a state characterised by the ascendancy of neoliberal whiteness; a state where no one is innocent and we are all responsible for the multiple intersecting exclusionary practices creating its unequal social orderings. The only way to struggle through the central paradox of governance to produce something different is to accept this troubling interdependence between resistance and reproduction and between hope and loss.

Analysing the everyday processes of this relational politics through original empirical studies in health, social care and education the book develops an innovative interdisciplinary theoretical synthesis which engages with and extends work in political science, cultural theory, critical race and feminist analysis, critical psychoanalysis and post-material sociology.

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