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## Emotions, Psychological Structure of

As is the case with many concepts in the social sciences, the term 'emotion,' used widely in everyday language, constitutes a hypothetical construct, that is, a conceptual and operational definition of an underlying phenomenon that constitutes the object of theory and research. While laypersons use 'emotion' interchangeably with terms such as affect, feeling, sentiment, or mood, psychologists define the construct as a process of changes in different components rather than a homogeneous state. Furthermore, it is assumed that the differentiation of the emotions (e.g., into fear, anger, or joy) is based on specific configurations of changes in the components.

### 1. Components

Starting with Greek philosophy, there has been an uninterrupted tradition of postulating at least three major reaction components of emotion: physiological arousal, motor expression, and subjective feeling. These three components are often referred to as the 'emotional response triad.'

#### 1.1 Physiological Arousal

The widespread notion that emotions upset the body's equilibrium state suggests that the presence of arousal or activation is one of the major preconditions for using the label 'emotion.' References to physiological changes such as temperature sensations, respiratory and cardiovascular accelerations and decelerations, trembling and muscle spasms, as well as feelings of constriction in internal organs are frequently part of emotion descriptions. The important role of neurophysiological changes in emotional episodes is due to the emotion-eliciting event disturbing ongoing homeostatic regulation and smooth behavioral coordination, and the preparation of appropriate adaptive responses (e.g., producing the necessary energy for appropriate actions such as fight or flight).

#### 1.2 Motor Expression

The changes in facial and vocal expression, as well as in gestures and posture, during emotion episodes are also considered to be central components of the

emotional response. According to Darwin ([1872] 1998) these expressions are rudiments of formerly adaptive behaviors (e.g., clenching one's teeth as a rudiment of a biting response). Whatever their origin, most scholars have explained emotional expressions in terms of their communicative functions, broadcasting the reaction of an individual and its corresponding behavior intentions to other members of the group.

### *1.3 Subjective Feeling*

The fact that individuals can verbally report a multitude of qualitatively different feelings, as encoded in a rich emotion vocabulary, constitutes the most important facet of emotional episodes for many scholars in the field of emotion. These internal sensations, often considered as necessarily conscious experiences, are often called 'qualia,' irreducible qualities of feeling that are unique to the specific emotional experience of a particular individual. More recently, it has been suggested that the feeling component of emotion can be conceptualized as a reflection of all changes in components during an emotion episode, that is, the results of event appraisal, motivational change, and proprioceptive feedback from motor expression and physiological reactions. It is important to differentially define the concepts in this fashion as the tendency to use emotion (the process as a whole) and feeling (one of its components) as synonyms results in confusion (Scherer 2000a).

### *1.4 Behavior Preparation*

It has been argued that the classic response triad needs to be complemented by another component—behavior preparation or action tendencies (Frijda 1986, Scherer 1984). While both the physiological and expressive components imply the preparation of adaptive action in a general, often unspecific way, the notion of specific action tendencies being part of the response syndrome suggests a more explicitly motivational function. Emotions change ongoing goal-directed behavior and produce action tendencies that are specifically adapted to dealing with the environmental contingency that has elicited the emotional response.

### *1.5 Cognitive Processes*

In the wake of the cognitive revolution in the social and behavioral sciences, there has been increasing recognition that emotions may have very strong effects on perceptual and cognitive processes such as attention, thinking, memory, problem solving, judgment, decision making, and the like (see contributions

in Dalgleish and Power 1999). Thus, the emotional response syndrome also includes a cognitive component. It can be further argued that the emotion construct should not be restricted to the response components but should also include the specific characteristics of the processes that elicit and differentiate the emotions. Thus, proponents of appraisal theories of emotion suggest that emotional reactions are determined by the subjective evaluation of events with respect to their significance for the well-being and goal attainment of individuals (see contributions in Scherer et al. 2001). The recursiveness of the appraisal-response sequence (e.g., the evaluation of an event as dangerous may produce fear which in turn may affect the ensuing evaluation of subsequent events) strengthens the suggestion to include cognitive appraisal processes as a component of the emotion construct.

While the notion that emotions are syndromes of component changes is widely accepted, there is debate as to the relative importance of these components, particularly as to which ones should be considered as necessary and sufficient conditions for the occurrence of emotion. The components are expected to interact, that is, to influence each other. Thus, one issue of research concerns the possibility that motor expression may produce specific feelings or at least increase or decrease the intensity of subjective experience (as postulated by proprioceptive feedback theories; see Scherer 2000a for further detail).

## *2. Process*

While it is customary to talk of 'emotional states,' emotion researchers generally emphasize that emotion is a process in time. Generally, research has shown that different emotions have different time patterns including differential duration and varying onset or offset patterns. What is seen as part of an emotion episode partly depends on the specific definitions proposed by a researcher. In what follows, a number of sequential phases or stages of typical emotion episodes are described. Emotions can be evoked by a number of different factors, including external events or behaviors, internal neurophysiological changes, or memory recall. All of these potential origins will be subsumed under the term 'stimulus event' (triggering an emotion episode). Since external events seem to be the most frequent elicitors, the description below is biased toward such types of stimulus events (e.g., a sudden noise that might represent an explosion in the vicinity).

Salient stimulus events are immediately evaluated by an automatic evaluation process on lower, sub-cortical levels of the central nervous system (CNS), focusing attention on the stimulus. This preliminary evaluation may result in orientation and/or defense

responses as well as in feelings of pain or pleasure. Stimulus events thus marked for requiring further, more controlled or effortful processing are subject to being appraised by evaluation processes on higher levels of the CNS, in particular the cortical association areas and memory (Dalgleish and Power 1999, Leventhal and Scherer 1987). In this phase, the causation of the event (i.e., the objects and individuals likely to be responsible), the process involved, the consequences to be expected, the implications for the well-being and the immediate goals of the individual, and the ability to modify the consequences or to adjust to them, are evaluated (a process described in detail by appraisal theories of emotion; see contributions in Scherer et al. 2001).

The appraisal process generally produces motivation towards an adaptive response to the event. Depending on the importance of the consequences to be expected, this urge may generate a primordial goal for the specific moment in time (e.g., survival or self-assertion), superseding all prior needs, desires, or goals. Once the consequences of the event and the individual's response potential are evaluated in at least a preliminary fashion, the current goal/plan hierarchy needs to be restructured. This stage can be called 'goal/need priority setting.' Next, action alternatives are examined with respect to the cost involved and the likelihood of success. The result of this selection produces more specific action tendencies or behavior preparation (Frijda 1986), enabling the organism to rapidly engage in a certain class of behaviors (e.g., mobilizing the necessary energy for fight or flight). In this phase, the internal monitoring of the event appraisal and the physiological and expressive reactions (as reflected in subjective feeling, see above) play a central role in determining the need for emotion control or regulation, inhibiting execution of the activated action tendencies. The next phase consists of behavior execution, that is, the triggering of motor commands that produce concrete overt behavior, in terms of instrumental motor behavior and verbal or nonverbal communicative acts. In many cases the individual will, during or after the emotion episode, probably talk about the emotional experiences with others (emotional communication).

So far, the description has focused on the part of the emotion process consisting of an individual's reactions to an event. In many cases this reaction is embedded in a social context (particularly when an interaction partner has provoked the reaction) and is only the beginning of an interactive process in which each reaction of one of the protagonists is a stimulus event that is likely to modify the emotion process. Examples are the escalation of anger or the soothing of sadness through the empathic response of another. This process of interpersonal emotion regulation or escalation has been well described in the context of marital interactions (Gottman 1993). In social interaction emotions, and particularly emotional expression, are

often 'managed' in the pursuit of strategic goals such as self-presentation, intimidation, adulation, and so forth (Goffman 1959, Manstead 1991).

### 3. *Differentiation*

So far, the structure of emotion has been defined in terms of the underlying theoretical construct, in particular with respect to components and process. However, the problem of structure also arises when the differentiation of the emotions is addressed: How many emotions are there and what are they? This question is answered very differently depending on the theoretical stance adopted (see contributions in Ekman and Davidson 1994). Below, a number of major theoretical positions and their views on this issue are briefly described (see Scherer 2000b for greater detail).

#### 3.1 *Dimensional Models*

The first explicit dimensional model was formulated by Wundt (1905) who used both introspective and experimental methods to study subjective feeling experiences. He proposed that feelings varied by their positions on three independent dimensions: pleasantness–unpleasantness, rest–activation, and relaxation–attention. This model strongly influenced early emotion psychology. It has an intuitive appeal since it has been shown that humans have a tendency to perceive all kinds of meaning in terms of valence (i.e., positive vs. negative) and activation (active–passive; see Osgood et al. 1975). Following this tradition, many dimensional theorists argue that the differentiation is sufficiently well described by one or both of these central dimensions. Dimensional models have been particularly successful in social psychological and neurophysiological approaches to emotion (see Scherer 2000b).

#### 3.2 *Discrete Emotion Models*

Theorists in this tradition postulate a limited set of basic emotions such as fear, anger, joy, sadness, and disgust, characterized by a number of fundamental adaptive responses to prototypical events (e.g., fear/flight in response to an attack by a powerful enemy, disgust/avoidance in the case of spoiled food). Thus, the structure of emotion differentiation is given by prototypical, phylogenetically evolved adaptation patterns. Some models suggest that the differentiation and the number of fundamental emotions is determined by evolved neural circuits (circuit models; e.g., Panksepp 1998) or by phylogenetically continuous classes of motivation such as aggression or nurturance (motivational models, e.g., Plutchik 1980). Based on

Darwin ([1872] 1998), Tomkins (1984) suggested the existence of a small number of discrete, basic emotions in the form of neuromotor programs. Tomkins' suggestion has been extended by Ekman and Izard, who worked towards obtaining empirical evidence for theoretically derived consequences of discrete emotion theory, such as early ontogenetic onset of the discrete emotion patterns, discrete patterning of prototypical facial expressions, and universality of these patterns (Ekman 1992, Izard 1991). Theorists in this tradition have suggested that these basic emotions can be mixed or blended, thus explaining the large variety of emotion-descriptive verbal labels in many languages.

### 3.3 *Meaning-oriented Models*

Frequently, the semantic fields of terms in the emotion vocabularies of different languages are used to describe the structure of emotion, assuming that there is a mapping between semantic and psychological structures and categories. For example, lexical models try to define basic emotions as prototypical linguistic categories (e.g., a prototypical 'anger' category covering terms such as irritation, rage, being cross, etc.; e.g., Shaver et al. 1987) and to define each category by listing, as is the case in a dictionary, the semantic prerequisites and implications for the use of the word (e.g., in the case of indignation, 'being denied what one thinks one has a claim on'). Close to this view are social constructivist models claiming that the emotions are constituted or constructed by socioculturally determined behavior and value patterns, varying greatly over cultures. For example, it is suggested that certain emotions exist only in specific cultures or that a particular emotion has disappeared because of historic changes in cultural values and lifestyles. These models all suggest that the structure of emotion differentiation cannot be reduced to basic psychobiological patterns (i.e., a limited number of adaptive behaviors) but needs to be modeled on the basis of sociocultural meaning, often reflected in the semantic structure of the emotion vocabulary (see Scherer 2000b for more detail).

### 3.4 *Adaptational Models*

Theorists focusing on the way in which evolution may have equipped organisms to respond automatically to significant events have developed what can be called 'biological preparedness' models. For example, Öhman (1988) has developed a model that suggests that humans have unconscious detection mechanisms for stimuli that are potentially harmful (such as snakes and spiders). The automatic detection of such threat stimuli serves to efficiently prepare emergency reactions on the level of the autonomic nervous system (ANS). LeDoux's (1996) work shows that the neural architecture of the fear system (at least in rats) is

optimally suited for the production of such rapidly and automatically elicited but relatively nondifferentiated responses.

### 3.5 *Componential Models*

Componential emotion theorists postulate that emotions are elicited by a cognitive (but not necessarily conscious or controlled) appraisal of antecedent situations and events and that the patterning of the reactions in the different response domains (physiology, expression, action tendencies, feeling) is produced by the outcome of this evaluation process. According to this view, the structure of emotion is the result of the dimensions or criteria used in the appraisal process to determine the meaning of the stimulus event to the individual and of the response patterns (facial and vocal expression, physiological symptoms) generated by the appraisal results (see the chapters authored or co-authored by Ellsworth, Frijda, Lazarus, Roseman, Scherer, and Smith in Scherer et al. 2001). Lazarus (1991) sees emotion structure as determined by appraisals on a small number of dimensions called 'relational themes' (e.g., 'loss of a cherished person or thing' giving rise to sadness). In contrast, the component process model proposed by Scherer (1984; see also chapter in Scherer et al. 2001) suggests that one can distinguish as many different emotional processes as there are differential patterns of appraisal results. However, it is suggested that there are modal emotion outcomes corresponding to universal organism-environment interactions (e.g., 'blocked goals') which tend to be labeled by short emotion terms (e.g., anger) in most languages. The other appraisal theorists adopt intermediate positions.

This review shows that the current psychological models of emotion vary quite strongly in their postulates regarding the structure of emotion with respect to focus on specific components, presumptions about the nature of the process, and the explanations offered for the differentiation of individual emotions. A two-dimensional coordinate system can be used to plot these structural differences among psychological theories of emotion. One dimension consists of the different components of the emotion syndrome, as described above: cognitive processes, peripheral physiological responses, motivational changes, motor expression, and subjective feeling. The second dimension consists of the different stages of the emotion process, as outlined above. Table 1 shows where in this space the models reviewed above can be located.

Table 1 illustrates the origin of some of the differences in assumptions about the psychological structure of emotion: The more a model is concerned with the output end of the emotion process (e.g., the selection of adaptive responses), the more it sees structure as being determined by the type of action tendency (e.g., a flight tendency characterizing the fear response). In contrast, the more a model focuses on

**Table 1**

Comparison of major emotion theories with respect to their focus on components and phases in the emotion process

Phases	Low-level evaluation	High-level evaluation	Goal/need priority setting	Examining action alternatives	Behavior preparation	Behavior execution	Communication
Components							
Cognitive							
Physiological	<b>Adaptational models</b>						
Expressive		<b>Appraisal models</b>	<b>Motivational models</b>		<b>Circuit &amp; Discrete Emotion models</b>		
Motivational							
Feeling	<b>Dimensional models</b>						<b>Meaning &amp; Constructivist models</b>

The solid area, representing a particular type of model, is drawn across the intersections of components and phases that theorists in the respective tradition focus on most. The horizontal lines projecting from the solid areas indicate that a particular model includes in its theorizing at least some of the components/phases crossed by these lines.

the appraisal phases, that is, the input end of the emotion process, the less constrained is the presumed structure of emotion differentiation, allowing for a multitude of potential outcomes of the appraisal process. Obviously, it also matters which component of emotion a specific model focuses on. Models oriented toward the output end of the process tend to focus on the motivational (action tendencies) and motor expression components whereas those focusing on the input side highlight the cognitive component as being involved in structural differentiation. The table also allows one to determine which theories are committed to a psychobiological view (the models focusing on the physiological and expressive components, i.e., adaptational, motivational, circuit, and discrete emotion models) in contrast to those that lean more towards the phenomenological or sociocultural aspects of emotion (the models focusing on the subjective feeling component, i.e., dimensional, meaning, and constructivist models). Appraisal models tend to span the complete range of components. In spite of these differences, the claims of the different models are quite compatible once one allows for the fact that they focus on different components of emotion and different phases of the process.

**4. Outlook**

The explosive growth of emotion research in the last quarter of the twentieth century has produced both conceptual and methodological tools that promise to revolutionize the study of emotion. Largely confined to philosophical speculation based on verbal reports of subjective experience for much of its history, and hampered by terminological confusion, the study of emotion is increasingly based on a consensus concerning fundamental conceptual distinctions and employs methods that complement the traditional reliance on verbal report. In particular, the objective

assessment of facial and vocal expression as well as of neurophysiological reactions allows a multicomponent approach to measurement that is likely to do greater justice to the complex structure of emotion episodes. Another promising development is the rapprochement between psychological and neuroscience approaches to emotion, with insights on the neural architecture of the emotion system, obtained through brain imagery, providing information on process characteristics. Our understanding of emotion processes has also been advanced by copious work on the development of emotion (see *Infancy and Childhood: Emotional Development*) and on affective disturbance.

Progress has been somewhat less marked with respect to the social functions of emotion: While there is much research on the influence of mood on social cognition, there have been only very few efforts to study empirically the role of emotion in social interaction. Phenomena like emotional contagion, affective influence, anger escalation, or emotional climate in groups constitute promising areas for future research on the social context of emotion processes.

*See also:* Culture and Emotion; Emotion and Expression; Emotion: History of the Concept; Emotion, Neural Basis of; Emotions, Evolution of; Emotions, History of; Self-conscious Emotions, Psychology of

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## Emotions, Sociology of

### 1. Introduction

In this article, a brief social history of the Western bias against emotions will clear the air for their current study. Works defining the beginnings of the 'sociology

of emotions' are described; substantive topics addressed by the field are organized under a cybernetic macro–micro framework that emphasizes its contribution to sociology in general.

The sociology of emotions is premised on several recent observations that contradict popular prejudices. First, some constant emotional posture is necessary for mental functioning. Second, rather than depicting the asocial, idiosyncratic part of human existence that escapes through the seams of social organization, emotion is socially patterned and is a vital part of the maintenance of social organization. Third, rather than shaping the mere cultural display of biologically fixed emotions, in most cases, social processes are involved in their very constitution.

Definitions of emotion typically include organized mental states comprising cognitive appraisals, impulses to action, and to varying degrees, feelings. Hochschild (1983) likens emotions to senses that signal what is personally relevant about surrounding events. Scheff has cautioned that the attempt to define emotion is a rock on which many a ship has split. One difficulty is that emotion labels are often ideological. Contemporary American salaries for corporate executive officers averaging 400 times more than the lowest organizational worker can be viewed in terms of 'purely objective rewards for effectiveness,' self-interest, or greed.

### 2. The Recent Shift in the Western Evaluation of Emotion

Until the end of the twentieth century, Western society paid scant attention to emotions except to warn against them as a source of bias. The last quarter of the century however, saw a significant reversal from the devaluation of emotion to recognition of its crucial importance. Emotion, once seen as the enemy of rationality is now viewed as the foundation for our engagement in the world. Studies of brain trauma now identify certain emotional processes as necessary for rational choice-making and social adaptation. Artificial intelligence research reveals the importance of emotional predispositions in selecting what is relevant to a particular line of thought out of an unmanageable array of objective possibilities. Philosophers contend that 'emotion is what one sees the world in terms of.' Thus, emotion sets the very agenda for thought.

### 3. The Discursive Origins of the Word Emotion

The practice of carving affective experience into many separate subtypes and grouping them together as the same kind of psychic phenomena called 'emotion,' is relatively recent, and suspect to many scholars. The word did not appear in the Oxford Dictionary until 1580, after terms like 'self' and 'consciousness' lost

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