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Emotion in organizations: A review in stages

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**Abstract**

Emotion has become one of the most popular—and popularized—areas within organizational scholarship. This chapter attempts to review and bring together within a single framework the wide and often disjointed literature on emotion in organizations. The integrated framework includes processes detailed by previous theorists who have defined emotion as a sequence that unfolds chronologically. The emotion process begins with a focal individual who is exposed to an eliciting stimulus, registers the stimulus for its meaning, and experiences a feeling state and physiological changes, with downstream consequences for attitudes, behaviors, and cognitions, as well as facial expressions and other emotionally expressive cues. These downstream consequences can result in externally visible behaviors and cues that become, in turn, eliciting stimuli for interaction partners. For each stage of the emotion process there are distinct emotion regulation processes, that incorporate individual differences and group norms and that can become automatic with practice. Although research often examines these stages in relative isolation from each other, I argue that each matters largely due to its interconnectedness with the other stages. Incorporating intra-individual, individual, interpersonal, and organizational levels of analysis, this framework can be a starting point to situate, theorize and test explicit mechanisms for the influence of emotion on organizational life.

“We keep coming back to feelings, I’ll have time for feelings after I’m dead. Right now we’re busy.”

*NASA Administrator Michael Griffin, speaking about the historic Independence Day 2006 launch of the space shuttle Discovery, after discussing the horror and sadness at losing the Columbia space shuttle in 2003, the worry leading up to the launch of Discovery, and the relief and pleasure at watching Discovery succeed (Boyce, 2006).*

This is an exciting time to be a researcher interested in emotion in organizations. In the wake of best-selling popular books (e.g., Goleman, 1995), as well as the resurgence of decades-old investigations of worker sentiments (Hersey, 1932), there has been heightened—indeed, often hysterical—enthusiasm from practitioners and academics alike. This popularization has tended to elevate the status and legitimacy of emotion as a topic of scholarly inquiry, and has led to a near explosion of research on the topic (Barsade, Brief, & Spataro, 2003; Brief & Weiss, 2002; Rafaeli & Worline, 2001), which represents a large-scale reversal of lay beliefs that the best way to manage emotions in the workplace is not to have any. Frederick Taylor’s (1911) scientific management focused on machine-like efficiency, and discounted emotion because it was seen as irrational, personal, and feminine (Mumby & Putnam, 1992)—as typified in the opening quote. By contrast, researchers now celebrate the infusion of emotion into organizational life (Fineman, 1996)—with implications for individual, group, and even firm performance, as well as intricate connections to organizational phenomena as varied as justice, diversity, power, creativity, stress, culture, and others.

The explosion of research in this area has been a boon but it has also been a mess. Popularization has led to many sweeping—yet often poorly substantiated (e.g., Goleman, 1995)—claims about the power of emotion to be harnessed for the bottom line. The academic literature has been extensive, but often only a loosely connected body of work with disparate themes all included under the banner of emotion. Often research takes existing topics within management and divides them into purportedly emotional vs. non-emotional versions. At some extremes, arguments nearly claim that everything is emotion, that it now

encompasses every phenomenon heretofore studied across management and organization. One question, then, is how to articulate boundaries because, for emotion to mean anything, it cannot mean everything. Another question is how to integrate the study of emotion into a coherent whole.

The present chapter is the first to organize a review of the research literature on emotion in organizations around an integration of psychologists' conceptions of the emotion process. At this point a definition of *emotion* may—or may not—be necessary. Although we tend to think that we know emotion when we see it, researchers have proposed a wide variety of definitions, the most widely held that emotions are adaptive responses to the demands of the environment (Ekman, 1992; Scherer, 1984; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). However, Fridlund (1994) argued that there is no formal definition of emotion that is not tautological in some way, and ultimately suggested that emotion is merely a social convention for discussing behavioral intentions. At its core, most theorists agree that emotion is a reaction to a stimulus and has a range of possible consequences (Frijda, 1988). Whereas emotions typically refer to discrete and intense but short-lived experiences, *moods* are experiences that are longer and more diffuse, and lack awareness of the eliciting stimulus. Moods can be created by stimuli of relatively low intensity, or can be left behind by emotions that fade so that the initial antecedent is no longer salient (e.g., Cropanzano, Weiss, Hale, & Reb, 2003; Schwarz, 1990). *Affect* is an umbrella term encompassing mood and emotion (Forgas, 1995).

### **I. The Emotion Process**

The integrated process framework presented here draws on processes detailed by distinguished theorists of emotion and social judgment, including Brunswick (1955), Buck (1984), Frijda (1986; Frijda & Mesquita, 1994), Fridlund (1994), Ekman (1972), Gross (2001), Scherer (1984, 1995), Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), and others who have argued for theoretical models of emotion as an interrelated series of processes that unfold chronologically. It incorporates important contributions from psychology and allied fields such as sociology and organization studies.

The goal of this chapter is to review the existing research literature on emotion in organizations systematically in terms of this process framework. Although it is beyond the scope of the chapter also to review the entire underlying literature on emotion, where possible it includes that which is illustrative or directly relevant. It would be an overly ambitious claim for any model to account for absolutely every aspect of emotion studied within organizational settings. However, at the risk of failing, this is a first attempt to move away from characterizing the vast literature as discrete topics, and to integrate it into a single framework. To the extent that this attempt falls short, it is a starting point for further development.

*Insert Figures 1 and 2 about here*

The emotion process begins in Figure 1 with intrapersonal processes when a focal individual is exposed to an eliciting stimulus, registers the stimulus for its meaning, and experiences a feeling state and physiological changes, with downstream consequences for attitudes, behaviors, and cognitions, as well as facial expressions and other emotionally expressive cues. Further, Frijda (1988) argued that emotions automatically trigger secondary controlled responses to regulate the emotion, which Figure 1 illustrates in the gray shaded area. At each stage, regulation processes allow for individual and group norms to override automatic processing (e.g., Frijda, 1986; Grandey, 2000; Gross, 2001), although this distinction can blur when practice at any of these regulated processes renders them over-learned and, thus, automatic (Campos, Frankel, & Camras, 2004; Gross, 1998). Moving from intrapersonal to interpersonal processes, the downstream consequences of emotional experience can result in externally visible behaviors and cues that become, in turn, the eliciting stimulus for interaction partners, as depicted in Figure 2. Each step of the emotion process is presented in more detail in the sections below.

Although common wisdom considers emotion to be chaotic and disorganized, the emotion process is orderly, carefully sequenced, and governed by empirical regularities (Frijda, 1988). Emotions unfold chronologically through a rule-governed sequence of automatic components depicted in the figures (Frijda, 1986, 1988; Gross, 2001). The controlled components in the gray box arise at specific

stages, but are optional and can end at any point. Not every path is possible, and the arrows in the figures identify links previously theorized and empirically documented. These steps unfold so quickly that they can appear together to represent a single phenomenon. However, for conceptual clarity I prefer to treat emotion more as an adjective than a noun: each piece of the process is emotional, but no single piece on its own is emotion.

Although the stages are often studied in relative isolation from each other, I argue that each process matters largely because the other processes matter with which it is interconnected. For example, we care about the ability to recognize emotional cues only because an emotional expression suggests something about another person's emotional experience, which suggests something about the other's evaluations of the stimuli in his or her environment. Likewise, we care about leaders' emotional expressions because followers interpret these expressions as important stimuli.

The focus on individual and dyadic processes evidenced in Figures 1 and 2 is in no way intended to discount the emotional role of groups, organizations, and societies. Indeed, their crucial role is infused throughout the framework, first within the norms inherent in the regulated components and second within the dyadic processes that can occur en masse. Thus, the framework captures multiple levels of analysis, including intra-individual, individual differences, interpersonal, and organizational processes.

## **II. From a Stimulus to Emotional Registration and Experience**

Starting with William James (1884), modern psychologists have emphasized that emotional experience follows the perception of a stimulus. More recently, Weiss and Cropanzano's (1996) Affective Events Theory (AET) characterized emotional states in the workplace as "discrete reactions precipitated by specific events" (p. 41). Thus, Figure 1 begins with a stimulus.

### **A. Stimuli**

A stimulus need not literally be an event that occurs, but can also be a stable feature of the environment that is salient. Indeed, any contact between people and their environment can become an

affective event, particularly when the environment includes other people. Kelly and Barsade (2001) argue that greater interdependence in the modern workplace makes it contain more intensely evocative stimuli. The monotony of past work ensured that mostly routine events arose, whereas working closely with other people brings new and changing stimuli. Among the greatest emotional impact for workers are those events related to interactions with coworkers, customers, and supervisors, with leaders' behaviors looming particularly large (e.g., Basch & Fisher, 2000; Dasborough, 2006; Gaddis, Connelly, & Mumford, 2004; Mignonac & Herrbach, 2004). Although social interactions tend to be the most salient, economic events and conditions are also important emotional elicitors (Brief & Weiss, 2002), as are a variety of environmental factors such as temperature, noise, and aromas (Isen & Baron, 1991), and physical artifacts such as colors and symbols (Rafaeli & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2004) that can be fleeting or chronic. Emotions also emerge from the act of engaging in work itself (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Sandelands, 1988), and from external factors that carry over to work, such as family concerns (Brief & Weiss, 2002).

Beyond mechanical tasks, we relate to our work as a series of interactions and relationships with other people (Dutton & Dukerich, 2006; Wrzesniewski, Dutton, & Debebe, 2003). Examining a range of narratives about work, Boudens (2005) found that themes of establishing and maintaining equilibrium in relationships and maintaining personal boundaries and identity tended to be particularly evocative of emotion. Positive elicitors included work-related accomplishments and overcoming obstacles, personal support, solidarity, and connectedness. Negative elicitors included inequitable situations focusing largely on non-financial compensation, discrimination, both covert and overt conflicts and power struggles, violations of norms and trust to the detriment of other individuals or the workplace itself, ideology-based disagreements, actual or potential on-the-job death and injury, and humiliation. In Mignonac and Herrbach's (2004) large-scale survey, the most frequent positive events were accomplishment and praise from supervisors and coworkers, and the most frequent negative events were being assigned undesired work, the departure of a well-liked co-worker, interpersonal conflicts with supervisors and coworkers,



and the interference with work of personal problems.

There is a long history of focusing on job characteristics and other environmental factors as important stimuli that influence workers' affective states (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Herzberg, 1966; Saavedra & Kwun, 2000). Indeed, many emotional experiences are related to particular job functions. Haas' (1977) steelworkers spent their days in precarious positions at great heights. Call center representatives report that they face an average of 10 customers per day who are verbally aggressive (Grandey, Dickter, & Sin, 2004). Research and development teams frequently faced technical problems, insufficient staffing, conflict among team members, and funding shortages (Pirola-Merlo, Härtel, Mann, & Hirst, 2002). They also experience the excitement of having creative ideas and seeing them recognized by colleagues (Amabile, Barsade, Mueller, & Staw, 2005). Because emotions are elicited the most strongly for our most central concerns, one's position within an organization can affect the most influential stimuli. For example, individuals low in a hierarchy express concerns about being treated kindly by others, whereas superiors express concerns about their subordinates following rules and norms (Fitness, 2000; Sloan, 2004). Annoying experiences for Disneyland theme park employees include "having children and adults asking whether the water in the lagoon is real, or where the well-marked toilets might be, or where Walt Disney's tomb is to be found, or the real clincher—whether one is 'really real'" (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989, p. 69).

### **B. Emotional Registration**

The attributes of an event may be objective, but meanings materialize (Weick et al., 2005). Including in Figure 1 an intervening stage in the process framework between the stimulus and experience does not represent a stand in the longstanding debate about the primacy of affect vs. cognition. On one side, Zajonc (1998) reviewed evidence that pathways in the brain via emotional structures are faster and more direct than pathways via cognitive structures. On the other side, cognitive appraisal and related theories argue that we analyze the social environment for cues to determine our emotional experience

(James, 1884; Lazarus, 1991; Schacter & Singer, 1962). However, in either case, a direct link from stimulus to experience is not tenable because—at some level, however minimal—a stimulus must be registered for it to evoke an emotional reaction. Even a subconscious level of awareness and processing is sufficient to bring a stimulus into the emotion process (Leventhal & Scherer, 1987; Garcia-Prieto, Bellard, & Schneider, 2003; Zajonc, 1998). I label the intervening stage *emotional registration* rather than appraisal in order to incorporate both this automatic subconscious processing as well as more explicit cognitive interpretation. Even so, it is worth noting that the nomenclature of *cognitive appraisal* has tended to mislead people into a false dichotomy of automatic vs. controlled stimulus registration—where the term cognitive has suggested that appraisal is verbal, conscious, deliberate, logical, and slow (Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003). Even controlled appraisals tend to occur quickly and with little awareness because they are over-learned—after all, we practice appraising the events of greatest relevance to us, and so for relevant events the process is likely to be well practiced. Indeed, the lack of conscious awareness of the registration process—the sense that our emotional reactions are clear and free of subjective interpretation—often prevents individuals within organizational settings from questioning and evaluating their appraisals.

There are three steps within the emotional registration process: attention, schemata, and feeling rules:

**1. Attention.** The first step in emotional registration is attention—not necessarily conscious attention, but literally that the actor’s sensory organs are oriented to take in the stimulus. At its most minimal, a pre-conscious exposure of several hundred milliseconds may be enough to register a stimulus, but not when looking elsewhere. For example, placing a physical barrier to prevent participants from seeing each other limits the impact of participants’ mood on their interaction partners (Carnevale & Isen, 1986; Howard & Gengler, 2001). Attention can also include deliberate attention as people learn over time which events are ordinary—and thus ignorable—and which are worth taking notice.

**2. Schemata.** Emotional registration also involves an act of sensemaking: “What does an event

mean?" (Weick et al., 2005; p. 410) Basic emotions theorists in psychology argue that we are hard-wired to code events automatically in terms of their meaning for the self (Ekman, 1992; Frijda, 1986; Scherer, 1995). The cognitive appraisal process is an ordered sequence of checklists that direct our attention soonest to the most pressing emotional challenges (Scherer, 1984). The initial rudimentary checks are "rapid automatic processing on a schematic level" (Scherer, 1995; p. 245) that do not require effort or even awareness. The earliest dimension is *novelty*—indeed whether a stimulus is worth noting, consciously or even subliminally (Frijda, 1986; Scherer, 1984). Scherer (1995) argues that the next dimensions are the inherent *pleasantness* of a stimulus, its *relevance* to our goals, our potential for *coping* with the situation, followed by others that proceed in a conditional order based on the answers to the first set. Other theorists have proposed slightly different appraisal dimensions, with the most comprehensive list including: *pleasantness*, *attentional activity* (approach vs. avoid vs. ignore), *anticipated effort* (active vs. passive), *initial causal agent* (self vs. other), *current control* (self vs. other vs. no one), *certainty* (comprehensible and predictable), *perceived goal obstruction*, consistency with *norms or social standards*, and *fairness* (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). This sequence has also been described as two stages, with an initial primary appraisal of pleasantness, and a subsequent secondary appraisal including all the remaining dimensions that involve more complex meaning and analysis (Lazarus, 1991). Although appraisal checks even for complex dimensions can become intuitive and automatic, even when appraisal does not require conscious thought we have the option to suspend the process in motion—for example, taking the time to figure out whether a colleague was serious or just kidding.

Taken together, the results of these checks distinguish among five basic families of emotion: approach (interest, hope, anticipation), achievement (e.g., relief, satisfaction, contentment, pride, joy), deterrence (anxiety, fear, distress), withdrawal (sadness, shame, resignation), and antagonism (irritation, anger, hate; Scherer & Tran, 2001). Over time the memory of higher-order dimensions fade away as we forget about the specific event, but moods can linger on as emotions "divorced from their antecedents"

(Cropanzano, Weiss, Hale, & Reb, 2003, p. 843) with only the pleasantness dimension remaining.

The emotional registration process is deeply contextualized. Being hit by a ball could be an attempted injury, clumsiness, or an invitation to play. A strategic issue facing managers could mean a threat or an opportunity (Jackson & Dutton, 1988). Indeed, evaluations along the appraisal dimensions are socially constructed, situation specific and—because they are in the eyes of the beholder—neither true or false (Zajonc, 1998). Wrzesniewski et al. (2003) argue that tasks at work do not have inherent meaning, but that meaning is developed around interpersonal cues from others. Thus, there is great variability in the emotional reactions that an event can invoke. For example, Scherer and Ceschi (2000) showed that the same eliciting event, the loss of baggage for airline passengers, evoked a range of states including anger, sadness, indifference, worry, and even humor. Although strong situations such as mortal dangers may be interpreted consistently, the link between stimulus and experience needs to be flexible enough to accommodate the range and diversity of human environments.

Cognitive appraisal theory is under-appreciated for its power to shed light on phenomena central to organizations. The fact that we are hard-wired to appraise events along these sequential dimensions suggests that the judgments correspond to our most pressing concerns inside and outside of organizations. For example, Frost (2003) argued that individuals within organizations feel pain based on how their organizations appear to respond to events, rather than the events themselves—particularly as related to the dimensions of responsibility, fairness, certainty, control, and the ability to cope with current conditions. Likewise, procedural justice research emphasizes the importance of the fairness and control dimensions over that of valence (Lind & Tyler, 1988). In the domain of leadership, Dasborough's (2006) interview study yielded a set of categories of leader behaviors that included awareness and respect, motivation and inspiration, empowerment, communication, reward and recognition, and accountability—corresponding closely to many of the appraisal dimensions. Also, counterfactual thinking is likely to weigh heavily in the appraisal process, particularly given the inclusion of a certainty

dimension, as we compare the state of the world to what we expected it might be. When consideration of such counterfactuals leads to regret, it is stronger for outcomes that were under our own control, for outcomes that resulted from action vs. inaction, and for unexpected events (Mellers, 2000). Power is woven throughout the appraisal process, given that higher power actors are more likely to approach vs. avoid, to be active vs. passive, to act as initial causal agents, to be in control currently, and to enforce others' adherence to norms and social standards (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). Taken together, high power provides greater flexibility to hold others accountable for negative outcomes and themselves for positive outcomes—leading to more anger and contempt vs. sadness, and more pride vs. gratitude (Morris & Keltner, 2000; Tiedens, 2001). The appraisal dimension of fairness connects it intricately with the concepts of justice and voice (Judge, Scott & Ilies, 2006; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985; Weiss et al., 1999), which, by definition, are always affective events. Sensemaking is an organizational construct that Weick et al. (2005) argued often accompanies an emotional experience. Thus, the chronologically earliest appraisal—novelty—is related to expectancy violation and thus a precursor to macro-level sensemaking (Weick et al., 2005). Finally, diversity can influence and be influenced by the appraisal process. It has been a challenge for researchers to reconcile the discrepant pattern of findings showing alternately that diversity is a help vs. hindrance for individuals and groups (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Recently Garcia-Prieto, Bellard, and Schneider (2003) argued that these conflicting findings may relate to organization members' emotional appraisals. First, diversity may have no effect if it is not perceived as novel and, thus, not to be appraised. Further, biases in interpreting in-group vs. out-group behavior and cultural differences in implicit theories such as those regarding control, certainty, and fit with norms can feed into the judgments made for the appraisal checks. Taken together, members of diverse groups can appraise different events and can appraise the same events differently.

**3. Feeling Rules.** The appraisal process, like many exercises in decision making, begins with at least some sense of the desired answer. Although the process of applying appraisal dimensions to events

appears to be universal across individuals and even cultural groups (Scherer & Wallbott, 1994), exactly how one applies them is a formula all his or her own. *Feeling rules* refer to the chronic goals of the registration process. They include a sense of how one should feel, including an emotional category as well as features such as intensity and duration, and can be verbally described just like any other norm (Hochschild, 1979). Most often, these desired states are to experience the most positive and the least negative affect (Frijda, 1988). In this sense, the entire field of motivation is relevant to the extent that motivations are goals for particular experiences, and emotion indicates whether goals are realized (Buck, 1988). Feeling rules also include one's regulatory focus to approach pleasure vs. avoid pain (Brockner & Higgins, 2001) and psychodynamic concepts such as defense mechanisms and drives, which have a role in directing the emotional appraisal process (Scherer, 1995). Some of the early pioneers of organizational behavior focused on workers' emotional needs (Maslow, 1943; Herzberg, 1966). Such needs lead us to shape our actual environment as well as our interpretation of it, in such a way to lead to the desired emotional states.

### **C. Emotional Experience**

Emotional experience is the closest process in Figure 1 to what is colloquially described as *emotion*—the psychological and physiological sense of being affected emotionally by an event (Frijda, 1986). "From moments of frustration or joy, grief or fear, to an enduring sense of dissatisfaction or commitment," Ashforth and Humphrey (1995) argued, "the experience of work is saturated with feeling" (p. 98). Large-scale qualitative studies of workplace events and narratives reveal the widest range of sentiment provoked within organizations, with positive experiences of pride, belongingness, fulfillment, relief, excitement, optimism, affection, nostalgia, empowerment, and joy, and negative experiences of disappointment, fatigue and strain, bitterness and resentment, anger, indignation, rage, embarrassment, pain, disgust, surprise and shock, regret, guilt, sorrow, fear, desperation, uncertainty, rejection, worry, and frustration (Basch & Fisher, 2000; Boudens, 2005). Workers report greater variety in their negative

emotions (Dasborough, 2006), which is consistent with cognitive appraisal theory in that one need not complete the ordered checklist in the absence of pressing challenges (Scherer, 1984).

Feelings within organizations are often mixed and ambivalent (Fong, 2006; Pratt & Doucet, 2000). Multiple feeling rules can conflict, for example when high-powered women face discrepant scripts for achievement and gender (Fong & Tiedens, 2002). Further, stimuli can be complex, with multiple answers to the appraisal checks and, therefore, multiple emotions elicited. For example, organizational change is a highly complex and salient emotion-eliciting event (George & Jones, 2001; Huy, 1999). Indeed, Vince (2006) found that senior managers of a firm undergoing an acquisition experienced a range of different emotions— from anger at themselves and others to shame, agony, sadness, powerlessness, depression, and fear—based on which aspects of the multi-faceted event they considered.

There is a temptation in the management literature to argue for the inherent goodness of positive emotion and the inherent badness of negative emotion. However, both result from the same emotional registration process and evolved alongside each other. Social functional theorists have long argued that even unpleasant emotions have valuable roles for social and work life (e.g., Fridlund, 1994; Keltner & Haidt, 1999). Whereas positive emotions are rewards, negative emotions are warnings and punishments (Larsen & Ketelaar, 1989). Positive mood is crucial for daily functioning and cooperation, yet negative mood is critical for response to survival situations (Spoor & Kelly, 2004; Zajonc, 1998). S. E. Taylor's (1991) mobilization-minimization theory of negative emotion argues that initial mobilization processes galvanize internal resources to direct attention and behavior towards solving the problem at hand, and over time minimization processes attempt to soften and repair the impact of the negative event.

Consistent with this notion that negative emotions are adaptive orienting responses, negative vs. positive work events appear to loom larger for employees. In an experience-sampling study, Miner, Glomb, and Hulin (2005) found that the effect on workers' mood was five times stronger for negative than positive events, in spite of positive events occurring three to five times as often. Similarly, workers

can better recall negative events and negative events have a greater impact on them (Dasborough, 2006). Negative mood is more likely to spill across the work-family boundary than positive mood (Williams & Alliger, 1994), and colleagues converge more strongly in their negative vs. positive moods (Bartel & Saavedra, 2000). This may explain the vast research literature on stress in organizational settings. Stress has been defined as “an unpleasant emotional experience associated with elements of fear, dread, anxiety, irritation, annoyance, anger, sadness, grief and depression” (Motowildo, Packard, & Manning, 1986), which is a type of negative emotional experience (Scherer, 1995). Its pernicious effects result from ignoring its helpful side—stress is supposed to be a warning signal for the need to change, but its underlying causes often do not get changed in spite of the warning. Even anger in the workplace can be beneficial when used within its intended role as an emotion of moral justice that provokes us to confront an obstacle or offender to change the behavior of another (Dilorio & Nusbaumer, 1993; Morris & Keltner, 2000). However, anger has been increasingly considered an overly disruptive state to be regulated heavily (Dilorio & Nusbaumer, 1993; Wharton & Erickson, 1993) and is rarely put to productive use.

**1. Individual differences.** Organizational actors carry with them their emotional history that includes traces of their past emotional experiences (Fineman, 1996). Over time, we use our emotional experiences to refine the schemas used in stimulus registration, as we encounter events repeatedly and become more adept at interpreting their meaning. Then, in turn, we use these repeated schemas as a lens to interpret new events, in a process that can be self-fulfilling. The chronic experience of sadness can lead us to interpret more events as sad, which makes us sadder. There is a reciprocal influence between emotional states and traits, connected by our systematic interpretive lenses.

Recent theories argue that the distinction between emotional states and traits can be blurry and that, indeed, traits merely refer to the likelihood of experiencing particular states (Fleeson, 2001; Larsen & Ketelaar, 1991). Everyone is capable of experiencing every emotion, but practice makes perfect.

Dispositions are attribution styles incorporated into the feeling rules and schemas that we use to interpret



our world. Support for this perspective comes from research showing that emotional dispositions such as negative affect, neuroticism, optimism, and extraversion influence participants' unique reactions to standardized emotion elicitors (Brief, Butcher, & Roberson, 1995; Larsen & Ketelaar, 1989; Watson & Clark, 1984), as well as evidence that affective states and their corresponding traits tend to have similar influences on resulting behaviors and cognitions (George, 1991; Lerner & Keltner, 2001). It is worth noting that, in addition to this assimilation effect that occurs when we travel a well-practiced emotional registration—whether or not it quite fits the new situation—our chronic schemas can also create contrast effects when we develop new benchmarks to evaluate stimuli not on absolute terms, but with respect to recent experience (Fuller, Stanton, Fisher, Spitzmuller, Russell, & Smith, 2003). In developing these benchmarks, Frijda (1988) argued that we can more easily habituate to positive experiences—thus, creating a hedonic treadmill in which ever-greater pleasure is required for positive experience—whereas the impact of negative stimuli is less malleable to recent experience.

Within organizational research, by far the most common focus on affective traits has been the appraisal dimension of intrinsic pleasantness, as examined in bipolar models of mood. In contrast with basic emotions theories that argue that we experience distinct categories of emotion, the circumplex model of affect attempts to map these categories into a two-dimensional space. In one version, one axis refers to *valence* or *hedonic tone*—the intrinsic pleasantness of a stimulus—and the other axis refers to the level of intensity of activation (Feldman Barrett & Russell, 1999). A second version of the model rotates these axes 45 degrees so that they refer to high-low positive affect and high-low negative affect, which are defined as the tendency to experience positive and negative states, respectively (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Contrasting these two models has been controversial, particularly because the rotated version suggests that the experience of positive and negative states are independent—a finding that appears to be an artifact of examining only half of the circumplex by sampling exclusively from intense experiences (Cropanzano, Weiss, Hale & Reb, 2003; Feldman Barrett & Russell, 1999). Even so, the

rotated model has been highly influential and has generated extensive empirical work within organizational settings. Individuals high in positive affect are more focused externally on promoting positive outcomes, where individuals high in negative affect are more focused internally on preventing negative outcomes (Diener & Larsen, 1984; Higgins, 1998; Larsen & Ketalaar, 1989). Positive vs. negative affect also map onto promotion vs. prevention regulatory focus, respectively (Brockner & Higgins, 2001). Individuals high vs. low in negative affect self-report more negative events, especially subjective events, and report that these events have a longer and more intense negative impact on them (Aquino, Grover, Bradfield, & Allen, 1999; Burke, Brief, & George, 1993; Grandey, Tam, & Brauburger, 2002). Likewise, individuals high in positive affect are more reactive to positive workplace events and less reactive to negative events (Frederickson, 2001; Miner et al., 2005). There is enough evidence that affective experience overlaps with self-reported perceptions of objective job characteristics—such as stressors—to suggest that positive and negative affect form a powerful lens rendering even straightforward reports of one's work environment unreliable (Bagozzi & Yi, 1990; Burke et al., 1993; Saavedra & Kwun, 2000). These differences in affective experience feed into worker's subjective well-being, perhaps tautologically given that one definition of well-being is that people "feel many pleasant and few unpleasant emotions" (Diener, 2000, p. 34).

Other affective personality traits have received less attention but are fertile ground for organizational research. In theory, every dimension of cognitive appraisal could be subject to individual idiosyncrasies in its use and overuse (Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003). For example, related to the appraisal of coping potential, individuals differ chronically in feelings of control over stressful situations (Williams & Alliger, 1994). Related to fairness, for example, individuals in economic games differ in terms of whether they prefer fair vs. greedy behavior (Haselhuhn & Mellers, 2005). Given the definition of *creativity* as ideas or solutions that are both new and useful (Amabile, 1983), appraisals of novelty and goal relevance could relate to individual differences in creativity. Likewise, micro-management could relate to

appraisals of control and blame, risk behavior to certainty, obstinacy to goal obstruction, whistle blowing to social standards and norms, and old-fashioned laziness could relate to anticipated effort.

In the absence of higher-order emotional appraisals, intensity is the other axis of the unrotated circumplex describing mood states. Just as there are individual differences in the predominance of positive vs. negative experiences, there are also individual differences in the predominance of high vs. low intensity emotions (Feldman, 1995). Indeed, what we often mean when describing a person as *emotional* is that they experience their emotions—any emotions—intensely. There has been relatively little research in organizational settings on stable individual differences in affective intensity, with the exception of Weiss et al. (1999) who found that self-reported affective intensity predicted greater variation in actual moods as assessed by experience sampling. Classic research on arousal has examined intensity of experience at the intrapersonal level (Yerkes & Dodson, 1908), and could be extended fruitfully to the interpersonal realm.

As promising as research has been on individual differences, it is important to look beyond them. Emotional experiences start with stimuli, even if personality serves as an interpretive lens. Accordingly, a great deal of variation in affective states is intra-personal (Weiss et al., 1999)—indeed, the majority, according to recent experience-sampling studies of mood pleasantness (56%; Miner et al., 2005) and state hostility (53%; Judge, Scott, & Ilies, 2006). This is more than sampling error. For example, variation can occur in daily cycles (Weiss et al., 1999). Strong situations can overwhelm the impact of personality. For example, some jobs are inherently more stressful than others (Motowildo, Packard, & Manning, 1986).

**2. Physiology.** Although there is a long debate regarding whether mental awareness of feeling states precedes physiological arousal or vice versa (e.g., Zajonc, 1998; James, 1884; Schachter & Singer, 1962), the two cannot easily be separated. Indeed, James (1884) argued that fear without awareness of one's heartbeat, breathing, muscle tenseness and trembling can hardly be considered fear. Emotions induce short-term and long-term changes to bodily functioning. In the short term, psychophysiological

responses are set in motion immediately upon registering a stimulus, and can take a few seconds to course through the body (Zajonc, 1998). These physical changes that accompany emotional experience are responsible, for example, for the experience of anger as smoldering hot and fear as shivering cold (Scherer, 1984). In the long term, the effects of short-term physiological changes accumulate and affect the body. Hochschild (1983) referred to *emotional stamina* as the ability to express emotion for long periods of time without negative effects on one's physiological state. For example, the increased rate of hypertension among individuals prone to stress speaks to the harmful effects of heightened physiological arousal over time. The classic stressor-stress-strain approach taken by the stress literature (e.g., Beal et al., 2005) can be reconciled with the emotion process model by considering the stressor as a stimulus, stress as the feeling state, and strain as the physiological effect.

The potential of psychophysiological markers of emotion to inform processes within organizations is immense and barely tapped. Ashby, Isen, and Turken (1999) proposed a neuropsychological theory of positive affect arguing that positive affect acts by increasing levels of the neurotransmitter dopamine. Heaphy and Dutton (2006) review evidence that positive workplace interactions have beneficial effects on three physiological systems: the cardiovascular system that distributes oxygen and nutrients via the blood, the immune system that heals and defends the body against disease and tissue damage, and the neuroendocrine system that regulates the nervous system and biologically active hormones. Such physical changes suggest mechanisms to explain why positive relationships among colleagues, supervisors, customers, and other stakeholders—such as mentoring and leader-member exchange—can have beneficial consequences beyond the instrumental benefits at stake (Heaphy & Dutton, 2006). Thus, psychophysiology can play a valuable role in elaborating theoretical mechanisms for organizational phenomena. Further, psychophysiological measures can be invaluable for organizational researchers. Although they usually require additional training and equipment for data collection and analysis or collaboration with experts in such methods (Heaphy & Dutton, 2006), they do

not require participants' awareness or willingness to report about their emotions—a great concern in research on emotion (Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2002; Scherer, 1984).

### III. Emotional expression

Ultimately the very private intrapersonal emotional processes described in the sections above are made public, as our sensemaking efforts become shared in the form of emotional expression and other post-emotional behaviors. Emotionally expressive cues—depicted in the upper right corner of Figure 1—begin with words (Pennebaker, Mehl, & Niederhoffer, 2003), but nonverbal cues are particularly important because organizations often lack a vocabulary for discussing emotional experience (Sandelands, 1988). Nonverbal cues include facial expressions, vocal tone, body language, movement, touching, and physical distance—indeed, essentially any way that the human body can emit movement, sound, or feeling can take on an expressive quality (Allport & Vernon, 1933).

On the intrapersonal level, expression has a value in itself. Indeed, Zajonc (1998) argued that the term *emotional expression* is preemptive, implying through its very name the argument that physical cues are intended as a signal of internal states. According to *vascular efference* theory, facial cues and head movements feed back into emotional experience, via the regulation of blood flow and brain temperature (Tomkins & McCarter, 1964; Zajonc, 1998). Although this particular argument is specific to the face, afferent feedback also leads individuals to feel internal states consistent with their own vocal tones and body postures (Hatfield, Hsee, Costello, & Weisman, 1995). Even if nonverbal cues are frequently driven by internal experience, the strength of their association can lead the pathway to reverse. A further intrapersonal value to emotional expression is catharsis that helps to terminate unwanted emotional experience. Individuals may vary in the extent to which externalizers discharge emotion using visible emotional expression vs. internalizers who use internal somatic activation (Buck, 1988).

On the interpersonal level, emotional expression is one of the most powerful forms of social influence (e.g., Ekman, 1972; Keltner & Haidt, 1999), inside and outside of the workplace. The modern

study of emotion as communication leans heavily on Brunswick's (1955) lens model of ecological perception—included within the interpersonal process framework in Figure 2—in which properties such as emotional states are associated probabilistically with specific external cues and, in turn, these cues are perceived probabilistically by a judge trying to infer the property. Although emotional expression has often been studied in organizational settings on its own, the lens model implies that expression needs to be considered in terms of how it is perceived by others.

The influential social function perspective on emotion has emphasized its adaptive implications as communication (DePaulo & Friedman, 1998; McArthur & Baron, 1983; Morris & Keltner, 2000). Evolutionarily, the emotions with the clearest physical signals are those for which it is generally adaptive to inform others—such as fear and anger, but not boredom (Cosmides & Tooby, 2000). Keltner and Haidt (1999) outlined three mechanisms by which the communication of emotions evolved as adaptive responses to social living. First, emotional expressions efficiently convey information about reactions to the shared environment, beliefs, social intentions, and feedback towards others. Second, emotional expressions tend to evoke emotional responses in others that help to solve the problems of group living, for example embarrassment can elicit forgiveness, and pain can elicit sympathy. Anger is intended to induce others to adjust irritating behavior, and can evoke a range of emotions from fear and guilt, if the implicit appraisal of blame is accepted, or a spiral of anger otherwise. Third, emotions can serve in operant conditioning as rewards or punishments, and promises or threats of possible future rewards or punishments. For example, male managers in a simulated employment setting offered greater praise to those female subordinates to whom they offered low tangible compensation (Vescio, Gervais, Snyder, & Hoover, 2005). Morris and Keltner (2000) describe social functions of anger to punish others for misdeeds, gratitude to reward others for cooperating, guilt to spur efforts to repair relationship harm, contempt to signal to someone their lower status, and shame to signal a transgressor's regret without need for formal punishment. They argue that the social functional perspective does not mean that

emotions are always functional—particularly at any given level of analysis—but rather that each emotion evolved with a function that it can serve, even if it does not always do so. These functions are the reason not merely to be happy all the time—we would lose the evolutionary value of negative emotion. Social functions help in resolving conflicts, appeasement, dividing resources fairly, and generally maintaining effective relationships (Morris & Keltner, 2000).

Emotion as spontaneous vs. deliberate communication has been hotly debated (Parkinson, 2005). At one extreme, Ekman (1972) argued that expression is primarily a spontaneous readout of internal states, and shows true emotion at all times except when managed with conscious effort. However, empirical evidence appears to favor more moderate positions, particularly Fridlund's (1994) behavioral ecology theory in which social audience factors heavily into emotional expression, even with internal states and conscious management held constant. Scherer (1988) distinguished between spontaneous *push factors* caused by the feeling and physiology of emotional experience—such as bodily changes like accelerated breath or shaking—vs. *pull factors* caused by social intentions to communicate. He further distinguished between pull factors that convey information vs. make a specific appeal for action. For example, an expression of fear could signify frozen terror, a deliberate signal that danger is nearby, or a request to extricate the expressor from the scary situation.

Pull factors have been investigated largely under the umbrella of *display rules*, to be described below in the section on display regulation. Push factors include biologically determined affect programs as well as cultural and individual expressive style, with evidence largely based on cross-cultural research. Classic studies demonstrated that emotional expressions can be recognized across cultural groups at accuracy levels greater than chance guessing alone, which suggests that a core of expression is universal and biologically programmed (Ekman, 1972, 1992; Russell, 1994). Indeed, as most people living with pets would agree, basic emotional messages can also transcend species boundaries. However, some of the message gets lost along the way. There is an in-group advantage favoring the understanding of

emotional expressions that originate from members of one's own cultural group (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003). A recent dialect theory of emotion argues that cultural groups vary subtly yet systematically in the cues they use to express emotion, and judgments are more accurate for expressions that use a familiar style (Elfenbein, Beaupré, Lévesque, & Hess, 2006). These cultural dialects are more than the over-learned conscious management of expression, in that they develop from random variation across isolated groups and do not necessarily serve a social function. Even within cultures, individuals develop unique expressive styles. Personality theorists have examined individual differences in the intensity of expressive displays (Halberstadt, 1986; Gross & John, 1998). In addition to intensity, individuals may also differ in the particular cues use for the same displays (Elfenbein, Foo, Tan, & Boldry, 2006).

The appearance of expressive displays may differ based on whether they are created by push vs. pull factors. Spontaneous expressions are more symmetrical, more consistent in their duration, and can use different expressive cues (Rinn, 1984). Observers can detect some of these differences, most notably the difference between the Duchenne smile with both lip corner retraction and wrinkles around the eyes vs. the non-Duchenne smile with only lip corner retraction—often known as the authentic vs. fake smile, respectively. For example, Scherer and Ceschi (2000) found that airline employees judged the good humor of their passengers with lost baggage based on fake vs. authentic smiling. Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen, and Sideman (2005) found that authentic vs. fake smiling enhanced customer satisfaction and perceptions of friendliness in simulated hotel and actual restaurant settings. Push vs. pull factors can also influence the channel of communication through which cues are expressed. Ekman and Friesen (1969) proposed a hierarchy of nonverbal expressive cues from the most controllable to the most leaky. They argued that facial expressions are more controllable and provide more feedback from the self and others, compared to leakier channels such as the body and voice. Voluntary cues tend to be expressed via facial expressions, whereas the cues expressed via leakier channels tend to be more spontaneous. Emotional expressions likely fall along a continuum between push and pull factors, in that we can exhibit varying



levels of intentional control. Facial expressions can give us away, and with practice even leaky channels can be controlled.

Most research on emotional expression within organizational settings focuses on its regulation, and is discussed at length in the section on display regulation below.

#### **IV. Emotion Regulation**

Each of the emotion processes reviewed above—from a stimulus to registration, experience, and expression—can be brought under at least partial voluntary control via emotion regulation processes that are unique to each stage (Frijda, 1988), depicted in the gray shaded area of Figure 1. Gross' (2001) pioneering model of emotion regulation emphasizes that there are distinct regulation strategies across the particular stages of emotion, and argues that attempts to regulate chronologically earlier tend to be more effective than those attempts later in the emotion process.

##### **A. Regulating Stimuli.**

Although the emotion process framework starts with a stimulus in the environment, people choose their environments (Buss, 1987; Diener, Larsen, & Emmons, 1984). *Situation selection*, or limiting exposure to situations that evoke undesired emotions and increasing exposure to those evoking desired states, is the chronologically earliest form of regulation within the emotion process (Gross, 1998). Different work environments make different affective events more or less likely (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). At some level, every choice that an employee makes is an affective event. We use our anticipated emotions in order to guide decision making (Loewenstein & Lerner, 2003; Mellers, 2000), and thus the decision making process looks forward through the emotion process and selects situations that will expose us to desired emotional experiences and avoid unwanted ones. However, this process of *affective forecasting* in anticipating our future emotions is imperfect, and suffers from biases such as over reliance on momentarily salient issues, and underestimating our resilience against negative events and habituation to positive events (Gilbert, Pinel, Wilson, Blumberg, & Wheatley, 1998; Loewenstein &

Schkade, 1999).

There is a temptation to review the entire organizational literatures on person-organization, person-group, and person-job fit, given the powerful influence that organizations have in choosing situations for the individuals within them. Indeed, many theorists have noted the strong component of emotion infused into organizational culture, in which different environments promote particular emotions and discourage others, often at great effort (Albrow, 1992; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Ashkanasy, 2003; Fineman, 1993, 1996; Huy, 1999; Kelly & Barsade, 2001; Merton, 1952; Rafaeli & Worline, 2001; Rafaeli & Vilnai-Yavetz, 2004; Sutton, 1991; Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). Indeed, cultural control via emotions is valuable for providing a tighter and deeper hold on employees than conventional bureaucratic mechanisms (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989).

Organizational structure influences the emotional experiences of the individual. Indeed, bureaucracy developed at least partly to limit individuals' ability to act upon their emotions when the modern workplace replaced kinship ties with standard operating procedures (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Putnam & Mumby, 1993). Hierarchy creates an emotional division of labor (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). Any kind of delegation involves some degree of situation selection—and tasks that elicit aversive emotions are more likely to be delegated. Van Maanen and Kunda (1989) argued that higher status roles involve creating emotional stimuli for others, rather than responding to others' stimuli. Particular strategies for emotional delegation include neutralizing, which involves limiting and routinizing interpersonal contact, and buffering, which separates the emotional connections involved in front stage relationship development from back stage tasks and commercial roles (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995). Ethnographic research details, for example, how managers offload anxiety-provoking situations downward in the hierarchy, such as responsibility for 24-hour nurse staffing under resource constraints (Brooks, 2003), and conducting emotionally charged in-person eligibility interviews for social services (Garot, 2004). However, ideally leaders also use their greater power to buffer the effect of

negative events on their followers (Pirola-Merlo, Härtel, Mann, & Hirst, 2002).

Organizations have “emotionalized zones” (Fineman, 1996, p. 556) that maintain employees’ equilibrium by permitting certain experiences not possible elsewhere. The need for emotional regulation can be so intense that employees benefit by releasing some of the constraints off-stage, for example in physical spaces accessible only to insiders, humor, workplace rituals, and off-site events such as parties, karaoke, and anywhere else that alcohol is served (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987).

Although stimulus selection clearly benefits individuals and organizations in many ways, it can also lead to the proverbial ostrich putting its head in the sand. For example, service representatives sometimes choose to avoid customers to whom they should be available (Grandey, 2000).

People choose their environments, but they also shape them. *Situation modification* involves changing a situation to adjust its emotional impact (Gross, 1998). Thus, emotions can be catalysts propelling us to action. For example, just as organizational change evokes emotions, so too do emotions evoke organizational change, when individuals seek to resolve discrepancies between their current and desired states of affairs (George & Jones, 2001). As emphasized by the Positive Organizational Scholarship movement (e.g., Frost, 2003; Dutton, 2003), efforts abound to improve organizations to make them safer, more fair, more rewarding, and generally more emotionally fulfilling.

### **B. Regulating Emotional Registration, Experience, and Expression.**

One of the hottest areas within the study of emotion in organizations has been the regulation of emotional registration, experience, and expression. These processes are all distinct, but work together towards the common goal of reducing unwanted emotional experience and the downstream effects that this experience has on others (Gross, 1998). These processes are discussed first individually, and then together in the context of emotional labor that spans regulation strategies.

**1. Reappraisal.** *Reappraisal* is regulation of emotional registration, with effects on the subcomponents of attention, feeling rules, and schemas (Gross, 1998b). Whereas situation selection alters

one's actual exposure to a situation, *attention deployment* alters one's attention to it (Gross, 1998b). This can include ignoring a situation altogether or focusing on particular aspects of a complex situation. Within reappraisal, feeling rules are also altered when organizations and social partners provide guidance about which emotions are inherently desirable to experience. People often look to similar others for clues to how they should feel (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Sutton, 1991). For example, Van Maanen and Kunda (1989) describe a high-tech company with a familiar phrase that "it's not work, it's a celebration" (p. 80).

The most ubiquitous form of reappraisal is to alter emotional schemas, by providing new responses to the dimensions of emotional appraisal. Weick et al. (2005) argued that sensemaking is a public and social process. Workers are most open to reappraisal when events are ambiguous, multifaceted, and potentially harmful to self-interests (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995). In such cases, leaders often pave the way by modeling reactions that signal the right way to make meaning of an event (Pescosolido, 2002; Pirola-Merlo et al., 2002; Yukl, 1999). Organizational examples abound of deliberate changes to the application of emotional schemas. For example, flight attendants are encouraged to see customers as small children who cannot be held responsible for unruly behavior (Hochschild, 1983). Language helps to create new schemas, such as when Disneyland refers for example to customers, police, and uniforms as guests, security hosts, and costumes, respectively (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). Error management training attempts to increase learning by reappraising mistakes as opportunities (e.g., "the more errors you make, the more you learn!", Keith & Frese, 2005, p. 681). Debt collection agencies teach their employees to reframe their interactions with sympathetic debtors as bills to be collected, and to believe that angry debtors are not angry at the collector personally and, indeed, collectors are helping debtors to protect their credit history (Sutton, 1991). Social service workers consider how clients may be responsible for their own difficult situation, and less needy than alternate applicants (Garot, 2004). Humor is often used as part of changing schemas. Making fun of adversity both invokes positive affect

directly and also signals that one can cope with a challenging situation (Avolio, Howell, & Sosik, 1999). Making fun of colleagues changes interpretations of their worthiness. In Collinson's (1988) ethnography, machine-shop employees used humor against others to reappraise themselves as smart and powerful when, objectively, their position was treated as among the most lowly in their manufacturing organization. The value of reappraisal is to help achieve desired feeling states when initial schemas fail in that regard. For example, employees of an airline facing bankruptcy and layoffs who took part in an intervention designed to teach reappraisal strategies reported higher positive affect, lower negative affect, and more constructive attitudes towards the bankruptcy than those randomly assigned to receive training at a later date (Neck & Manz, 1996). There is a certain dark side when organizations deliberately fill this role—indeed, Van Maanen and Kunda (1989) referred to dictating the meaning to attach to one's work as "social molestation" (p. 92).

**2. Experience Regulation.** *Experience regulation* involves deliberate direct changes in emotional state, outside of the registration process. This includes a host of psychodynamic defense mechanisms such as suppression, denial, and sublimation, in which an opposing emotion is substituted for one deemed unacceptable. Research emphasizes the downsides of suppressing emotional experience. Control over any ongoing thought process can lead to ironic effects where the suppressed thoughts and feelings bounce back to a greater degree after the active control is lifted (Gross, 2001; Wegner, Erber, & Zanakos, 1993). Chronic suppressors of emotional experience often lose touch with their emotional states (Davis & Schwartz, 1987). Suppressed emotions can cross experiential channels from subjective feeling to greater physiological arousal, which damages health over time (Gross, 1998b, 2001). Further, suppression is often imperfect, and still leaks into downstream emotional processes such as expression (Ekman & Friesen, 1969). There has been relatively little organizational research attention paid to the suppression of experience—rather than emotional display—perhaps because an experience truly suppressed is no longer accessible for research. The high steel ironworkers in Haas' (1977) ethnography suppressed their fear

largely through sheer will to cover it up and even replaced it with flagrant acts of bravado. This became apparent only after a deadly accident, when incontrovertible proof of their emotion froze the ironworkers in their own fear and they literally had to be carried from the worksite. Huy (2002) reported that many managers in a stressful organizational change expressed a need to “psyche’ themselves up” and “blank out’ negative thoughts” (p. 41). Experience regulation also includes physical behavior that feeds back into emotional states via catharsis, escalation, or direct effects on physiology—such as exercise, a massage, alcohol, narcotics, chocolate, etc. For example, debt collectors angry after frustrating phone calls were encouraged to punch a desk (Sutton, 1991). Judge, Scott, and Ilies (2006) argued that deviant behavior in the workplace acts as a kind of catharsis, in which workers feel that they have restored control after feeling frustration. Undergoing action of some kind relieves the energy potential created by emotional action tendencies, which needs to be discharged in some way (Loewenstein & Lerner, 2003). The social sharing of emotions serves as an opportunity for catharsis as well as reappraisal, given that venting or discussing feelings with others can give rise to new interpretations (Fineman, 1993). A whopping 75-84% of participants interviewed about anger experiences report that they told someone else at the time (Fitness, 2000; Sloan, 2004). Although relieving, such acts of venting can also be harmful for organizational actors. Brown, Westbrook, and Challagalla (2005) found that salespeople who vented to colleagues after losing major opportunities received lower performance appraisals from their supervisors.

**3. Display Regulation.** *Display regulation* involves changing visible emotional expression without altering the underlying experience. Ekman (1972) coined the term display rules as “management techniques” (p. 225) that allow individuals to “decouple their expressions from their feelings.” (p. 127). These are norms about what is appropriate to display, and include deintensifying, intensifying, neutralizing, and masking (Ekman, Sorensen, & Friesen, 1969). As norms they can be described explicitly and, indeed, are even laid out in many corporate manuals (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). Although they are conscious norms, display rules can become over-learned to the point where the expressor is barely

aware of their influence (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Ekman, 1984), like any other form of regulation (Gross, 1998).

Ekman's (1972) original coinage emphasized that display rules serve social functions— the outward acknowledgment of internal feeling rules—such as maintaining harmony by suppressing negative displays in collectivist cultures. Indeed, this is a common display rule in organizations, particularly among lower power actors to whom concerns such as harmony typically fall. However, there are as many possible display rules as potential social messages to display. Wharton and Erickson (1993) categorized organizational display rules as integrative, differentiating, and masking. Integrative displays are pleasant and affiliative, e.g., customer service. Differentiating displays such as anger create social distance, e.g., police officers and bill collectors. Masking displays use neutral demeanors to demonstrate reserve and high status, e.g., clinicians and judges. A helpful heuristic for analyzing specific display rules is to use the emotion process framework and *forward-track* through the sequence. An actor's optimal display rule is one that the interaction partner recognizes and registers to create an emotional state with post-emotional attitudes, behaviors, and cognitions that the actor desires. For example, high steel ironworkers suppress their displays of fear so as not remind colleagues who are trying to control their own fear (Haas, 1977). Researchers generally argue that positive displays are valuable, such as in customer service, because they create positive emotional contagion for the customer and serve as an inherently rewarding stimulus for operant conditioning (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989) that elicits reciprocity (Tsai, 2001). However, the process framework adds another explanation, which is that a positive display provides information about the actor's beliefs along the dimensions of emotional appraisal—in particular, that there are no stimuli in the shared environment that are goal obstructing, unfair, or counter-normative. By contrast, an irritated display would imply an attribution of blame, and a fearful display would imply an attribution of uncertain events. Thus, at its core, positive displays to customers are expert reassurance that they are blameless (e.g., "the customer is always right") and that the coast is clear.

Researchers have examined a number of factors that influence display rules. Rules originate with selection, training, rewards, and reinforcement—both formal and informal (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989; Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988). Individuals bring traces of past display rules from one organization to the next (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Display rules vary in their strength, and their crystallization vs. flexibility to incorporate personal expressive style (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). For example, supervisors vary substantially in their beliefs about subordinates' emotional displays within the same industry (Tsai, 2001) and even the same organization (Wilk & Moynihan, 2005). Rules are more prevalent for high-energy states, whether positive or negative, than for low energy states (Bartel & Saavedra, 2000), thus allowing people freer reign in their subtlety. Display rules evolve over time—for example, Huy (2002) described how managers released display rules during a corporate upheaval—and they can also vary based on the time of the day, season of the year, and even the weather (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989). For example, Sutton and Rafaeli (1988) found that convenience stores had a display rule of friendliness only during periods of light traffic. During busy periods the norm was for neutral displays signaling that the clerk was efficient and valued the customer's time. Similarly, display rule preferences can shift with experimentally induced task goals (Gaddis, Connelly, and Mumford, 2004). In light of the disparate social functions served across occupational roles, display rules vary greatly across occupations. Bill collectors, drill sergeants, and poker players display hostility, while funeral directors display sadness, and customer representatives display cheerfulness (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987, 1989). Specified emotional displays predict financial rewards for professional group members as diverse as nurses, waitresses, prostitutes, conmen, and poker players (Fineman, 1996). Hochschild (1979) argued that display rules denote a zone of permission. Given that low power suggests lesser flexibility for agentic emotions such as anger, contempt, and pride vs. sadness and gratitude (Morris & Keltner, 2000; Tiedens, 2001), these are reflected in typical display rules for women and low-level employment. Violation of such rules is a power play—because actors presume to interpret the world in a high-power manner—resulting in attributions of being uppity and out of control



if unsuccessful, but enhanced status if successful. Display rules vary across interaction partners, in light of different social goals. For example, nurses are expected to show warmth to patients yet flat affect to physicians, and waiters size up their customers for the demeanor they prefer (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987, 1989). Likewise, debt collectors display sympathy to new debtors, and for long-standing debtors they show irritation to those who are indifferent, friendly, or sad and calmness to those who are angry (Sutton, 1991). In each case, the goal is consistent with the social function to put the debtor into a state of mind to pay the bill promptly: an agitated—yet not too agitated—state of arousal. At some level, Sutton argues, debtors pay bills merely to end the stream of collectors' phone calls, which makes the debt payment a form of stimulus selection. Display rules are so ubiquitous that even the encouragement organization-wide to express authentic emotion can itself become an oppressive display rule for those who are not normally highly expressive (Martin, Knopoff, & Beckman, 1998; Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989).

**4. Emotional Labor.** *Emotional labor* (EL) is an umbrella term encompassing reappraisal, experience regulation, and expression regulation, which are considered alongside each other because actors frequently trade off these options as comparative strategies towards this same goal—although, in practice, most research includes only reappraisal and display regulation. The three can be difficult to distinguish because they are all manifested and monitored within organizations via external expressive cues. No one strategy is superior, as each is more suited to particular situational demands (Gross, 1998), and skill across strategies tends to benefit individuals (Lopes, Salovey, Côté, & Beers, 2005). Hochschild (1979) coined the term emotional labor as the creation of an observable expressive display to follow norms, and emphasized that EL is bought and sold for the goals of an organization rather than individual. Although Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) went as far as to argue that all expression of expected emotion during service encounters should be considered emotional labor, even genuine displays resulting from authentic experience, a key element of emotional labor is that the intimacy of human emotion is commoditized and literally part of the labor process (Domagalski, 1999), as contrasted

with work feelings that are emergent from human interaction (Putnam & Mumby, 1983). Hochschild (1983) examined job classifications and estimated that one-third of the US workforce engaged in EL as a routine part of their jobs. Although emotional labor is often considered women's work, Glomb, Kammeyer-Mueller, and Rotundo's (2004) examination of US employment classifications revealed that jobs high in EL included both stereotypically female positions such as nurses, librarians, and social workers and stereotypically male positions such as police officers and lawyers. Emotional labor is particularly relevant for boundary spanners (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Wharton & Erickson, 1993). Frontline personnel devote more effort to creating harmony because they interact with individuals who are not under the control of the organization, and whose needs are often at odds with those of the organization (Wharton & Erickson, 1993). EL is also more relevant for the service sector—where quality is a subjective judgment of an experience—rather than more tangible areas such as manufacturing (Wharton & Erickson, 1993). Indeed, among service workers, Pugh (2001) found no zero-order association between self-reported positive affect and objective ratings of expressive displays—suggesting widespread EL. As such, emotional labor is increasingly important to modern organizations, given the rise in the service economy (Wharton, 1993).

Given that expressive displays are the end products of emotional labor, EL serves the same social functions of display rules discussed above. Achieving these social functions feeds into organizations' instrumental goals such as customer purchases and satisfaction, and bill payments (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Côté & Morgan, 2002; Grandey, 2003; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989). Gains from EL are especially pervasive when goals are mediated by the subjective judgments of others, as in the case of tipping by customers, jury verdicts, client referrals, etc. (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Even so, it is not helpful to make blanket statements like "emotional labor leads to better performance", because the benefit accrues only when emotional labor succeeds in eliciting the desired response from an interaction partner (Côté, 2005). Emotional displays might not match the optimal social function, for example when a

display is perceived as insincere or irrelevant, such as when a sales clerk is friendly in a store that emphasizes speed (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989). A display may also be mismatched when forward-tracking through the emotion process leads to the opposite behavior that is desired—for example a positive display to a debtor signals the debt is not a serious problem (Sutton, 1991).

As helpful as emotional labor may be for organizations, it often has harmful consequences for employees' performance and personal welfare, in terms of work strain in the form of burnout, exhaustion, low job satisfaction, inability to stay in role, lower customer satisfaction, and lesser sense of personal accomplishment (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Côté & Morgan, 2002; Grandey, 2000, 2003; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989). These negative consequences appear to be stronger for the use of display regulation vs. reappraisal, which Hochschild (1983) referred to as surface acting and deep acting, and Gross (1998) referred to as antecedent-focused and response-focused regulation, respectively. However, the empirical relationship between EL and work strain has been inconsistent. Indeed, EL may even be a welcome reprieve from boredom for jobs low in cognitive demands (Glomb et al., 2004). Côté (2005) recently reviewed four mechanisms that explain the relationship between EL and strain: (a) emotional dissonance caused by displaying emotions that are not experienced and, thus, getting out of touch with one's own actual feelings and sense of self (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Grandey, 2000, 2003; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989); (b) vascular efference, also known as *facial feedback* (Zajonc, 1998) that helps employees' inner feelings come in line with outward display; (c) cognitive load due to the demands of maintaining self-control (Beal et al., 2005; Gross, 2001; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), which reduces attentional resources for other tasks, and (d) the potential buffering impact of personal control. Côté argued that these four mechanisms explain some but not all empirical findings. Dissonance predicts greater strain only when self-reported measures are used for both experience and display, but not using outside ratings of display. Display requirements may be less salient to those who fit in well, potentially inflating the association of self-reported display rules and strain. Facial feedback does not explain why

strain is greater for display regulation vs. reappraisal, when the facial movements are largely the same for both. Likewise it does not explain strain for those who suppress negative displays. The cognitive load explanation is challenged by multiple findings that positive emotional displays often lead to lesser strain. Further, long-term employees often practice EL enough to render it automatic. Finally, personal control is a double-edged sword, where emotional labor is alternately easier for those who feel they are enacting a valued identity and those who disengage.

Côté (2005) concludes that the common thread is that strain is lower under conditions of emotional labor that are likely to elicit the most favorable responses from interaction partners. Because reappraisal produces positive expressive displays that appear more spontaneous and authentic, they are better received. By contrast, display regulation produces inauthentic and forced positive displays that elicit negative responses from observers and increase the employee's strain (also see Grandey, 2003; Rafaeli & Sutton 1989). In addition, EL may create strain by blocking the social function of negative emotion—which is an opportunity to solve a problem to which we are being alerted (Gross, 1998; Keltner & Haidt, 1999). Because the social functions of negative emotions tend to be more immediate and pressing (Frijda, 1986), we are hardwired to respond more strongly to them (S. E. Taylor, 1991), which may explain why it creates less strain to squelch positive vs. negative displays.

This large body of empirical work demonstrates that there can be personal costs to succeed at enacting display rules, which presumes a value to success as long as the price is not too high—and researchers often extol the virtues of deep acting over surface acting for this reason (e.g., Gosserand & Diefendorff, 2005; Grandey, 2003). However, there is also a cost of success itself. Antecedent-focused strategies such as reappraisal can result in chronically inflexible or unrealistic appraisals of one's environment that cannot simply be turned off (Gross, 1998). Although deeply acted displays may appear more authentic to the audience (e.g., Grandey, 2003), ultimately they compromise the authenticity of personal emotional experience and can contaminate one's emotional life outside of the workplace

(Fineman, 1993; Hochschild, 1983; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987; Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). For example, employees who perform masking roles often have difficulty engaging their families at an emotionally expressive level (Wharton & Erickson, 1993). Even inside the workplace, a person who cannot convey sincere reactions misses the chance to develop a meaningful personal connection with clients, community members, colleagues, and the work itself (Grandey, 2000; Pogrebin & Poole, 1995).

## **V. Post-emotional responses**

The most pervasive research interest in emotion within organizations has been on its downstream consequences. In addition to their influence on general well-being and expressive behavior, emotional experiences feed into attitudes, behaviors, and cognitions, which are depicted together as post-emotional responses in the dashed box within Figure 1. In addition to direct links between emotional states and behaviors, the model also includes indirect links to behavior that are mediated by intervening attitudes and cognitions (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998; Loewenstein & Lerner, 2003). Given the connection between emotional experience and post-emotional behaviors, a question of natural interest—even obsession—to management scholars has been the influence of emotion on job performance, which is discussed at the end of this section.

These three resulting types of visible behaviors can, in turn, be considered as stimuli to feed back into the emotion registration process, as depicted in Figure 1. This connection is central to the James-Lang (e.g., James, 1884) and Schacter-Singer (1962) theories of emotion, in which individuals look to external behaviors and cues in order to infer their own internal emotional states. Along these lines, more recently Weick et al. (2005) argued that “action is always just a tiny bit ahead of cognition, meaning that we act our way into belated understanding” (p. 419). Just as post-emotional behaviors can serve as stimuli for the self, such behaviors can also serve as stimuli for interaction partners, as depicted in Figure 2.

To resist imperialism of other areas within organizational studies, at this point it is important to be clear that not all attitudes, behaviors, and cognitions result from the emotion process. Thus, Figure 1 includes a link from the stimulus directly to post-emotional responses that is depicted as unmediated by emotional registration and experience. In practice, these separate paths can be difficult to disentangle; however, for theoretical reasons it is important to distinguish them.

### **A. Emotion-driven Attitudes**

The formal definition of an attitude is “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998, p. 269). Thus, by their very definition, attitudes are connected to the emotional dimension of valence—its association with an object. However, Eagly and Chaiken (1998) argue that emotions and attitudes are still distinct concepts, and that attitudes are not merely affective reactions. Accordingly, although organizational researchers often refer to attitudes as emotions (e.g., intergroup emotions, interpersonal affect), as a field we should discourage this practice by distinguishing affect-driven attitudes from affect per se (Brief & Weiss, 2002).

Even so, given that valence is the primary dimension of emotional appraisal, the two concepts are inextricably linked. There is robust evidence for valence-consistent mood biases in organizationally relevant attitudes such as job satisfaction, performance appraisal, commitment, cohesion, intention to maintain working relationships, intention to turnover, evaluation of consumer goods, and even overall life satisfaction—although these effects can reverse if perceivers are made aware of moods that are irrelevant to the attitudes (Clore, Schwarz, & Conway, 1994; Forgas & George, 2001; Schwartz & Clore, 1983). Affect influences performance appraisals to be consistent with the valence of the affect (Robbins & DeNisi, 1994), particularly when the rating criteria are ambiguous (Isen & Baron, 1991). Largely an evaluation of emotional valence, leader-member exchange—the quality of subordinate interactions with their leaders—is greater under positive affect (Isen & Baron, 1991). Indeed, some have argued that an

evolutionary role of emotion was to facilitate the development of interpersonal liking and rapport (Spoor & Kelly, 2004).

**1. Affect-based vs. Cognition-based Attitudes.** There is an assumption strongly held that affect-based attitudes are stronger and qualitatively different than those formed via cognitive processing (Brief & Weiss, 2002). Zajonc (1998) argued that affective reactions are primary in determining our attitudes towards the social environment. Further, emotion-driven attitudes are stronger predictors of subsequent behavior than cognition-driven attitudes (Millar & Millar, 1996). Perhaps the inability to articulate the logic of forming an attitude leads to source amnesia, which could strengthen the feeling that the association is correct. Indeed, greater experience in a domain tends to predict greater influence of affect-based vs. cognition-based attitudes on resulting behavior, suggesting that we trust our gut instincts better when that gut is better informed (Weiss, 2002).

However, in practice it is difficult to distinguish the cognitive vs. affective source of attitudes. The clearest distinction comes from psychology laboratory studies in which attitudes are manipulated via subliminal priming. Edwards (1990) found that such affect-based attitudes are expressed with greater confidence, perhaps due to affective primacy where we are prone to trust gut instincts. Further, Edwards (1990) found that attitudes undergo greater change via means of persuasion that match the initial affect-based vs. cognition-based source of the attitude. In the case of non-experimentally induced attitudes, the separation of affective vs. cognitive components is less clear. Rather than presenting confirmatory factor analyses that demonstrate divergence in survey scales, the best practice is to validate scales by determining their sensitivity to experimental manipulations—although even in such cases there is usually still a substantial degree of overlap in scales measuring the two types of attitudes (Crites, Fabrigar, & Petty, 1994).

In spite of this challenge, the distinction between cognition-based and affect-based attitudes has captured a great deal of attention from organizational researchers. Ashforth and Humphrey (1995)

distinguish between calculative vs. affective commitment as well as transactional vs. transformational leadership. Likewise, emotional attachment to a job is different from a cognitive assessment that a job is a good fit (Brief & Weiss, 2002), a topic to be discussed at greater length in the section that follows. However, attempts to separate concepts such as conflict and commitment into purportedly emotional vs. non-emotional forms should be questioned closely and accompanied by firm evidence that, indeed, the source of the attitude is affect vs. cognition. In the absence of such evidence that attitudes are vs. are not accompanied by emotional experience, it is not clear to what extent the literature benefits from these distinctions. Often, the designation of an attitude as emotional appears synonymous for intense—such as emotional commitment (Huy, 2002)—or synonymous for having other people as the target—such as task vs. emotional conflict (Xin & Pelled, 2003). In the latter cases, it may be more accurate to refer to the distinction as task vs. relationship (Jehn, 1995), given that task conflict can also be emotional to the extent that we appraise it as relevant to the self. In practice, affect and cognition may be so intertwined that it is not possible to make clear empirical distinctions in the source of attitudes even if they are theoretically distinct.

**2. Job Satisfaction.** For decades, particularly from the 1950s through mid 1980s, the attitude of deepest interest to organizational scholars has been job satisfaction, and indeed the early study of affect in organizations was intricately tied to job satisfaction (Brief & Weiss, 2002; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Although job satisfaction was initially defined as job-related affect, Weiss and Cropanzano's (1996) Affective Events Theory (AET) articulated that, first, that job satisfaction is an attitude rather than an emotional experience and, second, that the evaluation of one's job is not necessarily entirely affective, but also has a cognitive component to it as well. Weiss (2002; Weiss, Nicholas, & Daus, 1999) argued that job satisfaction results from the three distinct factors of affective experiences, evaluative judgments, and beliefs about one's job.



A wide body of evidence connects affective experience to job satisfaction. At the trait level, job satisfaction is substantially higher for those high in trait positive affect and low in trait negative affect (Connolly & Viswesvaran, 2000; Judge & Larsen, 2001). Connolly and Viswesvaran (2000) attribute this relationship to affect-congruent interpretation of one's work environment, construct contamination in the form of overlap and method bias across self-reported questionnaires of affect and satisfaction, and the mediating role of state affect. Further evidence for the role of trait affect comes from the relative stability of individual job satisfaction over time, even in the context of major situational changes—suggesting that enduring traits can influence one's evaluative lens (Staw & Cohen-Charash, 2005). Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren, and de Chermont's (2003) large-scale meta-analysis reported that high positive affect and low negative affect predicted higher job satisfaction, higher organizational commitment, lower emotional exhaustion, lower depersonalization, greater sense of personal accomplishment, and lower turnover intentions. Interestingly, they found nearly no difference between the influence on job satisfaction of affect as measured by state vs. trait measures. Examining state affect within individuals across time, experience-sampling methods show that positive affective experience on a day-to-day basis is related to job satisfaction (Ilies & Judge, 2002; Weiss et al., 1999). Weiss et al.'s (1999) study further demonstrated that affect as well as beliefs about the job contributed independently to job satisfaction. However, they point out that even the so-called cognitive evaluations that drive attitudes may have initially been influenced by affective experiences. It appears likely that the influence of trait affect on job satisfaction is mediated by state affect, in that affective traits predict the likelihood of experiencing particular states (Fleeson, 2001; Larsen & Ketelaar, 1991) and, in turn, state affect influences job satisfaction in studies using experimental manipulations of mood. Notably, providing freshly-baked cookies at the time of administering a job satisfaction survey increased scores significantly (Brief et al., 1995), just as judgments of overall life satisfaction and a host of other social judgments can be influenced by mood inductions (Schwartz & Clore, 1983).

Interest in job satisfaction has been largely fueled by its presumed influence on workplace performance, a pursuit that has been one of the holy grails of organizational behavior—pursued for years and nearly abandoned due to decades of null results for methodological reasons (Kluger & Tikochinsky, 2001). It may be that early measures of job satisfaction that failed to tap into the attitude's affective component dampened its apparent association with performance (Staw & Cohen-Charash, 2005). Judge, Thoresen, Bono, and Patton's (2001) large-scale meta-analysis revealed a moderate association between job satisfaction and job performance—a correlation of around .30—which is higher in the case of high-complexity jobs and in the case of global measures of job satisfaction that are more likely to tap into affective vs. cognitive attitudes. This association may be dampened by moderating factors, such as turnover in the case of individuals high in positive affect who are more likely to leave jobs where they are unsatisfied (Staw, Sutton, & Pelled, 1994). The link may also be tenuous because satisfaction can lead to so many different behaviors—ranging from engagement to leisure—as can dissatisfaction (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). For example, Judge, Scott, and Ilies (2006) found that lower job satisfaction leads to more counternormative behaviors, and they argued that such deviant behavior was a form of behavioral adaptation in an attempt to restore equity and feelings of empowerment. Overall, the promise of a link to performance has fueled research on job satisfaction, which may generalize to other job-related attitudes.

### **B. Emotion-driven Behaviors**

Emotions are meant to move us. The origin of the term is the Latin word *promotionem*, to move forward, which reflects the evolutionary role for emotion to respond to survival challenges with action. *Action tendencies* are “action and the impulse for action, or their absence...One wants to hit, destroy, or retaliate, or jump and shout, to regain a lost person” (Frijda, 1986, p. 231). Each emotional experience triggers a specific automatic response corresponding to the core human theme of the emotion (Lazarus, 1991). Such action tendencies activate and prioritize our behaviors, signaling that we need to respond or no longer need to respond to aspects of the environment (Frijda, 1988). As such, they are implicit goals

that signal the most evolutionarily adaptive response to a stimulus, and tend to take *control precedence* to occupy center stage above other concerns (Frijda, 1988; Frijda & Mesquita, 1994) and, under intense enough emotion, individuals are considered out of control (Lowenstein & Lerner, 2003). On the one hand, action tendencies are specific to discrete emotional states, and emotions can even be distinguished from each other in terms of the actions for which they prepare us (Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991). On the other hand, action tendencies can also be general, changing broad goals as much as specific behaviors (Clore et al., 1994). Indeed, Scherer (1984b) argued that emotion evolved in order to decouple stimuli from behavioral responses, in order to increase flexibility in our behavioral repertoires.

The action tendencies of negative emotions are meant to address immediate problems and change circumstances for the better in the short or long term, and at the level of the individual or the community, and should be evaluated in terms of their long-term influence on reproductive success (Cosmides & Tooby, 2000; Frijda, 1986). For example, anger can serve to readjust a relationship or interaction (Morris & Keltner, 2000). Even the hot rage associated with jealousy can limit the presence of rivals for one's partner (Cosmides & Tooby, 2000). Thus, negative emotions can have positive consequences—and remain in our repertoire—when they lead us to actions that relieve the elicitor.

The action tendencies of positive emotions tend to be less specific or directed at immediate concerns. Frederickson's (2001) broaden and build theory emphasizes that positive affect expands our action repertoires and encourages creativity and search, facilitating approach rather than avoidant behavior, and widens the array of behaviors that come to mind. Broadened activities include playing, pushing limits, exploring, savoring, and integrating concepts and activities from disparate sources. The broaden and build theory argues that positive affect encourages longer term adaptation and the development of durable resources such as growth and well-being, rather than an immediate focus on solving life-threatening issues. Thus, positive affect is designed to undo the damage of negative affect and return psychological and physiological states to normal levels (Frederickson, 2001). George and Brief

(1992) reviewed evidence that positive moods led to a family of *organizational spontaneity* behaviors that include helping, protecting the organization, making constructive suggestions, improving one's own development, and spreading goodwill. Further, positive mood predicts lesser absenteeism (Forgas & George, 2001). Isen and colleagues (Isen, 1987, 2001; Isen & Baron, 1991) have amassed extensive research detailing the specific behaviors associated with positive affect, particularly greater creativity, greater generosity and cooperation, greater seeking of variety and small-stakes risk taking. However, they also note that individuals in positive moods can be defensive about protecting their affective state, and sometimes avoid tasks that have the potential to dampen their mood.

In examining the role of emotional experiences on behavior in organizations, it is worth noting that frequently the desired behavioral responses are blocked. Boudens (2005) writes of workplace narratives, "In many of the stories, the narrators chose to do and say nothing about the way they felt. In some cases they simply felt constrained, not wanting to jeopardize their position or upset the balance between themselves and another coworker" (p. 1302). Constraint often arises from differences in status within the organization, particularly for the experience of anger—with those higher in the hierarchy able to confront the cause of their anger in the short term, and those lower having the option to withdraw, in both the short and long term (Fitness, 2000; Sloan, 2004). Employees' emotional traits can also influence their willingness to block these emotional action tendencies. For example, individuals lower in trait hostility appeared to engage in less deviant behavior as a function of their state hostility (Judge et al., 2006). Speaking to the potential harm to employees of such blockage, Simpson and Stroh (2004) found that there was greater felt dissonance from display rules that decreased vs. increased negative displays. It may be easier to undertake an action tendency that is not felt vs. to withhold an action tendency that is. This might explain why negative emotion often has harmful consequences in organizational settings, because its evolutionary goal of enabling corrective action is thwarted.

### **C. Emotion-driven Cognitions**

Although emotion has long been considered a barrier to rationality—disruptive, illogical, biased, and weak—newer work also emphasizes its adaptive nature (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Putnam & Mumby, 1993). The three main perspectives on the relationship between emotion and cognition are that emotion interferes with cognition, that emotion serves cognition, and that the two are intertwined (Fineman, 1996). All three of these perspectives are veridical.

**1. Emotion interferes with cognition.** There is a strongly held lay belief that emotion is pernicious for thinking (Forgas, 2003). Indeed, Frijda (1986) argued that emotion serves as a relevance detector, so that it is purposely disruptive. Emotion can interrupt thoughts and redirect attention to the emotion itself (Beal et al., 2005; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Strong emotions can occupy cognitive capacity, including attention, reasoning and memory at the time of both encoding and retrieval (Clore et al., 1994; Schwarz, 1990). This cognitive interruption is adaptive to the extent that we need to be alerted of the need to pause and prioritize (Loewenstein & Lerner, 2003). However, it can be maladaptive to the extent that the evolutionary adaptation no longer matches our current decision making environment, to the extent that emotions are responsive to immediate influences that are not relevant to our cognitions, and to the extent that emotions can distort our evaluations of the probabilities and consequences of decisions (Loewenstein & Lerner, 2003).

Isen and colleagues (Isen, 1987, 2001; Isen & Baron, 1991) argue that even positive affect can serve as an interruption, because individuals in positive moods want to protect those moods by avoiding unpleasant thoughts. They review evidence that this *affect state protection* makes losses loom larger than gains even more so than normally, and leads individuals to avoid certain types of decisions. Those high in positive affect can be overconfident and suffer to a greater degree from self-serving biases (Staw et al., 1994), for example overestimating the extent to which others see them as valued members of their professional advice networks (Casciaro, Carley, & Krackhardt, 1999). Further, positive affect is a signal

that one's objectives are already achieved (Frijda, 1988), and this signal that all is okay has the potential to make us less critical and discerning (George & Zhou, 2002).

**2. Emotion serves cognition.** As much as emotion can disrupt thinking, it can also serve it. Emotion orients and directs attention to solving problems, helps to distinguish relevant from irrelevant stimuli, and provides the motivation to reach decisions and implement them (Fineman, 1996; Loewenstein & Lerner, 2003). Indeed, newer evidence suggests that affect is an essential component of thought and decision making because we depend on *somatic markers*, which are internal signals about the desirability and consequences of possible actions (Damasio, 1994). Thus, emotions benefit cognition by taking these factors explicitly into account, and are adaptive to the extent that they encompass the criteria relevant to a decision maker's future utility as well as accurate expectations about likely events and the way they would make the decision maker feel (Loewenstein & Lerner, 2003). Such affective processing can also take place implicitly, bubbling up to consciousness in the form of hunches and gut instincts that enable appropriate decision making (Fineman, 1996). Further, affect assists us to organize the categorization of social and even inanimate objects, in terms of how they make us feel (Forgas, 2003). Given these cognitive goals that are served by affect, some researchers even refer to emotionally influenced thought as *hot cognition* (Morris & Keltner, 2000).

Extensive evidence demonstrates mood-congruent influences on learning, memory, associations, social judgments, and social interaction behaviors (Clore et al., 1994; Forgas & George, 2001). Forgas' (1995) Affect Infusion Model (AIM) theoretically integrates this disparate evidence by arguing under what circumstances to expect greater influence of affect on cognition. The term *affect infusion* indicates the intensity with which affectively-loaded information influences cognitions and resulting behaviors. There are two distinct mechanisms for affect infusion: the process of thinking as well as the content of thoughts (Forgas, 1995; Forgas & George, 2001). First, affect infusion is greater for deeper thinking, constructive processing, and active elaboration vs. routine, recurrent tasks vs. complex tasks. Second,

affect infusion is greater when learning new information vs. elaborating what one already knows (Forgas, 1995; Forgas & George, 2001). Further, AIM assumes that individuals use the simplest strategy that is capable of producing an appropriate response. Given the presence of affect infusion, it operates on cognition via three mechanisms: memory-based effects, affect-as-information, and information processing (Forgas, 2003).

The influence of affect on memory is a special case of state-dependent memory, in which we are primed more easily to access and recall information when in a similar affective state to that in which it was originally learned (Clore et al., 1994; Isen & Baron, 1991), particularly for information that is autobiographical (Clore et al., 1994). However, it is worth noting that these effects can be fragile to replicate in the laboratory, and tend to appear only when affective states are strong, salient, self-relevant, and when the task calls for the active generation and elaboration of information rather than simple recall (Clore et al., 1994; Forgas, 2003).

The second mechanism for affect infusion is affect-as-information, in which we ask ourselves how we feel as a heuristic for judgments (Schwarz & Clore, 1983, 1988). Our emotions provide information about our own psychological state and the world around us—for example, with fear vs. calm suggesting different assessments of the likely safety of an environment (Schwarz & Clore 2003). Affect tends to be used more often as a source of information when the judgment itself is affective in nature (e.g., preferences and liking), for unfamiliar vs. familiar domains, when little other information is available, for issues that have low vs. high personal involvement, for issues for which the affect appears directly relevant vs. irrelevant, under low vs. high cognitive resources, under high vs. low time constraints, when we have high vs. low clarity about our feelings, and when judgments are overly complex for the piecemeal processing of information—in general, under the conditions that encourage heuristic processing (Clore et al., 1994; Forgas, 2003; George & Zhou, 2002; Lowenstein & Lerner, 2003; Schwarz, 1990). Although affect can be a valuable and intuitive method to access our own judgments, we

can also mistake incidental pre-existing feelings as relevant to new targets and, indeed, the influence of mood-as-information is stronger when we are not aware of the true source of the mood (Forgas, 2003; Lowenstein & Lerner, 2003). As such, moods can be more powerful influences than discrete emotions precisely because they are more diffuse, global, and difficult to identify the source (Schwarz, 1990).

The third mechanism for affect infusion is via information processing. Affect influences not only recall, but also the very learning and interpretation of new information (Forgas, 2003). Perceivers tend to interpret new information in a mood-congruent manner, and process new information more slowly and deeply when it is mood-congruent (Forgas, 2003). In the case of positive affect, information processing is more top-down, broader, more flexible and assimilative, makes more extensive use of pre-existing ideas and associations but less new information, and is also less effortful, more superficial, faster, and more confident (Clore et al., 1994; Forgas, 2003). Petty and Wegener's (1998) hedonic contingency approach argues that positive moods tend to invite effortful processing for those tasks that are generally pleasant, but only simplified heuristic processing for those tasks that are potentially frustrating. Isen (1987, 2001; Isen & Baron, 1991) argued that positive affect makes connections among ideas more accessible, leads to a broader and more complex focus on problem solving, and increases flexibility to join disparate ideas together—which, taken together, generally promotes decision making that is more efficient without being sloppy. Frederickson's (2001) broaden and build theory argues that positive emotion is a signal that an environment is safe, leading to more creative and deeper processing, with a widened array of thoughts that come to mind because exploration behaviors do not need to be postponed for the sake of basic safety. Accordingly, consistent with its positive effects on playfulness and exploration in novel and unusual settings, positive affect is associated with greater creativity, (Clore et al., 1994), even with a time lag of one to two days following the positive mood (Amabile et al., 2005). Further, individuals high in positive affect tend to take in wider information about the social environment, for example resulting in greater accuracy in assessing the personal networks of their colleagues (Casciaro et al., 1999).



By contrast with positive affect, information processing under negative affect is more bottom-up, more systematic and detailed, more narrow and vigilant in attention, and more externally focused towards changing one's existing situation (Clore et al., 1994; Forgas, 2003; Loewenstein & Lerner, 2003; Schwarz, 1990). Because negative mood signals us that we are in an unsatisfactory or even dangerous situation, we need to process information more deeply and with greater causal reasoning to address the underlying concern (Schwartz & Clore, 1983). Although positive mood is sometimes portrayed as uniformly beneficial—and negative mood as uniformly harmful—indeed, there appear to be specific cognitive benefits to negative moods. In light of the deeper and more deliberate processing focused on social tasks, negative vs. positive affect can lead to behaviors that are more polite, friendly, and elaborate (Forgas, 2003). Negative mood leads to lesser bias, for example greater accuracy in understanding the content of performance feedback and lesser susceptibility to the fundamental attribution error (Forgas & George, 2001). This is related to the *depressive accuracy* of mild and chronically depressed individuals, who show greater complexity in forming attributions and social judgments (Clore et al., 1994). There are even data suggesting a potential boost to creativity for being in a negative mood, which does not speak against the research on positive mood and creativity because Isen and colleagues' work typically contrasts positive vs. neutral rather than negative states (e.g., Isen, 1987). George and Zhou (2002) found that negative emotion could increase creativity when it was rewarded, and they argued that the negative mood signaled that more effort was necessary in a task. Thus, naturally occurring negative affect can be an energizing force that motivates us for change, which can enhance creative thinking (George & Zhou, 2002). George's (2000) review concluded that every profile of mood is helpful for some cognitive settings and harmful for others, which suggests the value of focusing on congruence between the cognitive tendencies of any particular mood and the task requirements of the work setting.

In addition to positive and negative moods, some moods are mixed. Mixed emotions can serve as information that the world is in an unusual state, and one needs new solutions because the old rules

may no longer apply (Fong, 2006). Indeed, Fong (2006) found that experimentally induced ambivalence increased performance in a test of creativity—but found this effect disappeared if participants were also given proverbs emphasizing that mixed emotions are commonplace. Likewise, mood swings can increase creative thinking (Amabile et al., 2005).

Although most work on the influence of affect on cognition has focused on positive vs. negative valence, exciting recent research has moved beyond valence to examine the role of other dimensions of emotional appraisal. Lerner and Keltner (2000) argued that there are *appraisal tendencies*, which are cognitive tendencies akin to action tendencies, specific to the dimensions of emotional appraisal. For example, angry individuals focus on issues of blame and fearful individuals focus on issues of risk. Overall, affect is a lens through which we interpret the events around us, with a theme of addressing the underlying core relational themes of our emotions (Loewenstein & Lerner, 2003). Consistent with these appraisal tendencies, Tiedens and Linton (2001) found that emotions that are characterized by high vs. low certainty—such as anger and contentment vs. worry and surprise—lead to greater heuristic vs. systematic processing, in the form of greater stereotyping, greater reliance on the expertise of the source of information, and less attention to argument quality. Lerner, Small, and Loewenstein (2004) theorized and found that differential action tendencies among negative emotions—with disgust to expel unwanted objects and sadness to change one's circumstances—led disgusted buyers to require lower prices and sad buyers to pay more for the same goods.

**3. Emotion and cognition are intertwined.** The third perspective on the relationship between affect and cognition is that they are intertwined, in the sense that much of what we consider *rational* is already pursued on highly emotional grounds. “Thinking and feelings are inextricably linked most of the time” wrote Ellsworth and Scherer (2003), “Certain ways of interpreting one's environment are inherently emotional, few thoughts are entirely free of feelings, and emotions influence thinking” (p. 572). Indeed, evolutionary psychologists have argued that emotion evolved as a means to coordinate functions across

multiple cognitive and behavioral domains, which suggests that the distinction of affect vs. cognition is to some degree arbitrary and semantic (Cosmides & Tooby, 2000).

Affect is always a critical part of the construction of thoughts and, indeed, it is problematic to separate affect from cognition (Forgas, 2003). Although emotional appraisal can be automatic and intuitive, ultimately each of the dimensions of cognitive appraisal discussed above in the section on emotional registration is a cognitive evaluation that is influenced by emotional processing. Thus, when we evaluate an event as positive or negative, establish its causality, its goal significance, etc., at some level it is not meaningful to label these evaluations as emotional vs. cognitive. For example, the major elicitors of perceptions of justice are positive treatment by others who have control over a situation (Judge et al., 2006), which overlap greatly with the cognitive appraisal dimensions linked most closely to anger, such as valence, certainty, control, and responsibility. Thus, findings that justice violations are associated with anger may be due as much to semantic overlap between justice and anger vs. a newly uncovered relationship. Indeed, it may be that society has constructed the neutral and rational construct of justice in order to correspond to an underlying emotional judgment such as anger. For this reason, we should tread lightly in research intended to demonstrate that emotions accompany the judgments of organizationally relevant topics such as justice, status, and conflict, as such statements may be true by design. Closely related is research that aims to demonstrate that emotions mediate the relationship between such topics and outcomes of interest, because the so-called mediator may be overlapping and intertwined with the independent variable. Such studies risk reinventing core principles of the psychology of emotion. Alternately, it would be fruitful for those who propose to take an emotional perspective on a topic previously considered through a cognitive lens to examine the dimensions of cognitive appraisal as a starting point for how emotion may already be woven into our current understanding of the topic. In doing so, the strongest evidence for a unique role of emotion on outcomes

arises when emotional experience becomes decoupled from its original source, and this incidental affect has powerful and often unintended consequences (Loewenstein & Lerner, 2003).

#### **D. Job Performance**

Ultimately, much of the research interest in emotion-driven behaviors—regardless of their pathway through Figure 1 directly from emotional experience or indirectly via attitudes and cognitions—relates to the influence of these behaviors on employee job performance. The earliest perspective on this issue is that emotion-driven behaviors are generally counterproductive, which drives the lay intuition that emotion gets in the way of business. If emotion evolved as an adaptation to assist with the problems of survival, perhaps solutions that were adaptive for animals and early humans are no longer appropriate for the task demands of modern organizational life (Morris & Keltner, 2000). Natural selection has been too slow to update the structure of the brain past that of the hunter-gatherer (Cosmides & Tooby, 2000). To the extent that jobs increasingly require cognitive attention and processing, the cognitive load created by emotions can render them a detriment to productivity (Clore et al., 1994). Indeed, emotion appears to be a more pernicious influence on performance in more vs. less cognitively complex tasks (Beal et al., 2005).

Nonetheless, researchers in organizational behavior have been driven by a vision of the happy worker as productive worker. Hersey (1932) was the first to show that productivity was higher under positive mood and lower under negative mood. Staw and colleagues' landmark work (e.g., Staw, Bell, & Clausen, 1986; Staw et al., 1994) demonstrated that individuals who self-reported more frequent positive emotional experience tended to be rated as more effective in their workplaces. Accumulated evidence now shows that, generally, high positive affect and low negative affect are associated with greater job performance, and longitudinal designs suggest that the direction of causality is more likely to begin with affect as the cause of performance as opposed to vice versa (Côté, 1999). Staw et al. (1994) theorized that positive affect is associated with better measured job performance due to (a) a direct intrapersonal effect

on productivity and motivation, such as greater persistence and higher goals (e.g., George & Brief, 1996), (b) rater bias where the same level of performance may be rated more highly due to halo effects from others who are favorably inclined towards those high in positive affect, and (c) interpersonal effects where colleagues offer substantive assistance and other favorable reactions that lead to tangible performance benefits for high positive affect employees. Conversely, those under high negative affect such as stress tend to perform worse at their jobs, which is attributed to the cognitive load of attending to the source of the negative emotion (Motowildo, Packard, & Manning, 1986). Although much of the research on affect and performance has been at the level of trait differences, in keeping with the often-fleeting nature of emotional experience, promising recent work has also found that momentary changes in state affect influence individuals' productivity over time (Beal, Weiss, Barros, & MacDermid, 2005).

The performance implications of affect have been increasingly examined in negotiation settings. Negotiators in positive moods tend to achieve higher individual and joint outcomes, due to greater use of cooperative strategies and fewer contentious strategies, higher goals, greater development of trust, better insight and effective exchange of information, and greater confidence (Barry, Fulmer, & Van Kleef, 2004; Carnevale & Isen, 1986; Forgas, 1998; Thompson, Nadler, & Kim, 1999). Barry and Oliver (1996) also argued that positive affect tends to benefit negotiators by increasing post-settlement compliance and the continuation of working relationships. By contrast with positive mood, negative mood appears to harm negotiation performance. Negotiators induced with negative moods are less accurate in reading their counterparts' interests (Allred, Mallozzi, Matsui, & Raia, 1996), and are more likely to reject offers that are economically superior to their alternatives (Pillutla & Murnighan, 1996).

In spite of this evidence supporting the idea of the happy worker as productive worker, the relationship between affect and performance appears complex, and depends on a number of factors such as competing effects, the role of interaction partners, constraints on behavior, and the performance context itself. In the case of competing effects, some influences of affective states can cancel each other

out, yielding little apparent effects. For example, in a realistically simulated foreign exchange trading scenario, participants in pleasant moods had greater confidence yet also lower accuracy in evaluating market trends (Au, Chan, Wang, & Vertinsky, 2003). Thus, those in bad moods were the most accurate yet benefited little due to their conservative trading behavior. A further complexity in the role of individual affect on performance comes from interaction partners. For example, because negotiators tend to be attuned to their counterparts' behaviors in order to reciprocate or complement these behaviors as appropriate, it is difficult to make performance predictions based on one negotiator's emotional state in the absence of considering the partner's state as well (Butt, Choi, & Jaeger, 2005). The influence of affect on performance can also be limited due to strong situations that constrain behavior. For example, Staw et al. (1994) argued that the relationship can be dampened in jobs that require a minimum level of performance in order to maintain employment standing. Having a low power position can also serve as a constraint. Anderson and Thompson's (2004) study of negotiation simulations found that only the trait positive affect level of the higher-power party was predictive of bargaining outcomes.

Ultimately, the influence of affect on performance is context dependent, based on whether there is a match vs. mismatch between the response tendencies of the affect and the demands of the task at hand (Beal et al., 2005; Clore et al., 1994; Forgas & George, 2001; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). For example, negative affect can be beneficial for jobs that require critical scrutiny and evaluation, such as inspectors, and for jobs in which concentration is important and performance would suffer in the event of frequent social interruptions and distractions (Staw et al., 1994). Further, negative affect can be a helpful signal to exit a job with poor fit, and indeed workers reporting more negative emotional experiences at work report greater intentions of quitting their jobs (Grandey, Tam, & Brauburger, 2002). Likewise, in some contexts positive emotions can be harmful for productivity, such as when they distract workers from their tasks or foster inertia by suggesting that a job is already well done (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Beal et al., 2005; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Taken together, these findings suggest the value of calling

attention to boundary conditions related to job requirements and demands, where particular affective states can be helpful in some tasks and harmful in others.

## VI. Emotion Recognition

This point in the review departs from intrapersonal to interpersonal emotion processes. Figure 2 juxtaposes an interaction partner or partners alongside the focal actor considered by the sections above and, thus, highlights a number of additional emotional phenomena of interest within organizations. The first interpersonal process to be highlighted is *emotion recognition*. Indeed, the signal value of emotional expression that was discussed earlier requires a perceiver to interpret the signal. Emotion recognition is the process of analyzing expressive cues to infer another person's emotional state. Thus, as depicted in Figure 2, the output of the emotion process for one person—in the form of expressive cues—can be stimulus that forms the starting point for another.

### A. The Backtracking Process

Emotional expressions are a powerful source of information—in effect, a window into another person's inner thoughts and feelings. The larger social function of emotion recognition—beyond simply providing an assessment of another person's emotional state—is that it allows perceivers to *backtrack* and reconstruct others' apparent emotion process. From an expression one infers a likely experience, and from the likely experience one infers the likely objective environment and the expressor's interpretation of it. Indeed, perceivers often describe emotional expressions in terms of likely eliciting events rather than emotional categories per se (Yik & Russell, 1999). Along the way, we infer details such as authenticity cues suggesting whether experience matches expression, and at whom the display was intended. Related to the backtracking of emotion recognition is the forward-tracking of *empathy*—which starts from a common stimulus and infers what another person is likely to feel. The goal of backtracking and forward-tracking is to gain usable information about social partners' likely beliefs and future behaviors and, indeed, about the objective environment. Perceiving is for doing (Gibson, 1979); we use

information from others' emotions as feedback to navigate our social worlds (Rosenthal, DiMatteo, Rogers, & Archer, 1979). Such sensitivity evolved to assist in coordinating and communicating with group members (Ekman, 1972; Spoor & Kelly, 2004). Lest this description make emotion recognition sound overly analytic, we interpret others' emotional cues quickly and automatically, without disruption by competing attentional demands (Neumann & Strack, 2000). Indeed, one often notices the value of reading emotional cues only when they are gone, for example, in computer-mediated "virtual" communication—for which new emotional channels evolved such as *emoticons* and all-capital writing.

Examples abound of backtracking via emotion recognition in organizational settings. Rafaeli and Sutton (1989) describe an Israeli supermarket clerk being told she must be new to the job if she is smiling. The customer backtracked to conclude the clerk perceives her job as pleasant, and this is only possible if the clerk did not have the experience to develop appropriate schemas (i.e., appraisals of high certainty, unpleasant, goal obstructed) to evaluate the monotonous job as a stimulus. Musicians read audiences' emotions to infer performance evaluations and adjust the music accordingly (Pescosolido, 2002). Leaders recognize emotions in order to understand better how followers make sense of their environment and to gauge appropriate leadership behaviors (Huy, 2002; Pescosolido, 2002). Likewise, team members look to their leaders for performance feedback, and infer that negative displays convey dissatisfaction (Sy, Côté, & Saavedra, 2005). Note that backtracking relies on a perceiver's interpretive lens. For example, union members may interpret colleagues' stress as a response to their work, when management sees the same stress as a defect in the workers' emotional appraisal related to coping (Fineman, 1996).

Recognizing others' emotions can influence attitudes, behaviors, and cognitions, represented together in Figure 1 under post-emotional responses. This can be mediated by a perceiver's own emotional experience, or directly with information used in non-emotional processing. For example, emotion recognition helps with inference of others' characteristics such as personality, competence, and status within an organization. The cues in facial expressions influence trait judgments (Knutson, 1996)—



which is sensible for perceivers given that, indeed, many traits refer to the likelihood of experiencing particular states (Fleeson, 2001). For example, participants find more likable those group members who express uniquely human emotions such as admiration, love, remorse, or regret (Vaes, Paladino, Castelli, Leyens, & Giovanazzi, 2003)—as inferred by their better treatment of them. Individuals high in negative affect may give off cues of anxiety that their colleagues interpret as a signal they are passive and able to be victimized (Aquino et al., 1999). Perceivers also judge others' competence from even *thin slices* of expressive cues, and they can accurately assess everything from actual teacher and physician effectiveness to voting behavior and communication ability (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1992). In simulated work environments and video vignette studies, participants viewing negative displays from supervisors gave lower satisfaction ratings (Glomb & Hulin, 1997; Newcombe & Ashkanasy, 2002). In terms of status, Tiedens (2001) found that participants conferred higher ratings to politicians and made higher salary recommendations for job candidates who expressed anger vs. sadness, in keeping with high power as a source of flexibility to hold others accountable for negative outcomes. Likewise, in a vignette study, leaders displaying negative vs. positive emotions received lower approval ratings—particularly for norm violations such as males displaying sadness and females displaying anger (Lewis, 2000). Tiedens (2001) argues that expressing anger may create a tradeoff where ratings are lower for liking-related constructs such as satisfaction, but higher ratings for competence-related constructs such as status and power.

Recognizing another person's emotional state can also provide information about their preferences—for example their bottom line in a negotiation. In several negotiation studies, participants were informed explicitly of their partner's supposed emotional state. Thompson, Valley, and Kramer (1995) showed that face-to-face negotiators who were later given a verbal statement about how the outcome compared to expectations supposedly written by their partner tended to report feeling the inverse affect—in keeping with naïve assumptions that one's gain comes at another's loss and vice versa. Further, participants who believed their partner was an in-group member and disappointed in one round

offered them more resources in the next round—suggesting they used emotion recognition to make a redress. In a computer-mediated scenario with a simulated opponent, Van Kleef, De Dreu, and Manstead (2004a, 2004b) gave participants verbal statements between rounds about emotional reactions to offers that were supposedly written by the counterpart without realizing they would be read. Participants used these reaction statements to adjust their behavior—offering less to participants already happy with the last offer and more to participants who were angry with the last offer. However, in a series of two-way interactions, these effects appeared only when participants were in a low power position where they needed to placate their counterpart, only when they had sufficient cognitive resources, cognitive flexibility, and time available, and only when generous offers from opponents did not appear to speak for themselves. In a vignette study and a face-to-face exercise in which one negotiator was given a lesson emphasizing the value of angry vs. neutral emotional display, Sinaceur and Tiedens (2006) found that negotiators in a low power position made greater concessions to counterparts expressing anger, presumably because they were motivated to undertake the relationship repair that the angry displays suggested were necessary. Taken together, these studies suggest the great potential importance to negotiators of backtracking via emotion recognition.

The majority of quantitative research on emotion recognition in organizations has focused on accuracy and its consequences, with accuracy defined in terms of judgments that match the intended emotional state. Typical studies contain photographs of facial expressions, audiotapes of vocal tones, and video clips of body movement. Elfenbein, Foo, White, Tan, and Aik's (2007) recent meta-analysis shows that—across corporate, academic, non-profit, foreign service, and clinical settings—greater individual-level emotion recognition accuracy generally predicted better subjective workplace effectiveness as rated by supervisors, supervisees, peers, and patients. Examining objective performance, Elfenbein et al. (2007) found that negotiators high in accuracy were better able to create value with their counterparts and also to claim value for themselves. However, emotion recognition accuracy is not always beneficial because

some messages are better left unheard. Indeed, Steiner (1955) argued that accurate social perception benefits individuals only when several conditions are all met: they have freedom to alter their behavioral response to others vs. strictly defined roles that constrain their interpersonal behavior, when the preferences or intentions that they perceive are relevant to the task at hand, and when the resulting behavior is aligned with the group or dyadic task. Indeed, personal relationships often suffer from the accurate understanding of potentially damaging thoughts and feelings (Simpson, Ickes, & Blackstone, 1995). Negative interpersonal feelings in social situations tend to leak out through the leakier, less controllable nonverbal channels such as vocal tone (Swann, Stein-Seroussi, & McNulty, 1992).

Accordingly, people who are especially skilled at *eavesdropping* by recognizing information via leaky channels tend to have difficulty in their personal and workplace relationships—particularly when understanding leaky negative cues (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002b). Participants in a group decision making task who were highly accurate with a subtle test of emotion recognition were less liked by peers and less able to incorporate their own interests into the group decision (Lopes, Barsade, Nezlek, Elfenbein, Straus, & Salovey, 2006). As valuable as sensitivity can be, sometimes a lack of sensitivity provides others with privacy from intrusion into their inner worlds, can dampen rather than amplify the daily ups and downs of work life, and can inoculate one from the influence of others' moods. Speaking to Steiner's criterion for freedom to alter behavioral responses, people who are the most capable of acting appropriately in response to others' emotions—for example, leaders who are extraverted vs. introverted—benefit the most from accurate recognition (Rubin, Munz, & Bommer, 2005).

The importance of individual variation in emotion recognition also raises a question about the average level: are people generally accurate or inaccurate? On the one hand, emotion recognition is highly intuitive and automatic, and evolved as an adaptation to solve the problems of group living (Spoor & Kelly, 2004). Indeed, classic studies demonstrate we can recognize emotions expressed by members of distant cultural groups (Ekman et al., 1969). However, the absolute accuracy rates in such

studies were quite low, on average only 58% after correcting for chance guessing (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002a)—on tasks that were carefully screened, for which participants' attention was drawn to stimuli, and for which responses were multiple-choice (Russell, 1994). Perhaps more directly germane to organizational life, studies of thin slice judgments have an average correspondence with criteria of about .39 (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1992)—which is impressive but imperfect. Likewise, the little research that has examined accuracy in actual emotion judgments made within organizational settings suggests that observers understand much—but not all—about colleagues' affect (Bartel & Saavedra, 2000; Totterdell et al., 1998). For example, Scherer and Ceschi (2000) showed that airline employees assisting passengers with lost bags could accurately detect passengers' self-reported worry and humor, but not anger, indifference, or sadness—which are lower-intensity or likely to be masked by display rules. Although accurate recognition of others' states may be adaptive, so too may be inaccuracy when Steiner's (1959) criteria for the benefit of social perception are not met. For example, controlled studies of lie detection based on expressive behavior rarely yield performance better than chance (O'Sullivan, 2005), but on a daily basis most people face only white lies that may be better left undetected (Swann et al., 1992). Ultimately, accuracy in emotion recognition is likely to be imperfect. In the act of backtracking through another person's entire emotion process, errors can enter at any point—and can accumulate.

### **B. Regulating Recognition via Decoding Rules**

Just as expressors can regulate their displays, perceivers can regulate their interpretations. *Decoding rules* (Buck, 1984) refer to norms about the appropriate recognition of others' emotions. Perceivers can choose to decode a message inaccurately, or decode a message accurately but not allow themselves to register or respond to it. Decoding rules can protect perceivers' interests when sensitivity to others' cues may be detrimental. Although less research within organizations has directly addressed decoding rules, one might expect to find them in tandem with display rules. The flip side of Hochschild's (1983) flight attendants' display rule to smile at hostile passengers could be a decoding rule to overlook

the passengers' hostile behavior. In Garot's (2004) ethnography of bureaucrats, service workers developed strategies to ignore the apparently sincere displays of tearful sadness from applicants for housing subsidies who were deemed ineligible. Perceivers can also use decoding rules to assist expressors who fail to regulate their own display properly—for example, a decision to overlook an inadvertent outburst in a meeting or tears in the locker room.

## VII. Interpersonal Influence of Emotion

Emotion is a powerful source of social influence. Hochschild (1979) included within her definition of emotional labor any actions intended to change others' emotions. Rafaeli and Sutton (1989) argued that display rules exist in order for expressive displays to influence others. Disneyland tells its employees that if they are happy at work, then the guests will be happy at play (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989).

The opportunity to shape each other's thoughts and feelings arises via multiple pathways within the emotion process—indeed, this is where emotion becomes a dance. *Emotional contagion* is a family of phenomena that describe this social influence (Hatfield et al., 1994). A heuristic to distinguish the multiple forms of contagion is to examine the emotion process framework in Figure 2 systematically for possible pathways—starting in each case with the circles that denote externally observable processes, and tracing pathways that reach the interaction partner. Interpersonal influence can result from sharing access to the same stimuli—and registering the stimuli similarly or, in the case of empathy, judging how the stimuli would be registered by relevant others. Emotional expressions are also a powerful source of influence. Through a two-part process of *primitive efference* described by Hatfield et al. (1994; also see Kelly & Barsade, 2001; Lakin, Jefferis, Cheng, & Chartrand, 2003), the expressive cues of others invoke behavioral mimicry that leads, in turn, to affective experience. Given that the primitive efference pathway bypasses emotional registration, such contagion is of mood—not emotion—because it lacks awareness of the elicitor (Neumann & Strack, 2000). However, emotional contagion can also take place

via emotion recognition, where expressive cues are interpreted for their meaning and serve as stimuli to feed into emotional registration and experience. Even more consciously, perceivers can use *social comparison* to examine others' expressive cues and infer the appropriate emotion to experience (Barsade, 2002; Kelly & Barsade, 2001). Finally, post-emotional responses such as instrumental behaviors—and the behaviors resulting from emotionally driven attitudes and cognitions—have a powerful influence on others. For example, it can be demoralizing when colleagues are often late or absent, even if one was initially happy at work. Among these multiple mechanisms for emotional influence, most research attention has focused on nonconscious mimicry and social comparison (Barsade, 2002; Bartel & Saavedra, 2000; Totterdell, 2000). Given the complexity of contagion, the specific mechanism generally remains untested in empirical work (c.f., Howard & Gengler, 2001).

Although recent research and theory has focused on emotional contagion as a source of transferring consistent mood states (e.g., Kelly & Barsade, 2001), most of the mechanisms for emotional contagion have the potential to invoke consistent or complementary states. For example, embarrassment might invoke forgiveness rather than more embarrassment (Keltner & Haidt, 1999). Anger directed at a low-power negotiator leads to fearful—not angry—behavior (Van Kleef et al., 2004a, 2004b). In terms of emotional appraisal, anger is an accusation of cause—which can invoke fear or apology if the accusation is accepted, but more anger if it is not. Complimentary vs. consistent contagion can vary based on the perceiver's backtracking process—for example, fear may strike fear when the perceiver interprets it to be directed at a stimulus common to them, but not otherwise. The optimal form of emotional contagion from the sender's perspective is to create an emotional induction for which the likely post-emotional responses are consistent with the sender's preferences. Senders may prefer an audience that is happy (e.g., service representatives), fearful (e.g., politicians, police), or angry (e.g., sports coaches, drill sergeants).

A number of factors appear to influence the extent of emotional contagion. Groups can develop

schemas and rules for managing members' emotional lives, which become automatic with practice.

Norms can address feeling rules, display rules, and shared schemas for reappraisal, and also sensitivity to each others' emotions (Bartel & Saavedra, 2000). Indeed, Elfenbein, Polzer, and Ambady (2007) found that teams of full-time public service interns that had been assigned at random differed significantly in their ability to recognize each others' nonverbal expressions of emotion—even though these teams did not differ in their ability to recognize the expressions of strangers. This suggests that teams varied in their person-specific learning of expressive styles and/or norms for attending to others' emotions.

Thompson, Nadler, and Kim (1999) argued that groups can develop *transactive emotion*—akin to cognitive *transactive memory* (Wegner, 1986)—which are schemas consisting of meta-knowledge about colleagues' emotional behaviors. Norms can be perpetuated through Attraction-Selection-Attrition processes (Schneider, 1987) favoring those whose emotion processes function similarly to existing members (George, 1990). Further, emotional contagion appears to be influenced by social closeness. Emotional contagion is greater when receivers like senders—even when liking is randomly assigned through the belief that the other had offered a token gift (Howard & Gengler, 2001).

Examples of emotional contagion abound in organizational settings. Pugh (2001) was the first to show that contagion is the mechanism responsible for the relationship between positive emotional displays and customer ratings of service quality, by demonstrating mediation via customer positive affect. In a simulated video rental store, service employees who produced “real” vs. “fake” smiles invoked greater positive emotional contagion in their customers (Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul, & Gremler, 2006). Tan, Foo, and Kwek (2004) demonstrated that, just as employees influence customers, customers also influence employees. Patrons of fast food restaurants who self-reported greater agreeableness and low negative affect received greater objectively coded positive displays.

Leadership factors heavily into organizational examples of emotional contagion (e.g., Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Hatfield et al., 1994). Conger (1991) argued that arousing affect in others is an important

mechanism for the influence of transformational leadership on followers. Some have gone so far as to say that “put simply, management’s job has become the management of emotion” (Rafaeli & Worline, 2001, p. 107), or that the modern leader is “an emotional manager” (Pescosolido, 2002, p. 584). George (2000) reviewed evidence that leader affect influences a range of follower outcomes such as prosocial behavior, retention, and group performance. This appears to be mediated by followers’ affect. In a simulated work environment using intact teams, Sy et al. (2005) demonstrated that the mood randomly assigned to the leader influenced followers’ moods accordingly which, in turn, influenced group process and performance. Although influence can flow in both directions and among peers (Totterdell, 2000), leaders are particularly influential senders of contagion because followers are more attentive to leaders than the reverse (Sy et al., 2005). Further, leaders tend to feel less constrained by expressive norms than followers, and greater expressiveness induces greater contagion in others (Totterdell et al., 1998). Accordingly, in general lower status individuals undergo greater shift to reach emotional convergence than their higher status peers (Anderson, Keltner, & John, 2003).

Although emotional contagion is initially a dyadic process, with a sender and a receiver, influence is reciprocal and emotional states can spread throughout groups. Indeed, in an *emotional transaction*, the sequence comes full circle, as the expressor is read by the perceivers, who are themselves read by the original expressor, in a dynamically unfolding and updating series of communication acts (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987, 1989). The convergence of group members’ emotional experiences appears to be healthy and beneficial for teams (Barsade & Gibson, 1998; Kelly & Barsade, 2001). Just as closeness can facilitate the transfer of emotional states, emotional contagion also increases closeness. Spoor and Kelly (2004) argued that the convergence of affective states across group members promotes group bonds and loyalty. Accordingly, roommates and married couples who show greater convergence over time in their expressive styles also report more satisfying relationships (Anderson et al., 2003). In intact work groups, Bartel & Saavedra (2000) demonstrated significant convergence in group mood via objective behavioral



cues and self-report scales. Convergence was stronger for groups with richer histories of interaction in the form of more stable membership, greater interdependence, or more clear norms for their regulation of moods. Convergence was also stronger for negative vs. positive moods, suggesting that colleagues are more sensitive and responsive to signals of potential problems. Totterdell and colleagues documented mood convergence among teams of professional cricket players, nurses, and accountants—even while controlling for team performance and shared exposure to the work setting (Totterdell, 2000; Totterdell, Kellett, Teuchmann, & Briner, 1998). Their data suggests a dynamic updating of mood states, given that convergence occurred within single time periods in their event sampling, which ranged between several hours and one day. Convergence was stronger for those reporting greater commitment to their teams and, speaking to changes in social closeness over time, mood linkage among the cricket players was greater when working collectively while playing defense vs. working individually while playing offense. Their collective activity may have provided both greater motivation to converge as well as greater interpersonal exposure. Likewise, Totterdell, Wall, Holman, Diamond, and Epitropaki (2004) found that job-related mood was more similar for employees closer to each other in their task networks. Barsade (2002) used a simulated work task to demonstrate that a confederate's positive expressive cues led to greater teammate positive mood as self-reported and coded by outside observers. This more positive mood, in turn, led to greater cooperation and self-reported performance and lesser conflict. Although empirically groups appear to benefit from emotional contagion, Barsade (2002) argues that—at extremes—mood contagion could be dysfunctional if groups become more rigid in their responses or overcome with strong emotions.

Ultimately, emotional contagion itself can become a stimulus. Frijda and Mesquita (1994) argued that we examine the match between our experience and the appearance of those around us to determine whether our reactions are appropriate with respect to social norms. Intuitively we understand the benefits of convergence and expect to experience it (Hochschild, 1979). Barsade, Ward, Turner, and

Sonnenfeld (2000) applied to affective states the similarity-attraction paradigm, whereby it is reinforcing to be with similar others. Surveying the top management teams of large corporations, they found that emotional similarity in trait positive affect—which influences state positive affect—predicted better self-reported team processes and even marginally better corporate financial performance. They argued that affective diversity reflects team members' initial similarity as well as their ability to converge. The benefits of affective similarity are not limited to positive mood. Indeed, Locke and Horowitz (1990) found that similarity in dysphoria, a low-grade depression, led to more satisfying social interactions. If affective diversity makes groups comfortable, however, sometimes comfort does not help groups to meet their goals. Heterogeneous affect can be a helpful signal of a changing environment (Spoor & Kelly, 2004). Accordingly, groups with greater mood diversity benefited from greater deliberation and better decision making in a simulation using a hidden profile task (Tuncel & Doucet, 2005). Another case in which affective diversity may be helpful is when displays differ in terms of dominance vs. suppression, for which complementarity is preferable to convergence (Tiedens & Fragale, 2003).

### **VIII. Emotional Intelligence**

No review of emotion in organizations could be complete without a section on emotional intelligence (EI). Although EI is not listed in any one stage of the process framework, it is intended as an umbrella construct inclusive of the range of phenomena depicted in Figure 2. That said, at this point in the review, it must be clear that reducing the entire emotion process to one individual difference that aggregates “correct” performance in each of these processes is necessarily an oversimplification. At the same time that EI has captured the attention of the lay public and practitioners alike—thus, making it among the areas within organizational studies most likely to heed Hambrick's (1994) call for the Academy of Management to “matter” (p. 11)—the challenge has been to maintain scientific standards in the face of the incentives that accompany mass popularization. Researchers are pressured to create assessment tools and intervention programs at the individual level, to focus on measures that are easily

scalable, and to present results that are simple and digestible—and they find that there is less interest in their work that has potentially more nuance but less marketability (Furnham, 2006).

Exhaustive reviews of EI appear elsewhere (e.g., Barsade & Mayer, 2007). Likewise, there are detailed critiques (e.g., Fineman, 2004; Matthews et al., 2002), covering topics as diverse as conceptual clarity, divergent validity from existing constructs, scoring difficulties—particularly psychometric shortcomings, and the questionable validity of pencil-and-paper measures, particularly self-report, and the theoretical quandary about how to define correct performance. It is worth noting that many models of emotional intelligence stretch far beyond the boundaries of the emotion process in Figure 2, including nearly everything except the proverbial kitchen sink—e.g., Tett, Fox, and Wang (2005) include creativity and flexible planning, and Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) include self-confidence, conflict management skills, fostering a service climate, and living one's values with transparency. These models are preemptive in that they presume a relationship between emotional skills and desirable qualities rather than testing it. Indeed, interpersonal skills can be used towards beneficent as well as manipulative ends (Steiner, 1959). Further, such models assume that individual differences across the distinct emotional processes converge into a single emotional “g”, which is an empirical question that has not yet been tested beyond common method variance due to response tendencies, verbal intelligence, and other factors involved in pencil-and-paper testing. Given the distinctness of the emotion processes, researchers working within an EI paradigm should steer away from gestalt predictions about the effects of total EI and should make specific predictions about the effects of individual processes, such as expression, recognition, and regulation.

That said, there is provocative new evidence that the best existing tests of emotional intelligence do predict workplace performance, above and beyond the role of cognitive intelligence (Barsade & Mayer, 2007). For example, Côté and Miners (2006) recently demonstrated that emotional intelligence, as measured by Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso's (2002) MSCEIT test, can even compensate for low cognitive

intelligence in predicting task performance and citizenship behavior.

One promising possibility for the future of EI is for researchers to address the issue of how to define correct responses by using objective laboratory-based measures. Scores in current so-called ability tests such as the MSCEIT are based on the opinions of expert and peer samples. Matthews et al. (2002) argued that this practice taps into conformity and knowledge of social norms, rather than ability per se. However, by contrast, objective measures of individual emotional skills can include psychophysiological and behavioral responses, for example the response time in responding to survey scales (Brockner & Higgins, 2001), the degree of interference on stroop tasks using emotional content (Sanchez-Burks, 2005), or the speed of physiological recovery from negative events (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998).<sup>1</sup>

Another promising possibility is to focus on emotional fit rather than emotional intelligence per se. Some contexts reward emotional behaviors that others consider deficient. For example, whereas American mothers prefer children who are assertive and sociable, and consider highly inhibited children to have socialization difficulties, Chinese mothers prefer inhibited children and consider bold children to be emotionally dysregulated (Campos, Frankel, & Camras, 2004). One's social interaction partner is also part of the emotional context. For example, some dyads and groups achieve greater emotion recognition accuracy than would be predicted by their individual skills (Elfenbein et al., 2006; Elfenbein, Polzer, & Ambady, 2007). As with other aspects of organizational culture, organizations may vary in the extent to which they prioritize affective fit—which, indeed, may or may not be uniformly beneficial, particularly when a business environment may call for employees who can represent a range of emotional styles. Truly emotionally intelligent behavior may consist of finding and shaping an environment so that one's dominant emotional responses are acceptable or even rewarded.

## **IX. Culture and Emotion**

Differences across cultural groups are infused into each stage of the emotion process, although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to review them in detail (for reviews, see Elfenbein & Shirako, 2006;

Mesquita & Frijda, 1992). Models of the emotional registration process have been tested cross-culturally and appear to be relatively universal in their mapping of appraisal dimensions to emotional states (Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003; Scherer, 1997). However, first, cultural groups differ in the ways that they map stimuli to the appraisal dimensions. For example, members of individualistic vs. collectivistic cultural groups attribute greater agency to the individual (Morris & Peng, 1994) and, thus, may evaluate events to have greater attributed personal control, resulting in greater blame and lesser uncertainty. Second, cultural groups differ in the schemas and feeling rules that guide their emotional registration, for example with members of collectivistic groups preferring emotional states that emphasize connectedness with others (Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000). Thus, wide variance in the emotions typically experienced across cultural groups also results from cultural differences in the stimuli that one generally encounters as well as regulation via situation selection, situation modification, reappraisal, and experience regulation (Mesquita & Frijda, 1992). Further, once an emotion is experienced, cultural groups differ in the tightness of regulation processes, with collectivistic vs. individualistic groups more likely to inhibit emotional processes for the sake of maintaining social harmony (Ekman, 1972). As discussed in the section on display rules above, cultural groups differ in their style of expressing particular emotions, and emotion recognition is more accurate when judging expressions posed in a culturally familiar style (Elfenbein et al., 2007). In the presence of others' emotional expressions, members of collectivistic vs. individualist groups are more likely to mimic and synchronize such expressive behaviors to be congruent with those around them (Van Baaren, Maddux, Chartrand, de Bouter, & van Knippenberg, 2003). In terms of post-emotional responses in the workplace, even the same emotional state can lead to different instrumental behaviors across cultural groups. For example, Bagozzi, Verbeke, and Gavino (2003) found that salespeople's sense of shame in Holland and the Philippines—operationally defined in terms of self-consciousness in interactions with customers—was similar in its experience, yet differed in its consequences. Whereas Dutch salespeople responded by withdrawing from personal involvement in the

interaction, Filipino salespeople responded by varying their approach to find a more comfortable interaction strategy. In general, psychologists have been actively interested in cultural differences within emotion processes, which remain ripe for exploration within organizational settings.

In general, the study of emotion in organizations has tended to be more fashionable in Western cultural settings, perhaps because the value of emotion seems more counterintuitive to members of individualist vs. collectivist societies. Our field would benefit from more research conducted across diverse contexts. Straightforward cross-cultural replications are necessary for a greater understanding of boundary conditions. However, beyond replication, the impact of culture on emotional processes also offers researchers the opportunity to test theory-driven hypotheses by increasing variance. Notably, Grandey, Fisk, and Steiner (2005) took advantage of differences between France and the US in employee personal control over emotional displays in order to examine the role of personal control.

Organizational researchers should look for ideas, inspiration, and grounding in the large existing literature on cultural differences in emotion. Further, to encourage such research, we should take care not to consider Anglophone Western groups as an implicit reference point, a practice that places an unfair burden on researchers outside these settings to defend the cultural generality of their work. For example, culture is frequently listed as a boundary condition outside the US (e.g., Butt, Choi, & Jaeger, 2005), but there is rarely any mention of culture in research conducted exclusively within the US.

#### **X. What next for emotion in organizations?**

This chapter attempted to review the wide research literature conducted under the banner of emotion in organizations, and to consolidate what we know into a single coherent model in order to provide common ground across these disparate domains. Such a fragmented body of work is common for nascent areas of organizational scholarship (Walsh, 1995). However, Barsade et al. (2003) argued that the field of emotion in organizations is now transforming into a mature, hybrid paradigm that draws from a variety of methods and perspectives.

The current review attempts to further Barsade et al.'s (2003) vision by presenting the integrated process framework. Emotion is a complex set of interrelated processes, and referring to any one piece as *emotion* is a misnomer. I argue that each stage matters at least in part due its interconnectedness with the other stages. For example, internal feeling rules exist to try to elicit appropriate post-emotional behaviors. Emotion recognition exists because expressive cues allow us a window into others' internal states. For this reason, even if researchers are interested in one particular area, wherever possible it is valuable to examine at least one stage forward and one stage backward. The field would benefit from researchers specifying where in the process their phenomenon of interest lives. Although the process framework in Figure 2 is a first step that is inevitably a work in progress to be revised and extended, detailed searches and review of the existing literature suggest that it largely represents the field's existing theoretical and empirical base. Thus, the process framework can be a starting point to situate, theorize and test explicit mechanisms, and to suggest a boundary for what organizational researchers label *emotion*. The term has been something of a Rorschach ink blot test, which at extremes can describe nearly every phenomenon within management. However, as I argued in the introduction, for emotion to mean anything, it cannot mean everything.

A number of challenges remain for affect in organizations. Staw (2005) argued that these challenges include its potentially faddish nature, its possibility of remaining relatively isolated from mainstream organizational studies, its appeal primarily to micro vs. macro and mezzo organizational scholars, its use as a supplemental variable rather than a focus on its own right, and its reliance on theories from psychology without theories specific to emotion in organizations. Organizational researchers have applied these psychological theories into fruitful streams of empirical work, particularly in the areas of emotional stimuli, display rules, feeling rules and norms, the relationship between affective states and performance, and emotional contagion—all specific to organizational contexts. One gap is for organizational scholars to broaden their interests across the emotion processes, as they have

been unevenly focused on specific areas such as post-emotional responses and emotional labor. Work has been less common in some areas that psychologists consider central, such as emotion recognition and emotional registration—which may, indeed, connect emotion more closely to mainstream organizational topics such as power, justice, accountability, and others. Another gap is that, until very recently, there has been relatively less focus on the processes that indeed have the greatest potential for Staw's (2005) call for a uniquely organizational lens—those that move beyond the individual level of analysis into dyads, groups, and even organizations. In the process framework, these interpersonal and higher levels appear primarily in terms of the norms that guide emotion regulation and the iteration of dyadic processes.

At the same time that we need organization-specific theory and research on emotion, we also need organizational researchers to steep themselves in the knowledge base of the disciplines so as not to reinvent the wheel. In particular, appraisal theories of emotion are underutilized, as discussed above. If we appraise every stimulus that is relevant to personal concerns, then any area of business becomes an emotional arena. Many topics central to organizational researchers—such as justice, trust, commitment, and conflict—overlap heavily with appraisal dimensions such as fairness, responsibility, valence, and certainty. Indeed, most topics of intense interest to researchers are interesting precisely because organizational members relate to the phenomena as novel, intrinsically rewarding or punishing, and relevant to goals—the first three of Scherer's (1988) dimensions. Given that society creates emotional labels for frequent clusters of appraisals and behavioral intentions (Fridlund, 1994), we should expect that emotions are woven throughout existing organizational phenomena. However, their co-occurrence does not always make them the mechanism. Indeed, cognition—not emotion—was earlier proposed as the intervening step between a stimulus and a response (Walsh, 1995). Although formal mediation analyses, often using self-reported data, may frequently declare emotion to be the winner, this is often as much a methodological artifact vs. phenomenon. As such, the field would benefit from a moratorium on



omnibus claims to discover “the role of emotion” in existing topics, and emotions researchers should have the burden to justify—theoretically and empirically—that any emotional approach adds uniquely to what we already know.

A further challenge is for organizational work on emotion to incorporate research methods from the disciplines, where the best practices have been more rigorous. The methods that represent emotional phenomena most faithfully are often expensive and intricate, with the state-of-the-art having moved beyond pencil-and-paper. Each emotional process is distinct and can be studied in different ways. Multi-media methods are amenable to organizational phenomena, and allow objective coding of recordings and the presentation to participants of actual expressive behavior. Fineman (1993) called for more focus on the “simmer and flow of everyday emotions” (p. 14), which includes sociological methods such as ethnography and qualitative examination of narratives, even if qualitative methods are sometimes passed over in the attempt for greater legitimacy from quantification (Fineman, 2004). It can be difficult to study emotion observationally because much of it is regulated and, therefore, difficult to observe (Scherer, 1984). However, in the attempt to bypass this difficulty by relying on self-reports, we risk asking our participants to tell us more than they could know (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). Emotion can be so implicit, so automatic, so outside of conscious awareness, that we should not rely—somewhat paradoxically—on participants’ emotional awareness in order to study it. As discussed above in the section on emotional intelligence, valid objective measures can be developed, and examples such as response latency and psychophysiological factors are just a beginning. When self-reported data is necessary, collection in real time via experience sampling is preferable to retrospective reports. On a more mundane level, researchers using self-report measures should be particularly vigilant regarding the possibility of common method bias when they collect perceptions of the work environment, stimulus events and consequences via self-report as well, given that such perceptions may be tainted by affective personality traits (e.g., Bagozzi & Yi, 1990). Vignettes and verbal stimuli are simple to implement, but do not reflect

the richness of truly emotional stimuli. For example, vignette studies tap into implicit theories that may or may not reflect actual behavior. Likewise, explicitly reporting others' emotions to participants bypasses the processes that do or do not lead to their accurate recognition. Ultimately, when done well, organizational research on emotion has the potential to bring to the table the rich context that has been less prevalent in disciplinary work, without sacrificing internal validity.

The final challenge for emotion in organizations has been its mass popularization, but this is a great opportunity as well. On the one hand, scholars have been pressured to formulate their research around the commercial goals of a thirsty business public. On the other hand, it is exciting for an area of management research to attract so much attention outside of the ivory tower (Hambrick, 1994). I end this review by expressing hope that we can preserve this momentum while changing the conversation, to channel the energy around the practical implications away from evaluating individuals—with rewards for those considered to be emotionally savvy—and into improving the emotional quality of our organizations for all (e.g., Dutton, 2003; Frost, 2003).

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**Footnotes**

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