Human Emotion

Culture and Emotion

Are emotions cross-cultural?
Are emotions culturally shaped?
Roadmap

Terminology

Social Constructivism

Cross-Cultural Studies

Nature or Nurture?

Take-Away Qs & Expert Interview
What is culture?
What is Culture?

Definition
Human phenomena that cannot be explained by, or attributed, to genetics or biology.

- Systems of meaning to interpret world
- Concepts transmitted through social participation
- Examples: language, customs
What is Culture?

“Cultural models inform a person’s central values, goals, and concerns, and thus constitute the background against which appraisals are formed.”
How are emotions shaped by culture?

1. Elicitors of emotion
How are emotions shaped by culture?

1. Elicitors of emotion
2. Display rules
How are emotions shaped by culture?

1. Elicitors of emotion
2. Display rules
3. Affect valuation
How are emotions shaped by culture?

1. Elicitors of emotion
2. Display rules
3. Affect valuation
4. Emphasis on emotions
5. Language of emotion
Do scientists think culture shapes emotion?
Terminology

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Take-Away Qs & Expert Interview
"Emotions are not just remnants of our phylogenetic past, nor can they be explained in strictly physiological terms. Rather, they are social constructions, and they can be fully understood only on a social level of analysis."

(Averill, 1980; p. 309)
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<td>Emotions are open systems (not a single function), can be constructed in many different ways.</td>
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What do we know?
Roadmap

Terminology
Social Constructivism
Cross-Cultural Studies
Nature or Nurture?
Take-Away Qs & Expert Interview
Cross-Cultural Comparison
Comparing cultures that differ on particular values (e.g., self-construal) that could influence emotion

Keltner et al., 2013
INDIVIDUALIST cultures emphasize an independent self that is free from others, autonomous, unique, and focused on the maintenance of high self-esteem and the pursuit of one’s own goals.

COLLECTIVIST cultures emphasize an interdependent self that is embedded in relationships, connected with others, and focused on maintaining harmony by adjusting to the demands of the social context or the larger group.
## Cross-Cultural Comparison

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<tr>
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<th>INDIVIDUALIST</th>
<th>COLLECTIVIST</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CULTURES</strong></td>
<td>USA, Europe</td>
<td>Asia, Latin America, Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SELF-CONSTRUAL</strong></td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Interdependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CORE VALUES</strong></td>
<td>Personal achievement, free choice, goal pursuit,</td>
<td>Social harmony, duty to groups, adjustment &amp; fitting in</td>
</tr>
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</table>
How Does Culture Shape Emotion?

Example 1

Culture suggests what are appropriate elicitors (i.e., antecedent conditions) for an emotion
How Does Culture Shape Emotion?

Example 2

Culture shapes appraisals of emotions
Theories of Emotion Timeline

Cognitive Theory
Cognitions (judgments, evaluations, thoughts) necessary for emotions to occur

Lazarus

FEAR
Americans ANGRY

Chinese SAD

Ellsworth & Peng (1997)
How Does Culture Shape Emotion?

Example 3

Culture shapes emotional display rules.
Display Rule

Cultural rules that dictate how emotions should be expressed and when and where their expression is appropriate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>With Experimenter</th>
<th>Alone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Japanese</strong></td>
<td><strong>Japanese</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone-Faced</td>
<td>Showed Just as Much Emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Americans</strong></td>
<td><strong>Americans</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displayed Emotional Reaction</td>
<td>Displayed Emotional Reaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Friesen (1972)
Matsumoto (2008)
How Does Culture Shape Emotion?

Example 4

Culture gives shape to the value we place on emotion.
Affect Valuation

JEANNE TSAI
Stanford University
Affect Valuation and Culture

ACTUAL AFFECT
“How I actually feel”

IDEAL AFFECT
“How I would like to feel”

Tsai et al., 2006; Tsai, 2007
What is your ideal affect?
High Arousal Positive (HAP)

Courtesy of Hillary Devlin
Low Arousal Positive (LAP)
Affect Valuation and Culture

High Arousal
- Aroused
- Astonished
- Surprised

Low Arousal
- Quiet
- Passive
- Inactive

Positive
- Happy
- Content
- Satisfied

Negative
- Unhappy
- Sad
- Lonely

Western Cultures
- Enthusiastic
- Elated
- Excited

Eastern Cultures
- Relaxed
- Calm
- Peaceful

Tsai et al., 2006; Tsai, 2007
How Does Culture Shape Emotion?

Example 5

Culture influences which emotions are emphasized and talked about.
**Hypercognized**

Emphasized in a culture, become objects of discussion, has elaborate cognitive structure usually seen with rich vocabularies.

**Hypocognized**

Underemphasized in a society, limited cognitive structure (few words for).
Hypercognized Emotion
Hypocognized Emotion
How Does Culture Shape Emotion?
Example 6

Culture shapes our language for emotion
Culture Specific Emotion Words

Some emotions are not universal but are culturally specific.

Consider Amae in Japan
Culture Specific Emotion Words

Schadenfreude - Germany
Culture Specific Emotion Words

FOMO
 Fear of Missing Out Quiz  
How much do you suffer from FoMO? Take the test!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all true of me</th>
<th>Slightly true of me</th>
<th>Moderately true of me</th>
<th>Very true of me</th>
<th>Extremely true of me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I miss out on a planned get-together it bothers me. *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I get anxious when I don't know what my friends are up to. *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It bothers me when I miss an opportunity to meet up with friends.*</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get worried when I find out my friends are having fun without me.*</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is important that I understand my friends &quot;in jokes&quot;. *</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sometimes, I wonder if I spend too much time keeping up with what is going on. *</td>
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<tr>
<td>When I go on vacation, I continue to keep tabs on what my friends are doing. *</td>
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<tr>
<td>I fear others have more rewarding experiences than me. *</td>
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<td>When I have a good time it is important for me to share the details online (e.g. updating status). *</td>
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http://www.ratemyfomo.com/
Culture Specific Absences

Disgust? - Polish
Sadness? Guilt? - Tahitian
Emotion? - Tibetan
Embarrassment? - Indonesian
Anger? - Inuit Culture
Language ≠ Experience
How Does Culture Shape Emotion?

Example 7

Culture influences how we read other’s emotions
How do you read other’s emotions?

- Japanese participants paid more attention to the eyes.

- American participants paid more attention to the mouth.
American participants paid attention to the target individual.

Japanese participants paid more attention to the social context (i.e., emotions of others).

Confirmed using eye tracking methods.
How Does Culture Shape Emotion?

Example 8

Culture influences whether we can experience several emotions at the same time.
Dialecticism: Opposites are not seen as contradictory

Tested 38 nations that varied from individualist-collectivist, and also varied in dialectic beliefs.

Schimmack et al., 2007

Can you be happy and sad?
Can you be happy *and* sad?

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<thead>
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<th>DIALECTIC</th>
<th>NON-DIALECTIC</th>
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<td>COUNTRIES</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>USA, Africa, Latin America</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONCEPTUALIZATION</td>
<td>“Opposite valence” emotions seen as compatible</td>
<td>“Opposite valence” emotions seen as incompatible</td>
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<td>EXPERIENCE</td>
<td>More frequent experiences of mixed positive and negative affect</td>
<td>Less frequent experiences of mixed positive and negative affect</td>
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Roadmap

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Cultural Influences on Emotion

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Take-Away Qs & Expert Interview
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Take-Away Qs & Expert Interview
Experts In Emotion

*EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY*
Experts In Emotion
Interview

Dr. Jeanne Tsai
Associate Professor of Psychology
Stanford University

Culture and Emotion
Thank You!

Psychology 3131
Professor June Gruber