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INTRODUCTION

Human beings are social animals. We gather in groups, we live in close proximity to one another, and we value social connectedness. We judge a person's worth by his or her relative standing in the social hierarchy. We use acceptance and rejection as primary and powerful ways to reward and punish others. From the very beginning, we engage in behaviors that socialize our children into the larger society. We make face-to-face contact and we spend hours chatting at an infant who is incapable of understanding. Milestones, including the first "social smile" at age 6 weeks, starting school, and getting married, are all desirable events because they further embed us in society and have the potential to widen and enrich our social worlds. We typically celebrate or mourn (with others) all important and, hence, emotional events. If humans engage in behavior that threatens this larger social environment by violating social norms, we punish members of our own species by restricting their access to others or by removing them from society. Inmates who violate

http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0000098-001
The Social Foundations of Emotion: Developmental, Cultural, and Clinical Dimensions, by S. G. Hofmann and S. N. Doan
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social norms in the prison system are further (emotionally) punished through social isolation.

Given the ubiquitous nature of our social world and our innate drive to belong, it is obvious that our social world directly influences our emotional lives—from how we understand and construct emotions to how they shape our overall well-being. However, many emotion theorists all but ignore the importance of social factors in their investigation of emotions; instead, they focus on emotion as primarily biological and privately lived experiences. The most likely explanation is that contemporary emotion theories and research have been shaped primarily by a biological, mechanistic, and overly simplistic evolutionary perspective. The goal of this book is to bring the social world into focus for the theories and research on emotions. Our primary argument is that human emotions developed and are experienced, expressed, and regulated though others and with others; human emotions happen within the social and cultural context. This social or cultural-relativity approach to emotions is the primary foundation of this book.

We realize that our argument stands in contrast to many notable emotion theorists, as we explain in more detail later. Many of these theorists have been influenced heavily by the evolutionary perspectives put forth by Charles Darwin. This traditional view of human emotions has overly emphasized—and perhaps even been limited by—an intrapersonal, evolutionary, and biologically oriented perspective. This perspective assumes that emotions are internal states that have evolved to deal with universal human predicaments, such as achievements, failures, and losses. Emotions are seen as reactions to a stimulus whose function is to motivate behaviors associated with certain brain circuitries and psychobiology in response to situational cues. Discrete *basic* emotions are thought to be present during infancy and develop according to a maturational timetable, with each emotion having its own corresponding set of prototypical expressions and corresponding physiological and neurological signature.

Although some theorists acknowledge culture and social forces in emotions, they tend to assign them a very narrow role (Ekman, 1992a, 1992b; Izard, 1992; Tomkins, 1963, 1982), focusing primarily on how they may moderate the antecedents of emotions, create norms for display rules, and color the emotional experience. From this perspective, an emotion is a biologically based and evolutionarily adaptive response to environmental stimuli that are universal experiences expressed through similar facial expressions across all cultures (Ekman, Friesen, & Ellsworth, 1972). In direct contrast to the biological perspectives are the social constructivists who believe that all emotions are social constructions (e.g., L. F. Barrett, 2017a, 2017b). This approach emphasizes the importance of conceptual

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knowledge, categorization, and situations that are used to construct an experience of emotion (L. F. Barrett & Russell, 2015).

Our own perspective lies somewhere in the middle. We argue that emotions cannot be reduced to distinct biological phenomena without considering social and cultural contexts. However, we do not share the view that emotions are exclusively social constructions per se. We do acknowledge that some emotions are biologically mediated experiences associated with physiological changes. At the same time, through the process of development and specifically socialization and mentalization, humans become capable of experiencing emotions whose core elements are primarily socially and psychologically constructed rather than biologically mediated. Importantly, past emotion theorists often have ignored the fact that the mind develops over time. Thus, the emotional experience should change from infancy to adulthood. This process of change and development happens through the process of socialization. Although we do not believe that emotions are exclusively social constructions, we emphasize that the emotional experience is fundamentally shaped and colored by cultural and social influences to the extent that in fully developed humans, emotion can be understood only in the social or cultural context in which it develops and is observed.

Modern evolutionary theories have moved beyond genetics to include other inheritance systems, such as *epigenetics*, environmentally induced activation and deactivation of gene expressions, and *social learning*, motivating a suite of behaviors that are subject to selection (Jablonka & Lamb, 2006; Penn, Holyoak, & Povinelli, 2008). Genetic and cultural evolution processes have been interacting with one another throughout the history of human evolution (Richerson & Boyd, 2005). We embrace and expand on these concepts, and we argue that it is the interaction between culture and biology that gives rise to the human experience of emotions, rather than social or biological factors alone. In elucidating our core arguments, we contend that to understand human emotions, we need to understand the concept of the self and how it changes over time. Because of our ability for self-awareness and reflection, and, importantly, theory-of-mind abilities that allow us to represent other's awareness and mental states, humans represent a unique species. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the human species is the construct of the self and its ability to project and conceptualize itself both in time (i.e., past and future selves), as well as space (i.e., self as individual or self as seen by society). This ability of self-consciousness is linked to high-level cognitive processes, including language, culture, empathy, and many social emotions.

As we describe in more detail in Chapter 2, we posit the existence of two different aspects of the self: the core self and the social self. The *core self* is involved in what has been described in the literature as basic emotions,

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whereas the *social self* is the part of the self that is needed to understand and experience social emotions. These two aspects of the self are certainly not independent. The core self develops into the social self over time as the person becomes socialized. Therefore, virtually any emotional experience likely begins as a biological process that is strongly shaped, colored, and defined by social and cultural influences. We neither promote a social constructivist perspective nor do we want to reduce emotions to a biological and evolutionary adaptive phenomenon. Instead, we argue in this text that social and cultural factors are *fundamental* to understanding the emotional experiences of humans. In our view, basic emotion researchers neglect these fundamental aspects, and social constructivists fail to acknowledge the part of the self that is constructing the experience of emotion.

Social factors at birth shape the development of the individual in fundamental ways that influence the very nature of emotional experiences, embedding them into the social context. Using diverse perspectives pointing to the communicative function of emotions, primary socialization processes that influence emotion, cultural factors, the social processes in self-regulation, and the role of social support, this book explores the many social aspects of emotions. We argue that contemporary emotion theories have underemphasized—and even ignored—the social dimensions of emotions, despite that emotions typically happen within a relational context within a larger social or cultural environment. We emphasize that humans are not passive recipients of emotional stimuli but are active constructionists of their emotional world. Emotions are not only experienced in this context, but individuals also regulate emotions through others and with others (which recently has been termed *interpersonal emotion regulation*). We argue that the sociocultural context is not simply a contributing factor some of the time, but, instead, claim that it is a constant, ubiquitous, and essential factor for understanding human emotions.

This perspective is consistent with recent emotion theories (LeDoux & Brown, 2017). Emotions are viewed neither as hardwired, biologically determined experiences associated with evolutionary adaptive response patterns nor as exclusively the products of social construction. Rather, these theories place great emphasis on the context, language, culture, and social influences as determinants of emotions while acknowledging the biological fundamentals of emotions. We see emotions—and especially social emotions—as being closely tied to the self, especially the social self. As the social self develops over time during the course of a human's lifetime, so do emotions evolve with the development of the social self. We realize that to some readers, this thesis might seem like a radical departure from biologically oriented conceptualizations of human emotions. However, we believe that the existing empirical evidence clearly supports our contention.

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Given the complexity of the subject matter, we have had to cover a lot of ground. We have not shied away from going into considerable depth and moving into breadth to understand the subject matter. The result is this scholarly book that tries to target a broad audience, especially advanced students and scholars on the subject. At the same time, we have tried to avoid an overly academic writing style to make the discussion engaging and lively while staying theoretically focused and grounded in empirical evidence. In the end, we hope that this book will be helpful to clinicians, researchers, and students interested in expanding their understanding of human emotions and emotion theories.

Our hope is that our book will contribute—or perhaps initiate—a much-needed discussion on human emotions, which has become a popular topic in academic circles, as well as among the educated public. We also hope to encourage interdisciplinary thinking and collaborations. Like any complex construct, an understanding of emotions requires integration across multiple levels, including, biology, the mind, and society. We have noted in our working relationship that emotions as studied by social and cognitive psychologists often ignore the large body of work on emotional development conducted by developmentalists or cultural influences as investigated by anthropologists. This lack of cross-communication is reminiscent of the parable of the blind men and the elephant. The lenses we wear from our specialized fields allow us to see only one aspect of emotion, which limits our understanding. Thus, one goal of our book is to attempt to integrate disparate bodies of research on emotion to provide a more nuanced and theoretically rich conceptualization of emotion. We also hope our book will not only find its way into the hands of frontline researchers and scholars of emotions but also to students and the educated and curious readers who want to learn more about current perspectives on human emotions.

After providing a review of the traditional and contemporary literature on emotions in Chapter 1, we discuss emotions within the life-course perspective in Chapter 2. In particular, we highlight how emotions and self-development are intertwined and are affected heavily by social interactions at birth. We present various mechanisms by which the social environment becomes integrated with individual biological responses and leads to emotions as an emergent property.

In Chapter 3, we review the latest neuroscience research that has focused on social aspects that affect the way emotions are processed in the brain (which sometimes is referred to as *social neuroscience*). We discuss the literature that has investigated the neural underpinnings of emotions, as well as work that has examined how impairments in specific areas may influence the social processing of emotions.

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Chapter 4 discusses sociocultural aspects of emotions in more detail. We argue that human emotions are shaped and learned, and occur within the social and cultural contexts. This chapter elaborates on the idea that social factors shape emotion by providing anthropological, sociological, and psychological evidence for how cultural values and beliefs shape the type of emotions we experience, how we express them, and the extent to which they affect our behavior. For example, natural healers can induce extreme emotions or even death through suggestions that are consistent with a cultural tradition. To provide a less extreme example, many daily emotional experiences, such as anger and love, are experienced qualitatively different across cultures. Additionally, we review a number of culturally specific emotional disorders that are uniquely shaped by the social context, such as *taijin kyfusho* and *ataques de nervios*.

Chapter 5 expands our discussion to the socialization of emotions. Here, we provide a developmental review of how emotional experiences, emotional expressions, and emotion situation knowledge develop throughout infancy and childhood. Specifically, we investigate social processes, such as emotion contagion, socialization, and parental and peer influences, that are present in early development and influence emotions. This review highlights the importance of social interactions and social institutions. We also discuss specific events within a social context (e.g., child abuse) that may lead to disruptions in emotional development.

In Chapter 6, we discuss social emotions in the context of human morality, such as guilt, shame, and pride. These emotional experiences are considered uniquely human and are particularly social in nature. We discuss both social influences and social implications of these emotions. We also discuss the ideas of collective guilt and collective shame, and their impact on the larger society.

Chapter 7 examines the social regulation of emotions. Predominant views of emotion regulation have focused primarily on *intra*personal processes. Yet, recent theoretical perspectives and empirical research have demonstrated that *inter*personal processes may be a more important and common way to cope with emotions. In this chapter, we discuss the extent to which social others (e.g., parents, partners, friends) affect one's ability to regulate emotions. This chapter also examines the role of social institutions, such as the legal system and religious organizations, and their influence on emotion regulation. We investigate these social influences on the regulation of both negative and positive affect.

In Chapter 8, we analyze the social–emotional aspects of common emotional disorders. Specifically, we discuss three cases that illustrate the role of the safety person or safety signal in panic disorder and agoraphobia, as well as numerous other social–emotional aspects of avoidant personality disorder

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and borderline personality disorder. Each case represents common psychopathologies with clear biological and temperamental correlates of the disorder. At the same time, we clearly observe social–emotional aspects that contribute to the development and maintenance of these disorders.

We conclude with Chapter 9, which summarizes our arguments. We also highlight gaps in the literature and suggest directions for future research.

We hope that this book will convince some readers that human emotions are more than physiological patternings of arousal and valence—that the development of human emotions is socially mediated, and social dimensions are even more fundamental than biology to understanding the uniqueness of human emotions. We also hope that we are able to convey that the social foundations of emotions are not of secondary importance as compared with evolutionary, biological, and other intrapersonal factors for understanding emotions in humans. Rather, they are integral to understanding how our species embody, understand, and experience emotion.