

# **Affective Computing**

## **PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAM**

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### **1 Introduction to Affective Computing**

In this section, I discuss the concept of artificial emotions. I briefly review the influential cognitive theories which describe emotions. These theories provide cognitive structure of emotions and some of them describe the underlying evaluative processes of emotion eliciting mechanisms. This is important in my work because I am interested to investigate how emotions are involved in collaboration and how the dynamics of a collaboration structure impact the underlying processes of emotion.

Studies show that the decision making of humans is not always logical [21], and in fact, not only is pure logic not enough to model human intelligence, but it also shows failures when applied in artificial intelligence systems [13]. Emotions impact fundamental parts of cognition including perception, memory, attention and reasoning [6]. This impact is caused by the information emotions carry about the environment and event values. The influence of emotions depends on an individual's focus of attention. For instance, a positive affect can cause a positive attitude towards an object if the individual's focus is on the object, whereas the same positive affect can be interpreted as a positive feedback towards one's partner during the course of a collaboration. As another example, a positive feedback can promote certain cognitive processes, or it can inhibit other cognitive processes according to the conditions in the environment [7]. In both cases, emotions play a regulatory role for cognitive processes [20]. Some of the effects flow from underlying shifts in the way people perceive and think under the influence of emotion.

### **2 Computational Theories of Emotion/Affect**

#### **2.1 Appraisal Theory of Emotions**

The emotional experience is the experience of a particular situation [16]. Appraisal theory describes the cognitive process by which an individual evaluates the situation in the environment with respect to the individual's

well-being and triggers emotions to control internal changes and external actions. According to this theory, appraisals are separable antecedents of emotion, that is, the individual first evaluates the environment and then feels an appropriate emotion [43]. The appraisal procedure begins with the evaluation process of the environment according to the internalized goals and is based on systematic assessment of several elements [42]. The outcome of this process triggers the appropriate emotions. At the end, the Coping mechanism manages the individual's action with respect to the individual's emotional state and the existing internal and/or external demands [15]. An individual can also use knowledge about the emotional reactions of others to make inferences about them. According to the appraisal patterns, different emotions can be experienced and expressed. Since expression of emotions reflects one's intentions through the appraisal process, the *reverse appraisal* mechanism helps one to infer other's mental states based on their expressions. [11, 22].

### 3 Relation to Psychology and Sociology

- Refer to functions of emotions (Page 48 in proposal).

#### 3.1 Emotion in Social Context

Emotions are involved in developing social context. Humans are social and most of the causations and constitutions of their emotions are social. Brian Parkinson in [34] argues that many of the causes of emotions are interpersonal and communicative rather than internal and reactive phenomena. There are different social aspects of emotions influenced by various factors such as social context and social relationship type. For instance, a dominant-submissive social relationship can cause and contain different emotions with different intensities compared to a reciprocal or a friendship social relationship type. As another example, an emotion can be interpreted in a certain way when an individual is situated in an environment with other people who are expressing a particular emotion.

There are numerous ways that emotions can be social [46]. There is a consensus on the fact that social events and entities surrounding the individual play an essential role in the generation of emotion. There are several ways in which other people elicit emotional responses in us. One is that we feel the emotions of those around us. Also, we have emotions about actions of those people around us. Another is we have emotions about the things

that happen to other people. Yet another is our concern about our relationship with others that elicits emotion in us. The groups to which we belong can also elicit our emotions. Moreover, we can feel emotion about the success and failure of our own group or of other groups. In addition, groups or individuals may make salient cultural concerns or societal expectations that can elicit our emotions.

Beside the fact that social context can cause eliciting emotions in individuals, social context provides information about what emotion should be expressed, by whom, and in what situations. For instance, people are well aware of the inappropriateness of expressing too much emotion to acquaintances [46]. However, the social knowledge of emotion expression is only partially delivered in an explicit fashion. There are studies on the regulatory role of society and social relationships on emotions, showing that people's emotions become socialized in implicit and unconscious ways. From this perspective, social context can control and direct our attention toward certain types of events and away from others.

### **3.2 Social Meaning of Events**

Humans are emotional and social beings. Their emotions and the social context in which they are involved have mutual impacts on each other. But, what if humans can share their emotions with others just as they share their thoughts, resources and their environment. Sharing an emotion with others may alter the experience of an event. For instance, according to the nature of the relationship between the individuals, the expression of emotions can either restrain them from further interactions or improve their relationship. Furthermore, individuals sharing emotions might possess a shared understanding of their environment. Socially shared and regulated emotions also provide social meanings to the events happening in the environment [48]. For instance, people are likely to make social inferences based on the presence or absence of particular emotions in their social environment. Moreover, emotions can provide a basis for judgment depending on the individual's relationships with others. In other words, emotions can associate or disassociate an individual, therefore, they can change or maintain the individual's social relationships [46].

### **3.3 Social Motivator**

Emotions can also play the role of a motivator in a social context. There is a subset of social emotions delineated as role-taking emotions in [44]. Shott

provides two categories of *reflexive* (e.g. shame or pride) and *empathic* (e.g., empathy or pity) role-taking emotions. The reflexive emotions can motivate the individual's self-control which depends on the anticipated reactions of others to the individual's behaviors. For instance, guilt might lead the individual to behave altruistically to restore a positive social stance for that individual. Empathic or vicarious emotions are based on an individual mentally placing himself in other's situation to understand how the other feels in that situation. These emotions motivate prosocial behaviors to maintain an individual's internal well-being [45].

### 3.4 Communicating Emotions

Humans need to communicate their emotions within the social context for different reasons. In [18] Goffman argues that human behaviors around others are performative which is often intended to convey information to others. When human's actions are visible in the social context, they behave differently in the presence of the others [50]. The social life of an individual is comprised of the individual's internal cognitive competencies and his interactions in the society. Lazarus says, if society is a fabric, then emotion is its color [29]. Although emotions undeniably have personal aspects, they are usually experienced in a social context and acquire their significance in relation to this context [31].

A successful and effective emotional communication necessitates ongoing reciprocal adjustments between interactants that can happen by interpreting each other's behaviors [31]. It not only requires proper interpretation of the other's expressions, but also correct assessment of the extent to which others can read an individual's expressions. In emotional communication, individuals are constantly exchanging messages about their mental states, and modifying each other's emotional responses as they occur. Individuals perceive other's emotional states through verbal and nonverbal responses during the interaction by processing relevant messages. Communication dynamics represent the temporal relationship between these communicative messages. The verbal and nonverbal messages from one participant are better interpreted inside the correct context including the history and the ongoing messages from the other individuals. Interpersonal dynamics (also known as micro-dynamics in sociology) represent this influence of relationships between individuals [33].

### 3.5 Social Functions

Humans are able to communicate their emotions in a social context. The social functions of emotions are the reason behind why humans try to communicate their emotions. In this section, I briefly discuss these social functions of emotions since they are directly related to my work. Ekman in [14] asserts that the primary function of emotions is to mobilize the organism to deal with important interpersonal encounters. Darwin in [9] argues the significance of social communicative functions of emotions. Emotions describe interpersonal dynamics in a way that they can constitute individuals' relationships [34, 46]. One aspect of expressing and communicating emotion in a social context is to express one's social motives and intentions [24]. Another aspect of communicating emotions is to reveal the underlying mental states of an individual [35]. In other words, emotions constitute two different functionalities of expressing communicative signals associated with one's social motives and intentions as well as expressing one's internal states and how one feels about something. In [28] Van Kleef has discussed the idea of inferential processes with which individuals can infer information about others' feelings, relational orientations and behavioral intentions based on their emotional expressions. He also argues that emotional expressions can impact social interactions by eliciting others' affective responses.

Functional accounts vary according to the kind of system being analyzed. Therefore, functional approaches to the emotions should vary by level of analysis. Social functions of emotions can be analyzed in *individual*, *dyadic*, *group* and *cultural* levels. My focus in this research is on social functions in dyadic interaction (more specifically collaboration); I also consider these functions at the individual's level especially when interpreting the other collaborator's behaviors. Studies in all these levels share a few assumptions about social accounts of emotions. They assume a) individuals are social by nature and pursue solutions to survival problems in social relationships, b) individuals apply their emotions to coordinate their social interactions and relationships to address these survival problems, c) emotions are processes mediating the individuals' relations to their dynamic environment [26]. In dyadic interactions, studies focus on how emotions impact the interactions of individuals in meaningful relationships. In [26] Keltner and Haidt discuss that in a dyadic setting, researchers mostly focus on communication of emotion (e.g. Scherer [41], DePaulo [12]), properties (e.g. emotion contingency, emotion synchrony) of dyadic emotions (e.g. Levenson & Gottman [30]), discourse (e.g. Bretherton [4]), and attachments (e.g. Hazan & Shaver [23]).

### 3.6 Dyadic Interaction

As mentioned earlier, the social context is an important factor influencing one's emotions. A dyadic interaction is one type of a setting in a social context. Dyadic interaction tasks allow us to study emotion in a social setting [8]. Dyadic interaction tasks make it possible to examine how individuals experience and express emotions during social interactions and how emotions shape and are shaped by the reciprocal interactions between individuals. In addition, eliciting and monitoring emotional processes yields useful information about the role emotion plays in interpersonal relationships. Compared with other emotion-eliciting events, events in a dyadic interaction can better help us study an ongoing emotional relationship between two individuals in addition to their internal emotional and cognitive processes. Dyadic interaction tasks are ideal for studying a range of emotional responses because of the fairly unstructured conversations between the individuals. Thus, dyadic interaction tasks will generate a wide range of emotions in comparison with the controlled emotion-eliciting events.

## 4 Similarities and Differences

## 5 Applications in Autonomous Agents and Robots

There are several examples in artificial intelligence and robotics of applying the appraisal theory as the basis of a computational model for emotions [1, 27, 32]. In [39] authors describe a system approach to appraisal processes based on Scherer's work on appraisal and the Component Process Model (CPM) [40]. They show how the temporal unfolding of emotions can be experimentally tested. In this thesis, I use the cognitive appraisal theory of emotion provided by Gratch and Marsella in [19]. They lay out a general domain-independent computational model of appraisal and coping. I use this appraisal approach, in general, as an evaluation mechanism for the internal and external events to assist the cognition and collaboration processes in my theory.

### 5.1 Sociability

Social skills have been mostly neglected in artificial intelligence and robotics. However, there is a broad discussion in natural and social sciences, e.g. psychology and primatology [2, 3, 25, 47, 49], about the role of social factors in the development of intelligence [10] (see Sections ?? to ??). Robots in the

real world, e.g. domestic robots or collaborative robots, require extensive understanding of aspects of humans' behaviors within their environment as well as the ability to communicate and collaborate with them. Emotions, as coordinated responses to detected or inferred relational meanings of the environment (based on appraisal theory), can provide understanding of the social environment, and the capability of communicating internal mental states and maintaining collaborations with human partners. In fact, the emotion processes momentarily respond to the unfolding affordances and constraints offered by the dynamic context of a social interaction [36]. Appraisal can provide the assessment of goal relevance and goal congruence with focus on self or other, the event, or the object in a social context [37]. In short, the agent will be capable of appraising the social environment in order to maintain effective social interaction.

## 5.2 Decision Making

Decision-Making is an important and complicated process for any robot or virtual agent. This process becomes more complicated when the agent needs to make a decision considering its own private goal, the collaboration's shared goal and the human collaborator's interests. I will provide more details about the following concepts in Chapter ??.

There are examples of rational and social agents designed based on the decision theory and emotional states [17]. Agents must take a form of action after making a decision. Zhu and Thagard argue how emotions significantly affect the action generation procedure as well as action execution and control [51]. The decision-making procedure, as the basis of an agent's behaviors and actions, is a crucial process for an agent in a social environment. Decision-making is a process that unfolds over time and should be explored in more detail. According to [38], the temporal structure of the decision-making process contains three component processes:

1. Choosing among options initially involves the process of *assessing* the available options. One's affective state and appraisal evaluation of one's internal state as well as the surrounding environment helps in the assessment of all available options. For example, based on the scenario in section ??, Robot's emotion instance is fear because of an existing block in the plan and its evaluation of Astronaut's emotion as anger (for the same reason). The assessment of available options will be based on minimizing the distance to the shared goal and Astronaut's satisfaction. For instance, if Robot faces a non-critical task, it will

give higher value to Astronaut’s demanding task which will cause the postponement of its own.

2. This process is followed by the *selection* of an option based on the value that has been assigned to the option. This process is also augmented by affective evaluation of the world, including self, other(s) and the environment. For instance, in our scenario (see section ??), following the assessment of available options, Robot will focus on Astronaut’s preferred task. Also, Robot creates and annotates meta information of the current state of the collaboration with affective evaluations.
3. Finally, the outcome associated with the selected action is *evaluated* and *incorporated* into existing knowledge for subsequent decisions which implicitly and explicitly help the belief and appraisal emotion systems to operate coherently over time. For instance, if something goes wrong the Robot gives a negative affective attribution to the outcome of the selected action or even a certain path to that action to be used in future assessments.

People’s experience of events leak into their beliefs and ultimately decisions. One aspect of these type of experiences is conscious or unconscious annotations by different emotions. For instance, one will never forget working with a friend due to the pleasant feeling of experiencing the outcome. On the other hand, a person will always remember a particular experience in life because of an utterly negative emotion that was felt at the time [38].

Emotions appear to influence the value and weight computation of available alternatives, and these computations are dynamically adjusted based on the environment and the individual’s internal states [5]. This way agents can operate and take actions based on preferences. In other words, emotional states of individuals are linked to their decision-making processes, assuming that emotions affect the way gains or losses are transformed to weights and values of the alternative beliefs, actions, tasks, and, in general, plans [38]. The outcome of an action is also profoundly bound to the decision making process as a final and an important stage. The experience of an outcome and in particular, the differences between the expected and observed outcome provides an opportunity to improve one’s beliefs about consequences (value) of the available alternatives and adopt a better decision policy in the future [5, 38].



## 6 Conclusion

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