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Societal origins of values and evaluative feelings

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Abstract

This chapter outlines an understanding of the societal origins of values and value feelings. I depart from the assumption that feelings and emotions are critical to understand the emergence of human values and value pluralism as well as their influence on social action. This perspective is elaborated by a review of the sociological literature on the emergence of values, in particular of works that have traditionally emphasized the role of feelings in the genesis of values and in value commitments. In a second step, the chapter discusses recent developments in theories of moral judgment, in particular works suggesting universal domains in which moral values arise. Acknowledging that intuitive moral feelings play a critical role in these accounts, I suggest that these feelings are not limited to or originate from specific universal domains of sociality and morality. Rather, I use constructionist accounts of human emotion to show that, through rituals and social practices, evaluative feelings can be tied to almost arbitrary objects, ideas, and domains of social life. In extending this view, I propose that understanding the origins of values and value feelings requires comprehensive theories and models of how evaluative affective responses become widely shared within groups and societies.

Keywords: sociality, values, evaluative feelings, rituals, practices, constructionism

Societal origins of values and evaluative feelings

Sociology, in a broad understanding, is traditionally concerned with two problems, explanations of social action and social order. Values and valuation have always played key roles in both domains. Although the concept of "values" today is much more frequently used in sociology, theories of "value" and "valuation" have an equally long tradition, dating back to Marx ([1867] 1976) and Simmel ([1900] 1978). Theories of value are, in most cases, concerned with the question of what individuals "value", i.e. what they deem good or desirable and seek to obtain in terms of their interests (Spillman & Strand, 2013). Understandings of value in contemporary sociology are closely related to the concept of utility, as it is used in economics or rational choice theory, and primarily refer to "subjective psychological value" (Molm, 1997, p. 14). In this view, subjective psychological value is more or less tied to basic affective responses of hedonic pleasure (e.g., Higgins, 2006).

The idea that interests and subjective valuations determine individuals' actions becomes a sociological one given two basic premises. First is the idea that a host of subjective interests is shared across many, if not most, individuals in a society, for instance basic needs related to bodily homeostasis. Hence, actions based on widely shared valuations should produce certain social structural effects, although they are equally known to lead to competition, conflict, and the disruption of order since valued resources are usually scarce. Second, and more intriguing, is the conjecture that individual valuations manifest a genuinely social dimension when the goods and services that people value are *exchanged* between individuals. What Simmel ([1900] 1978) has argued early on in his *Philosophy of Money* has become a cornerstone of modern exchange theories (Emerson, 1976): The exchange of (individually) valued goods requires their values to be compared to one another, which means that what is individually valued becomes, first,

socially related, and thus, second, clearly transcends the realm of individual valuation (see also Canto Mila, 2005, p. 164).

In contrast to individual valuations and their social ramifications, the concept of "values" in sociology explicitly focuses on the idea of socially shared beliefs and convictions that can hardly be commoditized. Traditionally, values are understood as conceptions of the desirable, as Kluckhohn (1951) famously noted: "A value is a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable, which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action" (p. 395). As such, values are, on the one hand, crucial ingredients to culture and symbolic social order, and many scholars have argued that values are the *essence* of culture, as reflected in Weber's figure of the "Kulturmensch" (cultural being) (Weber, [1904] 1949; see Oakes, 2003). Values are usually distinguished from a close relative, social norms, in that they are context-independent reasons for action and that they need not be (but in fact often are) backed by informal sanctions.

In addition to self-interests related to utility and individual valuation, values are, on the other hand, not only seen as conceptions of the desirable, but also as concrete motivators of social action (Weber, [1921] 1978; Parsons & Shils, 1951). One of the most debated issues in sociological theory is in fact the distinction between actions that are clearly based on individual interests and valuations and those that are "value rational" in the sense that they are aimed at what is deemed desirable, but what is often not actually *desired* because it is individually costly or runs counter to one's immediate interests (Weber, [1921] 1978). Many instances of prosocial behavior, such as donating or volunteering (Schokkaert, 2006; Omoto & Snyder, 1995), can be conceived of as forms of value rational action.

Based on these two assumptions, a vast array of social science research has attended to measuring the values that people hold dear, often in large population-based surveys (e.g., Rokeach, 1973; Hofstede, 1984; Schwartz, 1992; see overviews by Spates, 1983; Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004; Wuthnow, 2008). On the one hand, this research investigates associations between values and various forms of social action, for instance voting behavior (Schwartz, 1996; Leimgruber, 2011), economic performance (Granato, Inglehart, & Leblang, 1996), gender relations (Xiao, 2000), religious practices (Kim, 2008), or environmental behavior (Poortinga, Steg, & Vlek, 2004). On the other hand, scholars in this tradition have studied values and how they change over time to assess and describe the "culture" of a population and its dynamics (e.g., Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). The aim of these studies often is comparative in the sense of identifying differences and similarities in the value structures of societies or amongst different subgroups of a society. Although many have argued that values do not only reflect what is desirable but likewise have a motivational force (e.g., Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992), only very few studies have directly investigated the processes and mechanisms underlying the linkage of values and specific actions (but see Maio, Olson, Bernard, & Luke, 2003; Tao & Au, 2014).

After values had become out of fashion in sociological research on action and interaction, they recently regained prominence in various areas of study (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). One of the major debates revolves around the status of values in determining or informing action. Whereas it was long taken for granted that values somehow "cause" behavior or are direct predictors of action, more recent studies paint a markedly more nuanced picture arguing that values are often cultural "tools" that are deployed for post-hoc justifications or rationalizations of actions rather than as direct and immediate motivators (Vaisey, 2009; Swidler, 1986). If this was indeed the case, then the question to be asked is what principles and mechanisms bring about the observable

patterns of action in situations that cannot be fully explained by (material) self-interests? A second and largely unresolved issue in sociological accounts of values is how they emerge in the first place. Although much is known about changes in values in longer terms, for instance as a consequence of modernization or globalization (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005), and about links between values and socio-demographic indicators, for example race and ethnicity (Waters, 1990), social class (Kohn, Naoi, Schoenbach, Schooler, & Slomczynski, 1990), or age cohort (McBroom, Reed, Burns, Hargraves, & Trankel 1985) (see Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004, for an overview), comparably little research has directly addressed the question of where values actually "come from", i.e. what the basic mechanisms and processes are by which individual valuations become socially shared within a group (but see Joas, 2001; Bourdon, 2001).

In this chapter, I will address both of these topics. In particular, drawing on classical theorizing and more recent empirical evidence, I suggest that feelings and emotions lie at the heart of how values and value commitments emerge and of how they influence social action. Specifically, my goal is to show that the affective processes that contribute to the emergence and consolidation of socially shared valuations do so through their influence on social action and interaction. The conjecture that emotions are critical to values and value-driven behavior is by no means a new one and has been proposed by eminent scholars in the field, for example Kluckhohn (1951) and Feather (1980) (see Rohan, 2000). More recently, Schwartz (2012) stated that "values are beliefs linked inextricably to affect" (p. 3). Nevertheless, the "affect part" of the story has often been neglected in favor of a focus on the "cognitive structures" underlying values. I hope to add to this affective understanding of values in two respects. First, by exploring avenues of how values and affect become interlinked in the first place, and second by looking at the ways in which affect and values interact in social action. Although some of the current works

in moral philosophy and psychology do address similar questions, my understanding of this line of inquiry is that it is primarily concerned with questions of moral judgment. Moreover, regarding the role of emotions in (moral) value judgments, my impression is that the pertinent approaches consider emotions as either closely tied to evolutionary thinking and nativist assumptions, or, if holding more relativist views, lack conceptualizations of how the social sharing of values and emotions (or evaluative feelings) actually go together. Thus, an understanding of how affect and emotion are fundamentally shaped by social and cultural processes at various levels of analysis (Rogers, Schröder, & von Scheve, 2013) is integral to my approach to how values emerge and influence action.

The Emergence of Values and Evaluative Feelings

The question where values come from and how they emerge and manifest within groups and societies has intrigued thinkers for centuries and produced a broad spectrum of explanations in different disciplines. In sociology, however, interest in values has ceased since World War II, as Joas (2001) contends, and innovative approaches to the question seem to be lacking. To my knowledge, only two book-length sociological treatments (and one edited volume, see Hechter, Nadel, and Michod, 1993) specifically tackling this issue have been published more recently. Joas's (2001) *The Genesis of Values* and Boudon's (2001) *The Origin of Values* are two works that could not be more antagonistic in their approach, the former standing in the pragmatist and symbolic-interactionist tradition, the latter belonging to the camp of rational choice theory. But these antithetical points of departure come in handy when reviewing the field, since they cover an exceptionally broad range of sociological thinking – both historical and contemporary – on the emergence of values. Both, however, also often delve into the realms of individual

valuations, preferences, and social norms, so that I shall exclusively focus on what they have to say about the emergence of values and the role of emotions therein.

One of the major approaches to explaining the emergence of values (and value commitments) is rooted in utilitarian principles. The key assumption held by proponents of this view is that individuals subscribe to certain values because they have *good reasons* to do so, given the goal of satisfying their very own interests (Boudon, 2001, p. 2). A problem with these theories of course is the constraint that the utility derived from values needs to be shared within a group or population, so that the applicability of utilitarian explanations is clearly limited to specific instances of values, i.e. those from which *everyone* benefits. This limitation has been extensively discussed along very similar lines for the problem of conformity to social norms (Elster, 1989). Utilitarian notions are not necessarily identical with rational explanations of the emergence of values. This is illustrated, for example, by Weber's ([1921] 1978) distinction between instrumental and axiological (Wertrationalität) rationality. Boudon (2001) further shows that both Kant's and Rawls's accounts of values and value judgments rest on rational accounts that are clearly different from the purely utilitarian perspective. Both suggest that "moral feelings" are grounded in those rational principles, for example of fairness, that can be shared by all members of a society.

Another class of theories attending to the origins of values focuses on cultural transmissions and socialization (e.g., Parsons & Shils, 1951), arguing that individuals hold certain values because most actors in a group or society subscribe to these values. These views are largely insensitive to the question of how values arise in the first place, but rather presuppose a set of existing values which are then internalized during socialization and enacted, mostly pre-reflexively and automatically, in the form of socially shared practices. Aside from assuming that

values "simply exist", works in this tradition are faced with findings showing that certain values are universal across societies whereas others are not (Shweder, Much, Mahapatra, & Park, 1997; Brown, 1991). If all values were only culturally transmitted, then how can the comparably large cultural overlap in certain values be explained?

Some have suggested that these universalities in values are rooted in biological or psychological primitives, for example regarding their adaptive significance and inclusive fitness. This perspective includes views emphasizing the links between biological drives and individual valuations or preferences that are more or less universal across the human species (Michod, 1993). Others have proposed a limited set of universal domains for moral values (e.g., Graham et al., 2013) or suggested that culture itself follows evolutionary principles and therefore has certain adaptive functions to which values are a central ingredient (Richerson & Boyd, 2005).

Feelings in the Emergence of Values

A fourth major avenue is seen in works looking at the emergence of values as primarily brought about or rooted in feelings and emotions. Although utilitarian and biological accounts also touch on this issue, emotions are much more center stage in other works. Scheler's (1973) phenomenological theory of value, for example, assumes that humans are equipped with a sense of value that is similar to other senses, like our sense of color. Insofar, we cannot but perceive anything in the world always in terms of valuation based on certain characteristics of what is perceived. Valuations, according to Scheler, are *intentional* acts of meaning making, although they are not primarily brought about by reason or intellect, but rather by the "heart", i.e., through emotions (see Davis & Steinbock, 2013). This is reflected in Scheler's (1973) critical distinction between mere "feeling states" and "feelings for something" (see Joas, 2001, p. 92). Feeling states refer to undirected moods and other kinds of affective experiences, whereas "feelings for

something" have an intentional object as their referent to which they grant the kind of *value feeling* Scheler was interested in (see Joas, 2001). These "feelings for something" can be categorized as belonging to "acts of love" or "acts of hate" and relate to the different hierarchically ordered value types pleasure, utility, life, culture, and holy (from low to high) (Joas, 2001; Kamolnick, 2001; Kriegel, 2008).

Scheler's account is, however, for the most part person-centered and aside from postulating very basic value responses has only little to say on how values become socially shared within a society. Indeed, as Joas (2001) recounts, Scheler saw no tension between his idea of a "rigid ethical absolutism and objectivism" and the broad palette of values throughout history and across cultures (Scheler, 1973, p. xxiii, cited in Joas, 2001, p. 94). In Joas's (2001) interpretation, his perspective on the genesis of values is that there must exist a set of "eternal values" that are brought to the forefront of behavior through social relationships with "model persons" that represent different kinds of "value essences". "Following" these model persons does not mean blind imitation of their actions, but rather a reflexive orientation towards the values they embody.

This person-centered and almost intuitionist perspective on emotions and values is widened in scope by pragmatist scholars who have related the question of how value commitments arise to intersubjectivist understandings of identity formation. Based on the works of William James, John Dewey, and Charles Taylor, Joas (2001) suggests that value commitments arise from experiences of "self-transcendence and self-formation". For most of the above mentioned thinkers, "communication, intersubjectivity, and shared experience" are critical ingredients to the process of value formation (Joas, 2001, p. 116 f.). It is primarily the affective dimension of these extraordinary experiences, for example in social relationships, during rituals,

or in aesthetic involvement, and the communicative practices that constitute these experiences that give rise to certain value feelings.

It is interesting to note that in most cases the difference between "the desired" and "the desirable" is critical for the pragmatist endeavor. This is reflected in Taylors (1989) approach to values and his concepts of "weak" and "strong evaluations". According to his view, weak evaluations reflect evaluations based on individual desires and preferences, whereas strong evaluations are related to the desirable. Importantly, strong evaluations are never only felt as private forms of "moral feelings", but are rather experienced as revealing some "higher" and almost objective good (see Joas, 2001, p. 130).

Boudon (2001) identifies a further emotion-based approach to the emergence of values in Pareto's (1935) theory of "residues" and "derivations", as outlined in *The Mind and Society*. Pareto basically argued that emotions (residues) are motivators of all those actions that are not fully grounded in reasons and instrumental rationality (derivatives). However, this theory mainly tackles issues of action and decision-making and is much less concerned with actual questions of how socially shared values come to exist. Bourdon's reading of Pareto's work is nevertheless interesting because it reveals a common misconception of the role of feelings and emotions in the emergence of values. Boudon (2001) states that "feelings of value are distorted expressions of affective causes" in the sense that "I believe X is good because an instinct pushes me to feel so" (p. 34). This interpretation is misleading in that it reduces value feelings to hard-wired "instincts" rather than answering the question how these feelings and their connections to values come into existence in the first place. Although the works briefly reviewed above are clearly not as reductionist as Boudon suggests, they are equally mute or imprecise in attending to this question.

This is much less so in one of the most influential sociological works on the origins of values, namely Durkheim's theory of rituals and collective effervescence (Durkheim, [1912] 1995). Although Durkheim does not use the term "values", his studies are clearly concerned with various conceptions of what is deemed "desirable" in groups and societies (cf. Boudon, 2001, p. 5). His line of departure is more collective than the individualist accounts of, for example, Scheler. Durkheim's central argument is that values emerge in rituals and through the experience of what he calls "collective effervescence", a form of heightened emotional arousal. Rituals in his understanding involve the carrying out of cooperative actions amongst members of a specific group according to a predefined structure and choreography, in most cases in close physical proximity and face-to-face contact of the individuals involved. Also, rituals critically involve the presence and use of "totems" that symbolize shared values and beliefs of the group. Durkheim argued that, in particular, prosocial values that benefit the group's welfare ("solidarity") are individually costly to follow and usually too abstract and ephemeral to influence action in everyday life. Hence, during rituals, the collective effervescence that individuals experience is attributed or associated with the group's totems and the values they represent.

This way, Durkheim argues, beliefs are infused with specific feelings and an affective meaning that grant *evaluative* qualities to these beliefs which then acquire the status of conceptions of the desirable above and beyond what is individually desired and valued. Importantly, these affective meanings transcend the immediate ritual context and become guiding or even imperative principles in mundane contexts. Durkheim was also aware of the possibility that this affective "charging" of beliefs may abate over time and thus needs to be reinforced on a regular basis through rituals and the experience of collective effervescence.

Durkheim's and Scheler's positions can to some degree be construed as opposing poles in sociological analyses of value objectivism and value relativism, both justifying their arguments by making reference to feelings and emotions. Scheler assumed a number of "eternal" or universal values from which value feelings emerge that are made salient in societies in different combinations and to different degrees, hence creating the enormous historical and cultural variability in human values we observe. In contrast, Durkheim held much less rigid assumptions regarding the existence of universal values. Instead, he emphasized that the notable variability of value feelings is brought about by social and cultural dynamics and can potentially result from more or less arbitrary belief systems.

Feelings and Moral Values

Recent psychological and philosophical research in particular on *moral* values has reinvigorated the long dormant idea that feelings and emotions play a critical role in moral judgment and behavior and tallies with some of the sociological approaches outlined above. This is reflected, for example, in Haidt's (2001) "social intuitionist" account and "moral foundations theory" (see also Graham et al., 2013), in Prinz's (2007) concept of "emotionism", or in Nichols's (2004) discussion of "sentimentalism" (see also Deonna and Teroni, this volume, Moll, this volume). Although most of these works are primarily concerned with the role of emotions in moral judgment, they also make explicit assumptions on the origins of moral values. Perhaps the most prominent account in this respect is (2013) moral foundations theory (henceforth referred to as MFT; e.g., Graham et al., 2013; Haidt & Joseph, 2004). In a nutshell, MFT rests on evolutionary premises and the "nativist" assumption that the human mind is pre-organized to be responsive to issues of moral valuation and judgment in a number of specific domains. Based on extensive theorizing and empirical research, MFT has sought to uncover

these domains primarily in relation to foundational dimensions of (human) sociality. It explicitly refers to the sociological literature on the fabrics of sociality, for example Durkheim's ([1912] 1995) concept of the "sacred" or Tönnies ([1887] 2005) concepts of "Gemeinschaft" and "Gesellschaft" (Haidt & Graham, 2009), to identify these dimensions, which in the most current version of the theory are care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation (Graham et al., 2013). Although the theory has clear evolutionary origins, it emphasizes that the concrete manifestations of these dimensions in different cultures and societies are the product of cultural learning, socialization, and adaptation. In this view, the moral foundations do constrain the kinds of moral orders that can emerge, but do not prescribe these orders.

Moral foundations theory is based on Haidt's (2001) social intuitionist model of moral reasoning positing that *evaluative feelings* are at the core of moral judgments and in fact precede deliberative reasoning on moral issues. MFT assumes that these feelings fall into different categories and are constitutive for the different universal moral domains. Moreover, they manifest in specific discrete emotions that are characteristic for a particular domain, such as anger in the fairness/cheating domain.

In sum, there is considerable theorizing and evidence suggesting that feelings are critical to the genesis of values. At the same time, however, there are notably different positions on or little treatment of the question how, precisely, feelings become related to the contents of values in the first place, in sociological theory as well as in philosophical and psychological research. Attending to this question, however, seems critical for a comprehensive understanding of how values emerge and impact social action and behavior. For Scheler, it seems to be clear that because there are eternal and universal values, they are more or less directly linked to positive or

negative "feelings of something", given that the respective values have been adopted from "model" persons. For Durkheim, the links between values and emotions are clearly more collective and need to established through specific social processes, in particular symbols and the experience of effervescence. Pragmatists roughly hold that feelings are connected to values through social interaction and experiences of self-transcendence. Psychological research suggests that moral feelings originate in universal moral domains and are "shaped by development within a cultural context" (Graham et al., 2013, p. 66).

In the following, I suggest that a more comprehensive understanding of values as integral to culture and sociality – in particular with regard to their socio-historical variability – entails a corresponding understanding of the social and cultural processes that shape not only discrete emotions but also more basic and "intuitive" affective reactions associated with values. This understanding is important not only in view of the clearly notable cross-cultural differences in value orientations, but also to better comprehend the more subtle variations of values *within* societies. In fact, given the supposed coupling of values and evaluative feelings, empirical research should be able to demonstrate systematic relationships between both factors within a population or to uncover the mechanisms by which emotions are coupled to values in the first place.

The Social and Cultural Constitution of Value Feelings

Research in sociology and anthropology as well as in some areas of psychology has long argued that emotions are substantially shaped by the social and cultural environment within which individuals are brought-up and socialized. Countless studies have reported marked cross-national differences in how people react differentially to specific events. This includes experiencing different discrete emotions in reaction to comparable events (Oishi, 2002;

Matsumoto & Hwang, 2012) and showing different patterns of facial expression and other behavioral components of emotion (e.g., Elfenbein, Beaupré, Lévesque, & Hess, 2007). It also refers to the ways in which discrete emotions are conceptualized and symbolically represented (for example in media and the arts) (Wierzbicka, 1999) as well as different norms and practices related to emotions (Mesquita, 2003). Likewise, it has been shown that emotions are valued to varying degrees across societies (Tsai, 2007).

Cross-cultural emotion research has repeatedly demonstrated that cultural differences in emotional experience and a host of emotion-related behaviors are systematically tied to specific values that are dominant in a culture. One of the most prominent examples are differences between cultures holding "individualistic" or "collectivistic" values, a value type first investigated by Hofstede (1984) and now widely used – although often conceptualized differently – in values research (e.g., Schwartz, 1990; Triandis, 1995). In emotion research, individualism and collectivism are typically ascribed to "Western" and "East Asian" societies, respectively, and are associated, for example, with notable differences in facial expressions and the recognition of emotion (Matsumoto, Yoo, & Fontaine, 2008), ideal affect (Tsai, Knutson, & Fung, 2006), and emotion norms (Eid & Diener, 2001).

Although the relationship between values and emotions has been investigated with a range of emotions and emotion-related behaviors as dependent variables and a population's value structure as the independent variable, there is reason to believe that *evaluative feelings*, understood as basic and intuitive affective reactions towards value-relevant events or situations, are equally structured and socially shared as values are. Put another way: Given that affective intuitions are integral to the emergence of values and critical for value commitments, and that values are a key part of culture and thus socially shared within a population, we should be able to

demonstrate widely shared evaluative feelings within a cultural group regarding specific value-relevant issues. In fact, characteristic affective responses towards value sensitive issues make-up an important part of a group's (emotional) culture (Thoits, 2004).

Hence, in the same way as emotions have been shown to differ across cultures, we should be able to demonstrate that value feelings differ systematically across cultures, co-varying with value structures. If, indeed, as the social intuitionist component of MFT suggests, intuitive feelings precede deliberative value judgments, then these feelings – by definition – need to be shared within a cultural group in much the same way as values are. I suspect that this idea of shared evaluative feelings has put much of research on values and moral judgment on a universalist or nativist track, assuming that that shared feelings are best explained by invoking evolutionary (Haidt, 2001) or anthropological (Scheler, 1973) principles.

 Until now, the majority of cross-cultural emotion research has focused on discrete emotions, their conceptualizations, and behavioral components. In terms of values, this would include, for example, characteristic emotional reactions towards actions that are in accordance or incompatible with ethical values, often also called "moral emotions" (Mulligan, 2009), such as indignation or contempt on the one hand, or admiration and awe on the other hand. Moral emotions, however, are a different breed than the "value feelings" discussed so far since they are the complex kinds of self- or other-directed emotions that arise in view of ethical or unethical actions, often acting as reinforcement devices for normative moral obligations (see, e.g., Mulligan, 2009).

Here, the question rather touches on the more basic evaluative feelings that underlie (or contribute to bringing about) potentially very different kinds of values and the value structure of a society. I suggest that many of the processes involved in the social shaping of emotions also

contribute to establishing links between values and evaluative feelings. Much like Scheff (2002) has described shame as a "moral gyroscope", the development of a positive or negative stance, i.e. of intuitive feelings of "goodness" or "badness" towards certain objects and conceptions renders them "desirable". We could also say that widespread cultural practices that are reflected, for instance, in parenting and socialization styles, social institutions, political programs, ideologies, discourse, media and the arts all contribute to the emergence of socially shared "affective dispositions" towards what is widely deemed "good" and "desirable" and thus valued in a society.

This is not the place to a give a detailed account of the processes and mechanisms involved in the social shaping of knowledge and cognitive structures as well as more basic cognitive processes since there is a number of abundant approaches from different disciplines dealing with these issues (e.g., in cognitive sociology (DiMaggio, 1997; Cerulo, 2002), social and cognitive anthropology (Shore, 1996), or psychology (Varnum, Grossmann, Kitayama, & Nisbett, 2010)). Elsewhere, I have outlined the ways in which not only knowledge and cognition become socially shared but also emotions and more basic affective responses towards specific objects, events, and actions based on the levels of neural, cognitive, and social cultural processing (von Scheve, 2013; Rogers, Schröder, & von Scheve, 2013). This line of argument is mirrored roughly in many ways in the sociology of emotion (Barbalet, 1998; Turner, 2007). Importantly, these socially structured affective reactions – that are likely to include evaluative feelings – are elicited rapidly, automatically, and largely outside conscious awareness, hence mirroring what nativist or universalist accounts ascribe to intuitive value feelings originating in universal domains of morality (Graham et al., 2013).

Acknowledging some of the critique that has been marshaled against nativist positions concerning the origins of moral values (e.g., Prinz, 2009, 2007; Slaby, 2013; Kelly, Stich, Haley, Eng, & Fessler, 2007; see also von Scheve, 2010), I argue that the assumption of universal "moral modules" or pre-organized "moral domains" is, first and most importantly, *not necessary* to make sense of intuitionist positions regarding moral judgments and, more generally, the existence of certain value feelings. Moreover, I agree with scholars holding that we would need more convincing evidence, in particular at a neurophysiological level (e.g., Suhler & Churchland, 2011), to posit the existence of such universal domains or modules. If the "moral mind", as Graham and colleagues (2013) put it, is merely "organized in advance of experience" and then massively susceptible to social and cultural learning, the question arises at which point in time (or if ever) it is relevant for behavior in an "unaltered" form, given the ontogenetically early onset of social learning.

Be that as it may, my argument rather is that affective dispositions are generated during socialization towards all sorts of social concepts, the ones mentioned by MFT in any case *appearing* to be universal because they are related to very basic dimensions of human sociality present in almost any known society and not necessarily because they have a special "moral" status. Hence, these kinds of evaluative feelings will likewise be elicited towards social norms and conventions as well as to non-ethical values –not only within the "moral" sphere.

Social Structures and Processes of Evaluative Feelings

Our own research has attended in somewhat different ways both to the structuring of affective responses in value relevant domains as well as to the processes that are involved in imbuing values with evaluative feelings. In one study, we used the principles of affect control theory (ACT, Heise, 2007) to investigate the evaluative feelings towards two basic dimensions of

human sociality, *authority* and *community*. Affect control theory is roughly compatible with positions on the origins of values as put forward by pragmatist accounts. It rests on the principles of symbolic interactionism and assumes that evaluative feelings towards concepts in general emerge during social interaction and the formation of the self. They become socially patterned because interactions are always embedded in tight networks of social institutions. ACT measures evaluative feelings towards concepts using semantic differentials to assess individuals' affective perceptions of words denoting concepts on the dimension of evaluation, potency, and activity (Heise, 2007). These dimensions have been shown to be perceptual primitives that underly much of human social cognition (e.g., Scholl, 2013) and tally with many dimensional understandings of human affective experience (e.g., Fontaine, Scherer, Roesch, & Ellsworth, 2007; Barrett & Bliss-Moreau, 2009).

Using a quasi-representative survey of the German population, we obtained ratings for 909 words from the semantic fields of authority and community (Ambrasat, von Scheve, Conrad, Schauenburg, & Schröder, 2014). Although our results show a broad consensus in the affective meaning of (i.e., evaluative feelings towards) authority- and community-related concepts and thus confirm previous studies (e.g., Heise, 2010), we also find notable differences between social groups, in particular socio-economic status groups. These findings are broadly in line with the presumption that values do not only exhibit notable cross-cultural differences but are also differentially distributed within a society. At the same time our results concur with more recent findings regarding the psychology of social class (e.g., Kraus & Stephens, 2012). Crucial for the argument I seek to make, the consensus finding in evaluative feelings is in line with most existing survey studies on values in German society. Likewise, looking at international studies using ACT, we find that, for example, authority-related concepts are perceived more positively

by US-American than by German respondents, which is mirrored in the different value structures of the two societies. Hence, the study supports the assumption that evaluative feelings exhibit structures that are similar to the value structures of a society.

A second study has investigated the mechanisms through which values may be imbued with affective feelings (von Scheve, Ismer, Beyer, Kozlowska, & Morawetz, 2014). We specifically looked at Durkheim's ([1912] 1995) proposition that the experience of collective effervescence during rituals is transferred to the symbols of a group and thus, ultimately, to the beliefs and values represented by those symbols. To investigate the influence of collective effervescence on the affective perception or evaluation of group-related symbols, we conducted a natural quasi-experiment in which the Football World Cup 2010 is considered the treatment. World Cups reliably elicit collective effervescence during ritual gatherings and public screenings of matches in a highly nationalized context. Our study showed that the more participants experienced collective effervescence during the tournament, the more positively they perceived national symbols after the event. There was no general, affect-independent tendency to perceive symbols more positively after the event and the effect only holds for in-group symbols. In sum, this finding supports the view that social processes are indeed critical in the genesis of evaluative feelings, although the results are confined to those symbols that presumably represent specific values.

Values and Social Action

In sociology, detailed analysis of the influence of values on social action is inextricably linked to the works of Weber ([1921] 1978). Weber is widely associated with methodological individualism that places primacy on social actions as the main explanatory factors in social science research. He argued that social order at least partly results from patterns of social action

and stable social relationships. To make sense of such patterns and to interpretively understand actions in scientific terms, Weber ([1921] 1978) suggested four well-known ideal types of action, namely instrumental-rational, value-rational, habitual, and affectual action. According to Weber, the first two make the most significant contributions to explaining social order. Whereas instrumental-rational action is more or less universally based on principles of deductive reasoning and means-ends relations, value-rational action accounts for much of the variation in social orders observed across cultures and societies.

Although the exact status of value-rational compared to instrumental-rational action continues to be much debated in the humanities and the social sciences (e.g., Beckermann, 1985), its basic idea is straightforward. Individuals tend to act in the social world based on what is important to them, what they hold dear, what is of value to them – *irrespective* of the likelihood of success of an action, of costs that might occur, or whether other goals are negatively affected. Value rational action in Weber's sense is solely oriented towards the "intrinsic" value of a particular kind of action – Weber uses the German phrase "unbedingter Eigenwert" to denote this intrinsic value of an action (Weber, [1921] 1980, p. 12; see also the discussion in Kroneberg, 2007). Most importantly, an action is value *rational* in that it is intentionally and purposefully oriented towards some *Eigenwert* (Kroneberg, 2007).

Since Weber devoted much of his work to investigating the role of religious beliefs in the transformation of modern societies, he considered religious values in many ways "primordial", i.e. as governing behavior in almost any area of social life (see also Pelser and Roberts, this volume). His famous diagnosis of an increasing rationalization and disenchantment of the world consequently included a social-evolutionary account of "value rationalization". Value rationalization is a process through which value-bearing spheres of life other than religion, for

example politics and the economy, become more and more self-contained and autonomous in view of their potential to generate action guiding values that are independent of religious concern. On the one hand, these "value spheres" – religion, the economy, politics, aesthetics, the erotic, and intellectualism – guide value-rational action in many areas of social life and also inform other ideal types of action (see Oakes, 2003, for a discussion). On the other hand, value spheres are elements of social order in their own right. In Weber's works and in much of contemporary sociology, they are considered *the* building blocks of culture.

This classical view of the role of values in culture and social action has been substantiated by Parsons (1937) in his works on the structure of social action and then developed into becoming the paradigmatic view in sociology on how values (and social norms) influence social action. Paramount in this perspective is that values are not primarily conceived of as external constraints, but as internalized during socialization. According to the underlying structural functionalist logic, actions oriented towards dominant values and norms then contribute to reproducing the prevailing social order.

Challenges to the Prevailing View on Values in Action

More recently, this view has been increasingly criticized for making unrealistic assumptions on the power of values to control social action (Vaisey, 2009). One of the first to voice substantial concerns was Swidler (1986), who in her now classic piece argues that we should conceive of culture (and thus of values) as a "toolkit" from which actors assemble mostly post-hoc justifications for how they act rather than as determinants of action. Culture – and hence values – according to Swidler are much less the *ends* towards which purposeful action is oriented, but more so the *means* through which actors make sense of the world and their behavior (ibid.; see also Wuthnow, 2008). Part of the evidence for this skeptical view is given in Swidler's

(2001) more recent work showing that people are, on a regular basis, surprisingly incapable of giving well-grounded reasons and justifications for many of their actions. Likewise Smith, Christoffersen, Davidson, and Herzog (2011) report results of a large interview study with US-American adolescents on various issues of social life showing that these respondents are remarkably inept when it comes to thinking about morals and values. In accounting for their own actions, many of the interviewees "talked more about the power of personal gut feelings and emotions to inform their moral choices" than giving consistent reasons for why they do what they do (Smith et al., 2011, p. 51). Similar arguments have been developed in moral psychology and philosophy. Haidt (2001), for instance, reviews studies showing that individuals are frequently incapable of giving reasons for their moral judgments but rather rely on their gut feelings.

In discussing much of the critical sociological work on the direct motivational impact of values, Vaisey (2009) asserts that the critics, often implicitly, hold a "conception of cultural meanings as propositional, articulated, and logically coimplicated" (p. 1681). I concur with Vaisey's assessment that this view has become outdated not only in sociology, but also in many other disciplines. In sociology, it is first and foremost theories of *social practices* that have substantially challenged this account of the role of culture – and values – in social action (e.g., Turner, 2002; Giddens, 1984). These theories have provided various models of how culture is supposed to influence social action in a pre-reflexive, automatic, and intuitive manner. One of the most well-known concepts in this regard is Bourdieu's (1977) notion of the *habitus* as a complex set of socially and culturally embodied dispositions for thinking, feeling, and acting.

Although practice theories propose a number of "transmission" processes through which "culture" interacts with the human mind and body and brings about shared patterns of action,

such as socialization, implicit learning, and internalization, still little is known about the precise mechanisms through which this is accomplished. Vaisey (2009) and others (e.g., Lizardo, 2004; Ignatow, 2007) have suggested that information processing theories from the cognitive sciences could be helpful in refining sociological accounts of praxeological action. In particular dual-process theories of reasoning (Evans, 2007) have been considered useful in accounting for the pre-reflexive "patterning" of social action, as suggested by the habitus concept (Vaisey, 2009).

Emotions and Social Practices

My argument continues this line of thought and capitalizes on dual process models of reasoning. These models assume that there are two different systems of information processing underlying human reasoning and behavior, one characterized by "unconscious, rapid, automatic, and high capacity" processing and another based on "conscious, slow, and deliberative" processes (Evans, 2007, p. 256). Many proponents of dual-process models suggest that affects and emotions play an important role in the latter kind of processing and are implicated in the implicit, automatic, fast, and effortless processing in this "experiential" system (e.g., MacDonald, 2008; Evans, 2007). This view is adequately summarized by Epstein (1994, p. 716, cited from Slovic, Finucane, Peters, & MacGregor, 2004, p. 313): "The experiential system is assumed to be intimately associated with the experience of affect, … which refer[s] to subtle feelings of which people are often unaware. When a person responds to an emotionally significant event . . . the experiential system automatically searches its memory banks for related events, including their emotional accompaniments" (p. 716). It is precisely these dual-process models that also play a key role in research highlighting the importance of emotions in moral judgment (Haidt, 2001; Greene, 2007).

Although sociological works referring to these models in explaining the influence of culture and values on action do acknowledge the role of affect and emotion (Vaisey, 2009; Lizardo, 2006), a more systematic treatment is still needed. Sociological analyses turning to dual-process models as a cure for some of the weak spots of practice theories are confronted with a problem that is hardly relevant for the psychologists or decision-scientists who developed these models, namely that the behavioral outcomes of the automatic experiential system are *widely shared* within a social group. One way to make sense of this sharing is to rely on the workhorses of cognitive sociology and anthropology, such as cognitive structures, schemas, and scripts. Another and more fruitful way, I suggest, is to turn to the social shaping of emotions and basic affective responses – including the evaluative feelings discussed above.

Given that there is ample evidence from the sociology of emotion and cross-cultural psychology suggesting that emotions and affective responses (that are by definition evaluative) are widely influenced by culture and values and are shared within social groups, and that these affective responses are critical components of automatic and implicit information processing, we should be on safe grounds to assume that they are equally implicated in bringing about socially shared patterns of action and judgments that reflect how people value and evaluate – both implicitly and explicitly – various issues. Socially structured evaluative feelings thus become an essential link between rather abstract values as conceptions of the desirable on the one hand and social action on the other hand. In line with dual-process accounts and works in moral psychology and philosophy, these evaluative feelings intuitively motivate or constrain specific forms of action. The important sociological caveat here is that the assumption of socially shared evaluative feelings can also be applied to the ensuing patterns of social action and hence the

creation and reproduction of social order, which is one of the key explanatory concerns in the social sciences.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that values research should be complemented by an account of emotions and more basic evaluative feelings as socially structured and culturally shaped. This perspective, I presume, is necessary to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of where values and value commitments come from and how they motivate action. My suggestion is rooted in the largely uncontroversial claim that affect and values are most tightly intertwined and that emotions are integral to understanding both, the emergence of values and their influence on action. An initial review of classic and contemporary sociological literature on the emergence of values has shown that there are roughly three – not entirely opposing – positions on the role of emotions in the genesis of values. The first, "universalist" position assumes that value feelings are rooted in specific and hierarchically ordered "eternal values" that operate like sensory perception (e.g., Scheler, 1973). The second, "pragmatist" view emphasizes that values are generated in social-interactive contexts through notable experiences of self-transcendence (Joas, 2001). The third, "collectivist" account highlights the role of rituals and collective effervescence in the emergence of values (Durkheim, [1912] 1995). Turning to more recent work in moral psychology, my aim was to introduce a perspective to the sociological discussion that is, although still considered "nativist", less restrictive than universalist views in positing a number of universal "moral domains" that are shaped through culture and learning and from which evaluative feelings originate. I have voiced concerns over these theories' shortcomings regarding a proper model of how, more precisely, these evaluative feelings are shaped by culture and socially shared within a group.

In addressing this limitation, I have discussed sociological and cultural psychological approaches showing how emotions and basic evaluative feelings are socially constructed and become shared almost as a "common sense" within a population. Importantly, this pertains to feelings towards various concepts, conventions, norms, and values, not just to moral values. Hence, in my view, there is no imminent need to postulate universal moral domains. Rather, the proposed universality of some (moral) values, as in moral foundations theory (Graham et al., 2013), might be explained by the universality of certain foundational dimensions of *sociality* rather than of morality.

In a second step, I moved on to discuss the influence of values on social action. As a point of departure, I sketched Weber's classical concept of value-rational action and then briefly reviewed more recent critique that has been brought forward in some areas of cultural sociology against this direct motivating force of values for action. Alternative accounts, such as theories of social practices, emphasize the automatic and pre-reflexive nature of much of our day-to-day actions. Dual-process models of reasoning have been proposed to supplement these accounts. However, as I argue, sociologists have largely disregarded the critical role that affect and emotion play in dual-process models, in particular those concerned with moral judgment (e.g., Haidt, 2001). Conversely, dual-process models show only little interest in explaining where the emotions and affective reactions actually "come from" and how they become associated to different situational cues. Drawing on extant research on the social structuration and cultural shaping of emotions and evaluative feelings, I have argued that the very affective processes that are integral to the emergence of values are likely to play a vital role in how values – or, more precisely, evaluative feelings – influence social action. Most importantly, the assumption that these feelings are socially structured and shared within a group or population makes them ideal

candidates to explain regular patterns of social action that are necessary to understand social order. Some of my own studies that I have discussed provide initial but indirect evidence on this perspective on the tight coupling of values and emotion. At the same time, they show that more research is needed that directly investigates the links between socially structured and culturally shaped emotions and the values that are shared within a group.

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