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## The changing culture of emotions in modern society

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### The theoretical framework

The societal determination of our feelings and expressions of feelings has only recently become a subject of systematic sociological analysis (cf. Kemper, 1978a, 1978b; Hochschild, 1979; Collins, 1981). It is not possible in this paper to reconstruct the various theoretical approaches and lines of reasoning that are now being consolidated into a sociology of emotions (cf. Kemper, 1981; Shott, 1980; Gerhards, 1986). Instead, I have outlined, in the form of working definitions, the foundations of this subdiscipline to the extent necessary for discussing the changing culture of emotions in modern society. To analyse the social conditions in which emotions originate, I proceed from the following model.

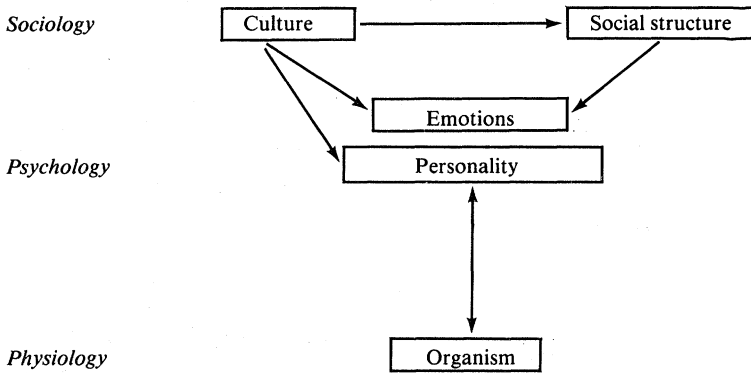
Emotions, understood as a person's positive or negative type of experience, arise through the interplay of four subsystems: the organism, personality, social structure and culture. The actor's interpretation of both sociostructural conditions and cultural patterns of interpretation, sometimes accompanied by physiological activation, makes it possible for emotions to arise (cf. Gerhards, 1988b). The interaction between the individual levels, together with their correspondence to the scientific disciplines of sociology, psychology and physiology, are illustrated in Figure 1.

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This text was translated from the German by Gordon Gillespie and Roger Karapin, Berlin.

*Social Science Information* (SAGE, London, Newbury Park and New Delhi) 28, 4 (1989), pp. 737-754.

**FIGURE 1**  
Interaction between the subsystems that produce emotions



The designation of the different levels and the ways they mutually refer to each other cannot be discussed in greater detail here; the perspective in this paper focuses on the field of culture. “Culture” means a system of collective constructions of meaning, or schemata for interpreting the world, which people use to define reality into what is good and bad, right and wrong, and beautiful and ugly (cf. Lipp and Tenbruck, 1979; Neidhardt, 1986). “Culture of emotions” then means the interpretation of emotions commonly shared by the people in a society or a part of society; only through the culture of emotions, in interplay with other factors, are emotions constituted. Three possible influences of culture on emotions can be distinguished:

(a) Cultural interpretations guide the understanding of social structures and in this way *indirectly* influence the shaping of emotions. This type of influence will be neglected in the following.

(b) Culture has a *direct* impact on the shaping of emotions due to cultural norms of correct and appropriate feelings and appropriate expressions of feelings, i.e. due to feeling rules (cf. Hochschild, 1979; 1983). Feeling rules are patterns of interpretation that determine what is to be felt and expressed in which kind of situation. They are produced and constantly reproduced through interaction: a wife admonishes her husband for not being grateful enough for the presents she gave him, a teacher tells a pupil he should be ashamed of his bad behaviour in class, those in the peace movement cannot understand why others are not frightened by the nuclear threat. All these examples are based on norms of adequate emotions.

(c) Cultural definitions of personality conceptions form the third cultural influence on emotions. "Identity conceptions" are notions of one's self, gained from self-observation and through the eyes of others. These notions also include assumptions about one's emotional self, that is, about one's own emotional identity. One interprets oneself as an emotionally controlled personality or a jealous lover, as a quick-tempered hothead or a cool guy whom nothing can bother (cf. Gordon, 1984). Such conceptions of the self are culturally coded identity types. They vary depending on gender, class, milieu and society.

These definitions of basic terms in the sociology of emotions are required for the following considerations. The purpose of the subsequent remarks is to reconstruct major changes in the culture of emotions, i.e. changes in the cultural feeling rules and the cultural conceptions of emotional identity in contemporary Western societies. In this regard, a large number of heterogeneous trends will be subsumed under the label "postmodern". This term merely differentiates the postmodern from the modern; a modern culture of emotions can be equated with Elias' concept of civilization. Elias described the process of civilization as a process of increasing control over emotions, in which certain emotions (fear and shame) take control of the remaining emotions through a process in which external norms are introjected. Elias proceeds on the assumption that the process of control over the emotions has continued until today (cf. Elias, 1981, I: 257).

Here, however, I would like to advance the thesis that the present culture of emotions cannot be adequately grasped with Elias' one-dimensional pattern of description. The label "postmodern culture of emotions" designates a large number of heterogeneous patterns of interpretation for emotions. Some of these can be viewed as the continuation and extension of the process of control over the emotions, some as counter-movements, and others as following a quite different logic. I discuss these three patterns of development in the order given, according to the following procedure: first I describe the phenomenon, then introduce the empirical evidence, and finally inquire into the social causes of its development. In conclusion, I address the linkages between the individual trends. Much of the following can be discussed only briefly, and some aspects must remain speculative.

## **Dimensions of a postmodern culture of emotions**

### *1. Commercialization and colonization of the emotional*

The “commercialization of the emotional” indicates that the determination and definition of feeling rules are linked to the rationality of economics and the principles of profit maximization. Specifically, the meanings bestowed on emotions via feeling rules are separated from the sphere of the private negotiation of meaning, and the definition of these meanings is organized in line with market criteria (for more details see Gerhards, 1988a). Such an orientation of feeling rules to economic rationality is present in the person-orientated work of the tertiary sector professions, e.g. salespeople, social workers and professionals in the media, the theatre and show business. In these occupations, definitions of adequate emotions and emotional expressions are part of the professional role; that is, the role includes adjusting one’s feelings to the needs of the customer and to the feeling rules required by the work situation. In short, emotion work (cf. Hochschild, 1983) is required.

The degree to which emotion work is required varies across the relevant professions. Frequently, the demands on emotion work belong only diffusely to the description of a professional role; that is, a specific professional profile or institutionalized forms of training often do not exist. However, this is not the case as far as the stewardess profession is concerned, as Arlie Hochschild (1983) has shown in such an impressive manner. Accordingly, the job description of a stewardess can be considered an ideal type useful for analysing what is perhaps only partially and diffusely part of the professional role in other occupations. In this case, the feeling rules are explicitly defined, and the conditions for successful emotion work are created by the selection and in-company training of the personnel. The recruitment of the personnel in accordance with criteria of beauty (size, maximum weight, hair colour, etc.) attempts to create the conditions for successful “surface acting”. Furthermore, role-playing and learned techniques for reattributing events make it possible to influence and modify one’s emotional states (“deep acting”) so that one’s frustrations and anger about unfriendly customers can be dealt with — always in accordance with the principle that “the customer is king”. Such techniques of emotion work are part of the formal

instruction for stewardesses and are systematically coached.

The figures on the changes in the occupational structure indicate that the commercialization of emotions is a process of social change. In a previous study, I regrouped statistics on the German occupational structure (1925 to 1982) in order to obtain a group of "emotion workers" (cf. Gerhards, 1988a). The number of jobs directly connected with emotion work was and is a minority of total employment. However, the proportion is constantly rising, supporting the hypothesis that emotion work is becoming more important. The percentage of "emotion workers" nearly doubled from 9 to 17 per cent in the period from 1925 to 1982.

An attempt could be made to embed this process of commercialization of emotions in a larger theoretical context. Following and expanding Habermas' theory of communicative action (1981), one could speak of a "colonization of the emotions". The process of the commercialization of emotions could then be interpreted as a specific form of colonization of the "Lebenswelt" (life world), namely as the penetration of economic rationality into an area normally structured by the "Lebenswelt". Emotions, at least as far as their definition by feeling rules are concerned, are embedded in the cultural context of the "Lebenswelt". They receive their significance through the interaction of culturally specified patterns with the actors' own active interpretation of these patterns. If such processes are abolished and emotions are tied directly to the economic rationality of profit-maximization, this can be interpreted as a colonization of the "Lebenswelt". However, it does not mean that the effects of this process are pathological. Judging this would require — similar to Habermas's approach to defining the ideal communication situation through the application of speech-act theory — theoretical criteria for the process of the ideal definition of emotions.

Taking Elias's civilization theory as a theoretical reference point, it is possible to qualify this description of the commercialization of emotions as a further step in the process of increasing control over the emotions. Orientating one's feelings and emotional expressions to the needs of customers requires a high degree of self-control; at the same time, the nature of emotional control has changed. What is expected is a situation-specific, flexible handling of one's emotional states and changes in feelings at short notice. Elias linked his model of increasing control over the emotions to the psychoanalytic concept of the formation of a strong superego. However, it is at least

possible that an ego outfitted with a strong superego is too rigidly and morally constrained to permit flexible adjustment. I return to this question at the end of this paper.

Speculating on the *causes* behind the commercialization of the emotions, it can be assumed that a cultural recoding of feeling rules is brought about in an exogenous manner by the economic system. Under competitive conditions, the rationality of profit maximization demands optimum orientation to the customers' needs, in turn requiring emotion work to be institutionalized.

## 2. *Informalization processes*

While the commercialization process may be interpreted as a continuation of the process of gaining control over the emotions, this surely does not hold for the informalization processes. "Informalization" means the loosening of control over one's emotions, the increasing orientation of individual action to individual emotional states — or, more concretely, acting out and showing one's feelings, lowering the shame and embarrassment thresholds. What *empirical* evidence is it possible to provide for such a presumed recoding of feeling rules?

Two Dutch researchers, Christian Brinkgreve and Michael Korzec (1979), analysed the advice columns of a Dutch weekly magazine which is read by every fourth person in the Netherlands. They performed a content analysis on a time series of data from 1938 to 1977. In the brief report produced by the project so far, the authors focus on the change in the relations between the sexes. They establish a change in the cultural coding of emotional control, as expressed in the advice columns. Self-control, i.e. holding back feelings and not showing others what one feels, was the tenor of the advice given until the mid-1960s. At that point, the advice changes: it is important to express emotions, and feelings can be shown; "let it all out" becomes a frequent tip (Brinkgreve and Korzec, 1979: 307).

Even if the analysis of the data presented by Brinkgreve and Korzec is still very fragmentary, the *leitmotiv* is clear: rather than the increase in emotional control forecast by Elias, a process of increasing informalization and loosening of emotional control can be detected for the cultural coding of emotions — above all in the last twenty years. This result is directly or indirectly supported by

other studies. Cas Wouters (1986) examined "manner books" from 1930 to 1985, with the intention of analysing the changes in the relations between the sexes; he arrives at results similar to those of Brinkgreve and Korzec. Even if a reactivated interest in formalizations of behaviour is noted in the 1980s, the overall trend towards increasing informalization remains unmistakable.

The results of an empirical, comparative study on the sexual behaviour of students (1966 and 1981) can also be interpreted in the direction of weakening emotional control (cf. Clement, 1986). Considering the findings of the surveys in these two years as two poles of development in students' sexual behaviour and attitudes, the development can be interpreted as a trend towards a loosening of control of emotions. Norms of control and the binding of emotional needs to the institution of marriage and to heterosexual relations have weakened in favour of an orientation of behaviour and attitudes to the actors' specific needs. The social norm is now the orientation of behaviour to one's emotional state, rather than the control of emotions.

This cultural transformation may appear to have a certain naturalness on its side. However, it should be clear that it is a recoding of the emotional which "naturally" has a social character and makes normative claims. This becomes evident upon looking at the recoding of deviant emotional behaviour. If twenty years ago direct expression of one's feelings triggered astonishment, today the opposite seems to hold: persons who do not "let out" their emotions are labelled as odd or even disturbed.

The informalization thesis advanced here receives further support from the extensive studies and debates about the change in values. Although attitudes about emotions were not surveyed and analysed directly, an indirect connection is evident between a change from materialist to post-materialist values and a change in the culture of emotions. Rather than describing the change in values itself, I should like to restrict the discussion to the relationship between a change in values and a change in the culture of emotions.

(a) It can be assumed that people who prefer the non-materialist values, and thus represent the change in values, are also less prepared to hide the emotions they feel. The willingness to work on one's emotions would then be lower here, and a control of emotions correspondingly rarer. If this assumption is valid, the change in values would at the same time be a further indication of the existence of informalization processes of the kind 'already' sketched. But

changes in values and in the culture of emotions are also interrelated at another point.

(b) The avoidance of negative emotions and the achievement of pleasant emotions is itself a non-materialist value which is gaining importance. It can be speculated that the bearers of post-materialist values would also be advocates of emotions as values. Post-materialists, according to this assumption, would be more likely to try to avoid negative emotions than materialists; post-materialists would also, in order to achieve positive emotional states, give lower priorities to material incentives, traditional forms of action, and normative orientations of action.

The assumption that emotions themselves have become a preferred value is supported by the studies of Daniel Bell and Daniel Yankelovich. Here, too, it is possible to establish only indirectly a relationship with a changed culture of emotions. According to Bell (1979), hedonism is the central principle of modern culture. It replaces the protestant semantics of the emotionally controlled behaviour with the cultural figure of an ego which is constantly changing yet continually orientated to self-fulfilment through the satisfaction of immediate needs (cf. Bell, 1979: 23, 307). Yankelovich, on the basis of a secondary analysis of American welfare surveys, speaks of "searching for self-fulfillment" as the dominant principle of American culture today (1981). The orientation to material goods and to norms and values that direct the orientation of one's acts to the needs of others is gradually being replaced by a culturally approved orientation to post-materialist values and to one's own needs and emotions. A study of value orientations in previously calvinistic Holland arrives at a similar result (cf. Felling et al., 1983).

Of course, with all these descriptions of a change in the culture of emotions — whether they are labelled informalization, change in values, hedonism or searching for self-fulfilment — I mean only to refer to an ideal type indicating the development trend. Mixed forms are empirically probable (cf. Klages, 1984: 89f.). In addition, there seems to be a sifting-down process, which Elias had already observed for the process of emotional control, whereby cultural innovations slowly penetrate the age and class pyramid. Accordingly, representatives of the new culture of emotions are to be found in the younger generation and the middle and upper classes, and above all among academics (cf. Felling et al., 1983: 102)

If it is necessary to rely to a great extent on inference by analogy



and on speculation when describing a change in the culture of emotions, this doubly true for the *causes* of such change. The configurations of variables and chains of dependency between them are so complex and the empirical research on the subject so meagre that in many respects it is only possible to conjecture about the causes. Inglehart's proffered explanation of a change in values is based on motivation theory and modelled on Abraham Maslow's theory of needs. By analogy with the microeconomic theorem of declining marginal utility, he proceeds from the assumption that the more primary needs are satisfied, the more dominant secondary needs can become and the more they demand satisfaction (cf. Thome, 1985, for a very detailed criticism of Inglehart's basic approach). In Western countries, especially West Germany, the development of the economy and welfare state after the Second World War has led to an enormous reduction in economic, existential uncertainties (cf. the figures in Kern and Schumann, 1983: 355). It is at least plausible that this leap in the satisfaction of basic needs and the freeing up of leisure time has also loosened the professional ethics of emotional control and has given emotions themselves a greater priority as values of action. However, such an attempt at an explanation does not go far enough since it tries to treat material conditions alone as the relevant environment for the development of values and culture (cf. also Thome, 1985: 33ff.). Reference to economic change alone — as Yankelovich (1981: 43) points out — cannot explain why the recession at the end of the 1970s is not matched by any return to more materialistic values.

Heiner Meulemann (1985) has linked the change in values to secularization processes, and has thus introduced a *cultural dimension* to the explanation of cultural changes. In a secondary analysis of a general survey, Meulemann asks to what extent a decline in the acceptance of religious interpretations of the world can be related to an increase in the values of self-determination, autonomy and equality between men and women. Without going into detail, Meulemann's analysis confirms that people with a strong religious bond are to a lesser extent bearers of the new values. In their study, the Dutch researchers Felling, Peters and Schreuder (1983) arrive at a similar result when they conclude that hedonism is the flip side of secularization. Here, too, there are problems in relating the results to the topic of change in the culture of emotions. The transfer can only be established speculatively. A double connection can be assumed between religious — especially Christian/protestant —

notions and cultural notions of emotional control and between attitudes towards self-determination and pleasure and attitudes towards a weakening of emotional control. If this assumption holds, change in the culture of emotions can be viewed as the “flip-side” of secularization. Listening to one’s feelings and acting them out serve as a framework of orientation when transcendental views of the world have developed cracks and lost their one-time function for steering action. Hence, change in the culture of emotions results from shifts in the cultural system as a whole.

A similar argument underlies Habermas’ theory of communicative action. However, here it is not orientation of the emotions which leaps into the breach of a rationalized “Lebenswelt”, but language. This provides the framework for a third development trend that seems important for the current culture of emotions. In addition to the processes of commercialization and informalization, I should like to examine the transformation of emotions into language.

### *3. Transformation of emotions into language*

The “transformation of emotions into language” refers to the processes that make it possible to talk about emotional states, either in institutionalized forms or in terms of a developing informal culture of conversation. Reflection on one’s emotions and saying what one feels — that one is afraid, ashamed or furious at someone — moves emotions from the private into the public realm, and simultaneously from one medium into another. It thus becomes possible to reconstruct backgrounds, causes and motives, to discuss desires for recognition, and to subject them to a discussion about justifications.

Although *empirical* evidence is not available concerning a trend towards a greater translation of emotions into discourse within a developing culture of conversation, this is not true of an institutionalized variant of cultural development: the enormous increase in the range of psychological therapy over the past twenty years. Matthias Angermeyer and Ludwig Kühn (1985) have made a quantitative analysis of books in the fields of psychology and psychological advice published in West Germany between 1950 and 1980. Since 1971, there has been an enormous increase in proportion to the overall number of publications, and in two control-group areas,

medicine and the *belles lettres*. A glance at the variety of books providing advice on the emotional life in the displays of nearly every bookshop informally confirms this finding. Constant reflective occupation with oneself, counsellor-guided deliberations about one's emotional states, and discussions of self-analysis with friends and acquaintances are forms in which emotions are internally and externally transformed into language. The rapidly growing supply of and demand for forms of therapy corresponds to the boom in the psychological book market (cf. Nau, 1983: 133). As different as the various forms of therapy may be, they are all institutionalized forms of occupation with one's emotions. Further, in most cases this involves expressing one's state of feelings in language, either by a presentation of the "here and now" or by reconstructing the genesis of idiosyncratic, emotional personality structures.

What is causing the transformation of emotions into discursive contexts? Secularization processes seem to be playing a role in the emergence of a new kind of culture of emotions. Habermas (1981) asserted this relationship for the transformation of norms and values into language, and it seems plausible to adopt it for the transformation of emotions into language. The transfer of emotions into discourse is then a partial aspect of the societal development in the direction of the rationalization of the "Lebenswelt". The "rationalization of the 'Lebenswelt'" refers to the gradual process of converting the prevailing action orientations and claims of validity (which had been left unquestioned because they were supported by norms and religious systems of interpretation) into consensus-forming processes which are to be negotiated by the participating actors. In other words, the cultural, externally provided definitions of social action, which are derived from religious contexts of meaning, are losing their power and are replaced by definitions worked out by the interacting actors themselves.

What does this imply for emotions themselves? With the crumbling of the code of emotional control, processes involving the self-definition of emotional states and of how they are to be interpreted and lived are becoming increasingly relevant. Books and therapies serve as guidance to support reflective processes about one's emotions. Through the reflective occupation with one's feelings, the subject departs from the medium of emotions itself and a transformation into internally or externally directed speech takes place.

#### 4. *New identity conceptions: the emotional self*

If the cultural framework of the way the world is interpreted changes as a whole, so do the cultural definitions of emotions and the coding of what is possible and acceptable as a personality conception. This assumption is based on the hypothesis that the self itself — and the emotional self is part of each identity conception — is a socially built, symbolic construct, and hence also subject to social processes of change. Ralph Turner (1976) called attention to changes in the cultural definition of the “real self”. He tried to make this conceptually comprehensible through the attributes “institutional” and “impulsive” self. “Institutional self” means such identity constructions that are orientated along the lines of institutionalized expectations and roles and which see the “true self” in optimum compliance with the accepted role patterns. In contrast, identity in the form of an “impulsive self” orientates itself not towards external role expectations but rather towards internal needs and emotional states.

In his unpublished dissertation, James Benton (1981) subjected Turner’s thesis of a gradual change from institutional to impulsive self to an empirical analysis. Using systematic content analysis, he uncovered and reconstructed the changes in the portrayal of the “ideal personality” in an American weekly magazine from 1920 to 1978. As a basis for classification he used the question of whether transcendental symbols or immanent symbols were used to describe one’s identity. Transcendental symbols of identity definition are those which determine an ideal-type of identity through attributes which lie outside the personality itself: religious ties and social conformism. “Immanent symbolism” implies that the external definitions of an identity construction are viewed as unnatural and compulsive, and intra-psychic symbols are being used instead: sensitivity, concepts based on drives, and emotions are symbols of an immanent definition of personality. The pair of notions, transcendental/immanent, thus corresponds to Turner’s concept of institutional/impulsive.

Benton considered the two forms of identity as ideal types. Empirically he found only mixed forms, but they inclined consistently towards one of the two poles. Benton’s analysis of the magazine confirmed his hypothesis. The notion of an ideal personality has indeed changed from an identity figure determined by transcendental features to one distinguished by immanent symbols. On the

one hand, criticism of transcendental symbols is becoming ever louder, the expectations regarding adaptation to institutional roles ever weaker, and deviant behaviour or unsuccessful personality construction is blamed increasingly on social conditions that suppress the "true" personality. On the other hand, references to immanent characteristics have been increasing, especially since the end of the 1960s. In fact, this is where emotions are playing a decisive role now; they are increasingly used for processes of self-definition as well as a pattern of argumentation. To show oneself as afraid, furious, loving, desiring, depressed or happy is becoming increasingly culturally acceptable and increasingly useful as a standard response for legitimizing acts or, more precisely, errors.

The fact that emotions are especially useful for establishing an identity is due to the special constitution of emotions (for the area of fear see Luhmann, 1986, Chapter XIX). Since they cannot be regulated away by any of society's functional systems, emotions can serve as a functional equivalent for other patterns of meaning, and indeed as a stable and durable equivalent. Emotions can claim authenticity, since any actor can personally attest that he or she has them, without others being able to refute the claim. Whoever has emotions and shows and uses them for his or her own identity strategy is morally in the right, since emotions cannot be disputed in communication processes.

These features make feelings especially suitable for identity-establishing processes. The question is simply under what *social conditions* this recourse is taken, i.e. what are the social preconditions for a recoding of identity? Here, the development of the welfare state, the change in the ratio of work time to leisure time, and the rise in income surely play a role — factors mentioned in the discussion of the causes of informalization processes. But recourse to the symbolism of emotions is also related to the question of what functional alternatives for identity conceptions are available. To put it in somewhat exaggerated terms, following Luhmann: the emotional is the modern a priori; it is the principle that does not fail when all other principles do (Luhmann, 1986: 240). The observed change in the terms of reference from a transcendental system of symbols to one of immanent notions is related to the decline in the persuasive and structuring power of the available transcendental interpretations of social life. I have already pointed out the processes which involve the secularization and rationalization of the "Lebenswelt". In his sketch of "another modern age", Ulrich Beck

(1986) names further factors in the dissolution of institutional patterns of interpretation of social life that make recourse to immanent symbolism probable.

Beck proceeds on the assumption that the basic, self-evident truths of industrial society are becoming increasingly frail and dubious. That is, the familiar forms of work and life (social classes, the family, sex roles, organization of work) have lost their power to provide a structure. At the same time, an increasing diversity in every area of professional life is making solidarity based on homogeneous groups less probable. Recourse to individuality is the last resort in efforts to provide meaning. A similar flexibility within traditional roles and expectations is taking place in the private sphere. The traditional division of roles between men and women no longer holds, and is being replaced by negotiations over who is who and who does what. Conventions for orientating behaviour are losing importance, while the possibilities for shaping one's own self are becoming greater.

These lines of development, which can only be hinted at here, add up to a central trend. Never before in history, according to Beck, have people been released to this extent from traditional social constraints and lifestyles and left so much to themselves as actors. To extend Beck's ideas speculatively, models and moulds for identity-formation processes might then be sought and found "internally". Emotions form a frame of reference for self-definitions, for an emotional self.

However, the empirical evidence supporting the thesis of a change in identity concepts is quite meagre, leaving the discussion of the causes of such a change correspondingly speculative. Further research is required here.

### **Post-conventional, emotional consciousness: unity in diversity**

Looking back on all the descriptions and analyses pertaining to the various dimensions of today's cultural coding of emotions raises an important question. Is it possible to filter out a common element which links these heterogeneous processes — commercialization of the emotions, transformation into language, informalization, and the formation of new identity concepts? In conclusion, I should like to explore briefly this question and hence

move toward a "post-Elias" concept of a culture of emotions.

Unity appears to lie in diversity itself, in the consistency of the heterogeneity, in the differentiation of cultural patterns of meaning. Thus, while many spheres of action call for commercialization (i.e. for the emotional to be penetrated by economic rationality), in other economic contexts a stronger emotional construction of reality is required. In still other areas, informalization processes (i.e. the loosening of emotional control) are confronted by the institutionalization of discourse. All this appears to be happening at the same time and in different areas, each with their own claims of validity. If one chooses Elias's theoretical concept to assess these developments, it is obvious that the heterogeneity of the tendencies cannot be reduced to the simple formula of an increase in emotional control. Although partial developments in this direction, e.g. the process of commercialization, can be inferred, the various trends taken together indicate a diversification of the culture of emotions.

At the same time this places other, new demands on individual actors. The flexible handling of different emotional requirements becomes necessary. People need to choose among, and play with, different formalized social interactions, while going along with less formality in other areas. Reflections on, and discourse about, one's emotional states can be required as much as surrendering to one's emotions. What is demanded today (in terms of the ideal-type) is a competence that puts people in a position to conduct themselves in various contexts of meaning and to act with their own emotions. But such a notion and cultural coding of an emotional self is not compatible with Elias's concept of an individual with a strong superego, which is far too rigidly and morally constrained to ensure flexibility.

As an alternative to Elias's psychoanalytical model, Gerhard Vohwinkel (1983) has reconstructed the process of civilization with the help of Lawrence Kohlberg's typology of the developmental stages of moral consciousness. If one follows up on the historical analysis and relates Kohlberg's concept to the cultural developments described above, then the actors' successful handling of heterogeneous expectations regarding their emotions could be called a form of post-conventional consciousness. What does that mean?

Kohlberg (1979) distinguishes between three levels of moral development, each consisting of two stages. The "pre-conventional" level corresponds to what Kohlberg calls a moral code that is followed for fear of external sanctions. If the person making the

judgments is egocentrically tied to the situations in such a way that she or he cannot reflect on her or his own or others' perspectives, only external sanctions can prevent the intended actions. Kohlberg speaks of "conventional consciousness" when the previously external expectations, norms and moral notions come into play by means of their internalization and the development of the superego as a regulative authority. Actions that are viewed as morally wrong are sanctioned internally by feelings of shame and guilt. The conventional level corresponds to Elias's description of the civilized person in control of his or her own emotions. "Post-conventional" designates the last phase of moral development and describes a consciousness capable of recognizing the relativity and area-specific validity of norms, and thus able to handle commandments and prohibitions more playfully, and also to generate new norms itself.

Applying these ideas about post-conventional consciousness to the area of the emotions, what is implied is a type of actor with a consciousness allowing him to dispose of his emotions, which includes the option of surrendering to his emotions. A type of consciousness is envisaged, which could anticipate the various feeling rules and could playfully maintain a distance from them, and also understand how to master situational changes with different emotional expectations. Such an actor would meet the heterogeneous cultural requirements for dealing with one's emotions. Whether the heart can be formed in this way is an open empirical question.

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