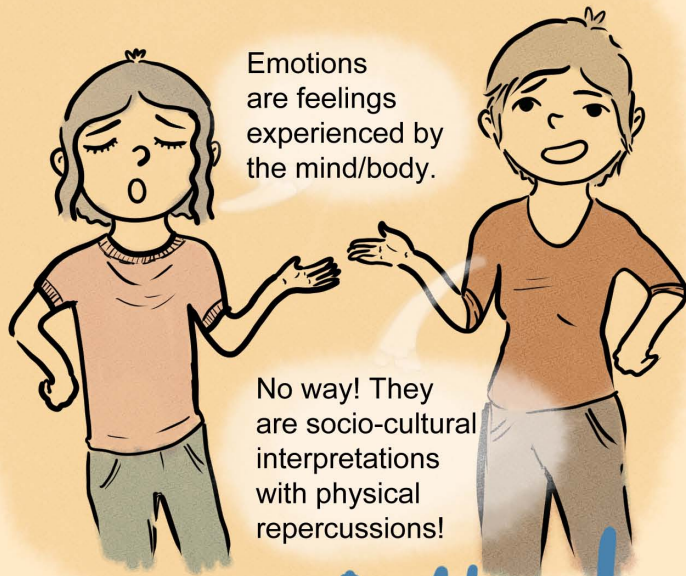




Linamar Campos-Flores is an FQRSC Postdoctoral Fellow at Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Iztapalapa in Mexico City. She studies the emotions involved in everyday resistance strategies implemented by women of Chicomuselo, Chiapas, opposing an extractive project from a Canadian mining company. Her research interests include the politics of emotions, human rights, migration, gender, and environmental issues.

Lina Erandi Campos-Castillo (Mani Takwani) is a Chiapanecan visual artist, currently working as a freelancer. Her work is closely linked to oneirology (the scientific study of dreams) and expressions of the body. She has exhibited her work since 2016 in spaces such as “Colors of childhood,” “Body and Soul”, and “Pulquearte.”





Emotions cannot be measured, so we cannot include them in our studies!

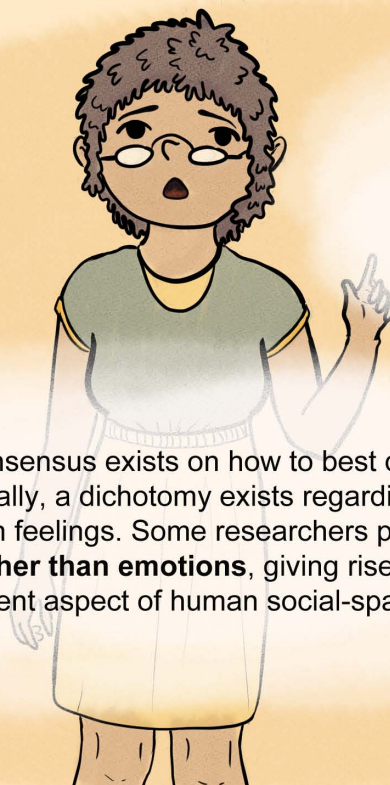
I disagree, emotions have different qualities, so we can include them in our analysis!



What are emotions?



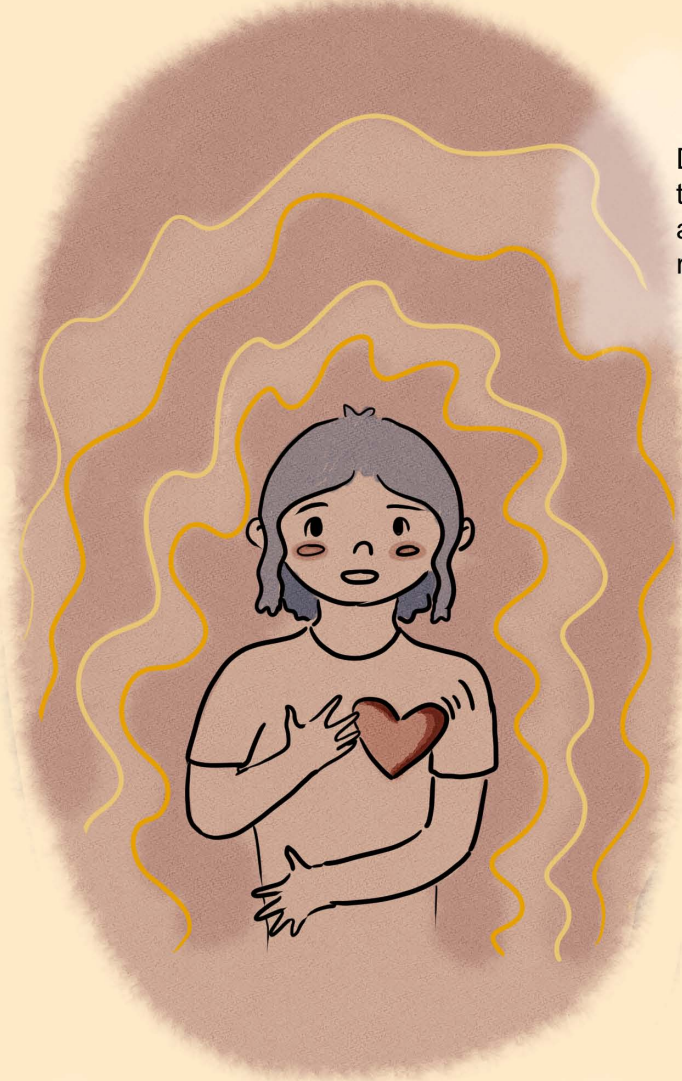
They are visceral, feminine...science is rational, objective, masculine.



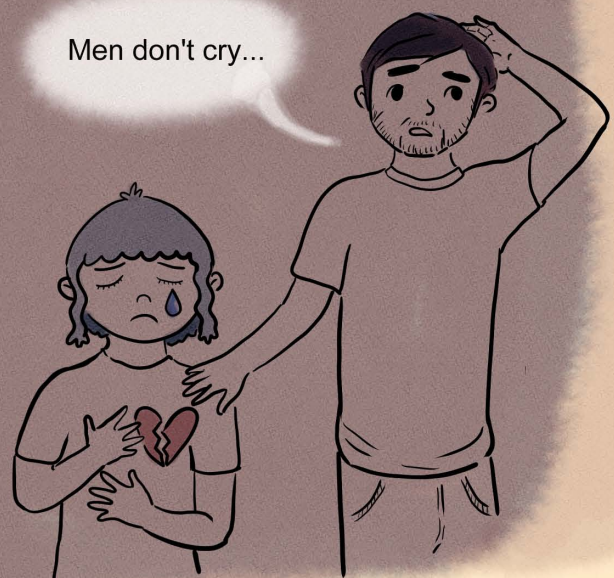
The long-standing debate on whether or not to include emotions within social science research has taken place over several decades and continued until the beginning of the 21st century. During that period, social scientists began to consider emotions explicitly in their research, contributing to what is now known as the "emotional turn" in the field.

Even today, no consensus exists on how to best define and theorize emotions. Additionally, a dichotomy exists regarding how to approach research on human feelings. Some researchers prefer to explore and analyze **affect, rather than emotions**, giving rise to two main perspectives related to the sentient aspect of human social-spatial interactions.

Defining emotions is as complex as the way we experience them. This is because human beings can feel emotions and experience psycho-physiological (mind/body) reactions simultaneously.

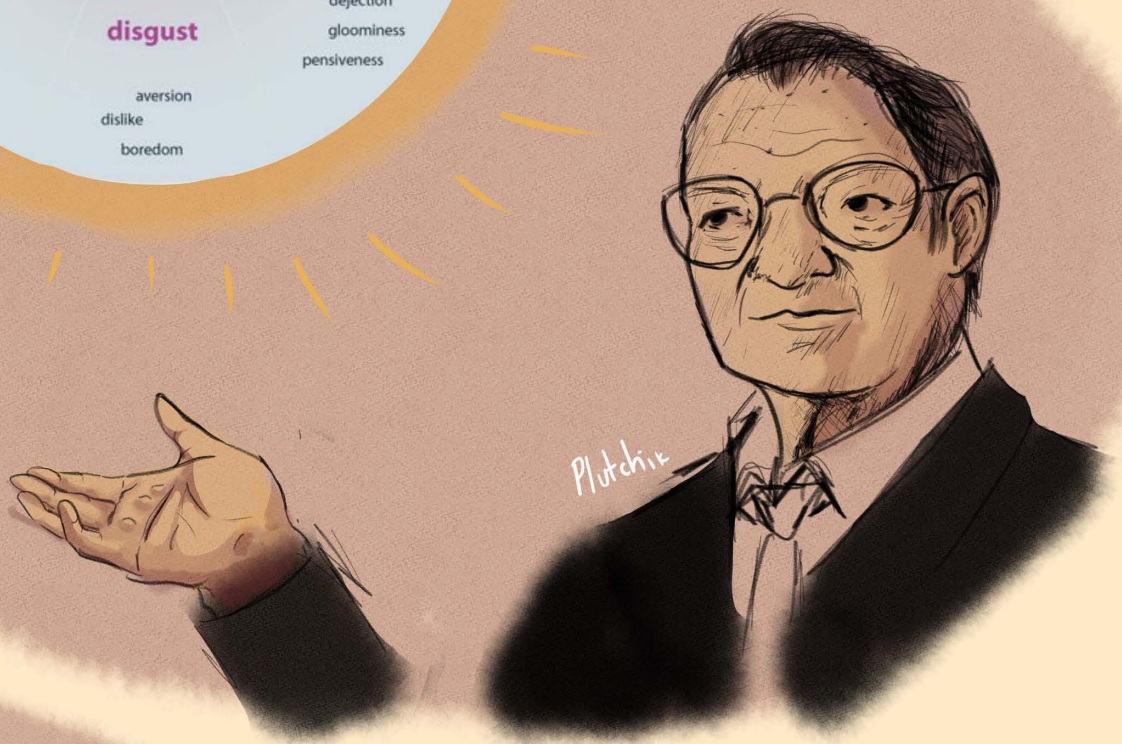


In other words, the discussion about emotions can be compared to the question: "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" Do we feel emotions first with our body or our mind? Is there an inherent cognitive action related to emotion? Or do they arise because we learn to react in such ways?





In 1980, the psychologist Robert Plutchik proposed a structured way of interpreting emotions based on their physiological purpose, currently known as "Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions." Other social scientists have used this influential work to structure their treatment of emotions in a logical way.

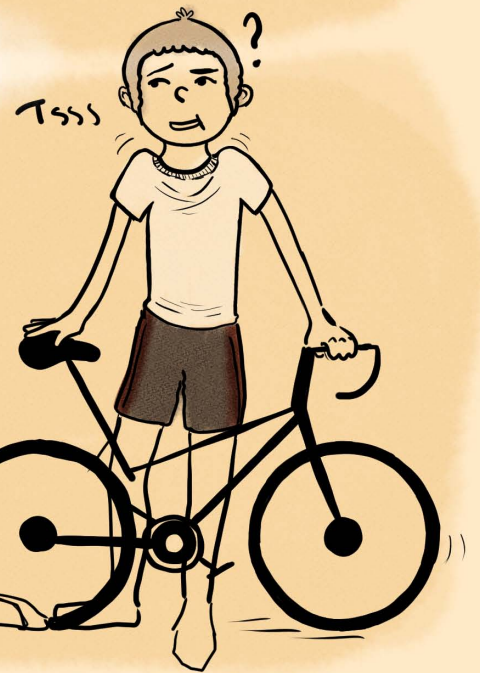


Sociologists lead the study of emotions. Social-constructionists argue that emotions are purely social, while other sociologists argue that emotions involve sensations or bodily feelings and forms of cognition.

One understanding of emotion is as "a prototypical, conscious, subjective, psychophysiological state of mind which arises in response to a danger or opportunity in the environment or to an event or situation in the social world, and which prepares one for a potentially adaptive, expressive, and/or communicative behavioral reaction" (TenHouten 2013, p. 9).



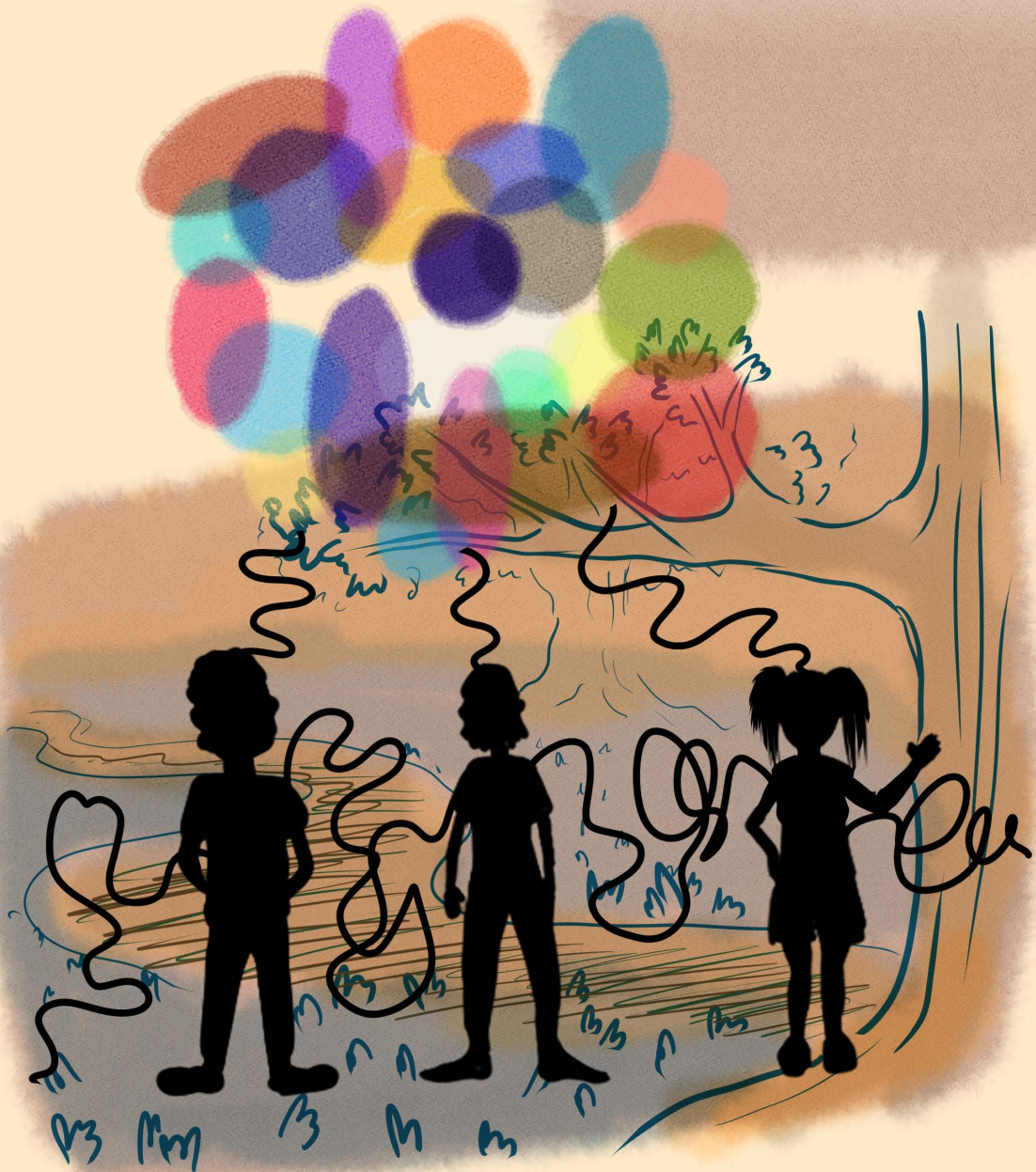
More simply put, emotions involve simultaneous perception/sensation/cognition/behavioral responses through cultural lenses. And sometimes, cognition is not at play, as happens in the fight-or-flight response.





For feminist geographers who coined the term “emotional geographies,” it is important to understand this denomination broadly, since emotions cross disciplinary boundaries (Davidson et al. 2007).

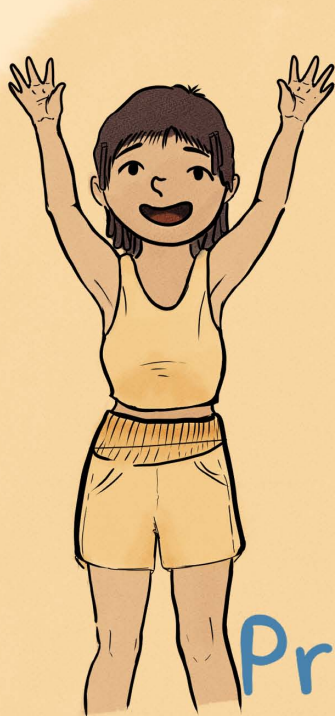
According to geographers of emotion, emotions can be understood as a kind of connective tissue that links an individual's personal experience with space, time, and place.





Social scientists mostly agree that all human beings experience six primary emotions—happiness, sadness, fear, disgust, anger, and surprise (Plutchik adds anticipation). These are considered to be universal, physiological, of evolutionary relevance, and biologically and neurologically innate.

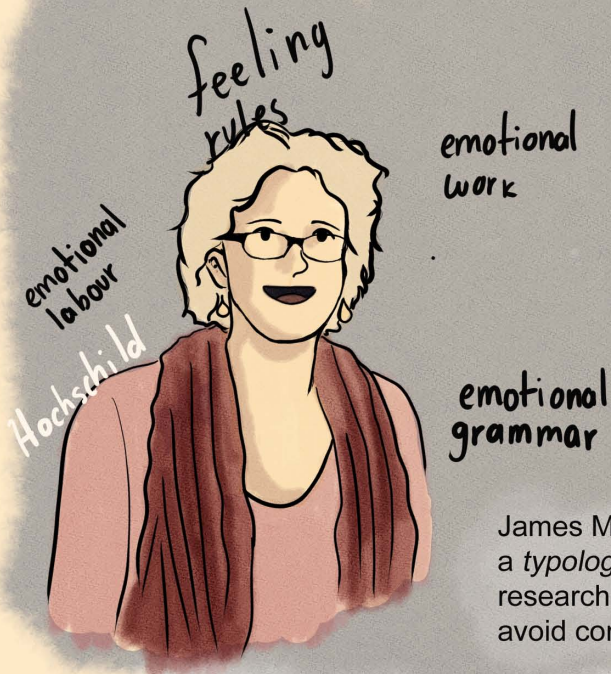
Secondary emotions, which can result from a combination of primary emotions, are **socially and culturally conditioned** (Bericat, 2015, p. 492).



Primary emotions

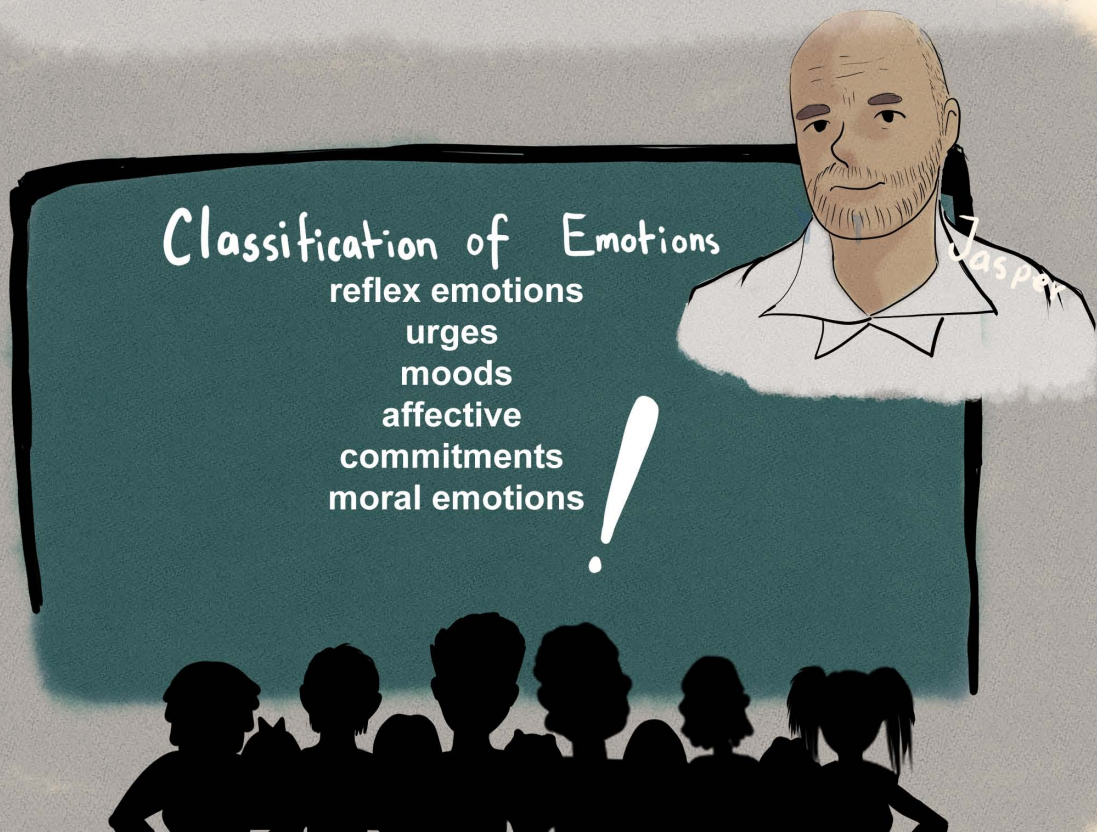


Within the study of emotions, several theorists have added other concepts and categories to the field. Arlie R. Hochschild, for example, coined several terms that other researchers have built upon, including *feeling rules*, *emotional work/labour*, and *emotional grammar* (1979, 1983, 2003).



James M. Jasper studies social movements, and has advanced a *typology of emotional processes* (2018). He proposes that researchers privilege the use of the following classifications to avoid conceptual confusions:

reflex emotions (quick responses to events and information), *urges* (strong bodily impulses hard to ignore), *moods* (de-energizing feelings persisting across settings), *affective commitments* (relatively stable feelings about others or objects), and *moral emotions* (feelings of approval or disapproval based on moral intuitions or principles).



THEORIES OF EMOTION

Sociocultural

emotions are shaped by sociocultural norms that determine how we express and interpret them



Physiological

responses within the body cause emotions



Neurological

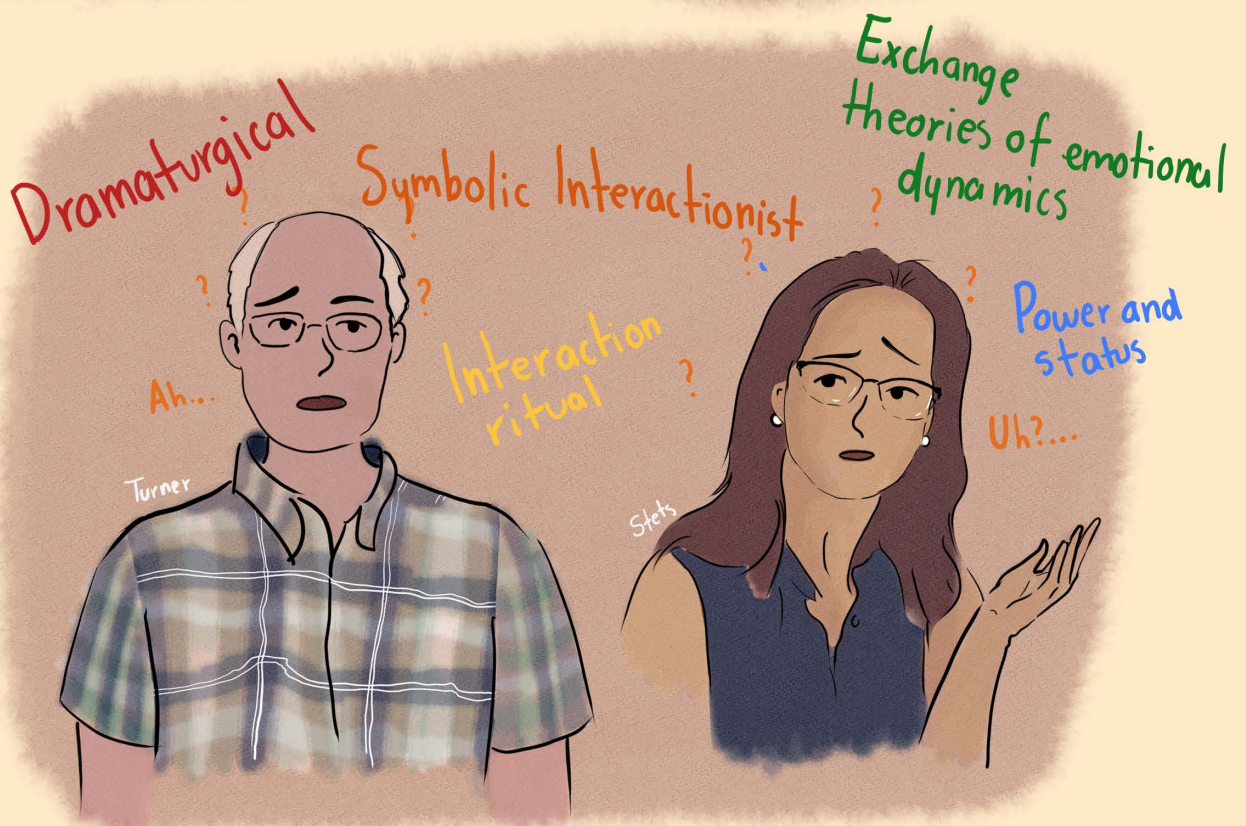
brain activity causes emotional responses



It is important to note that there are many theories of emotion. Turner and Stets (2005) assess the main theoretical perspectives in sociology: dramaturgical, symbolic interactionist, interaction ritual, power and status, and exchange theories of emotional dynamics.

Cognitive

thoughts form emotions



There also are other ways to understand emotion, emerging from other disciplines. For example, anthropologist Catherine Lutz suggests that the exploration of emotion is one of the “main Western cultural categories” (Lutz 1988, p. 288). In other words, we in Western society load emotions with our own conceptions, qualifying them as good, bad, excessive, etc., and then judge the opportune moment to express them. This can have the effect of ‘othering’ (making strange or different) cultural groups beyond those of Western society..

Is there another way
to understand emotions?



Lutz exemplifies this through her research with a Micronesian cultural group, the Ifaluk, for whom anger and fear have meanings and roles in social life that are different from those in the West.



Everyone, regardless of where they live, feels and shows their different emotions. What is critical for social scientists to understand is that the importance, expression, and meaning may differ significantly, based on cultural context.



So, it is true:
emotions matter!



Discussion Questions

Consider TenHouten's definition of emotions. Is it too elaborate, or not elaborate enough? What parts of it are meaningful to you, and what parts are confusing? How would you define emotions?

What do you think when you hear the phrase "the sociology/anthropology/geography of emotions"? What sorts of research might be possible within each of these realms?

Exercise

Working in pairs, identify your socio-cultural background (if you are comfortable doing so) and reflect on different ways that your upbringing has led you to express or hide your emotions. (This relates to the concept of *feeling rules*.) How do those socio-cultural feeling rules compare to those expected in the place/space you inhabit? If you have experience in non-Anglophone cultures, have you encountered or learned terms or ideas related to emotions that are not translatable into English, or difficult to define in one word? (e.g., *saudade* in Portuguese or *amae* in Japanese).

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