

Objective: To understand emotion as a concept and its relationship to IR.

Key Ideas

Question: What are emotions?

Answer: Emotions are *subjective experiences* of *physiological changes*, whose meanings can be cognitively and socially *constructed*.

Question: How do emotions differ from moods?

Answer: Moods are diffuse feelings, whereas emotions have a specific referent (i.e., triggering target).

Question: How do emotions and rational choice relate to one another?

Answer: Rational choice revolves around sets of assumptions and abstractions, yet emotions are inseparable from the biological systems by which they are produced. Whereas rationalist models might try to capture preferences and behaviors of groups or the state, theorizing about emotions requires the individual—“states do not have amygdalae.” At the individual-level, we cannot separate emotions and rationality. Without emotions, individuals cannot make decisions or achieve self cognition (see Damasio experiments).

Question: What are the three major models of emotional structure?

Answer:

Model	Description	Example
One-dimensional (Valence)	Divides emotions into + and - categories; emotions of similar valences have similar effects	Memory-based processing model of political judgments; through priming and framing effects, the media creates affective associations in memory
Two-dimensional (Circumplex)	Maps emotions along two dimensions: (1) valence (from unpleasant to pleasant), & (2) activation (from deactivation to activation)	Excitement and happiness might both be pleasant, but excitement is more active
Appraisal tendency (see Lerner)	Differential functions of discrete emotions; emotions serve coordinating roles for problem-solving	Acts of revenge are associated with anger, not fear

Question: What value do emotions have for signaling in diplomacy?

Answer: Emotional displays have communicative value. Because signals are most persuasive in scenarios where the signaler is least able to bluff, emotions make commitments and promises in face-to-face diplomacy more credible, since emotions can be spontaneous and hard to control. Emotions also matter for the development of interpersonal trust (e.g., via facial mimicry and emotional synchronization).

Question: According to Lerner et al. (2015), what are some ways to manage the “deleterious” effects of emotions on decision-making?

Answer: Lerner et al. (2015) suggests two broad approaches: (1) minimizing emotional responses through time delays, reappraisal, or counter-emotions, and (2) insulating decisions from emotions by cognitive awareness or by altering the “choice architecture.”