

Beyond the Feeling Individual: Insights from Sociology on Emotions and Embeddedness

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ABSTRACT Organizational scholars have treated emotions mostly as an individual-level phenomenon, with limited theorisation of emotions as an important component in social embeddedness. In this review essay, we argue for the need for a toolkit to study emotions as an inherently social phenomenon. To do so, we apply insights from sociology that have been under-utilized in management and organization research. We focus on three sociological concepts: collective emotions and social bonds, emotional energy and moral batteries, and emotional capital. We then develop an integrative model of emotional embeddedness to emphasize that emotions are socially constructed and socially authorized. We end the paper by setting out a research agenda for more research in management and organization that is informed by these three concepts.

Keywords: collective emotions, embeddedness, emotional capital, emotional energy, moral batteries, social bonds

INTRODUCTION

Emotions are an essential aspect of being human. Scholars of organizational behaviour have shown how emotions impact people's attitudes and behaviour, and therefore affect interpersonal relationships, group norms, and organizational performance (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995; Ashkanasy, 2003; Ashkanasy and Humphrey, 2011; Cropanzano et al., 2017; Daniels and Robinson, 2019; Elfenbein, 2007). Organization theorists have used emotions to explain how institutions are created, maintained, and transformed

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(Friedland, 2018; Jakob-Sadeh and Zilber, 2019; Lok et al., 2017; Moisander et al., 2016; Wright et al., 2017), and how people's emotions can shape organizing dynamics (Barberá-Tomás et al., 2019; Petriglieri et al., 2019). In all, for scholars, attending to emotions has been seen as advancing 'a better *causal* understanding of the "nuts and bolts"' (Goodwin and Pfaff, 2001, p. 301, italics in original) of social life.

While researchers have made significant progress in examining emotions in organizations (Elfenbein, 2007; Elsbach, 2009; Menges and Kilduff, 2015), the focus has been predominantly on the intra- (and occasionally inter-) personal aspects of emotions. For example, scholars have studied the impact of emotions on individual creativity (Amabile et al., 2005; Fong, 2006; To et al., 2015). Research on emotional labour has emphasized the effort of individual employees to adjust their emotional displays and emotional experiences to fit the situational demands (Grandey, 2000; Locke, 1996; Rupp et al., 2008). Research on teams has examined how individual emotions impact team effectiveness (Barsade et al., 2000; Chiang et al., 2021; Dasborough et al., 2020) and conflict resolution (Halperin, 2014; Jiang et al., 2013; Mikkelsen et al., 2020). In this way, the dominant view has focused on how emotions shape the decisions and actions of individuals.

There have been some exceptions to this individual-centric view of emotions. Some work has linked emotions to core organizational processes (Maitlis et al., 2013), such as organizational learning and change (Catino and Patriotta, 2013; Mikkelsen et al., 2020). For example, research on sensemaking in crisis and change (e.g., Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010), managing the unexpected, and High-Reliability Organizations (HROs) has shown that aspects of emotions such as timing, valence, and intensity may interact with cognition and organizational culture to trigger and shape sensemaking process (e.g., Catino and Patriotta, 2013; Weick, 1988, 1990, 1993; Weick and Sutcliffe, 2015). While this research stream has been valuable in placing emotions at the core of organizing, it stops short of revealing or investigating the ways in which emotions are *part of our embeddedness* in the social world, and how emotions are not just (consequential) feelings inside of us, but part of our very lived and inhabited experiences (Bandelj, 2009; Stets and Turner, 2014, p. 348). It is not just that people have emotions, but emotions have people (Collins, 2004). Emotions facilitate the ongoing person-society connection and help us to become and be the people that we are. For this reason, there have been calls to attend to a more sociological understanding of emotions, and to 'how emotions are constituted in (and constitutive of) social structure' (Zietsma et al., 2019, p. 6). This demands that we consider how emotions shape our social embeddedness in the world.

Studying the role of emotions in social embeddedness is important, as it enables researchers to recognize how emotions shape engagement with and understanding of institutions and the social world (Goodrick et al., 2020; Vince and Broussine, 1996). For example, recent research at the intersection of emotions and institutions has suggested that emotions are the foundation of institutional processes, because emotions make institutions experientially 'real' to people, and are key to the perceived permanence and durability of institutions (Voronov and Weber, 2016). Similarly, scholars have identified the pervasive conscious and unconscious role of emotions in how culture functions within and beyond organizations (Creed et al., 2014). Emotions are also involved in the collective sensemaking processes by which organizations create order out of disorder (Patriotta, 2016). The dominant intra-personal and inter-personal conceptualisations of emotion in organization studies fail to acknowledge this more

pervasive role of emotions in organizing and limit the explanatory power of emotions. As Vince and Saleem (2004, p. 133) argue, the study of emotion ‘provides an opportunity to question the meaning of emotions in context: [...] how emotions consciously and unconsciously construct organization’. We argue that to take seriously the social–emotional embeddedness of people, we need to expand the toolkit and frameworks we use to analyse and study emotions by highlighting ‘not individuals and their interactions, but interactions and their individuals; not persons and their passions, but passions and their persons’ (Collins, 2004, p. 5).

The aim of this review article, therefore, is to facilitate a dialogue between a sociological perspective on emotions and management research, to complement and enhance management research with insights from the sociology of emotions. Such an agenda can help move us beyond the idea that emotions exist in organizations as properties of their individual members and towards a view that emotions are essentially social; it will allow us to unpack emotional embeddedness. To do so, we conduct an integrative review (Elsbach and van Knippenberg, 2020; Patriotta, 2020), in which we map, critically analyse, and synthesize emerging research in management which takes a sociological view of emotions, complementing it with important insights from sociology that have received little attention from management scholars. We then develop a framework that outlines three key sociological concepts that can help us refocus our theorizing on social and emotional embeddedness: *collective emotions and social bonds*, *emotional energy and moral batteries*, and *emotional capital*. We selected these concepts as critical to developing a programme of research on emotional embeddedness, as they focus on central aspects of organizational life: interactions and social connection, social action, and power and inequality. Finally, we combine these three concepts into an integrative model to distil the implications of a sociological perspective for future research.

REVIEW METHODS

Our review involved four steps. First, we searched for papers with the string ‘emotion’ in the title, abstract, or keywords in Web of Science. We then filtered the results for papers published in our selected list of 11 core management journals, namely *Academy of Management Annals*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Human Relations*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Organization*, *Organization Science*, *Organization Studies*, *Strategic Management Journal*, and *Strategic Organization* and eight sociology journals, *American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, *Annual Review of Sociology*, *Emotion and Society*, *Sociology*, *Social Forces*, *Sociological Theory*, and *Theory and Society*. We limited our search to articles published between 1990 and 2022, because the ‘sociology of emotions did not emerge until the last decades of the twentieth century’ (Turner and Stets, 2006, p. 25).

Second, by reading the titles and abstracts of each paper, we excluded papers that did not explicitly theorize about or focus on emotions. This process resulted in a total of 536 papers. We then categorized the rest of the papers into two groups: with the majority, 374 papers, treating emotions as an individual-level phenomenon within organizations, and 162 papers (of which 97 were published in management journals) adopting a sociological view and framing emotions as embedded in social relations (see Table I for a summary).

Table I. Summary of search results

<i>Journal</i>	<i>Number of papers</i>
Organization Studies	27
Academy of Management Journal	16
Human Relations	15
American Journal of Sociology	14
Theory and Society	11
American Sociological Review	10
Organization Science	10
Annual Review of Sociology	8
Organization	8
Social Forces	8
Academy of Management Review	7
Sociological Theory	7
Administrative Science Quarterly	6
Emotions and Society	5
Journal of Management Studies	4
Strategic Organization	2
Sociology	2
Academy of Management Annals	1
Strategic Management Journal	1

This step indicated that sociological theories of emotions have indeed been less utilized in the field of management and organization. We found this tendency to privilege the psychological conceptualization of emotion to be the case, even when we included sociology journals and excluded management journals that are more individual in focus, such as *Journal of Applied Psychology* and *Organizational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes*. We also consulted classical sociology books on emotions. Our final sample contains 162 papers and 40 books or book sections that take a sociological approach to emotions.

Third, we read these articles, books, and book sections in detail to identify topics that could contribute to our understanding of how emotions impact social embeddedness. To answer this question, we focused on five dimensions: (1) research context, (2) research question(s), (3) definition of emotions, (4) key findings, and (5) the role of emotions (i.e., what do emotions do?). Our analysis revealed that emotions impact social embeddedness in three ways. First, many scholars have pointed to the importance of interactions and social connections, so to build on this theme, we identified the concepts ‘collective emotions and social bonds’ from the sociology of emotions. A second stream of research prevalent in the literature examines how emotions motivate social action; we then drew on the concepts of ‘emotional energy’ and ‘moral batteries’, building on Collins (2004) and Jasper (2011) to further develop this theoretical conversation. Finally, we noticed that

a very nascent, but critically important conversation discusses how power and inequality are based on the ability to experience and display certain emotions that are more valuable in a social group than others. We saw this as important to develop our understanding of emotions and social embeddedness and utilize the concept of ‘emotional capital’ to unpack and develop this theme.

In what follows, we discuss each of the three concepts, focusing on definitions, intellectual roots and core assumptions gleaned from the sociological perspective and applications in and for management research. We then point to fruitful avenues for future research. Our analysis of the literature has been outlined in Table II.

COLLECTIVE EMOTIONS AND SOCIAL BONDS

A core component of organizational life and, thus, of scholarship attending to social embeddedness is the importance of interactions and social connections. In our review, we discovered that the emotional component of this core aspect of social embeddedness is related to how emotions are shared, and how they bond people together. As such, we highlight two sociological concepts that can make sense of this critical component of social and emotional embeddedness: collective emotions and social bonds.

Collective Emotions and Social Bonds

Collective emotions and social bonds’ intellectual roots. Collective emotions have been defined as ‘the *synchronous convergence in affective responding* across individuals towards a specific event or object’ (von Scheve and Ismer, 2013, p. 406, italics in the original). Other definitions differ, depending on the scope of the analysis. Emotions are collective when they are elicited in a variety of shared experiences (Collins, 2014; Durkheim, 1912/1965; Goffman, 1956/1959, 1967). This might include persons’ physical proximity in crowds, gatherings and groups, as well as non-physical but socially shared experiences on social media platforms (Collins, 2014; Toubiana and Zietsma, 2017). Collective emotions are expressed and enacted through shared beliefs, norms and values, and they are embedded in people’s sense of group identity and belonging (Collins, 2014; Durkheim, 1912/1965; Goffman, 1967). The emotions embedded in social interactions include not only conscious emotional experiences, but also unconscious processes that function as defences against unwanted emotions (Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2020; Vince, 2019; Wettergren, 2005). In this way, emotions are seen as being present in ‘transactional dynamics’ rather than only in individuals (Emirbayer, 1997, p. 302).

The notion of collective emotion has its intellectual roots in the theories of Gustave Le Bon on crowds and contagion and in the work of Émile Durkheim, who studied religious communities to understand the social sharing of beliefs and attitudes in the emergence of collective emotions and behaviours (von Scheve and Salmela, 2014). Le Bon looked at how synchrony in cognitions, emotions and behaviours emerges in crowds. He explained this using the analogy of infectious diseases. He observed that cognitive and affective states can be infectious under certain circumstances and that they spread by emotional contagion (von Scheve and Ismer, 2013). Le Bon’s interest

Table II. Three sociological concepts of promise for management research

	<i>Collective emotions and social bonds</i>	<i>Emotional energy and moral batteries</i>	<i>Emotional capital</i>
Key insights/component ideas	Emotions can be collective and shared. Shared emotions intensify to produce solidarity and contention. Social bonds produce self- and social regulation and they support disruption	Emotions drive social actions	Some emotions are more valuable in a social group than others. Social stratification is based on the ability to experience and display the valued emotions
Definition	Collective emotions are common feelings by members of a social unit as a result of shared experiences Social bonds are emotional and affective attachments to others that comprise social embeddedness	Emotional energy is an enduring emotion that operates as a continuum, ranging from confidence, enthusiasm, good-self feelings, to depression, lack of initiative, and negative self-feelings A moral battery is a pair of positive and negative emotions which motivates action away from an unattractive state and towards an attractive one	Emotional resources that afford social advantage in a social group by virtue of facilitating activities that are valued within the social formation
Key thinkers and intellectual roots	Le Bon; Durkheim; Goffman; Hirschi; Scheff	Collins; Durkheim; Goffman; Jasper	Bourdieu; Nowotny; Reay
Theoretical assumptions	Emotions are strengthened by being shared. Collective emotions arise when individuals relate to each other, creating affective solidarities and emotional energy. Collective emotions are generated through contextually specific social interaction. Social bonds are developed and maintained with others through self and social regulation, but they also contain the potential for disruption	Emotions are fundamentally social phenomena that are constructed within interactions. Morality is an essential component of emotional energy/moral batteries. Individuals have similar responses to stimuli	Emotions constitute a form of capital by shaping behavioural dispositions that may be seen as desirable or undesirable within a social group

(Continues)

Table II. (Continued)

	<i>Collective emotions and social bonds</i>	<i>Emotional energy and moral batteries</i>	<i>Emotional capital</i>
Future research	<p>1. How do collective emotions and social bonds impact solidarity, creation, and community building? How do they tie people together in mutual defensiveness as well as mutual commitment? How can collective emotions contribute to the disruption of unequal social power relations?</p> <p>2. What kind of moral emotions besides shame and pride lead to social bonds? How do unconscious sources of emotions, values, desires and fantasies impact social dynamics? What are the implications for social change?</p> <p>3. How can atmosphere and organizational climate or culture be used strategically?</p>	<p>1. Under what circumstances would emotional energy/moral batteries suppress actions?</p> <p>2. Is copresence necessary for generating emotional energy?</p> <p>3. Are moral batteries the ‘substance’ of emotional energy that actually powers or suppresses actions?</p>	<p>1. How do people’s life experiences impact their ability to engage in emotional labour? How do people acquire the emotional capital of a particular social group? Why do some people struggle to engage in emotional labour?</p> <p>2. How does emotional capital contribute to the success of people in adapting to the ‘new’ economy?</p> <p>3. How does emotional intelligence reproduce social stratification? How do people’s life experiences impact emotional intelligence?</p>

in the process of contagion, or the ‘madness of crowds’ (Le Bon, 1896) has been studied across various disciplines (see Hatfield et al., 2014), including management and organization studies (Barsade, 2002; Bartunek et al., 2008; Gorbatai et al., 2021; Kudesia, 2021; Rao and Dutta, 2012; Smith-Crowe and Warren, 2014). It should be noted, though, that this ‘contagion’ view of collective emotions is best viewed as ‘collected’, to borrow the term from Coraiola et al. (2023), rather than *collective* per se, because these scholars see collective emotions as resulting from the aggregation of individual emotional experiences. In other words, it is still an individual-centric view of emotions.

There is also considerable work that conceptualizes and studies collective emotions – that is, moving beyond the ‘contagion’ metaphor and avoiding the primacy of the individual. Durkheim, for instance, occupies a prominent position in the early sociological study of collective emotions. Through his research into First Nation Australian (indigenous) social groups (Durkheim, 1912/1965), Durkheim sought to comprehend both the sacred and mundane elements of social life. If he could discover the principles of structural correspondence that linked the sacred and the mundane, he believed he would have a key to understanding the originating principles of the phenomena (Pickering, 2002). While Durkheim’s analysis was in many ways both racist and flawed in its conceptualisation of First Nation groups, he was able to describe ceremonial and ritual gatherings of exceptional social intensity. In doing so, Durkheim was able to capture and explain a powerful emotional sense of solidarity and dependence created by *collective effervescence*. That is, when a group of people gather together and engage in intense, focused, and rhythmic behaviours (‘co-presence’), their focused attention and shared emotion create ‘a mood that feels stronger than any of them individually’, which leads to symbols and shared morality (Collins, 2014; Metiu and Rothbard, 2012, p. 299).

One could say that Durkheim had intended to explain the origins of religious intensity, but instead discovered an explanation of how religion-like intensity was reproduced and shared in a variety of social contexts. Thinking through rituals and symbolisations provided a way of understanding, for example, ‘why all parties political, economic or confessional are careful to have periodical reunions where their members may revivify their common faith by manifesting it in common’ (Durkheim, 1912/1965, p. 240). His insights into the emotional underpinning of ritual, social sharing, and solidarity have formed the starting point of an understanding of collective emotions in social movements, intractable conflicts, and collective action.

Challenging the psychology-derived view that emotions are merely individual-level phenomena (Emirbayer, 1997), sociologists have emphasized the importance of collective emotions in building a strong sense of solidarity among people and to build collective identification. Studies of collective emotions are based on the assumption that ‘emotions are intrinsically social’ (Collins, 2014, p. 299). Collective emotions arise from peoples’ relatedness, which refers to conscious and unconscious emotional levels of connection that shape selves and others, people, and systems (French and Vince, 1999). Emotions become collective in that they are strengthened by being shared with others (Collins, 2014). A key assumption within this work is that emotions are dynamic, relational processes not confined to individuals; they are properties of the entanglements of human and non-human actors alike (Emirbayer and Goldberg, 2005; von Scheve and Salmela, 2014).

From this perspective, persons are inseparable from the transactional contexts within which they are embedded and a persons' relatedness with and through others is seen as 'pre-eminently dynamic in nature, as unfolding, ongoing processes...' (Emirbayer, 1997, p. 289).

Another key component of collective emotions, developed from the work of Thomas Scheff, is the forming and maintenance of *social bonds*. Social bonds refer to emotional and affective attachments that people make to others in social groups, such as family, peers, and acquaintances (Scheff, 1997). Attachments to social others provide a mutual sense of belonging and membership, and stave off the threats of isolation and alienation. Early formulations of the social bond and social control theory (Chriss, 2007; Hirschi, 1969; Krohn and Massey, 1980) emphasized affective attachments to family and peers as one of the key components of the social bond, and thus as a deterrent to delinquency. Scheff (1990a, 1990b, 1997, 2000) and his colleague (Retzinger, 1991; Scheff and Retzinger, 1991) explicitly link shame and pride to social bonds. Persons experience pride when social bonds are strengthened and shame when they are threatened.

Collective emotions and social bonds in management theory. These ideas have been picked up and extended by management scholars to understand the process of group solidarity, community creation and building. In their ethnographic study of a Haitian community after the 2010 earthquake, Farny et al. (2019) show that 'collective emotions fulfil an important justifying function, capturing what is the right thing to do in a certain setting, that is integral to the legitimation of practices creating new institutional arrangements' (p. 792). Their analysis reveals that social practices can create novel institutional arrangements through the mobilization of collective emotions. And these practices can both generate and sustain future practices. Elsewhere, in a historical study of British Motorsport Valley, Aversa et al. (2022) found that a shared localizing passion bound people to spaces where they pursued their interests, which allowed hobbyists to cluster around industries aligned with their hobbies. Gorbatai et al. (2021) adopted a mixed-methods approach to study the Makers, a nascent field of DIY (do-it-yourself) hobbyists and technology hackers who value open-source innovation. They showed that demonstrations and hands-on activities elicited emotional contagion and empathy among people. These shared emotions united increasingly heterogeneous people and maintained their collective identity. Shared emotions can also be strategically used to resist the power regime (Callahan and Elliott, 2019). Marsh and Śliwa (2022) examined the Polish oppositional artistic collective, the Orange Alternative's (OA) non-confrontational resistance against the government. OA organized interventions in the streets of Polish cities to engage the general public by using humour and parody. It created the emotional atmosphere of laughter, which led to the emotional changes in participants from fear of the authority to a lack of fear.

In addition, systems psychodynamics is a well-established field of work in management and organization studies that has focused on the ways in which collective emotions are generated unconsciously (Voronov and Vince, 2012), and how unconscious dynamics impact on collective emotion within an organizational context. Systems psychodynamics studies 'the interaction between collective structures, norms, and practices, on the one

hand, and the cognitions, motivations, and emotions of members of those collectives' (Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2020, p. 413). For example, Padavic et al. (2020) studied how a professional service firm seeking to retain and promote women created unconscious social defences to deflect from and sustain the culture of overwork that disadvantaged its women staff members. Another recent example (Jarrett and Vince, *in press*) examined the transactional dynamics of strategic leadership groups in radical organizational change. This study challenges the focus on an individual 'prime mover' (usually the CEO) and shows how shared and projected emotions inform the emergence of negotiated orders that influence change. Systems psychodynamic research shows how community creation and building is not only achieved consciously, but also through unconscious dynamics, connected to collective arrangements (work structures, methods, discourses), that are created and used by an organization's members as a protection against emotions (Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2020). To sum up, scholars in management have identified that collective emotions can create a sense of community and solidarity among people, and that collective emotions can be generated unconsciously. This sense of community and solidarity might arise from anxieties or from enthusiasms, but in both cases, it binds people together into social relationships and social bonds that then structure behaviour and action.

For social bonds, in the management literature, Creed et al. (2014) built on Scheff's work to examine the disciplinary and de jure power effects of shame and shaming on institutional processes of conformity and disruption. The work on social bonds, while small, has diverse sociological roots that have sought to draw attention to the affective ties that bind people together and on the consequences of such ties. Management researchers have also acknowledged the importance of self and social regulation for maintaining social bonds and social arrangements. In addition, Creed and colleagues grant a bounded, institutionally authorized agency that allows for a degree of non-conformity in the form of disrupting institutional configurations that are seen as unjust, and of moving towards or creating new, more just configurations of institutions and society. In this way, Creed et al. (2014) recognize the possibility of weakening or breaking old social bonds associated with unjust institutions and establishing or strengthening new social bonds in the process of constructing or reinforcing more just institutions.

While recent research in management has highlighted the importance of affective bonds for maintaining social conformity and regulation, a great deal more can be done. For example, Farias (2017) has shown that affective bonds of friendship can be built and reinforced through processes of rituals and socialization, thus intentionally making the stranger (newcomers) a valued member of a community. By integrating sociological perspectives into the management literature, it is possible to uncover both the social solidarity facilitative and disruptive impact of collective emotions and social bonds.

In this section, we have discussed collective emotions and the social bonds that bind people together. A key function of leaning into the sociological perspective and intellectual roots of these concepts is to challenge the prevailing view that emotions are mostly individual level phenomena. Specifically, we want to move the discussion away from studies that focus on emotions as 'collected' rather than collective (Coraiola et al., 2023). In this way, we encourage scholars to move beyond a view of collective

emotions as an aggregation of individual emotional experiences. Sociological insights help advance a truly collective view of emotions, whereby the collective social dynamics are deemed central to the production and experience of emotions (Farny et al., 2019; Fortwengel, 2023). The study of collective emotions also helps management and organization scholars to focus on the ‘transactional dynamics’ (Emirbayer, 1997, p. 302), namely, the situated patterns of behaviour within social interactions. The advantage of this is that it expands our ability to comprehend the ways in which emotions are intrinsically social and embedded in people’s sense of group identity and belonging.

In addition, we emphasize social bonds, the emotional and affective attachments that people make to others in social groups. Attachments to social others both provide a mutual sense of belonging and membership, and assuage fears of isolation and alienation. Complementing the interest in emotional attachment at work, specifically the attachment by a person to an organization (Yip et al., 2018), we draw attention to relational and emotional bonds that both hold groups and organizations together and support defended positions and emotional dependency on the status quo. Such a lens combines the study of both social connection (solidarity) and social conformity. More broadly, our advocacy of collective emotions and social bonds seeks to connect scholars with a more immediate conceptual understanding of the social nature of emotions and provides insights into how social embeddedness is translated or embodied in people’s lives and in the functioning of societies.

EMOTIONAL ENERGY AND MORAL BATTERIES

A fundamental question debated within sociology is what motivates action (Collins, 2004; Jasper, 2011), thus scholarship attending to social embeddedness has focused on this as a central component of studying social and organizational life. In our review, we discovered that emotional embeddedness also shapes social action and we draw on two sociological concepts that help illuminate and unpack this relationship: emotional energy and moral batteries (Krishnan et al., 2021; Methot et al., 2021; Rauch and Ansari, 2022; Reinecke and Ansari, 2021). We argue that both concepts illuminate how emotions are generated through interaction in the social world and can propel action as a response.

Emotional Energy

Emotional energy’s intellectual roots. Scholars argue that people are motivated to act because of how they feel in response to a given social stimulus. Specifically, emotions can motivate action in a variety of ways, ranging from increased propensity to give donations (Paxton et al., 2020), to changing adults’ criminal involvement (Giordano et al., 2007), and to collective action more generally (Goodwin et al., 2009; Klandermans et al., 2008; Summers-Effler, 2002). As Jasper (2011, p. 298) said: ‘Emotions are a core part of action and decisions, which we analysts ignore at our peril’.

Collins (1981, 2004, p. 49) defined ‘emotional energy’ as an enduring set of emotions that operates as a continuum, ranging from ‘confidence, enthusiasm, good-self

feelings', to depression, lack of initiative, and 'negative self-feelings'. High emotional energy (what scholars often mean when they refer to emotional energy), results from successful and positive emotional contagion and coordination in an interaction, while low emotional energy will lead people to withdraw from further interaction and reduce the likelihood of action. Similar to work on collective emotions reviewed above, the research on emotional energy originated from ritual theory. For example, Durkheim's (1912/1965) theorisation of collective effervescence and sources of morality is relevant to both collective emotions and emotional energy. Durkheim (1893/2014) also posited that to confirm the shared moral order, transgressions of this order would be punished, and moral solidarity generates 'righteous anger'. While Durkheim is credited as one of the earliest sociologists to enthusiastically embrace emotions, Goffman built on the interactionist tradition, applied this idea to micro situations, and examined rituals of everyday life (Goffman, 1956/1959, 1967). He conceptualized rituals are social gatherings in which individuals maintain the same focus of attention, share the same values and feel the same emotions (Bericat, 2016). As Rossner and Meher (2014, p. 205) put it, 'Durkheim paints a picture of how rituals create society; Goffman shows how society and its rituals create the self'. Integrating Durkheim and Goffman's ideas, Collins (2004) explicitly theorized emotional energy in 'interaction ritual chains'. He theorized how interaction rituals give rise to the collective moral order through (a) co-presence of physical bodies, (b) barriers to outsiders, (c) mutual focus of attention, and (d) shared mood (in later theorizing, Collins (2014) removes point b as a necessary ingredient). These ingredients create Durkheim's collective effervescence. A successful interaction ritual leads to (a) group-focused solidarity, (b) emotional energy, and (c) symbolic representations.

Emotional energy in management theory. Management scholars have begun to acknowledge emotions as a key motivator for action. For example, Lindebaum and Gabriel's (2016) analysis of the film 'Twelve Angry Men' illustrates that moral anger serves a dual purpose in maintaining moral and social order. Firstly, it acts as a signal that a breach of a moral code has occurred. Second, it provides a source of energy for people to take corrective action. Methot et al. (2021, p. 1446) showed that small talk at work, once regarded as insignificant, generates positive emotional energy and increases employees' daily organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB) and wellbeing.

Key to the understanding of emotional energy is that the emotions experienced in the interaction that leads to emotional energy are transient, but emotional energy itself is theorized as a longer-term emotional state. That is, during interactions, emotional contagion can lead the group to a shared mood (e.g., anger or excitement), which then translates into an emotional rhythm that intensifies over time, eventually leading to emotional energy, which creates the will to continue engaging and participating in interactions. In a way, interaction rituals are 'emotion transformers' that take 'first-order' emotions such as anger, joy, or sadness, and transform them into 'higher-order' emotional energy (Collins, 2014, p. 300). The emotional energy generated in one interaction can build to heighten the emotional energy in the next interaction (Collins, 2004).

The notion of emotional energy also relies on emotions as social phenomena that are constructed within interactions, rather than as mere physiological responses. The emotional energy experienced by a person is generated from a social interaction, a shared mood generated by being together and entrained. Emotional energy, in Collins' perspective, is about group solidarity and the social drive to continue to participate in further interactions (Collins, 2004). Collins notes that another important component of emotional energy lies in the moral sphere. Emotional energy is not merely enthusiasm in the sense of solidarity with the group, but it also involves a moral sentiment. Emotional energy 'includes feelings of what is right and wrong, moral and immoral' (Collins, 2004, p. 109). The moral nature of emotional energy connects to the idea of moral batteries, which is also grounded on the notion that people are attuned and respond to issues of morality and are bound by moral commitments. However, while emotional energy stems from interactions specifically, Jasper's (2011) theorizing of moral batteries tends to focus more on other triggers that threaten expectations and moral commitments and identities.

One insight for management and organizational research generated from this recent work pertains to the strategic use of emotional energy (Giorgi, 2017; Raffaelli et al., 2019; Zietsma et al., 2019). In contrast to the somewhat accidental impacts of emotional energy that have been the focus of sociological studies, management and organization scholars have recently explored how emotional energy can be used strategically to energize and motivate actions and lead to macro-level changes (Fan and Zietsma, 2017; Massa et al., 2017; Ruebottom and Auster, 2018; Zietsma and Toubiana, 2018). Fan and Zietsma's (2017) longitudinal case study of a water stewardship council showed how actors embedded in different institutional logics mobilized social emotions, moral emotions, and emotional energy to construct or weaken a new and shared governance logic. In particular, the increase in emotional energy (e.g., care, passion, or enthusiasm) was the result of heightened social and moral emotions and worked to increase council members' engagement in the new shared governance logic. This study also demonstrated that a decrease in emotional energy (e.g., depression, disappointment, or boredom) worked with two other emotional facilitators to weaken the governing logics. Ruebottom and Auster (2018) examined how organizers of 'We Day' (a rock concert for social change) purposefully evoked emotional energy in the design of the concert to encourage youth to commit to a new community of change makers, and Barberá-Tomás et al. (2019, p. 1797) revealed 'how entrepreneurs used multimodal interactions around a symbol to promote emotional energy in order to evoke the enactment of a new moral standard'. Emotional energy is not merely the result of successful interactions, but a tool that can be wielded and manipulated for strategic action.

While having different foci, the research on emotional energy is closely related to that on collective emotions and social bonds. Both streams of work build on ritual and interaction theory (Collins, 2014; Durkheim, 1912/1965; Goffman, 1967) and share the important assumption that emotions are fundamentally a social phenomenon constructed within interactions. This work also suggests that people have similar emotional responses to the same stimuli, which are the result of social structure and culture in shaping emotional energy (Kemper, 2011). Recent development in management illustrates the relationship between these two groups of ideas. For example, drawing on 21 months of fieldwork at FitCo, an athletic footwear and apparel

company, Lepisto (2022) developed a three-step process model of formation of meaningfulness in organizations. The leaders first engaged in ritual work to evoke emotional energy, which was then shared by organizational members via talk and gesture to develop a shared feeling of meaningfulness. Finally, the leaders generated a shared representation of meaningfulness by developing a vocabulary to communicate the significance of shared feelings and connecting these words to shared feelings. This study highlights the importance of understanding the interplay between collective emotions and emotional energy and their potential impact on organizational action.

Moral Batteries

Moral batteries' intellectual roots. Moral batteries as a concept is based on the argument that the energy source or fuel for action comes not merely from the coordinated emotions within interactions, but from the contrast between different emotions elicited within or from interactions (e.g., pride and shame) (Jasper, 2011). In particular, Jasper (2011), drawing on the imagery of a common flashlight or torch battery, proposed 'that pairs of positive and negative emotions form a "moral battery" that indicate a direction for action, away from the unattractive state and toward the attractive one' (Jasper, 2014a, p. 211). The moral component comes from the underlying tension that moves towards the good (e.g., pride in future), from the bad (e.g., shame in past or present). In this theorizing, it is the contrast between two emotions that drives attention and motivates action. Often the tension between the negative and positive emotion are linked to an 'unattractive' present that generates negative emotions and the potential for an 'attractive' future that generates positive emotions. In Jasper's view, such contrasts or tensions can be strategically manipulated to mobilize action. It is not surprising then that this work has been pivotal in the sociological literature on social movements (Bail et al., 2017; Norgaard and Reed, 2017; Ransan-Cooper et al., 2018).

Jasper's theorizing of moral batteries is also connected to Durkheim, but he also drew from Cooley (1902) and Scheff (1990b, 1994). As described above, these two scholars outlined the role of pride and shame in shaping social order and social bonds. The notion that these two emotions 'can help explain collective actions such as wars' (Jasper, 2014b, p. 344) is reflected in the fact that these two emotions are 'the most studied moral battery' (Jasper, 2011, p. 291). Jasper stressed the moral component of these intellectual roots and the 'moral sentiment' (Durkheim, 1912/1965), specifically 'moral commitments to sources of pride, shame and justice' (Jasper, 2014b, p. 349).

In addition to these connections to interactionist traditions, Jasper (2014b) also pointed to the influences of Affect Control Theory (ACT) and Identity Control Theory (ICT). In both theories, emotions are triggered either when events do not match expectations or when identities are not confirmed or validated. This explains Jasper's focus on emotional responses to events, and how specifically strategic action can be used to trigger distinct emotional reactions^[1] by others. This is possible because, as Jasper proposed, 'what triggers emotions...are shaped by expectations laid down by social context' (2014b, p. 347). This is something social movement activists and others can utilize to generate moral batteries, with positive and negative poles, to

motivate further action. Indeed, Jasper (1997, 2011) argues that political mobilisers will try to exaggerate the suffering of a present and the hope or potential for the future.

Both Collins and Jasper assume that many people have the same emotional response to interactions or other triggers. For Collins (2004), a shared mood is essential for a successful interaction ritual and high emotional energy. However, Kemper, building on Collins' work, noted that hierarchies of status and power can cause the same interaction to trigger different emotions (Kemper, 1978, 2011). While the implicit suggestion in Jasper's work is similar to Collins' emphasis on shared emotions, Jasper later clarified that the reason why most people tend to have similar emotional responses simultaneously is not some 'group mind or automatic contagion'; rather, 'the same expectations, social structures, and interactive processes are affecting them all' (Jasper, 2014b, p. 346). Further, Kemper (2011) argues that beneath the surface of ritual lies status and power – the behavioural dimensions that motivate all social interaction, structure social relations, determine emotions, and link individuals to the reference groups that deliver culture and administer preferences, actions, beliefs and ideas. His contention is that allegiance to ideas depends on faithfulness to the reference groups that foster ideas, and not to the ideas themselves.

Moral batteries in management research. Management scholars have also examined how emotions motivate collective action within and beyond organizations. For, example, Wang et al. (2021) found that when a policy label (e.g., #MeToo, feminist) matched the collective identity of employees (e.g., feminist), it activated their pride, driving them to become allies for activists in the workplace. In addition, some research suggests that the tension between a pool of contradictory emotions experienced by people energizes actions. Rauch and Ansari (2022) found that introducing drone technology to the US Air Force evoked workers' conflicting feelings, ranging from anger, embarrassment, and guilt to pride, satisfaction, and sympathy. These feelings motivated workers to adopt three different strategies – unconditional identification, reconciled identification, and sidestepping identification – to cope with the disruption to their work brought by emerging technology.

While Jasper's conception of moral batteries draws on the definition of a battery being 'a device that generates power', battery also has a secondary meaning 'a fortified emplacement for heavy guns' (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2010) (Stevenson, 2010). Recent studies in management and organizational research lead us to speculate that it may be possible for moral batteries to also act as a source of protection (Crawford and Dacin, 2021; Giorgi and Palmisano, 2017; Lefsrud and Meyer, 2012). Jarvis et al. (2019) found that animal rights advocates (AROs) experienced a 'reactive-affective conflict' when trying to disrupt the animal-abusive industrial practices of factory farming operations. These activists experienced acute, intense moral shock, anger, or sorrow when learning about abusive practices. However, they also experienced compassion and affective commitments to their work and to animals. This combination acted as a moral battery, but the action it triggered was the suppression of their acute negative emotions and the avoidance of confrontation towards abusers, so that they could collect more evidence of abusive practice and win more allies. In this case,

the 'reactive-affective conflict', the moral battery, suppressed confrontational actions. Recently, McCarthy and Glozer (2021) studied how activists replenish emotional energy by examining the case of 'No More Page 3', an online feminist organization which campaigned to remove a sexualized semi-nude images of women from a UK newspaper. They found that when people had a sense of alignment through shared experiences, they were more likely to form 'affective solidarity', which refuelled emotional energy. However, when people experienced misalignment with others' embodied experiences, affective solidarity seemed insufficient to recharge the emotional energy. In those circumstances, the activists turned to 'sensory retreat' by moving away from the collective (e.g., withdrawing from a Facebook group or falling silent online) to refuel emotional energy. The authors pointed out that such sensory retreat reflects people's institutional agency, because those activists actively managed painful emotions rather than suppressing them. These unique studies imply that moral batteries can trigger purposeful inaction.

Despite the growing interest in emotional energy and moral batteries, when we contrast management research to sociological research, we discover that our understanding of how emotions motivate action within and beyond organizations is incomplete. To begin with, while existing research has primarily focused on the 'positive' end of emotional energy as a strategic tool, it is equally important to investigate the 'negative' end, as originally described by Jasper (2011). That is, in the management literature, 'emotional energy' has been assumed to be positive. Yet, this is not always the case, and if we ignore the facets and drivers of negative emotional energy, our understanding of its role in organizational life is potentially flawed. Another component of emotional energy as a concept that is illuminated when we study its sociological roots is that it is not a transitory emotional state. For it to be 'emotional energy', it needs to be longer-term. This point has been unacknowledged in the management literature, which prevents us from truly seeing how deeply embedded emotions can be, as they stick around and shape interactions. If we are studying fleeting or transitory emotions in an interaction, we are likely not studying emotional energy.

Another important point we want to highlight is that Jasper's (2011) theorisation of moral batteries focuses not only on the contrast between positive and negative emotions, but their temporal relationship. That is, it is positive emotions in the future and the negative emotions in the present that are theorized to drive social action. We think the role of temporality and temporal orientation as they relate to emotions is something that has been overlooked in management theorizing. We think this might have real value for scholars studying ambivalent and mixed emotions (Fong, 2006; Gabriel et al., 2022; Rothman et al., 2017). Lastly, there is a need for further investigation to understand the complex link between emotional energy and moral batteries. Indeed, a few studies have implied that moral batteries could potentially serve as the underlying source of emotional energy that actively fuels or inhibits behavioural responses (Toubiana and Zietsma, 2017). Moreover, given that moral batteries have not been studied extensively, the role of status and social structures in shaping the possibilities of effective moral batteries has also been ignored. Sociological work has pointed to the fact that moral batteries are tied to unmet identity or institutional expectations, and yet scholars of identity and institutions have yet to deeply engage with these ideas.

EMOTIONAL CAPITAL

Power is a core component of organizational life and, thus, essential to our understanding of social embeddedness. In our review, we discovered that power is central to emotional embeddedness, as emotions are implicated in the structuring of the social inequalities around class, gender, race and so on (Ewick and Silbey, 2003; Farchi et al., 2022; Fields et al., 2007; Lively and Heise, 2004). As such, we highlight an under-utilized concept, emotional capital, to enable researchers to be more sensitive to the insidious ways by which emotions become implicated in power dynamics and become consequential for social stratification and inequality.

Emotional Capital's Intellectual Roots

Emotional capital extends Bourdieu's work on capital^[2] (Bourdieu, 1986) into the realm of emotions. Emotional capital refers to a person's 'trans-situational, emotion-based knowledge, emotion management skills, and feeling capacities, which are both socially emergent and critical to the maintenance of power' (Cottingham, 2016, p. 454). In other words, emotional capital is a set of emotional resources that enable people to develop the capacity to sense and adhere to emotion rules in a given social group.

The complicity of emotions with structuring inequalities is only possible to the extent that some emotions are deemed more valuable in a social group than others, and it assumes the existence of an emotional economy (Clark, 1987; Zembylas, 2007). That is, emotional exchanges involve "economies" of gratitude and resentment, and feelings of pride and shame, which mesh more or less closely with broader patterns of structured patterns of power, prestige and social (dis)advantage' (Williams, 1998, p. 128). In other words, social groups tend to have rules about which emotions can be felt and expressed, under what circumstances, and by whom. For example, there are norms about when to feel shame (Creed et al., 2014) or sympathy (Clark, 1987). Conversely, some emotions are disallowed under certain circumstances (Smith III and Kleinman, 1989) or for some groups of people. Thus, meat inspectors are not supposed to feel emotional connection to the farm animals that are to be slaughtered for food (Hamilton and McCabe, 2016), and some people (e.g., relatives of criminals) may not even be 'entitled' to feel pain for their loss (Kenney and Craig, 2012). We think emotional capital is particularly valuable for explicating the functioning of such emotional economies. Nowotny (1981) study of Austrian women in public life is the first to have done so. Other noteworthy elaborations of the concept have been by Reay (2000, 2004, 2005) in the sociology of education, by Cahill (1999) in the sociology of occupations, and Illouz's (2007) extension of the concept into an analysis of the emotional underpinnings of capitalism and consumer culture. These theorisations vary in their adherence to the Bourdieusian conceptualisation of capital, but they all extend his intellectual project into the realm of emotions in generative ways by examining how people's emotional resources are key to effective participation in various aspects of society.

Further, because emotions are intrinsically connected to culture (Illouz et al., 2014), emotional capital is best seen as a form of cultural capital (Cottingham, 2016). In other

words, it represents emotional resources that endow a person with the ability to develop emotional management in culturally appropriate ways (Illouz et al., 2014). Like other forms of capital, emotional capital is social-group specific, in that it is the social group that dictates what is valued and what is not, and capital relies on the interactions between a particular person and the audience for resources to be treated as capital. Thus, what constitutes emotional capital is defined by a particular social group, and emotions are linked to social positions and the reproduction of status distinctions and inequalities within a social group (Cahill, 1999; Reay, 2004).

Emotional Capital in Management Theory

Although, as noted, there has been very little research on emotional capital in management research, there have been some efforts to bring attention to power and emotions, highlighting the differing value placed on certain emotions (e.g., Callahan, 2004; Nguyen and Janssens, 2019). For example, Jakob-Sadeh and Zilber (2019) seek to unpack the role of power, and highlight the emotional control used by an organization to manage multiple logics and discuss how certain emotions are unbidden or unwelcome for their disruptive potential. Alonso and O'Neill (2022) show that sexist joviality, an emotion representing jollity and mirth, aids women in gaining status in an organization by portraying them as adaptive and easy-going; however, it eventually impedes the overall advancement of women in male-dominated settings. The concept of emotional capital can be used to develop this research stream further.

The implication is that emotional resources constitute a form of capital by patterning human experience, which in turn results in behavioural dispositions that may be seen as desirable or undesirable within a social group. For example, in Cahill's (1999) study of mortuary science, students' private emotional states (e.g., suppressing the fear of death) enabled them to learn emotional displays (e.g., conveying sympathy and concern for the families of the deceased) that are needed for effective work (see also Jordan et al., 2018).

In highlighting these private stocks of emotional resources that facilitate and enable emotional practice, we want to emphasize a key point that has been missing in the management literature. Emotional capital is not equivalent to emotional labour or emotion work (Hochschild, 1979; Thoits, 2004; Wharton, 2009). The notions of emotion work and emotional labour direct our attention to *emotional practice* (Cottingham, 2016) and emphasize primarily the outward displays and more-or-less deliberate self-regulation and monitoring efforts that facilitate resonance with audiences. They are also more situationally determined, with different situations potentially calling for different emotional displays or private emotional experiences. In contrast, emotional capital is more akin to a bundle of resources (Cottingham, 2016) that *enable* the emotional practice. It encompasses a variety of putatively private emotions, such as desire to be a particular kind of an actor, expectancy of future outcomes, and evaluations of one's (emotional and other) labour (Barbalet, 2001). In all, it encompasses any number of emotional states that contribute to 'success' within a particular social group by inculcating a person with the valued motivations. Key here is the *trans-situational* and potentially malleable nature of emotional capital that

differentially *enables* people to acquire the requisite emotional competence, or the ability to experience and display emotions that are expected of occupants of particular roles in a social group (Voronov and Weber, 2016). For instance, emotional capital is key in enabling people to experience a calling to pursue a certain career path (Lois and Gregson, 2018) and willingness to reshape their sense of self to fit the demands of a job (Schweingruber and Berns, 2005). In sum, emotional capital itself is *not* emotional practice. Rather, it is a *facilitator* of emotional practice.

Emotional capital is acquired mainly via primary and secondary socialization. Early childhood socialization plays an important role in shaping the ways people experience emotions (Pollak and Thoits, 1989), and it has been suggested that emotional capital is acquired primarily via early socialization (Cottingham, 2016). Research has documented that early childhood experiences can shape people's lifelong career aspirations and other life choices (Calarco, 2014; Ojeda and Hatemi, 2015; Polavieja and Platt, 2014). There is evidence that children learn to experience certain emotions that are culturally appropriate for someone of a particular gender, social class and race (Froyum, 2010). As such, emotional capital embeds people in social groups because societal distinctions, such as race, class and gender, have significant and lasting effects on persons' life trajectories, in part because they shape childhood experiences (Lignier, 2021) through which people acquire emotional capital (Cahill, 1999; Reay, 2005). In other words, emotional capital – much like other capital types – can be passed down from generation to generation (Reay, 2000, 2004).

Socialization into a profession or occupation also has a role to play in further developing emotional capital. A key mechanism here is normalization (Cahill, 1999), whereby a person may gradually become desensitized to certain disturbing or uncomfortable experiences and repress certain emotions, like fear of death or sexual attraction (Cahill, 1999; Smith III and Kleinman, 1989). Yet, people may struggle to acquire the emotional capital of a profession or occupation due to their early socialization that makes it more difficult to expand or alter their emotional repertoire in adulthood (Nixon, 2009), and the social categories that have shaped their childhood experiences may then have a lifelong impact on the capacity of people to acquire the emotional capital required to be part of a social group.

Another important aspect of emotional capital is that it does not necessarily lead to social advantage, but rather it can lead a person to 'better' occupy a subordinated position. While people must have the emotional capital needed to pursue success in their ascribed role in a social group, it may also make it difficult to deviate from the role. Thus, Reay (2000, 2004) observed how the shortage of emotional capital among some working-class mothers appeared to be inhibiting their ability to help their children with school work and to develop emotional capital of their own. Yet, even mothers who had more emotional capital (i.e., had emotional resources necessary to effectively help their children) did not challenge the gender role segregation within the family. The key point here is that emotional capital is likely to *reproduce* rather than transform the extant systems of privilege, and the accumulation of emotional capital is more likely to help people better 'occupy' their ascribed role in a social group than to transcend this role or to redefine the role itself in a manner that enhances its status within a social group.

There is some acknowledgement of these processes in management literature. Voronov and Weber's (2016, 2017) work captures a component of this. Their work on emotional competence refers to the ability to experience and display emotions that are deemed appropriate for a person occupying a given position in a social group. In other words, emotional competence focuses research attention on what constitutes competent emotional practice, acknowledging the inevitably socially constructed nature of what it means to be emotionally competent in a social group. It attends to the construction of the templates that are used to assess emotional competence. Yet, equally important is the flip side – the factors that enable people to fit these templates. *That* is what emotional capital gives us. Accordingly, to better understand how people's past experiences linked to race, gender and other important social categories influence their ability to develop emotional competence, it is valuable to acknowledge emotional capital, or the stocks of emotional resources that they possess or lack due to these life experiences. In other words, we contend that emotional competence (i.e., emotional practice) is conditioned and influenced by emotional capital (i.e., emotional resources or lack thereof).

Emotional capital as a concept has been almost completely absent in the management literature. Mukherjee and Thomas' (2023) study of palliative care consultations and Virkki's (2007) study of social work are among the only papers in management that explicitly evoke emotional capital, though the notion has been used by some sociologists of occupations (Cottingham, 2016; Schweingruber and Berns, 2005) and education (Reay, 2000; Zembylas, 2007). Mukherjee and Thomas revealed that professionals drew on their emotional capital (i.e., their experiences of dealing with the emotional nature of palliative care work) to suggest corrective feeling rules that validate patients' emotions and reattribute them to comply with professionals' care recommendations.

Despite being an understudied concept, in this section we have highlighted that emotional capital holds great potential for enhancing management and organization research. By highlighting the intellectual roots of this concept, we reveal the important ways in which it is distinct from emotional labour or emotion work. We point out that emotional capital is a resource that enables people to engage in emotional labour and emotional work – an antecedent. We thus encourage work to disentangle these concepts, and begin to turn to the unique role of emotional capital in power dynamics.

We also point out that by incorporating emotional capital into management research, we can gain insight into how people's biographies and lifelong experiences shape their ability to engage in emotional labour, and how social categories such as race, gender, and social class impact the acquisition of emotional capital. Additionally, emotional capital implies a different manifestation of power and powerlessness that complements existing conceptualisations that emphasize discursive or material manifestations. More fundamentally, the concept complements prior research that has tended to see emotions merely as something that are influenced by, or reflective of, social structures. It directs our attention to how emotions sustain and uphold social structures. As such, it is a particularly vivid illustration of the importance of emotional embeddedness for understanding social embeddedness.

Underlying the three core concepts we have identified – collective emotions and social bonds, emotional energy and moral batteries, and emotional capital – is the treatment of emotions not as individual phenomena but as components core to social interactions,

social action, and power dynamics: core to social and emotional embeddedness. In the next section, we put forward a model to show how these three concepts are related and can help us understand emotions as a core element of social embeddedness, and then outline areas of future research.

DISCUSSION

We have sought to bring attention to key concepts from a sociological perspective on emotions, which we think are important for organizational scholars. By attending to the work on collective emotions and social bonds, emotional energy and moral batteries and emotional capital we reveal the ways in which they can enhance and extend the psychological perspectives that have dominated management research. Our intent is to stimulate more research on emotions in domains where they have not received significant attention and to encourage new ways of thinking about emotions in domains that have investigated them extensively as an individual-level phenomenon. While for the purpose of this review, we outline three discrete arenas of sociological interest in emotions, they are, in fact, related. Specifically, together the concepts we review give us an integrative model to begin to unpack emotional embeddedness as a core aspect of social embeddedness.

An Integrative Model of Emotional Embeddedness

We set out to facilitate a dialogue between management research on emotions and the sociology of emotions to enrich the understanding of emotional–social embeddedness in management research. In this section, we develop an integrative model of emotional embeddedness (see [Figure 1](#)). While there have been many models introduced to theorize social embeddedness (Barley and Tolbert, 1997; Coleman, 1987; Hedström and Swedberg, 1998; Lawrence et al., 2009; Thornton et al., 2012), at the core of most of them is a depiction of the dynamic and iterative relationship between micro and macro. That is, an illustration of how structure (the macro) shapes action (the micro), and action shapes structure. Influencing this process are both situational and transformative mechanisms. Situational mechanisms refer to ‘the ways in which social structures constrain and enable individuals’ opportunities for action, and how the cultural and social contexts influence individuals’ goals, beliefs, habits, or cognitive frames’ (Ylikoski, 2017, p. 2), whereas transformative mechanisms refer to the ways in which people shape and alter the social structure. Where emotions have fit into these previous depictions has largely been as a component of the micro, emotions being in and thus influencing people. We argue that the three concepts we outline showcase a more complex role of emotions in social embeddedness. Indeed, we argue that emotional embeddedness is at the core of social embeddedness. In this model, depicted in [Figure 1](#), we reveal how collective emotions and social bonds, emotional energy and moral batteries and emotional capital are interrelated and shape the complex dynamic between structure and action.

Specifically, we suggest that macro-level relationships are defined and shaped by the rules of the game, and the social structure is thus shaped by emotional capital, as certain emotions are deemed more valuable and available or appropriate for certain social groups (depicted in arrow a). These power dynamics and inequalities are entrenched in

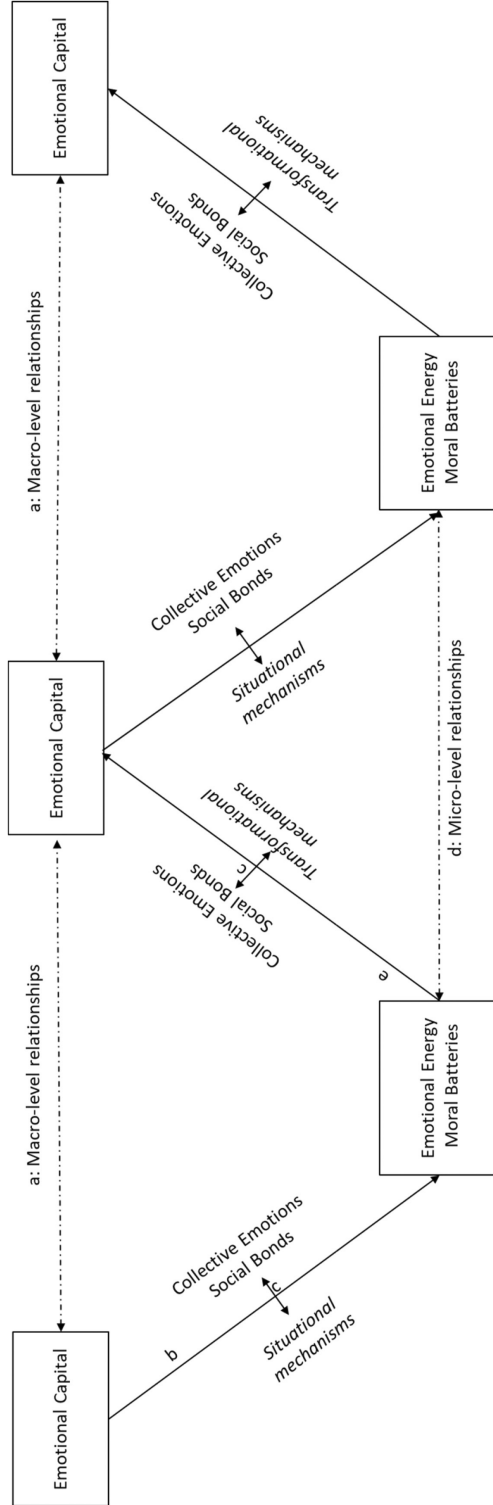


Figure 1. An integrative model of emotional embeddedness

the social structure. Yet, while emotional capital is embedded in the institutional environment, it is tied to the people whose lives and emotional experiences it can govern. Our ability to use and leverage emotions, thus, depends on emotional capital. Collins (1981) argues that people in a dominant position are able to generate more emotional energy during social interactions. Thus, emotional capital will also shape the emotional energy that people and groups can experience as a product of the emotional resources available to them (depicted as arrow b) (Widick, 2003).

Importantly, however, as we depict on the arrow (b) between emotional capital and emotional energy and moral batteries, it is collective emotions and social bonds which bind the macro to the micro. Collective emotions and social bonds foster a sense of belonging to a particular social structure, belonging and ties that will shape how emotional energy can be generated and thus shape action. For example, while football fans might experience intense collective emotions such as excitement, enthusiasm, frustration and disappointment through interactions, these collective emotions depend on their ties and commitment to a specific team/city (Cottingham, 2012). In addition, collective emotions and social bonds themselves are influenced by the macro context in which they arise, including the interactions that occur across and within the social structure (depicted as arrow c). For example, the collective emotions generated in a sport stadium are likely very different from those in a war (de Rond and Lok, 2016). Yet these collective emotions will also be impacted by the emotional resources available to people to respond and engage. For example, women and men may have different emotional affordances in a sport stadium or at war, as might people who are medical professionals compared to those who are patients (Toubiana and Zietsma, 2017).

As we have outlined above, emotional energy and moral batteries act as action-energizing mechanisms which fuel and shape interactions across the micro level (depicted as arrow d). While scholars traditionally study emotion as a within-person phenomenon and mainly focus on how people react to a stimulus, Hareli and Rafaeli (2008) proposed the idea of ‘emotion cycles’, meaning that a person’s emotions impact and interact with others’ emotional reactions, which leads to different behavioural outcomes. Emotional energy and moral batteries are generated in and through social interactions – and the resultant emotional energy also shapes and defines further interactions and actions.

Importantly, emotional energy is more than a transient and fleeting emotion, it is generated through and with collective emotions, which are driven by bonds and ties to people as well as institutions (depicted as arrows b and c). Similarly, through interactions that sustain emotional energy, people can feel more bonded to the structure and deepen the collective emotions (depicted as arrow e). The idea is that ‘the emotional displays and emotionally driven behaviors of others... moderate the “feeling of belonging” (Shepherd and Haynie, 2009)’ achieved in the social context (Biniari, 2012, p. 163). However, emotional energy can not only tie and bond people to a particular structure, it can also trigger action to enact institutional change on structures.

Management scholars have shown emotional energy and moral batteries can energize institutional disruption and desires to change the rules of the game (Creed et al., 2014; Toubiana and Zietsma, 2017). At the same time, those in defence of existing institutions can use their collective emotions to stall the transformative power of others’ action.

The interactions between and across groups, driven by emotions, will shape the types of impact these emotions can have on the institutions themselves (depicted as arrow e). Emotional energy, in turn, can interact with collective emotions and social bonds arising from other fields, resulting in transformational mechanisms that can be used to bring about change in social structure (depicted as arrow c). For example, Parker and Hackett (2012, p. 39) show that ‘hot spots and hot moments’ in scientific collaborations – places and times of intense emotion and innovations – elevate intra-group solidarity and inter-group conflict at the same time. This study suggests that emotions may generate intra-group solidarity but also a desire for collective actions against outsiders.

These relationships continually iterate and provide the dynamics at the heart of emotional embeddedness. We argue that the concepts we have sought to highlight through this review provide us with a toolkit to examine emotional embeddedness as a core component of social embeddedness. While our model is designed to capture and to elaborate on the inter-relationships between collective emotions and social bonds, emotional energy and moral batteries, and emotional capital, it is important to understand that this integrative model represents just one way to visualize the relationship of these three concepts. We developed the model to illustrate how emotions are an essential component in the dynamics between structure and action, and that emotional embeddedness is at the heart of social embeddedness. However, we think that it is important to add a critique to our model. While it helps to visualize the relationships between our key concepts at different levels (micro, meso, and macro), we also know that none of them can be sustained as a discrete level of analysis. It is useful to recognize, as a part of understanding the model, that it is a device for comprehension of relationships that will always be somewhat disordered *because* it pertains to emotions. In the following section, we outline promising areas for future research.

Future Research

Collective emotions and social bonds. While the sociological literature has clearly indicated the creative potential of collective emotions, it has also hinted at the contention and disruption that can be mobilized as a result of collective emotions and social bonds. Given broader calls in the management literature to disrupt and challenge existing hegemonies across society and the need for radical social change (Amis et al., 2020; George et al., 2016), we think that understanding the critical role collective emotions can play in disruption of all sorts is a promising avenue for future work. For example, while collective emotions tie people together in mutual commitment and understanding, they also tie people together in mutual defensiveness. Unconscious social defences against emotions protect organizations from disruption because they create ‘blind spots’ (Fotaki and Hyde, 2015) that reinforce the way things are (Delmestri and Goodrick, 2016; Voronov and Yorks, 2015), creating ‘empathy walls’ (Hochschild, 2016) that keep people from understanding people whose worldviews differ from ours. Defensive dynamics gain a certain taken for grantedness and sedimentation, creating a ‘hegemonic narrative – a pervasive, status-quo-preserving story that prevails despite countervailing evidence’ (Lingo and Elmes, 2019; Padavic et al., 2020, p. 61). We would like to see further research into social defences against emotion in organizations, particularly research

on ambivalence to the social power relations that underpin engagement with social inequalities and difference in organizations. For example, how do social defences make social power relations undiscussable (Bell and Nkomo, 2003) and thereby reinforce social inequalities?

Clearly, collective emotions and social bonds also have implications for the study of organizations and fields. As social bonds are the attachments that persons form with others in social groups (Creed et al., 2020; Creed et al., 2022), these concrete bonds provide the infrastructure, the linking mechanisms, that comprise persons' social and emotional embeddedness (Aversa et al., 2022). Thus, the infrastructure of social bonds, which are inherently emotional and affective as well as cognitive and aesthetic, is the platform on which all manner of organizational, field level, and institutional social processes are created. Management scholars' attention to processes of innovation and creativity (Elsbach, 2009; Jones, 2011; Raffaelli et al., 2019), collectively constructed meaning (Zilber, 2002, 2017), organizational culture (Fine and Hallett, 2014; Schneider et al., 2013), practice and routines (Baldessarelli, 2021; Lok and de Rond, 2013; Smets et al., 2017), organizational narratives (Boje, 1991; Czarniawska, 1997; Singh et al., 2015) and all other social practices in organizations and fields take shape on this platform infrastructure of social bonds (Farias, 2017; Moisander et al., 2016; Ruebottom and Auster, 2018). Thus, management scholars are encouraged to further develop and understand the nature and implications of the social bond and collective emotions.

We also think that the study of collective emotions can help to make a stronger link between moral emotions and social values – two concepts that have been recently attended to by organizational scholars. Values (Kraatz et al., 2020) are similar to norms, but are less bound to specific situations (Gecas, 2008) and thus, more dynamic. Values are socially constructed and relational, but they are not so tightly structured as to render people within organizations as 'mere carriers of predetermined social norms' (Heclo, 2011, p. 82). For example, Wright et al. (2017) study the professional values of physicians that are normatively inscribed into codes of practice (as duties and obligations). They illustrate how emotions are linked to the interests of others and activate collective resistance to practices that contravene professional values. The authors note that future research might examine how value driven emotions reflect and constitute enculturation. This study points to a possible direction for organizational scholarship in more closely examining the ways in which collective emotions and social bonds shape and/or are shaped by values and moral emotions.

We also suggest that a focus on collective emotions can be linked to the social unconscious in organizational studies, to capture shared, underlying dynamics that inform and perpetuate situated order (Padavic et al., 2020; Petriglieri et al., 2019; Starkey et al., 2021; Vince, 2019). The term 'social unconscious' refers to a 'co-constructed shared unconscious of members of a certain social system such as community, society, nation or culture', which 'includes shared anxieties, fantasies, defences, myths, and memories' (Weinberg, 2007, p. 312). For example, Starkey et al. (2021) examined unconscious forces at play in Brexit (the UK's vote to leave the European Union). They discuss the role of the unconscious in creating and sustaining a fantasy of liberation from foreigners. Their analysis shows how fantasy, desire and social order/disorder are entangled.

Further research that engages with unconscious sources of emotions can broaden our understanding of the relationship between emotion and organization. Through unconscious relations, groups of people co-create emotional scripts, displays, defences, and assumptions that connect to and reinforce organizational structures (Mikkelsen et al., 2020; Voronov and Vince, 2012).

Further, we emphasize that collective emotions are generated through people's emotional relatedness – the conscious and unconscious emotional levels of connection that shape selves and others, people, and systems (French and Vince, 1999). From our perspective, people's emotions are inseparable from the established power relations that both reinforce and are reinforced by those emotions. We highlight work within the field of systems psychodynamics, which shows how community creation and building is not only achieved consciously, but also through unconscious dynamics, connected to collective arrangements (work structures, methods, discourses) that are created and used by an organization's members as a protection against emotions (Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2020). It is important to acknowledge that unconscious dynamics mobilize both defences and desires. Thus, community and solidarity arise as much from anxieties as from enthusiasms in organizations.

In addition, we advocate the integration of sociological perspectives into management studies to help uncover the disruptive impact of collective emotions and social bonds on social processes. We think that an examination of collective emotions and social bonds for organizational and field-level processes can reveal the full extent of their influence. We also believe that sociological insights provide opportunities to better understand the relationship between moral emotions and social values. Finally, for management scholars interested in exploring the social unconscious, studying collective emotions and social bonds can provide insight into the shared underlying dynamics that maintain situated order.

Emotional energy and moral batteries. Through our review we found that a missing piece of the work on emotional energy is caused by scholars' general ignorance of the 'negative' end of emotional energy. Scholars often equate emotional energy to positive emotional energy, namely, 'a feeling of confidence, elation, strength, enthusiasm, and initiative in taking action' (Collins, 2004, p. 108), but this is not the only component of emotional energy that will have impacts. Jasper's (2011) theorisation of moral batteries also assumes that people desire to move towards an attractive end – replacing current negative emotions with positive emotions in the future. In management and organization studies, we already know that positive emotions can be used as mechanisms for self-advancement, domination, and control. Missing is an understanding of how when we try to move towards an 'attractive' state or gain more 'positive' emotions, we might actually be moving towards 'unattractive' or 'negative' ones. For example, 'fairness' is often used in organizations as a mechanism for suppressing differences or disadvantaged groups through a discourse of diversity and inclusivity for all. Similarly, the phrase 'all lives matter' is used to protest against anti-racism initiatives and oppressed voices ('black lives matter'). Scholars need to examine both sides of emotional energy/moral batteries: They can not only power action but also protect against actions (Ruebottom et al., 2022). Exploring the 'negative' side of

emotional energy and moral batteries can help us understand these concepts and the role in social embeddedness better.

Another area we believe is worthy of further research is to explore whether co-presence is a requirement for generating emotional energy. Although Collins (2004) proposed that co-presence of physical bodies is the glue that creates emotional energy and solidarity, other scholars have challenged this claim (Gilmore and Warren, 2007). For example, Zietsma and Toubiana (2018, p. 437) linked emotional energy to institutions and proposed that physical co-presence may not be necessary to generate emotional energy when there is some 'substance, ethos, or value' that bonds people together. In fact, technology-mediated social interactions can generate shared experiences that are visceral and feel real, provoking both positive and negative emotions (Ruebottom et al., 2022). Lockwood and Glynn (2022) also showed that following the Boston Marathon Bombings, people used the hashtag #BostonStrong on Twitter to express 'a proud mix of resiliency and defiance', which facilitated the creation of an imagined community. Cottingham's (2012) study of football fans watching televised games in sports bars provides some evidence of this claim, as even people who had never attended a game in the stadium became devoted fans.

Nevertheless, as mentioned, Collins (2020) recently defended the importance of physical presence using the coronavirus pandemic as a natural experiment during which people's normal social interactions were disrupted. He demonstrated that co-presence is chiefly of importance because it creates focused attention, shared emotion, and rhythmic entrainment. During the early stages of the pandemic, emotional energy and solidarity were much weaker because of a lack of embodied interactions across different settings such as in-person assemblies, remote schooling, and remote work. Technology may mimic the co-presence, but he emphasized that 'all distance media have their origins in successful [interaction rituals] that happen in physical co-presence' (Collins, 2020, p. 481). Future research can continue examining whether it is copresence which creates emotional energy. If it is, given the development of technology, how can we make better use of technology to generate emotional energy that motivates organizations and persons towards desired outcomes?

Finally, we think that the link between emotional energy and moral batteries warrants further attention. It is important to note that emotional energy and moral batteries are highly related, but we have not yet made concentrated efforts to deeply understand this relationship. However, a few management and organization scholars have shed some light on this relationship. While Barberá-Tomás et al. (2019) explicitly theorized their paper around the notion of emotional energy, their work also reveals how anti-plastic pollution social entrepreneurs performed 'emotion-symbolic work' by using visual image and words to elicit strong negative emotions of moral shock among the target audience to draw attention to plastic pollution, then combined this with hope for the future. This moral battery is indeed what contributed to the emotional energy that fuelled enactment of social change. While Toubiana and Zietsma (2017) did not use the term of moral batteries explicitly, a closer look reveals that moral batteries are at play in their case of member activism and their emotional energy. Members of the Degenerative Disease Federation (DDF) experienced hope in response to a new treatment option, but then felt betrayal as a result of the DDF's

negative response to the treatment. This acted as a moral battery fuelling a desire to act out against the DDF. Through interactions on Facebook, other members' emotions then escalated and amplified, increasing their emotional energy and leading to further emotions and more agency. Scholars might build on these studies and examine whether moral batteries are the 'substance' of emotional energy that actually powers or suppresses actions.

Emotional capital. Successful acquisition of emotional capital is linked to social class, race, gender, and other categories of social distinction (Cahill, 1999; Reay, 2004, 2005; Williams, 1998). Although we are not denying the importance of professional socialization for acquiring emotional capital (Colley, 2006; Orzechowicz, 2008), we argue that it can be helpful to look to earlier socialization and to the various social categories to which a person belongs to explain why some people have difficulty acquiring a high level of a social group's emotional capital, while others do so more readily. As such, more research attention could be directed to people's biographies (Creed et al., 2010, 2022; Lok et al., 2017) and lifelong experiences (Lignier, 2021; Ojeda and Hatemi, 2015; Polavieja and Platt, 2014). Such work could help explain how people acquire the emotional capital of a particular social group, and why some people might struggle to engage in emotional labour – despite extensive training and demands from a company – when their life experiences have not enabled them to acquire the 'stocks' of emotional capital. Scholars might also study how the emotional capital of top management teams may predict the type of organizational changes they implement, or the type of entrepreneurial ventures that are pursued. Similarly, emotional capital may play a significant role in the failure of organizational change or resistance to change.

We argue that emotional capital can be used to enhance our understanding of other core emotional concepts in the literature, such as emotional labour (Gabriel, 2010; Vince and Gabriel, 2012) and intelligence (Joseph and Newman, 2010; Voronov and Weber, 2017). For example, while Hochschild's (1979) original formulation of emotional labour was meant to highlight the commodification of even the most private human experiences by capitalism, organizational researchers have tended to focus primarily on its value to the organization (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Grandey, 2000; Pugh, 2001). In contrast, sociologists have retained the interest in the consequences of emotional labour for employees themselves and the important linkages between emotional labour and social inequalities around gender and race (Wharton, 2009). Some recent organizational research has started examining emotional labour in broader contexts, such as social movements (Jarvis et al., 2019) and institutional change (Jarvis, 2017). Emotional capital aligns nicely with this lineage of research on emotional labour and helps to connect the study of emotional labour to the process by which a person's life experiences within and beyond a particular organization or occupation impact their ability to engage in emotional labour. Thus, emotional capital sensitizes researchers to the limits of both persons' capacity to engage in emotional labour as desired by organizations and of organizations to get employees to engage in desired emotional displays.

Greater use of the concept of emotional capital may help researchers study different contexts, such as the gig economy (Caza et al., 2022; Petriglieri et al., 2019; Phung et

al., 2021), the emergence of expert service work (George, 2008), and increasingly portable careers (Petriglieri et al., 2017). The increased flux and unpredictability of these changing work contexts requires different ways of managing emotions, and it is worth examining the importance of emotional capital as a contributor to the success of people in adopting to these different and changing conditions of work. For instance, how might a person's emotional capital impact their comfort level with working on one's own, which is a particularly challenging feature of the gig economy (Caza et al., 2022)?

Emotional capital may also help expand our understanding of emotional intelligence (Huy, 1999; Jordan et al., 2002; Joseph and Newman, 2010; Lindebaum and Cartwright, 2010), which refers to the 'ability to recognize the meanings of emotions and their relationships, and to reason and problem-solve on the basis of them' (Mayer et al., 1999, p. 267). Specifically, it enables recognition that emotional intelligence is unlikely to be a context-free, neutral ability. Instead, we should explore how the use of emotional intelligence by practitioners and researchers might reproduce social inequalities within workplaces and within society at large. While the concept of emotional intelligence provides researchers and practitioners with a scientific vocabulary and a rich theoretical toolkit (e.g., Illouz, 2007), it can obscure the fact that people are not equally capable of portraying themselves as emotionally intelligent. Thus, it is important to explore how emotional intelligence becomes co-opted as a mechanism of power (Fineman, 2004). For instance, researchers should examine the extent to which definitions of what constitutes emotional intelligence tend to reflect the inclinations and cultural norms of those groups who occupy elite positions in society and in particular organizations (Bell and Nkomo, 2003; Illouz, 2007) and influence social reproduction via hiring practices (Rivera, 2015). Further, it is worth examining how personal background (inevitably intertwined with privilege or lack thereof) may enable people to acquire the necessary emotional resources to behave in a manner deemed emotionally intelligent or even to recognize the valuable emotional displays and associated behaviours in organizations.

In all, the concept of emotional capital forces researchers to acknowledge that 'workers' do not simply exist as context-specific entities that can be studied in that respective context, while bracketing off their lives and experiences outside of that context (Voronov et al., 2022; Voronov and Weber, 2020). Emotional capital prompts researchers to examine how workers' non-work lives (Ramarajan and Reid, 2013) and biographies (Toubiana, 2020) impact their work and work lives. It also encourages organizational researchers to continue investigating how emotions are linked to power (Jakob-Sadeh and Zilber, 2019; Nguyen and Janssens, 2019).

We have identified a toolkit of three core concepts from our review that reveals the emotional embeddedness of people. We also offer an integrative model showing how these three concepts are related. Based on this, we discuss promising opportunities for management scholars to utilize this framework. In doing so, we have sought to reveal the ways in which they can enhance and extend the atomistic perspectives that have dominated management research, answering recent calls to build on a sociological approach to emotions in management research (Voronov, 2014; Zietsma et al., 2019). In general, our findings reinforce conceptualisations of emotions as socially constructed and socially authorized due to the social embeddedness of emotions and social actors.

CONCLUSION

In this review, we have proposed a toolkit for deepening our theorizing of emotional embeddedness as core to social embeddedness, building on existing management literature that takes a sociological perspective, extending it with concepts from the sociology of emotions. While organizational research on emotions is largely dominated by individualistic perspectives, we have argued that drawing on concepts from sociology enables researchers to both explore new questions and to rethink the answers to old questions. Overall, the perspective advances the conceptualisation of emotions as socially constructed and socially authorized. We have started a conversation about how to use these concepts to push forward examinations of emotional embeddedness as core to our social embeddedness. Our most fundamental contribution is, thus, to acknowledge how emotions are inevitably embedded and authorized in social structures, and encourage research to further examine this. Rethinking emotions ‘beyond the individual’ is important not only for emotions scholars. Rather, it might prompt more fundamental questions about organizational research, advancing the view that people are inherently social–emotional, and embedded within organizations and institutions, while conversely, understanding organizations and institutions requires attention to people.

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NOTES

- [1] Note that such reactions can be both positive and negative.
- [2] Capital is a resource that acts as a source of power (Wacquant, 1993). Bourdieu argued that non-economic forms of capital are important in explaining social advantage (Bourdieu, 1986). For example, cultural capital derives value from the access to and mobilization of a society’s institutions (e.g., educational system) and cultural resources (e.g., cultural knowledge and skills). On the other hand, symbolic capital represents the use and manipulation of symbolic resources, such as myth, to obscure the arbitrary nature of social distinctions and inequalities (Shymko et al., 2023).

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