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van Kleef, G.A.

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### Emotions as Agents of Social Influence: Insights From Emotions as Social Information Theory

Gerben van Kleef

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#### Abstract and Keywords

Emotion is part and parcel of social influence. The emotions people feel shape the ways in which they respond to persuasion attempts, and the emotions people express influence other individuals who observe those expressions. This chapter is concerned with the latter type of emotional influence. Such interpersonal effects of emotional expressions are quite different from the traditionally studied intrapersonal effects of emotional experience. This calls for a new theoretical approach that is dedicated specifically to understanding the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions. I summarize emotions as social information (EASI) theory, which posits that emotional expressions shape social influence by triggering affective reactions and/or inferential processes in observers, depending on the observer's information processing and the perceived appropriateness of the emotional expression. I review supportive evidence from various domains of social influence, including negotiation, leadership, attitude change, compliance, and conformity in groups. Differences and commonalities with traditional intrapersonal frameworks are discussed.

Keywords: emotion, social influence, interpersonal effects, persuasion, compliance, conformity, negotiation, leadership

Social influence is a defining feature of life. Wherever people interact, they influence each other's attitudes, judgments, and behaviors. This is often an emotional enterprise—consider how easily a conversation about politics can turn into a heated debate. Traditionally, theory and research on the role of emotion in social influence have focused on the intrapersonal effects of emotions, considering how people's affective experiences shape the ways in which they respond to influence attempts. Until recently, little was known about the social effects of emotional *expressions*. This is striking if we consider how often people engender social influence by expressing their emotions to others. When two friends discuss the pros and cons of nuclear energy, one friend's enthusiasm may lead the other to reconsider her opinion. When a shopper refuses to donate to a charity collector, the collector's disappointment may lead the shopper to reconsider and offer some change. When a negotiator gets angry upon receiving his counterpart's demands, the counterpart may feel pressured to make a concession. When a manager expresses dissatisfaction about the performance of a work team, the team may become motivated to work harder. When a group of scientists at a conference attempts to decide where to go for dinner, their annoyance with one person's deviating preferences may lead that person to conform to the group's position.

These examples illustrate that emotion is an integral part of the social influence toolbox. Indeed, several theorists have noted that emotional expressions may be used deliberately to influence others. Clark, Pataki, and Carver (1996) reported anecdotal evidence that people strategically use displays of sadness to solicit help. This can be effective (especially in communal relationships), because observers may infer that the expresser is needy and dependent. Likewise, people may express anger to intimidate and influence others (Frank, 1988). For instance, managers have been reported to deliberately feign anger in order to influence their subordinates (Fitness, 2000). Furthermore, people may purposefully express happiness to get others to like them (Clark et al., 1996). Clearly,

then, there is much more to emotion than its private experience: Emotional expressions are a potential source of social influence (Van Kleef, Van Doorn, Heerdink, & Koning, 2011).

This chapter is concerned with the ways in which people engender social influence by means of their emotional expressions. The chapter unfolds as follows. First I define what is meant by emotion and how it differs from related concepts. Then I briefly discuss the traditional intrapersonal approach to emotion and persuasion as well as some of the dominant theoretical models in that area. Next I describe a recent theory that aims to explain the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions in social influence, and I explicate how this theoretical approach differs from traditional models. Subsequently, I review empirical work on the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions in various domains of social influence. The first part of my review will focus on well-established and somewhat older research on the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions in negotiation and leadership, two research domains that are highly relevant to social influence yet seldom discussed in the context of social influence research. The second part of my review will address more recent and ongoing empirical investigations of the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions in classic domains of social influence, namely attitude change, compliance, and conformity. Finally, I discuss the emerging conception of emotions as agents of social influence, highlight theoretical implications as well as differences and commonalities between the current interpersonal approach to emotions and traditional intrapersonal accounts, and suggest avenues for future research.

### Conceptualizing the Role of Emotion in Social Influence

The question of what constitutes an emotion has occupied philosophers, psychologists, and other social scientists since the dawn of civilization, and it continues to do so. Countless definitions of emotion have been advanced, attesting to the difficulty of formulating one that is satisfactory to all who are interested in the phenomenon. Instead of inventing yet another definition, I will describe the basic features of emotion about which there is reasonable consensus in the literature.

Most theories of emotion hold that emotions arise as a result of an individual's conscious or unconscious evaluation (appraisal) of some event as positively or negatively relevant to a particular concern or goal (Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991). Emotions are typically characterized by distinct subjective experiences (Scherer & Tannenbaum, 1986), physiological reactions (Levenson, Ekman, & Friesen, 1990), and expressions (Ekman, 1993). Furthermore, emotions are accompanied by a sense of action readiness (Frijda, 1986), in that they prepare the body and the mind for behavioral responses aimed at dealing with the circumstances that caused the emotion.

The term *emotion* is sometimes used interchangeably with *affect* or *mood*. However, these terms carry distinct meanings. According to Frijda (1994), *affect* is an overarching term that may be used to refer to dispositional affective tendencies (e.g., chronic positive vs. negative affectivity), diffuse moods (e.g., cheerfulness or depression), specific and acute emotions (e.g., anger or fear), and chronic sentiments (e.g., positive or negative attitudes). Emotions differ from the various other affective phenomena in that they are (a) directed toward a specific stimulus, such as a person, an object, or an event (unlike moods and dispositional affective tendencies, which have no clear object or identifiable cause); (b) can be differentiated in terms of their associated physiological responses, subjective feelings, expressive patterns, and action tendencies (unlike the other affective phenomena, which only differ in terms of valence); and (c) are relatively short-lived (compared to the other affective phenomena, which tend to be more enduring if not chronic).

In conceptualizing the role of emotion in social influence, it is useful to distinguish between intrapersonal and interpersonal effects of emotions (Morris & Keltner, 2000; Van Kleef et al., 2011). At the intrapersonal level of analysis, scholars seek to understand how people's attitudes, cognitions, and behaviors are influenced by their own emotional states. For instance, researchers explore whether certain emotional states render people more susceptible to influence attempts (e.g., Are happy people more likely than sad people to provide help when asked?). At the interpersonal level of analysis, studies are aimed at uncovering how people are influenced by the emotional expressions of others. In other words, research at the interpersonal level of analysis investigates how the emotional expressions of a source shape the attitudes, cognitions, and behaviors of a target (e.g., Are people more likely to extend help to a person who smiles than to a person who frowns?).

There is a rich tradition of research in social psychology and adjacent disciplines on the ways in which emotional states influence information search and processing, message scrutiny, and susceptibility to persuasion attempts.

This research has been inspired in part by various formulations of the elaboration likelihood model (ELM; e.g., Petty & Briñol, 2012; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), which specifies (among other things) how emotional states influence people's responses to persuasive messages, and how the impact of felt emotions depends on the extent of a person's information processing. Besides the ELM, research has been guided by the affect as information model (Schwarz & Clore, 1983), the affect infusion model (AIM; Forgas, 1995), and the mood as input model (Martin, Ward, Achee, & Wyer, 1993). All of these models speak to the various ways in which people's information processing and responses to persuasive messages are shaped by their *own* affective states. As such, the models are located at the intrapersonal level of analysis when it comes to understanding the role of emotional phenomena in social influence. An in-depth discussion of this literature therefore falls outside the scope of this chapter, which is concerned with the ways in which people are influenced by the emotional expressions of other individuals. I limit the current discussion to a brief summary of the types of emotional influences that have been studied in the intrapersonal tradition.

The ELM identifies a number of different processes through which emotional states may modulate social influence by impacting on basic cognition (Petty & Briñol, in press). When the likelihood of thorough elaboration is low, emotions may serve as simple cues. This notion is also present, among other things, in research on evaluative conditioning (e.g., De Houwer, Thomas, & Baeyens, 2001). When elaboration likelihood is high, emotions may be used as arguments, as detailed in the mood as input model (Martin et al., 1993). Under high elaboration, emotions may also influence the direction of thinking, as noted also in the AIM (Forgas, 1995). Finally, when elaboration is not constrained, emotions may influence the degree to which individuals process available information (Wegener, Petty, & Smith, 1995). For a more in-depth treatment of theorizing and research on the intrapersonal effects of emotions in relation to social influence, the reader is referred to a recent review by Petty and Briñol (in press).

The focus of this chapter is on the interpersonal level of analysis, because this is the primary arena of social influence. People continuously influence one another through their emotional expressions, whether deliberately or unconsciously, in personal relationships, in the workplace, and in the political domain. I define the interpersonal effects of emotions in social influence broadly as any effects of one person's emotional expressions—whether expressed through words, via facial displays, through the voice, via bodily postures, or through any combination of these expressive modalities—on (one or more) other individuals' attitudes, cognitions, and/or behavior.

The critical distinction between intrapersonal and interpersonal effects of emotions is that the former pertain to the effects of a person's own emotional experience on his or her cognitions, attitudes, decisions, and behavior, whereas the latter concern the effects of the emotional expressions of one or more other individuals on a person's cognitions, attitudes, decisions, and behavior. A logical corollary of this distinction is that intrapersonal effects of emotions can occur in social isolation, because a person may be influenced by his or her own emotions in the absence of other people. In practice, intrapersonal effects of emotions nonetheless frequently occur in social situations, because other individuals are often the cause of people's emotions (Parkinson, 1996). Interpersonal effects of emotions, however, can by their very nature only occur in social situations, because they require that one person observe an emotional expression of another person. The fact that interpersonal effects of emotions happen between rather than within individuals also means that traditional intrapersonal models of emotion and persuasion cannot account for the interpersonal effects of emotions, except to the extent that the emotions of the expresser become shared by the observer (an issue to which I will return later). The intrinsically social nature of the interpersonal effects of emotions thus calls for a theory that explains under which circumstances and by which mechanisms individuals are influenced by the emotional expressions of others. This call is answered by emotions as social information theory, which I summarize below.

### **Emotions as Social Information Theory**

Emotions as social information (EASI) theory (Van Kleef, 2009, 2010; Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2010; Van Kleef, Homan, & Cheshin, 2012) was developed specifically to account for the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions. As such, it is highly suitable for analyzing the interpersonal effects of emotions in social influence (Van Kleef et al., 2011). EASI theory is rooted in a social-functional approach to emotion (Fischer & Manstead, 2008; Frijda & Mesquita, 1994; Hareli & Rafaeli, 2008; Keltner & Haidt, 1999; Oatley & Jenkins, 1992; Parkinson, 1996; Van Kleef, 2009). A central tenet of the social-functional perspective is that emotions do not only influence those who experience them but also those who observe them (Fischer & Van Kleef, 2010). EASI theory extends this

general notion by specifying two processes through which observers may be influenced (i.e., affective reactions and inferential processes) and identifying two classes of moderating variables that influence the relative predictive strength of these mechanisms (i.e., the target's information processing depth and the perceived appropriateness of the emotional expression).

### Affective Reactions

Emotional expressions can evoke affective reactions in observers, which may subsequently influence their behavior. One type of affective reaction is produced by emotional contagion, the tendency to unintentionally and automatically “catch” other people's emotions (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994). Emotional contagion can occur when individuals are exposed to others' nonverbal displays of emotion (e.g., facial, vocal, and postural expressions), which may be mimicked and produce congruent emotional states via afferent feedback (i.e., physiological feedback from facial, vocal, and postural movements; e.g., Hess & Blairy, 2001; Neumann & Strack, 2000; Wild, Erb, & Bartels, 2001). Emotional contagion can also occur via verbal expressions of emotion, even in the absence of face-to-face interaction, for instance, through computer-mediated interaction (e.g., Cheshin, Rafaeli, & Bos, 2011; Friedman et al., 2004; Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004a). As a result of these processes, individuals tend to catch others' emotions on a moment-to-moment basis.

When people catch others' emotions, the resulting feeling state may influence their judgments and decisions via various types of “affect infusion” (Forgas, 1995). First, individuals may (mis)attribute the affective state to the situation at hand, using their feelings as input to their social judgments and decisions—a “how do I feel about it?” heuristic (i.e., affect-as-information; Schwarz & Clore, 1983). In ELM terms, this would be an instance of emotions biasing processing. Thus, if a person catches another's happiness and thereby comes to experience positive feelings, he or she may judge the situation as benign, which may promote cooperation. Second, the emerging affective state may selectively prime related ideas and memories that are part of an associative network, thereby facilitating their use when planning and executing behavior (i.e., affect priming; Bower, 1981; Isen, Shalcker, Clark, & Karp, 1978). Thus, if a person catches another's anger, he or she may selectively focus on negative aspects of that person, which may undermine cooperation.

The emotions individuals catch from others may also influence social behavior through mood maintenance and negative state relief. The core assumption here is that people strive to promote and maintain positive mood states and to avoid experiencing negative mood states (Carlson, Charlin, & Miller, 1988). This basic drive motivates people in a negative mood to engage in behaviors associated with positive feelings (e.g., helping others) in order to relieve their negative feeling state (e.g., Schaller & Cialdini, 1988). Likewise, individuals in a positive mood are motivated to exhibit behaviors that produce positive feelings and to abstain from activities that entail the risk of spoiling the good mood (i.e., positive mood maintenance; Wegener & Petty, 1994). In the current context, this means that when one's interaction partner feels happy, one may catch the partner's happiness and become motivated to maintain the positive feeling by acting in a friendly and generous way. Similarly, when the other expresses sadness, one may become somber through emotional contagion and become motivated to relieve oneself of the negative feelings, for instance, by acting generously.

In addition to emotional contagion, affective reactions may take the form of favorable or unfavorable impressions (Hareli & Hess, 2010; Knutson, 1996). Expressions of positive emotions tend to inspire positive impressions, and negative emotions negative impressions (Clark & Taraban, 1991). Such impressions may in turn shape social behavior. For instance, we tend to be more willing to help others whom we like and more likely to deny help to others whom we do not like (Clark et al., 1996). These effects are probably more direct and motivational than the effects of emotions on judgments and behavior discussed earlier, which are mediated by cognitive processes such as affect-as-information and affect-priming. Despite these differences, both types of affective reactions to other people's emotional expressions shape our responses to those other people. This notion has important implications for the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions in social influence, as the ensuing review of the literature will show.

### Inferential Processes

Another way in which emotional expressions can wield interpersonal influence is by triggering inferential processes in observers. Because specific emotions arise in response to appraisals of specific situations (Frijda, 1986;

Lazarus, 1991), observing a particular emotion in another person provides relatively differentiated information about how that person regards the situation. Note that such specific information is not provided by positive or negative moods, which only indicate whether things are generally going well or not. The implications of an emotional display vary as a function of the situation, but the basic informational value of discrete emotions generalizes across situations (Van Kleef, 2009). For instance, according to appraisal theories (e.g., Frijda, 1986; Roseman, 1984; Scherer, Schorr, & Johnstone, 2001; Smith, Haynes, Lazarus, & Pope, 1993), happiness arises when goals have been met (or good progress is being made toward attaining them) and expectations are positive. Expressions of happiness therefore signal that the environment is appraised as favorable and benign. Anger arises when a person's goals are being frustrated and he or she blames someone else for it. Expressions of anger therefore signal appraisals of goal blockage and other blame. Sadness arises when one faces irrevocable loss and experiences low coping potential. Expressions of sadness therefore signal lack of control and helplessness. Guilt arises when one feels that one has transgressed some social norm or moral imperative. Expressions of guilt therefore signal that one is aware of (and possibly troubled by) one's misdemeanor (for a detailed account of such appraisals and concomitant inferences, see Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2010).

Because discrete emotions have such distinct appraisal patterns (Manstead & Tetlock, 1989; Smith et al., 1993), they provide a wealth of information to observers (Keltner & Haidt, 1999; Van Kleef, 2009). For instance, emotional expressions convey information about the expresser's inner states (Ekman, 1993), social intentions (Fridlund, 1994), and orientation toward other people (Hess, Blairy, & Kleck, 2000; Knutson, 1996). In addition, emotional expressions inform observers about the expresser's appraisal of the situation (Manstead & Fischer, 2001; Van Doorn, Heerdink, & Van Kleef, 2012). This is illustrated by classic work on social referencing, which revealed that infants are more likely to cross a visual cliff when their mother smiles at them than when she looks fearful (e.g., Klinnert, Campos, Sorce, Emde, & Svejda, 1983). Presumably the mother's emotional display signals that the environment is safe (happiness) or unsafe (fear), thus informing the infant's behavior.

Individuals may thus distill useful pieces of information from others' emotional expressions (Van Kleef, 2009, 2010). For instance, when one is the target of another's anger, one may infer that one did something wrong, and this inference may in turn inform one's behavior (e.g., apologizing, changing one's conduct). When confronted with another person's happiness, one may conclude that things are going well, which may lead one to stay the course. When confronted with another's sadness, one might infer that the other faces a loss and has low coping potential, which may lead one to offer help or consolation. And when one's partner shows guilt after a faux pas, one may infer that he or she cares about the relationship and is willing to make up for the transgression. In short, inferential processes constitute a second set of mechanisms underlying the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions in social influence.

### Competing or Converging Processes

The two sets of mechanisms underlying the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions specified in EASI theory are distinct but mutually influential (Van Kleef, 2009). In some cases inferences and affective reactions lead to the same behavior. For example, the distress of a significant other signals that help is required (inference) but also triggers negative feelings in the observer (affective reaction), both of which foster supportive behavior (Clark et al., 1996). In other cases, however, inferences and affective reactions motivate opposite behaviors. For instance, when faced with an angry opponent in conflict, one's own reciprocal anger may provoke competition and retaliation, but one's inference that the other is upset because his or her limits have been reached may encourage strategic cooperation (Van Kleef et al., 2004a). Which process takes precedence in guiding social behavior depends on two classes of moderators: factors that influence the observer's information processing depth and factors that determine the perceived appropriateness of the emotional expression.

### Information Processing

Building on the idea that emotional expressions provide information about the expresser, EASI theory posits that the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions depend on the observer's motivation and ability to process the information conveyed by these expressions: The deeper the information processing, the stronger the relative predictive power of inferential processes; the shallower the information processing, the stronger the relative predictive power of affective reactions (Van Kleef, 2009).

To illustrate, imagine you show up 30 minutes late to a meeting with a colleague. Your colleague expresses anger regarding your tardiness. If you are motivated and able to carefully consider the reasons, meaning, and implications of your colleague's anger, you may come to realize that your being late caused the anger, that it is inappropriate to arrive late to a meeting, that you should apologize, and that you should be on time for the next meeting (a series of inferences). However, if you are not motivated and/or unable to think through the meaning and implications of your colleague's anger, the anger may upset you and make you dislike your colleague (affective reactions), and possibly cause you to decide not to meet anymore at all.

Information processing depth depends on the individual's *epistemic motivation*, that is, his or her willingness to expend effort to achieve a rich and accurate understanding of the world, including other people (Kruglanski, 1989). Individuals with higher epistemic motivation have lower confidence in their knowledge and experience less certainty. As a consequence, they tend to engage in rather deliberate, systematic information search and processing before making judgments and decisions (De Dreu & Carnevale, 2003; Kruglanski, 1989; Kruglanski & Webster, 1996; see also Chaiken & Trope, 1999).

Epistemic motivation is partly rooted in personality. For instance, individuals with higher need for cognition, lower need for cognitive closure, lower personal need for structure, and higher openness to experience have chronically higher epistemic motivation than their counterparts who score on the opposite poles of these scales, and as a result they engage in more deliberate information processing (De Dreu & Carnevale, 2003; Homan et al., 2008; Neuberg & Newsom, 1993; Van Kleef, Anastasopoulou, & Nijstad, 2010; Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). In terms of the present argument, these individuals are more likely to reflect on their partner's emotions, and therefore the effects of their partner's emotional expressions are more likely to be mediated by inferential processes than by affective reactions.

Epistemic motivation may also vary as a function of the situation. For instance, epistemic motivation is increased when a task is perceived as attractive or personally involving (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986); when one is held accountable for one's judgments and decisions (Tetlock, 1992); when outcomes are framed as losses rather than as gains (De Dreu, Carnevale, Emans, & Van de Vliert, 1994); and when a situation is competitively rather than cooperatively structured (Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2010). Conversely, epistemic motivation is undermined by factors such as environmental noise (Kruglanski & Webster, 1991), mental fatigue (Webster, Richter, & Kruglanski, 1996), time pressure (Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004b), and power (De Dreu & Van Kleef, 2004; Fiske & Dépret, 1996; Keltner, Van Kleef, Chen, & Kraus, 2008). By influencing epistemic motivation, these factors influence the relative predictive strength of affective reactions and inferential processes.

### Perceived Appropriateness

The relative predictive strength of inferential processes and affective reactions also depends on social-contextual factors that influence the perceived appropriateness of the emotional expression (Van Kleef, 2010). Such factors include (cultural) norms regarding emotion expression, the way the emotion is expressed, relative status, and dispositional preferences for social harmony, among other things. EASI theory posits that inferential processes become relatively more powerful in shaping responses to emotional expressions to the extent that observers perceive the emotional expressions as appropriate. Although inappropriate emotional expressions could be argued to trigger information processing because they violate expectations (Hamilton & Sherman, 1996; Stern, Marris, Millar, & Cole, 1984), evidence indicates that negative affective reactions to expectancy violations are primary (Bartholow, Fabiani, Gratton, & Bettencourt, 2001; Olson, Roese, & Zanna, 1996). Consider the case of a person who starts laughing out loud during a funeral ceremony. Even though other attendants may at some level be curious about what caused the person to laugh, their sense that the amusement is entirely inappropriate for the situation is likely to make them experience strong negative affective reactions. Accordingly, EASI assumes that the tendency toward additional information seeking that may be triggered by expectancy violations is outweighed by the strong negative affective reactions that are typically evoked by inappropriate displays of emotion (Shields, 2005; Van Kleef & Côté, 2007).

One factor that influences the perceived appropriateness of emotional expressions is culture. For example, in individualistic cultures, expressions of anger tend to be relatively acceptable. In the United States, expressions of anger are more likely to be interpreted as a sign of assertiveness and individuality than as a sign of aggression. In collectivistic cultures, however, expressions of anger are not appreciated. In Japan, expressing anger is perceived

as highly inappropriate (except perhaps when the anger is directed at an outgroup) because anger poses a threat to group harmony (Kitayama, Mesquita, & Karasawa, 2006; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Such “display rules” also vary across social groups and organizations. For instance, some organizations have explicit guidelines regarding emotional expressions (e.g., service with a smile; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987), whereas others do not.

Personality factors also influence to what extent emotional expressions are perceived as appropriate. For instance, some people have a strong desire for social harmony (e.g., individuals who score high on agreeableness; McCrae & Costa, 1987), whereas others have less of such a desire. Individuals with a strong desire for social harmony are more likely to perceive expressions of anger as inappropriate and to respond negatively to such expressions because they may create hostility and conflict and thus undermine social harmony (Graziano, Jensen-Campbell, & Hair, 1996; Suls, Martin, & David, 1998). In addition, the perceived appropriateness of emotional expressions depends on characteristics of the interactants that may be (partly) unrelated to personality, such as status. People tend to accept more from high-status others than from low-status others (Porath, Overbeck, & Pearson, 2008), and therefore expressions of anger from low-status others are more likely to arouse negative affective reactions than expressions of anger from high-status others.

### Summary

EASI theory provides a social account of emotion by focusing on the interpersonal consequences of emotional expressions. As such, it complements existing models that attempt to explain the *intrapersonal* effects of emotions on cognition, judgment, and behavior (e.g., Forgas, 1995; Martin et al., 1993; Schwarz & Clore, 1983; for a recent review, see Petty & Briñol, in press). EASI theory moves beyond the valence approach that characterizes many other theories and posits that each discrete emotion conveys specific social information (for a detailed account, see Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2010). The theory specifies two processes through which emotional expressions exert social influence (inferences vs. affective reactions), and it identifies two classes of moderators (information processing and the appropriateness of the emotional expression) that determine which of these processes takes precedence. The predictive strength of the inferential pathway increases to the extent that the target is motivated and able to engage in thorough information processing and perceives the emotional expression as appropriate; the predictive strength of the affective reactions pathway increases to the extent that the target's information processing is reduced and he or she perceives the emotional expression as inappropriate.

### Interpersonal Effects of Emotional Expressions in Social Influence: Empirical Evidence

This section provides an overview of empirical work on the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions in various domains of social influence. The first part of the review is devoted to established work in the adjacent fields of negotiation and leadership. The second part of the review addresses more recent and ongoing investigations into the interpersonal effects of emotions in classic areas of social influence, including attitude change, compliance, and conformity.

### Evidence From Neighboring Fields of Inquiry

Research on the interpersonal effects of emotions in social influence has only recently started to emerge. As a result, the current empirical record is modest. However, there is a lot to learn from adjacent areas of inquiry that are not traditionally seen as prototypical for social influence research yet contain clear processes of social influence. One such domain is negotiation. Negotiation is defined as a discussion between two or more parties aimed at solving a (perceived) divergence of interests (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). Social influence is central to this process. Typically, parties in negotiation attempt to persuade each other to make concessions using a variety of strategies. In that sense, negotiation can be seen as a sequence of reciprocal requests (akin to compliance). The main difference between negotiation and a request is that the former situation is typically characterized by competitive incentives, whereas the latter is not (Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2010). Nevertheless, research on the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions in negotiations reveals a lot about the ways in which emotions engender social influence.

In a first study of the interpersonal effects of emotions in negotiation, Van Kleef and colleagues (2004a) investigated the interpersonal effects of anger and happiness using a computer-mediated negotiation task. In the

course of the negotiation, participants received emotional messages from their (simulated) opponent (e.g., “This negotiation pisses me off”). Negotiators who received angry messages estimated the opponent’s limit to be high, and to avoid costly impasse they made relatively large concessions. Conversely, negotiators who received happy messages judged the opponent’s limit to be low, felt no need to concede to avoid impasse, and therefore made smaller concessions. A more recent study further showed that the inferences that negotiators draw from their counterpart’s emotions continue to influence behavior in later encounters with the same person. In a second encounter with an opponent who had previously expressed anger, negotiators conceded again because they believed that the other had ambitious limits, even when that person expressed no emotion during the second encounter (Van Kleef & De Dreu, 2010).

In line with the idea that emotions provide relevant information, research has shown that the tendency of negotiators to concede more to angry opponents than to happy ones is moderated by the extent to which individuals are motivated and able to systematically and deliberately process information during the negotiation. Thus, negotiators with a low dispositional need for cognitive closure, those who were under low time pressure, and those who depended strongly on their counterpart were influenced by their counterpart’s expressions of anger versus happiness. In contrast, those with a high need for closure, those who were under high time pressure, and those who did not depend on their counterpart were uninfluenced by the counterpart’s emotional expressions (Van Kleef et al., 2004b). Other studies showed that the interpersonal effects of anger and happiness are similarly moderated by power, with low power negotiators being more strongly affected by their counterpart’s emotions than high power negotiators (Sinaceur & Tiedens, 2006; Van Dijk, Van Kleef, Steinel, & Van Beest, 2008; Van Kleef, De Dreu, Pietroni, & Manstead, 2006b).

Several other moderators of the interpersonal effects of anger and happiness in negotiations have been identified. Inspired by the classic advice to “separate the people from the problem” (Fisher & Ury, 1981), Steinel, Van Kleef, and Harinck (2008) differentiated between emotions that are directed toward a negotiator’s *offer* and emotions that are directed toward the negotiator *as a person*. When emotional statements were directed at the participant’s offer, participants used the opponent’s emotion to assess his or her limits, and consequently they conceded more to an angry opponent than to a happy one. However, when the emotions were directed at the negotiator as a person, negotiators conceded *less* to an angry opponent than to a happy one. In this case, participants did not find useful information in their opponent’s emotions, but instead felt affronted by the angry remarks (see also Lelieveld, Van Dijk, Van Beest, Steinel, & Van Kleef, 2011). Other work has demonstrated that expressions of anger may be effective when they are perceived as appropriate but elicit negative affective reactions and retaliation when they are deemed inappropriate, for instance because they violate a display rule (Van Kleef & Côté, 2007).

Another recent study also illustrates how the social context shapes the perceived appropriateness of emotional expressions and subsequent behavioral responses to those expressions. Adam, Shirako, and Maddux (2010) examined the interpersonal effects of verbal expressions of anger across cultures. They found that European American participants conceded more to angry than to neutral opponents, whereas Asian American participants conceded *less* to angry than to neutral opponents. This reversal could be explained in terms of different cultural norms about the appropriateness of anger expressions in negotiations. Asian American participants deemed expressions of anger inappropriate, and therefore they responded negatively to such expressions.

Relatively few studies have addressed the effects of emotions other than anger and happiness. In one such study, Van Kleef, De Dreu, and Manstead (2006a) found that participants whose opponents expressed guilt or regret developed a positive impression of their opponents but were nonconciliatory in their demands. By contrast, participants whose opponents expressed disappointment or worry rated their opponents less positively, but they made larger concessions. Additional experiments revealed that another’s expressions of guilt are interpreted as a sign that the other has claimed too much, whereas disappointment is taken as a signal that the other has received too little. Furthermore, the effects of guilt and disappointment were eliminated when the target had low trust, because lack of trust undermined thorough processing of the implications of the opponent’s emotional expressions. Finally, another study revealed that the effects of disappointment on concessions are especially prominent when the perceiver is sensitive to the strategic implications of the other’s emotion, namely that his or her personal interests are jeopardized by a looming impasse (Van Kleef & Van Lange, 2008).

In sum, these studies show that expressing emotions can be a powerful influence strategy in negotiation, but success depends on which emotion is expressed under which circumstances. In line with EASI theory, expressions

of anger help to elicit concessions when targets are motivated to engage in thorough information processing, because this increases the relative predictive strength of inferential processes compared to affective reactions. Conversely, expressions of anger evoke retaliation when targets deem the anger inappropriate, because this increases the relative predictive strength of affective reactions.

Another area of inquiry that is not traditionally seen as representative of social influence research yet contains the key ingredients of social influence processes is leadership. Leadership refers to the process of influencing others to accomplish a goal (Yukl, 2010). Following a leader shares resemblances with obedience—a special type of compliance that occurs in response to orders by an authority figure (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). In the last 15 years, researchers have started to explore the effects of leaders' emotional expressions on followers. Early studies focused on the effects of leader emotional displays on follower ratings of leadership quality (e.g., Glomb & Hulin, 1997) and charisma (Bono & Ilies, 2006), showing that positive emotional expressions of leaders generally elicit more favorable ratings from followers than negative expressions.

More recently, researchers started to focus on actual follower behavior as a function of leaders' emotional expressions. Sy, Côté, and Saavedra (2005) studied the effects of leader moods on team functioning. They invited groups of participants to the lab and randomly selected one of them to play the role of leader. This person then saw a film clip that induced either a positive or a negative mood. The leader then joined the rest of the group and coached them as they built up a tent together while blindfolded. Teams that were exposed to a leader in a positive mood developed a positive mood themselves, and as a result they exhibited better coordination than teams with a leader in a negative mood. Teams with a leader in a negative mood expended more effort, presumably because they interpreted the leader's negative mood as a signal that performance was unsatisfactory. A potential caveat of this study is that it is unclear whether the mood induction may also have influenced the leader's behavior (an intrapersonal effect), which could in turn have influenced participants' responses—a limitation that is inherent to studying the interpersonal effects of emotions in real social interactions. Later studies circumvented this issue by using alternative procedures.

Van Kleef and colleagues examined the effects of expressions of anger versus happiness by a leader on team performance as a function of followers' information processing motivation (Van Kleef, Homan, et al., 2009). Four-person teams collaborated on a task, during which they were supposedly observed by their leader via a video camera setup. After a while, the leader (a trained actor) appeared on a video screen and provided standardized feedback and tips to the team, expressing either anger or happiness by means of facial expressions, vocal intonation, and bodily postures. Teams consisting of members with low information processing motivation (measured in terms of need for structure; Neuberg & Newsom, 1993) performed better when the leader expressed happiness, because they experienced positive emotions themselves and developed favorable impressions of the leader. Teams consisting of members with high information processing motivation, in contrast, performed better when the leader expressed anger, because they inferred from the leader's anger that their performance was suboptimal and that they needed to expend more effort.

Another study addressed the moderating role of followers' desire for social harmony, operationalized in terms of individual differences in agreeableness (Van Kleef, Homan, Beersma, & Van Knippenberg, 2010). In a first experiment, participants read a scenario about a leader who expressed anger or no emotion about their performance, with emotion being manipulated via pictures of emotional expressions. Participants high on agreeableness reported lower motivation in the anger condition compared to the neutral condition, while those low on agreeableness reported higher motivation in the anger condition than in the neutral condition. In a second experiment, participants performed a task in four-person teams and they received angry or happy feedback from their leader, as described earlier. Teams consisting of followers with high levels of agreeableness performed better when the leader expressed happiness, while teams consisting of low-agreeable followers performed better when the leader expressed anger. Additional analyses revealed that agreeable followers experienced high levels of stress when confronted with an angry leader, which undermined their performance on the task.

These studies indicate that the emotional expressions of leaders are an important source of influence. Although leaders who express negative emotions such as anger tend to receive poorer evaluations than leaders who express positive emotions, in some cases expressing anger appears to be an effective way to motivate followers and to get them to perform—at least in the short run. In line with the predictions of EASI theory, the effects of leader emotional displays on follower performance are mediated by both affective reactions (emotional contagion and

impressions of the leader) and inferential processes (inferences about performance quality), and the relative predictive strength of both processes depends on followers' information processing motivation and their desire for social harmony.

### Emerging Evidence From Research in Classic Domains of Social Influence

Recently, research on the interpersonal effects of emotions has started to address some of the more classic domains of social influence, such as attitude change, compliance, and conformity in groups. Research in this area is still very much in progress, but initial findings are consistent with the basic tenets of EASI theory.

Perhaps the "oldest" documented form of social influence is attitude change (sometimes called persuasion). Attitude change refers to a change in an individual's attitude(s) resulting from exposure to information from others (Olson & Zanna, 1993). Aristotle (350 BC/2004) already advocated the use of emotion in the process of influencing others' attitudes and beliefs. Interestingly, however, until recently theory and research with regard to emotional influences on attitude formation and change have been limited to intrapersonal effects. For instance, one class of models posits that message recipients' affective states influence their processing of persuasive arguments (Petty & Briñol, in press), with some models postulating that negative affect increases processing and other models suggesting that positive affect increases processing (see Côté, 2005b; Schwarz, Bless, & Bohner, 1991; Wegener et al., 1995). Other relevant accounts maintain that the role of a message recipient's affective state in shaping persuasion is determined by the depth of his or her information processing (e.g., Briñol & Petty, 2009; Forgas, 1995). For instance, Briñol and Petty argued that under high elaboration, information about the source that is presented *after* the persuasive message determines how people weigh their initial reactions to the message. The interpersonal approach advocated by EASI theory is notably different from these perspectives, because it focuses on the effects of the emotional expressions of a source rather than on the emotional state of a recipient.

Building on EASI theory, Van Kleef, Van den Berg, and Heerdink (in press) investigated the interpersonal effects of the emotional expressions of a source on the attitudes of a target. In a first experiment, they investigated attitudes about a popular Dutch television show called *Lingo*. Around the time of the study, there were plans to discontinue the show. Participants read a reaction to these plans from a source in the broadcasting business, which was manipulated to contain verbal expressions of sadness, happiness, or no emotion, while the content of the message was held constant. Participants reported considerably more favorable attitudes toward *Lingo* after reading a sad reaction to the intended discontinuation than after reading a happy reaction. In a second study, the effect was replicated in the context of a different attitude object. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, plans had been proposed to rebuild identical replicas of the Twin Towers in New York. Shortly before the study was run, these plans were aborted. Participants read a sad, happy, or neutral emotional reaction to the abortion of the replica plans. They reported more favorable attitudes toward the initial plan to rebuild the Twin Towers after reading the sad reaction than after reading the happy reaction.

These patterns suggest that the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions on attitude formation in these studies were driven by inferential processes rather than affective reactions. If affective reactions had been dominant, affect infusion (Forgas, 1995) should have led to more favorable attitudes after seeing happy rather than sad reactions. However, the opposite was found. Presumably, participants inferred from the source's negative emotional reactions to the intended discontinuation of *Lingo* and the abortion of the Twin Tower plans that *Lingo* and the Twin Tower plans were important and should be continued. Indeed, additional studies provided more direct evidence for the role of inferential processes (Van Kleef et al., in press). For instance, one experiment showed that nonverbal expressions of sadness versus happiness only influenced targets' attitudes when targets had ample cognitive resources available; when they were put under cognitive load, the effect disappeared. This finding suggests that other people's emotional expressions are not processed as peripheral cues but are used as relevant pieces of information upon which to base judgment and behavior provided that sufficient cognitive resources are available.

These studies demonstrate that EASI theory can be meaningfully applied to attitude change. It appears that targets used the emotional expressions of a source as information, which shaped their attitudes about various topics. The effects occurred both for verbal expressions of emotion and for nonverbal expressions of emotion. That these effects were only observed when the target had sufficient cognitive resources suggests that the effects are carried primarily by inferential processes rather than affective reactions. Even though these studies contained no direct

measures of information processing, the patterns are consistent with such an interpretation.

Another classic domain of social influence is compliance. Compliance can be defined as “a particular kind of response—acquiescence—to a particular kind of communication—a request” (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004, p. 592). As is the case for attitude change, most research on emotion and compliance has focused on intrapersonal effects. For example, the experience of emotions such as gratitude (Goei & Boster, 2005), guilt (Carlsmith & Gross, 1969), and embarrassment (Cann & Blackwelder, 1984) has been found to increase compliance. Other research has shown that people in positive moods tend to be more willing to comply with requests than people in a neutral mood (Carlson et al., 1988; Isen, Clark, & Schwartz, 1976).

Shifting this focus, Van Doorn, Van Kleef, and Van der Pligt (2014) investigated the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions on compliance with requests. In a first experiment, participants read a scenario about a man who expressed anger or disappointment about the fact that several bicycles were blocking the sidewalk, one of which belonged to the participant. Verbal expressions of anger versus disappointment were accompanied by pictures of matching facial expressions. Participants read that the man was moving heavy furniture and asked for help moving the bikes out of the way. Participants indicated that they were willing to move more bikes after the man had expressed disappointment rather than anger.

In a second study, participants were asked to imagine that while out shopping they encountered a charity collector. After the participant had donated a 50-eurocent coin, the charity collector paused in front of the participant, as if he expected an additional donation. Participants were shown a picture of the collector’s face, which expressed either anger, disappointment, or no emotion. Participants in the disappointment condition were willing to more than double their initial donation, while those in the neutral and angry conditions did not intend to make an additional donation. In fact, several participants in the anger condition indicated that they wanted to *take back* their initial donation. The difference between the disappointment and anger conditions was mediated by the perceived appropriateness of the charity collector’s emotional expression for that situation, which was higher in the case of disappointment than in the case of anger.

A shortcoming of these studies is that they relied on hypothetical scenarios. This limitation was remedied in a third study, in which participants played a computer-mediated donation game with a simulated partner, which involved real behavior (Van Doorn et al., 2014). Participants first made a donation in a practice round. Then they were informed that previous players had on average made either low or high allocations (i.e., a descriptive norm). Then they received a message from their “partner,” who asked them to be more generous in the real game than they had been in the trial round. This request was paired with anger or disappointment about the participant’s allocation in the trial round, or with no emotion. In the absence of an emotional expression participants conformed to the descriptive norm, giving more or less generously according to what others had given in the past. When the partner had expressed disappointment, participants donated more regardless of the norm; when the partner had expressed anger, participants donated less regardless of the norm. The difference between the anger and disappointment conditions was again mediated by perceived appropriateness.

These studies demonstrate that expressing emotions as part of a request can affect targets’ willingness to comply. Interestingly, the predictive value of emotional expressions outweighed that of an explicit descriptive norm, indicating that emotional expressions can be a powerful source of social influence. The studies corroborate the proposition of EASI theory that expressions of anger are more likely to be perceived as inappropriate in cooperative settings (e.g., a request for help) than in competitive settings (e.g., negotiation), and this helps to explain why expressions of anger undermined the effectiveness of a request for help, compared to expressions of disappointment, which were perceived as more appropriate.

A final line of research that has recently emerged aims to understand how emotional expressions shape conformity processes in groups. Conformity refers to the act of changing one’s behavior to match the responses of others (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). People may publicly accept a majority’s position to avoid being ridiculed or ostracized (without necessarily accepting the position in private), or they may privately adopt the group’s position because they strive for accuracy and the majority position appears to be correct (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). There has been very little research on emotion and conformity. Similar to most other areas of social influence, the scarce research that has been conducted has focused exclusively on the intrapersonal effects of moods and emotions. For instance, one study showed that positive moods increase conformity relative to negative moods (Tong, Tan,

Latheef, Selamat, & Tan, 2008), presumably due to an increased reliance on the consensus-implies-correctness heuristic.

Heerdink, Van Kleef, Homan, and Fischer (2013) performed a first exploration of the interpersonal effects of anger and happiness on conformity in groups. They reasoned that expressions of anger may signal that certain behavior is not tolerated by the group and may be sanctioned. Groups fulfill individuals' need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), and, as research on ostracism has shown, threatened belongingness is highly aversive and motivates behavior aimed at improving acceptance (Williams, 2007). By conforming to the group norm, the deviant can show that he or she is a "good" group member and thus increase chances of acceptance (Steinel et al., 2010; Van Kleef, Steinel, Van Knippenberg, Hogg, & Svensson, 2007). Happiness, on the other hand, is usually construed as a signal of affiliation (Clark et al., 1996) and acceptance (Cacioppo & Gardner, 1999). Targets of happy expressions can therefore be expected to feel safe in the group and to feel free to be unique and deviate from the group's position, as their behavior is unlikely to compromise their group membership.

In a first study testing these ideas, Heerdink and colleagues (2013) asked participants to recall an incident in which their opinion had differed from that of the majority of the group. After describing the situation, they reported which emotions the majority had shown and how this had made them feel. The more anger the majority had expressed, the more the participant had felt excluded; the more happiness the majority had expressed, the more the participant had felt accepted. These feelings of inclusion versus exclusion in turn predicted the extent to which participants felt pressure to conform to the majority position. Although this critical-incidents procedure yields rich data about actual experiences, it does not afford standardization. In follow-up studies, various standardized manipulations of group members' emotional expressions were employed.

In a second study the majority emotion was manipulated using a scenario. Participants read about a situation in which they were attempting to decide on a holiday destination with three of their friends. It turned out that the three friends all had the same holiday destination in mind, but the participant preferred a different destination. The majority did not agree with the participant's proposal. Depending on the condition, the majority expressed anger, enthusiasm, or no emotion about the situation. Heerdink and colleagues (2013) also manipulated the availability of an alternative group with which participants could go on holiday, reasoning that expressions of anger might prompt conformity in the absence of an alternative, but not in the presence of an alternative. Expressions of anger led to greater feelings of exclusion than expressions of enthusiasm, with neutral expressions falling in between. Feelings of exclusion in turn motivated participants to conform when no alternative group was available, whereas they motivated participants to leave the group when such an alternative was available.

In a third study, Heerdink et al. (2013) explored these mechanisms in the context of a computer-simulated group discussion (see Homan, Greer, Jehn, & Koning, 2010) on aesthetic preferences. In one condition, participants learned that their responses on several questionnaires indicated that they were very prototypical members of the group, meaning that their personality overlapped strongly with the personalities of the other group members. In the other condition they learned that they were rather peripheral members of the group, because their personality structure was different from that of the other group members (Steinel et al., 2010; Van Kleef et al., 2007). Participants then privately rated a number of abstract paintings. To generate discussion, their ratings were supposedly sent to the "other group members," who were preprogrammed to express different preferences than the participant. All group members then sent a few messages to the rest of the group to initiate the discussion. Depending on the condition, participants received messages expressing anger or happiness about their deviating opinion. Then participants rated the paintings for a second time, and this time their ratings could supposedly be seen by the rest of the group. Participants who occupied a peripheral position in their group exhibited conformity after receiving angry reactions, but not after receiving happy reactions. Participants with a prototypical position in the group were not influenced by their group members' emotional expressions, because they experienced little fear of social exclusion and, consequently, little pressure to change their opinion.

These studies indicate that the emotional expressions of group members may be interpreted as signals of future acceptance or exclusion, which in turn influence conformity depending on the security of the target's position in the group and on the extent to which the target depends on the group. As such, these studies provide initial evidence that emotional expressions can provide a means to engender conformity in groups, lending further support to the conceptualization of emotions as agents of social influence.

## Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

We have seen that emotional expressions can engender social influence by triggering inferential processes and/or affective reactions in targets. We have also seen that the consequences of emotional expressions differ widely. In line with EASI theory, the effects of emotional expressions depend on the target's information processing depth and on the perceived appropriateness of the emotional expression. Evidence for the critical role of processing depth stems from moderating influences of personality characteristics such as need for cognitive closure (Van Kleef et al., 2004b) and personal need for structure (Van Kleef et al., 2009; Van Kleef, Anastasopoulou, & Nijstad, 2010), experimental manipulations of time pressure (Van Kleef et al., 2004b) and cognitive load (Van Kleef et al., in press), and self-report measures of information processing as well as objective measures of time spent processing (Van Kleef et al., 2004b). Support for the role of perceived appropriateness comes from moderating influences of dispositional differences in the desire for social harmony (Van Kleef, Homan, et al., 2010), situational display rules (Van Kleef & Côté, 2007), the cultural context within which the emotion is expressed (Adam et al., 2010), and self-report measures of perceived appropriateness of emotional expressions (Van Doorn et al., 2014; Van Kleef & Côté, 2007).

## Differences and Commonalities Between EASI and Other Theoretical Perspectives

As noted before, the critical distinction between EASI theory and other theoretical perspectives such as the ELM (Petty & Briñol, 2012; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), the AIM (Forgas, 1995), the affect as information model (Schwarz & Clore, 1983), and the mood as input model (Martin et al., 1993) lies in the level of analysis: With regard to the influence of emotions, EASI is situated at the interpersonal level of analysis, whereas the other models are situated at the intrapersonal level of analysis (Morris & Keltner, 2000). Unique aspects of EASI concern its focus on the effects of a source's emotional expressions (rather than on a recipient's emotional experience); the role of inferential processes and affective reactions triggered by others' emotional expressions; and the moderating role of the perceived appropriateness of emotional expressions. A commonality between EASI theory and several other models (including the ELM and the AIM) is the importance that is attached to the recipient's information processing. Furthermore, the processes specified under "affective reactions" in EASI theory partly overlap with those featured in other models. Thus, to the degree that a source's emotional expressions are picked up by a target (e.g., through emotional contagion), the target could be influenced by some of the processes specified in the ELM and the AIM, as noted earlier in this chapter. Effects of emotional expressions on inferences and concomitant judgments and behavior cannot be accounted for by other models, however. In short, EASI complements existing models with its unique focus on the interpersonal effects of emotions.

## The Emerging View of Emotions as Agents of Social Influence

Research on social influence aims to uncover the processes through which, and the circumstances under which, individuals come to adapt their attitudes, cognitions, and/or behavior to other individuals. Besides an interest in fundamental processes, the social influence literature reveals a strong interest in tactics that can be used deliberately to influence other people. Classic examples are the foot-in-the-door technique (making a small request that is almost certainly granted and then following up with a larger, related request; Freedman & Fraser, 1966) and the door-in-the-face technique (making an extreme request that is likely to get rejected, so that a subsequent smaller request for a truly desired action is more likely to be granted; Cialdini et al., 1975). These strategies rely on individuals' desire for consistency and reciprocity, respectively. Other strategies capitalize more on emotional processes. For instance, "fear appeals" can be used to frighten targets (e.g., by showing pictures of tar lungs to smokers), which may in some circumstances help to establish behavioral change (Rogers, 1983). The theory and findings reviewed here suggest that interpersonal emotional strategies should be added to the social influence toolbox.

Changing the perspective from the observer to the expresser, the foregoing review also indicates, however, that the use of emotional expressions as a strategy of social influence is a delicate endeavor. A particular emotional expression may work in one situation, but not in the next. The effectiveness of emotional expressions depends on which emotion is expressed to whom and under which circumstances. The many contingencies of the effects of emotional expressions in social influence are perhaps best illustrated by research on anger, which is by far the most studied emotion in this context. For instance, expressions of anger may engender attitude change (Van Kleef

et al., in press), but they also undermine compliance with requests (Van Doorn et al., 2014). Expressions of anger by a leader may increase motivation and performance among followers who are high on epistemic motivation and among those who are low on agreeableness, whereas anger undermines motivation and performance of followers low on epistemic motivation and high on agreeableness (Van Kleef et al., 2009; Van Kleef, Homan, et al., 2010). Expressions of anger may engender conformity in groups when targets depend on the group and/or occupy a peripheral position in it, whereas anger undermines conformity when targets do not depend on the group and/or occupy a central position in the group (Heerdink et al., 2013). Finally, expressions of anger elicit concessions in negotiation when they are deemed appropriate and the target is motivated to consider the implications of the anger, but they backfire when they are perceived as inappropriate and/or the target is not motivated to process the information that the anger conveys (e.g., Steinel et al., 2008; Van Kleef & Côté, 2007; Van Kleef et al., 2004a, 2004b, 2006b).

The insights arising from these studies have obvious practical implications. It is clear that anger can be a powerful instrument of social influence, but it should be used with care. Expressing anger is only likely to have desired effects on targets when a number of conditions are met, as specified in EASI theory. Future research is needed to illuminate whether the effects of other emotional expressions are subject to the same moderating influences as are expressions of anger. When we learn more about the contingencies of the effectiveness of emotional expressions, we can start to consider how emotional expressions can be used in marketing or incorporated in governmental campaigns to promote desired behavior and discourage undesired behavior.

The present review also indicates that using emotional expressions to engender social influence requires adequate emotion regulation. Individuals who understand which emotional expressions work under which circumstances are likely to be more successful at exerting social influence than those who lack such knowledge. Indeed, Côté and Hideg (2011) argued that the ability to influence others by means of emotional displays should be considered a new dimension of emotional intelligence. Importantly, successful emotion regulation requires not just showing the right emotion at the right time but also showing the right emotion in the right way. In one study, participants felt more trust toward and cooperated more with a person who showed an authentic rather than an inauthentic smile (Krumhuber, 2007). In another study, “deep acted” displays of anger (which appear authentic) elicited concessions in negotiation, whereas “surface acted” anger (which appears inauthentic) had the opposite effect (Côté, Hideg, & Van Kleef, 2013). This difference could be explained in terms of lower levels of trust in the latter condition, which may have fueled reactance. Another recent study revealed that individuals with high emotion regulation ability are more successful than their less emotionally able counterparts in achieving their social goals, whether these are benign or malicious (Côté, DeCelles, McCarthy, Van Kleef, & Hideg, 2011). In short, some individuals are better equipped than others to use their emotions as tools of social influence.

### **Valence, Discrete Emotions, and Emotion Blends**

There is a pervasive tendency in the literature to conceptualize emotions in terms of their positive or negative valence. The foregoing review challenges this practice. Together with a growing body of research on the intrapersonal effects of emotions (e.g., Bodenhausen, Sheppard, & Kramer, 1994; DeSteno, Petty, Wegener, & Rucker, 2000; Fischer & Roseman, 2007; Keltner, Ellsworth, & Edwards, 1993; Lerner & Keltner, 2001; Tiedens & Linton, 2001), the theory and research reviewed here suggest that there is more promise in conceptualizing emotions in terms of their unique appraisal patterns and action tendencies than in terms of their valence. For instance, the “core relational themes” of anger and guilt are other-blame and self-blame, respectively (Smith et al., 1993), which helps to explain why they have opposite effects in negotiations even though both have a negative valence (Van Kleef et al., 2004a, 2006a). Further, the fact that disappointment does not involve assigning blame to another person whereas anger does helps to explain why expressing disappointment is more effective in securing compliance with a request (Van Doorn et al., 2014). Accordingly, future research would do well to measure or manipulate discrete emotions rather than focusing solely on positive or negative valence.

When it comes to discrete emotions, the preceding review also highlights important gaps in our knowledge. Although we are beginning to understand the effects of happiness, anger, sadness, disappointment, guilt, and regret, the effects of many other emotions have yet to be explored. A focus on other discrete emotions is needed to gain a more complete understanding of the role of emotion in social influence. One question that could be addressed in future research is whether different positive emotions (e.g., happiness, pride, gratitude, relief, hope,

compassion, awe) have differential effects, as is the case for negative emotions. For example, it seems plausible that in benign situations positive emotions with an other-focus (e.g., gratitude, compassion, awe) would be more likely to elicit cooperation than positive emotions with a self-focus (e.g., pride).

Without exception, the studies reviewed here have examined the effects of single emotional states and expressions (e.g., “pure” happiness, anger, sadness, or guilt). However, in everyday life individuals often experience “blends” of emotions (Scherer & Tannenbaum, 1986). These blends may even comprise emotions with a different valence. For instance, individuals reported that they simultaneously experienced happiness and sadness on graduation day (Larsen, McGraw, & Cacioppo, 2001). Little is known about the interpersonal effects of mixed emotional displays, but qualitative evidence suggests that the alternating or simultaneous expression of positive and negative emotions can be an effective instrument of social influence. In a classic study, Rafaeli and Sutton (1991) investigated the use of “emotional contrast strategies” as a social influence tactic. They discovered that criminal interrogators and bill collectors often use combinations of expressed positive and negative emotions to elicit compliance in others, a strategy that may be regarded as a variation of the “good cop, bad cop” technique. Such emotional contrast strategies can be effective in exerting social influence, although it is not clear exactly why such strategies are effective. Further exploration of the mechanisms and contingencies of emotional contrast strategies and other forms of mixed emotional expressions is needed to develop a more complete understanding of the interpersonal effects of emotional expressions in social influence.

### Conclusion

My goal for this chapter has been to demonstrate that emotions are powerful tools of social influence. Building on EASI theory (Van Kleef, 2009), I have argued that emotional expressions exert social influence by triggering affective reactions and/or inferential processes in targets, depending on the target’s information processing depth and the perceived appropriateness of the emotional expression. I have applied this framework to several domains of social influence, including attitude change, compliance with requests, negotiation, leadership, and conformity in groups. Although emerging evidence from these domains is consistent with EASI theory, more work is needed to establish the generalizability of the theory to other areas of social influence, such as politics and minority influence. Such research would further solidify the emerging conceptualization of emotions as agents of social influence.

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## Emotions as Agents of Social Influence

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### Gerben van Kleef

Gerben A. Van Kleef, University of Amsterdam

