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What Drives the Smile and the Tear: Why Women Are More Emotionally Expressive Than Men

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Abstract

In this article we examine gender differences in nonverbal expressiveness, with a particular focus on crying and smiling. We show that women cry and smile more as well as show more facial expressiveness in general, but that the size of this gender difference varies with the social and emotional context. We interpret this variation within a contextual framework (see also Brody & Hall, 2008; Deaux & Major, 1987; LaFrance, Hecht, & Paluck, 2003). More specifically, we distinguish three factors that predict the size of gender differences in emotional expressiveness: gender-specific norms, social role and situational constraints, and emotional intensity. These factors interact in different ways for smiling and crying.

Keywords

crying, faces, gender emotional expressiveness, smiling

The Nature of Gendered Expressiveness

A number of narrative reviews on sex differences in emotionality have converged on the conclusion that “The general claim that women are more emotional than men tells us more about our cultural stereotypes than about actual sex differences in emotions” (Fischer, 1993, p. 312; Kret & De Gelder, 2012; LaFrance & Banaji, 1992). Although reviews have concluded that research on sex differences in emotion presents an inconsistent picture, one pattern is reliable, namely that women are more emotionally expressive than men. These emotional expressivity differences could serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy for the stereotype that women are more emotional: Since women appear to be more expressive, they must be more emotional. Although men do express emotions, but are generally considered as less emotional, the concept of “emotionality” in particular seems to apply to strong emotional expressions and specifically to expressions that show one’s powerlessness or vulnerability, such as crying (Fischer, 1993; Shields, 1987). Moreover, since emotionality tends to be associated with weakness, powerlessness, uncontrollability, and impulsivity, such

inferred dispositions come also to be associated with women (e.g., Fischer, 1993; Fischer, Eagly, & Oosterwijk, 2013; Jansz, 2000; Shields, 1991).

In the more than two decades that have passed since these reviews, many more studies have been conducted on gender differences in emotional responding as well as on prevailing gender-specific norms and stereotypes associated with emotionality. The question is whether stereotypes and display rules have changed, and whether more recent studies on gender differences reflect this change. In the current article we discuss these stereotypes and review the current empirical evidence with regard to emotional expressiveness. We limit ourselves to gender differences in nonverbal behavior, specifically in crying, smiling, and general facial expressiveness because these are domains where we know there are strong norms (e.g., men should not cry) as well as many empirical studies.

We take a contextual perspective (see also Brody & Hall, 2008; Deaux & Major, 1987; Fischer & Evers, 2011; LaFrance et al., 2003) and examine gender differences in expressiveness

as a function of the changing social and emotional context and varying situational contingencies for emotional displays. We propose that three factors most likely predict the presence and size of gender differences: gender-specific norms, social role and situational constraints, and emotional intensity. Gender norms, which may vary with cultures or with age, are the more distal factors that prescribe how men and women should act (e.g., showing or suppressing one's emotions). Social role and situational constraints (e.g., Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Steffen, 1984) emphasize which goals are operating in a situation (e.g., a chief executive required to make a difficult decision, or a nurse empathizing with someone in pain). Finally, the intensity of emotions is important because intense emotions may override gender norms or social role constraints (e.g., grief at the loss of a friend). Our goal is to systematically examine these three factors and the relations between them in order to examine their effects on the size of gender differences in different aspects of emotional expressiveness.

Gender-Specific Emotion Norms

The well-known stereotype of the emotional woman tends not to be specific about which emotions women purportedly feel and express more than men. Recent studies however indicate that happiness, sadness, and fear are more typically associated with women, whereas anger and pride are more typically associated with men (Hess et al., 2000; Kelly & Hutson-Comeaux, 1999; Kring, 2000; Plant, Hyde, Keltner, & Devine, 2000; Shields, 1987; Weber & Wiedig-Allison, 2007). Some studies on the interpretation of emotions in men's or women's faces are consistent with these gender and specific emotion connections. Individuals are faster in detecting anger in male than in female faces, and in detecting happiness on female than on male faces (Becker, Kenrick, Neuberg, Blackwell, & Smith, 2007; Ohman, Juth, & Lundqvist, 2010). In addition, when the emotional expression is ambivalent, for example reflecting a blend of anger and sadness, observers tend to see more sadness in a female face and more anger in a male face (Plant, Kling, & Smith, 2004; also see Hess, Adams, & Kleck, 2005).

Stereotypes of course often contain a kernel of truth. In the case of specific emotions, gender stereotypes come close to men's and women's self-reported emotions in imagined situations. Hess et al. (2000) compared both gender stereotypical and self-perceptions of emotional expressions in a variety of situations, such as "someone learns that somebody close to him has been spreading negative rumors about him." Participants were then asked the percentage of men and women who would express nine different emotions (Study 1) in such a situation and how they themselves would react (Study 2). Although the gender stereotypes appeared to be similar to the self-perceptions, the stereotypical gender differences are larger than self-perceived gender differences as reflected in the different effect sizes. In particular, women reported a greater likelihood of expressing sadness (e.g., crying) and fear (e.g., withdrawing) in a variety of negative situations, whereas men reported expressing more anger (hitting), and contempt (staring or looking hard).

Stereotypes reflect descriptive norms but also generate prescriptive standards (Burgess & Borgida, 1999) about which emotions are seen as appropriate or desirable for whom. Historical research on the culture of emotion (see Stearns, 2008, for an overview) has shown that explicit discussions on emotional standards became more public in the 17th and 18th century, when changes in social and work circumstances resulted in changed ways of thinking about family relations, parent-child relations, work relations, and so on. Such emotion prescriptions have nearly always been different for men and women (see Lutz, 1990; Shields, 2002; Sturkenboom, 1998). During the last part of the 20th century however, there were indications that emotion norms in Western countries might be changing, and to have become less gender specific. Television programs began to show for the first time crying, loving, fearful, regretful, and anxious men. Such changes in media-generated emotion displays suggest that we may be witnessing a relaxation of gender-specific emotion norms. The general prescription of emotion suppression for men (Jansz, 2000) and emotion amplification for women may thus have morphed into more nuanced expectations, based what roles men and women adopt in particular contexts and on the specific events that elicited the emotional reaction (see also Labott, Martin, Eason, & Berkey, 1991). Indeed, Timmers, Fischer, and Manstead (2003) conducted a study in The Netherlands on gender-specific norms and expectations and found that whereas the explicit norms having to do with the appropriateness of some emotions (e.g., fear, sadness, shame) hardly differed for men and women, women were still expected to experience and express these emotions more than men. At this implicit level we can thus still distinguish gender-specific emotion norms along two dimensions: communality/care and dominance/power.

The communality/care norm stems from women's assumed primary role, namely that of care taking. Part of the positive dimension of this role specifies that women smile more, focus on fostering a positive social atmosphere, and on displaying enthusiasm, admiration, and love (see also Graham, Gentry, & Green, 1981; LaFrance, 1998; Stoppard & Gruchy, 1993). Although this has never been directly studied, we would expect on the basis of these implicit norms that women who do not smile would more likely be considered as unfriendly or asocial compared to men who do not smile. Thus, although no explicit norm prohibits men from displaying care-giving emotions, the relative underrepresentation of these affiliative displays by men may highlight the presence of a subtle gender norm. This norm would also influence emotion regulation. Simpson and Stroh (2004) for example found that whereas women managers suppressed negative and expressed positive emotions, men as managers showed the reverse pattern.

The second dimension relates to dominance and power and specifies that women be proscribed from displaying strong, dominant, or powerful emotions whereas men are prohibited from showing emotions that convey weakness, powerlessness, or competence. Men are expected to express emotions associated with dominance, power, and competence, especially in competitive contexts, whereas women are expected to display

powerless emotions like fear, sadness, and shame (Timmers et al., 2003). Indeed, male professionals who show anger are seen as having higher status compared to men expressing sadness, whereas the reverse is true for women (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008). This is also reflected in different expectations for and judgments of men and women crying at work, as shown in a study by Fischer et al. (2013). They found that the crying of men at work was judged more negatively and led to stronger inferences of emotionality than women's crying in the same situation. In other words, whereas explicit norms may have changed, the expression of powerless emotions still seems less problematic for women than for men.

Social Roles and Situational Contingencies

Although men are often proscribed from being too emotionally expressive and women from expressing negative emotions, men and women can occupy social roles that may modify, even overturn, these general rules. For example, gender norms for expressivity likely differ in more egalitarian compared to traditional relationships. Or consider the fact that norms for some roles in professional contexts may override gender norms because the priority in the latter is on carrying out some undertaking regardless of who is called upon to do it. In the next section, we review specific empirical evidence showing how social roles affect the presence and size of gender differences in crying and smiling. Both crying and smiling are emotional responses as well as social acts and thus have interpersonal consequences (Parkinson, Fischer, & Manstead, 2005). Social roles and goals may therefore influence the extent to which men and women show tears or smiles.

Crying. Various studies find that female adolescents and adults report that they cry more often than their male counterparts (Bekker & Vingerhoets, 2001; De Fruyt, 1997; Fischer, Rodriguez, van Vianen, & Manstead, 2004; Lombardo, Cretser, Lombardo, & Mathis, 1983; Lombardo, Cretser, & Roesch, 2001; van Tilburg, Unterberg, & Vingerhoets, 2002; Vingerhoets & Scheirs, 2000). This difference has already been found in self-reports from 11-year-old children (van Tilburg et al., 2002). These findings apply whether the study measures crying frequency (e.g., "How many times did you cry during the last month?"), crying proneness (e.g., "How likely are you to cry in the following situations?") (Jellesma & Vingerhoets, 2012; Vingerhoets & Becht, 1996) and ratings of crying intensity (Hess et al., 2000; Lombardo et al., 1983). When crying frequency and crying proneness are included in a single study, gender differences appear to be larger for crying proneness than crying frequency, at least in the case of adults (Peter, Vingerhoets, & van Heck, 2001; van Tilburg et al., 2002). This difference suggests that crying proneness measures are more influenced by gender-stereotypical norms or expectations.

Thus, the evidence aligns with the norm that men report less expressivity than women, but we should bear in mind that these studies are based on self-reports. The crucial question is whether this gender difference is stable across social contexts. Various

studies have found that both men and women report crying more when alone, but women report to cry more likely in the company of close friends or family than men, with the largest difference observed for a close male friend. This finding may support two different, yet not contradictory ideas: men may evaluate crying as more problematic and thus suppress their tears more than women when others are present (Lombardo et al., 2001; Williams & Morris, 1996), or women may be more inclined than men to let their tears run and to seek support from their closest friends.

Individual differences also moderate reports of crying. Focusing on sex role identification, Lombardo et al. (2001) had participants complete the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1974) and a questionnaire with several measures of crying. They found a significant interaction between sex role identification and gender, indicating that for both men and women, feminine and androgynous persons reported crying more than masculine individuals. Ross and Miroswky (1984) also examined married husbands' and wives' gender role attitudes and experiences with sadness and crying. Men reported to feel less likely to cry than women when sad and men who adhered to traditional gender role attitudes reported even less likelihood to cry when sad than less traditional men. For women on the other hand, only sadness, and not gender role was a significant predictor of reported crying. Thus, men's self-reports on crying are more determined by the adherence to specific crying norms, whereas women's reports on crying are less affected by norms and largely based on the intensity of their emotions.

However, gender roles do not always moderate sex differences in reports of crying as was shown in a cross-cultural study of 37 countries (Fischer et al., 2004). The researchers reasoned that real power differences between women and men would influence the likelihood of finding sex differences in expressivity. Specifically they predicted that gender differences in reported emotion expression would be smaller in countries where women have more power and status. The power and status variable was operationalized using GEM (Gender Empowerment Measure), which is a composite measure of the percentage of seats in parliament held by women, the percentage of administrators and managers who are women, the percentage of professional and technical workers who are women, and women's share of earned income in the country in question. Thus, the higher the GEM, the more status and power women have in a specific society. Whereas some measures, such as reported anger expression, showed the predicted interaction between GEM and gender, reports of crying were not predicted by gender at the societal level. Rather, there was a straightforward finding that women reported crying more than men.

While distal factors such as GEM, did not modulate gender differences in reported crying, more proximal social roles and/or situational constraints might affect variation in men's and women's reports of crying. In particular, if men and women occupy similar social roles, that might reduce gender differences in crying. However when crying proneness to different events was assessed, women reported more proneness overall than did men. Similarly, a cross-cultural study (Williams &

Morris, 1996) of likelihood of crying in British and Israeli men and women in different situations also found that women reported that they would cry more than men in nearly all situations. Yet, a significant interaction between situation and sex was also found. Work-related situations showed the largest sex difference, in line with the previously mentioned study by Hess et al. (2000). Lombardo et al. (2001) also found largest differences for conflict situations (someone yells at you, you have an argument with a loved one, you are angry), and problems at work.

As already alluded to, one concern with the forgoing studies on crying is that they are all based on retrospective self-reports, which are prone to gender-stereotyping (e.g., Robinson & Clore, 2002; Robinson, Johnson, & Shields, 1998). Given that crying is at the core of the stereotype of the emotional woman (Choti, Marston, Holston, & Hart, 1987), it is possible that women's and men's self-reports might exaggerate differences in crying. Men may be more reluctant to admit, or misremember crying episodes in comparison with women or women may overstate a measure like crying proneness (see also Bekker & Vingerhoets, 2001). In addition to such influences, there may also be a difference in how men and women define crying. Whereas women may report more instances of crying proneness, men have a higher threshold for affirming such experiences. Such different definitions may also further increase the overestimation by women and the underestimation by men.

In sum, gender differences in self-reported findings of crying are robust and suggest that there are also differences in actual crying. However, the size of this self-reported difference is affected by social roles and situational constraints that are likely to make the recollection or acknowledgement of crying different for men and women. As a consequence, men with traditional identities report to cry less than men with more feminine or androgynous identities (Jansz, 2000) and men report to cry most often when alone or with their partner. The crying incident matters as well, with the smallest gender difference in crying found when a loved one dies, and the largest difference in conflict situations. These findings suggest that when the intensity of emotional feelings is more similar, fewer gender differences will be found. With respect to the conflict context, we suggest that women appraise conflict situations more in terms of powerlessness and will cry even when the prevailing emotion is anger. This suggestion has not been examined empirically but it seems plausible that different emotions may elicit crying in men and women.

Smiling. Previous meta-analyses have shown that women on average smile more than men (Hall, 1984; Hall, Carter, & Horgan, 2000; LaFrance & Hecht, 2000; LaFrance et al., 2003). In addition, a recent study of smiling in children in the US from kindergarten through the 12th grade found that a sex difference in smiling emerged at about age 11 (Wondergem & Friedlmeier, 2012). In contrast with studies on crying, findings on smiling are generally based on observations of actual smiling behavior. The studies seem to reflect the presence of a general gender-specific norm that prescribes that women show more affiliative

and warm behavior, best manifested in a smile. Nonetheless the size of this gender difference depends on situational variation.

One situational variation is the presence of power differences. In the late 1970s Henley (1977) proposed that women smile more than men because of their low status relative to men, a proposal that became known as the *subordination hypothesis*. In fact, Henley argued that what looked like a basic sex difference in a host of nonverbal behaviors including smiling but also gazing, interpersonal closeness, being touched, and head nodding, stemmed rather from differences in dominance and power. In other words, women smiled more than men because women generally have less social power and status than men. Were they to have the same power as men, then theoretically the smiling difference would disappear.

Analogously, women are touched more than men because low-power people are touched more than higher power persons (Henley, 1977). Moreover, Henley contended that such behaviors not only reflect but also reinforce the power differences between men and women. Henley's subordination hypothesis has evoked as many debates as studies about the role of power in explaining sex differences in nonverbal behaviors such as smiling (and the empirical evidence to date is mixed; e.g., Hall, 2006; Hall, Coats, & Smith LeBeau, 2005; LaFrance & Hecht, 2000). In a meta-analysis on gender differences in smiling (LaFrance et al., 2003) power was considered as a potential moderator. Analysis showed that in situations where both men and women have high power or both have low power, gender differences in smiling are small, presumably because power imposes certain behaviors for whoever occupies a power-based role which has the effect of overriding gender roles. For example, male and female nurses or flight attendants may smile to an equal extent, irrespective of their sex. However, in situations of no clear power dynamics, for example, a meeting with colleagues, larger gender differences were found, presumably now because in the absence of specific power dictates, gender norms are likely to become more salient.

In the meta-analysis by LaFrance et al. (2003) several other moderators for the sex difference in smiling were examined. They found that certain contextual variations, such as the awareness of being observed or the presence of others, created the largest sex difference in smiling favoring women. Women smile more than men (alternatively men smile less than women) when they are aware that others could be watching them (e.g., presence of a video camera) than when they are unaware that others could be watching. Awareness of others watching presumably activates adherence to the gender norm. Another moderator was engagement with others, showing that gender differences were largest when individuals felt involved in an interaction. This was the case for real-life interactions, but even more when individuals were interacting with an imagined other, for example speaking to a camera.

On the other hand, when men and women occupy the same social roles such as a teacher, the size of gender differences was much smaller, just like in situations in which men and women have the same power. LaFrance et al. (2003) conclude from this analysis that the gender norm that women should smile is especially salient in situations in which one is not sure what to do

and where behavioral options are open (gender norms as safest option), or when one knows that one is being watched or evaluated (gender norms as obvious option).

The size of the sex difference in smiling also varies with culture and age. In some regions and groups there is little difference in smiling between women and men, for example in studies including British participants, whereas in studies including American participants, especially Caucasians, much larger gender differences in smiling are found (LaFrance et al., 2003). These gender differences across cultures indicate the presence of group-specific display rules. With respect to age, adolescents and young women smile much more than young men, but the sex difference begins to decrease after that, such that by middle age, the sex difference has become small, though still significant (LaFrance et al., 2003). The finding that sex differences are largest in teenagers and young adolescents may suggest the importance of gender norms, because during this period of life both men and women search for ways to impress potential romantic partners.

Emotional Intensity

The third factor in our framework accounting for why women are more emotionally expressive than men is the intensity of the emotion feeling itself. Emotional intensity may be reflected in greater crying and smiling by women. This may be especially true of crying where women describe feeling sad more than men. We would expect however that if men and women experienced the same highly intense emotions, then there would be less gender difference.

Studies taking into account the emotional situation that gives rise to crying show that strong sadness (as in the case of the death of a loved one) shows less gender difference than emotional situations that may give rise to more gender-specific experiences. Conflict situations for example show large gender differences in crying (Lombardo, Cretser, & Roesch, 2001), perhaps because a conflict may not only give rise to anger, but also to other feelings, such as powerlessness. Women may feel more powerless during conflicts and therefore may report crying more often when experiencing these emotions than men. This suggests that less extreme situations are more likely to increase the size of the gender difference. In addition, there is also abundant evidence that women report more empathy relative to men (e.g., Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004; Hoffman, 1977; Wheelwright et al., 2006), which may explain why they are more likely to cry when reading books, or watching movies or television (Lombardo et al., 2001), or seeing others cry.

In the case of smiling however, the relationship between emotional intensity and smiling is different. For women, there is lower correlation between smiling and the intensity of positive emotions than is the case for men, presumably because women are more likely than men to smile for a variety of reasons other than positive emotion. For example, especially negative intense emotions may increase gender differences in smiling (LaFrance et al., 2003), because it is in those situations of social tension that women are expected to do the emotion work to calm or

soothe others (Hochschild, 1983). However, with some specific negative emotions men have been found to smile more than women. For example, where disgust or distress is elicited by the presence of disgusting images men's smiling at the horror may signal a kind of stoicism or composure. Ansfield (2007) for example found that men reported more negative affect than women while viewing very distressing videos while they also smiled more, especially when others were present. In such situations, men may want to hide their stress more than women and this larger effort to regulate their stress may result in more smiling by men than women.

Other Facial Expressivity

Many studies show evidence that women's emotions are more accurately decoded than those expressed by men (see Hall, 1984; Thompson & Voyer, in press; Wagner, MacDonald, & Manstead, 1986). The assumption has been that this is due to women's greater facial expressivity, which makes it easier to infer the correct emotion. Indeed, Hall's (1984) meta-analysis of gender differences in facial expressions found evidence for this in locating 12 studies that all showed women to have stronger facial and gestural expressions than men.

Different methodologies have been used in studying sex differences in facial expressiveness. One involves instructing participants to imagine emotional situations, and measures are taken of their facial expressions during the imagery task. For example, Schwartz, Brown, and Ahern (1980) found that women showed stronger zygomaticus, corrugator, and frontalis activity than men when imagining happy, sad, angry, and fearful situations respectively. In addition, they also reported feeling these emotions more intensely, and their feelings and faces were more strongly correlated than in the case of men. The stronger facial expressiveness can therefore be seen as the result of their more intense emotions.

A second method has been to measure facial activity while participants watch emotional slides or film segments. The advantage of this method is that the stimuli are more standardized. For example, Kring and Gordon (1998) found that women reacted with stronger positive and negative facial reactions than men while watching six emotionally different film clips, whereas no sex differences in emotional experiences were reported. In addition, Thunberg and Dimberg (2000) found that women showed more corrugator activity when watching snakes than did men, whereas women and men rated the snakes as equally unpleasant (but see Vrana & Rollock, 2002).

Another variation has been to use emotional faces (either photos or videos) as stimuli. This research specifically examines to what degree observers show the same facial expressions as those they observe, a process called emotional mimicry. Again, most but not all of these studies show greater responsiveness by women (e.g., Dimberg & Lundquist, 1990; Sonnybörjström, Jönsson, & Svensson, 2008), depending on the type of emotion and the social nature of the signal. One study in which gaze direction and emotion was manipulated showed that women show less frowning (corrugator) in reaction to a male

angry frown than do men, more sadness (depressor) in reaction to sad faces than men, and more frontalis when exposed to averted fear faces than men (Soussignan et al., 2013). One last method is the study of emotional expressivity in real life (e.g., saying farewell at airports, or winning a gold medal during the Olympic Games). For example, Tracy and Matsumoto (2012) coded pride and shame displays by blind and sighted athletes and did not find sex differences.

In conclusion, when differences are found, women generally show stronger facial expressiveness. These more intense displays have sometimes been found to be correlated with women's more intense feelings, however, in studies where standardized stimuli were used, and no differences in reported emotions were found, sex differences in facial expressiveness still occurred. Whether women's stronger facial displays are the result of specific gendered contexts remains a question for now. We may speculate that exposure to emotional slides, films, or faces elicits stronger empathizing in women than in men, which may explain the greater likelihood of women's stronger emotional expressiveness. More studies of spontaneous expressions, while also measuring the appraisals of the emotional stimuli, may provide a more conclusive answer to this question.

Conclusion

The evidence reviewed here suggests that women cry and smile more and overall show more facial expressiveness than men. Based on these (partly self-report) data, we may thus draw the conclusion that women indeed are more emotionally expressive. We should be careful with this conclusion, however. First, part of these studies are based on self-reports that may show a gender bias, and second, gender differences may be exaggerated because of a bias towards studies that find significant gender differences (the so-called file-drawer problem). It is thus difficult to assess how large these gender differences really are. We therefore do not want to focus on the size of these gender differences, but rather on the variation in size as determined by various factors in the social and emotional context. Thus, the question is not so much whether, but why and to what extent these gender differences occur in some contexts and not or less in others.

We have proposed three factors that help to explain this variation. Indeed, the evidence suggests that all factors help to explain gender differences in emotional expressiveness, however, not in all contexts. The first factor relates to gender norms. There is some evidence that explicit norms relating to gender, smiling, and crying have disappeared (Timmers et al., 2003), but there still are expectations that form the implicit norms by which gender inappropriate behavior of men and women is sanctioned (see also Warner & Shields, 2007). The implicit norms prescribe that women should smile, whereas men need not, and that men should not cry, whereas women are allowed to.

Gender norms are most influential in ambiguous situations and may become less influential when there are social role or situational constraints, which is the second factor we discussed. When a situation provides clear social roles, this may override gender norms. Individuals in professional roles, like a nurse, a

police officer, or the prime minister, should express themselves according to the requirements of this role, which are in principle similar for men and women. Social roles that are demanding or provide clear norms thus decrease the size of gender differences in emotional expressiveness. The influence of gender norms can also be limited by the intensity of emotions, which is the third factor we considered. The stronger the emotion, the stronger the expression and the less salient gender norms become. Intense grief leads to crying in both men and women, but less intense or more ambiguous situations may give rise to emotions of different intensity in men and women and thus increase the size of the gender difference. In the same vein, intense joy results in laughter in both sexes, whereas low intense amusement may lead to gender differences.

Interestingly, emotional intensity interacts in a different way with gender norms and situational constraints for smiling and crying. For women, but less so for men, stronger emotional intensity is related to crying and thus decreases the impact of gender norms. Women seem to cry when they feel sad, angry, self-pity, powerless, or moved, whereas men mostly report to cry when sad. Men's self-reports on crying may be more dictated by gender-specific norms, however, men may also interpret emotional situations differently from women, leading to less crying. On the basis of the evidence to date we cannot draw firm conclusions on this matter. In the case of smiling, emotional intensity and gender norms seem differently related. In this case, men's positive and negative emotions are more strongly correlated with smiling, whereas women's emotions seem more influenced by the social context, that is, gender norms and social goals. The more frequent smiling and crying by women thus may be determined by a different interplay of emotional intensity and situational and social role constraints.

Whereas we argue that there is variation in gender differences in expressiveness due to emotional and social circumstances, the findings reviewed in this article do explain why women are referred to as the emotional sex. Even though women do not always feel more emotions, they often express more, often with their faces, which is then interpreted as support for women's greater emotionality (see also Barrett & Bliss-Moreau, 2009). This difference in emotional expressiveness is not necessarily a natural difference, but a functional difference in the social relationships in which men and women engage. Women may want to share powerlessness or stress with their tears, or signal support or affiliation with their smiles more than men. This would make women's expressiveness functional, at least in contexts where affiliation is important and the display of powerlessness no problem. Men's inexpressivity may often be functional as well, however, especially in competitive or hierarchical relations. In other types of relations (more egalitarian or affiliative), this seems less functional, which may also be the reason why men smile and cry more in affiliative than in competitive contexts.

Finally, we should acknowledge that this is not a complete review of gender differences in expressiveness focusing as we did on facial expressions. There are other channels in which emotions are expressed. In addition, most of the evidence we cite is based on research with White, young, highly educated men and women and the few studies including other groups

have sometimes shown different results. Such emphasis in subject selection means that the literature often fails to pay attention to the importance of intersectionality, that is, that individuals often reflect multiple social categories (e.g., young Black female). We therefore need to be mindful that although White women are taken as prototypical of their gender just as Black men are taken as prototypical of their race, women can be other than White (Thomas, Dovidio & West, in press).

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