

Finding Culturally (In)Dependent Levels of Self-Representation: The Case of Emotions

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In this project the philosophical differentiation between non-conceptual, conceptual, and propositional self-representations will be applied to refine the definition of self-construals as used in cross-cultural and social psychology. The psychological distinction between independent and interdependent self-construals originates from cross-cultural differences and has been shown to differentially impact individual cognition and behaviour. The different types of self-construals will be examined for the domain of emotions, referring to the distinction between basic universal emotions like fear, and on secondary cognitive emotions like shame, which presuppose certain cognitive capacities such as a concept of the self. The main questions will be (a) which particular aspects of emotion processing are non-propositional and which aspects are affected by cultural affiliation? (b) Are there differences in the emotions themselves in respect to different levels of representation, such that secondary cognitive emotions are culturally variant, while basic emotions are not? Altogether it is planned to revise the conception of the self from a multidisciplinary perspective including the development of new experimental paradigms.

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