

AFFECTIVE SOCIETIES

SFB Affective Societies

Affective Societies – A Glossary

Register of Central Working Concepts

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Affective Societies – A Glossary

Register of Central Working Concepts

The CRC is studying processes of social and societal change from the perspective of research on affectivity and emotions. This calls for a terminology that is not only compatible with all the disciplines participating in the CRC and their different traditions but also pays tribute to the idea of the constant change and processuality of the phenomena in question. Therefore, four semantic trends were particularly relevant when formulating working concepts for the CRC: (1) recourse to a semantics of the “theatrical” that emphasizes the performative, mediatized, and agency-like character of all human conduct; (2) the application of a *semantics of relationality* that shifts the focus from individual psychological aspects to interdependencies and interactions; (3) the use of a *semantics of processuality* that avoids the appearance of stability and permanence and accentuates the dynamic nature of affectivity instead; and (4) a preference for semantics that express instances of transgression and linkage and thereby the change in existing systems and structures without in any way denying the continuing influence and importance of these systems and structures (e.g., transnationalism, transmigration, transculturality).

The following list is not conceived as a closed dictionary of terms with binding definitions. It is far more an open catalogue of the main concepts and their contexts developed jointly when preparing the CRC, and it will be continuously developed throughout the cooperative work in the CRC. The focus is not on final definitions, but on conciseness and compatibility within the broader interdisciplinary context. These are terms that can become a focus of research questions themselves and in which *work on the concept* is not complete but has to be viewed as work in progress. As an instrument of internal communication, the register remains open for discussions, additions, and corrections. It will become an institutional part of the Theories and Methods Workshop and will be made available for continuous further development by all academics participating in the CRC during the first period of funding.

Actor

When appropriate, the CRC gives preference to the theoretically open concept of *actors* compared to that of subjects, persons, individuals, and the like. It thereby acknowledges a conceptualization of its research subjects as interacting and acting beings. The focus on actors represents an important advance on classical, experience-oriented emotion concepts insofar as right from the start, the CRC conceives actors in their fundamentally interactive relationships with others. The term actor is closely associated with the theater. However, this in no way denies the passive, receptive, and bodily feeling dimensions of subjectivity or declares them to be negligible. It construes these phenomena explicitly with regard to action options as *resonance phenomena* (→ *Resonance*) and in terms of concepts such as → *Performance* or the staging of an → *Emotion repertoire*. In addition, actors are no longer conceived exclusively against the background of the familiar spaces and places to which they belong. Attention is focused specifically on those instances in which they are either acting in other → *Lifeworlds* with other feeling rules, are confronted with rapid transformations within their own lifeworlds, or come into contact with concepts, symbols, and practices circulating in other emotion repertoires. Actors are accordingly no longer just studied in terms of their *embeddedness*, but with regard to the notoriously less well studied dimension of *disembedding* (→ *Belonging*). This makes it possible to study the effects of the *enculturation* of actors up to any instance of crisis.

Affect, Affectivity

Affect, or affectivity, is the dynamic, relational process that brings various actors into a relationship with each other. Affections [*Affizierungen*] tend to occur *between* actors rather than *within* them, forming an entanglement of affecting and being-affected in a particular setting. Due to this dynamic-relational character, affect has to be distinguished from individual emotional states (→ *Emotion*). For one, affectivity is essentially a temporal sequence, not a static, snapshot-like state. Moreover, unlike an emotion, a feeling, or a mood, affectivity is an as of yet indeterminate unfolding of forces, which is experienced primarily in terms of its *intensity*. Before being directed into culturally or discursively established channels in which they can be acted out in a specific way, affections are not yet measured in terms of their directionality, evaluation, or articulation. This is also why they evade specific forms of reflective representation. With these characteristics, affect can be conceived in some ways as the “central ingredient” of emotions and other individually perceived phenomena. At this, affectivity is neither independent from enculturation and emotion repertoires, nor does it merge with them completely.

It may appear as a *felt difference* to what had existed before (past experiences, actions, interactions, meanings, embeddedness). As such an intensive difference, affect can elicit further and also socially discernible changes through intensifying resonance.

This conception of affectivity provides access to a level of emotionality beyond its embeddedness in the individual and before any structuring of it through discourse or norms. Because of its dynamic, relational, constantly changing, and interactive nature, which frequently unfolds on the microscale of “miniscule” social interactions, this level is a blind spot in research. With the topic → *Movement*, the CRC is studying paradigmatic situations involving such affective differences in their complex temporal unfolding.

Belonging and Affiliation

Affiliation describes a long-term attachment that is nonetheless exposed to various changes—an attachment between individuals and collectives, individuals and places, or collectives and places. As a formal term, affiliation is initially open and not qualified more precisely or fixed to a specific cause. The affective dimension of affiliation, which expresses itself as a *feeling of affiliation, affinity, or belonging*, has generally been blanked out from academic investigation. However, it represents a central research interest in the CRC. Affiliation and belonging are contrasting aspects of the same concept, but they are not interchangeable: Generally, affiliation describes a form of membership and the accompanying interaction between actors and institutions (languages, practices, repertoires) in affiliation spaces (the family, peers, preschools, schools, clubs, occupational fields, etc.) that each have their own rules, rights, and duties. Belonging, in contrast, emphasizes the emotional dimension that, however, does not just *accompany* the phenomenon but also decisively *co-constructs* it. Where appropriate, affiliation is also the concept from which legal claims (on and by the person concerned) can be derived. *Belonging*, in contrast, is tied more strongly to the emotional, social, and also moral identification of a person. It is aligned with formal affiliations but can also deviate from these and come into conflict with them (although such differences are always still related to these formal affiliations). The CRC uses this in order to study affiliation in its moment of crisis that can emerge as a result of the blurring and dissolution of borders, symbolic boundaries, concepts, and practices. Where affiliation is at issue, the complex intertwining of society and community has to be a central focus of research.

Emotion, Emotion Concept

The terms “emotion,” → *Affect*, → *Feeling*, and mood are used in highly different ways depending on the specific discipline, its traditions, and its schools of theory. It cannot be traced back to an all-encompassing fundamental understanding, and the different concepts cannot simply be translated one into the other. Generally, “*feeling*” describes the subjective experience dimension of an affect, whereas “*emotion*” points to its culturally shaped conceptualization. The CRC has agreed on one definition that focuses on the dimension of the relationality of affectivity on all levels: The CRC does not reduce emotions to physiological sensations, but describes them as the juxtaposition of sensations and *complex concepts* that elicit, influence, and channel these sensations. Forms of expression, behaviors, and culturally embedded classifications, understandings and stocks of knowledge all enter into these concepts. This is how emotions combine to form collectively shared but individually available → *Emotion repertoires*. On the one hand, this conceptual understanding of emotions makes it possible to assign an influence of handed down traditions and forms of expression on the actual experience of emotions itself. Hence, a decisive change to an emotion repertoire leads to a just as decisive change to emotional practices and experiences. On the other hand, it also makes it possible to understand emotions beyond and independent from the individual. This enables the CRC to pursue its goal of examining the effects of the mobility of both actors *and* repertoires.

Emotion Repertoire

Repertoire (from the Latin *repertorium*, “inventory, catalogue, or summary”) describes the works that an individual artist, a group of travelling actors, or a theater can perform ad hoc at any time. It applies basically for all the performing arts. The CRC is transferring this term to the ability to produce affective experience not in the sense of a metaphor, but with the intention of developing a concept similar to the sociolinguistic terminus technicus of a *language repertoire* (and a corresponding *repertoire community*). The semantic reference to theater makes it possible to describe emotions explicitly as stagings of emotional meanings in relation to different social spaces and scenarios. This is not to deny the dimension of the experience of emotions: It is simply an orientation toward their → *Performance* and *mediality*. Through their mediation, emotion repertoires can spread, change, and penetrate into other → *Feeling systems* independently from their actors. This also leads to the formation of a genre-specific handed down form of expression that can circulate independently from immediate feeling and action as a mediatized → *Pathosformel*. The concept of *emotion repertoire* is a broad working concept. It includes not only concepts of *discrete emotions* but also verbal and nonverbal *expression*

rules and *expression forms, practices* in which these rules are acted out, and the modes of bodily *experience* and the *subjectification effects* that these repertoires have on individual actors and collectives. The term repertoire acts not only on the level of individuals but also on that of the collective as well as on that of institutions. The CRC is not pitting these levels against each other, but aiming specifically to analyze the many different ways in which they converge and influence each other reciprocally.

Feeling

Even though the CRC follows the usual differentiation of feelings, → *Affects*, and → *Emotions*, it needs to be pointed out expressly that they merge together and form a correlating conceptual field in which what they share is not the individualistic but the relational, situational, and procedural thrust of the entire CRC. As a collective term for all *felt* experiences, feeling is certainly the broadest term in this semantic field. In the terminology of the CRC, feelings accordingly describe the *subjective, bodily experience* of a specific affective relational connectedness with one's surroundings: for example, the experienced feeling of being excluded from a group. These are not only long-term dispositional feeling orientations (permanent feeling of exclusion) but also situational → *Immersive* feelings (e.g., the spontaneous and temporary community that forms at sport events).

Gefühlsbildung (formation of feeling)

The German term *Gefühlsbildung* (roughly translated as formation of feeling) plays with the threefold semantics of *Bildung* (as educating, taking form, and proceeding to emerge) and transfers these to the emergence and stabilization of → *Emotion repertoires*. Hence, *Gefühlsbildung* includes both explicit rules and implicit processes in cultural practices and in interpersonal interactions — both institutional pressure from without and the individual action readiness of the actor from within. *Gefühlsbildung* takes place in the interplay between the generations in the lifeworld arenas—in families, schools, and peer groups—and proves to be neither stringent indoctrination nor purely contingent molding. On the one side, it is open to new influences, be these through migration or through confrontation with circulating emotion repertoires; on the other hand, it also provides continuity. This ties *Gefühlsbildung* to a process-related semantics corresponding to the ideas on → *Movement* in the CRC. The CRC hypothesizes that it is possible to profitably examine processes of change and mobility effects by looking at feeling formation processes, how they master transformations, or how they fail and result in conflict.

Immersion

Immersion in the sense of, for example, the full-body baptism practiced by some Christian sects, always addresses the process, the accompanying experience, and the effect obtained. The term *immersion* (*immersive*) has received a lot of attention in education, film and theater studies, and research on virtual worlds. It describes the (completely) absorbed involvement in (artificial) worlds or sign systems. Immersive learning procedures in language acquisition, for example, are based on the idea that a foreign language can be learned better, faster, and, above all, more sustainably in the corresponding environment because this imitates natural language acquisition. Immersive language acquisition is accordingly a frequently applied or naturally occurring phenomenon, especially in multilingual regions or in the case of migration. Particularly in film and theater studies, this process is transferred to the conditions of reception. The description of virtual worlds or *immersive theater* reveals further intensifications when immersion is linked to interactivity, and the affect experienced becomes a crucial part of the action in the performance. The immersion itself is assigned an affective and therefore desirable quality here. It can also be used to define affective → *Resonance phenomena* more closely. *Immersive theater* and the movie screen thus serve as models for a relational and performative understanding of affect that is available as a theoretical concept for the CRC as a whole (“*affective societies in miniature*”).

Lifeworld

Since having been coined by the phenomenologist Husserl, the lifeworld concept has been regularly invoked to highlight the prereflective dimension of the social, cultural, and affective embedding of actors in their environment. Moreover, the method of lifeworld analysis has also become established in sociology (since Alfred Schütz) where it positions itself between phenomenological philosophy and its interest in the egological aspects of the lifeworld and the possibility of being able to study its structures empirically. Therefore, the expressions lifeworld and of the lifeworld [*lebensweltlich*] explicitly present the individual perspective of actors, refer to them, or even speak from their perspective. The fact that the affectivity to be found in lifeworlds has hardly been analyzed up to now is an even clearer indication of the need for the CRC to address this topic. The CRC emphasizes the role of affectivity in the construction of and embeddedness in lifeworlds. This revises the individualistic lifeworld conception that still dominates parts of phenomenology and replaces it with the fundamentally relational paradigm of the CRC. This reveals the increased pressure on local lifeworlds through global influences and the blurring of borders. Not only does migration to new lifeworlds involve an affective effort for the individual actor; it also places pressure on the coherence and implicitness of the

lifeworlds themselves. Then it is precisely that which is essential to a lifeworld—its intuitive accessibility and unquestioned significance—that experiences a crisis. A further line of research in the CRC is not to conceive this crisis of the lifeworld purely *ex negativo* as the collapse of “ontological certainty” (Giddens), but to work out the new experiences of resonance and dissonance (well-being, familiarity, alienation, lack of orientation, etc.) as the positive contents of a *trans-lifeworld* or *multi-lifeworld* form of existence within the framework of *affective societies*.

Media, Medial Spaces, Mediatization

The terms medium/media have attracted a great deal of attention in recent decades. This has led to the generation of a relatively broad spectrum of meanings that cannot be reported here. Nonetheless, two fundamental applications can be distinguished: First, medium as a *functional* term for a means of communication, by which almost everything can be a medium for something else (paper, audiotape, messengers); and second an *institutional* media concept (“the media”) as a collective term for established media shared by many (Internet, television, and literature). In addition, the heading *mediatization* is used (partly already since the 1930s) to describe the change in direct social relationships through media. These effects of the mediatization of lifeworlds are central, insofar as a key hypothesis of the CRC is that → *Emotion repertoires* with their symbols and practices circulate globally in mediatized form, penetrate other emotion systems, and thereby ensure a continuous hybridization, change, and conflictual tension in local → *Orders of feeling*. The Internet acquires a particular role in this not only as a relatively new medium but also as one whose impact can scarcely be overestimated because of its almost global reach, unprecedented interactivity, practical relevance to life, and high level of simultaneity. This applies particularly to all those issues that circle around the effects of mobility (→ *Movement*) and the breakdown of borders.

Movement, Dynamics, Mobility

Movement is a broad concept covering a change of place (in physics) just as much as the collective behavior of actors (social movement) or the bodily activity of an individual person or group (mobility, migration). With movement and being moved, the CRC is not addressing either of these phenomena alone, but a broad research perspective. This perspective ranges from phenomena such as migration, the circulation of → *Emotion repertoires*, and social movements, to being moved subjectively as a consonance or dissonance effect of being affected, macroscopic mobilities (of actors or repertoires), or microscopic dynamics within these mobilities. The focus on movement is inspired by the etymology of emotions (*e-motio*) itself. This gives

the CRC a clear, general orientation for its research: from state to process, from subjective sensation to relational dynamic, from habitualization to change, from receptivity to performance, and from places to routes. The marked inclusion of → *Media* in the CRC in this context does not just come from an interdisciplinary interest. It is far more the case that the focus is on media as a central conduit of movement and mobility. In addition, media are no longer assigned merely the function of representation, but, above all, that of the formalized storing of movement as well (→ *Pathosformel*). This is how the CRC is extending research on affectivity meaningfully to include the mobility research that is long-established in the social sciences and cultural studies and to enhance these in turn through the expertise available from research on the emotions.

Orders of Feeling, Feeling Rules

If orders of feeling are conceived in relation to the concepts of symbolic or normative orders, they refer to orders in which feelings are conceived discursively and can be, or are allowed to be, articulated by means of, for example, explicit feeling rules. An additional aspect is the (mostly culture-specific) occurrence of norms and sanctions related to feelings, the possibilities of expressing these norms, and the accompanying actions and practices (e.g., in the sense of emotion work or emotion regulation). A dominant order of feeling in a society or even just one that is purported to be dominant normatively regulates not only the situational adequacy but also the general hierarchy and agreed-upon valuation of feelings and the possibilities of articulating them as well as the ways in which their valuation and evaluation is embedded institutionally (e.g., in the role of affectivity in case law). The CRC assumes that orders of feeling go beyond mere “inscriptions,” have strong affective effects themselves, evoke → *Affiliation*, and are thereby in turn themselves susceptible to affective resonances and transformation processes.

Pathosformel (pathos formula)

Pathosformel is a term introduced by the German cultural historian Aby Warburg (1866–1929) to describe a *concise expressive gesture*. It has had a strong influence particularly in art history and cultural studies. The origins of the term are twofold: Darwin’s view of the continuity of expression in human beings and animals as well as Nietzsche’s theory on the conflict between the Apollonian and the Dionysian. For Warburg, *Pathosformel* is oriented very closely toward primal bodily affects such as intoxication, ecstasy, pain, and the like, and it appears as their superlative (e.g., *highest arousal*, *deepest contemplation*). The concept’s structural extension to all affect phenomena has emerged only through its reception by other scholars. Warburg saw

these → *Affects* as being *formalized* historically in objects of art. This formalization can freeze a movement process (→ *Movement*) as a “dynamogram” and thereby make it accessible and transferable. However, Warburg’s formula is *not* assigned the same inflexibility as mathematical formulas, but is an expression of the changing interference between stored (formalized) affective energy and its forms of cultural dissemination. Hence, the *Pathosformel* not only reveals a long history of being handed down by tradition, but can also shape this history dynamically. It is precisely this dynamic formalization idea that makes the *Pathosformel* interesting for the CRC: As a formalization, a *Pathosformel* enables the emotion repertoire to circulate *independently* from its individual bearers. Warburg’s theory is at its most speculative in the idea of an *energetic inversion*, through which the *Pathosformel* can animate its observer to perform a *reenactment* (→ *Performance*). It is not just the observer who assimilates the images; the images themselves approach the observer actively and in an activating way. This still unilluminated part of Warburg’s theory can attain a new validity through the conceptual work of the CRC on resonance phenomena.

Performance / Reenactment

Performance is used theoretically to describe speech acts (promises, vows, insults), stagings (of theatrical plays or ritual prescriptions), mediatizations (materialization of messages through writing and pictures), the acquisition of embodiments (e.g., of normative gender roles), and even acts of reception (e.g., when reading intensely). Basically, however, it can be used to refer to all types of action and, according to a premise of the CRC, it also has to be extended to affective action. Hence, performance is an ambiguous concept right from the start. It circles around a problem that is common (with, in each case, a slightly different meaning) to the philosophy of language (since Austin and Searle), theater studies, social anthropology, and media studies: Performance generates a simultaneity of something symbolic and a performing practice or a *performative act*, in which this something symbolic is both constituted and realized bodily. This is how an iterative performance guarantees a stable new use of the symbol across time that is neither fixed nor purely contingent. Particularly as repeated *reenactment*, performance is both a stabilizer of emotion repertoires (through restaging) and a possible destabilizer through (minimal) deviations, situational variation, or subversive acts. Up to now, the transformative power of performance and *reenactment* has been explained conceptually only through (random or purposeful) deviations in iteration. At this point, the CRC is meaningfully extending the perfor-

mance concept by integrating it into its model of relational affective resonance. The performance and the restaging of repertoires have to be understood, in turn, as part of a relational resonance process of reciprocally affecting and being affected.

(Affective) Resonance

Resonance (consonance/dissonance) is a term used originally in physics to describe a nonrandom correlation between two moving systems (e.g., two strings on a guitar or one string and the sound box of the guitar). Affective resonance correspondingly means the mutual production, amplification, and maintenance of affect as well as the stabilization or destabilization of an affective link between individual actors and collectives within the resonance space of a society. Resonance is a central concept for assessing → *Movement* and reciprocal change. This is why it has also received much attention in the study of dance and in the social anthropological theory of ritual. However, neither of these fields has really explained what causes it. The concept of resonance in the CRC accordingly does not negate its origins in physics, and it claims more than a merely metaphorical resonance (between individuals and their environment) as found in, for example, the poetic description of communing with nature. However, when using this term, the CRC does not commit itself to a premature naturalization or even physicalization of emotionality. Instead, it transfers the most important structural properties of physical resonance to the domain of social interaction: In resonance, moving and being moved become interlocked in a specific relational event. Resonance accordingly reveals an element of temporality that the CRC adopts through its focus on processes and movement. Resonance should then not be conceived without the dimension of experience; the entanglement of moving and being moved is also an entanglement of movement and experience. Accordingly, the concept of resonance encompasses both: the relation between two systems and the experiential quality of this relation. The conceptualization of affectivity as interpersonal resonance therefore emphasizes the holistic nature of a phenomenon together with its interactions that is more than just the product of adding together the affects of individual actors.

Social Collectives

The CRC defines a social collective initially in an atheoretical way as an unspecific set of actors who come together *without* the necessary precondition of formal membership (e.g., in the form of citizenship). Hence, the social collective is a fuzzy term for a social formation positioned between the individual, the community, and society that can encompass different associative forms, from the established local small group across translocal and virtual communities and

social movements up to comparatively anonymous associations, organizations, and cooperative relationships. The criteria for the formation of social collectives may be either ascriptive (e.g., gender, ethnicity) or acquired (e.g., education level) features, shared interests, ideologies, practices, or values. A precondition for the presence of a social collective in the sense applied here is an at least vague awareness of → *Belonging and Affiliation* that feeds, for example, situational affective community formation or results in more permanent “feeling collectives”. However, affective dissonances in and between social collectives can also result. What is particularly significant for the CRC is that, on the one hand, collectives reveal a tendency toward social closure, and, on the other hand, they can be understood as collective actors. Nonetheless, the CRC assumes that these relationships, like the characteristics of social collectives themselves, change through increasing mobility and the dissolution of borders and prove to be possible sources of tension and conflict, but also—as in the case of *online communities*—of unexpected transnational coalitions.