

Introduction to the Special Issue On Computational Modelling of Emotion

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EMOTIONS play a pervasive role in personal, social, and professional life. As artificially intelligent systems become pervasive in our lives, it is important that these systems are able to understand emotion in humans and simulate the function of emotion to be effective in their interactions with people. Computational models of emotion contribute towards this goal by, on the one hand, serving as a means to test emotion theories and help understand the function of emotion and, on the other, as the end in itself by simulating appropriate emotion and its downstream consequences – such as expressions of emotion – in computational agents. This special issue presents a critical overview of this cross-disciplinary field, with contributions from some of the leading scholars in cognitive psychology and affective computing, focusing both on theory and practice.

In the first article, Klaus Scherer summarizes the requirements for a computational model of emotion drawing on prevalent emotion theories, in particular, appraisal theories. Scherer emphasizes the necessity of modeling all components of emotion – cognitive appraisal, physiological responses, action tendencies, and expressive behavior – and the dynamic properties of emotion as it unfolds in time. Ruth Aylett and colleagues, in the second article, build on their comprehensive computational model – FATiMA – that implements many of these requirements. In their article, they look at emotion expressions as social signals, emphasizing that expressive behavior is not a mere reflection of internal state but often is modified based on social context – e.g., suppressing emotion when an unwelcome birthday present is received. They advocate for and integrate a theory-of-mind component into their computational model.

Historically, affective computing has tended to focus on theory-driven models, such as FATiMA, to model emotion; however, recent times have seen increasing success of data-driven deep learning models in other fields of artificial intelligence (a point Scherer also makes). Desmond Ong and colleagues, in the third article, propose a practical solution for

integrating theory- and data-driven models: probabilistic programming. They begin by reviewing recent work using Bayesian modeling that capture intuitive theories relating situations, mental states (e.g., appraisals), and emotion. They note some of the limitations with the Bayesian approach (e.g., representing dynamic aspects of emotion), and propose probabilistic programming languages as a solution for these specific limitations and, more broadly, for modular computational models of emotion. Finally, they summarize a useful collection of tools and existent technology that support probabilistic programming and integration with modern machine learning frameworks.

To build the kind of general-purpose artificial intelligence that succeeds in dynamic domains, it is insufficient to have a computational model of emotion; integration with broader models of the agent's sense-think-act cycle is needed. To accomplish this, we can draw inspiration from research in cognitive psychology that seeks to build general models of the human mind. In this tradition, in the fourth article, Christopher Dancy builds on Panksepp's empathy model to propose a cognitive model integrating affect with lower-level physiology (e.g., hunger and thirst) and higher-level cognition (e.g., the effects of stress on memory). In complementary fashion, in the fifth article, Amir Moye and Marieke van Vugt propose a cognitive model for focused attention and meditation that can serve as the basis for a more general model of emotion regulation. Methodologically, both articles build on extensions of the ACT-R unified cognitive framework – ACT-R/ Φ and Prims, respectively – which is well-established in cognitive psychology but may be less familiar to affective computing researchers.

The last two articles focus on one important and representative domain: human-robot interaction. The last decade has seen growing interest in robots that are able to navigate complex social environments – e.g., elderly care – which require a certain level of emotional sophistication. Lola Cañamero, in the sixth article, surveys research on models of emotion in robots, organizing this literature according to the underlying theoretical framework and the focus on general emotion principles. Finally, in the seventh article, Joost Broekens and Mohamed Chetouani address the important challenge of increasing transparency in robots. Researchers tend to agree that successful adoption of artificially intelligent systems require users to be able to understand and trust the actions performed by the system. Broekens and Chetouani propose using appropriate emotion expression to increase the transparency of a reinforcement learning robot by virtue of exposing the internal state of the

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Digital Object Identifier no. 10.1109/TAFFC.2021.3073214

algorithms through the expressions (e.g., surprise when an unexpected transition occurs).

The Guest Editors would like to express their gratitude to the reviewers for their time and effort in providing valuable feedback to the authors. They also offer their sincere appreciation to the IEEE Transactions of Affective Computing editorial board for the opportunity to put together this special issue.



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Dean Petters is currently a senior lecturer in psychology with the Sheffield Hallam University. His major research interests include using autonomous agent and multi-agent simulations to conduct research in Attachment Theory. In particular, using simulations to model the development of patterns of attachment during the first year of life. He also conducts empirical research on close adult relationships. Other major research include the study of visual object recognition, 4e cognition, and the computational foundations of cognitive science.



Joel Parthemore is currently a philosopher of mind with the Department of Cognitive Neuroscience and Philosophy, University of Skövde in Sweden. His research interests include the complex interrelationship between evolutionarily ancient emotions and relatively recently developed conceptual abilities, which inevitably shape the way researchers and laypersons alike view those emotions. He is likewise interested in certain emotional experiences, often lumped in with empathy, which can nevertheless be distinguished from empathy by giving the appearance of two agents sharing one single experience: that is to say, one experience shared among multiple agents.



David Moffatt is a cognitive scientist who teaches affective computing, artificial intelligence, and serious game design, at Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland, U.K. From a background in mathematics, computing and psychology, his research interests include centered on the computational modeling of affective phenomena like emotion, and their interactions with wider cognition. Other recent publications relate to creativity in education, games, and artificial agents.



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