

The Study of Emotions from an Exchange Perspective: A Comment on Social Structure as a Source of Emotion

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Exchange theorists have never fully developed an approach to the study of the emotional components of social exchange with the exception of the early anthropologists and more recently with Lawler's theoretical work on emotions and relational cohesion in social exchange settings. We examine some of the threads of theory in the various exchange conceptions that have been developed over the past few decades and present some empirical evidence concerning the role of emotions in the formation of exchange relations as well as examining the nature of the emotional outcomes that correlate with various types of exchange. We argue that not only the *form* of exchange, but also the nature of the *attributions* about the exchange outcomes involved determine the dominant emotions that emerge in exchange settings. In conclusion, we comment on the reemergence of fairness considerations in exchange theory (returning to some of Homans' and Blau's early theorizing) and how such considerations link to the renewed interest in emotions and exchange.