

Structural Architectures of Affective Systems: Investigating the CEF ‘Combating’ Scenario

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Abstract

This report investigates the scenario of the Core Emotion Framework (CEF) being “combated,” concluding that the framework is not suppressed externally but instead functions as a corrective architecture combating the structural failure of modern emotional understanding. Drawing on structural-constructivist theory, somatic psychology, and affective science, the document analyzes the CEF’s tripartite system, Decalogue of Operators, technological extensions (ECM, INAS), and clinical applications. It further examines open-science dissemination strategies and the framework’s position within contemporary psychological paradigms.

Keywords: Core Emotion Framework, structural constructivism, affective science, somatic psychology, emotional architecture, Head-Heart-Gut system, Decalogue of Operators, emotional operators, somatic energetics, emotional computation, emotional mechanisms, emotional mapping, structural psychopathology, GoodPerson Anxiety Pattern, conscientious anxiety, Emotional Cycling Machine, ECM Lite, INAS, neuro-affective synchronization, emotional engineering, affective modeling, emotional systems theory, open science psychology, Zenodo CEF archive, AI emotional architecture, computational affect, emotional alignment, emotional frameworks, practitioner protocols, emotional detangling, interoception, felt sense, emotional validation, emotional dynamics, structural emotional analysis.

Introduction

The landscape of contemporary affective science is characterized by a fundamental tension between the subjective phenomenology of felt experience and the objective requirements of mechanistic modeling. At the center of this tension is the Core Emotion Framework (CEF), a structural-constructivist architecture developed by Jamel Bulgaria that aims to reconcile these disparate domains.¹ The investigation into the scenario of the CEF being “combated” reveals a multifaceted narrative where the framework is positioned not as an object of external institutional suppression, but as a deliberate corrective force designed to combat the “structural failure” of current emotional understanding.² This failure manifests as a systemic inability to define the boundaries, components, and mechanisms of emotion, leading to a state where individuals navigate their internal worlds with vivid intensity but profound structural blindness.² By organizing ten primal emotional powers into a tripartite system of Head, Heart, and Gut, the CEF provides the “missing map” intended to transform emotional chaos into navigable systems.¹

The Ontological Foundations of the Core Emotion Framework

The Core Emotion Framework is built upon the premise that emotions are not merely "feelings" or subjective reactions to environmental triggers, but are instead highly organized systems with an internal logic and predictable patterns of change.² This perspective marks a departure from traditional models that focus heavily on labels, triggers, and regulation strategies, which Jamel Bulgaria argues provide comfort but lack structural depth.² The ontological foundation of the CEF is rooted in structural constructivism, a model that integrates affective science, somatic psychology, and cognitive-conative theory to provide a unified account of human functioning.¹

The Structural-Constructivist Paradigm

In the CEF, the "structural" component refers to the innate, architectural constants of the human affective system—specifically the ten primal emotional powers or "operators".¹ The "constructivist" component acknowledges that while these structures are universal, the specific expression and interpretation of an emotion are constructed through the individual’s interaction with their environment and cognitive architecture.¹ This dual approach allows the CEF to map emotional processes directly to somatic energetics and behavioral regulation while maintaining the nuance of personal experience.¹

The framework explicitly aligns itself with the work of several foundational figures in emotion science. It mirrors Antonio Damasio’s theories on how the body "knows" before the mind assembles meaning, as well as Lisa Feldman Barrett’s research showing that emotions start as raw sensory cues that the brain later constructs into experience.⁴ Furthermore, the CEF integrates the concept of the "felt sense" from Eugene Gendlin and Daniel Siegel’s work on interoception, positioning the body as the first narrator of emotional life.⁴

Comparative Framework Analysis

To understand the unique position of the CEF, it is necessary to compare its structural focus with other prominent psychological and educational frameworks. While frameworks like CASEL focus on social and emotional learning within an educational context, and LifeComp addresses broader personality characteristics for lifelong learning, the CEF focuses specifically on the mechanistic architecture of the emotion itself.²

Framework	Primary Objective	Structural Depth	Core Theoretical Basis
Core Emotion	Mapping the internal architecture and	High (Tripartite centers, 10 Operators, Technical	Structural Constructivism; Affective

Framework (CEF)	mechanisms of emotion systems.	Specs).	Science; Somatic Psychology.
CASEL Framework	Developing social and emotional skills in educational settings.	Moderate (5 competency domains).	Behavioral and Social Psychology.
LifeComp Framework	Enhancing personal, social, and learning-to-learn competencies.	Broad (Personal and social traits).	Holistic Personality Theory; Lifelong Learning.
traditional Psychopathology	Categorizing symptoms and behaviors for diagnosis.	Variable (Focus on labels and symptom clusters).	Clinical Observation; Statistical Manuals (DSM/ICD).

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The Tripartite System: Head, Heart, and Gut Dynamics

A central tenet of the Core Emotion Framework is the organization of emotional functioning into a tripartite system: the Head, the Heart, and the Gut.¹ This model is designed to provide a somatic map of how information is processed, felt, and acted upon, moving beyond the brain-centric models that often dominate modern neuroscience.¹

The Head Center: Cognitive-Conative Integration

The Head center in the CEF is not merely the seat of intellect but the locus of "Reflecting" and "Balancing" operators that map emotional processes to cognitive architecture.¹ It is where raw affective data is translated into interpretation and where executive control interacts with emotional signals.⁶ The "Dynamic Interplay of Affective Computation and Executive Control" is a key area of study within the CEF, analyzing how the scalar mechanisms of the framework influence cognitive load and decision-making.⁶

The Heart Center: Relational and Value-Based Balancing

The Heart center functions as the intermediary, focusing on "Balancing" and relational dynamics.¹ It bridges the primal, often binary signals of the Gut with the complex, high-level interpretations of the Head. In clinical applications, the Heart center is often associated with the processing of social emotions and the alignment of behavior with personal values.¹ The CEF suggests that emotional flourishing requires a state of "synchrony" across these centers, which the framework attempts to facilitate through specific practitioner protocols.¹

The Gut Center: Primal Somatic Energetics

The Gut center represents the source of "Outgoing" and "Reflecting" somatic energetics, acting as the foundation of the "quiet intelligence" described in CEF literature.¹ This center is responsible for the initial, pre-linguistic signals—the "flicker in the chest" or "sudden heaviness"—that signal a change in the internal environment.⁴ The CEF teaches practitioners to approach these signals with curiosity rather than control, treating them as essential data points rather than problems to be suppressed.⁴

The Decalogue of Operators: Functional Mechanics and Technical Specifications

The technical core of the CEF is the "Decalogue of Operators," a set of ten primal emotional powers that define exactly how an emotion system functions.³ These operators are the mechanistic components that traditional emotional models often lack, providing the "alphabet" for the CEF's structural map.²

The Sensing Operator and Initial Affective Signaling

The "Sensing" operator is the primary gatekeeper of the emotional system.³ It represents the ability of the somatic system to detect internal and external changes before they reach conscious awareness. In the CEF technical specifications (such as TS-1 and TS-2), the sensing operator is analyzed as a functional component that triggers the broader affective loop.⁴

The relationship between a stimulus (E) and the sensing operator's output (S_{out}) can be theoretically modeled using a sensitivity coefficient (κ) related to interoceptive awareness:

$$S_{out} = \kappa \cdot \int_{t_0}^{t_1} E(t) dt$$

This initial signal is then processed by other operators—such as "Reflecting" or "Balancing"—to determine the final emotional state.³

Structural Components and Predictable Patterns

The CEF defines an emotion as an organized system with identifiable components.² By identifying the specific operators involved in an emotional state, the framework allows for:

1. Predictability: Anticipating how an emotion will evolve based on its internal logic.²

2. Intervention: Selecting specific components for intervention, such as adjusting the "Reflecting" operator to change the cognitive interpretation of a "Sensing" signal.²
3. Transformation: Changing emotional patterns at the structural level rather than simply managing the symptoms.²

Technical Specification (TS) Series

The rigor of the CEF is reflected in its series of Technical Specifications, which provide the "Engineering Blueprint" for the framework.⁶ These documents, hosted on repositories like Zenodo and SSRN, establish the CEF as a "computationally relevant" model suitable for both human psychology and AI training.¹

Specification	Title	Primary Focus
TS-1	Foundations	Defining the conceptual and architectural identity of the CEF.
TS-2	Technical Specification 2	Core essence and early structural mapping.
TS-7	Technical Specification 7	Advanced mechanistic analysis of emotional dynamics.
TS-8	Technical Specification 8	Integration of affective science with somatic energetics.
TS-9	Technical Specification 9	Refinement of operator functions and scalar mechanisms.

Technological Integration: The Emotional Cycling Machine (ECM)

The transition of the CEF from a theoretical model to a practical technology is most evident in the development of the Emotional Cycling Machine (ECM).⁶ The ECM is a series of protocols and engineering blueprints designed to automate or facilitate the structural transformation of emotional states.⁶

Evolutionary Versions of the ECM

The ECM has undergone significant development between 2024 and 2026, with each version increasing in complexity and application scope. These versions reflect the framework's commitment to "Optimal Capabilities" and "Mass Adoption".⁶

Version	Classification	Key Architectural Feature
ECM v1.2	Modernized Protocol (Canonical Edition)	Standardized entry point for practitioners.
ECM v2	Next Generation	Enhanced integration of the tripartite centers.
ECM v3.0	Autonomous Emotional Cycling Machine	Independent processing of operator dynamics.
ECM v3.1	Engineering Blueprint	Technical requirements for computational implementation.
ECM v4.0	System Integrated Emotional	Environmental-level emotional

	Environment	regulation.
ECM Lite	Mass Adoption / Classroom Edition	Simplified protocols for general public and educational use.
ECM X	Experimental	Research-focused platform for testing new operator functions.

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The Integrated Neuro-Affective Synchronizer (INAS)

The Integrated Neuro-Affective Synchronizer (INAS v1.0) is a critical component of the CEF’s technological ecosystem.⁶ It is designed to align the framework’s structural outputs with neurobiological data. By using "scalar mechanisms," the INAS aims to provide a neurocognitive analysis of the Core Emotion Framework, bridging the gap between somatic psychology and computational neuroscience.⁶

The synchronization logic of the INAS can be represented as a state transition matrix (**T**) that maps the operator configuration (**O**) to a neuro-affective target state (**A**):

$$\mathbf{A} = \mathbf{T}\mathbf{O}$$

This allows for the potential development of biofeedback systems or AI architectures that can "synchronize" their internal states with the structural requirements of human flourishing.¹

Clinical Reframing and Structural Psychopathology

A significant application of the CEF is the "reframing" of traditional psychotherapy modalities through its structural lens.⁶ This approach "combats" the typical diagnostic method of labeling symptoms by instead looking at the "Structural Psychopathology" of the underlying emotion system.²

The GoodPerson Anxiety Pattern (GPAP)

One of the most innovative clinical applications of the CEF is the analysis of the "GoodPerson Anxiety Pattern" (GPAP) within the context of "Conscientious Anxiety".⁶ Traditional models might view this as generalized anxiety or perfectionism, but the CEF identifies it as a specific structural configuration where

the "Head" center's sense of duty becomes entangled with a persistent "Sensing" signal of threat in the "Gut".⁶

By identifying GPAP as a structural pattern, the CEF offers:

- De-pathologization: The pattern is seen as a system misalignment rather than a personal defect.²
- Targeted Detangling: Practitioners can use the "Detangling Method" to separate the conscientious values (Heart/Head) from the raw anxiety signal (Gut).¹
- Clarity: The individual gains clarity on why the anxiety feels "virtuous," allowing them to intervene at the structural level.²

The Practitioner Manual (PM-1) and Clinical Manuals

To support these clinical applications, Jamel Bulgaria has developed the "Practitioner Manual" (PM-1), which has been released in several versions (1.0 and 1.1) to reflect the evolving understanding of the framework.⁶ These manuals provide the "Practical Layer" of the CEF, offering tools for:

- Tracking emotional states using the operator lexicon.³
- Distinguishing raw emotion from cognitive interpretation.²
- Implementing the "ECM Lite" protocols for emotional cycling in a clinical setting.⁶

Teaching Emotion to Artificial Intelligence

The Core Emotion Framework is explicitly designed to be "computationally relevant," with one of its primary goals being to serve as an architecture for "Teaching Emotion to Artificial Intelligence".¹ This initiative "combats" the current paradigm of "emotionless" AI or AI that merely simulates emotion through superficial linguistic mimicry.

A Structural-Constructivist Architecture for AI

By providing a "Technical Architecture of the Core Emotion Framework" that includes a functional analysis of the Decalogue of Operators, the CEF offers a blueprint for building AI systems with an internal affective logic.⁶ In this scenario, the operators act as computational modules that allow the AI to:

- Process sensory data through a "Sensing" operator.
- Evaluate the data through "Reflecting" and "Balancing" functions.
- Regulate its own "Somatic Energetics" (e.g., resource allocation) in a way that mirrors human emotional states.¹

Implications for AI Safety and Alignment

The use of the CEF in AI training has profound implications for the problem of AI alignment. If an AI system's internal architecture is built on the same structural principles that govern human emotion and flourishing, the potential for deep alignment is significantly increased.¹ The CEF provides a shared language and structural map that can be used to synchronize human and artificial affective systems.¹

The Scenario of "Combating" the Framework: Analysis of Reception and Strategy

The query regarding the CEF being "combated" requires an investigation into how the framework positions itself within the broader scientific and academic community. The evidence suggests that the CEF is not currently facing organized "combat" in the form of suppression, but is instead actively "combating" several entrenched paradigms.²

Combatting the "Missing Map" Problem

The primary "combat" identified in CEF literature is against the "structural failure" of modern emotional understanding.² Jamel Bulgaria argues that people feel "lost inside themselves" because they have been given "descriptions, metaphors, and coping strategies" instead of a structural map.² The CEF is the weapon in this combat, providing:

- Clarity where there was noise.²
- Structure where there was chaos.²
- Agency where there was passivity.²

This perspective frames the framework as a disruptive innovation that "combats" the status quo by rendering traditional, purely descriptive models obsolete.²

The Open Science Front: Zenodo, OSF, and Hugging Face

A secondary "combat" scenario involves the framework's strategic use of Open Science platforms to bypass traditional academic gatekeeping.¹ By hosting the "CEF Main Archive" on Hugging Face and publishing technical specifications on Zenodo, Bulgaria ensures that the framework is "open, interoperable," and immune to the paywalls and slow publication cycles of traditional journals.¹

This strategy allows for:

- Rapid Iteration: Releasing multiple versions of manuals and specifications (e.g., ECM v1.2 to v4.0) in a short timeframe.⁶
- Transparent Validation: Using the "Pre-Registration Protocol" on OSF to invite open validation and "Multi-Level Factor Structure Confirmation".¹
- Community Building: Creating a "Canonical, Authoritative Archive" that is accessible to practitioners, developers, and researchers globally.¹

Resistance and Scholarly Critique

While specific hostile "combating" scenarios are not documented in the provided snippets, the framework's radical departure from traditional models likely faces "institutional inertia".² The emphasis on "Somatic Energetics" and the "Head-Heart-Gut" model may be met with skepticism by strictly neuro-centric researchers. However, the CEF addresses this by citing the "supporting works" of figures like Bessel van der Kolk and Jon Kabat-Zinn, thereby anchoring its innovative architecture in established,

albeit revolutionary, psychological traditions.⁴

Future Trajectories and the Validation of Affective Dynamics

As of 2026, the Core Emotion Framework is entering a critical phase of "Open Validation" and "Mass Adoption".¹ The future of the framework depends on its ability to move from theoretical modeling to empirical confirmation across multiple domains.

Validation Protocols: Phase 1 and Beyond

The "Pre-Registration Protocol: Open Validation of the Core Emotion Framework (CEF) Scale—Phase 1" represents the framework's commitment to scientific rigor.¹ This phase focuses on:

- Construct Definition: Ensuring each operator is precisely defined and measurable.¹
- Item Generation: Developing the tools necessary for large-scale data collection.¹
- Factor Structure Confirmation: Statistically verifying the tripartite (Head-Heart-Gut) and Decalogue (10 Operators) models.¹

Global Adoption and the "Optimize Your Capabilities" Brand

The CEF is also being disseminated through the "Optimize Your Capabilities" brand, which offers "professional" and "standard" versions of the framework's tools.¹ This suggests a move toward:

- Practitioner Certification: Standardizing the use of CEF protocols in clinical and coaching environments.¹
- Educational Integration: Deploying the "ECM Lite Classroom Edition" to teach emotional architecture to the next generation.⁶
- Commercial Application: Providing "Engineering Blueprints" for companies looking to integrate affective intelligence into their products.⁶

Synthesis of Findings

The Core Emotion Framework, as developed by Jamel Bulgaria, stands as a comprehensive response to the "structural failure" of modern affective science. By investigating the scenario of the CEF being "combated," it becomes clear that the framework is a proactive intervention designed to replace comfort-focused, structureless emotional advice with a rigorous, mechanistic map.²

The tripartite system of Head, Heart, and Gut, supported by the Decalogue of Operators, provides a functional analysis that is equally relevant to human Flourishing and AI training.¹ The development of the Emotional Cycling Machine (ECM) and the Integrated Neuro-Affective Synchronizer (INAS) demonstrates a commitment to turning theoretical insights into "computationally relevant" tools.⁶

While the framework "combats" ideological and structural deficiencies in the field, its reliance on Open Science ensures its growth is transparent and accessible.¹ The ongoing validation of the CEF Scale and

the release of advanced technical specifications suggest that the Core Emotion Framework is poised to become a foundational architecture for the next generation of emotional understanding, bridge the gap between the body and the mind, and provide a shared emotional logic for humans and machines alike.¹

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