

# EMOTIONS IN POLITICS

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**Key Words** affect, mood, cognition, judgment, memory

■ **Abstract** The study of emotion in politics has been active, especially as it relates to the personality of political leaders and as an explanation for how people evaluate significant features around them. Researchers have been divided into two groups—those who study leaders and those who study publics. The research programs have also been divided between those who use emotion to explain reliance on early experience that dominates contemporary judgment and those who use emotion to explain why people respond to the immediate contemporary circumstances around them. More recently, theory and research have attempted to reconcile these two seemingly contradictory roles by integrating them. Emotion's role in politics is pervasive both because emotion enables past experience to be encoded with its evaluative history and because emotion enables contemporary circumstances to be quickly evaluated. More recently still, theoretical models and supporting evidence suggest that there are multiple channels of emotional evaluations.

## INTRODUCTION

It would be hard to identify a single political thinker of note in the Western tradition who did not give emotion substantial attention. Aristotle (1954, 1983), Plato (1974), Hobbes (1968), Descartes (1989 [1649]), and the Scottish enlightenment thinkers, especially Hume (1739–1940) and Smith (1959), among many others, all thought it necessary to understand emotion in order to explore human nature and our capacities for politics. How these thinkers understood emotion remains a valuable question (Elster 1999, Rorty 1996). Yet a longstanding bias toward cognitive accounts has dominated the study of political judgment (Hilgard 1980).

Perhaps the mysterious character of emotion has been largely to blame for the difficulty of executing scientific studies of emotion in politics. Also perhaps responsible is the dominant view in political theory that progress and democratic politics require less emotion and more reason (Arkes 1993). It has been common, at least since Madison (1961 [1787]), to treat emotion as an unavoidable factor in politics that should be constrained and minimized so that reason dictates judgment with minimal distraction (Callan 1997, Holmes 1995). Notwithstanding this view, political scientists have actively explored a broad array of roles that emotion plays

in motivation and judgment. But although political science's recent attention to emotion in politics reflects considerable variety in theoretical direction and application, a consensus on the effects of emotion in politics remains to be achieved.

To provide some order to the proliferation of research on emotion in politics, I now broadly (and somewhat unjustly) characterize the overall pattern of interest and theoretical strategies common in political science. The use of emotion generally fits into one of two approaches. First, it has long been theorized that an account of the stable and particular characteristics of any person, especially his or her characteristic way of approaching decisions and actions, must include emotion as a facet of personality. Lasswell (1930, 1948) long ago held that politics is the expression of personal emotions. More generally, attention to political leaders and their decision-making styles has focused on their characteristic emotional inclinations. Among the most popular applications of this approach have been case studies of important political leaders (Rogow 1963; Langer 1972; Greenstein & Destler 1983; Volkan & Itkowitz 1984; Barber 1985; Greenstein 1987, 1994; Volkan et al 1997; George & George 1998). A variant of this approach is to explore the role of emotion in the specific instance of important political decisions made by political leaders (Janis 1982, Blight 1990, Steinberg 1996). In each of these projects, emotional dispositions secured early in life are used to account for the stable orientations political leaders display in dealing with the recurring situations, crises, and decisions they confront.

The second common application explores how people experience different emotional reactions to contemporary circumstances. Here the focus shifts from the emotion inherent in the personality of the individual to the emotion that is attached to external events, symbols, situations, individuals, or groups, in order to provoke a reaction in the audience. Emotion is used to explain why people deviate from their characteristic dispositions. The presumption is that although people may have characteristic ways of resolving pressing issues, they may do something out of the ordinary because of some provocative stimulus, as when someone says, "I just lost it, he made me so angry!"

Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (1954) offers counsel on how a leader should use emotion to gain influence over the audience he hopes to lead. A modern example can be found in Sears & Citrin's (1982) study of the emotional grounds for the public support that led to passage of Proposition 13 in California. They summarize, as follows, what led to the success of this tax-limiting proposition (Sears & Citrin 1982:222-23):

[A] surge of recklessness, a period of nearly blind emotion, [surrounded] the passage of Proposition 13, when anger at the government seemed to dominate the public's thinking. The usual explanations for the voters' choices still held sway, but this added hostility proved a potent weapon for the tax revolt. At this point, the tide of anti-government emotion eroded stable attitudes about what government should do. The public's desire for maintaining the status quo of services plummeted, their perceptions of

government inefficiency rose considerably, and their anger focused on the “bureaucrats.”

In this passage, Sears & Citrin (1982) use emotion to explain people’s departure from their normal behavior, not to explain the normal behavior itself. These two perspectives have long coexisted. On the one hand, emotions enable people to steadfastly remain true to their most deeply held values and attitudes (Sears 1993). On the other hand, emotions are capable of stirring people up, causing them to abandon their habitual commitments. Although these two perspectives seem difficult to reconcile, they do agree on the central importance of emotion in memory, evaluation, judgment, and action.

## Recent Reviews

Elster (1999) provides an excellent, if not comprehensive, account of how emotion has been historically understood in the Western tradition. The scientific study of emotion began with Darwin (1998 [1872]) and James (1883, 1894). Cornelius (1996) provides an excellent history of the scientific treatment of emotion in psychology beginning with James.

Several recent reviews in psychology offer overviews of current work on emotion, and some of these touch on emotion in politics. Excellent overviews include those by Zajonc (1998) and Cacioppo & Gardner (1999). More specific review topics have included feelings as subjective experience (Schwarz & Clore 1996); the interrelationship of emotion and memory (Blaney 1986); the relationship between emotion and motivation (Bradley 2000); the roles of emotion in evaluation (Tesser & Martin 1996), political judgment (Ottati 2000), and electoral politics (Glaser & Salovey 1998); and the neuroscience of emotion (Damasio 1994, LeDoux 1996, Rolls 1999). In addition, there are two collections of important papers on emotion, one published some 20 years ago (Rorty 1980) and one more recent (Ekman & Davidson 1994).

## ORGANIZING SCHEMA

This chapter identifies recurring themes, such as those mentioned above, as well as key definitions and common strategies in the study of emotions in politics. It offers a review of current findings, a review of the available theoretical models, and a consideration of measurement issues. Let us begin with definitions.

## Definitions

In the past, political scientists thought of emotion as the expression of underlying personality drives (Lasswell 1930), largely in psychoanalytic terms (Davies 1980), or as the result of cognitive processes (Abelson et al 1982). Since then, without denying the role of cognitive processes in assigning semantic terms to

emotional experience, more political scientists have seen emotional expression as resulting from distinct affective processes (Marcus 1991). This shift argues that evaluations arising from emotional processes, independent of prior or concurrent cognitive processes, can influence not only emotional expression but also thoughts, decisions, and political behavior.

This claim requires special attention to such key terms as emotion and mood, cognition and affect, evaluation and perception. Each of the reviews cited above uses some or all of these key terms. There is some consensus that, for example, moods can be differentiated from emotions because emotions have an explicit source (i.e. a reason why we feel as we do), whereas moods do not have a subjectively self-identifiable referent (Clore et al 1994). For instance, Wood et al (1990) define mood as "a general and pervasive feeling state that is not directed toward a specific target." Batson et al (1992) draw the more idiosyncratic distinction that emotions reflect past experience, whereas moods are anticipations of future experience.

The field of emotion is rife with basic disagreements about crucial conceptual definitions. The term cognition has been applied in a variety of ways. It is often used as a synonym for information processing (Lazarus 1984), a concept so all-inclusive that it would be hard to exclude any neurological action as evidence of cognition. More typically, cognition is used as a synonym for thinking (Ottati & Wyer 1993). Cognitive processes, which generate the perceptual features of an object, are often contrasted with affective reactions, which constitute evaluations. This follows the long tradition of equating cognition with thinking and affect with feeling, paralleling an even older tradition that contrasts the purported features of rationality with the purported features of emotionality (Elster 1999).

Recent work in neuroscience established the independence of these two processes and further established that affective evaluations generally arise before conscious perceptions (Rolls 1999). In the 1980s, a major controversy arose between those who claimed that emotional expression depends on cognitive attributions (Wiener et al 1978, Roseman 1984, Weiner & Graham 1984, Roseman et al 1986, Russell & McAuley 1986, Sacks & Bugental 1987, Smith et al 1993, Quigley & Tedeschi 1996, Roseman et al 1996) and those who claimed that emotional response arises from affective processes that are largely independent of cognitive processes (Moreland & Zajonc 1979; Kunst-Wilson & Zajonc 1980; Zajonc 1980, 1982; Granberg & Brown 1989; Bornstein & D'Agostino 1992; Murphy & Zajonc 1993; Murphy et al 1995). Much of this controversy depended on definitions. If cognition is a scientific synonym for conscious awareness, generally, or thinking in semantic terms, more specifically, then the empirical findings that emotional processes produce emotional responses outside of consciousness are less controversial. A good deal of work in political science has addressed the independent contributions of effective and cognitive assessment in politics.

A currently unresolved issue involves the structure or taxonomic character of emotion. There have been, broadly speaking, three theoretical approaches to the

structure of emotion: the valence view, the discrete or basic view, and at least two two-dimensional models. Substantive conclusions about the role of emotion depend on the relative scientific merit of these views. A recent controversy concerned measurement error in self-reported emotional response. Although attention to the measurement of emotion has been greater in psychology than in political science, the contribution of political scientists to resolving the measurement problem may prove of equal consequence (Green et al 1993, Green & Citrin 1994, Marcus & MacKuen 1996, Marcus et al 2000).

## Strategies

Some researchers focus on the personalities and decision making of political leaders. Others focus on mass publics, exploring the role of emotion in political judgment or in securing enduring disposition. As a result of this division of labor, and the attendant differences in research programs (the former more reliant on case studies, the latter more reliant on experiments and survey research), it is hard to integrate the research literature into a comprehensive account. In addition to research on leaders versus research on followers, there is a conflict between two theoretical accounts. One faction uses emotional attachments to explain how people are shaped by the enduring influence of earlier experience, via personality formation. The other uses emotion to explain how the impact of some contemporary individuals, groups, crises, or events is much magnified by their emotional content. Thus, the strategies fall into a fourfold typology, with two different domains of study crossed by the two contradictory premises.

This organization of strategies, though at times forced, supplies some taxonomic structure to my review of the research and theoretical literature. In the first section, I review the literature that addresses the capacity of emotion to secure previous experience and its lessons against the complex variety of contemporary experience. In the second section, I review the literature that addresses the ability of emotion to enhance the impact of some contemporary experience.

## EMOTIONS ANCHOR BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDES

### Personality and Affect

Perhaps the oldest view of emotion in political science is emotion as personality. Its best-known advocate was Lasswell (1930, 1948). The most common application of this approach has been case studies of political leaders, which find in leaders' early, formative experiences the sources for their characteristic manner of responding to the contemporary political challenges they confront (e.g. Greenstein & Destler 1983, 1994; Volkan & Itkowitz 1984; Volkan et al 1997; George & George 1998). The primary theoretical approach has been psychoanalytic and focused on character (Renshon 1998). Other ways of addressing personality are considered by Greenstein (1987, 1992).

Barber (1985) takes a somewhat different tack. He defines presidential personality as being anchored by two basic dispositions: a characteristic inclination to action (active) or inaction (passive), and a characteristic inclination to anticipate rewards (positive) or punishments (negative). Barber's personality theory, a two-factor model, anticipates one of the two variants of such models. His dimensions of personality, active-passive and positive-negative, parallel the models of affect advanced by psychologists Russell (1980, Russell & Barrett 1999, Russell & Carroll 1999) and Diener (1995). As shown below (where the various structure-of-emotion models are reviewed), Barber's characterization of presidents as active or passive and as positive or negative can be readily transformed by rotation to the alternative model. The alternative model depicts people as characteristically calm or anxious and characteristically extraverted or introverted. The primary claim is that early experiences, and the emotional reactions they generate, shape adult behavior.

A variant in the treatment of affect as personality has been to focus on some particular recurring syndrome. A syndrome of particular note is the capacity to form an emotional bond with the public, treated as either a "charismatic" bond (Madsen & Snow 1991) or as a form of "narcissism," either benign or malevolent (Volkan & Itkowitz 1984, Post 1993, Steinberg 1996, Volkan et al 1997). In general, these approaches consider the embedding of past experience in emotional tendencies to be a danger to the rational assessment of contemporary challenges. If a leader's actions are driven by needs rooted in his past, his emotions become the basis of "motivated errors" (Stein 1988) resulting from systematic misperceptions and delusions that can lead to systematic under- or overestimation of threat (Janis & Mann 1977, Janis 1982). For example, Steinberg (1996) finds President Johnson's decisions on the war in Vietnam to be heavily influenced by his emotional needs. On the other hand, Blight (1990) argues that the introduction of emotion, notably fear, into the Cuban Missile Crisis was largely responsible for minimizing distractions by nonrational considerations into Kennedy's decision making, and for its success. Blight's research presages a growing interest in the possible adaptive benefits of emotion (de Sousa 1987, Frank 1988, Gibbard 1990, Tooby & Cosmides 1990, Marcus 1991).

Two more approaches to the role of emotion in personality are worth noting. The role of emotion in the execution of evil has been considered by Baumeister (1997), Lifton (1986), and Arendt (1963). Each explains the willingness to engage in evil acts by the capacity to inhibit emotional response, i.e. the absence of empathy. Monroe (1996) finds that people who display a disposition to empathy are most likely to undertake heroic acts of altruism in moments of need. Greenstein (1969) and Masters and Sullivan (McHugo et al 1985, Sullivan & Masters 1988, Masters & Sullivan 1993) explore the emotional linkages between political leaders and the public.

Apart from the preponderant reliance on psychoanalytic approaches to personality, political scientists have not made much use of current attention to personality and affect in academic psychology (Rusting & Larsen 1998, Zuckerman 1991) and especially recent work on "big three" or "big five" models of personality (Digman 1989, Goldberg 1990, John 1990, McCrae & John 1992, Saucier 1992, Zuckerman

et al 1993, Costa & McCrae 1995). This lacunae offers a rich opportunity for new research.

## Evaluation Is Affect

The theoretical construction of affect as personality in leaders—their embedded response to the present by reference to the lessons of the past and to the inner needs of personality—has a parallel in the study of the role of affect in citizens. Emotion is conceived as an affective “glue” to ensure reliance on longstanding dispositions (Sears 1993), which Sears calls “symbolic politics” (Sears et al 1979, 1980). Affective responses to early experience become life-long lessons that ensure a measure of stability and continuity in the manner and substance of people’s response to the recurring challenges they face (Sears & Valentino 1997, Sears & Funk 1999). The conception of partisan identification as an “affective orientation to an important group object” (Campbell et al 1960:121) reflects a similar view of affect as a mechanism by which the experience of the past guides the actions of the present.

The conception of affect as evaluation—whether a historical evaluation that shapes responses to the present, or a contemporaneous evaluation that shapes responses to current events (as in communications or persuasion research)—has certainly been a central focus of affect research. But the dominance of affect as evaluation has had two detrimental effects. First, the structure of evaluation is generally conceived as a valence conception of liking–disliking (Osgood et al 1957). The consensus has been that approach–avoidance is the singular evaluative task performed by emotion. As a result, researchers adopting this approach have largely ignored the important alternative that multiple and varied evaluations may be performed by multiple affective systems. Hence the nature of the structure of affective response has been tied to a theoretical and methodological presumption that the structure of evaluation is adequately accounted for by a single bipolar dimension.

Second, researchers who study symbols (Edelman 1964, Elder & Cobb 1983, Edelman 1988) have identified the affective component of symbols as the key to their capacity to persuade and motivate action. Without emotional response, stimuli have no capacity to engage. Not surprisingly, this raises a normative concern that emotions can generate irrational responses (Sears & Citrin 1982, Jamieson 1992). The widespread presumption that the impact of emotions, via symbolic manipulation, is a major source of irrationality has delayed (until recently) attention to the possibility that emotions, in at least some instances, can motivate cooperative behavior. For example, Scholz & Lubell (1998) have shown that compliance with tax obligations is partly related to the emotional responses that attend a behavioral disposition toward compliance. Monroe and Carlson have found that emotional empathic response to people in need is an important causal factor in initiating helping behavior (Carlson et al 1988, Monroe 1996).

## Summary Judgment Is Affective

A popular conception of emotional response conceives it as a passive repository of cognitive inputs (Hastie 1986, Lodge & Hamill 1986, Lodge et al 1989, Rahn et al

1990, Glaser & Salovey 1998). Therefore, it is not surprising that the affective component of attitudes has predictive power in matters of interest to political science, such as voting (Kenney & Rice 1988, Rahn et al 1990). The on-line model of judgment (Hastie & Park 1986, Lodge & Taber 1998) identifies two roles for emotion: affect as a summary judgment stored in memory, typically defined as a valence “tag” (Fiske & Pavelchak 1986), and affect as a contemporary response to current circumstances.

The treatment of emotional responses as a summary repository results from efforts to provide a cognitive account of emotion. It is presumed that emotional responses arise from prior information processing (Ortony et al 1989, Ottati & Wyer 1991). This approach generally precludes treating affective evaluations as arising from distinct and independent processes, even though it has long been recognized that attitudes, with their three components of feelings, thoughts, and behavior (Rosenberg & Hovland 1960), are only weakly interrelated (Breckler 1984, Breckler & Wiggins 1989).

Emotional evaluation also plays a role in “framing” and “priming” studies. Emotional reactions to contemporary cues (frames or primes) seem to facilitate recall of prior, similarly valenced events (Edwards 1990, Krosnick & Kinder 1990, Tulving & Schacter 1990, Derryberry 1991, Bargh et al 1992, Krosnick & Brannon 1993, May et al 1995, Nelson et al 1997). The ability of contemporary moods to facilitate memory is important in the work of Forgas (1992, 1995). See also Bargh (1992) for an argument that prior emotional tagging of stimuli can elicit the emotional cue as an evaluation on even subliminal presentation of those stimuli. The general hypothesis predicts assimilation, or contagion, effects. This approach is discussed in more detail later in this review.

The power of affective evaluations in predicting, for example, the vote (Kelley 1983) naturally led to considerable research on people’s emotional reactions to a wide range of political stimuli. Describing the characteristic emotional responses of political leaders has been one area of research on affect (Marcus 1988). The influence of attractiveness on candidate evaluation was the focus of Rosenberg’s research (Rosenberg et al 1986). Klein (1991) has found that overall feelings about presidential candidates display a negativity bias, such that a voter weights negative personality traits more heavily than positive ones to arrive at an overall feeling toward a candidate. Masters and Sullivan have shown that politicians characteristically provoke two independent emotional responses, one “hedonic” and one “agnostic” (McHugo et al 1985; Sullivan & Masters 1988; Masters & Sullivan 1989a,b, 1993; Masters 1991; Masters et al 1991).

Emotional reactions are generated by political institutions, such as Congress (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse 1995); by political issues and positions (Conover & Feldman 1986; Kinder & Sanders 1990, 1996); and by one’s nation, conceptualized as public mood (Rahn et al 1996, Rahn 2000) or conceptualized as patriotism (Schatz & Staub 1997, Staub 1997, Schatz et al 1999). Given the importance of morality in political judgment, especially in democratic societies, it is surprising that the role of emotion in moral socialization has not received more attention



(but see Dienstbier 1984). Mikula et al (1998) find that perceptions of injustice characteristically elicit a feeling most commonly described as anger. Feelings of cooperation and antagonism are central to perceptions of allies and enemies (Volkan 1988).

Emotional reactions to groups, particularly in identifying targets for intolerance, have been a major topic of research on political tolerance judgments (Gibson & Bingham 1982, Sullivan et al 1982, Gibson 1992, Marcus et al 1995). Research on emotional reactions to groups more generally (Wilcox et al 1989) and on affect toward groups and the issue of affirmative action (Kinder & Sanders 1996), in addition to work on affirmative action and group biases (Nelson 1998), reveal the emotional character of dispositions (Cooper 1959). Emotional reactions to major events such as war (Kinder 1994), to campaign events (Brader 1999) and campaign advertising (Kern 1989), and to the state of the economy (Conover & Feldman 1986) show that affective reactions are a ubiquitous aspect of human perception and judgment.

The conclusion that emotional response is deeply implicated in evaluation and judgment creates a dilemma. The measurement of emotional response remains a contentious area; different claims are advanced about the structure of emotional response and the appropriate means of obtaining valid and reliable measures. The merit of the substantive findings cited above depends on how the researchers resolved measurement issues in each instance.

## EMOTIONS ENABLE CONTEMPORARY RESPONSIVENESS

Although much of the research literature cited above treats emotional response as a primary supporting mechanism of memory, not all political science research has limited the impact of emotion to that role. The literature reviewed below explores another understanding of emotional response. Rather than presuming that emotional responses derive from cognitive perceptions, researchers increasingly see evaluation as a distinct, independent mental operation. Rolls (1999) reports on the neuroscience of independent emotional appraisal. He finds that perception (i.e. awareness of the descriptive features of stimuli) arises separately from the emotional neural pathways that execute evaluation. Hence, emotional responses can support contemporaneous evaluation independent of conscious perception.

### Affect Is Information

The principal theoretical statement of affect as information is that of psychologists Schwarz (1990) and Schwarz & Clore (1996). Another theoretical statement is offered by political psychologists Lodge & Tabor (1998) in their version of the on-line model of political judgment. In both theories, emotion serves as an immediate evaluation of contemporary circumstances. Some studies suggest that, for most

people, the default condition is reliance on these affective evaluations (Kuklinski et al 1991, Marcus et al 1995).

Both theories rely on two presumptions. First, they presume that evaluations are simple, defined by the need for swift approach–avoidance assessment (i.e. a valence assessment). This claim has been regularly challenged, initially by Abelson et al (1982), Plutchik (1980a), and Russell (1980) and more recently by a considerable literature on the structure of affective responses, all of which finds that at least two dimensions are needed to account for the variation in people's emotional response (Watson & Tellegen 1985; Plutchik & Kellerman 1989; Marcus 1991; Marcus et al 1998; Watson & Clark 1992; Cacioppo & Berntson 1994; Marcus et al 1996; Cacioppo et al 1997; Russell & Barrett 1999; Russell & Carroll 1999; Tellegen et al 1999b; Watson et al 1999). Below, I discuss more fully the issues related to the structure of emotional response.

The second presumption is that the primary substantive impact of evaluative assessments is one of assimilation. That is, positive moods induce more positive judgments and negative moods induce more negative judgments. A variant is the presumption that moods perceived in others will have assimilation effects on subjects (Hatfield et al 1992, Hatfield et al 1994). A number of studies report results confirming this pattern (Hsee et al 1990, Sullins 1991, Gump & Kulik 1997). However, some studies suggest that contemporary mood may yield counterassimilation effects. In one study (Isbell & Wyer 1999), subjects whose moods had been manipulated (happy or sad) read an article about political candidates that included information about issue positions. The authors found that mood had a contagion or assimilation effect (i.e. happy subjects rated candidates more positively and sad subjects rated candidates more negatively) if the subjects were unmotivated. However, motivated subjects—those who showed greater partisan intensity or had been told they were going to vote on the candidates—displayed a counterassimilation effect. That is, happy subjects “over-corrected” by rating politicians lower, and sad subjects rated them higher (see Ottati & Isbell 1996 for other experimental evidence that assimilation effects of mood are not necessarily the general pattern in political judgments).

One common application of affect as information has been the linkage between social category and affective information. If someone is a member of group A, a group I like (or dislike), then I can quickly assess him by applying to him the affective tag of group A (Fiske & Pavelchak 1986). Thus, group affect becomes a reliable heuristic of wide political application (Brady & Sniderman 1985). Individuals need not work to obtain details about the target individual. They need only refer to the group affect tag.

Thus, contemporary political judgments are likely to be influenced by contemporaneous emotions, enabling affect to be a channel for persuasion. Roseman et al (1986) argue for an assimilation effect, explaining that an angry speaker will be most effective if his audience is similarly angry. [See also Agres et al (1990) and Chadhuri & Buck (1995) for related work on emotion in persuasion. For a consideration of the role of affect in persuasion in psychology, see Petty et al (1991)

and Millar & Tesser (1986a, 1989).] The affective content of a target, such as a facial display, is important. Interpretations of facial expressions as reassuring or threatening (Aronoff et al 1992), and more generally how subjects perceive facial expressions and decipher their emotional content (Ekman & Rosenberg 1997), have been studied. Affective content is also likely to be an essential facet of evaluation of political leaders (McHugo et al 1985, Sullivan & Masters 1988, Masters 1989, Warnecke et al 1992, Masters & Sullivan 1993, Way & Masters 1996a). A contemporaneous emotional reaction to a political situation thus offers an important insight into how people understand their circumstances. Miller & Krosnick (1999) provide evidence that a sense of threat, aroused by the anticipation of policies that one opposes, can motivate action. These studies are consistent with a long tradition in psychology that views affect as intimately engaged with memory, enabling us to recall prior experiences based on their emotional valence and strategic significance (Titchener 1895).

### Affect versus Cognition

Affective processing became more prominent in psychology beginning with the seminal work of Zajonc (1980, 1982), a psychologist. The idea that emotional processes occur outside of conscious awareness, which was initially treated with skepticism (Lazarus 1982, 1984), is no longer much disputed. Moreover, the weight of opinion in psychology has shifted to a view that these unconscious evaluations are far more active, and hence far more important, than conscious cognitive processing (Bargh & Chartrand 1999). Indeed, one study found that people attending to emotionally rich stimuli can extract more information from those stimuli than can people in emotionally impoverished circumstances (Halberstadt & Niedenthal 1997), which suggests that emotional evaluations are of greater strategic significance than cognitive ones.

In political science, a popular tradition of research has explored the contrasts between reliance on affective cues and reliance on cognitive or descriptive cues. Affective cues have been found to have considerable influence on voter judgment (Christ 1985, Marcus 1988, Ragsdale 1991). More generally, studies in psychology (Millar & Tesser 1986a,b) have explored how people make judgments when instructed to attend to different states of mind, either affective cues (feelings) or cognitive cues (thoughts). Political tolerance judgments have been shown to be influenced by such "state of mind" manipulation (Ottati et al 1989, Kuklinski et al 1991, Marcus et al 1995). Thus, attitudes may have either an affective base or a cognitive base. Earlier studies came to different conclusions about whether persuasion is best achieved by matching persuasive focus with attitude foundation (Edwards 1990) or by mismatching (Millar & Millar 1990). More recent work suggests that affect-based persuasions are more influential than cognition-based persuasions in changing affect-based attitudes, but this matching effect does not hold when cognitive persuasion is directed at cognition-based attitudes (Fabrigar & Petty 1999). Additionally, Erdley & D'Agostino (1988) have shown that that affective

information can prime through noncognitive channels. Thus, affect-based persuasive messages have an advantage over cognitive appeals, a finding that is especially pertinent during political campaigns.

In the contentious arena of politics, the identification of threat is crucial. Marcus and colleagues find that threat is experienced largely through affective channels rather than through explicit cognitive perceptions (Marcus et al 1995, Marcus et al 1998). Lavine et al (1999) find that authoritarians are more responsive to threat messages than to reward-based messages, indicating that some personality types are especially attuned to threat signals (Feldman & Stenner 1997).

In political science, Greene (1998, 2000) has shown that partisan identification can be established by either affective or cognitive identification (see also Granberg & Brown 1989). Patriotism may also have affective and cognitive orientations (Schatz & Staub 1997, Staub 1997, Schatz et al 1999), as may empathy (Hoffman 1984) and prejudice (Jackson & Sullivan 1990, Stangor et al 1991). Similarly, people may be more attentive to either affective or cognitive cues in their evaluations of leaders (Jones & Iacobucci 1989). Resistance to persuasive messages may be either affective or cognitive (Zuwerink & Devine 1996). Gunther & Thorson (1992) found more "emotional" messages, i.e. those bearing more positive emotion, to be more persuasive, but this finding may result from a relationship between emotionality and greater attention to emotionally encoded information (Halberstadt & Niedenthal 1997). This conclusion is supported by research (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse 1998) showing that cognitive appraisals of Congress are rather stable and impervious to media modification, whereas emotional reactions are more responsive (the effect is strongest among political novices).

Reliable measures of the affective and cognitive properties of evaluation have been created (Crites et al 1994). The phrase "affective and cognitive" may give the impression that one or the other must dominate. It is more likely, however, that instead of a contrast between cognitive and affective evaluations, there is a contrast between affective-only and cognitive-plus-affective evaluations. It is highly unlikely that any target of consideration is devoid of emotional content or influence.

## Affect Reactions Mediate Judgment

The research reviewed above presumes that people rely on either cognitive or affective channels of information. However, there is an additional role for affect. Affective state of mind, contemporary mood, may mediate how judgments are made in addition to providing information about the target stimulus. That is, the subject's affective state of mind may shape which factors are judged and how they are weighed (Rusting 1998).

Thus, affective reactions to groups change how subjects respond to policy options (Sniderman & Piazza 1993, Kinder & Sanders 1996). In political campaigning, so-called negative campaigning may induce people to pay more attention to the campaign, as research suggests that negative information is attended to more than positive information (Derryberry 1991, Pratto & John 1991, Taylor 1991, Ito et al 1998b). Thus, affect may influence the manner of information processing (Way &

Masters 1996a,b) with subliminal threat cues gaining more attention. But affective subliminal effects are apparently most robust when subjects are unaware, i.e. not attending to the target of affective stimulation (Bornstein & D'Agostino 1992).

With the added attention to the role of emotion in the formation of judgment, the normative view of that role has begun to shift. The conventional view has been that the intrusion of affect into decision making undermines what would otherwise be a clearer and more rational consideration (Janis & Mann 1977). Jervis et al advanced the common view that emotion undermines sound judgment (1985:4).

Motivated biases arise from the emotions generated by conflicts that personal needs and severe situational dilemmas pose. These biases serve important psychological functions, primarily minimizing ... discomfort.... The individual will pay a high price in the future as reality inescapably shapes and defeats the policy, but in the interim he or she avoids intolerable psychological stress and conflict.

This view is confirmed by work on the effects of anger (Lerner et al 1998). The inducement of anger yielded simpler cognitive processing, less attention to available information, and greater reliance on heuristics. However, these effects were reversed if subjects were told they would be held responsible for their views (i.e. if they anticipated having to justify their reactions). Thus, the intrusion of emotion, in and of itself, is not necessarily detrimental to the quality of decision making. Work on emotion and stereotypical thinking (Bodenhausen 1993, Bodenhausen et al 1994a,b) also suggests a more complex set of relationships, with different emotional states having different effects. Isbell & Wyer (2000) found that the effect of mood manipulation on subjects judging political candidates was counterassimilated when subjects were motivated and assimilated when they were not, indicating that the motivational status is highly relevant to the role of emotion in decision making. But although there are many studies on the role of emotion in politics, much more work will be necessary to achieve a sound theoretical and empirical understanding.

## THEORETICAL MODELS

The task of theory building is twofold. First, a theory must provide a measurement model enabling researchers to define and measure the phenomenon of interest. Second, a theory must explain why emotional responses occur as well as how and when variations in emotional response influence judgment and behavior. How much do we now know about these two facets of a theory of emotions in politics?

### Structure of Emotion

In the case studies of leadership, the descriptive component is largely drawn from psychodynamic sources. In psychoanalytic formulations, the subjective experience

of emotions takes the form of discrete, sometimes termed basic, emotions. In discrete-emotion formulations, distinct and specified circumstances are associated with a limited number of intense but differentiated manifestations of discrete emotion states, such as anger or love (Tomkins 1962, 1963, 1981, 1984). Thus, a common theme is that a subject's specific emotional response to a situation depends on the underlying attribution of the subject and the subject's prior experiences (Davies 1980). Discrete emotions are, in general, held to arise from attribution of the self (for example, a characterization of the self as weak or strong) and the circumstances (Frijda et al 1989). These discrete emotions constitute an important element of personality (Diener et al 1995). A more recent view holds that emotional responses are evolutionary adaptations to the need to encode environmental information (Tooby & Cosmides 1990). Discrete-emotion theories are found mainly in leadership studies, but Kinder (1994) has applied this approach to account for people's responses to leaders, issues, and salient events.

Among researchers treating emotion as a summary judgment, the more common descriptive measurement approach draws on the social-psychological school rather than the psychodynamic. Summary evaluative judgments are commonly treated as a simple singular valence assessment, i.e. positive or negative, like or dislike (McGraw et al 1991). However, other models have also been suggested. Dual-channel measurement theories argue that at least two dimensions are needed to adequately characterize emotional experience. Unlike discrete-emotion theories (Roseman 1984), which hold that each of the basic emotions is distinct, dual-channel theories hold that all subjective experiences arise from more than one underlying affective process. These multiple processes combine to form the subjective experiences that are then semantically differentiated into the many terms we ascribe to the rich variety thus produced (Storm & Storm 1987).

Two dual-channel models have been in the psychological literature for about 20 years. The earlier of the two has been advanced primarily by Russell (1980, 1983; Russell & Bullock 1985; Russell et al 1989a; Russell & Barrett 1999; Russell & Carroll 1999), a psychologist. In this view, one channel determines the valence of emotional experience while the other determines the degree of arousal. A measurement literature is available (Mehrabian 1995, 1996; Russell et al 1989b). Also in this vein is work by other psychologists, most notably Plutchik (1980a,b), Diener & Emmons (1985), Plutchik & Kellerman (1989), and Larsen & Diener (1992). This approach has been applied to personality (Apter 1989).

The second of the two-channel theories argues that each channel performs a distinct strategic evaluation. One channel evaluates the degree of threat or novelty in the environment. The other channel evaluates the success or failure of familiar actions, routines, or practices. This approach has been advanced mainly by psychologists Tellegen and Watson (Zevon & Tellegen 1982, Tellegen 1985, Watson & Tellegen 1985, Watson et al 1999) and Cacioppo (Berntson et al 1993; Cacioppo & Berntson 1994; Cacioppo et al 1997, 1999), and by political scientist Marcus (1988, 1991). There is a measurement literature for this theory as well (Watson 1988; Bagozzi 1993; Watson & Clark 1994, 1997; Marcus & MacKuen 1996;

Watson & Walker 1996; Cacioppo et al 1997). Personality applications are also evident in this model of emotion (Boddy et al 1986, Gray 1987a,b, Broadbent & Broadbent 1988, Malatesta 1990, Watson et al 1992, Carver & White 1994, Corr et al 1995, Berry & Hansen 1996, Watson & Walker 1996).

## Methodological Quandaries

The psychology literature has arrived at a consensus that the structure of emotion is two-dimensional (Zajonc 1998). However, this consensus was charged with failing to consider measurement error (Green et al 1993). This challenge led to special issues in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (Cacioppo et al 1999b, Diener 1999, Green et al 1999, Russell & Barrett 1999, Watson et al 1999) and *Psychological Science* (Green & Salovey 1999, Tellegen et al 1999a,b; for additional citations that bear on the issue, see Russell & Carroll 1999, Watson & Tellegen 1999). Some authors (Nelson 1998; Rahn 1998, 2000) have understood Green et al (1993) to mean that a single bipolar dimension is sufficient to describe the structure of emotion. However, even when measurement error is taken into account, a single dimension is not sufficient to account for the full variance in emotional response (Nelson 1998). This attention to measurement is surely appropriate.

Recently, Green and Salovey (personal communication) have clarified that their original work (Green et al 1993) was meant only to claim that happy and sad mood terms reside on the same dimension and not to claim that only one bipolar dimension suffices to describe emotional response. The measurement problem is not primarily a measurement theory problem but a theoretical underspecification problem. Moreover, the controversy has largely been confined to measures of self-report, ignoring the studies that use electromyographic measures of facial muscles (Cacioppo et al 1986) or techniques that allow mapping of brain activity (Tomarken et al 1990; Tomarken et al 1992; Wheeler et al 1993; Davidson & Tomarken 1994; Davidson 1993, 1995; Robinson 1995; Sutton & Davidson 1997). Still other measurement approaches use the startle reflex as a method of ascertaining emotional response (Bradley et al 1990; Lang et al 1990, 1993; McNeil et al 1993; Lang 1994, 1995; Ito et al 1998a). All of these studies conclude that at least two dimensions are required to explain the variance in emotional response. Hence, a substantial array of results from a variety of methodologies points to the need for a two-channel model of emotion, a point on which Green and Salovey now agree with Russell, Cacioppo, Watson, Tellegen, and Marcus. Such controversy as remains turns on whether the description of emotion is better described by valence and arousal dimensions or by enthusiasm and anxiety dimensions (somewhat mislabeled as "positive" and "negative" psychology). Determining which of these two alternatives is more useful requires research that weighs the evidence for the substantive claims of the competing accounts.

Some other methodological contributions merit notice. Reliable measures of the affective or cognitive foundation of attitudes toward stimuli have been developed

(Crites et al 1994). There is a useful literature on using self-report to measure emotional responses (Bagozzi 1993; Watson & Clark 1994; Mehrabian 1995, 1996; Ottati 1997; Watson et al 1988; also see Watson & Tellegen 1999). The measurement of emotional responses to a target stimulus must take into account whether the focus is on the global character of the target or on some specific properties thereof (Ottati 1997).

An additional implication of dual-channel models of emotion is that ambivalence will be an important element in the experience of emotion. A literature on the measurement of emotional ambivalence is available (Hass et al 1992, Breckler 1994, Thompson et al 1995, Cacioppo et al 1997). There is also a substantial literature of psychophysiological measurement (Cacioppo et al 1986, 1988, 1993; Fridlund & Cacioppo 1986; Harmon-Jones & Allen 1996), although it is uncommon for political scientists to use such measures.

## Functional Models

Relative to the dominant tradition, functional models of emotion take a more neutral stance toward the role of emotion. Rather than presuming that emotions detract from the rationality or efficiency of thought or action, functional models of emotion consider whether and how emotional processes provide adaptive benefits. Thus, at least some contemporary theories reflect a change in normative orientation away from the earlier concern with affect-introduced bias and misperception, toward a view of emotions as helpful heuristic devices that offer context-contingent judgment strategies (Forgas 1995). A second development has been increasing reliance on neuroscience to better understand how the brain uses emotional processing. The neuroscience approach makes emotion less mysterious and readily comparable to cognitive processing (Armony & LeDoux 1997).

**Personality Theories** As noted above, personality and emotion are closely linked. Theories of personality, or at least some dimensions of personality, have increasingly been interpreted as set points, or baseline and reactive dispositions, for individual differences in emotional expression and emotional reactivity. Consequently, just as personality is expected to depict the stable, enduring qualities of an individual (Conley 1984), so too the functional continuity of emotional dispositions can be in part accounted for by stable emotional dispositions (Zuckerman et al 1993, Watson & Walker 1996, Cacioppo et al 1999a).

Voters seem to look for reliable personality cues that signal the likelihood of a candidate's success. Zullow and colleagues have found that candidates who convey pessimism are more likely to be defeated (Zullow et al 1988, Zullow & Seligman 1990). More generally, emotional dispositions may explain stable inclinations in responding to salient threats (Mogg et al 1990), the possibility of national separation (Flett et al 1999), or a general sense of national threat of various kinds (Feldman & Stenner 1997). In addition, emotional dispositions have been found to account partially for the role of threat in political tolerance judgments (by Marcus



et al 1995) and judgments more generally (by Broadbent & Broadbent 1988). Thus, trait and state aspects of emotion are interconnected (Gross et al 1998).

**Single-Channel Theories** As noted, valence accounts fail to adequately account for emotional response, but a considerable literature continues to thrive, in part driven by continued reliance on “feeling thermometers” and the like in various communal data-gathering programs. It is hoped that multiple-channel theories of emotion will guide future research.

**Multiple-Channel Theories** Multiple-channel theories of emotion presume that affective reactions derive from multiple evaluative processes resulting in multiple affective dimensions. Although work in the 1950s seemed to establish that evaluation was global and formed a single dimension (Osgood et al 1957), in fact this conclusion derived from the reliance on paired oppositions, the semantic differential, which imposes a single-valence structure on the data. Once data gathering enables subjects to disaggregate their emotional responses, then it becomes clear that salient stimuli often evoke multiple, simultaneous emotional reactions (Lang et al 1993, Lang 1994, Ito et al 1998b).

Multiple-channel theories, such as those of psychologist John Cacioppo (Cacioppo & Bernston 1994; Cacioppo et al 1997, 1999b), neuroscientists C Robert Cloninger (1986), Jeffrey Gray (1987a,b, 1990; Gray & McNaughton 1996), and Jaak Panksepp (1989, 1998), or political scientist George E Marcus (1991; Marcus et al 1995, 2000), each argue that more than one evaluative process is ongoing and subserved by emotional processes at any given time.

There is evidence of multiple-channel responses to groups (see Hass et al 1992, Nelson 1998). More generally, if there are multiple channels of evaluation, then there should be evidence of multiple motivational consequences. Evidence supporting multiple-channel theories of evaluation can be shown by differential effects of each channel on learning and political judgment (Marcus & MacKuen 1993, Brader 1999). Psychology has been primarily focused on differential responsiveness to each channel, as in Cacioppo’s bivariate model (Cacioppo & Bernston 1994, Cacioppo et al 1997), whereas political science is likely to be more interested in the differential effects of each channel (Marcus et al 2000). Evidence of the asymmetric effects of the two channels in politics has been reported (Marcus & MacKuen 1993).

## CONCLUSION

Although a full understanding of emotion is not yet realized, there has been a general shift from presumption of disruption and distortion to a more functional and less normatively biased view. Such a shift in normative orientation was recommended more than 50 years ago in psychology (Leeper 1948). That recommendation is something else political science could borrow from psychology.

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