

Editorial

Interdisciplinary Approaches to Emotions in Politics and International Relations

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Abstract

The ‘emotional turn’ within the social sciences and humanities attracts increasing scholarly attention. Political Science, traditionally emphasising the ‘rational’ public sphere rather than the ‘emotional’ private sphere, has increasingly questioned this dichotomisation, identifying broader political concepts and practices. The international political process—frequently characterised by widespread distrust, populist campaigns and extreme rhetoric—necessitates addressing and examining its underlying emotions. Informal, affective manifestations of politics are enormously influential, profoundly shaping inter- and intra-national democracy; they accordingly require interdisciplinary study. This thematic issue of *Politics and Governance* includes disciplines as diverse as education, history, international relations, political theory, psychology, and sociology. In doing so, we illustrate that emotions are cross-disciplinary concerns, relevant beyond the study of politics.

Keywords

affect; emotions; friendship; individualisation; interdisciplinary; international relations; narratives; political history; political science

Issue

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1. Introduction

The emotional turn in the humanities and social sciences, especially within the discipline of international relations (IR), attracts considerable scholarly acknowledgment. This thematic issue of *Politics and Governance* presents multiple methodologies which have proven successful in elucidating this concept. In that vein, it cites recent works such as *Researching Emotions in International Relations: Methodological Perspectives on the Emotional Turn* (Clément & Sangar, 2018), and studies of the role that individual actors play in IR (Jacobi & Freyberg-Inan, 2015), as well as Nussbaum’s (2013, 2001) writings on the formation of diplomatic ties through encouraging

certain emotions (sympathy, for example) and openly contesting others (such as disgust).

The relevance of this academic approach is clear within the current geopolitical landscape, increasingly characterised by brinkmanship and populist rhetoric. Investigating ‘celebrity politics’, politicians as ‘personas’, and the modes of communication underlying these topics, is crucial. The relevance of emotions to individualisation applies to studies of political leaders and elites (Berenskoetter & Van Hoef, 2017; Van Hoef, 2018) and of citizenries, increasingly characterised as self-actualising, informal and affective (Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994; Bennett, 2008; Loader, Vromen, & Xenos, 2014; Manning, 2015). This development, particularly ev-

ident among younger generations, informs academic understandings of voting and party membership (both subject to considerable volatility), as well as informal modes including petitions and activism.

Academic acknowledgement of informal political participation was encouraged by proliferating protest movements and youth activism in the late 1960s. Recent decades have seen an expanded scholarly focus on post-materialist values, ‘issue politics’, and civic engagement. In the discipline of politics, the traditional dichotomisation of emotions and rationality (based fundamentally upon Cartesian mind-body dualism, and largely unquestioned since the Scottish Enlightenment) is increasingly subject to problematisation. This expanded academic scope encompasses expanding political practices and digital technologies, the latter necessitating research on online participation and dialogue. It represents a truly interdisciplinary set of concerns and investigations.

Acknowledging the contribution of psychoanalysis (in demonstrating emotions as *part of* rationalisation), Jenkins (2018) argues that politics, devoid of emotions, would jeopardise its own capacity to inspire. Hall (2007) conceptualises emotions as central to reasoning, collapsing the dichotomy between them. We have also observed increasing critique *within* sub-disciplines such as

deliberative democracy, questioning Habermas’ prioritisation of rationality as a means (and quantifier) of effective communication. Myriad perspectives on these topics necessitate and contextualise this thematic issue of *Politics and Governance*, encompassing a range of disciplines including Education, Psychology, Political Theory and Sociology. The articles are presented in a tripartite structure, as Table 1 illustrates.

2. Interdisciplinary Approaches to Emotions in Politics and International Relations

2.1. Part I: Emotions in Politics

In the opening article, Anne-Kathrin Weber (2018) reinforces the relevance of Nussbaum to studying passionate emotions, specifically their potential in encouraging social justice and societal ‘love’. Weber problematises Nussbaum’s theory of compassionate emotions (on the basis of ‘hierarchisation’ and tension with political and social reality) and, in doing so, employs Arendt’s theorisation of pity. This is applied to the 2016 US election—specifically Clinton’s “Love and Kindness” ads—to illustrate how these challenges threaten to come into play when compassionate emotions are utilised as political devices.

Table 1. Tripartite structure of this thematic issue.

Part	Author(s)	Article
<i>I. Emotions in Politics</i>	Anne-Kathrin Weber	The Pitfalls of ‘Love and Kindness’: On the Challenges to Compassion/Pity as a Political Emotion
	Amy Skonieczny	Emotions and Political Narratives: Populism, Trump and Trade
	Jo Warner	Emotional Interest Representation and the Politics of Risk in Child Protection
	Alex Prior	Getting the Story Right: A Constructivist Interpretation of Storytelling in the Context of UK parliamentary engagement
<i>II. Conceptual Approaches</i>	Anna Durnova	Understanding Emotions in Policy Studies through Foucault and Deleuze
	Rosa Sanchez Salgado	The Advocacy of Feelings: Emotions in EU-Based Civil Society Organizations’ Strategies
	Yuri van Hoef & Andrea Oelsner	Friendship and Positive Peace: Conceptualising Friendship in Politics and International Relations
<i>III. Emotions in International Relations</i>	Simon Koschut	Appropriately Upset? A Methodological Framework for Tracing the Emotion Norms of the Transatlantic Security Community
	Trineke Palm	Interwar Blueprints of Europe: Emotions, Experience and Expectation
	Tereza Capelos & Stavroula Chrona	The Map to the Heart: An Analysis of Political Affectivity in Turkey
	Eleni Braat	Loyalty and Secret Intelligence. Anglo—Dutch Intelligence Cooperation During World War II

Amy Skonieczny (2018) also contextualises her approach through the 2016 US election; in this case, the candidacy of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders. A psychoanalytic narrative framework is applied to the populist phenomenon in US politics, with an especial focus on Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders at the time of their candidacy. Populism is, through Skonieczny's (2018) framework, a discursive narrative that allows for a comprehensive investigation of its more emotional elements.

Jo Warner (2018) provides legitimacy for an inclusion of emotions within political representation; in this context, the representative responsibilities and efforts of British Members of Parliament (MP) in relation to child protection. This topic is examined through MPs' efforts to embody their constituencies in collective emotional responses, defending their respective constituencies from feelings of guilt and shame, apportioning blame in relation to personal feelings of guilt, and the role of the MP as an envoy for anxieties about risk to individual children.

Alex Prior (2018) echoes the importance of political representation within discussions of parliamentary politics. Parliament's role—rather than that of parliamentarians—is the focus here, with especial emphasis on attempts to engage citizens through storytelling techniques. These techniques are analysed on the basis of their fidelity to narrative theory, the way in which they represent parliament *and* citizens to each other (and to themselves), and their construction (and, by extension, presupposition) of an 'audience' that would feasibly engage as a result.

2.2. Part II: Conceptual Approaches

In bringing these discussions into more conceptual territory, Anna Durnova (2018)—working within the field of Policy Studies—calls for a dismissal of the binary relationship between emotions and 'meaning', and specifically a shift in focus (based upon the work of Foucault and Deleuze) toward adopting an emotions-based theoretical framework through which to view subjective and collective interpretations of meaning.

As discussed earlier in this introduction, one of the most intriguing (and widely-debated) aspects of the study of emotions is the degree to which emotions are dichotomised with concepts like reason and rationality. For example, as Rosa Sanchez Salgado's (2018) article points out, Civil Society Organizations (CSO) based within the European Union pursue an image of professionalism and expertise that could be considered at odds with emotions and feelings (especially with reference to the traditional conceptualisations earlier). Sanchez Salgado (2018), in investigating this interplay, examines the use of emotions (and emotional appeals) in the advocacy strategies of EU-based CSOs. These communications encompass appeals to reason, but also appeals to emotions used within the framework of advocacy strategies such as 'blaming and shaming'.

Yuri van Hoef and Andrea Oelsner (2018) present an overview of the current status of friendship studies, paying special attention to the overlooked role affect plays in political friendship. Building forth on this insight, they argue that studying friendship is of particular relevance to fields such as Peace and Conflict Studies, where it addresses the lacuna of research on positive peace. They provide several theoretical conceptualisations and methodological approaches that can be readily applied when making sense of friendship, both on a personal level between elite actors, and on the international level between states.

2.3. Part III: Emotions in International Relations

The research of Van Hoef and Oelsner (2018) serves to emphasise the relevance of emotions to International Relations, a theme that the third section of the thematic issue focuses upon. The relationship between norms and emotions—as well as their importance to collective self-image(s)—also forms an area of focus for Simon Koschut (2018). This study pursues a methodology for studying the integration of norms and emotions (in the form of 'emotion norms') within the transatlantic security community by tracing their prevalence historically, through texts that—in terms of self-conception and self-image—could be considered canonical.

Similar to Koschut's (2018) approach, Trineke Palm (2018) developed an emotion discourse analysis to the study of interwar Europe and its variously idealised end states, themselves based upon normative and moral claims. Drawing on Koselleck's concepts of 'space of experience' and 'horizon of expectation', Palm applied an emotional framework to Coudenhove Kalergi's canonical text *Pan-Europa* to examine the emotional and normative underpinnings of ideas about European unity and integration.

Building on this question of binary conceptualisations, Tereza Capelos and Stavroula Chrona (2018) investigate (and 'map') political affect 'clusters' that reach beyond (and problematise) traditional compartmentalisations of emotions (such as anger, hope, pride and fear). The authors discuss a rich and nuanced variety of emotional attitudes among the citizenry—shaped in their own right by ideological orientations—the significance of which goes far beyond the field of Turkish politics (serving as their case study).

Continuing with this international focus, Eleni Braat (2018) concludes the thematic issue by applying the study of emotions to a more (literally) elusive phenomenon—wartime intelligence—and the importance of ostensibly nebulous concepts like loyalty in building and maintaining its underlying networks and collaborative efforts, in comparison to formal work processes. This serves to reflect and encapsulate the broader relevance of this thematic issue, in advocating the relevance of emotions within formal (and informal) political processes.

3. Conclusion

The tripartite structure of this thematic issue offers scholars several fruitful avenues to study emotions in the humanities and social sciences. The first part emphasizes the relevance of emotions within discussions of political actors, representatives and institutions, offering a practical approach to make sense of emotions in politics. This is followed by several conceptual studies that offer a myriad of ways to make sense of emotions conceptually, which builds a bridge towards the third part of this thematic issue on approaches to studying emotions within the field of International Relations. Each of the individual contributions offers an invaluable scholarly approach to the study of emotions. They also offer detailed studies of emotions within their subdisciplines; their relevance, salience, and applications.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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