# Introduction

## *How Emotions Can Explain Outcomes in International Relations*

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This book is about how emotions can help explain outcomes in international relations. It is now widely recognized that emotions play an important role in world politics as they do in face-to-face relations or in domestic politics. With the exception of a few scholars to whom we shall revert shortly, however, little attention has been paid to examining what this role actually is and how it can be studied. Crawford (2000) and Bleiker and Hutchison (2008) have argued that such neglect arises from the assumption – shared by realists, liberals and neomarxists alike – that foreign policy is pursued on the basis of rational expectations reflecting the "interests" of the actors that partake in international agency. Long regarded as irrational or as interfering with rationality, emotions were not deemed worthy of scientific attention. This perception has changed substantially over recent years. In the life sciences and in the philosophy of mind, the folk dichotomy between "heart" and "mind", or emotions and thoughts, has now been debunked. Affective and cognitive processes are increasingly seen as integrated. Evidence demonstrates that emotions often play a crucial role in judgement and decision making. By acting as tie-breakers when subjects have to choose among various options, of which none appear to be superior, they are now seen as "a prerequisite for good decision making in many situations" (Damasio, 1994; Västfjäll and Slovic, 2013: 266).

Crawford (2000: 116) points out rightly that emotions have been the subject of denial rather than indifference in the study of international relations. She argues that realists have held tacit, unproblematized assumptions on two emotions, fear and hate, which are in fact "implicit and ubiquitous, but undertheorized" in their theoretical framework. Crawford's argument can be taken further as there is reason to believe that the other major paradigms in international relations have proceeded along the same lines as realism. It might even be said that each paradigm has in fact *overrationalized* – rather than undertheorized – a select number of emotions, while dismissing other emotions altogether. We know that realists consider states to be motivated primarily by the pursuit of relative power.

Translated into the language of emotions, this amounts to believing that an overriding desire – man's "lust for power", for example – is the main driver in the conduct of foreign affairs. This desire elicits envy (or the coveting of others' possessions) and entails aggrandizement as its purposeful behaviour, but it is tamed by fear, particularly the fear of failure. In classical realism, lust for power is rationalized into "interest defined as power" (Morgenthau, 1956 [1948]: 5), and fear of failure into "risk assessment", which converts uncertainty into probability. Similarly, classical liberalism is grounded in the premise that human action is motivated by the "desire for bettering our condition" (Smith, 1776: II.3). The purposive behaviour thus prompted is a "propensity to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another" (Smith, 1776: II.3). Following the "doux commerce" thesis, this propensity is deemed capable of containing excessive power plays in international politics by creating interdependency regarded as an absolute gain for all. In this regard, the distinctive feature of the institution of the marketplace is to tame jealousy (or the fear of losing a possession) and envy (or the resentment caused by another enjoying a possession that one does not have) by turning these emotions into emulation (or the desire to attain economic equality with, or superiority over others). It is therefore apparent that liberalism rationalizes a number of emotions into various kinds of utilitarian self-interests. Similar considerations can be made with regard to Marxism, which considers that lust for wealth and power are the mutually supporting drives in international politics at the capitalist stage, and that this has resulted in the exploitation of the subject classes by the dominant classes. By point of fact, Marxism similarly overrationalizes the emotions involved in this dynamic. Couched in rational terms, greed (or the desire for excess) of the dominant classes becomes "appropriation of surplus value", and wrath of the expropriated classes becomes "class consciousness". In view of the foregoing examples, it is apparent that rationality in the main paradigms of international relations theory comprises some form of rationalized emotion. To engage with the role of emotions simply amounts to recognizing what is currently denied despite overwhelming evidence.

The fact remains that emotions differ from thoughts in many ways. They involve specific elements of consciousness referred to as feelings – of pleasure or displeasure. They are personal, internal and usually short-lived. As such, they pose serious methodological challenges to scholars of international relations. Before passing to the question of why this is the case, it is necessary to secure our ground by a brief digression on the notions of desire, emotion, sentiment, attitude and affect, which are often confused:

- *Desire*, following Locke's classic definition, is an "*uneasiness* of the mind for want of some absent good" (1690: II.xxi.31). The satisfaction of a desire produces pleasure, its frustration results in pain.

- *Emotion* can be defined generally as a feeling associated with the perception, the idea or the judgment that a particular desire is satisfied or not, thereby motivating subjects to take various sorts of action. As a result, emotions are either pleasurable or painful. Such a definition concurs closely with the findings of appraisal theories of emotion. Theorists in this tradition argue that "most, but not all, emotions are elicited and differentiated by people's evaluation of the significance of events for their well-being" (Moors and Scherer, 2013: 135; Lazarus, 1994). Emotions are bound to cognized feelings or felt cognitions relevant to the well-being of the person who experiences them. Thus, fear or anger is elicited when one cognizes an object or subject as either harmful (with the attendant desire to regain a sense of security) or injurious (with the desire to retaliate); pity or empathy when one cognizes a subject as suffering misfortune (with the desire that his misfortune ceases); envy or jealousy when one cognizes a subject as either enjoying a good that one lacks (with the desire to obtain it) or as seeking to take possession of a good that one enjoys (with the desire to preserve it). From this perspective, the significance of emotions also lies in the particular sorts of action that they motivate people to take or, to put it another way, in the purposive behaviour that they are amenable to prompt. To jump when one is startled by a bear in the woods expresses (1) the action of avoiding (2) an object perceived as threatening harm which (3) initiates certain organic activities. Purposeful behaviour allows us to appreciate the specific role that desire – which brings together cognition and feeling – plays in emotions (in this instance, the desire to avoid harm and to restore the "absent good" which would be a feeling of security). As John Dewey (1895: 20) noted, it is especially important when dealing with emotions to address "the "feel", the "idea" and the "mode of behavior" in relation to one another". Following his definition, "emotion in its entirety is a mode of behavior which is purposive, or has an intellectual content, and which also reflects itself into feeling or Affects, as the subjective valuation of that which is objectively expressed in the idea or purpose" (1895: 15).
- *Sentiment* – following Nico Frijda et al. (1991: 207), who build on a long-standing literature in moral philosophy – refers to a "disposition to respond emotionally to a certain object". This disposition is "not warranted by an eliciting event *per se*" and lasts longer than simply a mood. As Frijda argues, "affections and aversions towards individuals or groups are sentiments". We hold sentiments about ourselves, our families, our countries and others.
- Sentiments result in *attitudes*, which are positive, negative or indifferent reactions to situations.[1] Reactions of this kind arise from "global evaluations

[1] I am using the definition of attitude proposed by Read Bain (1928: 951).

of any object such as oneself, other people, issues, and so forth" (Petty et al., 2003: 59).

- Attitude in the foregoing sense is merely a behaviouristic synonym for *affect*, which entails "positive and negative evaluations (liking/disliking) of an object" (indifference being habitually designated by the term "flat affect").[2]

Now that we have defined the main notions underlying the study of emotions, we get a better picture of the specific issues and challenges facing scholars of international relations. To begin with, we need to bear in mind that the actors of world politics are collective players who (as such) do not experience feelings, emotions, sentiments or affects, although they can display attitudes. To simply reduce states to governmental decision makers does not in itself solve the problem as scholars of international politics are unable to observe key players in salient situations where emotions may play a role in decision making. Nor can they rely on data, such as memoirs or other retrospective accounts of events, owing to the problems associated with selective memory or post hoc justifications. These are important barriers that need to be overcome in order to ascribe decisions made by heads of states or governments partly or wholly to emotional reactions rather than rational assessments. As long as this ground is left unploughed, emotions cannot be studied as an independent variable capable of effecting decision making in international politics.

Scholars of international relations have therefore sought to highlight the role of emotions from angles other than decision making. A growing body of research has begun to address how a variety of emotional states such as anger, humiliation or revenge function in specific international circumstances.[3] However, space limitations require that focus be put here on scholarship that attempts to develop general theories of how emotions matter in world politics. Studies of this kind have been undertaken from the perspectives of constructivism (Neta Crawford and Jonathan Mercer), cultural theory (Ned Lebow), political philosophy (Pierre Hassner) and psychoanalysis (Pierre de Senarclens). As mentioned earlier, Crawford (2000) argues in her essay that emotions are central to international relations, and that realists hold implicit assumptions about them, in particular fear and anger, which accordingly should deserve more attention. At the time of finalizing this volume, she has turned to studying how fear has been institutionalized or "translated and embodied into practices and procedures" that articulate ideas, organize knowledge, particularly military doctrines, routinize decision-making operations and eventually lead to building physical structures and adopting technologies – such as biometrics – to protect borders (Crawford, 2014: 547). The purpose of her reflections is partly normative by aiming to provide the opportunity to think of how empathy that makes

[2] Cf. Thoits (1989, 318).
[3] Cf. Coicaud's review of literature in Chapter 1.

friendship possible, rather than fear, can be promoted and institutionalized in international politics.

Mercer (2010: 2) proposes to conflate emotions and beliefs into a single entity that he calls "emotional belief" defined as "one where emotion constitutes and strengthens a belief and which makes possible a generalization about an actor that involves certainty beyond evidence". This would allow the study of emotions through the cognitive component of the beliefs of which they are a feature. More recently, Mercer (2014) suggests building on the work conducted earlier by intergroup emotions theorists. Intergroup emotions are group-level emotions shared across members that motivate people to take action specifically related to implications for the in-group, such as confronting an out-group perceived as threatening (Smith and Mackie, 2008).

Lebow (2008) has been developing a motivational theory of international relations. Basing his beliefs on classical Greek philosophy, he contends that political communities, because they are made up of men and women, are driven by three fundamental components of the human psyche, namely reason (*nomos*), appetite (*epithumia*, which encompasses our biological and more sophisticated urges) and spirit (*thumos*, or the desire to be esteemed and respected by others, which manifests itself first and most simply as anger at slights or injustices, but which can provide the motivational force for much political action aiming at securing honour and victory).[4] Adding fear to these three components, and applying them to the study of ancient, medieval, early modern, modern and contemporary polities, Lebow traces various world orders built around combinations of spirit, appetite, reason and fear. A similar concern with the role of emotions in international relations is expressed in the works of Hassner (2005), who has explored – from the perspective of political philosophy – the avenues by which fear, honour and greed shape what he calls the "geopolitics of emotions" in contemporary international relations.

Both Lebow's and Hassner's works, however, focus on conscious social emotions. Pierre de Senarclens (2010), for his part, stresses the importance of *unconscious* mental processes in intercommunal behaviour. Basing himself on a psychoanalytic reading of the emotional weight that group identities carry, de Senarclens argues that Freud's cultural texts remain an important source of insight despite the critiques voiced by sociologists who fear being dragged back into "psychological reductionism". He points out that the nation-state is

[4] In the *Phaedrus* (253c–254e), Plato compares the human psyche to the dynamic relation between a charioteer and his pair of horses, one of them "noble and good" and the other of an "opposite stock". The charioteer personifies the reasoning part of the soul (*nomos*), the "good" horse is its spirited part (*thumos*) in charge of the elevated, self-conscious emotions, while the "bad" horse embodies its appetitive part (*epithumia*). The role of *nomos* is to direct the path of the chariot, which requires that he trains the bad horse to obey his direction.

not merely a geopolitical or sociological entity, but is infused with unconscious emotional feelings at the root of all communal groups. As object relations theorists have underlined, the nation can provide "good narcissistic images" to subjects prone to anxiety and fragmentation (Kristeva, 1983; Volkan, 1988); but it can also exacerbate their aggressive drives with destructive consequences in times of crises.

Our brief look at the state of recent research that offers generalizable propositions on emotions in international relations reveals that, despite the fact that few specialists have so far engaged with this topic, their contributions are very engaging. These inquiries basically fall into two groups. Some are highly original essays, which by virtue of their idiosyncrasy are not particularly amenable to further developments by other than their authors who are all experienced scholars. This applies to the studies undertaken by de Senarclens, Hassner and Lebow. The second group of inquiries is made up of seminal articles formulating programmatic calls for future research, which – while intuitively appealing – are not yet based on substantiated research and still lack practical methodological propositions as to how such research may be carried out. I only touch here on a few aspects of the latter works.

The notion of "emotional belief" proposed by Mercer has its appeal, but its study poses a number of challenges. While ideas may simply be expressed, beliefs need to be experienced. In other words, beliefs differ from ideas in that they take the form of representations deemed true in people's minds. This brings us back to the nagging problem of how the analyst can get inside the heads of actors, in this instance to determine whether they actually share beliefs that have a particular emotion as a property. Moreover, not all emotional beliefs are social, fixed or dispositional; they may well be individual, transient or occurrent, with limited impact on collective behaviour. Finally, there remains the problem of determining how and to what extent these beliefs actually influence group behaviour.

A similar difficulty arises with respect to the study of intergroup emotions. As the social-psychological pioneers of the concept noted, "intergroup emotions are experienced by individuals (when they identify as members of a group), not by some kind of group mind" (Smith and Mackie, 2008: 429). Establishing how group memberships that extend beyond face-to-face contacts – such as in the case of a "nation" – may take on such emotional importance for a large number of individuals as to issue in *collective* behaviour is by no means a straightforward matter. Stereotypes may possibly provide relevant content for investigating the effects of intergroup emotions. Their study however would require appropriate methods capable of revealing how in-group or out-group prejudices actually influence collective behaviour. Until then, the study of intergroup emotions in world politics will remain a matter of programmatic formulation.

Institutionalization of emotions may be an avenue for future research less riddled with obstacles. The role of social institutions in shaping emotions has been an ongoing subject of study in history and macrosociology. It seems obvious that at least some *inter*societal regimes have been designed to ensure, among other things, the management of specific emotions such as fear or trust. The challenge here is to combine the study of discursive and non-discursive practices, of emotional speech acts produced by leaders, which are eventually embedded in institutions that seek to achieve specific functions by, inter alia, regulating emotions. This may be done by using analytical tools developed in the field of the history of emotions. We have only to mention here the concept of "emotional communities" devised by Barbara Rosenwein (2006) to study social groups as systems of feeling. Contemporary "security communities" rest on a "we-sentiment", which in turn is based on trust defined by Barbalet (1996) as the emotional foundation of cooperation by way of involving the perception that another's will corresponds to one's own expectations. Building "security communities" can be viewed as a process which seeks to institutionalize an overall attitude of trust through various cognitive practices that gradually shape a larger, mutually valued identity, and through diplomatic policies aiming at socializing state elites to become motivationally aligned with the "cognitive region" in the making (Adler, 2005) or with the "nonterritorial functional space" (Ruggie, 1993). Conversely, distrust, which can be defined following Worchel (1979) as "a sense of readiness for danger and an anticipation of discomfort", cognizes relationships with out-groups as taking place within a dysfunctional space of conflicting interests. This results in institutionalized practices of confinement and control that take the form of various walls of separation, real or metaphoric, the apparent purpose of which is to provide sanctuary (the Great Wall of China, Hadrian's Wall, the Iron Curtain, the Berlin Wall, the Israeli West Bank Wall). International relations are made up of a great number of "emotional communities", some larger and some smaller than the "imagined community" that is the nation-state. As Barbara Rosenwein (2002: 35) points out, the concept of "emotional community" allows the researcher to look at various social and political entities from the perspective of what they "define and assess as valuable or harmful to them; the evaluations that they make about others' emotions; the nature of the affective bonds between people that they recognize; and the modes of emotional expression that they expect, encourage, tolerate, and deplore". By focusing our attention on these points, new light can be shed on patterns of conflict and cooperation in world politics relating to topics as diverse as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) that emerged from the Marshall Plan, or the ongoing Israeli-Arab conflict. Such subjects are clearly ones of burning topicality: emotional communities have fostered cooperation with in-groups, crystallized adversarial relationships with out-groups, or done both simultaneously. It would certainly be possible to study the emotional

speech acts (or performatives) made by leaders prior to the institutionalization of such communities, just as it appears largely feasible to analyse how the latter, once established, have attempted to manage emotions. Lack of primary sources should not be a cause of concern as many contemporary emotional communities produce an abundance of texts.

Our quick glance at the state of research on emotions in international relations shows that, while innovative studies have been undertaken on this topic, there is still need to develop, explore and especially test theories and methods. It may be welcomed that there is no grand paradigm or "universally recognized scientific achievements that, for a time, provide model problems and solutions for a community of practitioners" (Kuhn, 1970: viii). Current research, however, is overly fragmented. Each scholar appears to have an incommensurable idea about emotions and what kind of questions should be asked. Under these conditions, tentative theories and methods requiring testing, improving and extending are unlikely to reach maturity.

The purpose of this volume is to pause and reflect on how to begin remediating some of these problems. We started from the premise that humility should be exercised by looking at the body of knowledge developed in other disciplines. Scholars of emotions coming from various fields of study were asked how emotions could be investigated from an international perspective involving collective players. International relations specialists contributing to this volume were committed to interdisciplinary approaches, and many have a track record of research in a range of other fields. The intent of the editors was to address existing gaps in knowledge by providing cross-disciplinary theoretical and empirical inquiries.

The book is presented in two parts. The first part features essays from political science, psychoanalysis, philosophy, history, sociology, economics and law. The second part focuses on emotions in foreign policy decision making, and examines emotions in war and in peace.

Part I of the book explores the role of emotions in international politics from a plurality of disciplines and methodologies. Jean-Marc Coicaud's first essay serves as an anchor for the debate. He highlights tendencies to which we have briefly alluded to explain why, despite progress in recent years, emotions remain overlooked in the discipline of international relations. Coicaud calls into question realism's denial of the role that emotions play in world politics, a denial that appears entirely inconsistent with a theoretical framework infused with fearful assessments about the capabilities and intentions of U.S. opponents. He likewise queries rationalism's dry conception of collective actors as rational, self-interested utility-maximizers. Coicaud concludes, in his second essay, that emotions and passions matter all the more so in international politics as they can generate in crowds feelings about whether or not rights are respected, motivate collective international or transnational action to assert denied rights, and thereby contribute to social and political change.

While Coicaud focuses on how emotions may be crucial to reasoning and behaving well, Pierre de Senarclens in his chapter on "Psychoanalysis and the Study of Emotions in International Politics" is concerned with how emotions can also interfere with good reasoning and lead subjects to behave destructively. De Senarclens suggests that it is worth rereading Freud as a social theorist. Deeply concerned by the destructiveness of war, Freud was led to address questions as to what mental processes lead men to bind into social structures, how these structures are established, at what cost for their members, and why they so often fail. Organized groups are entities with which members identify, and the psychological source of their identification is to be found within their original family relations. Fundamental to Freud's concept of the human psyche is the notion of primordial ambivalence, namely the presence of conflicting drives, in particular love and hate.[5] Cultural identification is a response to such ambivalence rooted in images of loved parental figures, in hostile impulses directed towards them and in concomitant feelings of guilt.

Although based on his clinical findings and representing no less than a third of his work – which indicates the importance that he ascribed to the study of social phenomena – Freud's cultural texts remain speculative. How do such conjectures fare now that emotion has become a hot topic in cognitive science in general and in neuroscience in particular? Jean-Michel Roy's chapter reflects on the emotive turn in cognitive science. Considerable understanding has been recently achieved on how brain circuits process emotion. Back in the 1990s, a team of neuroscientists at the University of Parma discovered a general neural mechanism – ascribed to a specific class of brain cells called "mirror neurons" – that enables subjects to understand the meaning of other people's actions, intentions and emotions. These neurons fire when an individual performs a familiar action and – this is perhaps the most important point – when he/she thinks of or observes others performing the action. By contributing to make what others do and feel as part of the individual's own experience, mirror neurons are thought to grant humans the ability to empathise with others. However tantalizing this discovery may be, it still leaves open the question of how these neurons actually acquire their mirror properties. Recent research tends to conclude that the latter can be exaggerated, reversed or even nullified through learning experiences. In other words, mirror properties are neither innate nor fixed once acquired (Catmur, Walsh and Heyes, 2007). This would imply that to experience empathy humanity is not "hard-wired", but rather "soft-wired" through various cultural processes. Clearly the most spectacular breakthroughs in neuroscience have not settled the longstanding "nature-nurture" debate, as those responsible for the mirror neurons discovery readily admit themselves:

[5] Cf. Kaye (2003: 387).

> The data reviewed in this essay show that the intuition of Adam Smith – that individuals are endowed with an altruistic mechanism that makes them share the "fortunes" of others – is strongly supported by neurophysiological data. When we observe others, we enact their actions inside ourselves and we share their emotions. Can we deduce from this that the mirror mechanism is the mechanism from which altruistic behavior evolved? This is obviously a very hard question to answer. Yet, it is very plausible that the mirror mechanism played a fundamental role in the evolution of altruism. The mirror mechanism transforms what others do and feel in the observer's own experience. The disappearance of unhappiness in others means the disappearance of unhappiness in us and, conversely, the observation of happiness in others provides a similar feeling in ourselves. Thus, acting to render others happy – an altruistic behavior – is transformed into an egoistic behavior – we are happy. Adam Smith postulated that the presence of this sharing mechanism renders the happiness of others "necessary" for human beings, "though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it." This, however, appears to be a very optimist view. In fact, an empathic relationship between others and ourselves does not necessarily bring positive consequences to the others. The presence of an unhappy person may compel another individual to eliminate the unpleasant feeling determined by that presence, acting in a way that is not necessary the most pleasant for the unhappy person. To use the mirror mechanism – a biological mechanism – strictly in a positive way, a further – cultural – addition is necessary. It can be summarized in the prescription: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7, 12). This "golden rule," which is present in many cultures besides ours (see Changeux and Ricoeur 1998), uses the positive aspects of a basic biological mechanism inherent in all individuals to give ethical norms that eliminate the negative aspects that are also present in the same biological mechanism (Rizzolatti and Craighero, 2005: 119–120).

Lacking innate and fixed properties, mirror neurons are unlikely to help us understand more fully particular outcomes in diplomatic negotiations. Sociology appears in this regard better suited to analyse the emotions that may be aroused under certain social structural conditions to produce particular effects on behaviour, such as giving in to, rather than disregarding totally, an unhappy party to a negotiation in order to do away with the unpleasant feeling created by his/her distress. "The Sociology of Face-to-Face Emotions" by James Jasper, a leading practitioner of the sociology of emotions applied to the study of social movements (Jasper 1998), raises a series of questions and methodological challenges that scholars of international relations need to address in order to study adequately the role of emotions in world politics. Firstly, anthropomorphisms should be diligently avoided on the obvious though often ignored grounds that collective players cannot have emotions. Secondly, strategic dilemmas in diplomatic negotiations involving