

Emotional Dynamics of (In)security and Politics

Saarland University, June 11-13, 2024

This conference seeks to explore the relationship between feelings of (in)security and emotional needs towards protection and political responses to those feelings and needs. In the current age of insecurity, democracy and political polarization are deeply affected by citizens and non-citizens' perceptions of security and insecurity and the emotional needs (e.g. feeling appreciated, safe, accomplished, or part of a community) associated to these perceptions. Emotions such as pride, hope, fear, anxiety, anger, hatred are crucial factors in constructing or breaking ties between citizens. We conceptualize emotional needs as politically relevant needs that have roots in perceptions towards threats. They bring the micro level of an individual's values, affects, identities and social positionings, the meso-level of discourses, social representations and communication, and the macro-level of political reactions through policies that promise to enhance protection together. Fear and insecurity may be driven by actual crises, but also by imagined danger and the way the potential threats are constructed and communicated. Politicians not only engage with shared perceptions and collective insecurity. They may also manipulate and exploit these perceptions, creating demands for more protective policies. Therefore, we are interested in papers that investigate among others: how politicians read insecurity in current societies and whose emotional needs matter in the policy agenda; the role of citizens emotional needs towards protection in the policy-making process; and in which ways politicians intervene in crises and perceptions of threats and insecurity by fostering emotional responses on the part of multi-layered citizens and non-citizens.

We invite contributions to the following panels:

Panel 01: Emotional Responsiveness: Political and Policy Responses to Subjective Insecurity (Prof. Dr. Georg Wenzelburger, Saarland University)

Panel 02: The Role of Emotions for Political Participation in European Democracies (Prof. Dr. Daniela Braun, Saarland University)

Panel 03: Policy Entrepreneurs and Emotional Manipulation: Strategies, Policy Areas, and Level of Governance (Prof. Dr. Moshe Maor, Reichman University)

Panel 04: Narratives, Representations, Migrations and Affective Citizenship (Dr. Cristiano Gianolla & Dr. Lisete Mónico (Centre for Social Studies- Coimbra University)

Panel 05: Political Psychology of Resentful Affects: Frustrations, Insecurities, and Reactionary Preferences (Dr. Tereza Capelos, University of Southampton)

Panel 06: Marginal Populations and Political Emotions: Policy Feedback, Social Empathy and Political Agency (Prof. Dr. Peter Starke, University of Southern Denmark)

Panel 07: Different Framings of Political Messages and Their Social Consequences (Prof. Dr. Katarzyna Hamer, Institute of Psychology Polish Academy of Sciences)

Panel 08: Nationalism, Intersectionality and the Political Space to Manifest Emotions (Dr. Beatriz Carbone, Saarland University)

Panel 09: Emotions in Political Crisis Communication: A Strategic Game Between Fear and Security?! (Katja Demler, Saarland University)

Panel 10: Emotional Responses to European (Regional) Integration: from Europhobia to Euphoria (Stefanie Thurm, Saarland University)

Please send paper proposals to the conference email address conference-emotionaldynamics@uni-saarland.de, including your abstract (500 words max.), affiliation, and a short bio-note. Indicate to which panel you would like your paper to be considered. The deadline for paper proposal is **December 15, 2023**.

A notification of acceptance, rejection, or inclusion in the waiting list will be communicated by January 15, 2024. Participants are requested to register for the conference by March 15, 2024.

Conference Organization

Dr. Beatriz Carbone

Prof. Dr. Georg Wenzelburger

Invited Keynote Speaker

Prof. Dr. Bethany L. Albertson (The University of Texas at Austin)

Co-author of *Anxious Politics: Democratic Citizenship in a Threatening World* (Robert E. Lane Award 2015)

The Conference “Emotional Dynamics of (In)security and Politics” is hosted by the Chair of Political Science and Comparative European Research of Saarland University (site) and funded by the Department of International Relations of Saarland University.

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Panel Descriptions:

Panel 01: Emotional Responsiveness: Political and Policy Responses to Subjective Insecurity

The question of how governments react to the needs of the citizens with policies is at the heart of representative democracy. However, while much ink has been spilled on policy responsiveness matching public opinion data with policy output data (such as public spending or legislation), we currently lack an understanding about emotional responsiveness, that is how politicians react to the emotional signals they receive from the public. This panel aims at studying these interrelationships by looking more closely at policy responses to subjective insecurity. We invite papers that contribute to these questions from a conceptual and theoretical angle as well as empirical contributions.

Chair: Georg Wenzelburger (georg.wenzelburger@uni-saarland.de)

Panel 02: The Role of Emotions for Political Participation in European Democracies

European democracies have been transformed fundamentally by vast developments such as modernization, globalization and the ongoing series of multiple crises. Emotions such as pride, hope, fear, anxiety, anger, hatred are expected to be crucial factors in these times of uncertainty and crises. Emotions have not only the power to affect personal relationships, but also the level of politics. Moreover, emotions are expected to play a significant role in the current period of polarization of Europe societies. Against this backdrop, Panel 2 seeks to study the role of such emotions as well as polarizing political issues for political participation in European democracies. More specifically, the panel invites papers investigating the impact of emotions on different types of political participation such as voting behavior, protest behavior but also more innovative forms of political engagement such as political boycott or online participation. The findings of the presented papers will add to a better understanding of the role of emotions for different forms of political engagement: Do emotions have a hampering effect on institutional forms of participation (e.g., electoral participation) or do emotional ways of issue polarization in politics lead to a more extreme voting behavior? In contrast to these challenging factors for democracies, papers could also study more positive effects of emotions for democracies: Do emotions in politics mobilize at least some groups of the society or increase non-institutionalized forms of participation? We are interested in papers using diverse

methodological approaches to study the impact of emotions on political participation – including quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods or computational designs.

Chair: Daniela Braun (d.braun@uni-saarland.de)

Panel 03: Policy Entrepreneurs and Emotional Manipulation: Strategies, Policy Areas, and Level of Governance

Emotional entrepreneurs are one of the fundamental factors behind fluctuations in politics and policy. They are defined as “individual and collective actors that attempt to advance a political and/or policy agenda by regulating expected or actual emotions generated during political and policy processes” (Maor & Gross). Despite the growing recognition of the role of affect and emotion in political and public policy processes, current literature still lacks clarity and consistency regarding how emotional entrepreneurs think, decide, and reason. The great majority of studies on policy entrepreneurs focus on the strategies they use. Recent work identified 20 distinct strategies, with one directly related to emotional manipulation, termed strategic use of symbols. However, strategic emotional manipulation in policy and political settings remains a black box. To bridge this gap, this panel aims to shed light on emotion manipulation strategies and identify and map emotional entrepreneurs in the countries under investigation across policy areas and levels of governance. We seek theoretical and empirical, quantitative and qualitative, case-study and comparative papers, addressing issues related to emotional entrepreneurs and the process of emotional entrepreneurship. Scholars may focus on skillful vs. conventional emotional entrepreneurs; the relationship between emotions and emotional entrepreneurs’ motivations, intentions, opportunity evaluation, behavior, memory and learning; and the relationship between emotional entrepreneurs and contextual factors.

Chair: Moshe Maor (moshe.maor@runi.ac.il)

Panel 04: Narratives, Representations, Migrations and Affective Citizenship

This panel aims to analyze the emotional dynamics related to security broadly understood (physical, cultural, political) that invest people on the move, focusing on migrants and refugees. The panel has three aims: 1) Explore the emotional needs of migrants and refugees, how they vary in relation to the contextual and conjunctural reason that led people to migrate and those they met in the welcoming country. 2) Investigate how people on the move manage pre-existing and newly constructed representation of cultural diversity, political values, and socio-political engagement in their own and in the welcoming country. 3) Debate the emotional relations between migrants and refugees with state bureaucracy, administrative procedures, institutions and street level bureaucrats. Social representations conceived as theoretical-methodological instrument of analysis is particularly welcomed.

Chair: Cristiano Gianolla (cgianolla@ces.uc.pt) & Dr. Lisete Mónico (lisete.monico@fpce.uc.pt)

Panel 06: Political Psychology of Resentful Affects: Frustrations, Insecurities, and Reactionary Preferences

Resentful emotionality, expressed as anger, incivility, frustration, heightened insecurity and suspicion dominates the politics of contemporary democracies. Resentful emotions can serve as emotional flashpoints signaling social, political, and economic crises and uncomfortable truths about unequal distribution of resources and opportunities, rising asset and wealth inequality, local marginalization, felt often as loss of dignity and humiliation. While grievance politics deals with what matters to us, it can turn anti-democratic when ignored, or pro-democratic when the emotional origins of its demands are addressed. This panel invites papers that examine the politics of resentful emotionality and its relationship with democracy. The papers will consider empirical evidence (quantitative and qualitative) with the aim to identify

the origins, processes, mechanisms and consequences of resentful emotionality, and seek to leverage solutions for pro-democratic articulations of political engagement.

Chair: Tereza Capelos (T.Capelos@soton.ac.uk)

Panel 07: Marginal Populations and Political Emotions: Policy Feedback, Social Empathy and Political Agency

This panel invites scholars examining the political agency of marginalized groups (e.g. marginal urban communities, ethnic minorities, residents of 'left behind' places, homeless and other vulnerable populations). 'Political agency' encompasses not just political participation, but also its preconditions such as the emotional connection to formal and informal political processes, perceptions of individual and collective efficacy, or the lived experience of politics in everyday life. This panel is particularly interested in two issues: 1) the various positive and negative feedback effects of public policies (e.g. social welfare, policing, urban development and infrastructure) and the different 'faces' of the state on political agency of marginal populations 2) the role of emotional expressions by representatives of the state, from national politicians to street-level bureaucrats. One example would be the question what role 'social empathy' can play to foster feelings of belonging and a sense of political agency. We welcome a variety of methodological and theoretical approaches; empirical work will be prioritized.

Chair: Peter Starke (starke@sam.sdu.dk)

Panel 08: Different Framings of Political Messages and their Social Consequences

This panel will focus on different framings of political messages, e.g. in terms of risks or benefits of certain solutions, positive or negative valence (e.g. of the event, protective policy, etc.), potentially evoking positive or negative emotions, addressing different levels of social identifications (e.g. messages framed on a local, national, or global level) etc. We will analyze the social consequences of such different framings.

Chair: Prof. Dr. Katarzyna Hamer (khamer@khamer.eu)

Panel 09: Nationalism, Intersectionality and the Political Space to Manifest Emotions

The public expression and performance of emotions depend on empathy and the discursive possibilities available in the public sphere. Gendered, racialized, and intersectional dynamics play a role in the determination of whose feelings and emotional needs matter and can be expressed as a collective manifestation with a political function. And these emotional dynamics change from time to time. On the one hand, long-lasting grassroots movements and online campaigns have sought to enhance the political space available to women, people of color, migrants and intersectional groups to politicize emotions such as anger and grieve and feelings of solidarity. On the other hand, anti-gender campaigns and ethnonationalist discourses promoted by right-wing populist movements, men's rights, and red pill communities seek to reclaim the space to express white, male and cis pride, xenophobia, and islamophobia, whereas capitalizing on perceptions of insecurity and security. Against this background, this panel invites contributions that seek to analyze (empirically and theoretically) the relationship between discursive space, power relations, national and collective identities and the politicization of emotions. In which ways are emotions acknowledged and legitimized and in which ways are they disavowed, depoliticized and silenced?

Chair: Dr. Beatriz Carbone (beatriz.junqueira-lage-carbone@uni-saarland.de)

Panel 10: Emotions in Political Crisis Communication: A Strategic Game between Fear and Security?!

Crisis communication is considered in the literature as one of the main components of crisis management. As a result of multiple crises that have hit Europe during the past decade, political science interest in studying the crisis communication of these events has strongly increased. In

this context, crisis communication is not merely characterized by the sober exchange of information to reduce unknowledge and uncertainty among the population. Rather, communication is often also characterized by emotions and interpretations: Not least, populist parties such as the AfD in Germany or the FPÖ in Austria deliberately play on the fears and insecurities of the population in their communication in order to gain approval for their measures as well as political capital. Therefore, we welcome papers in this panel that analyze emotionally charged communication in times of crisis as well as their impact on public sentiment or political outcomes. Studies on large, global crises such as the Corona crisis or the Ukraine war are just as welcome as studies on crises that are limited in time and space. The panel equally invites comparative analysis and single case studies, qualitative and quantitative investigations.

Chair: Katja Demler (katja.demler@uni-saarland.de)

Panel 11: Emotional Responses to European (Regional) Integration: from Europhobia to Euphoria

The ongoing process of European integration has been connected to an increase in emotional responses among the European public and European parties, alongside with a rise in politicization. From enthusiasm and hope to fear, anger and mistrust, the emotional responses vary widely. This can be seen on a large scale as a reaction to European integration as a whole, but also on a smaller scale as a reaction to de- and re-bordering processes in cross-border regions. This panel will therefore address the questions of how and why citizens react emotionally to European (regional) integration, how this influences their political behavior, and how political parties use these emotions when dealing with the issue at hand.

Chair: Stefanie Thurm (stefanie.thurm@uni-saarland.de)