Emotion Regulation:
Implications for Political Science and International Relations*

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ABSTRACT
Despite robust evidence that emotions can have a powerful impact on public opinion, political behavior, and foreign policy, few studies have directly addressed the possibility that emotions may be strategically regulated by politicians, policymakers, and other actors. To systematically examine the role of emotion regulation in domestic and global political domains, what is needed is a framework for organizing the large number of regulatory strategies available to political actors who wish to influence others’ emotions. One such framework is Gross’s (2014) process model of emotion regulation, which previously has been used primarily to examine psychological processes at the individual level in healthy and clinical populations. We show how this framework facilitates an analysis of whether different emotion regulation strategies and implementation tactics have different political consequences, both immediately and over the long term. We also provide guidance on productive directions for future research within each domain of the process model.

Keywords: Emotion, Emotion Regulation, Political Science, International Relations, Public Policy
Politicians and policymakers are successful to the extent that they can influence others’ views, decisions, and behaviors. One way to exercise this kind of influence is by modifying others’ emotions. This is because emotions affect opinion formation, attention, learning, and political behavior (for recent reviews see Brader et al. 2011; Brader and Marcus 2013; Groenendyk 2011), as well as attitudes on a wide range of issues related to world politics, such as nuclear proliferation, the logic of deterrence, the war on terror, motives for war, alliances and defense policies, ethnic conflicts, and humanitarian intervention (Hutchinson and Bleiker 2014; Mintz and DeRouen 2010).

Recently, scholars have begun to consider the strategies employed by politicians to modify peoples’ emotions. Focusing largely on the competitive information environment of electoral campaigns, scholars have noticed that different approaches to influencing emotions have different consequences (e.g., Brader 2005, 2006; Ridout and Franz 2011). These studies have yielded important insights, and what is now needed is a framework for examining how politicians and policymakers regulate others’ emotions.

In this article, we integrate psychological research on emotion regulation, a young and rapidly developing field (Gross 2010, 2014), with the study of politics at the intersection between political and policy leaders, on the one hand, and the general public, on the other. As we discuss in greater detail below, emotion regulation refers to attempts to influence which emotions people have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions (Gross 1998a, 275). This process is driven by emotional entrepreneurs – individuals, groups, and institutions that attempt to advance a political and/or policy agenda by up- or down-regulating expected or actual emotions generated during political processes.
To understand emotion regulation in political contexts and – in particular – the
causes and consequences of the operation of emotional entrepreneurs, we extend the
study of emotion regulation, which has previously focused primarily on psychological
processes at the individual level, to the level of the political system and the level of world
politics. Focusing on individual and institutional political actors, our goal is to provide an
overarching conceptual framework delineating the major families of processes that
populate this emerging area which has so far developed as seven largely separate streams
of research.

The first stream focuses on the use of fear mongering to stir public opinion (e.g.,
Brader 2005; Kaid and Chanslor 2004; Kaid and Johnston 1991; Lupia and Menning
2009; Torres et al. 2012), or as is commonly known – the “politics of fear” (Burkitt 2005;
De Castella et al. 2009). The second centers on the use of outrage at opposition members
to cue in-group members to participate in action against the out-group members who have
committed the outrage (McDermott 2011). The third refers to the use by political leaders
of emotion-laden appeals, particularly on the issue of terrorism, to enhance their approval
ratings while minimizing criticisms, gathering support for their policy agendas, and
diverting public attention during domestic crises (De Castella and McGarty 2011; De
Castella et al. 2009; Mueller 2006). The fourth concentrates on the use by politicians of
emotions in modern political campaigns in order to activate party supporters while
attracting those who are unattached (Jerit 2004), influence political participation, activate
existing loyalties, and facilitate persuasion (e.g., Brader 2005, 2006; Weber 2012), and
determine voting decisions (Ridout and Franz 2011). The fifth considers the effect of
emotion regulation on political attitudes in intractable conflicts (e.g., Halperin et al. 2011;
Halperin et al. 2014). The sixth focuses on the strategic use of emotions to effect foreign policy outcomes (Zahariadis 2003, 2005; Petersen 2012). The seventh scrutinizes the use of emotion to mobilize and demobilize members of social movements involved in protest politics (e.g., Aminzade and McAdam 2001; Jasper 1997).

At present, the aforementioned literatures on emotions and politics rarely speak to each other. They define and conceptualize emotion differently, vary in focus and level of analysis, and consider how different types of emotions unfold in different contexts. Perhaps most important, they have not clarified what it means for emotion to be “manipulated,” and to demonstrate whether it has worked (Brader et al. 2011, 393). This brings to the fore the need for an analytical framework that will: clearly delineate the subfield of politics and emotional regulation at the intersection between political leaders and the general public; encompass the variety of specific emotions and forms of emotion regulation; unite features that are common to many different approaches to emotion; and provide a theoretical context for future research.

Such a framework would enable us to understand the processes by which politicians and the policies they design may become valued or devalued for reasons unrelated to their ability to affect goals (Edelman 1964, 1988; Jones, Thomas, and Wolfe 2014; Maor 2014a, b). As political actors look for emotion regulation opportunities, their activities transform the course of action for governments and for other players in domestic and world politics, and powerfully influence who is seen as deserving of what, and why (e.g., Schneider and Ingram 1993, 1997, 2005), who is capable of doing what, and why, how and when things ought to be done, and by whom success or failure is determined. Integrated in this process is the interaction of emotional information with the
power of the politicians to establish different types of political actions (i.e., what politicians say and what they do) and public policies (Westen 2007), as well as different types of policy goals, tools, and audiences (Schneider 2013), and thereby, the direction and pace of political change. The development of a conceptual framework that maps this dynamic process would nicely complement William Riker’s (1986) seminal contribution regarding political manipulation by agenda control, strategic voting, and manipulation of dimensions which is concerned with cognitive rather than emotional processes. Such a framework would also direct attention to the most prevalent theoretical approach in political science – the theory of affective intelligence (Marcus and MacKuen 1993; Marcus 1988).

This article proceeds as follows. The first section elaborates on the concepts of emotion generation and emotion regulation. The second section examines why politicians and policy makers might want to regulate others’ emotions. The third section describes the process model of emotion regulation. The fourth section maps the literature using the process model of emotion regulation. The fifth section reviews what is known about emotion regulation efficacy. Finally, the sixth section describes promising possibilities for future research.

**EMOTION GENERATION AND EMOTION REGULATION**

Emotions such as anger, fear, happiness, and sadness are an important part of daily experience. Across situations, these emotions can vary substantially in their intensity (e.g., from a mild to a hysterical response), duration (e.g., from a particular moment in time to a particular time interval), and speed of emergence and decline (e.g., from fractions of a second to seconds or even minutes) (Suri et al. 2013).
Contemporary scholars usually define emotions by focusing on three core features. First, emotions are generated in the context of meaningful situations. The meaning of these situations may be enduring or fleeting, biologically-based or culturally-derived, personal or widely shared. When attended to and evaluated with respect to one’s goals, these situations can give rise to emotional responses. Second, emotions are multifaceted phenomena, comprised of subjective aspects (i.e., feeling), behavioral aspects (which include relatively rapid changes in the face and posture, in addition to relatively slower instrumental behaviors), as well as physiological aspects, which provide metabolic support for these behavioral changes. Third, emotions are malleable: although they may disturb what one is doing and impose themselves on one’s awareness, they are not obligatory, and can thus usually be regulated (Frijda 1986).

To illustrate emotions in a political context, consider the anger felt by numerous Americans over President Barack Obama’s health policy, labeled Obamacare. This response may have involved strong negative emotions of some policymakers and members of the general public, coupled at times (e.g., during anti-government protests) with changes in emotion experience, activity of the muscles of face and body, as well as changes in motivational and metabolic processes that support anticipated and actual behavioral responses. Whether the emotion of anger is useful or not in this particular context depends on one’s perspective regarding both the merits of Obamacare and the most effective strategy either for supporting or blocking this health care policy.

When emotions are judged to be unhelpful, people may make efforts to change the emotions that they and others feel and express. *Emotion regulation* may be defined in
this context as the activation of a goal to up- or down-regulate the magnitude, duration and/or quality of the emotional response (Gross et al. 2011; Gross 2014).³

When discussing emotion regulation, several important distinctions need to be made. First, one must ask whose emotions are being regulated, and by whom? In particular, the emotion regulation goal may be activated in oneself (intrinsic regulation) or in someone else (extrinsic regulation). For our purposes here, our main focus will be extrinsic regulation. Illuminating in this regard is the distinction between short-term hedonic goals and “instrumental” (Tamir 2009) motives for emotion regulation which are perceived to lead to longer-term benefits (e.g., Tamir et al. 2008). For our purposes here, our main focus will be on instrumental goals which are perceived to lead to short- and/or long-term benefits for emotional entrepreneurs. Second, one must ask why emotions are being regulated. Sometimes the alteration in the emotion is an end in itself, such as when a president visits the site of a natural disaster and offers comfort. Here the goal is to down-regulate people’s sadness, fear, and anger following a natural disaster so that they feel less devastated. At other times, however, an emotion regulation goal is merely a means for achieving some other valued end – for example, political actors may up-regulate people’s anger concerning a tax policy in order to mobilize support for the policy to be terminated. Third, one must ask what strategy is being used to regulate emotion. A consideration of the various strategies used to regulate emotions will be a major focus in the sections that follow, but first we need to consider why political actors might want to engage in emotion regulation.

WHY DO POLITICIANS AND POLICYMAKERS REGULATE EMOTIONS?
Many politicians are strategic actors. When they act in the political system, they know that emotions can affect opinion formation (e.g., Brader 2005, 2006; Druckman and McDermott 2008; Huddy et al. 2007; Lerner et al. 2003; MacKuen et al. 2010; Small et al. 2006), attention and learning (e.g., Brader 2005, 2006; Brader et al. 2008; Huddy et al. 2007; MacKuen et al. 2010; Geva and Shorick 2006; Redlawsk et al. 2007), and political action (e.g., Marcus et al. 2006; Brader, Valentino and Suhay 2008; Valentino et al. 2011). When they act in global politics, they know that emotions can effect ethnic hostility (Kaufman 2001), deterrence (Mercer 2005, 2010), reputation and signaling (Mercer 1996; 2010), nuclear proliferation (Hymans 2006), conflict resolution and post-conflict reconciliation (Hutchison and Bleiker 2008; Halperin 2014), and the eruption of wars (Löwenheim and Heimann 2008). They also know that negative emotions have distinct effects on public opinion regarding terror and war-related policy choices (e.g., Bleiker and Hutchison 2008; Huddy et al. 2005; Skitka et al. 2006; Small et al. 2006) and on electoral campaigns and mass media (e.g., Brader et al. 2010; Gross and D’Ambrosio 2004; Gross 2008; Miller 2007).

Understanding the impact of emotions leads politicians to compete for control of the emotional arena. The “prize” of this competition is the power to regulate one or more of three types of expressions of emotions, elicited by political candidates, political groups, public policies, politically-relevant events, and even specific objects or symbols in the political system and in world politics: individual emotions, group-based emotions that derive from the emotional experiences of an individual in response to group-related events (e.g., Smith, 1993; Mackie et al. 2000; Iyer and Leach 2008), and collective
emotions that arise when the society as a whole, or its part thereof, experience the emotions (e.g., Niedenthal and Brauer 2012; Stephan and Stephan 2000).

The power to regulate emotions in the political system includes quantitative as well as qualitative dimensions. The former refers to attempts to increase (up-regulate) or decrease (down-regulate) a particular emotion, such as fear or anger; the latter, to attempts at changing the type of emotion (e.g., anxiety into anger).

Politicians regulate emotions in order to influence perceptions, preferences, and vote choices, as well as to exercise public authority to achieve substantive ends. The goal of affecting political and policy contestations may be short-term changes in the aforementioned attributes, as well as durable shifts caused by reconfiguration of emotions and emotional experiences. For this reason, emotion regulation in political and policy environments features a distinct set of players, strategies, and dynamics.

In the context of highly dynamic polities and modern political life, a successful emotion regulation strategy has pervasive and profound effects. It shapes the nature of interaction within states, that is, between politicians and voters, between politicians and organized interests, between politicians and other policy actors. It influences mass political behavior, the activities of interest groups, and public policies. A successful strategy also shapes interactions between states. Overall, emotion regulation profoundly changes the contours of political and public policy contests and therefore creates politics and policies. It advantages the set of political actors who recognize the potential role of emotion regulation, alongside the role of institutional and agenda manipulation, and who master the use of tools and strategies employed throughout this process. It disadvantages politicians whose attempts to regulate emotion backfire, for example, when people who
value autonomy feel they are being manipulated and this, in turn, provokes a reaction which undermines the aims of those who are perceived by the public as the manipulators.

For political scientists wishing to understand how emotion regulation influences politics and policies, the profound role of emotion regulation in political arenas has two main implications. First, it indicates that it is essential to explore emotion regulation strategies and their effects at the domestic and global levels if we are to gauge the full spectrum of those who participate in political and policy processes, how, and with what impact. Second, it solidifies the rationale for concentrating on how political and policy actors seek to control the public sphere.

THE PROCESS MODEL OF EMOTION REGULATION

In a political context, emotional entrepreneurs face the challenge of influencing which emotions the general public and policy makers have towards a given political candidate or a public policy, when they feel them, and how they experience or express them. The basic logic of their actions can be understood when one takes into account two factors: first, that political and policy processes involve evaluation and behavior by members of the general public and policymakers with limited cognitive capacity to execute mental operations (Simon 1978; Pashler 1998); and second, that “attention requires capacity, and the amount of capacity required increases from early to late modes of attention” (Johnston and Heintz 1978, 432). Taken together, these factors suggest that engaging in extrinsic emotion regulation may be a very effective means of influencing responses to a given candidate or policy. This premise is equally relevant under “hot cognition” conditions, that is, when all cognitive objects are linked to affective tags in
long-term memory via associative network, and therefore emotion influences political information processing automatically (Lodge and Taber 2013).

In what follows we offer a conceptual framework that highlights a psychological perspective on the ways emotion regulation happens during political and policy processes. It draws upon Gross’s (1998a) process model of emotion regulation, which helps to organize the numerous forms of emotion regulation at the individual level. The framework advanced here specifies five stages which represent five families of emotion regulation processes, namely, situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. These families may be distinguished according to when in the emotion-generative process they have their main impact (Sheppes and Gross, in press; see Figure 1).

[Figure 1 about here]

Situation selection consists of efforts by emotional entrepreneurs to modify the political or policy situation members of the public and/or policymakers encounter in order to increase or decrease the likelihood that certain emotions will arise. This family of emotion regulation strategies is best captured in the attempts by emotional entrepreneurs to influence the decision of these individuals to either approach or avoid an encounter with the political candidate’s personality traits, principles, and policy positions, or the policy goals, policy tools, or target populations, by hiding them from sight or masking them. Because this strategy occurs before individuals enter into an emotional situation, it is the most forward-looking attempt at emotion regulation. An example is a government policy which erects roadblocks to catch drivers with tax debts. The anger among large segments of society that is likely to be generated by this policy may be regulated by
emotional entrepreneurs in a call to drivers to use public transport during this tax campaign. Another instance is when emotional entrepreneurs in government significantly limit public access to sites, people, and information related to the policy goals, the policy tools or the target populations (‘t Hart 1993). A salient example is the detention in relocation camps of more than 100,000 people of Japanese descent living on the West Coast of the United States during the Second World War.

*Situation modification* refers to efforts emotional entrepreneurs make to modify the external features of the political or policy situation in order to alter its emotional impact. So even if one approaches the political candidate or policy, the emotional information may be regulated by changing certain characteristics of the external political or policy situation. An example is the timing of the business cycle by Republican presidents so that economic growth is produced just before elections for which voters, whose “feel-good” factor outweigh their concerns about rising inequality following GOP presidents’ policies, reward them (Bartel 2008).

*Attentional deployment* refers to attempts by emotional entrepreneurs to change the direction of attention towards a political candidate or policy after the emotional situation has been encountered in order to change their emotional impact. This activity is undertaken primarily by cognitive means, especially distraction. *Distraction* refers to efforts by emotional entrepreneurs to direct attention either away from the emotional aspects of a political candidate’s personality traits, principles and policy positions, or policy goals, policy tools, and target populations, mainly by producing independent neutral thought content (Van Dillen and Koole 2007). An example of the use of distraction in order to reduce public anger is the decision by Israeli Prime Minister,
Benjamin Netanyahu to release Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in exchange for 1,027 Hamas terrorists in the midst of the social unrest amongst Israel’s middle class. Another example, by same prime minister, is the decision to bring the world’s largest fire-fighting aircraft, the “Evergreen” Boeing 747 supertanker from the U.S., when Israel’s worst ever forest fire was already waning.

**Cognitive change** consists of efforts by emotional entrepreneurs to change the meaning of a political candidate’s personality traits, principles, and policy positions, or policy goals, policy tools, and target populations, in a way that alters their emotional impact. They do so by changing how members of the general public or policymakers make sense of these political or policy features and/or about their capacity to manage them. The most studied form of cognitive change is reappraisal, which involves an attempt to change the meaning of an event in order to influence emotional responses to an event (Gross 2001, 2002; Gross and Thompson 2007; van Zomeren et al. 2012). An example of cognitive change is the attempts of U.S. Senator James Inhofe (Oklahoma) to frame climate change as a hoax, using rhetoric “that was often visceral, hyperbolic, and shrill […]” (Cox and Béland 2013, 318). This strategy “encouraged people to make reflexive judgments, filter out conflicting information, and thereby foreclose careful thought about the relations between scientific knowledge and policy outcomes” (Cox and Béland 2013, 318).

**Response modulation** refers to changing one or more of the experiential, behavioral, or physiological components of the activated emotion response towards a political candidate’s personality traits, principles and policy positions, or policy goals, policy tools, and target populations, in the final stage of the emotion generating process.
in order to change its emotional impact. One form of response modulation is expressive suppression (e.g., Richards and Gross 1999, 2000), which refers to efforts to suppress emotional behavior. An example is the dismantling by the Hong Kong Police of the “Occupy Central” protest site in Hong Kong, bringing to an end almost three months of intense, pro-democracy demonstration.

The process model of emotion regulation provides an overarching framework for analyzing the actions of emotional entrepreneurs. The different stages in the model represent a cycle of stages that is activated repeatedly during an emotion. For example, a fear response to a political candidate, generated by a smear campaign operated by a rival candidate, may lead one to quickly withdraw one’s support from the candidate and then subsequently look for another candidate to support. The individual’s “emotional response” contains all these different responses, perceptions, and actions. However, they are represented in the model with a few cycles of the situation-attention-appraisal-response sequence, each of which may successively influence the situation that gave rise to the emotion in the first place (as indicated by the arrow in Figure 1).

**Mapping the Literature Using the Process Model of Emotion Regulation**

In the following sub-sections, we draw attention to the three major families of emotion regulation processes that have been explored to date in the political arena.

**Situation Selection**

Most research on emotion regulation in political settings (often explicitly termed emotion manipulation) focuses on *situation selection*. This strategy often revolves around
increasing exposure to emotional appeals in order to evoke a particular emotion in the target audience (Kaid and Johnston 1991, 56).

Focusing on the tone of election campaigns, communication scholars have explored multiple forms of emotional appeal (Marmor-Lavie and Weimann 2005) and claimed that spot viewing influences perceptions and judgments of candidate likeability (for a comprehensive review of this literature see Kaid 2004; Kaid and Chanslor 2004), that the best medium for emotion initiation is television (Way and Masters 1996), that there is a reliance on emotional appeals in both negative and positive ads (Kaid and Johnston 1991), that the most popular strategy in negative ads appears to be humor or ridicule (Kaid and Johnston 1991), and that the use of emotional appeals undermines rational and issue-based voting and therefore reduces the quality of voter decision making (Goren 1997; Marmor-Lavie and Weimann 2005) and undermines the values inherent in liberal democracy (Dermody and Scullion 2003).

Political science scholars have demonstrated that voters behave differently in different emotional states (e.g., Marcus 2000), that fear-arousing rhetoric may be selectively deployed to support political purposes (De Castella et al. 2009; De Castella and McGarty 2011; see also: Burkitt 2005; Jeritt 2004; Weber 2012), that politicians will have greater ability to use fear for their purposes when a citizenry’s psychological profile makes it less motivated or able to adapt to fear appeals (Lupia and Menning 2009), that political ads in the 2000 U.S. presidential campaign elicited five emotions, namely, anger, fear, enthusiasm, pride and compassion (Brader 2006), that political ads using non-verbal emotional cues to evoke emotions (particularly enthusiasm and fear) can change the way citizens get involved and therefore can promote democratically desirable behavior.
(Brader 2005), and that leaders and citizen groups in the U.S. manipulate emotions to polarize the electorate (McDermott 2011).

In addition, Ridout and Franz (2011) have demonstrated that televised ads influence people’s voting choice, with greater influence on those who are the least informed about politics, and that tone and emotional appeals are not the same; hence, anger appeal can be found in both negative and positive ads. They have also found an inconsistent pattern of results with regard to the impact of fear and anger ads – sometimes they benefit their sponsors and sometimes they are ineffective (see also Calantone and Warshaw 1985; LaTour and Pitts 1989, Mueller 2006; Torres et al. 2012), and a consistent pattern regarding promotional ads and appeals to enthusiasm – they never result in a backlash. Ridout and Franz (2011) concluded, as did Lau, Sigelman and Rovner (2007), that we do not know whether negative ads “work”. The core message is that, compared to no regulation, situation selection in campaign advertising leads to greater or lesser liking of political candidates by the general public, voting for political candidates, participation in politics, vigilance in political interactions, reliance on contemporary evaluation, persuasion and activation of existing loyalties (e.g., Brader 2005, 2006).

Relatedly, scholars of social movements have shown that situation selection is undertaken by the strategic use of threats and blame (Jasper 1997; 2006a, b; Jasper and Poulsen 1995). Threats are intended to produce negative emotions such as anger and outrage, and blame is intended to suggest targets against which these emotions could generate injustice frames (see also Vanderford 1989). And scholars of international relations have embraced the manipulation of fear in the study of conflict processes. For
example, the politics of fear has been addressed by numerous scholars of post-conflict societies, divided by the pain of past or current injustices and by emotions derived from traumatic events (Ahmed 2004; Brown 1995; Butler 2004; Holes 2004). The phenomenon of interest in these studies has been the extension of fear to broader social relations, that is, to society at large. In addition, Petersen (2011) has developed an analytical framework to explain variations in Western intervention in the Balkans by the strategic use of emotions by political entrepreneurs. Although not much variation in intervention strategies was recorded, the analytical framework directly engaged with the notion that violence creates anger and fear, stigma leads to contempt and hatred, and status reversals to resentment. By angering those who have a clear ethnic identity, political entrepreneurs can produce retaliation and begin a spiral of violence, which, in turn, will elicit the desired Western intervention. In other words, by changing the level of violence, political entrepreneurs change the power of this emotion as a strategic resource and thereby its effectiveness in eliciting the desired intervention.

Relatedly, Ross (2014) has argued that, as a “circulation of affect” in the context of social interaction accumulates over time, social actors are exposed to new combinations of emotions and, consequently, emotions are decoupled from their original objects and become attached to new objects and meanings. For example, in the aftermath of 9/11, government-sponsored acts of racial profiling contributed to the invention of the terrorist enemy as a racialized synthesis of Arab, Muslim, and Middle Eastern phenotype and cultural stereotype, and this, in turn, has influenced public tolerance for the use of force. And Zahariadis (2003, 2005) has demonstrated that foreign policy entrepreneurs – in this case, Greek politicians who responded to the breakup of the Yugoslav federation –
used political symbols to generate emotions and convey the meaning of policy images. When successful, images loaded with emotional meaning have found a receptive political audience thus increasing their role in the policy process. Emotional manipulation has been facilitated when affect was high and cognitive meaning not well specified.

**Cognitive Change**

*Cognitive change* is most commonly used to decrease negative emotion. An attempt to directly negate fear appeals or reduce negative emotion may also be on the strategic menu of emotional entrepreneurs. The aim is to negate or reduce the effects of provocative messages, conveying direct threats that are derived from a “dangerous” candidate in order to turn voters away from him or her. Calantone and Warshaw (1985) focused on two negation strategies, namely, denying the validity of fear-inducing charges and counterattacking the opponent who raised this association. They found that fear-inducing charges by a credible source reduced the attacked candidate’s vote, but this effect was fully offset when a second credible source denied that the charges were valid or levied a counterattack. When both negation strategies are simultaneously employed, the attacked candidate’s vote increased above its pre-attack level.

Cognitive change has also received attention by scholars of social movements. For example, Gamson (1992) claims that for protest behavior to emerge, an “injustice frame” should be activated. Such frames comprise ideas and symbols that allow members and activists to construct their grievances through a sense of moral indignation. This process involves cognitive change which provides evaluations about how significant a specific problem is, what a fair solution of this problem is, and how the problem could be alleviated or resolved by social movement activities. Emotion regulation plays a key role
in this process because such frames depend on “the righteous anger that puts fire in the belly and iron in the soul” (Gamson 1992, 32). A successful up-regulation of anger may lead to increased willingness of activists to challenge whatever perceived harm or suffering they have encountered. In addition, activist leaders are often engaged in managing and mitigating emotions such as fear of arrest and death in order to facilitate grass-roots participation in high-risk protest action. Goodwin and Pfaff (2001) demonstrated that civil rights activists in the United States and East Germany used mass gatherings, rituals, shaming, new collective identities and the possession of guns in order to reduce participants’ fears. Gun possession, for example, could modify one’s appraisal of a situation in order to alter its emotional impact.

Another context in which cognitive change has received attention is in studies of intractable conflicts (Halperin 2014; Halperin et al. 2011). For example, in the context of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a nationwide survey of Jewish-Israeli adults was conducted. This survey assessed both cognitive change and attitudes toward providing humanitarian aid to Palestinian citizens. Israelis who regulated their negative emotions using cognitive change were more supportive of providing humanitarian aid than Israelis who did not use cognitive change (Halperin and Gross 2011). A second study from this same research group randomized Israeli participants either to a cognitive change training condition or to a control condition just before the Palestinian UN bid in 2011. One week after the training, participants who had been trained to use cognitive change showed greater support for conciliatory policies and less support for aggressive policies towards Palestinians than control participants. These effects were still evident five months later, and at each time point, negative emotion mediated the effects of cognitive change on
conflict-related attitudes (Halperin et al. 2013). Studies of cognitive change have also addressed intractable conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina (e.g., Čehajić-Clancy et al. 2011), Cyprus (e.g., Halperin et al. 2012), Northern Ireland (Moeschberger et al. 2005) and other contexts.

Response Modulation

Response modulation is most commonly used to teach new rules of emotion expression. Goodwin and Pfaff (2001) have demonstrated that U.S. civil rights activists engaged in “emotion work” aimed at creating (or suppressing) various emotions, fear included. Emotional work is undertaken, amongst others, by rhetoric (Robnett 1997), day-to-day interaction with the target audience in order to build emotional loyalty necessary for persuasion (Lofland 1996), socialization, i.e., teaching new emotion rules (Hochschild 1979) which make the expression of certain emotions, such as anger, acceptable (Taylor and Whittier 1995), and the creation of institutions that promote and legitimize the expression of emotions (Morgen 1995). Making a particular emotion acceptable may trigger a process by which activists or would-be activists recognize that the collective fails to experience the emotions that are appropriate for the event, and consequently, they take on the burden of feeling that emotion (Goldenberg, Saguy, and Halperin 2014). This process of emotional burden, which may explain collective action, compliments models in which emotions are considered as a motivational source for collective action (e.g., Van Zomeren et al. 2008). Relatedly, making a particular emotion acceptable may also impact the communication of an emotional entrepreneur’s thoughts and intentions because emotions serve a very important functional role in these processes (e.g., Le Bon 1960/1895; Van Kleef 2009; Van Kleef et al. 2010).
Altering emotional responses once they have been elicited by emotional socialization (Aminzade and McAdam 2001, 39) is also undertaken by addressing the “social epistemologies of emotion” (Thoits 1989), that is, the beliefs regarding different aspects of emotions (e.g., who is likely to experience what kinds of emotions, the dynamics of emotional contagion, and so on). Gould (2009) has nicely described the historical process of emotion work in gay and lesbian movements which has changed how they feel about themselves and others, and how emotions should be interpreted and expressed.

EMOTION REGULATION EFFICACY IN POLITICAL AND POLICY SETTINGS

Of course, just because emotion regulation is attempted doesn’t mean it will succeed. Some attempts to regulate emotions are doomed to fail because the levels of emotional intensity are overwhelmingly high (Sheppes and Gross, in press). Others may fail or backfire because emotional entrepreneurs do not accurately track ongoing or anticipated emotional responses generated by a candidate or policy, fail to activate an emotion regulating strategy on time, fail to employ the most appropriate strategy, or make a mistake in the selection of the emotion regulatory goal (Gross 2013).

Contextual factors, such as place, technology, demography and history, may also play an inhibiting role. For example, an attempt by emotional entrepreneurs to down-regulate collective guilt generated from a public policy in a country whose dominant groups have experienced collective guilt as a consequence of being confronted with ingroup-perpetrated immoral historical events may not be as successful as the same strategy employed in a country which did not experience collective guilt. Still, under
some conditions, emotion regulation goals set by emotional entrepreneurs may be realistic and attainable. This raises the question of which emotion regulation strategies may be more effective than others. In the context of the political domain, as elsewhere, *effectiveness* refers to a strategy’s success at achieving the initial emotion regulation goal per unit of effort expended (Sheppes and Gross, in press).

In the process model described above, the five families of emotion regulation processes may be categorized according to when in the emotion-generative process they have their primary impact (Sheppes and Gross, in press). If a politician is likely to generate an emotional impact, which is a target for emotion regulation by emotional entrepreneurs, it is reasonable to expect that employing a strategy that diverts the potential emotional trajectory before the politicians’ emotional impact on attitudes and behavior is fully developed, will tend to operate quickly and efficiently, compared to the employment of strategies later on in the process model. The same holds for a public policy. If a public policy is likely to generate an emotional impact which is a target for emotion regulation by emotional entrepreneurs, employing situation selection will tend to be quicker and more efficient than utilizing the other emotion regulation strategies.

Continuing with this rationale, if a political candidate or public policy is likely to generate an emotional impact, emotional entrepreneurs should take into account that some emotion regulation strategies may be employed before the emotion has had an impact on attitudes and behavior of individuals, or afterwards. Specifically, situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment and cognitive change may be considered *antecedent-focused strategies* because they may gain their maximum impact when they start operating early in the process of emotion generation (Gross 1998b). In
other words, they operate on an individual’s emotions before the process of emotion generation has had a full impact on the individual’s attitudes and behavior. By contrast, response modulation falls under the category of response-focused strategies because it starts later in this process, when the individual’s response is well-developed (Gross 1998b). Based on Sheppes and Gross’s (in press) insight regarding the variance in the effectiveness of the aforementioned strategies, one may argue that antecedent-focused strategies are generally more effective than response-focused strategies in up- or down regulating emotions derived from a political candidate or public policy.

The idea advanced here is that policy scholars should pit one strategy against another on the basis of the assumption that a strategy that alters the emotion trajectory early on should be more effective than a strategy (or a set of strategies) which intervenes later (Sheppes and Gross, in press). It is expected that the relative costs of strategies that intervene earlier will be lower than those that intervene later on, and thus have to deal with the fully developed consequences of emotion generation.

Focusing on changes in emotions generated from a political candidate or public policy raises an intriguing set of conceptual and empirical challenges related to the strength of an emotion stimulus, the specific emotions generated (e.g., anger, fear, disgust), the specific groups of emotions generated (e.g., positive/negative), and the intensity of emotions an emotional entrepreneur is facing when regulating. Each of these factors may help to explain and predict the effectiveness of emotion regulation. Scholars of politics and policy could evaluate the effectiveness of emotion regulation strategies employed by emotional entrepreneurs under different emotion strengths, different emotions, different groups of emotions, and varying emotion intensity.
Students of politics and policy could test the claim that the later the emotion regulatory process occurs in the emotion-generative process, the more likely it is to be affected by the level of emotional intensity (Sheppes and Gross 2011). Applying the same logic while focusing on the level of effort emotional entrepreneurs need to employ in order to replace existing and incoming emotional information, one could test the claim that emotion regulation strategies employed by emotional entrepreneurs at an early stage in the emotion-generative process are unlikely to be affected by the level of emotional intensity because they replace existing and incoming emotional information with minimal effort, and are therefore expected to operate quickly and efficiently. By contrast, emotion regulation strategies employed by emotional entrepreneurs at a later stage of the emotion-generative process are likely to be affected by the level of emotional intensity because of the effort required to replace existing and incoming emotional information, and are therefore expected to operate slowly and inefficiently (Sheppes and Gross 2011).

Scholars of politics may also pit one emotion regulation strategy against the other insofar as the valence of emotions (i.e., positive/negative) or specific emotions (e.g., fear, disgust) are concerned. In addition, each emotion regulation strategy (or set of strategies) may be subject to in-depth analysis. Perhaps the ideal candidate for such an exercise is cognitive change, because the operationalization and measurement of a change in the interpretation of an emotional stimulus in a way that modifies its emotional impact is part and parcel of the tool-box of constructivist scholars.

Furthermore, some strategies may be effective in the short run, whilst others may be more productive in the long-run. Going back to the Israeli example of the Boeing 747 supertanker, the distraction may have blocked public anger during the first days of its
arrival, but very quickly, public anger over preparedness matters emerged and was directed at the incompetence of the Minister of Interior, the Minister of the Treasury, and the Prime Minister. Bringing the supertanker was therefore very effective in the short run and maladaptive in the medium- and long run because of the prolonged public attention focused on the devastation caused by the fire. One might therefore test a claim that the strategy of distraction is likely to be effective in the short term, but its regulatory consequences will tend to evaporate quickly.

By contrast, employing emotion regulation strategies late in the emotion-generative process, which is likely to involve relatively high emotional intensity, may be costly to activate yet may produce long-term benefits. Late regulation strategies, such as reappraisal, require much effort from emotional entrepreneurs. Members of the general public and policymakers must be persuaded to engage and understand the emotion derived from a candidate or policy, and perhaps also its consequences. Once the emotional situation is attended and understood, the meaning of the emotional situation may be significantly altered. Such a strategy may therefore have short term costs but long term benefits. One may therefore test the claim that emotion regulation strategies employed by emotional entrepreneurs later in the political or policy process might have short term costs but long term benefits. Our discussion of emotional regulation effectiveness could also be widened to include individual differences (e.g., gender), group differences (e.g., hegemonic vs. subservient), as well as cultural and geographic ones. In addition, it is clear that the aforementioned list of emotion regulation strategies is not exhaustive. To complement this list, scholars of emotion regulation, public policy,
political science and international relations are encouraged to identify other possible emotion regulation strategies.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The paper’s main contributions are to direct attention to how emotions can be regulated so as to help politicians, policymakers, and other actors operating in domestic and global political domains benefit from what is useful, but avoid what is not, and to offer a conceptual framework for organizing and directing research on extrinsic emotion regulation processes within and between states. We have used Gross’s (2014) process model of emotion regulation in order to highlight the large number of regulatory strategies available to political and policy actors who wish to influence others’ emotions. We have relied on this process model because it has proven to be helpful in the study of emotion regulation at the individual level in healthy and clinical populations.

We have distinguished five families of emotion regulation processes that have their primary impact at different points in the emotion-generative process, and suggested that emotion regulation strategies can target each of these unfolding stages. We have also mapped the literature using the process model of emotion regulation and showed that most research to date has largely focused on three families of emotion regulation processes, namely situation selection, cognitive change and response modulation. In addition, we have proposed that antecedent-focused emotion regulation strategies that are initiated before the emotion generative response is sufficiently developed may be more effective than response-focused regulation strategies that try to fight off a well-established emotional response, and that the effectiveness of emotion regulation strategies may depend on the resources required by the underlying regulatory strategy; the
emotional intensity of the impulse one is regulating; and whether a strategy targets a short

term or long term goal.

In reviewing the relevant literature, we have pointed to additional work needed on
situation selection, cognitive change, and response modulation, and we have identified
the pressing need for work on situation modification and attentional deployment in
political contexts. Ongoing opportunities exist in virtually every area of inquiry into
emotion regulation. For example, scholar may examine the efficacy of the following
attention deployment strategies: (i) distraction; (ii) thought suppression, which involves
efforts not to think about a certain emotional content (e.g., Wegner 1994); (iii)
rumination, which involves attempts to ask “big questions” (Why are we sad? Why do
these bad things happen to us?) regarding negative events, in order to direct attention
inward with an abstract, rather than action, orientation (e.g., Watkins 2008), and (iv)
mindfulness, which involves effort at directing attention to the immediate here and now
aspects with an orientation of acceptance (Bishop et al. 2004).

Scholars may also define and dimensionalize each of the emotion regulation
strategies, differentiating it from related constructs, and developing empirical measures.
More work is needed to understand how emotion regulation is employed; the underlying
process that allow it to create value for emotional entrepreneurs, and how to evaluate it
more effectively. In order to get inside the heads of these entrepreneurs, scholars also
need to broaden their methodological toolbox and develop research designs that
incorporate lab experiments, the use of electroencephalographic (EEG) techniques,
functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and other biologically oriented analyses,
the use of interventions outside the lab, such as conveying messages through the
education system (e.g., Bar-Tal and Rosen 2009), dialogue groups (e.g., Maoz 2011), drama shows and soap operas (e.g., Paluck 2009), and the use of reappraisal training (or not – control group) to survey participants (Halperin et al. 2013; Halperin 2014). Experimental techniques as well as agent-based modeling could generate findings and hypotheses, some of which may be examined in the real world of national and international politics, preferably by using different methods of data collection.

Given that emotion regulation can affect the general public in a particular state or globally, as well as specific groups in society, scholars might wish to demonstrate how emotion regulation operates at these levels at a number of different stages in the policymaking process. Scholars may also examine the role of time in designing studies, and consider, for example, how and why emotional entrepreneurs employ specific strategies in particular time periods, why emotion regulation strategies change and evolve over time, how changes in the identity of emotional entrepreneurs affect their strategies, how changes in the time horizons of emotional entrepreneurs influence their emotion regulation strategies, and how different macro-social factors influence emotional entrepreneurs and their effects in different historical periods. Scholars may also examine the processes by which emotion regulation strategies are built, maintained and repaired. In other words, more work is needed in order to gauge how emotion regulation strategies are managed.

Our framework could also be used to further the most prevalent theoretical approach in political science – the theory of affective intelligence (Marcus and MacKuen 1993; Marcus 1988) – with its now widely adopted three-dimensional structural account of affective appraisals (that is, enthusiasm, anxiety and aversion/anxiety) which has
generated novel hypotheses regarding dimensions of political participation; attention, learning, reliance on contemporary considerations, and defensive and aggressive actions to protect extant identifications and convictions (e.g., Brader 2006, Marcus et al. 2000; Marcus and MacKuen 1993; Huddy et al. 2007, MacKuen et al. 2010). Scholars may examine emotion regulation in familiar but punishing environments as compared to other environments in order to gauge the nuanced operation of the disposition system with regard to the activation of feelings of anger and frustrations. How does emotion regulation impact the ability of the disposition system to track responses to familiar situations, and how do emotion entrepreneurs make use of these abilities? How does emotion regulation work in the case of enthusiasm and satisfaction generated by familiar and rewarding environments?

Scholars seeking to theorize about and test the role of emotions in world politics, especially the processes through which individual emotions become collective and political (Crawford 2014; Mercer 2014), may analyze the use of emotion regulation to “scale up” or “scale down” emotions between the individual, societal, governmental and nation-state levels. In international relations theory, the way emotions move from one level to another is still not clear (Stein 2013, 387; Hutchison and Bleiker 2014, 499), perhaps because it is not evident how important agency is in the explanations of emotion-driven international outcomes. Once we move away from structural explanations and identify the agency involved, we are able to explain threat perceptions by integrating emotion regulation. Scholars should therefore pit traditional explanations of threat perception – the constructivist, the sociological institutionalist, and the psychological explanations which ignore the role of emotion in threat perception (e.g., cognitive biases
and heuristics, loss aversion, framing and risk propensity) – against our explanation in order to gauge the comparative advantage of each.

Scholars of international politics and emotion may also build in emotion regulation as a driver for threat perception by looking at the way it is used to bolster the credibility of deterrent threats, especially its success in the emotional loading of the likelihood of a threat. Scholars may also build emotion regulation into the analysis of attempts to promote international interventions or institutionalize emotions in peace and war systems, as well as in other forms of strategic interactions. Focusing on diverse strategic contexts of foreign policy decisions, scholars may examine the deliberate production of emotions, such as empathy, in formal and informal diplomatic negotiations amongst members of security communities (Adler and Barnett 1998), or fear, during (cold or hot) wars.

Theorizing the actual process and the specific mechanisms that render emotion political at the regional and global levels enables scholars to focus on specific emotions which are manipulated for specific purpose by specific actors using specific strategies during specific periods. Conceived in this way, one can move away from the view that emotion can explain only deviations from rationality, and towards the use of emotion to explain accurate judgments as well as erroneous ones (Mercer 2005). This understanding of the relations between emotion regulation, perception and decision making opens an important research agenda for scholars of international relations and emotions. This agenda faces “difficult but not impossible [methodological] challenges, challenges that political psychologists have long grappled with” (Stein 2013, 387).
One reason this topic is so compelling is that often innovation in the social sciences occurs at the intersection of disciplines (Dogan and Pahre 1990). This may pose a problem when politics does not have the same currency as the other disciplines (e.g., economics). In our case, however, emotion regulation is part and parcel of power games in politics, and therefore, there is no need to engage in concept stretching (Sartori 1970) or other forms of conceptual engineering. The emergence of this new research agenda is critical to political science and international relations because it bridges a significant gap in our understanding of the competition over control of the emotional arenas in domestic and global political domains. Although scholars of political science and international relations lack a consensus on what the most interesting questions are that require solutions, the fact that this topic is directly related to the dynamics of legitimation and valuation of politicians and public policies should suffice to place it on a research agenda. Findings from studies addressing these questions promise to transform how we think about the intricate relationship within and between states.
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Figure 1. The process model of emotion regulation (reproduced with permission from Gross & Thompson, 2007).
The literature on campaign advertising has examined the effect of positive versus negative advertising (e.g., Marcus 2003; Marcus and MacKuen 1993; Macus, Neuman and MacKuen 2000; MacKeun et al. 2010; Neuman et al. 2007), discrete emotions (e.g., Valentino et al. 2011), and the combined effect of both (Huddy et al. 2007).

McDermott (2011) defined emotional entrepreneurship as “the process by which leaders strategically use outrage at opposition members to cue in-group members to participate in action against the out-group members who have committed the outrage” (p. 114). We prefer a much broader definition whose analytical reach captures also the use of humor or sarcasm, as well as other tools.

On the neural bases of emotion and emotion regulation, see Ochsner and Gross (2014).

See, for example, group-based anger (e.g., Reifen Tager et al. 2011), group-based guilt and shame (e.g., Iyer and Leach, 2008), group-based pride (e.g., Haslam et al. 2000) and group-based hope (Cohen-Chen et al. 2014). According to Smith (1993) and Mackie et al. (2000), group-based emotions are influenced by the level of identification with the group, as well as by unique appraisals of the event at hand which depend on the group member’s personality, values, and interests and by the type of event. Successful emotion regulation can affect both factors.