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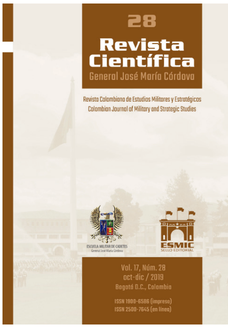

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Public attribution as a regulator of emotion: Manipulating the political effects of hostilities

La atribución pública como reguladora de emociones: manipulación de los efectos políticos de las hostilidades

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Abstract. Ascribing attribution in security and strategic studies often focuses on its technical feasibility not its political utility. This paper highlights the emotional effects of attribution. It contends that public attribution can convert the effects produced by hostile activities into favorable circumstances, regulating the emotions of domestic populations. Allocating responsibility to oneself can elicit guilt, shame, or pride, blaming an "other" is likely to elicit anger, and blaming impersonal circumstances can elicit sadness. Anger and pride can be harnessed to support escalation foreign policies. Guilt, shame, and sadness are likely to be used for de-escalation policies of restraint. Hence, attribution should be understood as an opportunity to manipulate the effects of hostile activity to one's advantage.

Keywords: attribution; emotion; escalation; politics; security; strategy

Resumen. La discusión sobre la atribución en seguridad y estudios estratégicos frecuentemente se centra en su viabilidad técnica, no en su utilidad política. Este artículo destaca los efectos emocionales de la atribución pública: sostiene que esta puede convertir los efectos de actividades hostiles en circunstancias favorables, mediante la regulación de emociones en las poblaciones domésticas. Atribuirse a sí mismo la responsabilidad puede provocar culpa, vergüenza u orgullo; culpar a "otro" genera probablemente enojo; y culpar a las circunstancias, tristeza. La ira y el orgullo se pueden aprovechar para apoyar las políticas exteriores crecientes. Es probable que la culpa, la vergüenza y la tristeza se usen para las políticas de restricción decrecientes. Por tanto, la atribución puede entenderse como una oportunidad para manipular los efectos de la actividad hostil en beneficio propio.

Palabras clave: atribución; emoción; estrategia; política; psicología; seguridad

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Introduction

Attribution is understood as the act or the process of allocating responsibility for specific activities. Issues surrounding attribution of hostile activities have recently been at the center of many discussions in security and strategic studies. In keeping with the age-old question "Who did it?", the debates about attribution often focus on the technical feasibility of the process. This emphasis is most evident in the debates related to cyberspace whose technical specifics, combined with its relative lack of geographic constraints, pose particular challenges to anyone attempting to attribute cyberattacks successfully. Nonetheless, attribution, related to more traditional domains of combat, have also motivated similar debates. Deterrence by punishment in any domain (and across domains), against any activity, requires knowing who is responsible for the activity so that, if desired, one may retaliate. Recently, attribution has been regarded as necessary, although challenging, concerning responses to terrorism, chemical attacks, poisonings, naval disputes, air sorties, or ground to air attacks.

This focus on the practical feasibility of the process is warranted, but it often comes at the expense of examining the political utility of attribution. Knowing the identity of the perpetrator is often considered a requirement for unilateral or multilateral responses, in compliance with international law. However, as Diodotus reminds us when it comes to security issues, it is more appropriate to think about them in terms of one's interests and desires as opposed to treating them like a court of law, where every piece of evidence ought to be given careful scrutiny (Thucydides, 1974, Book III, para. 44). In other words, as almost everything in security and strategic practice, the process of attribution has no inherent value –it is only relevant in terms of its consequences. Those dealing with attribution should, therefore, always keep in mind the strategist's most useful question, "so what?" (Gray, 2011, p. 80). Accordingly, instead of asking who did the activity at hand, a prudent statesman should ask who should be blamed for the hostile activity so that the consequences of this attribution are favorable to his desires.

One of the ways in which statesmen can influence the consequences of attribution is by making it public; this may take many forms, from speeches to international sessions to direct sanctions (Egloff & Wenger, 2019). The key here is for politicians to allocate responsibility for hostile activity publicly in an attempt to manipulate the opinions and beliefs of their population, their allies, or even their adversaries. Pointing out a specific actor as responsible is always challenging; the revelation needs to have at least some credibility in the eyes of the audience. If sufficient credibility is achieved and the attribution is made publicly, then it has the potential to influence the politics in both times of peace and war to the advantage of those who venture to attempt it.

The purpose of this paper is to explore this political utility by drawing attention to the potential emotional effects of public attribution. Emotions are understood here as a complex amalgamation of feelings and cognitive aspects, elicited by one's appraisal of reality. As such, emotions constitute a powerful psychological force, which influence not only human thinking but also their behavior. In the words of one famous psychologist, when it comes to cognitive processes, “Emotions are prime candidates for turning a thinking being into an actor.” (Frijda, Manstead & Bem, 2000, p. 3). Thus, when using attribution in emotion regulation, statesmen may be able to negate the psychological effects of adversary’s hostile activities or even gain support for their policies, whether escalating or otherwise.

The importance of emotions has already been recognized in various sub-fields of political science. A growing body of literature has begun to examine the importance of emotions in domestic politics and foreign policies. In domestic politics, emotions are often studied in terms of their impact on electoral behavior, political campaigns, or support for specific policies (Garry, 2014; Meier, Schmid, & Stutzer, 2019; Wang, Leviston, Hurlstone, Lawrence & Walker, 2018; Weber, 2012). In international relations, the role of emotions is studied in diplomacy, war, coercion, conflict termination and escalation, and in many other areas (Ariffin, 2016; Crawford, 2000, 2013, 2014, Hall, 2015; Markwica, 2018; McDermot, Lopez, & Hatemi, 2017; Mercer, 2010, 2013, Ross, 2014). Even in strategic studies, there are works that emphasize the need to move away from attempts to control emotions by “rational calculation” and rather to manipulate or regulate emotions in support of one’s overall strategy (Duyvesteyn, 2017; Milevski, 2019; Payne, 2015; 2018; Smith, 2014; Žilinčík, 2018).

In comparison, works on emotions transcending the boundaries between domestic and foreign politics are relatively rare. That is not to say that there are none. Richard Ned Lebow (2015) attempted to develop a holistic theory of (domestic and foreign) polities, politics, and policies that revolves around distinct emotions. Moshe Maos and James Gross (2015) wrote a thought-provoking synthesis of our current understanding of how emotions can be harnessed in support of both domestic and foreign politics. Nevertheless, the scarcity of the research connecting the two spheres may impede our understanding of some of the core mechanisms at the intersection of securitization and attribution (Rythoven, 2015). However, while securitization is limited to the intensity regulation of one specific emotion, attribution can regulate emotions qualitatively, changing one emotional state into another. The understanding of this conversion may benefit both scholars and practitioners of security.

The general argument of this paper is that public attribution can be a mechanism to convert the effects produced by hostile activities into favorable circumstances by regulating the emotions of domestic populations. Expressly, public attribution may elicit qualitatively different emotional experiences in targeted audiences, and these emotions may be subsequently harnessed for foreign political purposes. In terms of specific emotions, allocating responsibility to oneself is likely to elicit guilt, shame, or pride, blaming a specific “other” is likely to elicit anger, and blaming the impersonal circumstances is likely to elicit sadness. Anger and pride can be harnessed to support escalation foreign policies. Guilt, shame, and sadness are likely to be used for de-escalation policies of restraint.

The paper is structured as follows. The ensuing section specifies the scope, methods, data, and the limitations of this research. The section after that examines the phenomenon of attribution and discusses recent trends in the research on the topic. Subsequently, emotions are briefly introduced from the perspective of the appraisal theory of emotions. The observations derived from this theory are then used to explain the causes of different emotional states and the consequences they may have on human decision-making. The following section discusses the real-world obstacles to the deliberate elicitation of emotions through attribution. The last section summarizes the findings and discusses their implications.

Scope, methods, data, and limitations

To define the scope of this paper, I will rely on the salient work on the subject of emotion regulation involving politics in general. According to Maos and Gross (2015), any study of emotion regulation in politics should start by clarifying who the main actors are, what the reasons behind their efforts are and through which strategies they regulate emotions. This paper will first focus on the regulation of emotions in domestic populations. While public attribution can at times also influence populations of allies or adversaries, it is the domestic population that matters the most to the statesmen employing the attribution. Emotional regulation can be performed by individual statesmen, political parties, or even non-partisan organizations; all of these can be labeled "emotional entrepreneurs" (a label coined by Maos and Gross).

Second, this study considers emotions that are elicited both for their own sake and for instrumental purposes. In the first case, attribution is employed for negative purposes; in the second, it is employed for positive purposes. Negative purposes may include anything from eliciting emotions for their own sake to minimizing, negating, or reversing the emotional effect of hostile activity. Positive purposes represent harnessing the elicited emotions for particular foreign policies, escalating, or de-escalating. The distinction between the two is not always clear-cut. Even if the regulation was first conducted to achieve negative purposes, the emotions elicited could subsequently be harnessed to pursue positive ones. Sometimes, those in pursuit of a positive purpose only ever achieve a negative one. However, the difference between the two purposes is still meaningful because it draws attention to the intentions of emotional entrepreneurs. As a result, the act of attribution can subsequently be evaluated as successful or not.

Thirdly, this research focuses on the "strategy" of public attribution concerning the regulation of emotions. Maos and Gross (2015, p. 12) list five different processes by which emotions may be regulated; they are *situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation*. In line with the appraisal theory of emotions, this research focuses on the processes associated with cognitive change. The emphasis is placed on the process of reappraisal, which can be defined as "an attempt to change the meaning of an event in order to influence emotional responses to an event." (Maos & Gross, 2015, p. 14) The reappraisal, in this case, means the change in the allocation of responsibility for specific hostile activities. The focus is also placed on the qualitative regulation of emotions as opposed to the quantitative, which means that the interest is primarily on the changes in the type of emotions instead of the changes in the intensity (arousal) within specific emotions.

In terms of methods and data, this research uses the theoretical analysis of the phenomenon, drawing on several sources. The analysis is divided into two phases. In the first phase, I draw upon the science of emotion to explain how subtle changes in the adjudication of attribution to different entities may elicit different emotional states in the domestic population and how these emotional states can be harnessed for foreign policy. The data for this section is gathered from theoretical treatments of emotion, laboratory experiments, and field surveys. Illustrative cases from various periods of military history complement the previous. The second phase explores the real-world complications related to emotion elicitation. This section draws on further insights from emotional psychology and biases, as well as some classical works in strategic studies.

Because this paper focuses on the emotions of entire populations, it is necessary to discuss the issue of collective emotions briefly. Though individuals always experience emotions, these can also spread in broader collectives. Cross-disciplinary research suggests that how this happens depends on the size of the collective. In smaller groups, emotion spreads through contagion, that is, via face to face interactions with other group members. In larger collectives, the feelings of emotion depend on each member's identification with the shared identity. In other words, those identifying strongly with the collective identity are likely to experience similar emotions when something important happens to that collective, even if these particular individuals are not directly affected by the event (Kilduff & Menges, 2015; Kim, 2015; Kleef & Fischer, 2016; Mercer, 2014; Scheve & Ismer, 2013).

There are significant limitations to this project, related to both the underpinning arguments and data. It must be considered that the arguments presented in this work rely on observations deduced from emotion theories as well as findings from various experiments. Relying on these carefully selected insights to construct theoretical arguments about the real-world is always bound to reductionism. Therefore, the arguments presented in this work are probabilistic because there are plenty of intervening variables at play in the everyday decision-making process. For a much more in-depth discussion on the obstacles of applying insights from psychological experiments to the study of politics, see Jervis (2017) and Markwica (2018). The penultimate section of this article will address some real-world complications in more detail.

Moreover, the psychological data used in this paper should not be considered unquestionable truths. There are two reasons for this. First, the study of emotions is in constant and rapid progress. New insights are likely to replace the older ones; this may impact the shelf-life of the findings of this research. Some of the data may rapidly be rendered obsolete. Second, the field of psychology in general faces several challenges, such as the replication crisis or the conflation of correlation and causation as they relate to the interpretation of results (Bleske-Rechek, Gunseor, & Maly 2018; Yong, 2018). These issues must be acknowledged to encourage a healthy skepticism toward the reliability of the data. To counter these limitations, I have relied on the triangulation of theoretical and empirical sources; from the latter category, on the results already replicated. There is, of course, and fortunately, no countermeasure against the replacement of the older findings by the new ones.

Trends in scholarship on attributions

Attribution is often considered as a requirement for the success of some coercive activities. For example, for deterrence by punishment, it is necessary to know who should be blamed; the defender must know in which direction to motion his credibility to tailor his potential punitive response to the characteristics of the specific actor (Rid & Buchanan, 2015; Wilner, 2019). It is also important because the very ability to adjudicate attribution successfully conveys credibility in the eyes of potential rivals and the broader international community. Ultimately, an injurious response against the wrong target may have adverse consequences, such as opening a new front of hostilities (Libicki, 2009).

Many scholars and practitioners of security have argued that attribution is a weighty problem, especially concerning the cyber domain. Allegedly, this domain is the most challenging and deserves increased attention. Most of its issues are supposed to be directly related to the domain's nature or the instruments through which cyber power is exercised. The difficulties include the absence of physical traces, the multiplicity of actors, the lack of geographical boundaries, the transformation of code in time, the duration of cyber-attacks, and the requirement of the specific expertise, among others (Fitton, 2016, pp. 116-118; Kello, 2017, pp. 198-200; Libicki, 2009, p. 43; Iasiello, 2014, pp. 58-59; Nye 2017, pp. 49-52; Rid & Buchanan, 2015, p. 5; Trujillo, 2014, pp. 47-49).

Numerous suggestions have emerged in response to the challenge of solving the technical conundrum of attribution. For example, Caltagirone and his colleagues (2013) produced the "Diamond" model, drawing on insights from intelligence analysis. By focusing on four interconnected variables –adversary, infrastructure, capability, and victim– this model provides a well-designed way to analyze the intrusion in any domain of competition. Others have recommended the analysis of the specific characteristics of many adversaries. For example, Valeriano and Maness (2015, p. 10) have argued that one should focus on understanding the desires that motivate the attacks. The recognition of the potentially interested party in a hostile activity can help narrow the pool of suspects considerably. Conversely, Bishop and Goldman (2003) have contended for the careful examination of the potential adversaries' capabilities. The U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence (2018) has published its guide to cyber attribution, synthetizing the most salient insights into a coherent framework for thinking and action regarding attribution.

As a result of the triangulation of the methods mentioned above, the actual prospects of attribution are not so grim. Rid and Buchanan (2015, p. 6) have stated that the practice of attributing cyber-attacks "is already more nuanced, more common, and more political than the literature has acknowledged so far." The cases of successful attribution in the last few years are plentiful, and they continue to grow. Some examples include sophisticated attacks such as NotPetya, WannaCry, or Russia's hacking of the Democratic National Committee (Greenberg, 2018; Modderkolk, 2018; Nakashima & Rucker, 2017). Another enabler to solve the technicalities of attribution is the attacker's indifference to being identified. For example, Prince (2018) claims that Russians seem to be less concerned with being identified than in the past and that sometimes they prefer the West to adjudicate attribution. Thus, the challenges of attribution do not seem unsurmountable.

On the other hand, works exploring the political utility of attribution are less common, although some interesting insights have recently emerged. One argumentative strain emphasizes that even if attribution is technically successful, it may not be politically beneficial to do it publicly. In line with this, Hare (2012, p. 138) argues that the technical and legal feasibility of attribution is a separate issue from its political utility. For example, when it comes to coercion, attribution is not a requirement for action. Similarly, Edwards et al. (2017) argue that several considerations drive statesmen's calculation of whether to attribute the hostile activity publicly or not. One is that the polity may not be able to respond using punishment, electing to abstain from public attribution to avoid damaging its credibility. Another reason is the attribution adjudicating polity's uncertainty about the perpetrator's specific characteristics, whether he acts by his own will or on behalf of another polity. The defending state may thus choose to deliberately abstain from public attribution to avoid scaring off the wrong target. Abstaining from public attribution may also be beneficial if the effects of hostile activities are not particularly severe. This echoes the sentiment of Rid and Buchanan (2015, p. 7), who argue that when deciding about attribution, "what is at stake politically" should always be considered.

Recently, several distinct but converging approaches have emerged on how to tackle the political factors of attribution. For example, Egloff and Wenger (2019) emphasize that the character differences in the challenges and opportunities of public attribution tend to vary according to the state's political system. Democratic systems, in general, tend to be more transparent and present more credible evidence, while more autocratic governments have relatively free hands. The authors also consider the trends and attempts at the institutionalization of attribution. Similarly, the research of Grindal and his colleagues (2018), consider the political challenges and opportunities of institutionalizing attribution in domestic politics and the transnational domain. Hare (2012), on the other hand, emphasizes the relationship between attribution and the inconsistency of political objectives and particular policy options. Schulzske (2018) offers an interesting take on the political consequences of attribution; he explores the role of attributional uncertainty and the effects it may have on domestic populations. Specifically, the author argues that the inherent uncertainty in the attribution of cyber-attacks allows elites to exploit the situation by creating favorable narratives. These frames developed by politicians may be damaging in the long-term because they do not easily allow new and contradictory evidence. This, in turn, may give rise to prevalent conspiracy theories and the undermining of democratic accountability.

A brief survey of recent research shows that attribution in current security practices is challenging but feasible, warranting scholars in security issues to move from the examination of its technical feasibility to its political utility. Emerging works on political factors emphasize the need to understand the political utility of attribution and raise questions about the institutionalization of the actors doing the attribution, and even examine some possible effects of attributions on domestic populations. An unexplored realm is how the effects of hostile activity can be translated into favorable domestic circumstances.

The issue of how to convert hostile activity into domestic benefits is of paramount importance. Attribution has been used for political purposes throughout military history. Stalin and Hitler, for instance, attributed the hostile activity of their forces to the Fins and Poles, respectively; this was supposed to legitimize their subsequent offensives against the offenders, in the eyes of the international community and the domestic populations who were eager to defend their countries. This remains relevant in contemporary security practices, whether attribution is used to legitimize one's case for war or to increase support at home. Vladimir Putin, for example, has played with public attribution repeatedly in recent years. The more famous instances include the denial of his country's involvement in the annexation of Crimea, the blame game that followed the shooting down of a Malaysian airplane over Ukraine, or the attempted assassination of Sergei Skripal. Thus, understanding the potential of public attribution to gain support at home is of utmost importance.

Despite the apparent political utility of public attribution in the past and the contemporary security practice, its emotional logic has been under-explored in strategic studies. This disregard is curious when we consider that some of the more popular strategies, such as terrorism and deterrence, have, in essence, the goal of eliciting particular emotions. Thus, if it is possible to manipulate public emotions using attribution craftily, then, it may be possible to negate the adversary's endeavor. This echoes Sun Tzu's (1993, p. 79) advice to seek to frustrate the enemy's strategy instead of engaging him in direct combat. Attribution may thus be a political instrument to counter the enemy's plans. In the following lines, we will explore how one may achieve this by purposefully regulating emotions.

Emotions: their elicitation and effects

Much of human lives revolve around emotions. The desires we hold, the preferences we set, the decisions we make, and the actions we make are all closely related to the influence of emotions on our thinking and behavior (Frijda & Mesquita, 2000; Stein & Trabasso, 1992; Angie, Conelly, Waples, & Kligyte, 2011; Rolls, 2014; Lerner et al, 2015). It has for a long time been assumed or explicitly stated that emotions are incompatible with rational calculation; that reason and emotions are at odds with each other. However, a rapidly growing body of research on emotions has begun to question this assumption. Indeed, what this emerging research indicates is that emotions and reason are inseparable, or at the very least, mutually interdependent (Damasio, 2006; Hacker, 2018; Storberck & Clore, 2007).

There are several theories on what emotions are, how they came to existence, and what are their effects. These theories range from basic emotions, which emphasize the biological nature of the phenomenon, to constructivist theories, which emphasize the active role of individuals in the elicitation and experience of emotions (Moors, 2013). This research employs the appraisal theory of emotions, which lies somewhere in between. Emotions are hence understood as "complex, organized subsystems consisting of thoughts, beliefs, motives, meanings, subjective bodily experiences, and physiological states." (Lazarus, 2001, p. 67). This theory's central claim is that emotions do not emerge as a result of the direct impact of an external phenomenon on an individual. Instead, emotions emerge as a consequence of one's subjective interpretation (appraisal) of the phenomenon (Roseman & Smith, 2001, p. 3). The process of appraisal is based on several dimensions through which the individual constructs the meaning of a situation as it relates to his or her concerns (Moors et al., 2013, p. 120). Specific combinations of these appraisal dimensions can produce a broad spectrum of different emotions (Moors et al., 2013, p. 122). Even more interestingly, the combination of dimensions that gives rise to emotion in the first place constitutes the crucial components of emotional experience (Scherer, 2001a, p. 107). In other words, the specific appraisal causes the emotion to emerge and influences the cognitive processes in the same direction (Lerner & Keltner, 2000).

These qualities make the appraisal theory similar to the constructionist in that it can explain a vast range of emotional experience. However, where psychological constructionism argues for an endless variety of emotional episodes, appraisal theorists regard some regular patterns that may help us to differentiate between the different emotional instances (Scherer, 2001a, p. 108). Furthermore, these patterns of appraisal are more or less stable across individuals and cultures (Roseman & Smith, 2001, p. 18), which makes this theory similar to the theory of the basic emotions because it includes an element of universalism. Of course, there is some criticism against various aspects of the theory (Roseman & Smith, 2001, pp. 10-18); however, its proponents offer some persuasive rebuttals (Moors, 2013).

The basic building blocks of emotions are appraisal dimensions. It is through them that an individual derives meaning from the situation. Some disagreements exist among the appraisal theorists regarding the best way to conceptualize the dimensions (Schorr, 2001). Nonetheless, the overlaps between diverse lists of dimensions are so overwhelming that the disagreements are mostly about fine-tuning the specific models and not about the core methodological differences (Scherer, 2001b). This research uses the appraisal dimensions that have been empirically tested and have theoretical coherence, and, at the same time, tightly fit the potential perception of denial activity. Several decades ago, Smith and Ellsworth (1985) identified the relevant dimensions; their dimensions have successfully undergone many empirical tests. Their list include dimensions such as *pleasantness, attentional activity, control, certainty, perceived obstacle, legitimacy, responsibility, and anticipated effort*.

The most relevant dimension for this research is responsibility allocation. One can allocate responsibility to oneself, another person or group, or some impersonal circumstances. This research will focus on five emotions, distinguishable by their strong dependence on the allocation of responsibility. These emotions are guilt, shame, pride, anger, and sadness. The differences between these elicited emotions are determined by other dimensions, such as perceived obstacle, or legitimacy. The specific combination of each emotion's particular dimensions is seized by the concept of the appraisal theme, which conveys the full meaning of the emotion.

Attribution to oneself

Attributing hostile activity to oneself is likely to elicit emotions such as guilt, shame, or pride (Scherer, 2001, p. 115). The difference between guilt and shame, on the one side, and pride on the other, is whether the resulting feeling is pleasant or unpleasant. The difference between guilt and shame seems to depend on whether one is more concerned about the wrongfulness of the activity or about one's identity being tainted by the activity (Tangney, Stuewig, Hafez, 2011, p. 707). The appraisal theme of guilt is one's transgression of a moral imperative (Lazarus, 2001, p. 64). Guilty people tend to be motivated by the desire to remedy the bad deed committed; they are inclined to pursue "social reproach" to repair the impaired relationship with others (Tangney et al., 2011, p. 707). The appraisal theme of shame is a failure to live up to one's (or society's) expectations (Lazarus, 2001, p. 64). Shame is likely to motivate one to attempt "social escape" to avoid further confrontation with others (Tangney, 2011, p. 707). The appraisal theme of pride is an "enhancement of one's ego by taking credit for some achievement" (Lazarus, 2001, p. 64). Pride is likely to motivate one to be confident and assertive (Roseman, 2001, p. 71). From these characteristics, it is possible to infer that guilt and shame are more likely to be harnessed for de-escalating foreign policies, while pride can be harnessed for the escalating.

Attribution to one's polity has been a common feature of security politics, whether intended for negative or positive purposes. One of the more famous examples is American participation and hostile activities in the Vietnam War. Various emotional entrepreneurs, mostly proponents of the anti-war movement, made regular public attributions about the war and some controversial instances, such as the Tet offensive or the My Lai massacre. These attributions resonated in the American society, often eliciting both shame and guilt, the two emotions that converged into the so-called Vietnam Syndrome (Mendible, 2016, p. 191). The American public felt ashamed of losing the war against a supposedly weaker force; this went directly against the notion of American military exceptionalism, which was rooted in the victories of the World Wars. The very identity of the American nation was thus tainted by events that were their responsibility, intensified by the guilt of fighting not only the wrong war but also in the wrong way (Kendrick, 2006, p. 139). Thus, guilt and shame were the elicited emotions instead of pleasure or pride –the expected emotions following the many tactical victories. As is to be expected from the theoretical observations, in the years to come, the anti-war movement harnessed both emotions to support the policy of de-escalation and restraint.

There have been many attempts to elicit pride by public attribution. Some of the earliest, and perhaps crudest, examples of this can be found in Classical Greece. For example, when the Thebans and their allies defeated the Spartans at the Battle of Leuctra (371 B.C). The Thebans made sure that they were held responsible for the activity; they publicly attributed themselves the victory by engraving a telling message on the monument to that battle, which read "Thebans are superior in war." (Stewart, 2017, p. 374). The pride of the Thebans soon transformed into heightened confidence, which allowed Epaminondas, the ablest Theban general, to persuade his countrymen to escalate the conflict with Sparta and embark on an unprecedented aggressive campaign in Peloponnese. At other times, the pride elicited by the attribution of victories, sometimes even by the attribution of defeats, has been institutionalized as nationalism and patriotism. Both of these ideologies have been regularly exploited throughout history, most notably from the end of the 18th century onward, to pursue aggressive foreign policies or, at least, stubborn resistance against foreign invasion.

Attribution to another

The appraisal theory predicts that attributing hostile activity to another entity is likely to elicit anger (Scherer, 2001, pp. 115-116). The specific appraisal theme of anger is blaming another person for blocking access to one's objectives (Smith & Lazarus, 1993, p. 238); this brings the dimensions of object attainability, responsibility, and control to the forefront. An angry challenger perceives his desired objective blocked by the actions of the defender. At the same time, he feels that the situation could be under his control if he removes the "other." An angry individual's choices tend to be riskier; they underestimate the possibility of adverse events and overestimate the possibility of positive events (Angie et al., 2011, p. 1395). Thus, anger seems to be a perfect emotion to be harnessed for aggressive escalation of foreign policy.

Statesmen have used public attribution adjudication to another to elicit anger countless times in security history. In Thucydides' time, Cleon, an Athenian demagogue, publicly blamed the citizens of Mytilene for a revolt to elicit anger in his domestic population (Thucydides, 1976, Book III, para. 38-40). Similarly, the American president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, publicly attributed the attack on Pearl Harbor to the Japanese (Mohan, 2016). More recently, to convert the American population's grief into anger, the George W. Bush administration attributed the 9/11 terrorist attacks to Al Qaeda (Bush, 2001). All three statesmen subsequently harnessed the elicited anger to support their aggressive and escalating foreign policies.

Evidence from experimental studies and even a representative national survey support these observations. Sadler et al. (2005), for example, found that angry individuals tend to prefer confrontational policies. Their experiment also highlights the feedback loop of the appraisal dimension through responsibility; angry individuals were shown to attribute causes to others such as terrorists. Interestingly, but in agreement with the theoretical predictions, the reverse correlation was between anger and blaming one's polity (foreign policy of the US). Similarly, Lerner et al. (2003) found that anger motivates people to seek policies rooted in the desire for punishment and, therefore, escalation. Another survey by Skitka et al. (2006), conducted three years later, explicitly provides evidence that anger increases an individual's tendency to support a specific escalation foreign policy; for instance, the expansion of the American involvement in the War on Terror beyond Afghanistan. A similar survey from the same year failed to replicate the relationship of anger to the responsibility of another; however, there may be methodological rather than empirical reasons behind this (Small, Lerner & Fischhoff, 2006, p. 295).

Attribution to impersonal circumstances

The adjudication of attribution to impersonal circumstances is likely to elicit sadness. The appraisal theme of sadness is a sense of irreversible loss (Smith & Lazarus, 1993, p. 238). This theme brings forth the dimensions of perceived obstacle, control, and effort. A sad challenger sees his objective as unattainable because he understands that he has no control over the unfolding of events. Furthermore, he understands that the effort he would have to exert to improve the situation is extremely high. In general, sad people tend to underestimate their capabilities (Kavanagh & Bower, 1985). Sadness is, therefore, a perfect emotion to be harnessed for de-escalation policies of restraint.

Of the three types of attribution, this one is perhaps the least common in history; however, there some recent trends have emerged that hint at how the regulation of this kind of emotion may work. One example is the recent tendency of some security practitioners to blame the wars in the Middle East on the effects of climate change; this reappraisal allocates the responsibility for the hostilities to environmental changes instead of the people. A slightly different kind of emotional regulation through attribution occurred during the second Obama administration. The administration deliberately and repeatedly blamed "extremism" (impersonal causes) for terrorist attacks without mentioning any particular group of people (Prokop, 2016). While the primary intention was, according to the president, to not alienate Muslim populations in the Middle East, the side effect might well have elicited more sadness than anger in the general US population. In both cases, the proposed and pursued foreign policies were of restraint or non-escalation, which concurs with the experiment conducted by Sadler et al. (2005) that found that sad people have strong reservations about escalation policies. Additionally, this experiment also draws attention to the feedback loop that sad people are uncertain about the causes of hostile activity, often citing impersonal factors.

One domain of competition that provides plenty of opportunities for this kind of emotional regulation is Cyberspace, given the uncertainty and friction inherent to this domain. Hostile activities can be blamed on the accidental malfunction of some technology or the unintentional effect of particular code. Thus, what has often been described as the obstacle to the technical process of attribution in cyberspace may, in fact, constitute a significant political opportunity. In other words, if an actor launches a cyber-attack, provoking an angry and aggressive response, the defender can purposefully elicit sadness and harness support for restraint instead. Although the characteristics of the cyber domain are particularly well suited for this approach, as illustrated by the previous examples, this can be possible, to some extent, even with terrorist attacks.

Real-world complications of emotional regulation

The preceding sections have discussed attribution as a viable instrument to regulate the emotions of domestic populations. The purpose of this section is to draw attention to the several nuances and obstacles that make intentional emotional regulation much more complicated in the real world than in abstract theorizing. The complications discussed below deal with the collateral emotional effects of the public adjudication of attribution on allies and adversaries, the problem of accidental emotions, and the psychological biases of individuals and groups.

As mentioned in the introductory section, security practice is all about consequences. One problem with public attribution as emotional regulation is that its consequences are not contained to the territory of the attributing emotional entrepreneurs. Instead, the allies and adversaries, and their respective societies may also be affected. In other words, one may be able to elicit pride in one' population, but, with the same act, elicit anger in the adversary's; this is because the adversary may see this attribution as the allocation of responsibility to a specific, hostile polity. Thus, one can effectively increase the resolve of the adversary's group to pursue confrontational policy, even if this was not at all the adversary's intention. Similarly, seeking to elicit sadness in one's society by blaming some impersonal circumstances may make allies angry if they suspect or know that it was the wrongdoing of a specific hostile actor. Ultimately, the emotional effects of public attribution may go far beyond what statesmen seek to achieve; sometimes, it can even elicit emotions that are detrimental to their desires.

The second real-world complication of emotion regulation is the ubiquitous emotions that preexist in the populations of any polity before the public attribution happens. Of course, even in experimental conditions, people are never entirely free of emotions. However, in the real world, the intensity and quality of these emotions are bound to be more complicated. Emotional stimuli are abundant in the world –too many things that people care about– unlike a laboratory setting, where one focuses on the specific tasks at hand without much interference from the outside world.

The emotions that individuals feel before the public attribution takes place are known as "accidental" or "incidental." These may influence the whole process of emotion regulation. They may make it easier, harder, or impossible to manipulate the emotions of the public in particular ways. For example, it has been proposed and shown that the transition from feeling scared to angry may be easier than from feeling sad, and vice versa (Schwartz & Weinberger, 1980; Winterich, Han, & Lerner, 2010; Zhan, 2015). As Zhan (2015, p. 10) suggests, this may be because anger and fear are similar in their appraisal of stimuli as threatening to one's objective. Another explanation can be derived from recent findings in neuroscience. The areas of the brain associated with feelings of anger and fear have significant overlaps, while those of sadness and anger are minor (Wager, Kang, Johnson, Nichols, Satpute & Barrett 2015). Therefore, it is likely that a population that already feels scared because of recent or potential terrorist attacks may be easily regulated to feel anger, as opposed to if it was feeling sad. More data is required to understand the synergic and counter-acting relationships between different emotions. The bottom line is that statesmen should be aware that the presence of accidental emotions may impede their intention to elicit a specific emotion, or it may be easier than they expect.

Many stimuli may elicit accidental emotions, but one prominent phenomenon for students of security is the polities' war or peace status. In war, violence or its potential is a constant possibility that may affect the emotional experience of the masses long before any attempts at emotional regulation take place. Both Clausewitz and Thucydides give us some hints about how this may work. Clausewitz (2000, p. 328) argues that, because of the constant potential of violence, a danger is one of the eternal components of the climate of war. As it happens, a danger is the central appraisal theme for the emotion of fear (Lazarus, 2001, p. 64). Fittingly, people in war may be more suspect to the regular feelings of fear. Thucydides (1974, Book III, para. 84), on the other hand, argues that war strips people of the possibility of efficiently satisfying their basic needs. Depending on whom the people choose to blame for this sad state of affairs, they may experience accidental feelings of anger or sadness. All this means that those attempting to regulate public emotions should carefully examine how people are already feeling before embarking on their endeavor to change it.

Then, there is the issue of different psychological biases. There are too many to examine them all in appropriate detail. However, the most relevant concerning this kind of emotion elicitation is arguably the human tendency to contemplate certainties rather than uncertainties, the role of chance, and the overall complexity of the real world (Jervis, 2017, p. 321). The prevalence of this bias is probably based on that it is much easier to navigate the world without continually questioning every assumption. Consequently, it is reasonable to expect that specific emotion that relies on the appraisal of high certainties, such as anger, can be elicited easier than those associated with a fair bit of uncertainty, such as sadness (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985, pp. 821-824). Other biases related to the sensitivity to particular emotions are specific to particular segments of the population. For example, there seem to be some differences related to ideological identities of conservatives and liberals (Steiger, Reyna, Wetherell & Iverson, 2019). Some biases are therefore universal, while others are group-specific. The bottom line is that statesmen should appreciate the diversity of the population and not assume that all individuals will be similarly receptive to their attempts at emotion regulation.

Conclusions

Public attribution can regulate the emotions of domestic populations by allocating the responsibility for hostile activities to different causes. It may be done for both negative and positive purposes. In the first case, the emotion is elicited for its own sake without any particular foreign policy objective. In the second, the emotion is elicited to gain support for specific foreign policies. The allocation of responsibility for different causes may elicit qualitatively different emotions in domestic populations; its allocation to oneself is likely to elicit emotions such as guilt, shame, or pride. The allocation of responsibility to another is likely to elicit anger, and its allocation to impersonal circumstances is likely to elicit sadness. Guilt, shame, and sadness are likely to gain support for policies of restraint and de-escalation. Anger and pride are likely to gain support for policies of hostility and escalation.

Many nuances complicate the deliberate elicitation of particular emotions; this research focused on three. The first one is that emotional effects are not confined within the domestic populations; public attribution may also elicit emotions in allied or adversarial societies, and these may go against the desires of the emotional entrepreneurs. The second is that people are not emotion-free before attribution happens; the accidental emotions that they experience influence how and whether it is possible to elicit all the other emotional states. It is hard to reduce the complexity of the issue here, but it is reasonable to expect that there is a marked qualitative difference in accidental emotions in wartime and peacetime. Thirdly, there are universal and specific biases, which may make it easier for some emotions to emerge at the expense of the others.

Furthermore, the theoretical arguments derived from emotion theories, though supported by laboratory evidence and data gathered from field experiments with representative data samples, still have limitations when trying to extrapolate their insights and apply them in the real world. It is always reductionist to try to infer any psychological cause and effect relationships from the carefully administrated laboratory experiments to the real world, which is inherently more complex. Furthermore, psychology, as a field, has some problems with replication of many insights, and there is a good chance that emotion science may be afflicted by the same. Lastly, there is an abundance of psychological studies that jumble correlation with causation. All these limitations should prompt readers to proceed with the utmost care when interpreting the arguments of this paper.

The arguments presented in this paper may be beneficial to practitioners and scholars alike. Statesmen, willing to adjudicate attribution publicly may be able to elicit emotional effects that benefit their cause or, at least, negate the emotional effects that benefit the adversary. They may also be better prepared to understand the adversary's use of public attribution. One finding that deserves special mention is that the characteristics of cyberspace, which are often cited as challenges to the technical feasibility of attribution, may, in fact, be converted into political assets. For scholars in the fields of security and strategic studies, this paper can serve as yet another stimulus to focus more on political opportunities of attribution than on its technical challenges.

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