

Robin Markwica. *Emotional Choices: How the Logic of Affect Shapes Coercive Diplomacy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. 384 pp. \$100.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-19-879434-9.

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Coercive diplomacy, where a state seeks to modify another state's behavior by threatening the use of military force, has delivered mixed results throughout history. The target states sometimes yield, while at other times they choose to accept war rather than yielding, even when facing a vastly more powerful opponent. The source of this disparity is the key concern of Robin Markwica's *Emotional Choices: How the Logic of Affect Shapes Coercive Diplomacy*, which addresses the issue by introducing a new theory of choice to the field of international relations.

Existing literature commonly explains foreign policy decision-making using either the rationalist "logic of consequence," in which actors seek to maximize benefit and minimize cost, or the constructivist "logic of appropriateness," which focuses on norms. Dissatisfied with the explanatory power of these two approaches, Markwica introduces a third: "the logic of affect," or emotional choice theory. Importantly, he does not seek to replace rationalist or constructivist approaches or negate their value; rather, he seeks to offer a useful complement and thereby boost the explanatory power of the conglomerate. Indeed, he posits that "each logic of choice captures important elements of political life" (p. 25).

In chapter 2, Markwica develops the theory of the logic of affect, drawing on contemporary psy-

chology and sociology. He argues that decision-making processes are shaped by a dynamic interaction between the decision-maker's norms, identities, and five key emotions: fear, anger, pride, hope, and humiliation. Norms and identities form the long-term basis of an individual's decision-making processes, while emotions provide the short-term catalyst for movement and change. Markwica goes on to develop a number of propositions detailing how each key emotion tends to influence behavior and decisions. Of note, the correlation between key emotions and outcomes is neither simple nor direct. For example, fear can lead to flight, fight, or freeze responses, increasing the likelihood of compliance in the first case and non-compliance in the latter two. While not an entirely novel idea, this is one of the profound insights of Markwica's logic of affect.

In chapter 3, Markwica confronts head-on the "thorny methodological challenges" (p. 34) of studying emotions, especially in retrospect based on historical records. After outlining long-standing reluctance to include emotions in decision-making frameworks on account of methodological difficulties, he sets about developing a "qualitative method for inferring emotions from their external representations in texts and for tracing their influence of decision-making" (p. 124). The method uses established psychological techniques to assess ex-

ternal representations of emotion, resulting in a taxonomy of observable signs for the five key emotions. Once identified, the relationship of emotions to decision-making is analyzed via the process form of explanation. Drawing on process philosophy, as advanced by Alfred North Whitehead among others, this form of explanation posits that “cause and influence are inextricably intertwined and mutually defining” (p. 119). This, again, is innovative—Markwica eschews stronger and more commonly used causal and constitutive forms of explanation because neither can reliably account for the dynamic nature of emotions. In doing so, he settles for a less definitive framework that resists “any attempts to establish unchanging law-like generalizations” (p. 119), but one that is thoroughly defensible from a methodological standpoint. There are still difficulties inherent in the design, including reliance on external expression, which differs from the actual experience of emotions, the limits of text-based inferences, and the subjective influence of the researcher. However, I fundamentally agree that methodological difficulties are not a valid reason for the exclusion of emotions from the study of decision-making; Markwica’s methodology provides a strong starting point for their inclusion.

The newly developed method is then applied to two historical case studies. Chapter 4 focuses on eight decisions made by Nikita Khrushchev during the Cuban Missile Crisis, while chapter 5 focuses on eight decisions made by Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War. The cases studies were selected in part because they typify the disparity in coercive diplomacy outcomes that is the *raison d’être* for this book: the Cuban Missile Crisis is lauded as a textbook example of coercive diplomacy success, whereas Saddam’s noncompliance during the Gulf crisis resulted in war. The case studies are detailed, with particular attention paid to how the leaders’ emotions were inferred from historical records and then contextualized. The results are mixed—in half of the analyzed decisions, there is either a dearth of information from which to make infer-

ences about the emotional state of the decision-maker, or the emotions play a minor role. However, in the other half, Markwica concludes that emotions are a primary driver in the decision-making process, validating the emotional theory of choice as formulated in chapter 2. Overall, introducing the logic of affect sheds light on decisions that previously evaded comprehension via the existing theories of choice, as well as improving explanations in cases where the existing theories were partially successful.

Although Markwica makes the distinction between coercive and deterrent threats and limits the analysis to coercive diplomacy only, his emotional theory of choice and methodology clearly have broader applications. If fear alone can lead to multiple different appraisals and actions by a key decision-maker, before the addition of other emotions into the mix, this may have profound implications for deterrence theory and other areas of international relations. Markwica introduces the “coercer dilemma,” which illustrates how emotional dynamics act to impede the effectiveness of coercive threats. He then posits solving this dilemma as the main goal of policy and outlines some policy implications, including questioning extant wisdom as it applies to signaling and threat design.

Readers seeking a parsimonious theory with strong predictive power, such as the rational actor model, or those with a preference for stronger forms of explanation, such as causal logic, may find the emotional theory of choice unsatisfying. However, Markwica seeks not to predict, but to enhance our understanding of decision-making; not to replace existing theories of choice, but to complement them. In a book characterized by intellectual honesty and humility, Markwica explicitly avoids overreach and cautions against extrapolating from his results, instead advocating further empirical analysis and research. In a field concerned with human decisions and interactions, his human-focused theory of choice is a welcome addition that starts to bridge a long-existing chasm in

reconciling what ought to happen with what does
happen when the rubber hits the road.

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