

Russia's War on Ukraine: Unbottled Emotions & the Conditioning of the EU's Russia Policy

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The Context

- Russia's War on Ukraine
 - Strengthening of CFSP and CSDP
 - Increased voice for NCEEs (Northern, Central, East European states) in the EU
 - Likely Ukrainian accession
- Increased attention to role of emotions in policymaking
 - Special Issue on emotions & EU Foreign Policy

When and how do emotions matter in EU foreign policy (in times of crisis)?

What are the Key Concepts?

- Emotions
 - EU
 - Foreign Policy
 - Trauma
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- What do we say about:
 - how to conceive of the EU?
 - trauma?
 - How do you define foreign policy?

The Academic Contribution of the SI

- “[...] despite the increasing importance of emotions in explaining political behaviour at the individual or collective levels, the study of emotions in EU politics and policies remains still very limited. The core objective of this special issue is thus to fill this gap by highlighting the role of emotions in EU foreign policy and to launch a call to EU foreign policy scholars for taking emotions seriously in their analyses.” (Gürkan & Terzi, 2024: 575)

Understanding Emotions (i)

- “[E]motional displays serve to ‘frame issues, to maintain or alter state’s image, or even to transform the character of specific relationships’” (Hall in Gürkan & Terzi, 2024: 578).
- “... societies are sustained by an ‘emotion culture’ which determines how the constituting members of a society should feel in various types of situations. These appropriate emotional responses are constructed, produced, reconstructed, learned and inherited in a social-cultural context and the sum of these emotional responses constitute the emotion culture of a community” (Hochschild in Gürkan & Terzi, 2024: 579).

Understanding Emotions (ii)

- “Politicians’ statements or political institutions’ declarations usually involve emotions, which might then shape public perceptions (Pace and Bilgic 2019: 1407). At the international level, once emotions are expressed, they shape inter-state relations by constructing, reframing and maintaining conflicts or friendships (Hall 2015).” (Gürkan & Terzi, 2024: 575)

Rationality and Emotions

- “[W]e must consider whether, especially amid major norm violations, we are over-rationalising, failing to realise how certain emotions, especially those that emerge from sustained historical traumas, inform behaviour in less an aware and calculated fashion than a reflexive and subconscious one [...] ‘emotion is not merely a tool of rationality but instead is necessary to rationality’ (Mercer 2005, 93), captured in the idea that ‘incidental emotions arise from past situations’ (Renshon and Lerner 2012).” (David and LD, 2024: 665)

What is the concern of the authors in relation to dominant thinking on emotions?

Why do the authors think the unbottling of emotions may constitute a challenge to EU Foreign Policy in the future?

What are your thoughts about whether the emotional turn in EU foreign policy analysis is a valuable one?

References

- David, M., & L.D. (2024). Russia's war on Ukraine: unbottled emotions and the conditioning of the EU's Russia policy. *Journal of European Integration*, 46(5), 661–684.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2024.2363613>
- Gürkan, Seda & Terzi, Özlem (2024) Emotions in EU foreign policy – when and how do they matter?, *Journal of European Integration*, 46(5): 575-596, DOI: 10.1080/07036337.2024.2360697