# 5

## THE RISE OF POPULISM

### The Politics of Justice, Anger, and Grievance

*George E. Marcus*

## Introduction

For a very long time, human communities have faced periodic threats such as disease, violent attacks, terrorism, economic threats, and financial crises. There is considerable research which shows that people facing threats demand that those in authority exhibit strength and a forceful commitment to protecting the public (McCann, 1997; Doty, Peterson, & Winter, 1991). In sum, threats drive the public to demand protection (Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Feldman, this volume). Long before the term populism became popular, the role of *collectivizing emotions* in driving public reactions to social events has long been a concern for democratic governance (Weiner, 2012; Jasper, 1998; Jasper, 2011; Barsade & Knight, 2015; see also Golec de Zavala, this volume). But which emotions drive social solidarity? And as group integrity is a variable, what role do emotions play in reducing group cohesion?

The emotion that connects threat to the threat response is widely claimed to be fear. It has long been believed that fear signals the presence of threat and increases support for strong, even authoritarian, parties, leaders, and their programs (Nussbaum, 2018; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; see also Kruglanski, this volume). This straightforward argument is presented in Figure 5.1. A corollary holds that some are more sensitive to disorder than others. This individual difference then informs where on the ideological spectrum people align (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Castano et al., 2011). The long lineage of this story has encased it in invisible certitude.

The belief that fear drives the threat response is very ancient. A famous line in Psalm 23 extolls the faithful to "fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Hobbes in *The Leviathan* (1968, p. 186) states that "where
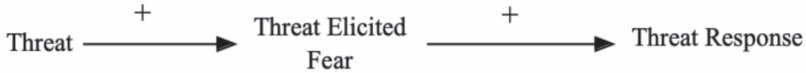
**FIGURE 5.1** The standard view.

every man is enemy to every man" life is "worst of all, continual fear, . . . solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Absent sovereign authority, nature and human nature combine to generate a world of perpetual fear. The idea that fear identifies threat and in turn drives the response to threat has been the predominant account for millennia well, before it received scientific affirmation (Robin, 2004). The scientific literature on threat includes alternative accounts, among them: Terror Management Theory (Burke, Kosloff, & Landau, 2013); the incivility literature (Gervais, 2019); and the authoritarianism and threat literature (Feldman & Stenner, 1997). None of these, to date, have had much purchase in the public forum or our understanding of political processes.

My argument is that fear is not the sole emotion linked to threat, and that threat-induced fear is often not the principal cause of people offering submissive fidelity to authority, generally, or specifically to authoritarian programs and leaders. This standard account is largely wrong because it ignores the influence of anger as a fundamental element in the evaluation of threat and political behavior.

## What Is at Stake

First, addressing the public's fear is a viable solution to threats only if it is true that threat engenders fear and fear alone. If not, then the common political response of efforts to "keep the public safe" is likely to prove ineffective because other factors are in play.

Second, the public's susceptibility to passion has long been a central charge in anti-democratic critiques. Indeed, the first aristocratic critique of democracy, as too often besotted by passion and opinion to make legitimate decisions, was birthed shortly after democracy was invented by the Athenians (Plato, 1974). Of late, it has again become a popular claim (Caplan, 2007; Brennan, 2017). It is argued by some that only the "epistemically able" should command public authority (Davies, 2019).

The presumption of reason's position as the highest achievement of the human species rests on the belief that rationality is and should be the sole foundation for making wise choices. Thus, reason alone can produce fairly, expressly, and accurately calculated judgments (Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1982). It has long been preached that the subordination of reason to emotion is irrational and detrimental.

## Testing the Standard Account

The primacy of fear account has considerable evidence to sustain it (Jost et al., 2003; Jost, Stern, Rule, & Sterling, 2017; Onraet, Alain, & Cornelis, 2013), yet much recent research also challenges this account (Skitka, Bauman, Aramov-ich, & Morgan, 2006; Marcus, Valentino, Vasilopoulos, & Foucault, 2019). What explains this discrepancy? The following results suggest that the standing view is sound but only when anger is ignored.

Nick Valentino, Pavlos Vasilopoulos, Martial Foucault, and I use two matched studies of the 2017 national elections in France and Germany to examine the roles of fear and anger on voting preferences (Marcus et al., 2019; Vasilopoulos, Marcus, Valentino, & Foucault, 2019). Survey participants were asked how they felt about: the state of the nation; the state of the economy; the political system; and the state of immigration. We then examined how these feelings impacted on the probability of voting for Le Pen in 2017 and voting for the far-right party, Alternative for Germany (AfD), in the 2017 German national parliamen-tary election. While populism is a confounded complex cluster of elements, these two far-right parties serve, by most accounts, as exemplars of the phenomenon (Wuttke, Schimp, & Schoen, 2020; see also Krekó, this volume). The results are shown in plots derived from multinomial logistic regressions models. Rather than focusing on fear associated with singular high-threat events, such as terror attacks (Finseraas & Listhaug, 2013; Sniderman, Petersen, Slothus, Stubager, & Petrov, 2019), we explored how feelings about recurring political topics influence voting preferences. As the results for the four targets are near similar, I show only two, that for the nation, a topic of general interest to all, and immigration, a topic that is of special interest to populist parties.

I begin by demonstrating that fear has indeed been shown to generate support for the far right, but only in analyses that fail to consider anger and focus solely on fear (Figure 5.2). All plots derived from: French Election Study, N = 6152; Germany IPSOS Pre-election Study, N = 633. Next, I show what happens when the influence of anger is taken into account in the usual way, by multivariate analyses (Figure 5.3).

The four plots shown, as well as those not shown, show greater fear leads to greater support for far-right parties. But the validity of this result is dependent on the unproven presumption that it is fear alone that is relevant to the public's response. Figure 5.3 shows the influence of fear when anger is taken into account.

Across the board, controlling for anger flattens—one even reverses—the slopes (compare the slopes in Figure 5.2 to those in Figure 5.3). But anger does more than reduce the influence of fear. It has its own effect on voting for the far right (Figure 5.4).

Greater anger clearly generates robust support for Le Pen and for the AfD. This is hardly the first analysis to show that ignoring anger leads to the wrong conclu-sion about what fear does (MacKuen, Wolak, Keele, & Marcus, 2010).
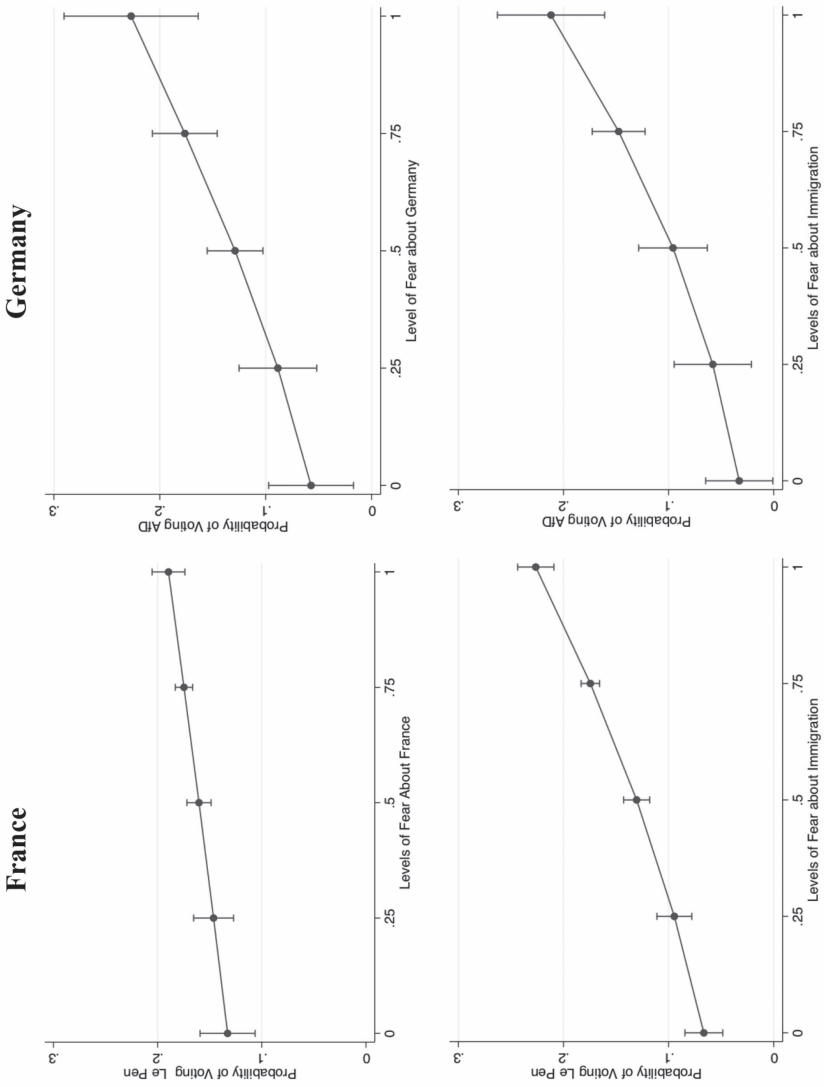
Proof

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**FIGURE 5.2**   Threat-induced fear and support populist parties, France and Germany, 2017.
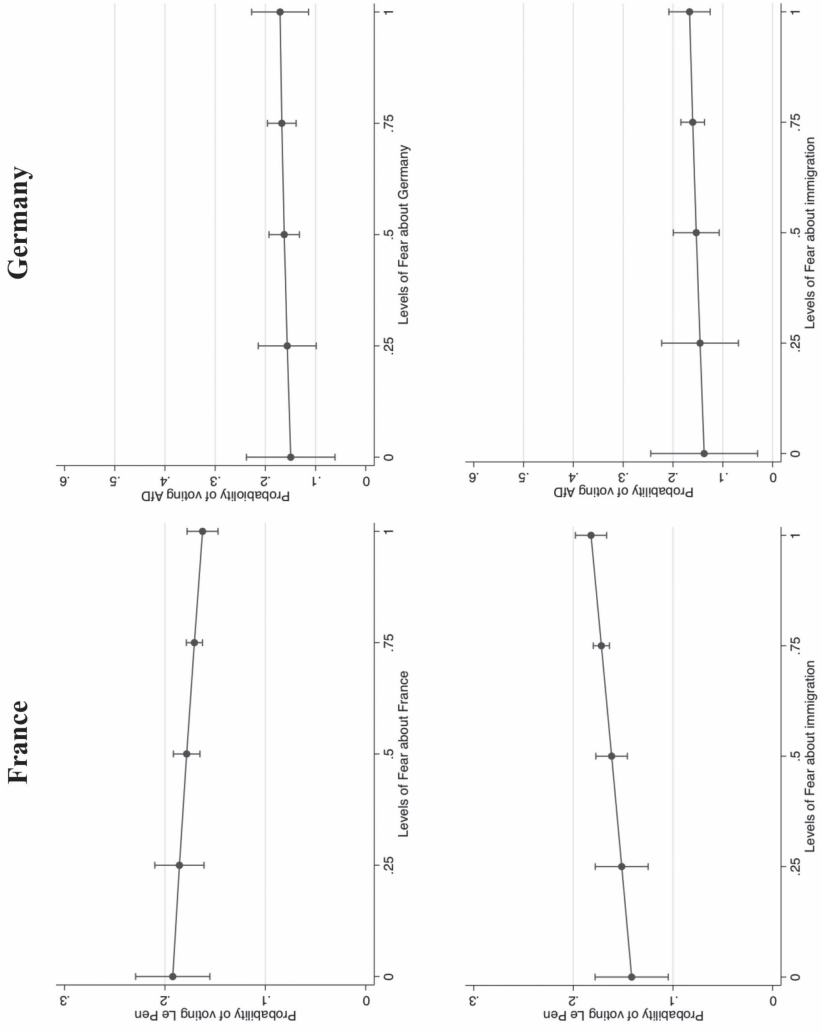
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**FIGURE 5.3**   Fear and support for the far right, controlling for anger, France and Germany, 2017.
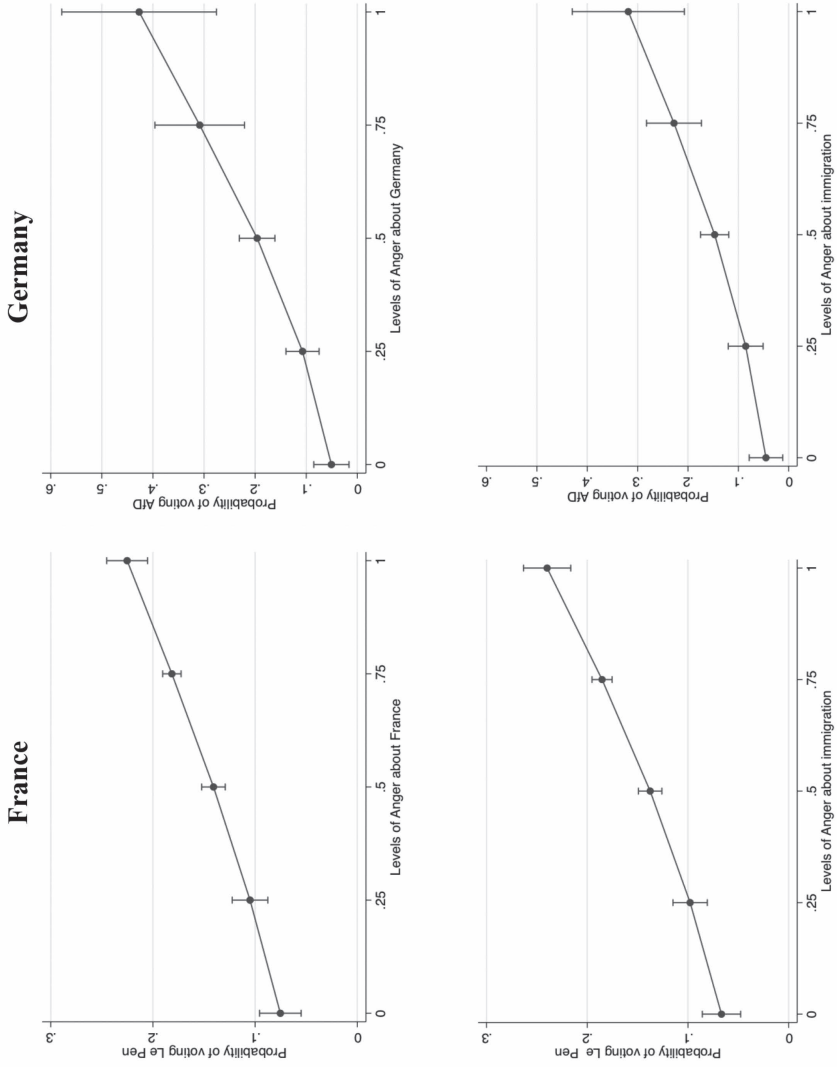
**FIGURE 5.4** Anger and support for the far right, controlling for Fear, France and Germany, 2017.

In sum, a fear-only account of how people respond to threat misses the robust influence of anger. Also, the fear-only account misattributes effects of anger to fear, and so misrepresents what threat-elicited fear actually does. Anger's robust influence challenges the common understanding of populism as being driven by fear. Anger is the collectivizing emotion, not fear.

Inattention to anger is, in part, a result of the common presumption that people, at any given moment, feel but one dominant emotion. Hence, if people are fearful, then they are only fearful. And, so, anger does not need to be considered. But that presumption has been repeatedly shown to be false, as in most circumstances people report, when the methods enable, multiple emotions (Abelson, Kinder, Peters, & Fiske, 1982; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988).

## When Under Threat: Should We Look to the Past or to an Unknown Future?

Much of the early work on emotion in psychology began with the presumption that perception preceded cognition and that in turn informed emotion (Schachter & Singer, 1962). This understanding of perception has been a crucial foundation of cognitive appraisal theories. It places emotion as a consequence of both perception and cognition. On the other hand, the theory of Affective Intelligence has been expressly premised on the recognition that multiple preconscious affective appraisals provide swift ongoing vital strategic and actionable analyses (Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000; Marcus, 2002). This theory has been the dominant account of emotion in political science and political psychology for some decades. It should not be confused with the similar sounding but not comparable concept of emotional intelligence familiar to psychologists. Affective appraisals are a primary feature of preconscious neural processes (Siegel, Wormwood, Quigley, & Barrett, 2018). In sum, AIT describes emotions as strategic and contemporaneous appraisals that precede and guide seeing, thinking, and acting.

Consciousness does not see the world as it is. Populist thinking, as is true for all political thinking, often contains a measure of irrationality (see also Krekó; Golec de Zavala; Forgas & Lantos, this volume). The brain presents the world in conscious awareness as the brain constructively interprets it. Central to these interpretive processes are affective processes. To accomplish successful engagement with the world and with others, the brain has access to multiple systems of memory, one of which, procedural memory, makes available the rich complexity of past experiences. Additionally, the brain relies on emotional and proprioceptive information to manage our actions.

Although cognitive appraisal accounts presume that affect comes at the end of the cognitive assessment of the perceived world, there is considerable evidence to challenge this view (Zajonc, 1980; 2000; Maratos, Senior, Mogg, Bradley, & Rippon, 2012; see also Golec de Zavala, this volume). Studies show that affective appraisals produce a correct decision well before consciousness (Bechara,

Damasio, Tranel, & Damasio, 1997; Gelder, De Haan, & Heywood, 2001). Often, the affective reaction is primary and essential to choosing correctly, while cognition is not. The swift preconscious role of emotion also applies to political assessments (Spezio et al., 2008; Todorov, 2017) and moral decisions (Haidt, 2001).

### Human Brains Evolved a Specific Solution to the Lack of Foresight

Psychology has largely focused its considerable attention on uncertainty (Kahneman et al., 1982). In this fashion, the disciple has acknowledged that humans lack foresight. Here, foresight is understood as having certain knowledge of the future. The conventional focus of social psychology has long been on human bias and has neglected to consider whether such biases may be instrumental in how human manage the lack of foresight.

The evidence is abundant that the ever-changing world poses deadly threats to entire species, including the human species (Darwin, 1966; Diamond, 2005). Because of the absence of certain knowledge of what is to come, humans have found a number of ways of managing, such as the active use of imagination to anticipate possible actions and their possible consequences (Hippel, 2019). Also among them are institutions that regularize the world into predictive patterns. The practice of science and the rule of law are important examples.

But, far earlier, human brains evolved another means to address our lack of foresight. We learned to switch between holding tightly to long-held practices or shifting to devising new ones. When we adopt the view "today is like yesterday," it follows that what worked yesterday will likely produce equally good outcomes tomorrow. But, when we accept "today is unlike yesterday," we must instead rely on individual and collective deliberation to generate more promising solutions. The first approach rests on the powerful role that habituated thought and action play in human life (Bargh & Pietromonaco, 1982; Bargh & Chartrand, 1999). But the soundness of this option is based on the expectation that habits will reproduce past results in situations that match those previously experienced. Populist programs are typically premised on the universal soundness of that expectation.

But if today is not sufficiently similar to the past, the predicted outcomes are far less likely. A better outcome might result from putting aside our habitual ways of evaluating a course of action. A better result might come from rejecting the vast inventory of proven practice, so we are free to seek out and then deliberate on the options advanced by others. Still, putting aside received wisdom may not necessarily lead to a better outcome (Scott, 1998). Since we lack foresight, whether we choose to keep to our habits of thought and action or reject them in favor of considering other options, we are making a most consequential bet, the outcome of which we hope we can survive to judge.

The Enlightenment project looked on reason as central to the success of the world that would emerge after the constraining grip of rigid hierarchies of faith, tradition, and monarchical rule was ended. That new order would be revealed by increasing numbers of autonomous reasoning individuals (Kant, 1970). Such individuals would, by relying on freely and rationally formed assessments, create a more commodious, cosmopolitan, peaceful, and democratic social world (Smith, 1986; Pinker, 2018).

However, some psychologists have come to the conclusion that reasoning is most commonly used in a biased manner described as "motivated reasoning" (Kunda, 1990; Mercier & Sperber, 2017). The motivated reasoning model of human consciousness presents a dismal view of human capacity. According to the Wikipedia entry on motivated reasoning (searched 2020): "Motivated reasoning . . . stands in contrast to critical thinking where beliefs are approached in a skeptical and unbiased fashion." If that is commonly the case, reason seems ill-suited to serve as the foundation for a more enlightened world but well suited to populist movements.

Many will be familiar with the dual process model of judgment (Chaiken & Trope, 1999). Psychologist Daniel Kahneman's popular book, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, draws attention to this feature of human nature (Kahneman, 2011). Basically, one mode of judging and acting, "thinking fast," describes how humans rely on fast intuitive means to produce effective results (Gigerenzer, Todd, & Group, 1999; Haidt, 2001). One the other hand, it has long been understood that humans can also avail themselves thinking harder, slower, and deeper when they are so motivated (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). While there is general agreement on the features of the two decision orientations, scholars have offered differing accounts of this dual capacity (Sherman, Gawronski, & Trope, 2014; Van Bavel, Xiao, & Cunningham, 2012).

Recent work on Affective Intelligence theory holds that humans evolved these two states of consciousness to make life without foresight more manageable (Marcus, 2002). *Motivated reasoning* is not a case of "irrationality," but rather should be understood as an adaptive response in many, perhaps most, common circumstances of life. Neuroscientist Jeffrey Gray identified the neural mechanisms that enabled *both* reliance on what was previously learned via habituation *and* what can be acquired through fresh deliberative analyses (Gray, 1987). That is to say, humans have the ability to rely on what they have previously learned *and* the ability to set aside old lessons to generate new solutions when new solutions are needed. And, to do so, they must engage a second state of conscious awareness, *motivated deliberation*. As I shall show below, fear and anger play guidance as to which of these states of consciousness we present. And these orientations then shape how people respond to political threats.

It is fear's fundamental task to select the state of consciousness best suited to the moment (Marcus, 2002). When fear is low, we comfortably rely on habituated

thoughts and actions that in familiar circumstances yield expected results. How-
ever, when we are more fearful, relying on learned and trusted habits of thought
and action is not likely to produce predicted results, so we turn to motivated
deliberation (Marcus & MacKuen, 1993; Brader, 2006). Here, the human capac-
ity to engage the active use of imagination, speculation, and contemplation—
both private and public—becomes the means to finding new solutions, new
allegiances, and new outcomes. Fear weakens our reliance on standing practices,
thereby setting the stage for new collective ventures.

The ability to have a vivid representation in one's mind enables it to be self-
consciously viewed and then shared with others via words and pictures. It is
such explicit shared representations that enable democracy to serve as a collective
error correcting space. Public deliberation is constrained if thought and action
are tightly interwoven and embedded in deeply engrained partisan habits. When
consciousness is in its "error-correcting" mode (Gray, 2004), human judgment
turns to reliance on deliberate consideration and reflection. Diverse reflections
on alternative understandings is democracy's principal advantage over more rigid
regimes (Ober, 2008).

The availability of dual processing is advantageous for evolutionary fitness,
especially with regard to managing threat. What does this new psychology of
perception offer to our understanding of the role of fear and anger in populism
and political behavior?

I turn to answering that question in the section that follows.

## The Theory of Affective Intelligence and Threat

The theory of Affective Intelligence addresses the two alternating states of con-
sciousness, *motivated reasoning* and *motivated deliberation*. The first of these, moti-
vated reasoning, is familiar to psychologists. The second, motivated deliberation,
is roughly comparable to motivated cognition as, for example, described by the
elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The common treatment
of greater or less open attentiveness and reflection are too often described as
spatial metaphors (higher and lower, inside or outside). AIT holds that temporal
descriptions are more apt, early and later. The two states are briefly described in
Table 5.1.

There is an important distinction between Affective Intelligence theory and
the cognitive appraisal school. AIT presents emotion as involved in the precon-
scious processing of sensory and soma-sensory information, while the cognitive
appraisal school focuses on the conscious experience of emotion. AIT predicts
that *unconscious* emotional appraisals are not hiding *beneath* the surface of con-
scious awareness; they function hiding *before* conscious awareness. Preconscious
systems operate constantly and concurrently as they swiftly monitor potential
threats, deploying anger and fear to direct the most apt response.

**TABLE 5.1**  Two motivated states of conscious awareness—an overview.

| Two States of Mind | |
| --- | --- |
| *Motivated Reasoning* | *Motivated Deliberation* |
| Default | Departure from default |
| Driven and executed by preconscious affective appraisals of enthusiasm and anger. | Driven by preconscious affective appraisal of fear. |
| To: achieve efficacious reliance on habits of thought and behavior ("Automaticity", Bargh, 1999; James, 1890). | To: engender a form of autonomous agency by increasing motivation for more information freed from reliance on habits of thought and action to instead rely on deliberation. |

The rules of social interaction and exchange are well understood, most often grasped intuitively (Haidt, 2001). These are well described in the many books by Erving Goffman (1959, 1971, 1981). Changing levels of anger reflect changing levels of norm violation. For a minor breach, people might display disdain towards offending persons. For more serious breaches, people may shun those believed responsible or demand serious punishments (Skitka et al., 2006; Giner-Sorolla & Maitner, 2013). Populists, leaders and followers alike, see injustice all around them (Norris & Inglehart, 2018). And injustice fuels anger, and anger strengthens the inclination to *engage* in motivated reasoning. The greater our anger, the more robust the spontaneous defense of collective convictions. Anger serves as the watchdog of justice and, as such, is a foundational antecedent of populist movements.

Anger, then, is focused on the perception of norm violation. Fear, on the other hand, identifies threats that are unexpected or unfamiliar. And it is here we find another contrast between how fear is understood with the cognitive appraisal school and how it is understood within AIT. The cognitive appraisal school holds that fearful people seek to avoid risky choices. This interpretation of fear has a long tradition (Kahneman et al., 1982; Lerner & Keltner, 2001; Lerner, Gonzalez, Small, & Fischhoff, 2003).

In contrast, AIT holds that the fundamental role of fear is to identify uncertain and unexpected circumstances. Fear then acts to inhibit spontaneous, and default, reliance on motivated reasoning and to shift the state of conscious awareness to deliberative thinking. The state of motivated deliberation enables more open consideration of options and coalitions best suited to address whatever the uncertainty presents. Fear thus causes a radical attentional shift. In the absence of threat, we rely on our received learning that assures us of the safety of our status quo. But when threat triggers fear, we turn abruptly to active, engaged learning to see how

we might obviate that threat (Marcus & MacKuen, 1993; Groenendyk, 2016; Brader, 2006). Thus, the preconscious affective appraisals of anger and fear serve cognitive tuning functions (Forgas, 2013).

In the next section, I present three experiments to test whether fear and anger focus attention on different features of threats. I also examine whether, as predicted by AIT, threat-elicited anger recruits motivated reasoning and threat-elicited fear recruits *motivated deliberation*.

## Testing the Framework: States of Political Consciousness When Facing Menace

Figure 5.5 displays a path model derived from Affective Intelligence theory, here with Partisan Certitude as an operationalized facet of *motivated reasoning* and Political Open-Mindedness as an operationalized facet of *motivated deliberation*. Included in the model is ideological identification (conservatism/liberalism). This account builds on a longstanding view that conservatives evince a different stance towards threat then do liberals (Jost & Krochika, 2014; Schreiber et al., 2013). However, as I shall show below, ideological identification's influence on populism and managing threat may well depend on whether or not the threat is one that has been politicized (Petrocik, 1996; Crawford, 2017).

To test this model, I and my colleagues, W. Russell Neuman and Michael B. MacKuen, chose three political threat topics well known to most Americans: terror attacks; an economic crisis that unfolded in 2006–2008; and food threat (stores selling contaminated foods).

The data come from two national surveys, each representing the broad diversity of American adults, drawing on the GfK Custom Research's sampling base. The first survey collected in late 2009 (n = 1545) included study 1. The second set of data, collected late 2009 (N = 2,583), included studies 2 and 3.

Each study features three different stimulus stories: one presenting the threat as benign; one emphasizing unknown and unpredictable elements; and a story
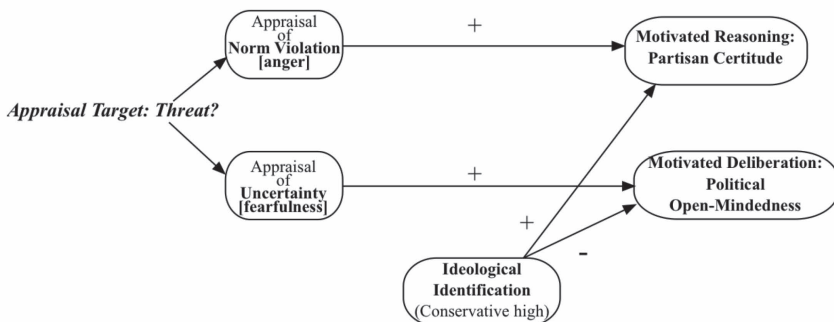


**FIGURE 5.5** Research design—the shifting states of conscious awareness.

**Benign - Low Threat**

## Good News on Border Security

Dateline: Washington DC: Department of Homeland Security Senior Director Robert Mooney testifying before Congress reported that tests on new border security technologies provided evidence of dramatically improved capacity to detect potential terrorists at US ports of entry. "We have installed three new technical systems and each has already increased our capacity to catch the bad guys," he testified. "Advanced digital technology will be our first line of defense."

Mooney demonstrated a new data system that collects up-to-the-second data on lost and stolen passports from 188 countries around the world so that if a malevolent individual attempts to use someone else's passport to avoid detection silent alarms alert border officials immediately. "You can buy genuine recently stolen passports on the streets of Cairo for less than $20," Mooney reported, "But now it will serve as a passport directly to our detention facility."

There are 304 land, sea and air travel ports of entry in the United States each maintained by DHS's uniformed immigration and customs inspectors. Each will be fully operational with the new Triple-Safe system within six to eight weeks.

**High Threat - Uncertainty Salient**

### Buffett Says Global Debt Panic Could Lead To Second Economic Downturn

Washington — Legendary billionaire investor Warren Buffett, the chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway, is worried that the US is on the verge of another "economic Pearl Harbor."

In an interview that aired Sunday on *Dateline NBC* he said, "The nation's economic situation is fragile. Countries all over the world are going from economic recovery to total ruin almost overnight. The debt crisis is spreading like an out-of-control wildfire. We're really vulnerable. I think we may be next." Buffett was referring to the European debt crisis that began unexpectedly earlier this year in Greece and has since spread like a virus worldwide.

"I don't know what advice I could give to potential investors now other than hide your money," Buffett said. He noted that he has scaled back most of his own investments to shield himself from what he calls "the infectious fear of uncertainty." US investors have lost billions of dollars in recent weeks as the stock market has fallen sharply in response to the debt crisis. The market still shows no sign of stabilizing anytime soon.

**High Threat - Normative Violation Salient**

**Peanut Corporation Knowingly Sold Salmonella Tainted Food**

WASHINGTON – A new Food and Drug Administration report finds that "corporate greed and reckless disregard for public safety" were behind the 2009 peanut-related salmonella outbreak that killed 9 people, sickened 691 others, and led to one of the largest food recalls in history. The report is the result of a year-long investigation and was released at a press conference today.

The investigation concludes that the now-defunct Peanut Corporation of America (PCA), at the time one of the nation's largest food manufacturers, intentionally sold products tainted with salmonella after their internal tests detected the deadly bacteria in their peanuts.

Despite the test results, PCA ignored federal food safety laws by refusing to stop production at their Georgia plant.

emphasizing key actors violating core norms. Figure 5.6 shows snippets of three of these nine stories (for the complete stories, see https://www.research wgate.net/publication/342919199_The_Rise_of_Populism_The_politics_ of_justice_anger_and_grievance/addSupplementaryResources).

The two judgmental styles, motivated reasoning and motivated deliberation, were measured with two items each, averaged to create two simple summated scales. The items are listed in Table 5.2.

The two scales are very weakly correlated ($r = .04$; $n = 4122$). These orientations are not mutually exclusive (MacKuen et al., 2010). Details of the validity and reliability of these items can be found in Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen (2017).

Fear and anger were measured using multiple indicators (Marcus et al., 2017). After reading their assigned story, participants were asked: "How does what you have just seen make you feel?" This was followed by ten items in randomized order, with three measuring fear (*scared, worried*, and *afraid*, $\alpha = .91$) and four

**TABLE 5.2** Operationalizing motivated reasoning and motivated deliberation.

*Motivated Reasoning*: **Partisan Certitude** (i.e., "my way is the only way")
• These issues and events provide no room for compromise.
• I am certain that my point of view on these issues and events is the right one.
*Motivated Deliberation:* **Political Open–Mindedness** (i.e., "it takes a village")
• To solve these sorts of issues and events, everyone's concerns should be heard.
• These sorts of issues and events are best resolved by listening to everyone's concerns.

*Note*: Response options: extremely true; very true; moderately true; slightly true; or not at all true.

measuring anger (*hateful, angry*, *bitter*, and *resentful*, α = .90). The three other emotion indicators, *enthusiastic, hopeful*, and *proud*, were randomly interspersed, but as they do not impact on results below they will not be further discussed.
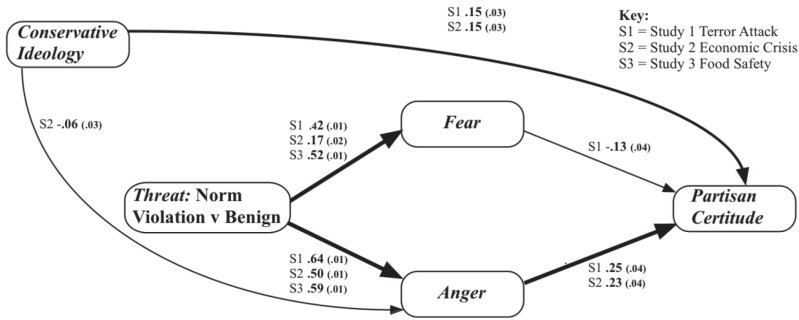
Relying on Andrew Hayes's PROCESS procedure (2018), path models were generated. I report the standardized path coefficients in the following figures. I am grateful to Profs. Alan Lambert and Ken Savitsky for running these analyses. The experimental treatments serve as the independent variable (X). Partisan Certitude and Political Open-Mindedness each serve as dependent measures, Y1 and Y2. The path models place two mediating variables, fear (M1) and anger (M2), between the experimental treatment and each of two dependent variables: Y1, Partisan Certitude; and, Y2, Political Open-Mindedness. Each figure presents the results of all three experiments to facilitate direct comparison. Figure 5.7 presents the mediation model with Partisan Certitude as the dependent variable (Y1). Figure 5.8 presents the mediation model with Political Open-Mindedness as the dependent variable (Y2).

The analyses answer particular questions that address the central claims of AIT:
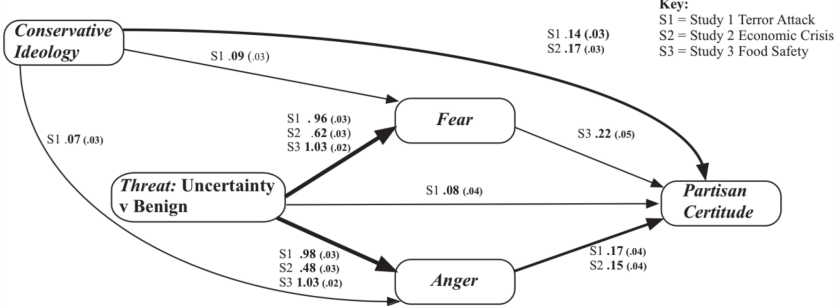
(1) Does anger promote greater steadfast reliance on partisan views? Figure 5.7 shows these results. Panel A shows these results when the Normative Violation treatment is contrasted to the Benign treatment; Panel B shows these results when the Uncertainty treatment contrasted is contrasted to the Benign treatment; and Panel C shows these results when the Normative Violation treatment is contrasted to the Uncertainty treatment, i.e., when both fear and anger are *both* rampant.
(2) Does fear initiate a willingness to listen to the voices of others outside one's own partisan alignment? Figure 5.8 shows these results. Again, the three panels show what happens with anger is heightened, when fear is heightened, and when both fear and anger are heightened.

Significant path estimates (p < .05) are shown as bold. The thickness of the path lines, as one, two, or three points, indicates whether one, two, or all three experiments produced significant results for that path.

**A: Experimental Effects - Norm Violation v Benign Treatments - Partisan Certitude**

Conservative Ideology

S1 .15 (.03)
S2 .15 (.03)

Key:
S1 = Study 1 Terror Attack
S2 = Study 2 Economic Crisis
S3 = Study 3 Food Safety

S2 -.06 (.03)

S1 .42 (.01)
S2 .17 (.02)
S3 .52 (.01)

Fear

S1 -.13 (.04)

Threat: Norm Violation v Benign

Partisan Certitude

S1 .64 (.01)
S2 .50 (.01)
S3 .59 (.01)

S1 .25 (.04)
S2 .23 (.04)

Anger

**B: Experimental Effects - Uncertain v Benign Treatments - Partisan Certitude**

Key:
S1 = Study 1 Terror Attack
S2 = Study 2 Economic Crisis
S3 = Study 3 Food Safety

Conservative Ideology

S1 .09 (.03)

S1 .14 (.03)
S2 .17 (.03)

S1 .07 (.03)

S1 .96 (.03)
S2 .62 (.03)
S3 1.03 (.02)

Fear

S3 .22 (.05)

Threat: Uncertainty v Benign

S1 .08 (.04)

Partisan Certitude

S1 .98 (.03)
S2 .48 (.03)
S3 1.03 (.02)

S1 .17 (.04)
S2 .15 (.04)

Anger

**C: Experimental Effects - Uncertain v Norm Violation Treatments - Partisan Certitude**

Key:
S1 = Study 1 Terror Attack
S2 = Study 2 Economic Crisis
S3 = Study 3 Food Safety

Conservative Ideology

S1 .15 (.03)
S2 .12 (.03)

S1 .07 (.03)
S3 .07 (.03)

S1 .09 (.03)
S3 -.07 (.03)

S1 -.15 (.02)
S2 -.30 (.03)

Fear

S3 .10 (.04)

Threat: Uncertain v Norm Violation

Partisan Certitude

S1 .46 (.03)
S2 .64 (.03)
S3 .17 (.04)

S1 .28 (.04)
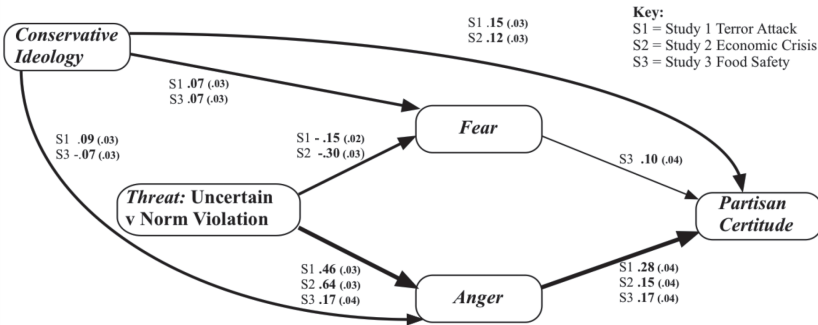S2 .15 (.04)
S3 .17 (.04)

Anger

**FIGURE 5.7**  The influence of fear and anger on Partisan Certitude.

The results across all three experiments are quite consistent. Exposure to a threat story activates both heightened anger and heightened fear. Heightened anger promotes reliance on motivated reasoning. The paths from anger to Partisan Certitude are significant and robust in seven of the nine analyses. At least two of these paths are robust and positive in each of the three panes of Figure 5.7.

**A: Experimental Effects - Norm Violation v Benign Treatments -  Political Open-Mindedness**
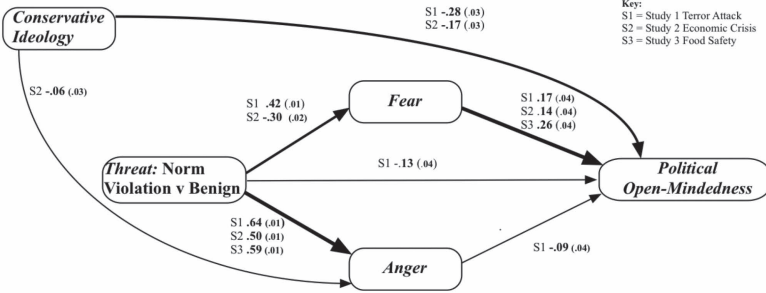


**B: Experimental Effects - Uncertain v Benign Treatments - Political Open-Mindedness**
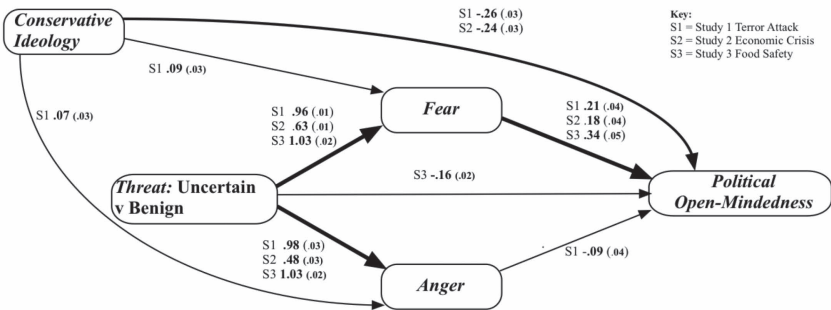


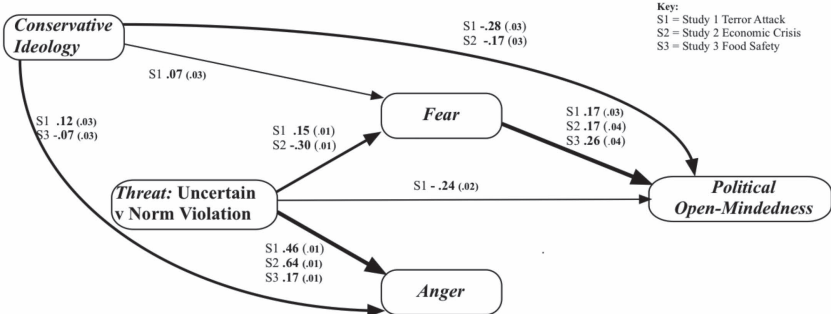**C: Experimental Effects - Uncertain v Norm Violation Treatments - Political Open-Mindedness**



**FIGURE 5.8**   The influence of fear and anger on political open–mindedness.

Fear does not seem to initiate a "rally to the group" orientation, as but three of the nine path analyses are significant, two paths positive and one negative spread across the three studies.

Conservatives do tilt to Partisan Certitude, but only in the two partisan threat experiments, terror attacks and the economic crisis. It is worth further exploring whether partisan bias in judgment orientations may be evident only for topics that have previously been presented as partisan. To date, food safety has not been treated as a partisan issue in the United States. Moreover, there is precious little

evidence that conservatives are different from liberals in their affective appraisals to each of the three experimental treatments.

In sum, though the nine stories are very different, the evidentiary pattern is clear. When people are angry, their convictions are strengthened and they turn a deaf ear to "outside" voices.

Does uncertainty shape how people respond to threat? Figure 5.8 tells that tale.

Threat-elicited fear does initiate a shift to deliberative reasoning, as all nine path coefficients between fear and Political Open-Mindedness are statistically significant, with but two of the nine paths from anger to Political Open-Mindedness significant, but modest in impact. As to ideological identification, liberals are more inclined to adopt Political Open-Mindedness, while conservatives are more resistant and this pattern is not driven by affective evaluations. Further, the liberal propensity to adopt Political Open-Mindedness is evident only for the two politicized topics, terrorism and economic crisis. Liberals and conservatives appear equally likely to be moved to anger by Normative Violations and to be freed from their convictions by fear.

The results reported above are not definitive, as they must be replicated by other scholars and subjected to the full array of scientific challenge. I believe, however, that they are sufficient to assert that we indeed gain a better understanding of how people identify and respond when under threat if we pay attention to how angry as well as to how fearful they are. Those who have become angry will show robust motivated reasoning (Suhay & Erisen, 2018). On the other hand, those who find themselves more fearful express greater willingness to adopt deliberative reasoning (Marcus & MacKuen, 1993; Brader, 2006).

Notwithstanding these further inquiries and what they may reveal, the commonly voiced claim that people experience fear and only fear when faced with threat and, further, that threat-driven fear accounts for how threatened people react is insufficient to understand the emotional predicates of populist thinking (Lambert et al., 2010; Lambert, Eadeh, & Hanson, 2019).

## Ramifications

I close by considering three topics for further consideration. Why have far-right parties and their charismatic leaders been gaining power? Second, how should the robust influence of preconscious affective appraisals modify our normative conceptions of democratic citizenship? And, third, perhaps unexpectedly, given the growing appeal of populism, what should be the role of justice in liberal societies?

### *Causes of the Rise of Populism*

In the public arena, the dominant explanation of attraction of populist messages is that they are driven by fear: fear of immigrants; fear of economic loss; fear of

living in a dangerous world; and so on. The focus on fear is reflected in our language: xenophobia, i.e., fear of strangers, and homophobia, i.e., fear of gays. It is revealing that we don't have proper words for threats that elicit anger. This may partly explain why so many accounts credit fear and not anger as the cause of the rise of populism and support for extreme candidates.

The robust influence of anger shown in these studies tells us that those motivated to support populist parties are driven by grievances. And grievances do not flow from fears, but from a sense of injustice (Norris & Inglehart, 2018; Oesch, 2008). Anger is the means by which we identify breaches in the web of deftly aligned behaviors that make a viable social order.

Ignoring anger generates a profound misunderstanding of how people respond to threats (Petersen, 2010). Anger is not some extraneous irrational intrusion that disrupts our otherwise rational mind. Rather, it is the mechanism by which we gain swift preconscious warning that we face a direct challenge to norms that sustain the social order. The rapidity of that warning advances our evolutionary fitness. But to the extent that fear is presented as the principal force in play, consideration of populist grievances will be absent in public discussions. And blindness to the importance of anger will prevent due consideration about which grievances are valid and how best to resolve them. Trying to calm people's fears when we should be addressing their anger about grievances will leave the angry among us with an increasing sense that our leaders, and our governments, are "out of touch."

Indeed, calming the public's fear may prove to be detrimental, especially when a specific threat is largely unfamiliar. Novel threats are likely best dealt with by engaging the public in open inquiry rather than by seeking to calm their fears. A pernicious and often intentional consequence of calming a fearful public is to insulate authorities from public scrutiny and oversight.

### Human Nature—Old and New

The ancient challenge to democracy, first launched by Plato (1974), is the claim that passions drive the public to irrational endorsement of charismatic leaders. The Enlightenment proposed autonomous reason as the antidote to this fragility in human nature. The social sciences were tasked with mapping the anticipated success of enlightened modernity (Marcus, 2008). This new venture predicted that society would become ever more populated by self-determining individuals. Modernity anticipated that people would willingly leave behind a world constructed to secure prosperity through reliance on stable hierarchies and well-practiced traditions. That many willingly valued social responsibility over individual autonomy was taken as evidence of human frailty (Fromm, 1965).

Affective Intelligence theory offers a new view of democratic citizenship (Marcus, 2002; Marcus, 2013). Rather than adopting the Enlightenment model of people ruled by rationality, the theory of Affective Intelligence describes people

making good use of their emotions and of their capacity to reason to address the challenges of an unseeable future.

Discourse on citizenship has focused on two seemingly mutually exclusive and antagonistic conceptions. Some argue that deliberation is the sole proper normative basis for citizenship (Benhabib, 1996a, 1996b; Fishkin, 2009). Other equally confident voices claim that democratic citizens are best served steadfast commitment to collective action (Sanders, 1997; Shapiro, 1999). While each stance has particular benefits, the protean capacity to shift from one and back in the circumstances best suited to each offers greater evolutionary fitness than would a singular reliance on either.

### Justice in the Liberal Project

The influence of anger suggests that creating a just society is a task profoundly central to the enduring ability of social life to sustain community. This task has long been understood as central to ensuring a stable liberal democratic order. The American Founders placed task by design in the Constitution's first words, in the Preamble:

> We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

The Preamble begins by stating its goal: to create a more perfect union. What follows is a list of actions necessary to achieve it, arranged in proper order, each necessary for the execution of the next: only by establishing Justice is a society able to insure domestic Tranquility. Domestic tranquility then makes it possible for society to provide for the common defense, which in turn enables the government to promote the general Welfare. Only such a government can then secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.

Creating a more just society must have an enduring place on the public agenda of the enlightened world. Living in an ever-changing world inexorably presents new challenges to existing conceptions and practices of justice. At any given moment, justice must be directed towards a continuing past *and* an emergent future. Some will favor the forms of justice that protect and seek to extend the past into the future. Anger that urges us to defend traditional practices provides an important foundation for such endeavors. Some will be more open to seeking approaches to justice best adapted to our evolving society. And here, fear provides a foundation for more open consideration of both old and new claims. Emotion serves both approaches to justice.

Doing justice in large, diverse democratic societies requires that we confront conflicting views of justice. What exactly is the "just order" and where oppression

remains will remain topics for ardent debate (Young, 1990). And doing so effectively requires taking the hidden and making it visible. Fear, rather than anger, is best suited to awaken a sleeping, complacent, and self-satisfied public. Creating justice is a never-ending obligation for democratic citizens.

In the effort to establish a more just society, both motivated reasoning and motivated deliberation each have their distinct advantages and their distinct vulnerabilities. The first tilts human judgment to defend practices that have *proven* worth. The second encourages the reconsideration of settled practices. Each stance has its fallibilities. It is useful that each is available in circumstances best suited to its strengths. Grasping the different contributions of fear and anger, and how each checks the fallibilities of the other, leads to better understand when and why the public and their leaders give voice to their fears and to their angers. Philosopher David Hume put forward a famous thesis (Hume, 1984, p. 462): "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them." Humans make better use of reason by having anger and fear direct to what purpose reason is put.

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