

PROTEMO INSIGHTS

How Do Emotions Shape Coalition Dynamics in Policymaking?

PSJ

POLICY STUDIES JOURNAL

based on Maor, M. 2026. "**Emotion and the Advocacy Coalition Framework: An Affective Dynamics Perspective.**" Policy Studies Journal 1–15



Policy debates aren't just technical.

Think about debates on

 Climate

 Migration

 Public health

 LGBTQ+ rights

These aren't just policy disagreements.
They're **emotional**.



When issues feel emotional,

people don't argue alone — **they form camps.** And even political coalitions aren't built on beliefs alone, but also on emotions such as:

🙄 Anger

😨 Fear

😏 Pride

⚖️ Moral conviction

Emotions thus help hold coalitions together.



That's why policymakers don't just evaluate arguments.

They may feel **connected** to a cause, a community, or a moral position.

That **emotional attachment** can shape their choices — even before facts are weighed.



In technical areas, facts tend to dominate.

But in **identity-based or moral conflicts**, emotions intensify, group boundaries harden, and compromise becomes harder.

These are “**high-affect**” policy environments, where feelings are not background noise — they drive the debate.



Even mediators aren't emotion-free.

Those who mediate between sides:

- ❤️ May feel emotionally closer to one group
- 😬 May publicly express one thing but feel another
- 🕊️ Or actively try to calm tensions

Whether visible or hidden, emotions influence who is trusted — and whether compromise is possible.



Emotions don't replace beliefs – they shape how beliefs work.

They influence how people interpret evidence, choose allies, and respond to conflict, which means that **understanding coalition politics** requires understanding affect.

If we ignore emotions, we miss why some coalitions endure, polarize, or collapse.



Want to know more?

Read the full publication "**Emotion
and the Advocacy Coalition
Framework: An Affective Dynamics
Perspective**" by Moshe Maor in the
Policy Studies Journal!



**Link in the first
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