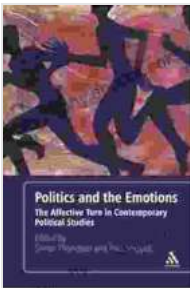


# The Affective Turn: Unveiling the Hidden Power of Emotions in Politics

In the realm of political science, a profound shift is taking place. The traditional focus on rational decision-making and institutional structures is yielding ground to a new understanding that recognizes the profound influence of emotions on political phenomena. This transformative perspective, known as the affective turn, is revolutionizing our comprehension of how people engage with politics and how political systems function.



## Politics and the Emotions: The Affective Turn in Contemporary Political Studies by Curt Weldon

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 2725 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 244 pages



At the heart of the affective turn lies the recognition that emotions are not merely personal experiences but potent forces that shape political behavior, decision-making, and social interactions. Drawing inspiration from disciplines such as psychology, neuroscience, and sociology, scholars in political science are exploring how emotions can mobilize or demobilize

citizens, influence policy outcomes, and even shape the very foundations of political systems.

In his seminal book, "The Affective Turn in Contemporary Political Studies," leading political scientist Jonathan Mercer provides a comprehensive overview of this emerging field. Through engaging case studies and theoretical insights, Mercer illuminates the profound implications of the affective turn for our understanding of political power, resistance, and democratic politics.

### **Understanding the Affective Turn**

To grasp the transformative potential of the affective turn, it is essential to delve into its core concepts. Mercer emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between affect and emotion. While emotions are conscious feelings that individuals experience, affect refers to non-conscious physiological responses, such as increased heart rate or changes in skin temperature.

The affective turn challenges the traditional view that politics is solely driven by rational calculation. It posits that affect plays a crucial role in shaping how people interpret political messages, evaluate candidates, and respond to political events. By delving into the realm of affect, political scientists can gain a deeper understanding of the motivations that underpin political behavior.

### **Emotions in Political Context**

The affective turn has prompted scholars to examine the multifaceted ways in which emotions manifest in political life. Some emotions, like anger or fear, can trigger political mobilization and shape political discourse. Others,

such as empathy or compassion, can foster cooperation and promote a sense of community.

For example, the 2016 Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom was heavily influenced by emotions. Many voters were motivated by a sense of nostalgia for a bygone era and a fear of the unknown. By understanding the affective dynamics at play, political analysts can better comprehend the decisions that voters make.

## **The Impact of the Affective Turn**

The affective turn is having a profound impact on various subfields within political science. It is challenging established theories and opening up new avenues of research. Here are a few key areas where the affective turn is shaping our understanding of politics:

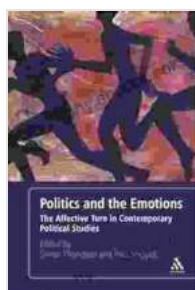
- **Political Behavior:** Scholars are exploring how emotions influence voter turnout, candidate choice, and political participation. They are also examining the role of emotions in political socialization and identity formation.
- **Policymaking:** The affective turn is shedding light on how emotions affect policy decisions and implementation. By understanding the emotions that policymakers experience, we can better grasp the factors that shape their choices.
- **Social Movements:** Protest movements and social activism are often driven by emotions. The affective turn provides a framework for analyzing the emotions that mobilize individuals and sustain collective action.

- **Democratic Theory:** The affective turn is challenging traditional notions of democratic citizenship. It raises questions about the role of emotions in democratic decision-making and the extent to which emotions should be considered in democratic theory.

"The Affective Turn in Contemporary Political Studies" is a groundbreaking work that offers a comprehensive exploration of a paradigm shift in political science. Jonathan Mercer provides a compelling case for the transformative power of emotions in politics. By embracing the affective turn, scholars and policymakers alike can gain a deeper understanding of political phenomena and develop more effective strategies for engaging with the citizenry.

As we navigate the complexities of the 21st century, the affective turn is proving to be an indispensable tool for anyone seeking to comprehend the emotional undercurrents that shape political life. By unveiling the hidden power of emotions, "The Affective Turn in Contemporary Political Studies" invites us to rethink our understanding of politics and embrace a more holistic approach to political analysis.

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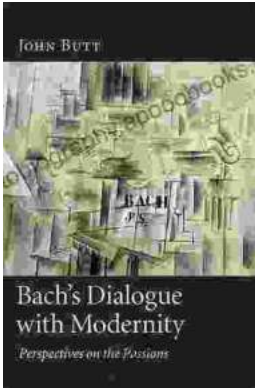
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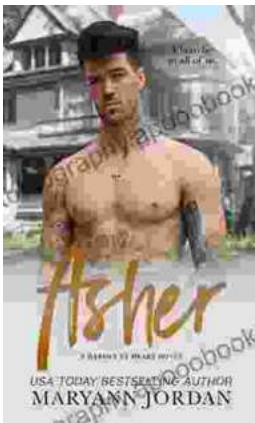
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