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Anxiety in Democratic Life

> *Passion is a sort of fever of the mind, which ever leaves us weaker than it found us.*
>
> William Penn (1909), *Fruits of Solitude*

> *Anxiety is the hand maiden of creativity.*
>
> T. S. Elliot

Emotions matter in politics – enthusiastic supporters return politicians to office, angry citizens march in the streets, a fearful public demands protection from the government. Yet, in much of Western political thought, emotions are either ignored or derided as destructive to democracy. Until recently, scholarship in political science paid little sustained attention to how emotions such as anxiety affect political life, focusing instead on the cognitive and rational aspects of politics. We explore the emotional life of politics in this book, with particular emphasis on how political anxieties affect public life. When the world is scary, when politics is passionate, when the citizenry is anxious, does this politics resemble politics under more serene conditions? If politicians use threatening appeals to motivate and persuade citizens, how does the public respond?

Throughout this book, we show that political anxiety triggers engagement in politics and that it does so in ways that are potentially both promising and damaging for democracy. Using four substantive policy areas (public health, immigration, terrorism, and climate change), we demonstrate that anxiety triggers learning, but it also prioritizes attention to threatening information. Anxiety can push citizens toward trusting the government in times of crisis, but this can leave people open to manipulation. We also find that political anxiety increases support for protective

and potentially anti-democratic policies. Anxiety about politics triggers coping strategies in the political world, where these strategies are often shaped by partisan agendas.

This book provides a fuller picture of anxiety in politics and gets us closer to reconciling the current normative appreciation of anxiety with the political uses of anxiety. Emotions like anxiety may benefit citizens by increasing attention and making political choices easier, but we doubt that political elites and the news media evoke fear in order to create better citizens. Democratic citizenship in an anxious world can be a deeper, more informed citizenship. Without a full spectrum of voices from partisan political elites, though, anxious citizens in search of protection from threats to their health and way of life may support charlatans or madmen who offer bodily protection while destroying the body politic.

In much of foundational Western thought, emotion plays a role in conceptions of citizenship and the correct form of government, and it rarely is viewed in a positive light. In Plato's parable of the cave, human beings are trapped by desire and prevented from moving up into reason, thus underscoring the idea that emotion undermines rational thought. In Plato's conception of democracy, the rulers are defined by emotional disorder, an unstable system that would eventually lead to tyranny or rule by fear (Neblo 2007). For Thomas Hobbes, emotion is a universal experience and fundamental to the formation of governance. For Hobbes, the fear of death is a motivating force in political life, encouraging and indeed compelling individuals to form a government to protect themselves from anarchy and its dangers. Hobbes argues that fear of physical violence made the state of nature intolerable, leading citizens toward endowing a government with authority to rule and keep citizens safe. In order to escape this fear, those in the state of nature were motivated "to seek and accept a sovereign who will ensure public peace and mutual compliance with freely made arrangements and their resulting obligations" (Hobbes 2008). Anxiety thus leads to support for a sovereign who can ensure public safety; yet, this is not always a democratically elected or accountable leader.

American political philosophy perpetuated the notion of emotion as destructive and destabilizing of governance. Much of the focus in the *Federalist Papers* is on how to build institutions that can limit the force of passion in the newly formed American government. In *Federalist 71*, Alexander Hamilton argues that government should only respond to the true opinions of the community, not to "every sudden breeze of passion or to every transient impulse which the public may receive from the arts of

men who flatter their prejudices to betray their interests" (Hamilton, Jay, and Madison 1961, 432). Twentieth-century scholars concerned about the rise of totalitarianism, fascism, and the atrocities of two world wars also suggested that emotions, cued by political propaganda, affected mass behavior in damaging ways (Lasswell 1927; Lippmann 1943) and that the public can be convinced to act, often violently and against their interests, through the manipulation of affect (Edelman 1985). Contemporary deliberative theories (Ackerman and Fishkin 2004; Fishkin 1995; Habermas 1989) generally consider emotion as an impediment to reasoned discussion, the recognition of one's true interests, and deliberation as a democratic practice.

Whereas political philosophers focused on emotion's role in society, for many decades, empirical social science ignored emotion, instead focusing on a colder, calculating politics. Much of the political science literature on mass political behavior emphasizes cognition – what citizens know or do not (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Converse 1964; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996), how citizens learn about politics (Gilens and Murakawa 2002; Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Prior 2007), and how they utilize information in making political decisions (Campbell et al. 1960; Lau and Redlawsk 2006; Lupia 1994; Zaller 1992). The rational choice perspective, in particular, underscores how individuals weigh cost-benefit information in making political decisions (Downs 1957; Fiorina 1981; Lupia, McCubbins, and Popkin 2000) and rarely considers how emotions may inhibit or enhance decision making (but see Lupia and Menning 2009). For decades, psychology's cognitive revolution similarly undervalued emotions, placing the focus instead on processes like perception and memory, which were conceived of as separate from emotion (LeDoux 2000). If emotions are epiphenomenal, this underemphasis on emotional processes may be sensible, but recent work shows the systematic effects of emotion on political life.

This is not to say that emotion was wholly ignored in psychology or political behavior research. In cognitive psychology, Abelson's concept of "hot cognition" (1963) called for closer attention to affective processes. Taking up Abelson's call, Zajonc (1980) argued that affect is primary, basic, and inescapable in how individuals judge the world around them. Emotion also appears in earlier work on political behavior. Research on the authoritarian personality (Adorno et al. 1950), Lane's investigations of the common man (1962), and Sears's theory of symbolic politics (1986, 1993; Sears et al. 1980) all consider emotion's place in political life, although emotion rarely plays a constructive role in these works.

In recent decades, though, social scientists have turned their attention back to emotion's role in a wide variety of phenomena such as voting (Abelson et al. 1982; Marcus and MacKuen 1993), candidate and presidential evaluations (Conover and Feldman 1986; Steenbergen and Ellis 2006), information processing (Redlawsk, Civinetti, and Lau 2007), framing effects (Dillard et al. 1996; Druckman and McDermott 2008; Huddy and Gunnthorsdottir 2000), and public opinion (Brader 2002, 2006; Huddy, Feldman, and Cassese 2007; Huddy et al. 2003; Kinder 1994). In addressing the serious concern of political observers about emotion's destructive capacity, research in the past two decades reveals that emotion may be a useful and constructive part of political life. As Kinder (1994, 310) put it, "Emotion is, in some respects, an inevitable natural force. And nothing that is so essential to the human experience is likely to be all bad." Recent psychology, neuroscience, and political science work finds that emotion may be integral to learning (Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000; Redlawsk et al. 2007; Valentino et al. 2008), attitude formation (Brader, Valentino, and Suhay 2008; Zajonc 1980), and even reasoning (Damasio 1994; Lodge and Taber 2005; McDermott 2004). Even political theorists are touting the potential benefits of anxiety to the American public. Bryan Garsten (2006) argues in *Saving Persuasion* that anxiety might actually be a key to deeper reflection:

Deliberation and judgment therefore seem to emerge not in sedate citizens who reason, as Rousseau once proposed in the "silence of the passions" but instead in citizens who have been disturbed out of their calm and made attentive by sharp feelings of anxiety. Partiality and passion together, in the form of anxiety, can prod reflection. (Garsten 2006, 196)

We also see emotion as inextricable to political life. Furthermore, we believe that a focus either on how emotions can undercut rationality or on how emotions can cure democratic malaise can only tell half the story.

We argue that citizens think and act differently when they are emotionally involved in politics – particularly when they are anxious – than when emotion is less intense or absent. Fear does not paralyze the need for action, for turning passivity into activity, for advancing against an unseen enemy on foreign shores, as suggested by Franklin Roosevelt's famous quote. Anxiety prompts a need and desire for protection, and this motivates citizens to seek out this protection by utilizing coping mechanisms. Threats and the anxieties that accompany those threats lead to a public more engaged with politics, more trusting of expert political actors, and

more supportive of public policies they believe will return security. Anxiety also leads to a bias toward threatening news, less trust in a range of political actors perceived as less expert, and increased support for denying rights in the name of safety.

UNDERSTANDING EMOTION AND ANXIETY

We are concerned with how anxiety affects a set of political outcomes – information processing, trust, and attitudes. Because our focus is on the substantive effects of one emotion, we do not offer a general theory of emotion in political life. Rather, we rely on previous scholarship in psychology and political science to illuminate the broad role of emotions in conditioning citizens' opinions and behavior and instead concentrate on how anxiety influences citizen motivations and conduct. As Kinder (1994) mentions, theories of emotions abound, and we heed his call for more empirical investigations of the consequences of emotion. In this section, we define emotion, differentiate emotion from other phenomena like moods, and describe differences across emotions.

Emotions are "multi-faceted, whole-body phenomena" (Gross and Thompson 2009, 5) that occur when individuals evaluate a situation as relevant to their goals and involve changes in perceptions, behavior, and physiology (Clore and Isbell 2001; Gross and Thompson 2009). Emotions are internal states that represent an "evaluative, valenced reaction to events, agents, or objects" (Nabi 1999, 295) and may vary in intensity. Emotions are made up of five separate components: (1) an appraisal or evaluation of the situation, (2) a physiological reaction, (3) a change in cognitive activity, (4) an action tendency, and (5) a subjective feeling state. Whether cognition precedes emotion or the converse, emotions are a central feature not only of social experience (Damasio 1994; James 1884), but, as we show, also of political experience because they influence political thoughts and motivate behavior. Not only do emotions make us feel something, they also encourage us to *do something*.

Emotions are related to but distinct from mood and affect. Mood represents diffuse states that are not attached to any particular objects and are longer lasting than emotions (see Gray and Watson 2007, for a review). Because moods are not tied to a specific provoking stimulus, they involve less thinking than emotions (Cassino and Lodge 2007; Forgas 1995) but can bias cognition (Clore, Schwarz, and Conway 1994). Emotions are generally more intense than moods, are shorter lasting, and have a more definite cause. *Affect* is often used as a broader term

that encompasses emotions and mood, as well as other phenomenon such as liking and disliking, pain, arousal, stress, and the like (Gross and Thompson 2009; Petty, Baker, and Gleicher 1991). Affect is a "physiological state that is experienced as either pleasant (positive affect) or unpleasant (negative affect)" (Ottati and Wyer 1993).

Drawing on functionalist approaches to emotion (Frijda 1988) and appraisal theory (Arnold 1960; Lerner and Keltner 2000; Roseman and Evdokas 2004; Smith and Ellsworth 1985), we use the idea that emotions serve to coordinate responses to circumstances that individuals confront and that their effects often persist past the original emotion-evoking event. Rather than being a mysterious process unrelated to reason or cognition, we agree with previous scholars that emotions evolved to assist humans in negotiating a complicated and sometimes dangerous environment. Simon (1967) claims that emotions act as an alarm system and direct people to redirect plans and efforts to goals they prioritize. Similarly, Dillard and colleagues tout the importance of emotion in evolutionary terms:

Emotions function to enhance the likelihood of survival of individual organisms and, by extension, the species. The advantage of emotions over careful cognitive analysis is the rapidity and globality of response. In fact, one function of emotion is to alert the system to the state of the organism-environment relationship. (Dillard et al. 1996, 46)

Tooby and Cosmides (2008) also argue that emotions are fundamentally important to the human experience because they have evolved to solve adaptive problems and guide a host of other systems. Emotions, in this framework, are superordinate programs designed to direct the activities over other bodily processes including attention, perception, learning, physiology, reflexes, behavioral decision rules, communication processes, energy allocation, probability estimates, values, and regulatory variables such as self-esteem.

Emotional reactions provide individuals feedback about the nature and potential urgency of the contexts that they are in (Damasio 1994; Schwarz and Clore 1983a; Zajonc 1980). Positive affect and emotions signal that a situation is safe and heuristic thinking is adequate. Negative affect signals a problem in the environment that should be attended to more systematically (Clore and Isbell 2001). Feelings of risk are experienced rapidly and include often unconscious responses to perceived danger or threat (Slovic 1993; Slovic et al. 2005). The information provided by emotions is not duplicative of consciously acquired information, but instead these two

systems are reinforcing. This is not to say that experienced emotions are always appropriate for a given situation or that emotions are always attributed to the correct cause. Emotional misattribution or the inability to regulate emotions can be the cause of psychopathology (Gross and Thompson 2009), social struggles, and changes in memory and perception (Schwarz and Clore 1983b; Tversky and Kahneman 1973).

Early studies of emotion by both political scientists and psychologists focused broadly on two qualities of emotions: *valence* (ranging from pleasant to unpleasant) and *arousal* (ranging from calm to excited) (Abelson et al. 1982; Bradley and Lang 2000; Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum 1957). Valence models allow researchers to show how positive or negative evaluations of candidates or issues affect attitudes in a relatively low-effort way (Bargh et al. 1996; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1993). In the "affect as information" model (Forgas 1995), individuals are able to use mood or general affective states as substitutes for detailed information in making judgments. Rather than relying on memories or conscious thoughts about a policy, individuals base their evaluations on their positive or negative feelings about groups affected by the policy. Affectively charged information can be embedded in the judgment process and influence the encoding and use of information (Bargh et al. 1996; Forgas 1995). These valence models are useful in tracing out how sets of emotions shape evaluations and attitudes, but they are unable to differentiate how specific emotions may influence behaviors in different ways. Our focus on the discrete emotion of anxiety draws most heavily from the cognitive appraisal approach but recognizes the importance of valence and arousal.

Theories in the cognitive appraisal family emphasize how perception of the environment affects the formation and application of emotion (Frijda 1988; Lazarus 1991; Nabi 1999; Ortony, Clore, and Collins 1990; Roseman, Spindel, and Jose 1990; Smith and Ellsworth 1985). Frijda, Kuipers, and ter Schure (1989) contend that "events are appraised as emotionally relevant when they appear to favor or harm the individual's concerns: his or her major goals, motives, or sensitivities" (1989, 213). These goals may include meeting societal and personal ideals, and appraisal is a key step between a situation and emotion (Scherer 2003). Similarly, Clore and Isbell (2001) state that appraisals "reflect one's goals and concerns, and are therefore as important in guiding human behavior as is a rudder in guiding the ship" (Clore and Isbell 2001, 106).

Once an appraisal of relevance and either benefit or harm is made, emotions can be signaled that then determine other responses. Note that this appraisal process does not need to occur consciously and that

attributions are not always accurate. Misattribution of emotional states from one situation to another may result because it is often difficult to separate how one feels about a candidate, policy, or piece of information from how one feels more generally. Although individuals may misattribute their anxiety about their job to anxiety about national economic conditions, we are interested in how expressed anxiety matters for politics, even if the emotional accounting is off.

Anxiety occurs when individuals appraise a situation as being unpleasant, highly threatening and uncertain (Lerner and Keltner 2000, 2001; Roseman and Evdokas 2004), and when the situation seems out of control (Smith and Ellsworth 1985). Anxiety is not merely a threat to a disliked consequence but also is a reaction to a perception that a situation, person, or object poses a threat to one's own well-being. We rely on Eysenck's definition of anxiety as an "unpleasant and aversive state" with the purpose of detecting threat and danger in the environment (Eysenck 1992). Anxiety is a negatively valenced emotion but differs from other negative emotions such as anger, sadness, and disgust, which involve different cognitive appraisals (Lerner and Keltner 2001). Anxiety involves uncertainty (Steenbergen and Ellis 2006), whereas anger involves certainty over obstacles blocking progress toward a desired goal and blame on harm inflicted by others (Brader 2011). Sadness comes from an inability to achieve goals and the loss of valued objects and people. Like anxiety, sadness often causes attention to information, but this attention is often backward looking and reflective rather than directed at ameliorating future threats. Disgust is a reaction to "the presence of noxious conditions (e.g., rotting food, bodily excretions)" (Brader 2011, 195) and comes from an evolutionary urge to remain clean and safe (Smith et al. 2012). Shame comes from the recognition of one's inability or unwillingness to meet standards and motivates individuals to hide, but it also enforce these standards on others. We focus on anxiety because it is a common phenomenon in politics, and it has important political effects.

Political scientists are increasingly interested in how anxiety affects political life. One of the most influential theories of emotion within political science is Marcus, MacKuen, and Neuman's theory of *Affective Intelligence* (AI), a theory that focuses on three major emotions: anxiety, enthusiasm, and anger/aversion. AI posits that two emotional systems, the dispositional and the surveillance systems, help citizens to organize the political environment (Marcus and MacKuen 1993; Marcus et al. 2000; Neuman et al. 2007). The dispositional system regulates the execution of previously learned behavior and receives feedback from the

environment about the success of those behaviors that make up habits. The surveillance system provides citizens with warnings about novel situations and potential threats, signaling that an innovative response is necessary. When the surveillance system senses a threat in the environment, it signals that citizens should pay closer attention and gather more information in order to counter the threat. Citizens mainly rely on their political habits to guide new decisions unless they are made anxious about candidates or issues. A major implication of the AI theory is that, once anxious, citizens are motivated to learn, pay attention to news coverage, and base political decisions more heavily on contemporary information rather than partisanship. Brader's (2006) experimental study of how emotive campaign ads influence learning, participation, and voting also emphasizes how anxiety can increase learning and the potential for persuasion. Scholarship on Americans' reactions to the 9/11 terrorist attacks highlights the important role of anxiety (Huddy et al. 2005a, 2005b, 2007; Schlenger et al. 2002; Schuster et al. 2001; Skitka et al. 2006) as does recent work on topics as varied as immigration attitudes (Brader et al. 2008), health behaviors (Gravatt and Brown 2011; Green and Witte 2003; Groenendyk, Brader, and Valentino 2011; Witte 1992), and environmental risks (Meijnders, Midden, and Wilke 2001).

ANXIETY AND POLITICS

Because typically anxiety is unpleasant for those people experiencing it, we expect that citizens will try to cope with this emotion in a variety of ways. Individuals do not merely passively experience emotions; they also try to regulate those emotions by increasing pleasant emotions and decreasing unpleasant ones like anxiety (Gross 2009; Gross and Thompson 2009). Emotions are motivating, meaning that they cause us to want to act. In particular, anxiety motivates individuals to avoid danger, seek protection, and create a safer environment (Jarymowicz and Bar-Tal 2006; Nabi 1999; Roseman and Evdokas 2004). When the emotion that we feel is negative, misplaced, or destructive to the situation, we often do something to reduce the intensity or the valence of the emotion that we feel. Emotional regulation can range from unconscious, automatic techniques developed in childhood (i.e., avoiding upsetting information or steering attention to pleasant faces) to more effortful, conscious processes such as hiding one's anger at immigrants in particular company. When anxiety originates from political life, we expect that individuals will employ more conscious processes connected to politics

(i.e., calling a Member of Congress) more often than interpersonal methods (i.e., calling a friend).

We focus on three ways that citizens may cope with political anxiety: (1) seek information, (2) endow trust in government, and (3) support protective public policies. These behaviors need not all occur for an anxious citizen to feel better about politics. Nor do we assume that some methods are better than others. Here, we describe each coping process in turn and further lay out our expectations of how anxiety shapes these processes in specific cases in Chapters 3–5.

Information Seeking

As one way of regulating emotion, individuals may seek information, which we explore in Chapter 3. Both seeking information and avoiding information may serve to lessen anxiety either by resolving uncertainty or ignoring the cause of anxiety (Gross and Thompson 2009). As Maslow (1963) stated, "we can seek knowledge in order to reduce anxiety and we can also avoid knowing in order to reduce anxiety" (1963, 122). When individuals feel they are ill-equipped to deal with harms or the information environment, they may simply avoid information as a coping mechanism (Green and Witte 2003). However, based on previous scholarship that shows increased attentiveness under conditions of political anxiety (Brader 2006; Huddy et al. 2007; Marcus et al. 2000; Valentino et al. 2008), we expect that anxiety will tend to increase attention, particularly when information provides solutions. Political anxiety caused by a variety of sources such as ads (Brader 2006), candidates (Kinder, Abelson, and Fiske 1979; Valentino et al. 2009), policy changes (MacKuen et al. 2010), and threatening events (Boyle et al. 2004) increases both the desire for information and the active search for information.

Although individuals seek information in the pursuit of lowering anxiety, the information that they are attracted to may not help them accomplish this goal. As individuals pursue information, we expect that their search will concentrate on threatening information because this information may seem more relevant to avoiding future harms and thus potentially reducing anxiety than positive information (Cacioppo and Berntson 1994; Lau 1982). From an evolutionary standpoint, anxiety motivates shifting perception and attention toward the source of a threat, reweighting safety as the highest goal, directing memory toward useful retrieval tasks, and activating specialized learning systems (Tooby and

Cosmides 2008). In the throes of political anxiety, citizens seek information that is relevant to the source of their anxiety (Brader 2006) and use information more efficiently (Valentino et al. 2009). When losses loom larger than gains in judgments (Kahneman and Tversky 1979), avoiding future harm and reducing uncomfortable feelings make useful information imperative. Negative, threatening pieces of news provide an efficient way to evaluate whether anxiety is warranted and what the potential remedies are for it.

Political Trust

For representative government to function properly, citizens must put at least minimal trust in the actors who govern on their behalf. We argue that another method by which people cope with the uncertainty and negative affect that underlie political anxiety is to trust expert political actors to protect them from threats. We investigate trust in Chapter 4. Trust acts as an emotional regulation technique, a palliative for citizens made anxious by events and elites. As Levi and Stoker (2000) so aptly put, "If trusting, an individual is freed from worry and from the need to monitor the other's behavior or to extricate herself from the relationship" (495).

Trust helps individuals to manage and mitigate risks. In a society with complex and potentially perilous threats, citizens must put their trust in institutions to handle these risks. Complex policy problems such as environmental disasters, disease outbreaks, or confronting terrorism demand collective rather than personal solutions. As Merolla and Zechmeister (2009) write:

Collective crises tend to have solutions that lie beyond the control of any given individual or household. Individuals might take certain measures to in order to mitigate the personal damage that occurs in the face of a collective crisis (e.g., stocking the house with gas masks in the face of a terrorist threat) but these individual measures are unlikely to forestall or resolve the crisis condition entirely. (27)

As such, we concentrate on how anxiety influences trust in political actors rather than interpersonal trust (Putnam 1994). Hand-washing is a potentially effective behavior that can lessen the threat of any individual getting sick from the flu or other infectious diseases, but without organized vaccine programs or quarantine plans, quelling disease outbreaks is unlikely. Similarly, some individuals might take action against illegal immigration (i.e., participating in Minutemen militias), but only

coordinated governmental policy can resolve immigration problems. This means that citizens must turn toward government actors to help lower anxiety.

Trusting involves believing that others will act "as they should" (Barber 1983) and that a person or institution will "observe the rules of the game" (Citrin and Muste 1999). Hetherington defines political trust as the "degree to which people perceive the government is producing outcomes consistent with their expectations" (2005, 9). Cleary and Stokes see trust as relational, "trust involves a relationship between actors regarding an action. . . . Trust is a belief (that is, A's beliefs that B will do X)" (2006, 12). As Levi and Stoker (2000) note, political trust judgments reflect citizens' evaluations of the current political context rather than their social characteristics or political identities.

We argue that judgments of government trust depend on individuals' emotional state as well. General trust judgments are more than ideological or partisan reactions to specific political figures or incumbent administrations (Levi and Stoker 2000). This suggests that a political environment of crisis, threat, and anxiety should influence trust in government broadly among the populace. When governments appear unable or unwilling to handle societal problems such as the economy and crime, trust in government wanes (Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn 2000; Hetherington and Rudolph 2008; Mansbridge 1997). Whereas inefficient government tends to decrease trust, perceptions of procedural fairness in distributing benefits (Tyler, Rasinski, and McGraw 1985) and competence augment trust (Barber 1983; Levi 1988).

Political trust is a crucial component of governance (Citrin 1974; Hetherington 1998). As Hetherington (1998) argues, political trust is both a cause and by-product of how citizens evaluate the government and incumbent elites, and political distrust creates an environment where it is difficult for political leaders to successfully implement policy. Trust increases compliance with a wide range of government policies that call for sacrifice, including taxation (Scholz and Lubell 1998), cooperation in collective action problems (Tyler and Degoey 1995), public health mandates (Leavitt 2003), and support for economic redistribution (Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn 2000; Hetherington 2005; Rudolph and Evans 2005). Trust is useful for both constituents and legislators because it fosters political accountability by providing citizens a low-effort heuristic for sanctioning or rewarding elected officials (Bianco 1994).

More trusted politicians are endowed with more leeway to exercise power and judgment even when their actions may be at odds with or more

extreme than what the constituency wants (Bianco 1994; Egan 2012; Ferejohn 1999) because officials can be discovered and punished. We expect that anxious citizens put their trust in experts who can handle the threats that create anxiety.

Political Attitudes

Just as anxiety drives people to pay attention to threatening information and trust relevant figures, we also expect that it leads them to support policies that they think of as protective. Anxiety motivates individuals to seek safety, and this can take the form of either flight or fight mechanisms (Halperin, Sharvit, and Gross 2011; Jarymowicz and Bar-Tal 2006; Nabi 1999; Roseman and Evdokas 2004). Anxiety also increases the potency of frames (Druckman and McDermott 2008) as well as increases the potential for persuasion by elites (Brader 2006; Marcus et al. 2000). Together, this suggests that the motivation to seek protection may lead citizens to follow the policy prescriptions of the most prominent elite voices, particularly if those policies seem effective at lessening threat (Rogers 1975). Policy solutions may appear to be particularly effective because of the character of the policy itself, because the elite offering it has an advantage in that policy domain, or because few other solutions are offered by other elites.

Previous research suggests that threat and anxiety increase support for protective policies across a variety of policy areas. Citizens who feel threatened by crime and terrorism are more supportive of civil liberties restrictions on fellow citizens than are those who are less threatened (Berinsky 2009; Davis 2007; Marcus et al. 1996; Mondak and Hurwitz 2012). Worry about violence tends to increase support for more punitive crime policy (Page and Shapiro 1992) as well as lower support for the consolidation of democracy in the developing world (Merolla, Montalvo, and Zechmeister 2012). Anxiety over immigration from Mexico increases support for restrictive immigration policies (Brader et al. 2008).

Although these examples all suggest that anxiety increases support for policies on the right, not all anxiety leads to support for more conservative policies. The political environment shapes whether anxiety may increase support for protective policies offered from the right or the left. Days after the 2004 Madrid bombings, Spanish citizens voted in a socialist government that promised to pull Spanish troops from Iraq (Rose, Murphy, and Abrahms 2007). The Great Depression ushered in an era of liberal government in the United States and Sweden, but led to

conservative governments in Australia and Britain (Achen and Bartels 2005). Natural disasters like droughts and floods tend to decrease the vote share of sitting incumbents of both parties (Achen and Bartels 2002), suggesting that anxiety may not consistently favor one side of the ideological spectrum but rather depend on political context.

What sorts of policies are best suited to offer protection? Answers to this question vary in the population, and they also vary by policy area. Political elites play a significant role in drawing the link between public anxiety and proposed solutions, especially in portraying their recommended policy action as effective and protective. Edelman's theory of symbolic politics (1985) also suggests that, in a political world where crisis is ubiquitous, public anxiety produces a desire for reassurance and placation to quiet doubts. Political leaders offer this reassurance through attaching emotion to abstract symbols such as groups, leaders, and political enemies. For Edelman, the myth and ritual surrounding symbols provide meaning to the anxious person's life, creating reassurance and contentment:

> Politics is for most of us a passing parade of abstract symbols, yet a parade which our experience teaches us to be a benevolent or malevolent force that can be close to omnipotent. Because politics does visibly confer wealth, take life, imprison, and free people, and represent a history with strong emotional and ideological associations, its processes became easy objects upon which to displace private emotions, especially strong anxieties and hopes. (1985, 5)

For Edelman, anxious citizens are ripe for manipulation by elites who use symbols to divert the public's attention from self-interest into actions that facilitate the interests of elites. Our view is more optimistic about how elites help the public to regulate and resolve their anxiety. In our model, political figures offer to a worried citizenry not only symbols but also tangible policy framed as protective. Worried citizens will support these protective policies when they believe the policies are effective and that the government is capable of implementing them.

This is not to say that policies framed as protective are necessarily the best possible policy options, that public anxiety cannot be channeled into democratically questionable behavior such as racial prejudice or violence, or that the public cannot be manipulated. Using a game theory model, Lupia and Menning (2009) predict that politicians can send unwarranted fear signals (i.e., claim that there is a threat when none exists) when citizens cannot receive feedback about the true threat and thus manipulate the public into supporting bad policies. This is most likely to occur for

distant, abstract, or ambiguous threats because these issues are less likely to provide the type of feedback for citizens to "realize, rethink, and change previous behaviors" (2009, 101). In addition, convincing an anxious public to support a particular set of protective policies should prove easier when one policy option dominates elite discussion and has few dissenting voices (Zaller 1992). However, for some policy areas with more elite divergence, persuasion should be more difficult even when anxiety is high.

COPING IN A PARTISAN WORLD

Some threats are not heavily debated. In some situations, everyone experiences anxiety, and political elites agree on a solution. For example, a tornado warning will cause people to worry and government officials to urge people to take cover. However, many threats in politics are more nuanced. An economic crisis will generate anxiety, but not everyone will worry about her own job or wealth, and political elites might fight over whether increased spending or austerity will bring the economy back. In a political context where political elites disagree over which actors are responsible for the source of threat and solutions to the anxiety-causing threats, we expect partisanship to shape which actors citizens turn toward to alleviate anxiety.

Generally, when citizens see similarity between their own policy preferences and government outputs, they are more satisfied with policies and are more trusting of government (Citrin 1974; Miller 1974); they become less satisfied as policies appear further from their ideals (Hetherington 1998). As the parties vocally disagree about the resolutions to threats and policy issues become politicized, we expect that individuals will turn toward expert elites for guidance about what policies to support that they perceive will keep the public safe and improve their emotional state. For example, in Israel, after rocket attacks, support for right-wing parties increases because these parties are seen as more capable of handling security (Getmansky and Zeitzoff 2014). In more politicized policy areas, those actors who come from the party that "owns" the policy area may be deemed more expert and therefore more trustworthy in times of threat (Egan 2013, Petrocik 1996).

Partisanship and Information Seeking

Anxiety may free individuals from partisan biases in how they search for information, or it may serve to reinforce their predispositions. Partisans

exhibit resistance to information inconsistent with beliefs, as well as factual information that would necessitate updating evaluations, and this bias is not mitigated by political knowledge (Bartels 2002; Shani 2006; Zaller 1992). Bartels argues that partisanship "is ... a pervasive dynamic force shaping citizens' perceptions of, and reactions to, the political world" (138). Partisanship not only shapes attitudes but also how partisans search for and retain political information. Partisans are motivated to seek out and evaluate information in ways consistent with their partisan identities, which may include ignoring or discounting information that would challenge their previous views (Klapper 1960; Lord, Ross, and Lepper 1979; Vallone, Ross, and Lepper 1985). Together, these biases suggest that partisans may be immune to the effects of anxiety on information seeking if the threatening news that they encounter disagrees with their political predispositions. Yet, anxiety may also break through the partisan wall to free individuals to more broadly seek information to balance their anxiety, even if that information leads to updating beliefs. Marcus et al. (2000) state the proposition this way: "when anxious, people would no longer rely on their political habits (thus mindless partisanship would no longer figure in the vote equation)" (61). They argue that, in a threatening political environment, political identities such as partisanship and group membership are set aside and that these identities do not affect information processing. In Chapter 3, we test how partisanship shapes the type and valence of information that partisans seek.

Partisanship and Trust

Anxiety may either increase or decrease trust in a variety of political actors, conditional on whether the government is the source of the anxiety, whether the actor has expertise in the area of concern, and whether one party is advantaged on the policy. Political elites help citizens to link their own anxiety into trust in the various elements that make up the American government. When the government is not blamed as the cause of anxiety and can offer solutions to threats and, citizens may increasingly trust government actors. When political anxiety stems from government policy failure, though, this anxiety may lead citizens to decrease trust in the political actors responsible for the anxiety, not necessarily the whole political system.

   Actors who come from the party who "owns" that issue should be advantaged on expertise grounds. Political parties maintain "issue

owning" advantages on select policy areas (Petrocik 1996; Petrocik, Benoit, and Hansen 2003; Simon 2002), areas where the party is seen as more competent, consistent, and more active based on the party's priorities and constituency (Egan 2013). On owned issues, parties appear more sincere and committed to delivering policy (Egan 2013; Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989) and generally focus rhetoric on owned issues (Petrocik 1996). If anxious respondents consider the owning party to be the most knowledgeable about the policy and have the most capacity to give useful information, then trust should be higher in the owning party than in the less expert/non-owning party.

Partisanship and Political Attitudes

There is widespread consensus about what will keep us safe in some policy domains. For example, in the realm of public health threats, there are generally agreed upon "best practices" designed to keep the public safe. Although even best practices can be debated in the public, such as whether to immunize girls against human papilloma virus (HPV) (Haber, Malow, and Zimet 2007), there is likely to be more of a consensus at the professional/elite level. In other policy areas, protective measures are more contested. People argue over whether undocumented immigrants pose a threat in the United States, and some Americans think that access to government services (education, welfare) creates a "magnet" that attracts more immigrants (Frey et al. 1996). Along this line of reasoning, denial of government services may help protect Americans from undocumented immigrants. When it comes to climate change, is it individuals, the U.S. government, or the international community that has to act? Activists would argue that all three are needed to combat global warming, but even they face disagreement over the best policies (nuclear power vs. renewable energy sources, cap-and-trade measures vs. carbon taxes). Finally, most Americans have experienced some level of anxiety over terrorism since 9/11 and wondered what sorts of policies will keep us safe. In the simplest comparison, we can think of hawkish foreign policy response versus a more dovish policy. Although certain elites advocated liberal internationalism after 9/11, we contend that the dominant framing was of a global "War on Terror", and that this hawkish policy was successfully framed as protective (Entman 2004).

Protective policies may originate from both parties, but we expect that policies that originate from an "owning" party may be deemed more attractive and effective at regulating anxiety. Over the past several

decades, the Republican Party has "owned" the issues of taxation, terrorism, national security, and crime, whereas Democrats have been advantaged on the environment, education, and healthcare (Egan 2013). J. M. Miller (2007) notes that negative emotions mediate agenda setting, meaning that when anxiety is high, individuals are more likely to prioritize that issue as nationally important. If anxiety leads citizens to prioritize particular policies in judgments of leaders, and the parties themselves prioritize different issue areas, then anxious citizens may end up trusting an elite and supporting his or her policies even if they do not normally agree with that party. Given that anxiety stems from uncertainty and that owning parties seem able to deliver policies that can fix anxiety-producing problems, supporting the policies offered by the owning party may be an appealing way to lower anxiety (Egan 2013). Overall, we note that what counts as "protective" is malleable and subject to framing, but, with particular policies in particular contexts, we use our theory to construct workable hypotheses. Taken together, we expect that evoking anxiety should increase support for more protective public policies.

CONCLUSION

Anxieties about contemporary political issues such as immigration and climate change shape how Americans think and act in political life. Because anxiety is uncomfortable, we expect that individuals utilize a variety of mechanisms to regulate anxiety – seeking additional information, putting trust in government, and supporting protective policies. We explore each of these coping mechanisms in turn in the remainder of the book. Chapter 2 describes the four policy areas that we use and explains the basic contours of our experimental studies. Chapter 3 explores how anxiety influences the content of information seeking using immigration as a case study. In Chapter 4, we explore anxiety's effect on trust in both the areas of immigration and a public health outbreak. Chapter 5 utilizes all four policy areas (immigration, public health, terrorism, and climate change) to trace out anxiety's effects on attitudes. Last, Chapter 6 concludes with a discussion of the implications of anxiety for democratic theory.