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Policy over- and underreaction as policy styles

Moshe Maor

Introduction

Disproportionate policy response is typically understood to be "a lack of 'fit' or balance between the costs of a public policy and the benefits that are derived from this policy, and/or between a policy's ends and means" (Maor 2017a, p. 384). Scholars have traditionally assumed that such responses are unintentional policy errors and therefore undeserving of academic attention. Studies of British government, for example, claim that governments overrespond to crises, creating policy disasters (e.g., Dunleavy 1995; Hood 1994). Another study categorized the foreign policy mistakes made by US presidents as "too much" policy, which results from a mistake of commission in the diagnosis stage of decision-making, and policy that is implemented "too soon," caused by a mistake of omission at the prescription stage of decision-making (Walker and Malici 2011). A recent conceptual turn has advanced the conceptualization of policy over- and underreaction as types of *intentional* policy responses that are largely undertaken when political executives are vulnerable to voters (e.g., President Trump deliberately playing down the coronavirus). Disproportionate policy response, it has been argued, may be intentionally designed, implemented as planned, and, at times, successful in achieving policy and political goals (Maor 2017a, 2019a; Maor *et al.* 2017). This conceptual turn forces scholars to recognize the political benefits that elected executives may reap from deliberately implementing disproportionate policies; that such policies can at times be effective; and, consequently, the possibility – explored in this chapter – that certain issues or governments will tend to reproduce consistently either *underreaction policy style* or *overreaction policy style*.

This chapter elaborates on various psychological and institutional explanations that can account for unintentional policy over- and underreaction styles and strategic explanations that can account for the intentional use of these styles. The arguments advanced in relation to psychological and institutional explanations are that policy over- and underreaction styles may occur as a result of psychological biases and strong emotions, as well as due to institutional values, procedures, myths, and routines. The arguments advanced in relation to strategic explanations are that (i) real or manufactured policy problems, especially in the areas of national security and crime prevention, may produce overreaction policy style as political executives wish to display their unwavering commitment to the resolution of problems by implementing

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aggressive and visible policies as well as by overspending on the military and police, and (ii) real or manufactured policy problems to which government supporters accord low priority may produce underreaction policy style, involving symbolic action and neglect. These disproportionate policy styles are likely to be pronounced when populist leaders hold executive positions.

The chapter is structured as follows. The first section introduces the definitional basis for policy style and disproportionate policy response, thereafter elaborating on the disproportionate policy perspective that guides research in this subfield. The second section presents psychological explanations for over- and underreaction policy style, the third, institutional explanations, and the fourth, strategic explanations. The final section concludes and presents avenues for future research.

The definitional landscape

Policy style refers to the development of governing modes that structure instrument choices and design decisions in predictable ways (Richardson *et al.* 1982; Howlett and Tosun 2019a). The concept of policy style has attracted scholarly attention over the last three decades as part of the attempt to give some clarity to the model advanced by Richardson *et al.* (1982). Much of the research on policy style has focused on governments' propensity to make anticipatory or reactive decisions by either seeking to reach consensus with organized groups or by imposing decisions notwithstanding opposition from such groups (Richardson *et al.* 1982; Jordan and Cairney 2013; Richardson 2018a, 2018b). The concept has been fruitfully applied to the policy process in particular countries and groups of countries (e.g., Richardson *et al.* 1982; Howlett and Tosun 2019a, 2019b), and it has been suggested that a better conceptualization should draw on each stage of the policy cycle rather than just decision-making or policy formulation (Howlett *et al.* 2009). One of the main findings to emerge from recent research is that a single description of policy style is too simplistic to capture the wide range of constraints imposed by different policy environments (e.g., Cairney 2019; Howlett and Tosun 2019b).

Disproportionate policy response is comprised of two core concepts: policy overreaction and policy underreaction (Maor 2017b). *Policy overreaction* is a policy that "impose[s] objective and/or perceived social costs without producing offsetting objective and/or perceived benefits" (Maor 2012, p. 235). *Policy underreaction* is "a policy whose actual net utility . . . is smaller than a counterfactual net utility" (Maor 2014a, p. 428). Because policy problems and solutions are often loaded with ideational and symbolic elements (e.g., Schneider *et al.* 2014), different individuals and groups may perceive disproportionate policy responses somewhat differently, and perceptions may change as the magnitude of a crisis or policy problem becomes more apparent. Both concepts are therefore objective facts and, at the same time, matters of interpretation. An objective manifestation of policy overreaction relevant here is the concept of *policy overinvestment*, which occurs when a government invests in a single policy instrument beyond its instrumental value in achieving a policy goal. An objective manifestation of policy underreaction is *policy underinvestment*, which occurs when a government invests in a single policy instrument below its instrumental value in achieving a policy goal (adapted from Jones *et al.* 2014, p. 149). A focus on the extent of over- or underinvestment in a policy relative to its goals directs attention to two additional concepts. *(Positive) policy bubbles* constitute "a sociopsychological phenomenon which occurs when policy overreaction or overinvestment due to distorted policy valuation is sustained by positive feedback over an extended period of time" (Maor 2019b, p. 14, see also Maor 2014b; Jones *et al.* 2014). Instances of policy underreaction or underinvestment resulting from distorted policy valuation sustained by negative emotions and emotional sentiments are termed *negative policy bubbles* (Maor 2016).

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Why do certain issues or governments tend to reproduce consistently either policy underreactions or policy overreactions?

The existing literature offers three types of explanations for policy over- and underreaction and, by implication, also the over- and underreaction styles. These causes can be linked to policy styles along two paths: psychological and institutional paths cover the unintentional occurrence of these styles, whereas strategic explanations cover intentional instances.

Psychological explanations of over- and underreaction policy style

By focusing on cognitive biases, dispositions, and beliefs, psychological explanations identify a pattern of overreaction thinking that systematically deviates from perfect rationality (Simon 1982). This research mainly centers upon how systematic cognitive biases in human decision-making (Kahneman 2011; Kahneman *et al.* 1982) inform anomalies in the behavior of individuals and collectives. Biases that were found to generate overreaction include, among others, the *availability bias* (Lichtenstein *et al.* 1978), the *affective bias* (Slovic *et al.* 2007; Viscusi and Gayer 2015), the *representativeness heuristic* (Kahneman and Tversky 1973), and *overconfidence bias* (Lichtenstein *et al.* 1982). A sub-stream within the psychological stream is dominated by the punctuated equilibrium theory of public policy (Baumgartner and Jones 2009). According to this theory, the combination of limited government attention spans, which are triggered by cognitive constraints, and the resistance to policy change that is structured into a governmental system leads to underreaction when a policy problem is "off the radar" and rules for reaching binding decisions make change difficult. Likewise, these same factors result in overreaction when the severity of the policy problem passes a certain threshold (Jones and Baumgartner 2005). Under conditions of *status quo* institutional arrangements, a policy change may therefore be sudden and disproportionate (Jones and Baumgartner 2005). Other punctuated equilibrium theories center upon "focusing" or "trigger" events (Birkland 1997; Cobb and Elder 1972) or "Pavlovian" policy responses (Lodge and Hood 2002) in answer to societal demands for government action. Such demands may be misguided in contexts of public anxieties, fears, and panic, including those of a moral nature (Jennings *et al.* 2017). Competing explanations in international relations attribute overreactions to policymakers' cognitive and emotional biases (e.g., Janis 1989; Jervis 1976) or to sociopsychological dynamics in small decision-making groups (Janis 1982; Mintz and Wayne 2016).

Policy problems involving threats to personal safety and security, especially in the policy domains of crime prevention and national security, may result in the adoption of overreaction policy style. These policy areas touch upon individuals' most basic needs, thereby generating responses that are based on (catastrophic) worst-case policy scenarios. By the same token, many policy solutions in the area of crisis preparedness are increasingly viewed through the filter of the worst-case scenario (e.g., blizzard travel bans). Furthermore, policymakers and government agencies are characterized by a growing tendency to think along the lines of a military or police model, prioritizing a maximalist response over a proportionate one, while constantly assuming that the unanticipated all too often happens.

An example of policy overreaction style caused by cognitive biases was the US government response to 9/11, which was largely guided by the *precautionary principle*. According to Sunstein (2005), people's tendency to be gripped by the availability heuristic (along with other sources of cognitive bias) leads to the perception of the precautionary principle as delivering particular results. Sunstein (2005) also endorses the influential dual processing approach to cognition, according to which cognitive activities are of two basic types: "System 1" and "System 2."

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System 1 processing is automatic, nonconscious, and intuitive. System 2 processing is effortful, deliberative, and conscious. Sunstein (2005) understands the application of heuristics that lead to cognitive biases, such as the availability heuristic, as a component of System 1 processing.

US Vice President Cheney suggested the core of the *precautionary principle*, announcing,

> We have to deal with this new type of threat in a way we haven't yet defined . . . With a low probability, high-impact event like this . . . if there's one percent chance that Pakistani scientists are helping al Qaeda build or develop a nuclear weapon, we have to treat it as a certainty in terms of our response.
>
> *(cited in Suskind 2007, p. 62)*

This view, which is commonly known as the *one percent doctrine*, provides a classic example of *policy overreaction doctrine* (Maor 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2018). The one percent doctrine guided the strategic thinking of the White House during the Bush administration and its doctrine of preemptive action, including the war on terror and the war against Iraq. The expectation that emergency powers would be terminated and civil liberties restored after the passing of the serious threat never materialized. Once the emergency subsided, governmental enforcement agencies did not relinquish their newly acquired powers (Alford 2017). Dragu (2011) summarized perfectly the interest of these agencies: "[B]ecause they are always worse off when civil liberties are expanded and better off when they are reduced, agencies seek to make the emergency reductions in civil liberties permanent" (Dragu 2011, pp. 64–65). This has been the essence of policy overreaction style in the US policy domain of national security since 9/11.

Regarding policy underreaction, studies demonstrate that individuals underestimate the cumulative effect of events (Bar-Hillel 1973; Cohen *et al.* 1972) and, in the face of potential gains, are risk averse (Kahneman and Tversky 1979). Research also indicates that individuals manifest complacency, defensive avoidance (Janis and Mann 1977), "work avoidance" (Heifetz 1994), and "immunity to change" (Kegan and Lahey 2009) when under stress caused by unpleasant policy problems and that they encounter "cognitive blind spots" (Bazerman and Tenbrunsel 2012) when confronting complex information.

Policy problems that generate strong negative emotions towards target audiences may produce underreaction style. A salient example of policy underreaction style deriving from fear and prejudice is the response of the US federal government to the deadly and contagious AIDS epidemic. This epidemic began in the early 1980s and primarily affected two marginal and stigmatized groups: homosexual or bisexual men and intravenous drug users. The fear and prejudice created by the AIDS epidemic (Epstein 1996) was "so intense that it embrace[d] the entire range of public policy" (Fox 1989, p. 59). Most Americans regarded AIDS as "a ghastly retribution for a repulsive vice" (Sobran 1986, p. 220). By 1987, AIDS-related mortality had reached 16,461 (Francis 2012, p. 293). However, although the Centers for Disease Control and the surgeon general provided reliable information regarding the disease and a focal point for public discussion (e.g., Perez and Dionisopoulos 1995; Francis 2012; Shilts 1988), and despite the fact that political mobilization of HIV-infected people began as early as 1984 in some cities, the Reagan administration was reluctant to invest substantial resources in prevention and education programs, in research on AIDS, and in establishing task forces to deal with the disease (Francis 2012; Shilts 1988; Fox 1989, p. 60). In addition, the president remained silent regarding this public health crisis during the years 1981–1986 (Perez and Dionisopoulos 1995; Francis 2012; Shilts 1988) even though the information regarding the enormity of the disease had become "common knowledge" (Hewitt 2005; Baumgartner 2015). Only in 1987, after the number of Americans that had died of the disease was nearing 20,000, the number of those infected with

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the HIV virus had passed one million (Nichols 1989), and the 1986 Surgeon General's Report on AIDS had received extensive media attention, was a critical mass achieved that made the issue a pivotal one, leading to a significant policy investment (Shilts 1988). This policy underreaction style, characterized by government neglect and inaction until 1987, emerged as a result of the difficulties involved in placing these issues on the government agenda, a result of the strong negative emotions associated with the policy problem. Put differently, this style emerged within the context of an emotion-driven negative policy bubble.

Institutional explanations of over- and underreaction policy style

The second stream, which is in its infancy and as yet remains conceptual in nature, revolves around the independent effect of institutions. Peters *et al.* (2017) jumpstarted this research stream by highlighting how the development of new institutionalism in political science affects the disproportionate policy subfield. According to this stream, policy overreaction may occur when the actions of institutions and organizations, or the demands for certain types of action, diverge from the institution's stated norms (Brunsson and Olsen 1993) and when threats to the institution's core values increase (Peters *et al.* 2017). Rational choice institutionalism brings to the fore factors that mitigate the effects of veto players. One example are the opportunities for overreaction resulting from the divergent views held by collective actors (e.g., political parties) regarding how to address a given political or policy problem. Likewise, international regimes to which a state belongs (West and Lee 2014) can affect domestic politics by modifying how domestic institutions translate societal demands into policies (Betz 2017). A further example is an extraordinary or urgent event that leads to widespread consensus amongst policy actors, justifying immediate and drastic policy response (e.g., Walgrave and Varone 2008). Other determining factors include institutional rules and regulations concerning decision strategies (Allison and Zelikow 1999; March and Olson 1989); issue complexity and lack of institutional capacity (Epp and Baumgartner 2017); and flawed government decision-making processes (Allison and Zelikow 1999).

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An example of policy overreaction style caused by institutional rule is the National Institutes of Health (NIH) procedure regarding the allocation of funding for AIDS research. Since the early 1990s, this was based on setting aside a fixed amount (10%) of its budget to fund research on the disease. This requirement that a fixed percentage of the budget be set aside to fund this research, irrespective of its declining severity (measured in the number of deaths due to HIV/AIDS), led to policy overreaction and to the emergence of policy overreaction style. A manifestation of this style surfaced due to the requirement that each NIH institute spend its annual AIDS allocation. This, in turn, led some institutes to stretch the definition of HIV research, while others relaxed quality standards (Kaiser 2015). Unsurprisingly, some patient groups and members of Congress began questioning the rationale for allocating a disproportionate amount to AIDS in comparison to diseases with higher death rates, such as heart disease and Alzheimer's (Kaiser 2015). In 2014, Congress omitted instructions ordering the NIH to maintain the 10% budget allocation for AIDS research.

Similarly, from the normative perspective of new institutionalism, underreaction may occur when the actions of institutions and organizations, or demands for certain types of action, diverge from the institution's declared norms (Brunsson and Olsen 1993), or when core values are not under threat (Peters *et al.* 2017). Rational choice institutionalism – especially the veto player theory (Tsebelis 2002) – predicts status quo and a likelihood of policy underreaction when veto players are cohesive. Historical institutionalism highlights factors driving path dependency processes (Pierson 2000). Policy underreaction may result, therefore, from bad

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structures and ideas (e.g., regulatory ideologies) that are sustained by long-term processes relating to institutions' values, myths, and routines. Other determining factors include "institutional blind spots" (e.g., Zegart 2007); institutional paralysis (Turner 1978; Weick 2009); institutional rules and regulations regarding decision-making strategies (Allison and Zelikow 1999; March and Olson 1989); lack of resources, and difficulties in putting issues on the government agenda (Peters 2018).

Focusing on the importance of ideas in defining the policy trajectories that institutions will follow (e.g., Béland 2009a), an example of policy underreaction style caused by ideas is the neglect of social inequalities (e.g., gender, race) by governments of industrialized countries throughout much of the 20th century due to cultural assumptions. A case in point is policymakers' conception of dependency. At the outset, when the US government instituted social insurance at the federal level in the mid-1930s, this was framed as rooted in "American values" such as self-reliance. Consequently, payroll contributions created "earned rights" and politically strong entitlements that were defined in sharp contrast with more politically vulnerable social assistance benefits. The latter came to be closely associated with the negative cultural category of dependency and the language of "welfare" (Fraser and Gordon 1994; Béland 2009b, 2019). Given that the economic independence of wage-earners – mostly men – was taken for granted, and dependency was characterized as the status of women and racial minorities – and simultaneously pathologized (Fraser and Gordon 1994) – it is hardly surprising that an underreaction policy style emerged in this domain. This underreaction policy style has been (and still is) recorded in the two-track policy established and maintained in the field of social policy. First-track programs, such as unemployment and old age insurance, offer aid as an entitlement, without stigma or supervision and hence without connotation of dependency. These programs include veterans' pensions; benefits for military personnel, war veterans, and their families; and earning-based programs, such as Unemployment Insurance, Workers' Compensation, and Social Security. In contrast, second-track public assistance programs, among them Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and the federal Aid for Dependent and Old Age Assistance Program, are public assistance programs providing relatively meager benefits that are received by a disproportionate number of women and racial minorities (Reese *et al.* 2018).

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Strategic explanations of over- and underreaction policy style

The third stream, likewise in its infancy and conceptual in nature, advances the idea that, on occasion, disproportionate policy response may be intentionally designed, implemented as planned, and, in some cases, successful in achieving policy and political goals (Maor 2017a, 2019a; Maor *et al.* 2017). In order to provide parameters that enrich our understanding of the political dynamics involved in the design and implementation of disproportionate policy responses, a recent study formulated the *disproportionate policy perspective*. This perspective suggests that, under certain conditions, policymakers may face incentives to design and implement disproportionate policy, which, on occasion, may be successful in achieving policy and political goals. Among the fundamental strategies are the prioritization of policy effectiveness over policy costs (or over another factor), leading to the formulation and implementation of policy overreaction options, and/or cost-consciousness (or another factor) over effectiveness, resulting in the formulation and implementation of policy underreaction options. This perspective also posits that policy overreaction will be pronounced if the emotional context of the policy (e.g., mass panic and public fears) is equally, if not more, important than the substantive nature of the

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problem at hand, and that disproportionate policy options may be planned as signaling devices or context-setters (e.g., Maor 2017a, 2019a).

> The disproportionate policy perspective implies that a disproportionate response in the policy domain may at times be a politically well-calibrated and highly effective strategy because of the damage it inflicts on political rivals and/or its success in shaping voters' perceptions favorably.
>
> *(Maor 2019a, 7)*

Intentional disproportionate policy responses are largely undertaken when political executives are vulnerable to voters. Intentional overreactions derive from the desire of political executives to pander to voters' opinions or signal extremity by overreacting to these opinions in domains that are susceptible to manipulation for credit-claiming purposes (Maor 2017a, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c). Intentional policy overreaction style becomes evident, for example, when national security and crime prevention issues assume a prominent place on the public agenda – bringing credibility concerns to the forefront and allowing demonstrations of force to calm these concerns. During real or manufactured crises that undermine personal security and safety, publicly visible authority plays a major role. Furthermore, choices made during such times are likely to be affected to a lesser degree by bureaucratic and political compromise or by preferences of special interests. As the institutional and normative restraints that usually operate in a democracy fade, the latitude available to political executives grows, as does the opportunity to portray an image of toughness and strength. Consequently, political executives seeking reelection may be willing to prioritize the visibility and popularity of policy instruments over their economic efficiency and/or effectiveness. In addition, in these policy areas it is relatively easy for political executives to exaggerate their willingness to escalate situations into (armed) conflicts (Yarhi-Milo 2018).

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In the area of counterterrorism, for example, scholars have shown that democratic governments undertake suboptimal policies involving observable displays of force and coercive actions rather than secretive, more optimal activities because it is in their electoral interests to respond to public demands for improved security in the aftermath of major terrorist attacks (e.g., Crenshaw 2010; Cronin 2009; Donohue 2008; Dragu 2016, 2017; see also Bueno de Mesquita 2007). A counterfactual-based study of post-9/11 proactive measures in the US furthermore found that the return to the War on Terror was pennies on the dollar (Sandler *et al.* 2009).

Zero-tolerance policies in the area of crime prevention offer additional examples of policy overreaction style. In the US, these policies include the Morgan Act, the US Crime Act, and President Trump's zero-tolerance border enforcement policy. The latter policy entailed the separation of children from their parents at the US border, disregarding the heterogeneity of this target audience as well as the traumatic effects on young children. The Trump administration defended the use of this policy, claiming that it is a deterrent against other potential immigrants, as well as a negotiating tool in the president's efforts to force Democrats to cave on his immigration demands. Thus, it could be considered a deliberate policy overreaction. In the UK, examples of zero-tolerance policies include the Crime and Disorder Act, Crime Reduction Partnership, and the Home Office national objectives. Overreaction policy style therefore involves routinized decisions to apply military or military-like instruments and to advance hawkish rhetoric bearing aggressive connotations (Yarhi-Milo 2018, p. 33) alongside military assertiveness. As opposed to routinized choices that are characterized by secrecy, this policy overreaction style enables political executives to appear "resolute" or strong vis-à-vis domestic

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audiences; to appease the public; to galvanize their base around the challenge; to divert public opinion away from domestic social and economic issues; to restore their (and their nation's) credibility; and to impress world leaders. These strategies, however, are not without costs: such policies are much "noisier," more expensive, and may trigger a backlash among certain domestic audiences that object to them.

An example of intentional policy underreaction style can be discerned in the area of climate change, especially when the "no regrets" doctrine – according to which measures ostensibly taken in response to uncertainty must realize other objectives – is employed. The UK Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs notes, "most current adaptations are justified on co-benefits and/or are 'no regret' options" (DEFRA 2005, p. 8). Although these activities are framed by the government as proportionate (DEFRA 2005, p. 8), they are not designed to perform optimally in all scenarios of climate change. This is evident with regard to flood preparedness: "[u]nder-investment in these defenses is storing up costs and risks for the future" (Committee on Climate Change 2014, p. 8).

Intentional disproportionate policy styles are likely to be pronounced when populist leaders hold executive positions. These styles may be adopted because the purpose of these leaders is to "challenge the dominant order and give voice to the collective will, goals that are infused with a sense of urgency by proclaiming that a crisis exists" (Oliver and Rahn 2016, p. 191; see also Moffitt 2015). Regarding intentional overreaction policy style, when their goals seem unachievable via traditional means, populist leaders may tend to force attention towards the issues at hand by adopting maximalist positions, threatening excessive action, setting harsh deadlines, demanding concessions, arguing that extreme problems demand extreme tactics, and, at times, implementing maximalist strategies. Overreaction policy style vis-à-vis national security, immigration control, as well as trade policy (e.g., the US–North Korea crisis; the manufactured US–Mexico border crisis [Morales 2019]; the US–China trade crisis) has been recorded during Trump's presidency (as of writing this chapter, 2019); with regard to migration in Viktor Orbán's Hungary (Cantat and Rajaram 2019); and in connection with the fight against drugs in Rodrigo Duterte's Philippines. Underreaction policy style with regard to climate change has been recorded in all countries led by populist authoritarians. Such a style has also been recorded in connection with gun violence in the US.

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Discussion

Remarkably, most studies of policy style make no reference to disproportionate policy styles. Indeed, at present, many consider instances of policy over- and underreaction to be policy mistakes and, as such, believe that they are not worthy of academic attention. My view is completely different. The study of disproportionate policy, let alone disproportionate policy style, is highly important because, under certain conditions, such responses and styles yield substantial benefits for policymakers. As illustrated here, some policy over- and underreaction styles may indeed occur due to psychological and institutional factors and therefore may be categorized as unintentional errors of commission or omission (Maor 2019a). However, other disproportionate policy styles may result from strategic considerations. The arguments advanced here in this regard are that (i) real or manufactured policy problems, especially in the areas of national security and crime prevention, may produce overreaction policy style as political executives seek to display their unwavering commitment to the resolution of problems by implementing aggressive and visible policies as well as overspending on the military and police, and (ii) real or manufactured policy problems to which government supporters accord low priority may produce underreaction policy style, involving symbolic action and neglect.

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A strategic perspective on disproportionate policy styles offers unique insights into the modern political reality, especially with regard to policy overreaction style. Global and domestic threats, coupled with publics that are relatively skeptical about politicians and political institutions, and rising negativity and populism in democratic politics make policy overshooting increasingly necessary in order to ensure that the public perceives policy action as sufficient and politicians as competent. Not surprisingly, overreaction policy style has been a focal point for political actors seeking to maintain the results of radical policy changes. Such action has repeatedly exerted a dramatic effect upon the direction and character of policy and politics. A classic example is the US response to 9/11 discussed here. It is, therefore, an exciting time for the study of disproportionate policy styles.

Conclusion

This chapter captures the relatively enduring nature of disproportionate policy styles or, put differently, the characteristic way of doing things disproportionately. It demonstrates that the concept of disproportionate policy style can be fruitfully applied to over- and underreaction policy styles. Certain issues have their own pattern of policymaking: national security and crime problems, especially when there are high levels of existential threat, may produce overreaction policy style; policy problems to which government supporters accord low priority may produce underreaction policy style. These disproportionate policy styles are likely to be pronounced when populist leaders hold executive positions. These styles may also occur unintentionally as a result of psychological biases and strong emotions.

This discussion raises the questions of how disproportionate policy styles are created, how they are maintained, and how they change; what operating procedures, bureaucratic routines, and operational codes are employed in the practice of these policy styles; how such policy styles affect calculation of political executives' interests and self-interests; what association exists, if any at all, between these styles and majoritarian and consensus democracies; how such policy styles are influenced by the rules and structures of the civil service and political systems within which they are employed; how such policy styles balance the use of organizational, authoritative, financial, and informational tools; and how preferences for long-term disproportionate policy styles change, if at all, and what factors are responsible for those changes. In my opinion, answering these questions will be the most useful way to proceed.

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