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R obert Jervis once claimed that "states sometimes fail to deploy threats that would benefit them and on other, probably more numerous, occasions employ threats that provoke rather than deter."[1] If so, the field of international politics has done a remarkably poor job of accounting for the latter types of threat. For one, provocation has remained an elusive term.

Despite the frequent references to provocation in both scholarship and public commentary, its distinct meaning and impact on state-level outcomes has remained unclear. Todd Hall's recent article makes a distinguished contribution to the study of international politics by addressing these gaps. In this review, I summarize Hall's key insights, discuss the strengths and limitations of his article, and elaborate on the future avenues of research that he identifies in his conclusion.

Hall's central aim in the article is to theorize provocation in international politics. To achieve this goal, he proceeds in four steps. First, he defines provocations as "actions or incidents that state actors perceive as intentionally and wrongfully challenging or violating their values and goals, thereby eliciting outraged reactions that spur rash, aggressive responses" (2). That is, Hall uses the term provocation to refer to a specific range of phenomena that are "constituted by their effects: outraged reactions." By drawing boundaries around what counts as provocation, Hall leaves other uses of the term at large, stating forthrightly that "the goal of

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[1] Robert Jervis, "Rational Deterrence: Theory and Evidence," *World Politics* 41:2 (January 1989): 198.

this piece is not to provide a comprehensive accounting for the various uses of the term in international politics" (2).

With a definition of provocation in hand, Hall's second step is to distinguish three "forms" of outraged reactions: personal outrage, performative outrage, and popular outrage. Personal outrage refers to the "individual emotional experience of intense anger in response to a perceived violation or slight" (3). Drawing from a wealth of recent findings on anger in the social psychology literature, Hall outlines how personal outrage can have three significant effects: "it can alter preferences, change attitudes towards risk, and increase impatience and urgency" (5). Outraged individuals, therefore, have a greater desire to exact retribution, are more risk accepting, care less about the future, and seek more immediate rewards.

Performative outrage refers to public displays of outrage, particularly by political elites. A key feature of performative outrage is that individuals may *not* experience intense outraged emotions, instead displaying outrage to satisfy social expectations or, in the case of elites, putting on a performance to affect the strategic calculations of the foreign provocateur. The latter idea draws directly from Hall's previous work.[2] For instance, as Hall explains in *Emotional Diplomacy*, elites may deliberately display their anger and frustration to a foreign provocateur to convey that a core value has been violated.[3] Yet, as he points out, acts of performative outrage may induce sincere emotions both in the individual and in others.

Finally, popular outrage refers to the collective outraged reactions of the domestic public which then exert pressure on the policy elites. Public assemblies, media reporting, and social media can transmit and amplify emotions of outrage across the populace, thereby constraining the potential choices of policymakers. As Hall acknowledges, popular outrage shares similarities with the notion of domestic audience costs. Referring to audience costs as "the possible penalties policymakers will face for breaking promises to their domestic publics," he claims that "[p]opular outrage in response to a provocation works along these lines" (11).

Having distinguished three forms of outrage, Hall's third move is to explain how they interact through "outraged resonance." Enraged speeches by policy elites, for instance, "may generate popular resonances," regardless of whether the individual orator feels intense anger (13). Oppositely, "bottom-up expressions of outrage may pressure a policymaker to engage in performative outrage, thereby locking in a reaction and further eliciting greater popular echoes." Importantly, Hall also uses the notion of "outraged resonance" to address a key concern that arises when making the case that emotions influence policy outcomes: the longevity of emotions. By arguing that the emotional impulses generated by provocation can "enjoy a longer lifespan" through outraged resonance, Hall builds the case that provocation can more meaningfully impact international politics than the fleeting effects one might expect when considering the individual in isolation (13).

Hall's fourth and final step is to illustrate his theoretical insights through a case study of the Franco-Prussian War. The central story is that the Prussian Chancellor Otto von Bismarck deliberately provoked the French

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[2] Todd H. Hall, "We will not Swallow This Bitter Fruit: Theorizing a Diplomacy of Anger," *Security Studies* 20:4 (2011): 521-555; Todd H. Hall. *Emotional Diplomacy: Official Emotion on the International Stage*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

[3] Hall, *Emotional Diplomacy*, 48.

and lured them into an ill-prepared war against Prussia by doctoring a telegram and releasing it to the press; the altered Prussian telegram – the 'Ems dispatch' – described an encounter between the Prussian king and French ambassador as if the latter had been snubbed. Given the difficulties of measuring changes in emotion and assessing their impact on behavioral outcomes in the case, Hall takes great care to identify the observable implications of provocation: "sudden shifts in preferences towards retaliatory satisfaction, lax attitudes towards risk, impulsivity, and urgency" (16). The primary and secondary evidence that Hall brings to bear tells an intriguing story that is consistent with the interpretation that France was provoked into an "impulsive and imprudent war" with Prussia (28).

Hall's article does a tremendous service to the literature in two important respects. Above all, it pioneers a way to comprehend provocation as a distinct phenomenon in international politics. Second, it subtly advances a role for emotions in the field. By distinguishing personal outrage from performative outrage, it avoids claiming that provocation is solely an emotional phenomenon; by discriminating personal outrage from popular outrage, it avoids reducing the role of emotions to either level or claiming that states somehow have emotions; and by outlining a process of outraged resonance, it explains how emotions can have staying power and meaningfully influence state-level outcomes. Thus, Hall's article makes an exemplary contribution to the emerging literature on emotions and international relations.

One feature that is noticeably absent from the article is a review of how provocation has been understood in the extant literature–as Hall observes, his article "is not the first academic piece to address the phenomenon of provocation" (14). Admittedly, Hall states outright that he is not attempting to account for all the ways in which provocation has appeared in the literature and further notes that provocation plays an important role in the study of terrorism. But a brief discussion of some of the ways in which existing studies on interstate conflict have used the notion of provocation and how they differ from Hall's innovations could have aided readers. For instance, Glenn Snyder and Paul Diesing point out that a chief risk that policymakers aim to avoid during crises is "emotionally provoking the opponent's leadership into rash behavior."[4] More recently, provocation has been discussed in the game theoretic literature on crisis bargaining where public threats can provoke a rival state's domestic audience and make it harder for the rival state to back-down.[5] And the experimental literature on audience costs and public opinion finds outcomes consistent with provocation where the aggressive rhetoric of foreign leaders makes it harder for the home state to make large concessions by reducing domestic support for leaders who make such deals.[6]

One of the drawbacks of excluding a discussion of existing work on provocation is that the onus of differentiating provocation from more established concepts in the field falls onto the reader. Take, for instance, audience costs. Most obviously, Hall's notion of provocation differs from audience costs because emotions in the public sphere can diffuse to leaders and impact their decisions directly. But popular outrage

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[4] Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing, *Conflict Among Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making, and System Structure in International Crises* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977): 235.

[5] Shuhei Kurizaki, "Efficient Secrecy: Public versus Private Threats in Crisis Diplomacy," *American Political Science Review* 101:3 (August 2007): 543-558.

[6] Matthew S. Gottfried and Robert F. Trager, "A Preference for War: How Fairness and Rhetoric Influence Leadership Incentives in Crises," *International Studies Quarterly* 60:2 (2016): 243-257.

also differs from audience costs because it foments an *urgent* need for belligerence: it creates pressures on leaders to engage in "rash, aggressive behavior" (11). If this is true, we would expect to see leaders being punished by their public even after escalating against an adversary, unless the public's "demand for quick satisfaction" (12) is met in a timely manner. The logic that appears most consistent with audience costs is that of performative outrage "locking in" (13) the reactions of policymakers: once policymakers display outrage in public, they may face 'inconsistency costs' for subsequently acceding to the provocateur. This begs the question, however, of whether provoked policymakers will engage in performative outrage in the first place. More broadly, when will provocation lead to changes in state-level outcomes?

The two key areas for future research that Hall identifies are "how outraged reactions become translated into actual policies" and "the intersection of provocation and strategic calculation" (28). Indeed, several startling questions arise at these junctures. Can efforts to coerce other states provoke rather than induce acquiescence? Will provocation lead to "rash, aggressive" (11) outcomes or will it strengthen the bargaining position of the provoked state and induce the provocateur to back-down? Or could states engage in deliberately provocative actions to signal greater resolve and increase their chances at successful coercive diplomacy? Some of the most promising research projects in the field are addressed at these questions. For instance, Allan Dafoe and Sophia Hatz employ survey experiments to investigate whether and why coercive acts in interstate crises can provoke.[7] Allan Dafoe and Jessica Weiss conduct survey experiments in China to study the types of foreign actions that provoke the Chinese public.[8] And this author develops game theoretic models to analyze how different strategic uses of provocation affect crisis bargaining and the outbreak of inadvertent war.[9] For this upcoming body of research, and in the study of international politics more broadly, Hall's article marks an important milestone.

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[7] Allan Dafoe and Sophia Hatz, "Coercion and Provocation" *Working Paper* (October 2016).

[8] Allan Dafoe and Jessica Chen Weiss, "Provocation, Public Opinion, and Crisis Escalation: Evidence from China," *Working Paper* (October 2016).

[9] Hyun-Binn Cho, "Provocation, Inadvertent War, and Military Signaling During Crises," *Working Paper* (2017).