process of moving concepts from long-term memory to working memory through a pandemonium model (Larson, 1996; Neisser, 1967; Ratcliff and McKoon, 1996) in which activation is seen as a competition between all of the activated concepts, with those that are most activated, for whatever reason, being selected for further processing in working memory.

It is at this point that the parallel nature of the affective and semantic connections becomes critical. Those concepts that are most semantically implicated by the communication are of course likely to win the competition, and move into working memory. So, if an individual is reading a message about tax policy, the concept of taxes is going to be constantly activated and reactivated, as many of the concepts in the communication will either be about taxes directly, or about concepts closely related to taxes that will cause its further activation. However, the concepts related to taxes that are most likely to be brought into working memory, and therefore potentially enter the conscious awareness of the individual as relevant considerations, are those that are *both* semantically and affectively related to the concept. Suppose that taxes are viewed negatively, but there are an equal number of positively and negatively evaluated concepts that are semantically related to taxes (public works projects and tax refunds might be seen positively, while IRS audits and tax preparation might have a negative affective connection). Because the activation of the concept of taxes spreads both affectively and semantically, those concepts that are both semantically and affectively connected with the concept of taxes will most likely pop into working memory. So, when a message mentions taxes, a negatively viewed concept, the other associations that come into working memory are going to be biased in favor of other negatively viewed concepts. IRS audits rather than positively perceived public works projects are likely to win out.

Figure 1.4 presents an overview of our account of the stream of information processing from the initial unconscious registration of an event to the generation of an evaluative response. *The fundamental assumption driving our model is that both affective and cognitive reactions to external and internal events are triggered unconsciously, followed spontaneously by the spreading of activation through associative pathways which link thoughts to feelings, so that very early events, even those that remain invisible to conscious awareness, set the direction for all subsequent processing.* It is only at the tail end of this stream of processing that we become consciously aware of the associated thoughts and feelings generated moments earlier. It is at this moment that we experience what subjectively seems to be consciously initiated thinking and reasoning (Custers and Aarts, 2010; Libet, 1985).

Most of the key concepts and processes in our theory are represented in Figure 1.4, starting with the left to right causal directionality of processing through time. A stimulus event triggers the stream of processing, proceeding through affective and then cognitive mediators, and perhaps leading to the construction of evaluations of political objects and conscious deliberation. As

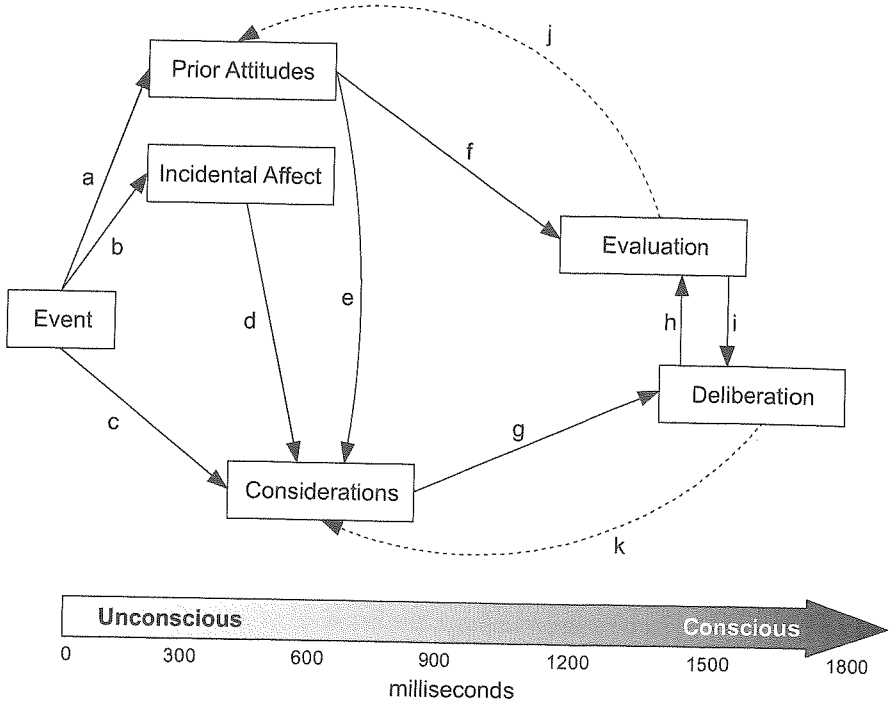

FIGURE 1.4. A Dual Process Model of Political Evaluation

awareness also increases left to right. Each arrow in the figure represents a theoretical process hypothesis. It is worth noting before we introduce these hypotheses that the conventional model of political reasoning involves only the c-g-h sequence in Figure 1.4: an event triggers the retrieval of cognitive considerations from memory, from which conscious deliberations are constructed, yielding reasoned evaluations.

While such controlled political cognition may sometimes occur, our dual process model claims that all thinking is suffused with feeling, and these feelings arise automatically within a few milliseconds (in our data as little as thirteen milliseconds) of exposure to a sociopolitical object or event. This is the *hot cognition* hypothesis that stands at the center of our theory of