

# THE APPROPRIATENESS OF POLITICAL EMOTIONS

THOMAS SZANTO  
*University of Flensburg*

RUTH REBECCA TIETJEN  
*Tilburg University*

Emotions can get things right and serve us in many productive ways. They can also get things wrong and harm our epistemic or practical endeavors. While this is equally true of political and non-political emotions, assessing the appropriateness of political emotions is a particularly contested endeavor. In our paper, we explore political emotions from a meta-normative perspective. Building on existing discussions on the fittingness and appropriateness of emotions in general and distinctive types of political emotions in particular, we investigate which different standards of appropriateness political emotions have qua being political. We develop a novel taxonomy that distinguishes the focus-, target-, subject-, and aim-appropriateness of political emotions. As we argue, our focus-based account of fittingness allows us to assess the fittingness of political emotions from a first-personal perspective by reflecting on the question of whether the emotion adequately mirrors what really matters to the emoters. While the standard of target-appropriateness assesses whether the target of the emotion has the right scope, the standard of subject-appropriateness allows us to assess whether the emotion adequately mirrors one's group membership. The standard of aim-appropriateness, finally, assesses the political legitimacy of political emotions based on one's underlying understanding of the political itself.

**Keywords:** shared emotions; political emotions; fittingness; appropriateness; affective injustice; affective scapegoating; himpathy; kitsch solidarity; virtue signaling

---

**Contact:** Thomas Szanto <thomas.szanto@uni-flensburg.de>  
Ruth Rebecca Tietjen <R.R.Tietjen@tilburguniversity.edu>

## Introduction

Emotions can get things right and serve us in many productive ways. They can also get things wrong and harm our epistemic or practical endeavors. Resenting somebody for having insulted your friend gets it wrong when your friend well understood that the remark was a joke. On the other hand, if your friend is not familiar with the given cultural context and hence couldn't quite grasp the subtly sexist nature of the joke, your resentment might not only be appropriate but also help her navigate the new social context. Hoping that your meeting with your supervisor will be productive might motivate you to prepare better but will be inappropriate if all your previous meetings were failures.

Thus, in everyday encounters, we often assess the appropriateness of our emotional reactions and their aptness to achieve certain aims. We give and ask for reasons for the type, intensity, and duration of our emotions, and have a sense of what we ought to feel under certain circumstances. Though many details are still debated,<sup>1</sup> there is a broad consensus in philosophy of emotions that our folk-psychological, social practice is warranted: Emotions indeed have standards of appropriateness. Ever since D'Arms' and Jacobson's (2000a) seminal contribution, it has become common to distinguish roughly between the fittingness and the prudential and moral appropriateness of emotions.<sup>2</sup> My amusement might be fitting in tracking the funniness of the joke and yet in certain contexts, say a funeral, it might nonetheless be wiser not to be amused. Moreover, some forms of amusement, such as amusement about sexist jokes, might be morally inappropriate although potentially fitting (cf., however, Carroll 2020; An & Chen 2021).

But things are far less straightforward when it comes to emotions in political contexts, such as anger at a certain policy or resentment in the face of humiliation by political opponents. And we enter ever more contested terrain when we consider fear of immigration or group-pride of non-oppressed groups, which are often indistinguishable from outright xenophobic fear or racist white pride (Vice 2017). When are such emotions "fitting" or morally or prudentially "appropri-

---

1. Most recently, see Echeverri (2019), Ballard (2021), Na'aman (2021a; 2021b), Deonna & Teroni (2021), Naar (2021), Forcehimes (2022), Achs & Na'aman (2023), Fritz (2023), and Howard (2023). We'll briefly discuss some of the issues raised in the literature below.

2. The literature is conceptually inconsistent: Qualifiers such as "correct," "apt" or "fitting" and occasionally "justified" or "warranted" are sometimes used synonymously with "appropriate," sometimes these are distinguished as technical terms. Moreover, sometimes "fittingness" is qualified as "rational," "cognitive" or "epistemic," and some use "instrumental," some "prudential" or "strategic" to qualify the practical or political value or "aptness" of emotions. For an altogether critical view on this broadly tripartite conceptualization, and the alternative notion of "adequacy of emotions," see Stephan (2017). In this paper, we use "appropriateness" as an umbrella-term and in line with the standard literature "fittingness" for a particular dimension of the appropriateness of emotions which we later (§3.1) specify in terms of "focus-fittingness".

ate”? And who decides this question? Even if we just look at arguably legitimate grievances, the very issue of appropriateness of political emotions quickly turns out to be a minefield of competing theoretical intuitions but also of contesting existential concerns as well as practical, moral, and political values. Compare, for example, Amazonas farmers’ existential fear over sustenance and their rage at head-in-the-clouds Western anti-deforestation activists who, in turn, not only contend that the farmers are misled and harbor, all-thing-considered, morally inappropriate emotions, but are also angry at their own governments for not exerting more economic pressure on South American policy makers.

The aim of our paper is not to arbitrate between legitimate and illegitimate political grievances, nor to suggest a normative framework for fitting or morally and prudentially appropriate political emotions. Rather, we investigate the different standards of appropriateness by which we can assess political emotions, thereby exploring political emotions from a “meta-normative” perspective.

Following well-established discussions on the appropriateness of emotions, philosophers have provided incisive analyses of the appropriateness of specific types of emotions,<sup>3</sup> and political ones in particular.<sup>4</sup> Among the latter, many pursue normative agendas, with social change in view. They debate the appropriateness of political emotions such as resentment (Murphy & Hampton 1988), anger (Srinivasan 2018; Cherry 2021), forgiveness (Murphy & Hampton 1988; Pettigrove & Parsons 2010), contempt, hatred (Brogaard 2020) or hope (Stockdale 2021). Some have recently drawn on psychology to offer a normative framework for assessing a cluster of emotions concerning climate change (Mosquera & Jylhä 2022), or used insights from the cognitive sciences to reshape problematic emotions norms in a way that is sensitive to feminist concerns (Kurth 2022).

While there is, then, an impressive roster of research on both the appropriateness of emotions *tout court* as well as on the appropriateness of certain types

---

3. Studies of the appropriateness (broadly speaking) of specific emotions in non-political contexts abound, e.g., on personal regret (Bittner 1992), grief (Cholbi 2017; Ratcliffe et al. 2023), forgiveness (Bennett 2018), interpersonal hate (Vendrell Ferran 2024; Cox & Levine 2022), blame (Wallace 2019), anger (Na’aman 2020), forgiveness (Hieronymi 2001), resentment (Reis-Dennis 2021), envy (Protasi 2021), pity (Forcehimes 2022), fear (Fritz 2021), or admiration (Archer & Matheson 2022). See Bell (2011) for a discussion of specific problems regarding the appropriateness of so-called “globalist attitudes,” or evaluative reactions of whole persons, such as shame, moral contempt, disgust, or admiration.

4. Including resentment and Ressentiment (Murphy & Hampton 1988; Brudholm 2008; MacLachlan 2010; Stockdale 2013; van Tuinen 2020; Fleury 2023; Illouz 2023), collective guilt (Tollefsen 2006); anger (Bell 2009; Reis-Dennis 2019; Srinivasan 2018; Cherry 2021; Stockdale 2021; Emerick & Yap 2023; Lepoutre 2023; Silva 2024), blame (McGeer 2013), forgiveness (Murphy & Hampton 1988; Pettigrove & Parsons 2010; Stockdale 2023), contempt (Bell 2013; Brogaard 2020), fear (Degerman et al. 2023; Illouz 2023), pride (Brady 2017; Salmela & Sullivan 2022), hope (Stockdale 2021; Tilev 2022), envy (Archer et al. 2022; Protasi 2021), hatred (Murphy & Hampton 1988; Brogaard 2020; Schmid 2020; Szanto 2021), or disgust (Kumar 2017; Illouz 2023), but also less obvious ones such as bitterness (Stockdale 2021).

and tokens of political emotions, a general and comprehensive account of the appropriateness of political emotions is still lacking.<sup>5</sup> The aim of our paper is to fill this lacuna. More precisely, we pursue two main objectives: First, we develop a systematic taxonomy of the standards of appropriateness of political emotions, which critically integrates and extends existing accounts. Hereby, we zoom in on the affective intentional structure of political emotions and present a revised standard of fittingness (focus-fittingness) and two additional standards (target- and subject-appropriateness) to complement the traditional assessment of emotions in terms of fittingness and moral or prudential appropriateness. Second, we argue that there is a distinctively political standard of appropriateness that determines—against the backdrop of a given understanding of the political—which emotions count as politically legitimate or illegitimate (aim-appropriateness).

Our approach is “meta-normative” in that it does not deduce the standards from a specific normative political framework (e.g., a republican or liberal one), nor from any decontextualized set of moral values. Rather, we show how different conceptualizations of what the political is allow for different types of legitimate political emotions (retributive, reformative, etc.). We also critically reflect on the question of why we cannot properly discuss any standards of appropriateness of political emotions independent of the moral and political values at stake, thereby acknowledging the socio-political situatedness of our own analysis and the limitations of any “meta-normative” framework.

Our analysis is meant to be of both theoretical and practical—and, in particular, political—value. While we acknowledge that a critique of political emotions from normatively committed standpoints is necessary and valuable (see Illouz 2023), we also show that it is possible to criticize political emotions from within a first-personal perspective, for example, when an emotion does not mirror what really matters to the emoters themselves. Furthermore, our analysis aims to sharpen our awareness of how and why assessing the appropriateness of political emotions is such a contested issue.

We proceed as follows: First, we introduce our account of political emotions. Second, we discuss what we call the “standard account” of appropriateness, distinguishing between the fittingness, moral appropriateness, and prudential value of emotions in general and political emotions in particular. Third, we

---

5. Building on Srinivasan’s (2018) concept of affective injustice, which we will also discuss below, Gallegos (2022) has recently engaged in an interesting meta-normative analysis of emotional aptness. But he does not focus on political emotions and rather aims to account for why it is generally an “affective good” that emotions aptly respond to evaluative properties and what the normative practices are that ground such emotional aptness. For another meta-ethical defense of Srinivasan’s notion, building on the idea that there is an essential connection between apt reasons for emotions and (non-consequentialist) reasons for action, see Plunkett (2020). For an earlier, historically informed, meta-normative analysis of emotions’ role for justice, see Solomon (1995); see also Ahmed (2004) on “just emotions.”

complement the standard view and distinguish what we call the focus-, target-, subject-, and aim-appropriateness of political emotions. Finally, we briefly map our taxonomy of appropriateness and situate our project in between two other approaches to the critique of political emotions.

## 1. What Are Political Emotions?

Following a dominant trend in contemporary philosophy of emotion<sup>6</sup>, we take emotions to be concern-based, evaluative affective states. As affective states, they have a phenomenal quality; it feels a specific way to have an emotion. They are directed at a particular object, their target. The targets of the rage of the above-mentioned Amazonas farmers, for instance, are Western anti-deforestation activists. Emotions affectively evaluate their target in the light of what we care about, that is, what we attribute worth and value to (Roberts 2003). These background concerns are called the “focus” of the emotion (Helm 2001). The Amazonas farmers, for example, are concerned with their sustenance. Different types of emotions differ from each other, among other things, in terms of their “formal object,” or the evaluative quality they ascribe to their target (Kenny 1963; Teroni 2007). In fear, we experience something as threatening, in anger, as offensive. The Amazonas farmers’ anger targets the Western climate activists as offensive in threatening their existence and ignoring their needs and grievances. Emotions and concerns co-constitute each other. Our emotions are based on our concerns but also make things matter to us in the first place (Helm 2001; Roberts 2003).

While emotions are an important subclass of affective phenomena, they are only one subclass among others. Others include moods, passions or sentiments, and atmospheres. Some of these intentionally more diffuse affective phenomena can also be or become public and indeed qualified as political (e.g., Rivera & Paéz 2007; Ringmar 2018; Osler & Szanto 2021). As such, political atmospheres, for instance, give rise to questions of appropriateness—if not of fittingness, then at least of moral and prudential appropriateness.<sup>7</sup> In this paper, we delimit our analysis to political emotions.

Now, surely, all emotions have some political dimension in that our emotion repertoires are always shaped by our socio-political environment and determined by socio-cultural “emotion norms” that tell us when, what, and how (not)

---

6. See, e.g., (Goldie 2000; Nussbaum 2001; Helm 2001; Roberts 2003; Furtak 2018). For a different, attitudinal theory of emotions, see (Deonna & Teroni 2012).

7. On the appropriateness of political atmospheres generally, see (Osler & Szanto 2021), or for the discussion on existential anxiety, despair, and hope in the context of climate change, see (Huber 2023; Ojala et al. 2021; Pihkala 2017; Tietjen 2024).

to feel (Hochschild 1983). In this paper, however, we focus on a narrower set of phenomena. These political emotions proper are a subset of shared emotions (Salmela 2012; Szanto 2015) and characterized by four features (Szanto & Slaby 2020; Osler & Szanto 2021).

- (1) Political emotions have a double affective intentionality: They are based on a shared concern for a matter of political import and, at the same time, involve a background concern for the given political community.
- (2) They implicitly or explicitly make a claim for the public recognition of the emotion and its underlying concerns.
- (3) They are shaped through the interaction of the group members.
- (4) Following from all this (as we elaborate in §3), the sharedness and group-specific emotion norms put normative pressure on individuals to maintain and express specific emotions.

To illustrate these claims, take the example of our collective fear of the Covid-19 pandemic. First of all, as a political emotion properly speaking, this emotion is based on our shared concern for our health care system and this concern in turn reveals and partly constitutes our concern for our community or those who partake in this system (1). We thereby not just contingently have the same emotion based on the same concern; rather, our individual emotions and the way we feel and regulate them is shaped by other people's emotions and concerns (3). As a political emotion, the fear comes with a claim for public recognition: a claim that the emotions and their underlying concerns be publicly recognized by third parties (2). More precisely, they come with the claim that others should recognize both that we have these emotions and that they are appropriate and, therefore, require consideration in political deliberation. This claim need not be, and often is not, met—which is exactly why political emotions are felt and publicly expressed. In the case of the pandemic, for instance, other groups such as Covid-19 deniers have questioned the appropriateness of pandemic fear. It is in their claim for public recognition that political emotions differ, for example, from shared emotions that arise in a more “private” context, for instance a family, but also from shared emotions in a public but “unpolitical” context, for example in the context of sports fandom. By saying this, we do not mean to undermine the feminist critiques of the public/private distinction, nor to deny the political dimension of phenomena such as sports fandom in reproducing oppressive gender and racial norms (Tarver 2017). Rather, we want to point to a class of emotions that are more directly or “outspokenly” political in that the emoters demand public recognition, for instance by publicly expressing their emotions at political demonstrations or on social media.

We acknowledge that this definition of political emotions is narrow and rather demanding.<sup>8</sup> Yet, it has the advantage of cashing out the (collectively) intentional structure of political emotions and hence allows us to detail standards of assessment that are linked to emotions' affective intentionality. More precisely, we explore standards linked to the emotion's focus, intentional target, subject, and aim. Moreover, this definition of political emotions allows us to capture normative demands that arise from their sharedness but may not arise for political emotions more loosely understood. For example, a person may feel threatened by the Covid-19 pandemic but be exclusively concerned with her own well-being. Although such an emotion may motivate political behavior and can thus be considered political in a weaker sense, according to our definition, it does not count as a political emotion proper because it does not meet the first criterion.

A special class of emotions that we will turn to later when discussing various membership-misidentifications (§3.3) are so-called "group-based" emotions. In group-based political emotions, individuals self-categorize and identify as members of a political community and form emotions about events concerning that group, even if they are not personally involved in the event, and even if there may in fact be no community in the relevant sense. We consider such group-based emotions to be only political in a derivative sense, since they are not necessarily based on a shared matter of concern and might lack a concern for the community (as required by our first criterion); moreover, they do not necessarily involve a reciprocal interaction (as required by the third criterion). However, given that most social-psychological work on political emotions focuses just on this class (see, e.g., Halperin 2016), and given their key role for political identification, we deem it important to include such group-based emotions in our analysis.

## 2. The Standard Account and the Case of Political Emotions

In the previous section, we introduced the concept of political emotions. In this section, we turn to the question of how to assess the appropriateness of emotions in general, and political emotions in particular. We first introduce what we call the "standard account" of the appropriateness of emotions (§2.1) and then turn to the question of how this account has been applied to political emotions (§2.2).

---

8. For some alternative general philosophical accounts of political emotions which situate them within political theory, rather than provide philosophy-of-emotion-based definitions, see, e.g., (Solomon 1995; Ahmed 2004; Hall 2005; Sokolon 2006; Krause 2008; Kingston 2011; Nussbaum 2013). For a review, including the vast social-scientific literature on political emotions, see (Szanto & Slaby 2020).

### 2.1 Three Forms of Appropriateness

According to the standard account, put forward by D'Arms and Jacobson (2000a), we need to distinguish three ways in which emotions can be appropriate or inappropriate: their fittingness, their moral appropriateness, and their prudential value.

First, we can assess whether the emotion gets things right in the following sense: first, whether the object of the emotion in fact has the evaluative properties ascribed to it by the emotion, or whether the emotion has the right shape; second, whether the emotion is proportionate, or has the right size. For instance, we can ask whether my colleague's remark indeed was offensive and hence merits resentment, and if so, we can still ask whether a reaction of raging resentment is proportionate to the offense that the remark constituted or whether the offense would rather call for some mild indignation. More recently, in addition to shape and size, a third dimension of fittingness has been introduced, namely that of duration and issues of temporal development at large (Na'aman 2021a; 2021b; Cholbi 2017; Howard 2023; see also Bittner 1992 and Hieronymi 2001). For instance, while it might be fitting for me to feel angry at you as an immediate response to your willful offense, my anger might no longer be fitting after you have expressed sincere regret and properly apologized.

This is what is called the fittingness of the emotion. According to one view, sometimes called the "alethic view" (see Howard 2018), norms of emotional fittingness then are "norms of correct representation" (Na'aman 2021a: 532). An emoter accurately answering these norms is responding to objective normative reasons. But, analogously to the rationality of beliefs, fittingness is also dependent on the epistemic reasons that are available to the emoter. The latter reasons constitute whether an emotion is *rationaly justified* given the *apparent* evaluative properties of its object. This is the fittingness of an emotion in terms of its being "warranted" (D'Arms & Jacobson 2000b; Na'aman 2021a). Thus, envy of my neighbor's wealth is not fitting if he doesn't possess much, but it will still be warranted if I haven't realized that there is little behind the facade.

Second, in moral terms, we can assess whether it is good or bad, virtuous or vicious to have the emotion in question. Which moral standards one applies thereby is dependent on which moral theory one favors, e.g., a virtue ethical, consequentialist, deontological, or care-ethical one. In a virtue ethical framework, for example, we can ask whether the character expressed in an emotion is virtuous or vicious (e.g., Pettigrove 2012; Bommarito 2017); in a consequentialist one, we can ask whether having an emotion maximizes a specific non-moral good. We do not want to commit ourselves to any specific moral theory here. In either case, as D'Arms and Jacobson (2000a) argue, it would amount to a "moralistic fallacy" to infer that just because an emotion is morally (in)appropriate, it

is also (un)fitting. For instance, if someone threatens to kill thousands of people unless I become angry with you; while it may be morally appropriate for me to be angry with you, this in itself does not make my anger fitting, because it provides me with what is sometimes called “the wrong kind of reasons” (see Gertken & Kiesewetter 2017).

Third, in prudential terms, we can assess whether having the emotion is conducive to one’s aims. For instance, we may inquire whether climate despair is a politically productive or destructive emotion (and again, if it turns out to be destructive, this in itself is not a reason for it to be unfitting).

## 2.2 *Political Emotions and Moral Assessment*

In recent years, the distinction between the fittingness, moral appropriateness, and prudential value of emotions has been applied to political emotions, most notably by Srinivasan (2018). Srinivasan offers a defense of anger in the context of racial oppression and thus opposes views that reject anger for being politically destructive, prominently put forward by Nussbaum (2013; 2016; see also Pettigrove 2012). As Srinivasan points out, anger as a reaction to racial oppression may be fitting even if politically counterproductive. In cases like these, the oppressed are faced with a dilemma: either they feel fitting anger, thereby acknowledging past and present injustices yet exacerbating their situation, or they repress their anger, thereby bettering or at least not worsening their situation yet failing to appreciate racial injustices. They are exposed to an “affective injustice” that often remains unrecognized but is psychologically taxing.

Interestingly, Srinivasan phrases the conflict as, first and foremost, one between the fittingness (or “aptness”) and the prudential warrant of anger. However, we can easily see how moral considerations play a crucial role here too. More specifically, moral values can play a threefold role when assessing the fittingness and appropriateness of political emotions such as anger or resentment. First, they are built into our assessments of fittingness because, as a moral emotion, anger is fitting if it rightfully targets an offense. Srinivasan (2018: 129) acknowledges this in portraying anger as a form of moral perception. Second, they may be built into our prudential considerations. This is the case when the goals by which we assess anger’s productivity are themselves moral in nature, such as when we ask whether anger, ultimately, helps or hinders our pursuit of racial justice. Indeed, the classic counterproductivity critique of political anger, as Srinivasan (2018: 123–127) presents it, incorporates moral values. According to this critique, anger about racial injustices is counterproductive because (in a racist world) it fuels racist violence, thereby undermining the antiracist struggle for more racial justice. However, other examples that Srinivasan discusses point

to a broader understanding of prudential reasons, including, for instance, the effect of anger on one's personal well-being. Third, the moral builds an assessment category of its own. As Srinivasan argues, anger might, for instance, be immoral insofar as by causing harm to oneself or others, one violates a duty towards oneself or others.

While in the case of anger, moral values are built into our assessments of fittingness, in the case of other political emotions, fittingness is independent of moral values. In this respect, it is helpful to look at Stockdale's (2021) discussion of the difference between essentially moral political emotions (e.g., anger), non-essentially moral political emotions (e.g., hope), and mixed political emotions (e.g., bitterness), and the respective tighter or looser connections between fittingness and moral appropriateness. Take, for example, political hope, which involves a distinct standard that has to do with the probability of the hoped-for outcome being realized and how the emotion tracks the evidence about its likelihood (Stockdale 2021: 61–65, 91).<sup>9</sup> In this specific sense of fittingness, we can assess the hope for all racial injustice to end worldwide in a year from now as unfitting (the probability is close to zero) independently of any moral values. Similarly, there is an epistemic dimension to bitterness that we can assess independently of any moral values. Following Stockdale, we here conceive of bitterness as an anger-like perception of a wrong without much hope for acknowledgment and repair. For instance, if it is highly unlikely that anything will rapidly change for the better, bitterness in the face of gender biases in hiring processes in one's department is fitting, independently of any moral considerations.

Generally, we need to be careful and explicitly elaborate when and why the reasons for the fittingness or for the prudential appropriateness of a political emotion are reasons for its moral appropriateness (or vice versa), and when they do not converge. Importantly, these reflections are in line with D'Arms and Jacobson's observation that "we can allow that some reasons why it is [morally] wrong to feel an emotion are also reasons why that emotion doesn't fit" (2000a: 82). They warn us only against concluding that just because an emotion is immoral or counterproductive, it is also unfitting. This still allows for cases in which moral values play a role for the fittingness or prudential appropriateness of emotions (see also Achs & Na'aman 2023).

To summarize, while its overall moral or prudential merit qua being a moral or prudential merit does not make a political emotion fitting, moral values often do play a role in the assessment of the fittingness or productivity of an emotion. This especially applies to those political emotions that essentially entail moral evaluations, such as anger, moral disgust, collective guilt, or forgiveness.

---

9. This is what Stockdale calls "epistemic" in contrast to "cognitive" rationality assessment of an emotion, where the latter equals the standard fittingness, as introduced by D'Arms and Jacobson (2000a).

This is one of the reasons why assessing the fittingness or prudential value of these emotions is so contested: Our judgment invariably will be informed by our moral values.

### 3. Political Emotions: A Refined Taxonomy of Appropriateness

In the previous section, we introduced the “standard account” of the appropriateness of emotions, thereby distinguishing the fittingness, moral appropriateness, and prudential merit of emotions. We then elaborated how this account has been applied to political emotions. As we have pointed out, in the case of politically controversial emotions, much of the controversy stems from the fact that in the case of political emotions, moral values are built into our assessments of fittingness and productivity. In the following, we set out to develop a framework that allows us to assess the fittingness and appropriateness of political emotions more independently of moral values. In order to do so, we zoom in on four key elements of the affective-intentional structure of political emotions and their relevance in assessing the fittingness and appropriateness of political emotions: the focus (§3.1), target (§3.2), sharedness (§3.3), and aim of the emotion (§3.4).

#### 3.1 *A Focus-Based Account of Fittingness*

When assessing the fittingness of political emotions, we might worry that we might never come to an agreement: which political emotions we take to be fitting depends on which values and concerns we have. For example, to a nationalist who is committed to an essentialist ideal of national identity, fear of immigrants who allegedly threaten this ideal might seem fitting; by contrast, a committed advocate of multicultural values might reject the nationalist’s values and, therefore, reject his fear as unfitting. The conflict about the fittingness of the emotional reaction here points us to a more fundamental disagreement about political ideals and values. Indeed, the sphere of the political is fraught with disagreements. One might even argue that the political sphere *is* the sphere in which such disagreements arise, or that it is constituted by conflict, as post-foundational theorists hold. But even if one disagrees with this move and believes that consensus on political matters (at least in principle) can be reached, it is still a matter of fact that disagreement abounds in the sphere of the political. How should we respond to this? Does the acknowledgment of (contingent or fundamental) political disagreement force us to give up the idea of fittingness altogether because conflicts about the fittingness of political emotions restate or even instigate conflicts about political values?

Here, we want to remain neutral with regard to this question and bracket the complicated meta-ethical discussion on the epistemology and metaphysics of moral and political values. Instead, we want to introduce what we call the “focus-based account of fittingness”<sup>10</sup>—that is, a refined account of fittingness that allows us to assess the fittingness of political emotions in a way that accounts for (contingent or fundamental) political disagreement. Recall that the focus of an emotion is the concern the emotion is based on. For instance, my anger about the discriminatory treatment of Muslims in Dutch society is based on my concern for justice; justice, thus, is the focus of my anger.

The basic idea of the focus-based account of fittingness is that when we assess whether an emotion is fitting, we should not ask whether the object of the emotion has the evaluative properties that the emotion purports to disclose, for instance, whether the professor whom I despise for her intellectual ostentations really is despicable. Rather, we should ask whether the evaluative properties disclosed by the emotion really mirror what matters to the emoter (qua their having that emotion). In this regard, my contempt for my professor might be fitting if humility is what really matters to me (and matters to me in having that emotion). It would be unfitting, however, if what really matters to me is academic achievements, and if my contempt serves as a coping mechanism to cover my own feelings of intellectual inferiority and envy vis-à-vis my professor. The mismatch here is between the concern that the emotion commits me to (in this case, a concern for humility) and the concerns I really have (in this case, a concern of academic achievements). Our focus-based account of fittingness relies on the idea that emotions involve an implicit commitment to their focus, a so-called “focal commitment” (Helm 2001), that comes with a normative pressure to feel, think, and act in a certain way. In the example above, for instance, my contempt commits me to the value of humility; at the same time, my attachment to the value of humility commits me to admire rather than despise humble people. If, thus, my other emotions, thoughts, and actions reveal that humility does not really matter to me, that might speak in favor of the second type of interpretation of my contempt as disguised envy. As such, our focus-based account of fittingness is in line with accounts that highlight the agent-relative nature of emotional fittingness.<sup>11</sup>

---

10. For a detailed account, see Szanto 2021.

11. See, e.g., Roberts 2003; Müller 2021; see also Howard 2023. For a congenial account, see Stephan 2017, who discusses emotional appropriateness in terms of an emotion having a “fundamentum in persona,” whereby the emotion’s focus has or lacks actual significance for the subject. Importantly, Stephan further distinguishes intra-, intersubjective, and cross-cultural assessments of (objective and subjective) emotional adequacy. Notice that our account of focal fittingness needs to be distinguished from another congenial agent-relative or subjective account of fittingness proposed by Achs & Na’aman (2023), according to which assessments of fittingness always need a “specification” regarding “for whom, when and how” a given object “possesses a certain evaluative property” (2023: 2526).

To illustrate, consider two sets of cases of political emotions that are not focus-fitting. The subjects in these cases wittingly or unwittingly but deceptively refocus what really matters. This includes cases in which there is a mismatch between the public display of an emotion and the concern and cases in which there is some mismatch between the experience of the emotion and its focus. First, take virtue signaling. For instance, people might publicly express outrage about racist practices, yet what really matters to them are not anti-racist values but a sense of belonging, moral superiority, or public recognition (see also Cherry 2021: 130–134).<sup>12</sup> Their outrage, in this case, is unfitting in terms of the focus-based account because their concern for belonging, moral superiority, or public recognition does not render their affective evaluation of racist practices as outrageous intelligible. Similar considerations apply to so-called (white) “saviorism,” whereby members of the dominant group allege that without *their* emotions (say racial anger) on behalf of the oppressed, the latter would be doomed on their own (Cherry 2021: 134–138). Rather than racial justice, what really matters to the emoters in this case is, again, their own morality or the morality of their group.

Second, take hatred. Hatred is a sentiment that appraises its target—a person or group of persons—as evil or hateworthy. Paradigmatic cases in the political context are xenophobia, antisemitism, Islamophobia, misogyny, homophobia, or forms of racism.<sup>13</sup> As a “global” rather than local attitude, hatred targets the person or group of persons *as a whole* rather than specific properties or actions of the other (as, e.g., fear or anger does). Furthermore, hatred is an overgeneralizing, essentializing, and collectivizing attitude (see Szanto 2020; 2021). It is overgeneralizing in that it picks out a limited number of actions or properties of the other and yet assesses the other *as a whole*. It is essentializing in that it tends to treat the features in question as inherent to the other and, therefore, as unchangeable. Finally, it is collectivizing in the following two senses: first, the target of hatred characteristically fluctuates between individuals, groups, and proxies (“the refugees”; “this typical unemployed person”, etc.); second, it is characteristic of hatred that the hate-community becomes affectively invested in their own hatred. Their collective identity becomes dialectically interwoven with their target. On the one hand, haters aim to eliminate their targets; on the other, they need the targets to uphold their sense of identity. Indeed, it is this “negative solidarity” with one’s own hate-community that lends affective weight to the emotion, rather than some determinate affective concerns (as, e.g., overcoming oppression with anger or climate goals with hope) (Szanto 2020; 2021; see

12. The issue here is of course independent of how linguistic practices and different use of emotion concepts modulate normative assessments of emotions; on this, see Díaz & Reuter 2021.

13. Note, however, that we do not want to reduce the affective dimension of these phenomena to hatred. For a critical discussion, see Manne 2017.

also Ahmed 2004; Katsafanas 2022). What really matters to hating communities is, thus, to establish and uphold their sense of identity, cohesion, and superiority over and against an outgroup rather than their alleged aim to eradicate the “evil” target from the face of the earth. Political hatred thus becomes focally unfitting: The targets do not have the affective import for the emoters they purportedly have (being hateworthy or evil); rather, the haters have other, often unacknowledged and rather diffuse concerns underlying their hatred, such as the ethnic homogeneity of their country, a reinforcement of their collective identity and superiority, or the positive feelings of belonging associated with negative solidarity with their fellow haters.<sup>14</sup>

To take a more specific case of political hatred, as Salice and Montes Sánchez (2023) have recently argued, sometimes racial hatred is grounded in repressed envy (see also Nussbaum 2018: ch. 5; Protasi 2021: ch. 5). What is envied, for instance, might be power, success, talent, and, ultimately, recognition (values that might be actual or alleged, rendering the underlying envy fitting or not). Since envy is a heavily stigmatized emotion whose acknowledgment would require the painful acknowledgment of one’s own partial inferiority vis-à-vis the other, it tends to get repressed and masks itself in affective attitudes such as resentment or hatred. The rival is no longer experienced as superior but as inferior, blameworthy, or evil; the self is no longer experienced as inferior but as morally superior (yet aggrieved). What originally mattered to the envier (power, success, talent, recognition, etc.) fades into the background; the others are hated simply for *who* they are.

The affective mechanism that transforms painful self-regarding emotions of shame, envy, and feelings of powerlessness into a range of other-directed antagonistic emotions such as resentment, contempt, or hatred has been discussed under the label of “Ressentiment” (Salmela & Capelos 2021; cf. Szanto 2022). As such, Ressentiment-induced contempt (as it was described in the initial example) for the initially envied success of, say, the “elites” will not be fitting in a focal sense since it does not pick out in the relevant way the value of success. Rather, contempt here is based on a sour-grapes style, often self-deceptive, transvaluation of the others’ success (Capelos & Demertzis 2022), devaluating it, say, as built on nepotism or corruption.<sup>15</sup>

To summarize, the focus-based account of fittingness allows us to criticize political emotions as unfitting without imposing our own normative standpoint on those whose emotions we are assessing. According to this account, political emotions are unfitting when the emotion does not mir-

---

14. For a symmetrical argument for why hatred is also essentially *morally* inappropriate (*pace* Brogaard 2020 and others), see again Szanto (2021).

15. For critiques of distinguishing morally or politically legitimate resentment from illegitimate Ressentiment, see Brudholm (2008) and van Tuinen (2020).

ror what really matters to the emoters. Complementing the class of cases that we discussed here in which it is the emotion that gets things wrong, as frequently discussed in the literature, there are other cases in which emotions rightly gain epistemic authority over our value commitments—as when grieving for the loss of distant others impacted by war (see Butler 2009) makes us extend our narrowly personal circle of concern. That said, one might be worried that the account only shifts the original problem to a different level of the analysis: Who is to decide and diagnose what *really* matters to the emoters? Before we address this worry and discuss the clashes between personal or existential grievances, on the one hand, and of political or moral values, on the other (§3.4), we introduce two further sets of appropriateness standards: the first pertaining to the scope of the target; the second to the scope of the subject of political emotions.

### 3.2 Target-Appropriateness

In the previous subsection, we introduced the focus-based account of fittingness. This account assesses the fittingness of emotions based on the question of whether the emotion mirrors what really matters to the emoter. In this section, we turn to a second important element of the affective-intentional structure of political emotions, namely their target. We restrict our analysis to those political emotions that target persons or groups of persons.

Clearly, political emotions can go wrong when they have the wrong target. For instance, my anger at refugees who allegedly exploit our social security systems might be unfitting if the real problem is austerity politics that erodes our social security systems. But political emotions can also go wrong when, in principle, they have the right target yet the wrong scope, that is, when they target a group of persons that is either too large or too narrow. In the following, we discuss examples for these three cases of target-inappropriateness: (1) target-upscaling; (2) target-downscaling; and (3) target-refocusing.

First, consider a case of target-upscaling. Cherry (2021: 16–17) conceptualizes a version of such target-inappropriate anger as “rogue rage,” whereby the subject of moral anger positions herself in opposition to *everyone* else. Think, for instance, of anti-misogynistic anger that targets not a particular male colleague’s sexist behavior but all men or all members of the faculty. One of the instrumental problems involved in political emotions going rogue is that they do not aim at any resolution, change, or reform but seek simply “to hit back at the world” (Cherry 2021: 17). But we can also imagine cases in which the emotion is target-inappropriate and yet focally fitting, morally appropriate (e.g., from a consequentialist perspective), and politically productive, for instance when one’s

anger has an expressive and deterring force, hindering relevant future harms.

Second, consider a case of target-downscaling in which the emotion just targets isolated incidents or single individuals rather than the relevant underlying structural or institutional causes. Think of the above anti-misogynistic anger that solely targets a particular person using sexist slurs, instead of (also) focusing on the institutional culture enabling those slurs or prevalent gender biases in academia. One might argue that in a case like this, the emotion that targets the individual offender is appropriate, yet what is missing is an additional affective awareness of or reaction to the underlying structural injustices. In merely being angry at the individual offender and their concrete offense, the emoter seems to miss an important dimension of the situation.

Third, take a case of target-refocusing. The most prominent and perhaps most harmful form of target-refocusing is that of scapegoating, as when refugees are blamed for abusing social benefits or feared for taking away jobs. Cherry distinguishes scapegoating, or what she calls “wipe rage,” from so-called “pain-passing.” While in the latter, one passes on the pain to others who have not caused it, wipe-rage is directed at those “racial ‘others’” whom the outraged believes, even if wrongly, to be the actual cause of one’s harm (Cherry 2001: 18). In contrast to Cherry, we take scapegoating to be a specific type of deliberate pain-passing where *one is made or makes oneself believe* that “others” are responsible for one’s harm, a mechanism often exploited by right-wing populists, who deliberately misconstrue, say, refugees as harmful or blameworthy. This of course makes scapegoating not just target- but also morally inappropriate, blaming those who are actually not responsible for the harm. This case also shows up an important difference between our account and the standard account of fittingness that assesses whether the target of the emotion in fact has the evaluative properties that the emotion allegedly discloses. On the standard view, in the example above, scapegoating is unfitting because it is not the immigrants who are responsible for high unemployment rates but independent austerity measures. On our account, the emotion is focally fitting but target-inappropriate because one refocuses one’s emotional reactions on the wrong target. Our account is, thus, more nuanced than the standard account because it allows us to capture the difference between cases in which an emotion is unfitting because the emotion does not properly mirror what matters to the emoter (focus-unfittingness) and cases in which the emotion is unfitting because it has the wrong target (target-inappropriateness).

As these examples suggest, inappropriately scaling up or down or refocusing the target typically arises for antagonistic or hostile political emotions, such as anger, resentment, contempt, or hatred. But there is no principled reason why this cannot arise for pro-social, inclusive, or forward-looking emotions as well. Suppose an unbounded compassion “sliding” from a real-enough harm

that happened to a particular man falsely accused of sexual harassment to compassion for all men in the face of potential accusations (corresponding to the first type of target-inappropriateness that we described). This case is related to but different from the harmful logic of misogynistic “himpathy,” discussed by Manne (2017): a form of excessive sympathy for particular male perpetrators of sexual assault. Or think of wrongly “inferring” from an isolated, promisingly friendly exchange one witnesses between white police officers and a black suspect the over-optimistic hope that racial biases will soon no longer be a societal issue. This case is the inverse of the second type of target-inappropriateness we described above. While in those cases of target-downscaling one ignores the systemic dimension of a particular harm, here, one overgeneralizes from a particular case and accordingly forms over-optimistic emotional reactions.

To summarize, we can assess the appropriateness of political emotions by zooming in on their target and asking whether the emotion has the right target and whether the emotion’s target has the right scope. Political emotions can go wrong in scaling up, scaling down, or refocusing their target. Importantly, an emotion can be focus-fitting and yet target-inappropriate. This is the case, for instance, when one is angry about one’s colleague’s racial slur and yet perceives this slur as only an isolated incident. The emotion is focally fitting because it mirrors what really matters to the emoter, namely racial justice; it is unfitting, however, in that the emotion or emoter fails to affectively recognize the structural and systemic nature of racism.

While cases of target-refocusing, -upscaling or -downscaling are not explicitly mentioned in the standard account, they can be integrated into it. Thus, our aim here is not to show that the standard account is wrong but rather that it fails to recognize important differences in how political emotions can be inappropriate, in the present case in terms of their target or scope.

### 3.3 *Subject-Appropriateness and Standards of Sharedness*

In the previous subsection, we argued that political emotions that have persons as their target can be inappropriate in terms of the scope of their target. In this subsection, we zoom in on the other side of the affective-intentional relation, namely the subjects of the emotion. We suggested that political emotions properly speaking are emotions that are shared in a robust sense among participants (§1). We will now show how the sharedness generates additional normative standards. We subsume these standards under the label “subject-appropriateness” because they all concern how the subjects of shared political emotions relate to each other or concern potential misidentifications as to who feels the

emotions. Crucially, what we are debating in this section is neither the focus-fittingness nor the target-appropriateness of political emotions. Subject-appropriateness is an independent standard of assessment since a focus-fitting and target-appropriate emotion can nevertheless be subject-inappropriate.

To begin with, let's recapitulate what the sharedness of political emotions entails. First, political emotions focus on a shared matter of political import and have a background concern for the political community as such; second, they implicitly or explicitly make a claim to public recognition of the shared concern; third, there is a reciprocity between the members' emotions: the sharedness of political emotions feeds into the members' personal concern for the matter and for the polity as such, as well as into the expression, regulation, and indeed the very felt experience of political emotions.<sup>16</sup>

Now, given this rather demanding account, there are several ways in which individual and shared concerns might come apart or be mismatched. We focus here on the politically most relevant ones and set aside further possibilities that are of more conceptual or metaphysical relevance.<sup>17</sup> Specifically, we distinguish three main types of cases: various membership misidentifications; narcissistic misidentification; and forms of false, kitschy, or phony allyship. In the first set of cases, there is a misalignment between personal and shared concerns; the misalignment may be witting or unwitting and is not necessarily strategic. In the second set of cases, subjects narcissistically narrow down their concern to themselves rather than being concerned with their community. In the last set of cases, we have various epistemic, affective and/or political problems resulting from inappropriate and often strategically biased sharing of political emotions.

In all the following cases, what is at stake is the subject-appropriateness of the emotion, not its fittingness. They may or may not be (focally) fitting. Our analysis here goes beyond the standard account in that it draws attention to how political emotions can go wrong in terms of their shared character. This cannot be fully captured by the distinction between fittingness, moral, and prudential standards.

---

16. Importantly, assessing membership identifications and correcting possible misidentifications is a matter of emotional co-regulation (the social negotiation of when, what, and how to feel together), by way of what Hochschild (1983) calls "emotion norms" and by so-called "deep stories" (2016), public and internalized narratives about how, given our political identifications, we ought to feel about certain socio-cultural and political issues (as when we tell ourselves and others: "We are not *complainers* like those welfare-benefit recipients" or "These are *liberal* sympathies, not *ours*"); see more in Osler & Szanto (2021).

17. Such as the case where I misidentify myself as a member of a political community in the radical sense that there exists no such group or even because of some brain-in-the-vat type error. For a more comprehensive and technical account of such cases, see Szanto 2015; see also Salmela 2014.

### *Membership Misidentifications*

A misalignment between one's personal and shared concerns and their expression comes in different guises. Consider the following cases. First, consider misidentifications as to one's membership in a political community that supposedly shares a concern with oneself. For instance, I might properly conceive of myself as a member of a political community (e.g., Black Lives Matter), but falsely identify the emotional and/or political import of a given event for the community. The event was of negligible impact and widely deemed by BLM members to be better ignored so as not to arouse negative repercussions for the movement. If such cases repeatedly occur, I might eventually feel little belonging to the group, and if I give public expression to the emotion "in the name of the group" in such cases, I might even be excluded for prudential reasons.

From a group-level perspective, and given our account of focus-fittingness, we can ask whether an emotion adequately mirrors what really matters to the group as such, or most of its members. What is assessed here is whether only a few or most members, or at least some recognized opinion-leaders, correctly evaluate (and feel) the import of an event for the community and are ready to act upon the given emotion. Hope for radical climate change policies, understood as a genuinely *shared* political emotion, for instance, will not be appropriate if none or most of us deem those policies undesired or futile, or if most of us are affectively neutral vis-à-vis them and/or are not committed to follow those policies anyway. Importantly, while from the individual perspective, the emotion may be focus-fitting (e.g., I care about the future of our planet and my personal concern renders my hope intelligible), it still may be subject-inappropriate because my emotion does not adequately mirror the evaluative affective standpoint of the community I identify with and claim to feel for.

Considering collective guilt, both individual and group-level misidentifications may arise. There is the much-debated question whether collective guilt is irrational if it is experienced without any personal involvement or culpability, or whether there is a form of collective guilt that can rather be only assessed in terms of collective culpability (Tollefsen 2006; see also Petersson 2020). Contextual differences matter here: For example, feeling guilty for what the government that you yourself voted for has done seems relevantly different from feeling guilty for a genocide that your compatriots of three or more generations earlier committed. But the point at stake here is different from such cases: it concerns how exactly a member relates to the group she identifies with and takes to be guilty. For example, we can raise the question of whether collective guilt is subject-appropriate if no, or hardly any, member of the community you identify with ever felt such guilt.

Finally, consider the case of “hetero-induced” shame and pride (Salice & Montes Sánchez 2016). Hetero-induced, or vicarious, pride and shame differ from ordinary instances of the self-involving emotions pride and shame in that they are not about the achievements, qualities, or actions *of oneself*; rather, as the name suggests, they are emotional reactions induced *by others*, notably others whom one identifies with and cares about (e.g., one’s daughter, colleagues, or compatriots). The *target* of hetero-induced pride or shame is not the achievement, etc., *of those others* but one’s own self, part and parcel of which is one’s relation to those others. The focus of these emotions, or what one is affectively concerned with, in turn, are the others whom one cares about. For example, as a German, I might feel proud of how Angela Merkel and my compatriots welcomed refugees from Syria in the years 2015–2016. However, if I never wholeheartedly (or at all) identify with my compatriots such that they become part of my social self, it will be inappropriate for me to feel proud or ashamed of their deeds. In cases like these, hetero-induced shame and pride go wrong in that they rely on a form of group-identification that is not (fully) realized.

### *Narcissistic Misidentification*

A second type of subject inappropriateness is that of narcissistic misidentification. In cases of narcissistic misidentification, the individual conceives of the harm or benefit that triggered his emotional reaction as exclusively issued towards himself. hooks and Cherry have discussed the case of “narcissistic rage” at racial injustice in this context (hooks 1995: 27–29; Cherry 2021: 20–23). To take a garish example, imagine the African American football star O. J. Simpson complaining to police officers who are brutalizing him at a traffic control (“How dare you treat *me* like this?”). There is more involved here than just a wrong sense of entitlement. The narcissistic subject ignores the structural injustices vis-à-vis all other oppressed ingroup members and wrongly conceives of it as merely personal harm. Moreover, based on an internalized “ideology of hierarchical privilege” (hooks 1995: 28), he also establishes hierarchies within his own ingroup (“*they* might deserve that treatment, but not *us* achievers”). Beyond anger, we can easily imagine other political emotions based on wrongly expected preferential treatment rooted in such misidentification, for instance what we might call “narcissistic relief” (“*I/we* don’t need to worry about the effects of climate change, *they* might”).

Whether or not such narcissistic emotions still count as political according to our conception, which notably requires a claim to public recognition and precisely the sharedness of the concern, will depend on how narrowly narcissistic the identification is: Does the subject just single out himself from the group as

deserving preferential treatment, or does he include some other privileged peers and claim some recognition for them as a privileged sub-group within the group of non-privileged? Notice also that this misidentification is not the same as what we called “target inappropriateness,” and specifically the problem of wrongly scaling down the targets by targeting just specific incidents instead of structural matters. The present misidentification has more to do with the standpoint one assigns to oneself in a narcissistic fashion regarding a (shared) concern than with the relation between particular and structural matters. But the two are related in their blindness to structural matters.

Let’s now turn to a set of cases that concern problems in the ways one allies oneself with those with whom one (allegedly) shares a concern—ways which, while also narcissistic, are more self-congratulatory than self-indulgently oversensitive.

### *False, Kitschy or Phony Allyship*

False emotional allyship with political communities, as discussed by Cherry (2021: 118–130), and broached by Margalit (2011) in terms of “moral kitsch” regarding solidarity, are cases which superficially resemble certain forms of membership and narcissistic misidentifications, but represent a different type of misidentification of sharedness. The issue of false allyship is most relevant in contexts of asymmetric power relations. To be sure, feelings of solidarity or other forms of emotional allyship with, say, oppressed ethnic minorities or exploited laborers, are not only morally appropriate but may be obligatory. While they can also be politically useful, they are, however, often inappropriate in various ways.

First, there might be an epistemic problem when a member of a dominant group allies his *experience* of a political emotion with the experience of members of a minoritarian group, on whose behalf his emotion is supposedly realized or expressed. For instance, a member of the white middle class who feels (morally, focally, and prudentially) appropriate anger at racial oppression commits an epistemic fallacy if he assumes that he *knows what it feels like* to be racially oppressed *by virtue of feeling* that anger. The epistemic problem here involves an affective misalignment: The non-oppressed subject falsely experiences a sense of emotional sharing with the oppressed. Moreover, this would involve an affective injustice and hence be morally inappropriate, adding insult to injury, insofar as the “ally” would reduce the experience of oppression—which results from a complex of such experiences as vulnerability, despair, pain, or shame—to a mere feeling of anger (Cherry 2021: 122–123; see also McKinnon & Cherry 2019). Notice that epistemic and eventual moral inappropriateness do not arise by the asymmetric nature of the allyship as such, and they need not

arise. Rather, they only arise if those false and reductive presumptions based on such allyship are made.

Second, consider what Margalit aptly calls “kitsch solidarity,” a false fraternal love for strangers: “Indulging in ‘brotherly love’ is not to be in love with strangers but to be in love with our phony love of strangers” (2011: 174). It is focally unfitting, since its focus is not a concern for others but with one’s own “phony” feelings (for others). But this is not only sentimentally narcissistic (see Pugmire 2005: ch. 5); it is also morally problematic, since it distorts social facts and glosses over social asymmetries. Kitsch solidarity can be conceived as an emotion itself (Szanto forthcoming), but it can also be the basis of further inappropriate political emotions, activating inappropriate compassion or the above-mentioned false ally type anger. Intersectional problems of misidentification are entangled here. For example, how can a white middle-class woman feel “female” solidarity with trafficked prostitutes?<sup>18</sup>

Finally, there is a related “phony” identification: virtue signaling or “grandstanding,” as when one publicly expresses anger over something one doesn’t really care about, just to align oneself with a supposedly virtuous ingroup and/or to appear superior to some outgroups. Virtue signaling is focally unfitting like kitsch solidarity (and white saviorism, see §3.1): Here too, one refocuses the attention to one’s own morality or the morality of one’s ingroup. One identifies with a political or moral cause that one is in fact less (if at all) concerned with compared to the concern with one’s moral standing. This is not the place to enter a discussion into why virtue signaling is morally or politically vicious (Tosi & Warmke 2020) or, rather, as Levy (2021) has recently argued, can be virtuous as it facilitates commitment to shared norms and supports public moral deliberation. Here, we only want to note that virtue signaling is focally unfitting if it is based on a phony, narcissistic, and potentially hubristic social identification.

Yet, however important it is to point out such misidentifications, we must be wary of all too readily denouncing somebody’s emotional reactions as based on false or phony allyship. The affective politics of solidarity and the political emotions involved therein are about the negotiation of alignments *and* differences, a negotiation that theorists of radical democracy qualify as “agonistic” (see more in the next section). It means gauging whose political concerns and values are sufficiently similar to our own to merit our feelings of solidarity, but also sufficiently different, perhaps unheard, such that others might indeed need our help to express and gain public recognition of their concerns. And this process is beset by the danger not only of false allyship but also of falsely weighing up our

---

18. See again Szanto forthcoming; for discussions on intersectional solidarity, see (Medina 2003) and (Yuval-Davis 2011). Relatedly, Cherry (2021: 129) discusses how dominant members may *appropriate* the emotions of the oppressed (e.g., *their* anger at racial injustice) similarly to cultural appropriation—a phenomenon we might call *emotional appropriation*.

solidarities according to real group membership or some feelings of belonging, as if to say, “If their concerns and values are not sufficiently similar to ours, why bother solidarizing with them?”

This brings us to the last—eminently political—standard of appropriateness of political emotions concerning their political aims and political legitimacy.

### ***3.4 Aim-Appropriateness and the Political Legitimacy of Emotions***

In the previous three subsections, we revisited the standard account of the appropriateness of political emotions through a reflection on the focus-, target-, and subject-appropriateness of political emotions. However, we also need to account for a fourth dimension when assessing the appropriateness of political emotions, namely whether an emotion is compatible with our understanding of “the political” as such. What is at stake here is the political legitimacy of an emotion. We call this form of appropriateness “aim-appropriateness” because the legitimacy of a political emotion depends on whether its aim is reformative or destructive, or whether it aims positively at social change towards justice and equality; or rather only at voicing grievances, marking hostilities, or seeking retribution. Underlying this standard is the intuition that there are types or tokens of political emotions that are not just inappropriate in that they do not adequately mirror what really matters to the emoters (focus-unfittingness); they are not just inappropriate in that they are mis-targeted (target-inappropriateness); they are not just inappropriate in that they involve some form of misidentification (subject-inappropriateness). Rather, they are “anti-political” (Vargas González 2024) in that they constitute a threat to the public space or the sphere of the political as such. What does this mean?

Whether a specific type or token of emotion is regarded as politically legitimate depends on our underlying understanding of the political itself. Very roughly, we can distinguish three understandings of the political: consensual; antagonistic; and agonistic. According to the consensual understanding, which is sometimes attributed to Arendt<sup>19</sup>; politics, though it starts with plurality and disagreement, is all about recognizing commonalities, forging associations, and achieving consensus (see Wolin 1994). According to the antagonistic understanding most prominently exemplified by Schmitt (1932), politics is about con-

---

19. See (Marchart 2007; Mouffe 2005). The attribution of this consensual model to Arendt, who also stresses the conflictual nature of politics, based essentially on plurality and divergence just as much as on commonality, is somewhat misleading. In any case, the model also underwrites most (Arendtian and non-Arendtian) forms of civic republicanism, as well as liberal deliberative democracy theories.

flict between enemies and the sovereignty of political communities to wage war against each other. The agonistic understanding represented by proponents of post-foundational or radical democracy theory such as Laclau and Mouffe (1985/2001; Mouffe 2005) shares with the antagonistic understanding the conviction that politics is essentially about conflict. However, it differs from the antagonistic view in that it does not frame the conflicts in question as conflicts between enemies that are ultimately to be solved violently but as conflicts between adversaries that require non-violent tools, where one recognizes the political legitimacy of one's political opponents. In this respect, the agonistic view resembles the consensual understanding of the political. However, the former disagrees with the latter in holding that there is no rational ground on the basis of which we could come to a consensus about fundamentally disputed political concerns and values about which we disagree.

What does this imply for the political legitimacy of emotions? How do these three different understandings of the political translate into claims about which political emotions constitute a threat to the political sphere as such, are "anti-political," and, therefore, politically illegitimate? Some proponents of the consensual framework such as Nussbaum reject any constructive political role of antagonistic political emotions such as fear (2018), disgust (2006), and anger (2016). By contrast, the Schmittian framework allows even for hostile antagonistic emotions such as hatred, contempt, and retributive forms of anger.<sup>20</sup> An agonistic framework, finally, allows for antagonistic emotions but only as long as they do not turn hostile or aim at the annihilation of the other (Osler & Tietjen 2024). For instance, it allows for what Cherry (2021) calls "Lordean rage," an inclusive and transformative anger targeting racial injustice (cf. Lorde 1997). Indeed, given its understanding of the political as a sphere of conflict, the agonistic paradigm even advocates antagonistic emotions; however, it condemns hatred or forms of anger that call for retributive punishment or the expulsion of others from the sphere of politics altogether.

We see, then, that the implicit or explicit understanding of the political itself, as a normative framework, determines which emotions are considered politically legitimate or illegitimate. Given that we conceive of illegitimate political emotions as those that constitute a threat to the sphere of the political, both specific types (e.g., hatred, Ressentiment-induced contempt) and subtypes (e.g., retributive forms of anger), as well as tokens of political emotions (e.g., hope for the elimination of one's opponents) can be classified as illegitimate. Although there are dozens of accounts that stress the pro-social, moral, or reformatory functions of antagonistic emotions for politics,<sup>21</sup> this question of how one's underlying

---

20. Tellingly, we are not aware of a single account of political emotions that would explicitly endorse a Schmittian paradigm of politics.

21. See fn 4.

understanding of the political shapes one's account of which emotions count as politically legitimate and illegitimate is hardly addressed explicitly.

We introduced the idea that some emotions might constitute a threat to the public sphere as a distinctive standard of appropriateness. However, this standard shares some important features with other standards.

First, the answer to the question of whether a specific emotion is politically legitimate depends, in part, on the motivational character of the emotion and its aims. For instance, hatred may be seen as anti-political because it aims at the annihilation of its targets, as might some forms of anger because they do not voice injustices or seek to repair moral harm but only strive for vengeful retribution. In this regard, the assessment is connected to prudential standards that assess whether having or displaying an emotion is conducive to certain individual or collective aims. Moreover, if the reason for classifying an emotion as politically illegitimate is that it threatens the public sphere as such, this can also be seen as a prudential claim as it refers to an undesired consequence of the emotion, namely of destroying the very sphere in which it can be operative.

However, what is distinctive about this standard of appropriateness is that it does not make recourse to any particular political value that might be threatened by a given political emotion. Rather, it refers to threats to the public sphere whose existence is a condition of the possibility of us developing, expressing, and cultivating political emotions, in addition to being a condition of the dignity and autonomy of human beings who only flourish in the public sphere (see Arendt 1958). In this regard, the standard resembles a "transcendental" or "anthropological" rather than a prudential assessment. Again, in this regard, the standard for determining the legitimacy of political emotions will be a "meta-normative" one. And yet, any understanding of the political as such will inevitably introduce normative considerations. To illustrate, both antagonistic and agonistic theorists will question a conception of the political that essentially relies on the notion of a "public sphere" that is exclusively defined in formal-procedural or deliberative terms. Although we use the notion of "public sphere" in a broader sense, this exemplarily shows that all our political concepts are normatively connected to our understanding of the political.

Second, the assessment of emotions as anti-political is also closely connected to moral standards of assessment. This is most clearly the case when one determines the bounds of the political by moral values such as the demand to recognize the other as equal, even in cases of fundamental political disagreement, partisanship, and conflict. While we think it is true that these limits can be, and most often are, spelled out in moral terms, we remain neutral here on the question of whether this need necessarily be so or whether the underlying values could not be seen, in turn, as distinctively political.<sup>22</sup> In either case, emotions will

---

22. For a helpful discussion of distinctively political normativity, see Erman & Möller (2022).

arguably play a key role in negotiating our fundamental political and/or moral values and their legitimacy.

#### 4. Conclusion

Taking stock, how can political emotions be fitting or unfitting, appropriate or inappropriate? Based on their affective-intentional structure, we have distinguished four main standards of appropriateness of political emotions:

- (1) *Focus-fittingness*: We can assess the fittingness of political emotions—i.e., according to our focus-based account of fittingness, whether the emotion adequately mirrors what really matters to the emoters.
- (2) *Target-appropriateness*: In the case of political emotions that target persons or groups of persons, we can ask whether the emotion is target-appropriate—i.e., whether the emotion targets the right (group of) person(s) and whether the target of the emotion has the right scope (or being too broad or too narrow).
- (3) *Subject-appropriateness*: Reflecting on the sharedness of political emotions, we can assess the subject-appropriateness of political emotions—i.e., whether the emotion adequately mirrors one's group membership.
- (4) *Aim-appropriateness*: Finally, we can assess the aim-appropriateness of political emotions, asking whether the emotion is compatible with our understanding of the political itself.

How do these standards map onto the traditional tripartite distinction of fittingness, and moral or prudential appropriateness? We hope to have shown that focus-fittingness is better suited to evaluate political emotions in terms of their affective intentionality. Hence, we suggest a revision of standard accounts of fittingness. When it comes to moral and prudential evaluations, our taxonomy integrates rather than replaces them. Moral and prudential assessments remain integral to political emotions. Indeed, we believe that the aim-appropriateness and legitimacy of political emotions will inevitably be imbued with moral considerations.

In the discussion of our four standards, we focused on examples of *unfitting* and *inappropriate* emotions. This mirrors the fact that political emotions partly gain their importance and power from being contested. At the same time, understanding the various ways in which political emotions can go wrong also allows us to understand the various ways in which they can be fitting or appropriate. Finally, besides cases of appropriate and inappropriate political emotions, there are cases where the “inappropriateness” results from a *lack* of emotional reac-

tions (see also Fritz 2023). As exemplified by the emotional numbness concerning climate change (Norgaard 2011; Slaby 2023; Tietjen 2024) and “bourgeois coldness” (Kohpeiß 2023) in the face of thousands of refugees drowning in the Mediterranean, we can criticize people not only for feeling one rather than another emotion but also for feeling nothing rather than something.

In the introduction of our paper, we promised a meta-normative account of the appropriateness of political emotions. As such, our project is overlapping with two other equally valuable projects.

The first is a critique of political emotions as a critique of ideology, as paradigmatically practiced in critical theory. As Illouz (2023: 10–11) convincingly argues, although criticizing emotions always requires us to claim epistemic authority over others, the attacks and threats to democracy we are facing today simply do not allow us to remain neutral.

The second is a critique of the critique of political emotions: It warns against establishing or exacerbating affective injustices by employing dominant emotion norms to assess and potentially correct purportedly inappropriate emotions of marginalized groups (Kurth 2022). Relatedly, a need for epistemic humility has been highlighted, warning against the “arrogance involved in projecting particular emotions on millions of people” as particularly liberal voices tend to do (Degerman 2020: 165). Finally, risks loom large if calls for emotional correction come from some uncritically assumed political perspective or privileged socioeconomic standing, even if the critique does not target the marginalized (Stockdale 2021: 95–97).

We wholeheartedly embrace the emancipatory and anti-oppressive aims of these critical endeavors. Moreover, we believe that these three critical approaches do not conflict but rather can mutually inform and enrich each other—even if there may be productive tensions. Indeed, by providing a more clear-cut taxonomy of standards of appropriateness and reflecting on the political legitimacy of emotions, our framework allows for a more nuanced *critique of critiquing* political emotions, or a critique of just bluntly disparaging those that do not fit into one’s preferred political perspective.

## Acknowledgments

We are very grateful for valuable feedback on earlier drafts of this article by Lucy Osler, Mihaela Mihai, and Mikko Salmela. Thanks also to audiences at the Universities of Copenhagen, Flensburg, Graz, and Würzburg, as well as to three anonymous reviewers for *Ergo* for their thorough and productive suggestions. Work on this paper was supported by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) research project “Antagonistic Political Emotions” (P 32392-G) as well as the Carlsberg

Foundation project “Who are We? Self-identity, Social Cognition, and Collective Intentionality” (CF18–1107).

## References

- Achs, Rachel and Oded Na’Aman, (2023). The Subtleties of Fit: Reassessing the Fit-Value Biconditionals. *Philosophical Studies*, 180(9), 2523–2546.
- Ahmed, Sara (2004). *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh University Press.
- An, Dong and Kaiyuan Chen (2021). Jokes Can Fail to Be Funny Because They Are Immoral: The Incompatibility of Emotions. *Philosophical Psychology*, 34(3), 374–396.
- Archer, Alfred and Benjamin Matheson (2022). *Honouring and Admiring the Immoral: An Ethical Guide*. Routledge.
- Archer, Alfred, Alan Thomas, and Bart Engelen (2022). The Politics of Envy: Outlaw Emotions in Capitalist Societies. In Sara Protasi (Ed.), *The Moral Psychology of Envy* (181–198). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Arendt, Hannah (1958). *The Human Condition*. University of Chicago Press.
- Ballard, Brian S. (2021). Content and the Fittingness of Emotion. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 71(4), 845–863.
- Bell, Macalester (2009). Anger, Virtue, and Oppression. In Lisa Tessman (Ed.), *Feminist Ethics and Social and Political Philosophy: Theorizing the Non-Ideal* (165–183). Springer.
- Bell, Macalester (2011). Globalist Attitudes and the Fittingness Objection. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 61(244), 449–472.
- Bell, Macalester (2013). *Hard Feelings: The Moral Psychology of Contempt*. Oxford University Press.
- Bennett, Christopher (2018). The Alteration Thesis: Forgiveness as a Normative Power. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 46(2), 207–233.
- Bittner, Rüdiger (1992). Is It Reasonable to Regret Things One Did? *Journal of Philosophy*, 89(5), 262–273.
- Bommarito, Nicolas (2017). Virtuous and Vicious Anger. *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, 11(3), 1–27.
- Brady, Michael S. (2017). The Appropriateness of Pride. In Adam J. Carter and Emma C. Gordon (Eds.), *The Moral Psychology of Pride* (13–30). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Brogaard, Berit (2020). *Hatred: Understanding Our Most Dangerous Emotion*. Oxford University Press.
- Brudholm, Thomas (2008). *Resentment’s Virtue: Jean Améry and the Refusal to Forgive*. Temple University Press.
- Butler, Judith (2009). *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* Verso.
- Capelos, Tereza and Nicolas Demertzis (2022). Sour Grapes: Ressentiment as the Affective Response of Grievance Politics. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 35(1), 107–129.
- Carroll, Noël (2020). I’m Only Kidding: On Racist and Ethnic Jokes. *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 58(4), 534–546.
- Cherry, Myisha (2021). *The Case for Rage: Why Anger is Essential to Anti-Racist Struggle*. Oxford University Press.
- Cholbi, Michael (2017). Grief’s Rationality, Backward and Forward. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 94(2), 255–272.

- Cox, Damian and Michael P. Levine (2022). Good Hate. In Noell Birondo (Ed.), *The Moral Psychology of Hate* (165–183). Rowman & Littlefield.
- D’Arms, Justin and Daniel Jacobson (2000a). The Moralistic Fallacy: On the ‘Appropriateness’ of Emotions. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 61(1), 65–90.
- D’Arms, Justin and Daniel Jacobson (2000b). Sentiment and Value. *Ethics*, 110(4), 722–748.
- Degerman, Dan (2020). Introduction: Negative Emotions in Dark Times. *Global Discourse*, 10(2), 163–168.
- Degerman, Dan, Matthew Flinders, and Matthew Thomas Johnson. (2023). In Defence of Fear: COVID-19, Crises and Democracy. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 26(6), 788–809.
- Deonna, Julien and Fabrice Teroni (2012). *The Emotions: A Philosophical Introduction*. Routledge.
- Deonna, Julien and Fabrice Teroni (2021). Which Attitudes for the Fitting Attitude Analysis of Value? *Theoria*, 87(5), 1099–1122.
- Díaz, Rodrigo and Kevin Reuter (2021). Feeling the Right Way: Normative Influences on People’s Use of Emotion Concepts. *Mind and Language*, 36(3), 451–470.
- Fritz, James (2023). Unfitting Absent Emotion. In Russ Shafer-Landau (Ed.), *Oxford Studies in Metaethics* (Vol. 18, 73–96). Oxford University Press.
- Echeverri, Santiago (2019). Emotional Justification. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 98(3), 541–566.
- Emerick, Barrett and Audrey Yap (2023). Betrayed Expectations: Misdirected Anger and the Preservation of Ideology. *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, 24(3), 352–370.
- Erman, Eva and Niklas Möller (2022). Distinctively Political Normativity in Political Theory. *Philosophy Compass*, 17(6), 1–11.
- Fleury, Cynthia (2023). *Here Lies Bitterness: Healing from Resentment*. Trans. by Corey Stockwell. Polity.
- Forcehimes, Andrew T. (2022). How am I Supposed to Feel? *Philosophia*, 50(2), 533–542.
- Fritz, James (2021). Fitting Anxiety and Prudent Anxiety. *Synthese*, 199(3/4), 8555–8578.
- Furtak, Rick Anthony (2018). *Knowing Emotions: Truthfulness and Recognition in Affective Experience*. Oxford University Press.
- Gallegos, Francisco (2022). Affective Injustice and Fundamental Affective Goods. *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 53(2), 185–201.
- Gertken, Jan, and Benjamin Kiesewetter (2017). The Right and the Wrong Kind of Reasons. *Philosophy Compass*, 12(5), e12412, 1–14.
- Goldie, Peter (2000). *The Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration*. Oxford University Press.
- Hall, Cheryl (2005). *The Trouble with Passion: Political Theory Beyond the Reign of Reason*. Routledge.
- Halperin, Eran (2016). *Emotions in Conflict: Inhibitors and Facilitators of Peace Making*. Routledge.
- Helm, Bennett W. (2001). *Emotional Reason: Deliberation, Motivation, and the Nature of Value*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hieronymi, Pamela (2001). Articulating Uncompromising Forgiveness. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 62(3), 529–555.
- Hochschild, Arlie R. (1983). *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. University of California Press.
- Hochschild, Arlie R. (2016). *Strangers in their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. The New Press.

- hooks, bell (1995). *Killing Rage: Ending Racism*. Henry Holt.
- Howard, Christopher (2018). Fittingness. *Philosophy Compass*, 13(11), e12542, 1–14.
- Howard, Christopher (2023). Forever Fitting Feelings. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 107(1), 80–98.
- Huber, Jakob (2023). Hope from Despair. *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 31(1), 80–101.
- Illouz, Eva (2023). *The Emotional Life of Populism: How Fear, Disgust, Resentment, and Love Undermine Democracy*. Polity.
- Katsafanas, Paul (2022). *Philosophy of Devotion: The Longing for Invulnerable Ideals*. Oxford University Press.
- Kenny, Anthony (1963). *Action, Emotion and Will*. Routledge.
- Kingston, Rebecca (2011). *Public Passion: Rethinking the Grounds for Political Justice*. McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Kohpeiß, Henrike (2023). Bourgeois Coldness: Affect and Colonial Subjectivity. *Parallax*, 29(4), 429–448.
- Krause, Sharon R. (2008). *Civil Passions: Moral Sentiment and Democratic Deliberation*. Princeton University Press.
- Kumar, Victor (2017). Foul Behavior. *Philosophers' Imprint*, 17(15), 1–17.
- Kurth, Charlie (2022). Inappropriate Emotions, Marginalization, and Feeling Better. *Synthese*, 200(2), 1–22.
- Laclau, Ernesto and Chantal Mouffe (1985/2001). *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. Verso.
- Lepoutre, Maxime (2023). The Red Mist. *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, 24(1): 36–57.
- Levy, Neil (2021). Virtue Signalling Is Virtuous. *Synthese*, 198(10), 9545–9562.
- Lorde, Audre (1997). The Uses of Anger. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 25(1/2), 278–285.
- MacLachlan, Alice (2010). Unreasonable Resentments. *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 41(4), 422–441.
- Manne, Kate (2017). *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*. Oxford University Press.
- Marchart, Oliver (2007). *Post-Foundational Political Thought: Political Difference in Nancy, Lefort, Badiou and Laclau*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Margalit, Avishai (2011). Why Are You Betraying Your Class? *European Journal of Philosophy*, 19(2), 171–183.
- McGeer, Victoria (2013). Civilizing Blame. In Justin D. Coates and Neal A. Tognazzini (Eds.), *Blame: Its Nature and Norms* (162–188). Oxford University Press.
- McKinnon, Rachel and Myisha Cherry (2019). Rachel McKinnon on Allies and Ally Culture. In Myisha Cherry (Ed.), *Unmuted: Conversations on Prejudice, Oppression, and Social Justice* (57–62). Oxford University Press.
- Medina, José (2003). Identity Trouble: Disidentification and the Problem of Difference. *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 29(6), 655–680.
- Mosquera, Julia and Kirsti M. Jylhä (2022). How to Feel About Climate Change? An Analysis of the Normativity of Climate Emotions. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 30(3), 357–380.
- Mouffe, Chantal (2005). *On the Political*. Routledge.
- Müller, Jean Moritz (2021). Perceptualism and the Epistemology of Normative Reasons. *Synthese*, 199(1), 3557–3586.
- Murphy, Jeffrie G. and Jean Hampton (1988). *Forgiveness and Mercy*. Cambridge University Press.

- Na'aman, Oded (2020). The Fitting Resolution of Anger. *Philosophical Studies*, 177(8), 2417–2430.
- Na'aman, Oded (2021a). Emotions and Process Rationality. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 99(3), 531–546.
- Na'aman, Oded (2021b). The Rationality of Emotional Change: Toward a Process View. *Noûs*, 55(2), 245–269.
- Naar, Hichem (2021). The Fittingness of Emotions. *Synthese*, 199(5), 13601–13619.
- Norgaard, Kari Marie (2011). *Living in Denial: Climate Change, Emotions, and Everyday Life*. MIT Press.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. (2001). *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. (2006). *Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame, and the Law*. Princeton University Press.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. (2013). *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice*. Harvard University Press.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. (2016). *Anger and Forgiveness: Resentment, Generosity, Justice*. Oxford University Press.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. (2018). *The Monarchy of Fear: A Philosopher Looks at Our Political Crisis*. Oxford University Press.
- Ojala, Maria, Ashlee Cunsolo, Charles A. Ogunbode, and Jacqueline Middleton (2021). Anxiety, Worry, and Grief in a Time of Environmental and Climate Crisis: A Narrative Review. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 46(1), 35–58.
- Osler, Lucy and Thomas Szanto (2021). Political Emotions and Political Atmospheres. In Dylan Trigg (Ed.), *Shared Emotions and Atmospheres* (162–188). Routledge.
- Osler, Lucy and Ruth Rebecca Tietjen (2024). Affects and Emotions. In Nils Baratella, Steffen Herrmann, Sophie Loidolt, and Gerhard Thonhauser (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Political Phenomenology* (448–559). Routledge.
- Petersson, Björn (2020). Collective Guilt Feelings. In Saba Bazargan-Forward and Deborah P. Tollefsen (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Collective Responsibility* (228–242). Routledge.
- Pettigrove, Glen (2012). Meekness and ‘Moral’ Anger. *Ethics*, 122(2), 341–370.
- Pettigrove, Glen and Nigel Parsons (2010). Palestinian Political Forgiveness: Agency, Permissibility, and Prospects. *Social Theory and Practice*, 36(4), 661–688.
- Pihkala, Panu (2017). Environmental Education After Sustainability: Hope in the Midst of Tragedy. *Global Discourse*, 7(1), 109–127.
- Plunkett, David (2020). Debate: Anger, Fitting Attitudes, and Srinivasan’s Category of “Affective Injustice.” *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 29(1), 117–131.
- Protasi, Sara (2021). *The Philosophy of Envy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Pugmire, David (2005). *Sound Sentiments: Integrity in the Emotions*. Oxford University Press.
- Ratcliffe, Matthew, Louise Richardson, and Becky Millar (2023). On the Appropriateness of Grief to its Object. *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*, 9(2), 318–334.
- Reis-Dennis, Samuel (2019). Anger: Scary Good. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 97(3), 451–464.
- Reis-Dennis, Samuel (2021). Rank Offence: The Ecological Theory of Resentment. *Mind*, 130(520), 1233–1251.
- Ringmar, Erik (2018). What are Public Moods? *European Journal of Social Theory*, 21(4), 453–469.

- Rivera, Joseph de and Darío Páez (2007). Emotional Climate, Human Security, and Cultures of Peace. *Journal of Social Issues*, 63(2), 233–253.
- Roberts, Robert C. (2003). *Emotions: An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Salice, Alessandro and Alba Montes Sánchez (2016). Pride, Shame, and Group Identification. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7(557), 1–13.
- Salice, Alessandro and Alba Montes Sánchez (2023). Envy, Racial Hatred and Self-Deception. In Alba Montes Sánchez and Alessandro Salice (Eds.), *Emotional Self-Knowledge* (188–208). Routledge.
- Salmela, Mikko (2012). Shared Emotions. *Philosophical Explorations*, 15(1), 33–46.
- Salmela, Mikko (2014). The Rational Appropriateness of Collective Emotions. In Gavin Sullivan (Ed.), *Understanding Collective Pride and Group Identity: New Directions in Emotion Theory, Research and Practice* (21–33). Routledge.
- Salmela, Mikko and Gavin B. Sullivan (2022). The Rational Appropriateness of Group-Based Pride. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13(848644), 1–12.
- Salmela, Mikko and Tereza Capelos (2021). Ressentiment: A Complex Emotion or an Emotional Mechanism of Psychic Defences? *Politics and Governance*, 9(3), 191–203.
- Schmid, Hans Bernhard (2020). *Evil in Joint Action: The Ethics of Hate and the Sociology of Original Sin*. Routledge.
- Schmitt, Carl (1932/2007). *The Concept of the Political* (Expanded Edition). Transl. George Schwab. University of Chicago Press.
- Silva, Laura (2024). Is Anger a Hostile Emotion? *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 15(2), 383–402.
- Slaby, Jan (2023). Structural Apathy, Affective Injustice, and the Ecological Crisis. *Philosophical Topics*, 51(1), 63–83.
- Solomon, Robert C. (1995). *A Passion for Justice: Emotions and the Origins of the Social Contract*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Sokolon, Marlene K. (2006). *Political Emotions: Aristotle and the Symphony of Reason and Emotion*. Northern Illinois University Press.
- Srinivasan, Amia (2018). The Aptness of Anger. *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 26(2), 123–144.
- Stephan, Achim (2017). On the Adequacy of Emotions and Existential Feelings. *Rivista internazionale di Filosofia e Psicologia*, 8(1), 1–13.
- Stockdale, Katie (2013). Collective Resentment. *Social Theory and Practice*, 39(3), 501–521.
- Stockdale, Katie (2021). *Hope Under Oppression*. Oxford University Press.
- Stockdale, Katie (2023). Collective Forgiveness. In Glenn Pettigrove and Robert Enright (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy and Psychology of Forgiveness* (392–406). Routledge.
- Szanto, Thomas (2015). Collective Emotions, Normativity and Empathy: A Steinian Account. *Human Studies*, 38(4), 503–527.
- Szanto, Thomas (2020). In Hate We Trust: On the Habitualization and Collectivization of Hatred. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 19(3), 453–480.
- Szanto, Thomas (2021). Can it Be or Feel Right to Hate? On the Appropriateness and Fittingness of Hatred. *Philosophy and Society*, 32(3), 341–368.
- Szanto, Thomas (2022). Sacralizing Hostility: Fanaticism as a Group-Based Affective Mechanism. In Leo Townsend, Ruth R. Tietjen, Hans Benrhard Schmid, and Michael Staudigl (Eds.), *The Philosophy of Fanaticism: Epistemic, Affective, and Political Dimensions* (184–212). Routledge.

- Szanto, Thomas (forthcoming). Feelings of Belonging and Feeling Solidarity: Two Forms of Social Cohesion? In Danielle Petherbridge and Luna Dolezal (Eds.), *The Phenomenology of Belonging*. SUNY Press.
- Szanto, Thomas and Jan Slaby (2020). Political Emotions. In Thomas Szanto and Hilge Landweer (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Phenomenology of Emotion* (478–494). Routledge.
- Tarver, Erin C. (2017). *The I in Team: Sports Fandom and the Reproduction of Identity*. University of Chicago Press.
- Teroni, Fabrice (2007). Emotions and Formal Objects. *Dialectica*, 61(3), 395–415.
- Tietjen, Ruth Rebecca (2024). An Eco-Existentialist Analysis of the Lived Experience of Climate Change and Its Denial. In Kevin Aho, Megan Altman, and Hans Pedersen (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Existentialism* (168–178). Routledge.
- Tilev, Seniye (2022). What Should We Hope? *Philosophia*, 50(5), 2685–2706.
- Tollefsen, Deborah P. (2006). The Rationality of Collective Guilt. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 30(1), 222–239.
- Tosi, Justin and Brandon Warmke (2020). *Grandstanding: The Use and Abuse of Moral Talk*. Oxford University Press.
- van Tuinen, Sjoerd (2020). The Resentment-Ressentiment Complex: A Critique of Liberal Discourse. *Global Discourse*, 10(2), 237–253.
- Vargas González, Jessica (2024). Fear as a Political and Anti-Political Emotion: A Normative Analysis in Times of Political Polarization. *Social Theory and Practice*, 50(4), 667–691.
- Vendrell Ferran, Ingrid (2024). Hate: Toward a Four-Types Model. *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 15(2), 441–459.
- Vice, Samantha (2017). White Pride. In Adam J. Carter and Emma C. Gordon (Eds.), *The Moral Psychology of Pride* (191–210). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Wallace, R. Jay (2019). Trust, Anger, Resentment, Forgiveness: On Blame and Its Reasons. *European Journal of Philosophy*, 27(3), 537–555.
- Wolin, Sheldon (1994) [2016]. Fugitive Democracy. In Sheldon Wolin (Ed.), *Fugitive Democracy and Other Essays* (100–113). Princeton University Press.
- Yuval-Davis, Nira (2011). *The Politics of Belonging: Intersectional Contestations*. Sage.