

## **Affects and Emotions: Antagonism, Allegiance, and Beyond**

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### **Abstract**

There is growing interest in political phenomenology in the role that affectivity and emotions play in the political realm. Broadly speaking, it has been suggested, that political emotions fall into two sub-categories: *political emotions of allegiance* and *political emotions of antagonism*. However, what makes an emotion one of allegiance or one of antagonism has yet to be explored. In this chapter, we show how work done on the phenomenology of emotions, the phenomenology of sociality, and critical phenomenology, can inform our understanding of political emotions. Inspired by frameworks from each of these fields respectively, we introduce three 'levels' of phenomenological analysis with regards antagonistic political emotions: (i) the antagonistic *character* of the emotion, (ii) the antagonistic *role* in group dynamics, and (iii) a critical reflection on the very notion of *antagonistic*. Through this three-pronged phenomenological analysis we show how we can better understand, and critique, the conceptualisation of political emotions of antagonism and allegiance as well as show that whether an emotion is considered one of allegiance or antagonism depends on what level of analysis is employed.

### **Introduction**

It is widely recognised that the political sphere is suffused by affectivity. As Szanto & Slaby (2020, 478) put it: "The political is affective because it fundamentally deals with what matters to us, what we value, fear or desire, or what concerns us—us as a polity". This recognition is accompanied by the acknowledgment that the affective is also suffused by the political. For our affective lives, our feelings and emotions, are governed by rules about what, how, and when we should and can feel (Hochschild 1979; Whitney 2018; Archer & Mills 2019). In many ways, we can see this as a philosophical adoption and endorsement of the second-wave feminist rallying cry that the political is personal and the personal is political.

In contemporary political phenomenology, discussions of affectivity and emotions in the political realm typically fall into one of two camps. On the one hand, we find discussions of political *affect*. Influenced by the Affective Turn, and drawing notably from theorists such as Spinoza and Deleuze, these debates consider how relational affect circulates, transmits, and sticks to subjects and objects (e.g., Ahmed 2013; Slaby & Bens 2020; Bens et al. 2019; Massumi 2015; Protevi 2009; Wuth 2019). On the other hand, we find discussions of political *emotions* (e.g., Szanto & Slaby 2020; Osler & Szanto 2021; Stephan & Osler, forthcoming). Influenced by and situated in the phenomenology of emotions, growing interest has arisen around what makes an emotion specifically political. Here we find a focus on how emotions are formed against the

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backdrop of a political community, the demand such emotions have for public recognition, and the shared dimension of political emotions and atmospheres. Note though that while the focus has been on political *emotions*, this approach also can be used to explore other affective phenomena such as political moods, political sentiments, and political existential feelings.

In addition to the above division between political affects and political emotions, phenomenological attempts have been made to define political emotions as a subcategory of collective emotions (Szanto & Slaby 2020). According to this view, political emotions have a double affective intentionality: they are based on a shared concern for a matter of political import and involve a background concern for the political community itself. Fear of rising fuel prices based solely on one's concern for one's own workplace security will not count as a political emotion according to this definition, whereas fear based on a concern for the working and middle classes who are disproportionately affected by such a rise in price will. The sharedness is not just a contingent matter of fact; rather it is necessary for political emotions in this narrowly defined sense that the emotions of the individual members of the group interact and that the sharedness puts normative pressure on individual group members to maintain and express specific emotions. Note that sharedness can come in different degrees, spanning a co-occurrent sharing of an emotion in the moment between parties, for example a shared anger at a political demonstration, to a looser form of sharing where one's emotion refers back to one's political community's values, concerns, or emotions, for example being angry when one hears about a new law victimizing asylum seekers but no-one else is currently present with you (Salmela 2012). Finally, political emotions characteristically come with a claim for public recognition. Note that this is a definition of collective political emotions *proper*. A wider definition might cover phenomena that meet some, but not all, of these criteria. For the purposes of this chapter, we take as our main focus political *emotions* and, in what follows, we will presume that the emotions discussed meet the criteria for political emotions.

It has been suggested, both explicitly and implicitly, that collective political emotions broadly fall into two sub-categories: *political emotions of allegiance* and *political emotions of antagonism* (Szanto & Slaby 2020; Slaby & Bens 2019). Solidarity, for instance, is thought to be a political emotion concerned with building allegiance, harmony, and accord within a political group (Laitinen & Pessi 2015; Müller 2020; Salmela 2015; Szanto forthcoming), while hatred seems to be an antagonistic political emotion that sows friction, discord, and hostility between political groups. In the literature on political emotions, focus on seemingly antagonistic political emotions dominates, with rich explorations of emotions such as anger (Cherry 2021; Srinivasan 2018), hatred (Brogaard 2020; Brudholm & Schepelern 2018; Richardson-Self 2018; Szanto 2020; Vendrell Ferran 2021), vengefulness (Cherry 2023; MacLachlan 2023), disgust (Munch-Jurisc 2023), fear (Tietjen 2023), resentment (Stockdale 2013), Ressentiment (Salmela & Capelos 2021; Salmela & von Scheve 2018), indignation (Osler 2023), envy (Archer et al. 2021; Protasi 2021; Ceva & Protasi 2023), and loneliness (Tietjen & Tirkkonen 2023).

It is not clear, however, what counts as or constitutes a specifically *antagonistic political emotion* or a specifically *allegiant* one. This is not so much because of a lack of consensus on this point but due to the fact that little to no work has been done to clarify what these subcategories amount to. In this chapter, we show how phenomenology can help unpack how political

emotions can be antagonistic and, through our analysis, begin to unsettle the clear binary between the categories of allegiance and antagonism. We will introduce three 'levels' of phenomenological analysis with regards antagonistic political emotions: (i) the antagonistic *character* of the emotion, (ii) the antagonistic *role* in group dynamics, and (iii) a critical reflection on the very notion of *antagonistic*. In doing so, we draw, in turn, from work done on the phenomenology of emotions, the phenomenology of sociality, and critical phenomenology. Through this tripartite phenomenological analysis, we show that whether an emotion is considered one of allegiance or antagonism depends on what level of analysis is employed.

## 1. Antagonistic character

Many working on the phenomenology of emotions follow Bennett Helm (2009) in taking emotions to be "felt evaluations". On this view, emotions are conceived of as feelings that disclose the world in a certain way and show what matters to us. The feelings are both intentional (they are about something in the world) and evaluative (they reveal the world as being a particular way based on my own concerns). The cliff is revealed as dangerous through one's fearful apprehension of getting close to the edge based on one's concern for one's own safety. This intertwining of feeling and intentionality has led some to describe emotions as having "a distinctively affective form of intentionality" (Helm 2020, 227; Slaby & Stephan 2008). What makes an emotion a particular type is that it shares a common evaluative characteristic, or formal object, with others (Kenny 1963; Teroni 2007). For instance, the formal object of fear is danger, the formal object of anger is offence. Each emotion also has a particular object to which it is directed, described as the target. In walking forward, the edge of the cliff is the target of fear. Emphasis is also often placed on the way emotions motivate us to act in various ways.

Standard examples of antagonistic political emotions include: hatred, resentment, anger, disgust, ressentiment, indignation, fear, and contempt (e.g., Brogaard 2020). What does this list of emotions have in common? It seems that we do not want to say (at least not straightforwardly) that all these emotions share the same formal object, or evaluative characteristic, as this would collapse them into being one type of emotion. However, they do share the characteristic of being aversive reactions. What we mean by this is that they involve some form of negative hedonic valence but also a form of negative appraisal (Colombetti 2005). As aversive reactions, antagonistic political emotions differ from "affirmative" political emotions, such as solidarity, compassion, love, hope, and joy which typically have a positive hedonic valence and involve a positive appraisal. Note that some political emotions do not straightforwardly fit into either of these categories, for instance cases of moral shock, where the emoter experiences bewilderment at the occurrence of something, may not, at least initially, have an obviously positive or negative valence (Stockdale 2022).

Being *aversive*, though, is not sufficient to make a political emotion *antagonistic*. For these aversive emotions to be antagonistic, the *target* of the emotion must be another person or group (see also Brogaard 2020, 12). Antagonistic political emotions, then, differ from emotions that do not take people or groups as their targets but rather, for instance, political structures and events. In this regard, not all forms of, e.g., anger and hatred are antagonistic. For example, a climate

activist might feel angry about climate change, yet not blame any specific person or group of persons. However, aversive political emotions of this kind can transform into *antagonistic* political emotions if the target shifts from, say, an event or fact to an individual or group. For example, Greta Thunberg's anger is antagonistic as the target of her anger is those in power who are failing to act upon their promises to prevent or tackle the climate crisis. Finally, in antagonistic emotions, we feel offended by the other(s) (Brogaard 2020, 12). Either the target's behavior and actions (e.g., in the case of anger) or their very being and existence (e.g., in the case of hatred) is experienced as offensive.

To summarize, antagonistic political emotions differ from other political emotions in, first, being aversive, second, targeting persons or groups of persons, and third attributing some form of offensiveness to the target. What this reveals is that certain emotions, when directed at others, are inherently oppositional and sometimes even hostile. On this analysis, antagonism is baked into the affective intentionality of such emotions. Other political emotions, by contrast, when directed at others, seem to be inherently friendly and amicable, e.g., political solidarity or political admiration.

Their seemingly inherent hostile nature is one of the reasons why antagonistic political emotions such as anger and hatred traditionally have a bad reputation. For instance, in the liberal tradition, anger has been criticized for its vengeful or retributive nature and portrayed as a politically destructive emotion (Nussbaum 2016, 2019). By contrast, scholars in the traditions of critical and feminist philosophy have highlighted the potential epistemic, moral, and prudential value of antagonistic emotions. For instance, they have argued that anger at racial oppression allows us to acknowledge injustices and can motivate us to fight for the freedom of all. In these cases, rather than striving for retaliation, anger strives for recognition: the recognition of past and present injustices and of one's own and all other people's freedom (Silva 2021; Srinivasan 2018). As these considerations demonstrate, although anger — if directed towards other people or groups of people — is inherently oppositional, it is not necessarily hostile. Other antagonistic political emotions such as hatred, however, might be inherently hostile (Szanto 2020; see Brogaard 2020 and Vendrell Ferran 2021 for a partial defense of hatred).

What is interesting, in our view, about this analysis is that while it might capture many of the classic cases of what comes to mind when we think of antagonistic political emotions, it notably leaves other examples by the wayside. On the one hand, political emotions that are often listed as examples of antagonistic political emotions do not clearly fall within this category. Envy, for instance, while an uncomfortable emotion that is directed at another person or group of persons for having something that we desire to have ourselves does not necessarily involve an experience of offense (Protasi 2021; see, by contrast, Brogaard 2020, 14-16). For example, I might envy my colleague for her tenure-track position and yet not feel offended by her but rather see the real problem in the precarious working conditions in academia. On the other hand, nationalistic pride is a political emotion that is often deeply associated with antagonism, yet if we only analyse the affective character and intentionality of the emotion it seems to fit better into the category of 'affirmative' political emotions as it involves feelings of solidarity, allegiance, and affirmation for members of one's own political community. This suggests that antagonism does

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not lie solely in the character of the emotions but in how they impact or shape dynamics *between* groups. We turn to this second level of analysis now.

## 2. Antagonistic dynamics

Our first level of analysis situates antagonism in the character of certain kinds of emotion. In this second level, we move from the question of ‘what emotions are’ to the question of ‘what emotions do’. Here, antagonism is framed in terms of the emerging oppositional dynamics between political groups. In recent years there has been an upsurge of interest in the phenomenology of sociality, with a particular emphasis on the formation and maintenance of groups and collectives (Szanto & Moran 2015; Salice & Schmid 2016; Dolezal & Petherbridge 2017). Such discussions have brought to the fore questions about what it is to feel with, act with, belong to, and identify as a ‘we’ or an ‘us’. At the heart of these discussions is an emphasis on the role that affective and embodied interactions and relations play in the life of groups. Attention has primarily been devoted to exploring the role that feelings of belonging, togetherness, and shared emotions play in the emergence of collectives (e.g., Walther 1923; Osler 2020; Thonhauser 2018). However, with eyes turned towards the ‘we’ and intra-group dynamics, less attention has been given to the role of the ‘they’ and inter-group dynamics (. Sara Ahmed (2013), though, stands out among phenomenologists with her critical focus on how emotions shape individual and collective bodies through contact with ‘others, stressing how emotions in and between groups play a central role in politics’ (for a epistemological perspective, see Pismenny et al., forthcoming).

These reflections prompt the question of what role “antagonism” plays in the affective dynamics of group formation. Scholars in the traditions of anti-liberal political theory (e.g., Carl Schmitt) and post-foundational democratic theory (e.g., Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau) claim that antagonism, broadly understood, is an integral part of all forms of political communalization. According to this view, all political emotions involve an oppositional distinction between “us” and “them”, meaning that “conflict is an ineliminable dimension of politics” (Mihai 2013, 32).

The antagonistic group dynamics involved in political emotions is most obvious in cases like (group-focused) hatred. Hatred is not only directed towards an outgroup, it is also the ingroup that is (at least in part) constituted through hatred. Our “we” is constituted through hating “them”. This is not, though, simply a matter of *constituting* boundaries between those who are ‘in’ and those who are ‘out’. As phenomenologists have stressed, sharing emotions with others involves a sense of connectedness and belonging with those we share. While hatred appears to be the epitomisation of an antagonistic political emotion, when we hate together as a group, it also acts as an affective tool of allegiance, binding the haters together. This has been described as “negative solidarity” — a form of solidarity that is purely negative in that it is constituted through the opposition to others rather than in a positive identification with another and shared commitment to a political ideal (Arendt 1968).

By attending to both the character of hatred but also to what group hatred can do, we muddy the waters when it comes to the division between antagonism and allegiance. For an inherently

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antagonistic emotion like hatred can (and, according to some, always) build and sustain allegiance. To blur the picture even further, there is often not a clear chronological order between antagonism and allegiance — we might feel allegiance to a group from which emerges a hatred of others or a hatred of an ‘other’ can help prompt the emergence of a group. Sharing anger or hatred can also work to build solidarity between unusual bedfellows — as has been the case in the allegiance of SYRIZA and ANEL, left-wing and right-wing populist parties, respectively, in Greece (Aslanidis & Rovira Kaltwasser 2016; Tietjen 2022).

Political emotions that, on the surface, do not appear antagonistic in nature, such as pride or hope, can also create antagonistic group dynamics. Think of how nationalistic pride not only bonds the members of a group together in solidarity but does so at the exclusion of others. Being proud to be Danish is, whether explicitly or implicitly, pride in being Danish rather than a member of another nation state. Indeed, in many cases of national pride there is another level of exclusion relating to the legitimacy of membership to the group among the citizenry of that nation, for instance in terms of who counts as ‘Danish’. In such cases of nationalistic pride, there seems to be a devaluation involved of those who are excluded based on where they come from, who they are, how they feel, what they think and do, and what values they subscribe to.

Again, we can distinguish between hostile and non-hostile antagonistic dynamics of emotions. Within postfoundational democratic theory, this distinction has been phrased in terms of a distinction between “antagonism” and “agonism”: “While antagonism is a we/they relation in which the two sides are enemies who do not share any common ground, agonism is a we/they relation where the conflicting parties, although acknowledging that there is no rational solution to their conflict, nevertheless recognise the legitimacy of their opponents” (Mouffe 2011, 20) Sticking to our own broader understanding of antagonism, we can say that although all forms of political group formation may involve an oppositional understanding of “us” versus “them” not all forms of political communalisation involve hostility. For example, in a society that is structured by patriarchy, white supremacy, and heteronormativity, as members of an oppressed group, we may rightfully feel angry about our oppression. Our anger thereby has an antagonistic affective dynamic in that it is directed at those who are responsible for our oppression. However, as Myisha Cherry (2021, 24) has shown in her analysis of Lordean rage, if this form of anger is informed by an inclusive rather than an exclusive perspective according to which “I am not free while any [other] is unfree” the antagonistic dynamics that is involved in it is not hostile. Other emotions with an antagonistic group dynamics, by contrast, are tied to an exclusive perspective that devalues others. This especially is the case in hostile antagonistic political movements and structures, such as misogyny and fanaticism (Manne 2017; Tietjen 2023).

In this analysis, as before, we have focused on what appears as more or less “openly” antagonistic emotions based on how these emotions impact the relations between groups. Inspired by the lessons of critical phenomenology, we now turn the lens of critique on the very conception of ‘antagonism’ and ‘allegiance’ and show how the antagonistic or allegiant character and dynamics of certain political emotions only come into view when we situate those emotions and emotes within a social-political historical context.

### 3. Beyond antagonism and allegiance

Critical phenomenology calls attention to how contingent social structures like patriarchy, white supremacy, and heteronormativity shape our experiences in a quasi-transcendental way (Guenter 2020, 12) and to how affectivity can be a source of critique and resistance in our emancipatory practices and struggle for liberation (Lugones 2003; Ahmed 2004; Weiss et al. 2020). Often such critical work thematizes what and who is absent in the very purview of classical phenomenological study. In doing so, attention is drawn to how experiences subjected to phenomenological exploration are presumed to be universal but are, in fact, shaped by the social and cultural privilege that the phenomenologist himself occupies. Thus, critical phenomenology stresses the situatedness of phenomenology itself.

Taking our cue from this critical stance, we now examine cases where the antagonistic features of political emotions only come to the fore if we adopt a thoroughly historical and situated position. This discloses numerous ways in which antagonism can masquerade as allegiance. Here we explore three exemplary, but not exhaustive, ways in which this might occur: i) where supposedly affirmative political emotions mask prejudice and oppression — what we call ‘ersatz allegiance’; ii) political emotions of allegiance that are offered in the face of harm without the recognition that one’s own political community contributed to the emergence of the harm in the first place — what we call ‘amnesiac allegiance’; and, iii) cases of supposedly ‘universal’ political emotions that have as their background concern humanity as a whole political community — what we call ‘homogenizing allegiance’.

First, consider the case of political admiration that occurs in instances of so-called ‘positive prejudice’. Here, we take inspiration from Sara Protasi’s (2021) discussion of the positioning of Asian Americans as ‘the model minority’. On the surface, the admiration of Asian Americans as hard-workers who contribute to the American economy might look like a political emotion of allegiance and affirmation. Yet, this political admiration works as a case of smoke and mirrors. What this positive prejudice masks is the very real oppression of and discrimination against Asian Americans, removing this political community from sight in discussions and policies about anti-discrimination and positive efforts regarding diversity. Moreover, such supposed admiration can work to position Asian Americans as the target of a hostile political emotion: envy. This envy may be experienced by other marginalized groups such as, say, African Americans who envy Asian Americans for seemingly being exposed to less racialism but also by white Americans who envy them for their seemingly effortless socio-economic success and recognition. The contingency of this political admiration should also be highlighted. For the status of “model minority” is a precarious one, one that can be revoked overnight. Think, for instance, of the rise of discrimination against Asian-Americans upon the outbreak of Covid-19 and the heightened political tension between America and China.

When a political community is not acknowledged as a target of racism and hostile political emotions this obscures recognition of that community’s struggles living within and being the victim of a racialized system. Among other things, this failure to recognise this ‘positive prejudice’ as grounded in an oppositional stance makes it harder to legitimize and argue for the

appropriateness and aptness of antagonistic political emotions such as anger arising from the affected communities. Consequently, what might posture as allegiance on the surface, can give rise to affective injustices that work to silence and undermine the political emotions of communities (Whitney 2018; Srinivasan 2019; Archer & Mills 2019). In light of this, we suggest that this kind of political admiration is an example of ‘ersatz allegiance’ — a faux allegiance that masks its own oppositional stance, while also working to cauterize the legitimate antagonistic political emotions and actions of those whom it affects.

Second, take the case of political sympathy or pity that motivates foreign aid and private donations of colonial nations to improve the situation in former colonies. For instance, the allocation of the majority of British foreign aid to India in the 1960s and 1970s. Here, a sense of “we” is constituted through seemingly moral emotions and virtues such as pity, compassion, and generosity (see also Ahmed 2013, 20-23), emotions that again seem to fit with the label ‘allegiance’. What falls out of sight, however, is the way in which Britain’s colonial history contributed to the emergence of this situation and ongoing suffering. Moreover, it ignores the fact that the very possibility of this generosity — and, in turn, the possibility of presenting and constituting members of the British public as “generous” subjects — rests upon wealth generated by the oppression and exploitation of these “others” in the first place. Behind the seemingly positive character and dynamics of these emotions, then, is a history of antagonism. Another example is of the characterization of LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly in the case of trans persons, as ‘brave’ upon coming out, by those who have previously contributed to hostile heteronormative environments and politics.

We dub instances of this second kind ‘amnesiac allegiance’, as their characterisation as political emotions of allegiance depend on a forgetting of the historical context that underpins the current situation and, only through this historical short-sightedness does the longer antagonistic context fall from view.

Finally, we turn our attention to examples of political emotions that supposedly take all of humanity as a political community such as collective hope. The belief in the idea of moral progress that is central to some forms of US-American culture and the unambiguous collective hope for a world free of racial oppression at first sight seems to be radically inclusive and equalizing. Indeed, by hoping ‘for us all’, it seems that there is no ‘other’ that such an emotion could antagonize. In this regard, collective hope presents itself as a political emotion that is not only free of antagonism but also explicitly committed to the idea of overcoming antagonism in the form of racial inequality and oppression.

However, as Joseph R. Winters (2016) has argued, collective hope still might implicitly reinforce oppressive structures in that it fails to acknowledge past and ongoing injustices — and, more generally, the fact that we are not equal but rather find ourselves embedded in radically different socio-political situations that are deeply entrenched in histories of oppression. A more just affective attitude, therefore, would be what Winter’s calls “melancholic hope”, a form of hope that is sensitive to the various ways in which we are wounded and broken. Ruling out antagonism for all parties itself becomes a form of injustice when antagonism is warranted and

apt. Unambiguous collective hope, then, can work to silence the voices of the oppressed. Due to the way in which this political emotion flattens out and erases various political communities, claims, and histories in the attempt to create a single, unified political group, we dub this a form of ‘homogenizing allegiance’.

What these three cases have in common is that they all involve a partial failure of recognition that does not allow an antagonism to develop or come to the foreground. The example of portraying Asian Americans as a model minority shows how practices such as “positive” prejudices can mask antagonism and deprive a group of the possibility to feel apt antagonistic political emotions. The example of former colonial powers feeling pity and presenting themselves as benevolent illustrates how what might present as allegiance may obscure the history of hostile antagonism that gave rise to the situation in the first place. The case of collective hope, finally, exemplifies how “de-othering”, i.e., including the “other” in an allegedly homogenous “we”, can itself be a form of disregard, disvalue, or lack of recognition when centuries of oppression have created this other as another. In all cases, those who are excluded are not excluded based on an open form of antagonism or animosity and it is exactly for this reason that this form of exclusion tends to remain invisible.

#### **4. Outlook**

In this chapter, we have distinguished three layers of affective “antagonism”:

- (1) The first, most visible, form of affective antagonism is an antagonism inherent to the structure of the emotion itself. It is an antagonism between the emoter(s) and the target that can, but need not, be hostile. “Antagonism” here describes an aversive affective reaction or attitude toward a person or group that is experienced as offensive. This form of affective antagonism can be uncovered through an analysis of the affective phenomenology of the emotion.
- (2) The second form of affective antagonism is an antagonism connected to the social dynamics of the emotion. Here, “antagonism” describes a way of forming an ingroup through opposition to others. This opposition can but need not take the form of an open antagonism between the emoter(s) and the target. It also brings into view emotions such as pride or hope that, on the surface, do not seem to be antagonistic but contribute to an antagonistic group dynamics. This form of affective antagonism can be uncovered with the help of phenomenology of sociality.
- (3) The third form of antagonism is an antagonism inherent to the socio-political structures themselves that build the background of the emotion and are presupposed and reinforced by it. Antagonism of this form is even less visible than the second form of antagonism, especially if it masquerades itself as allegiance. The disclosure of this form of antagonism requires a thoroughly historically and socially situated analysis through the lens of critical phenomenology.

Through this three-pronged phenomenological analysis we have shown how we can better understand, and critique, the conceptualisation of political emotions of antagonism and allegiance and what role they play in the political sphere. However, each of the three layers individually and together deserve further attention. To conclude, we point to four open research questions that roughly concern the first, second, and third level of analysis, as well as the structural whole.

First, there is an ongoing discussion about the potential epistemic, moral, and prudential value of political emotions. This discussion also has resulted in a reconsideration of the “appropriateness” of political emotions such as anger, hatred, or hope. This discussion, however, has been focused on specific types or tokens of political emotions. What we lack, however, is a more general account of what standards of appropriateness political emotions have, how our understanding of the political as such and our socio-political situatedness itself shape our understanding of and answer to this question.

Second, we addressed the question of how communities are presupposed by, shaped, or constituted through political emotions of allegiance and antagonism. However, these processes themselves are highly context-sensitive and require a more thorough and critical analysis of the metaphysical, ontological, and normative nature of these communities. For example, the community that builds the background concern of the emoter(s) can be defined more or less narrowly or broadly, e.g., a group of activists who jointly fight for a common political goal, a group of (allegedly) suffering and oppressed people whose rights one defends, or the social or legal community that one aims to change. The boundaries of such groups are often inherently vague and there are various ways in which processes of group formation and identification can go wrong.

Third, while we have called attention to the way in which the antagonistic and allegiant dimensions of certain political emotions are only revealed by the socio-historical and political context of those emotions and emoters, we have not analysed examples of political emotions that themselves are directed towards history. Nostalgia, for instance, is often discussed as a political emotion that binds together a community through a collective longing for bygone times, as well as acting as an antagonistic catalyst between political communities (Menke & Wulf 2021). This notoriously difficult to define affective phenomena brings to the fore questions not only about how we characterize and categorize various political emotions and affects, but points to further critical questions about how conceptions of history feed into and shape political affectivity.

Finally, further research needs to be done to consider how these three different dimensions of antagonism that we have identified interact with, presuppose, exclude, intersect with, influence, and sustain one another. Moreover, the analysis needs to be complemented by an analysis of the concept and phenomenon of allegiance. We think that this — and the commitment to philosophy as a *critical* practice — would also contribute to overcoming the gap between affect studies and emotion theories in not so much focusing on the question of what political emotions

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and affects, respectively, *are*, but rather on what they *do* - and what *we* do by focusing on one rather than the other phenomenon, labeling it in one or the other way.

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