

Day of Parliamentary Research

# Emotions as Privileges

*On Anger, Hope, and Democratic Discourse*

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Emotion is not the opposite of reason.

# Beyond the binary.

Emotions are **constitutive elements of democratic practice**. They shape whose voices are heard and which arguments are taken seriously.

## THE OLD PICTURE

### Emotion vs. Reason

- *emotion as disturbance*
- *emotion as irrational*

## THE ARGUMENT HERE

### Emotions as political

- *emotions shape legitimacy*
- *emotions structure participation*

## The argument

# Emotions function as privileges

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Not all subjects are equally entitled to articulate their feelings as ***relevant or politically legitimate***.

## RECOGNISED

## Anger as Authority

*Read as conviction, leadership, principled resolve:  
a sign of political seriousness.*

## DISMISSED

## Delegitimised Anger

*Read as „subjective“, „emotional“, „irrational“:  
disqualified from legitimate reasoning.*

# Reading emotions politically

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## Dominique Moïsi

*The Geopolitics of Emotion*

Emotions (fear, humiliation, hope, courage) are not private states but **shared political orientations**. They structure how communities relate to the future and to one another.

## Megan Boler

*Feeling Power*

Emotions are disciplined through institutions and discourse. What appears as „natural“ feeling is in fact **shaped by power**, by rules about whose grief, anger, or hope can be voiced.

Where the asymmetry becomes visible

# Migration and belonging

Contemporary debates on migration make the uneven distribution of emotional legitimacy unusually legible. The *same emotional expression* is framed differently depending on who speaks.

## DOMINANT VOICES

- *Anger framed as concern*
- *politically legitimate*
- *“protecting society”*

## MARGINALISED VOICES

- *Anger framed as overreaction*
- *politically dismissed*
- *“identity politics”*

## BOTH

### Same emotion— different recognition

*The asymmetry is not in the feeling; it is in the political ear that receives it.*

## R e f r a m i n g

# Hope and courage as democratic resources

## *Hope*

- sustains political participation
- orientation toward a shared future
- democratic endurance

## *Courage*

- speaking despite delegitimation
- remaining audible despite dismissal
- democratic agency

What follows

# Resonance and responsibility

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**01. Listening instead of dismissal** — Democratic culture does not silence emotion; it learns to receive it.

**02. Legitimacy before agreement** — Recognising emotional speech is not conceding the argument; it grants credibility.

**03. Democratic sustainability** — Negotiation becomes more durable when hope and courage stand alongside critique.

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*Emotions are not the noise of democracy — they are part of how it learns to listen.*

I n c l o s i n g

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*Thank you.*

**C O N T A C T**

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