

Narrative Report: Benjamin Lange

The support by the Society for Applied Philosophy enabled me to conduct important research and drive forward some of my core research agendas coming out of my doctoral studies.

In addition to submitting several articles for publication, the core of my work over the past six-months focused on refining my monograph project to work on a first systematic and exhaustive account of *negative partiality* and thereby shed light on a fundamental area of human morality. Negative partiality concerns the domain of what we owe to our *adversaries*, as opposed to what we owe to *intimates* like our family and friends. It is a hitherto largely neglected field of enquiry in the philosophical literature.

Adversarial relationships are pervasive, with common-sense roots ranging from sports rivalries to acts of bullying or offensiveness by colleagues and classmates to abusive romantic relationships. Adversaries range from disillusioned ex-spouses and estranged friends to passive-aggressive or inconsiderate neighbours and condescending pub acquaintances.

But even though negative personal relationships are widespread, the literature on the ethics of partiality has virtually ignored them. It has focused exclusively on positive personal relationships and sought to answer questions like: What do we owe ourselves, family, and friends? How extensive are these associative duties to act in certain ways in virtue of the special relationships in which we stand to our intimates? And what justifies these duties? In this respect, the current literature is overly idealistic.

The reality of human interaction, by contrast, is complex. Though positive personal relationships are important and central to our lives, negative ones are too. And our lives contain plenty of both. Indeed, our relationships can evolve over time: friends can become enemies, and enemies can become friends. Research into negative partiality will provide a realistic grasp of the complex net of interwoven and dynamic human relations and their corresponding normative implications. It will thereby contribute to a full normative account of this fundamental aspect of human morality.

At a general level, my research into negative partiality will give us an understanding of what kinds of negative partiality are justified under what conditions; the responses towards adversaries called for by negative personal relationships; the elements that constitute negative personal relationships, their termination, and their transition; the relation between positive partiality toward intimates and negative partiality toward adversaries; and the connection between negative partiality and morality more broadly.

To this end, I have been able to publish an open access overview article on the debate on partiality in general as well as contribute to a forthcoming volume on the ethics of relationships, where I tackle some of the distinctive issues of rivalry or enmity through the lens of negative partiality:

- **Lange, B.** 2022. The Ethics of Partiality. *Philosophy Compass*: <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12860> Open Access
- **Lange, B., and Brandt, J.** In preparation. Relationships between Enemies and Rivals understood as Negative Partiality. In *The Ethics of Relationships* eds. Betzler, M. and Löscke, J. Oxford University Press: forthcoming.