

## Workshop

### **Bridging Emotions: Affect in Overcoming Social and Political Divides**

Keio University, Tokyo

May 16, 2026

Organizers: Takemitsu Morikawa & Christian von Scheve

Over the past years, research in sociology and neighboring disciplines, such as political science and psychology, has produced remarkable insights into the role of emotions in social and political conflict, as well as in negative and antagonistic social exchanges. This includes topics of affective polarization, intergroup conflict, social exclusion, rejection, devaluation, and misrecognition. Negative affect and discrete emotions such as anger, spite, fear, resentment, humiliation, and hatred have been shown to shape collective identities, fuel antagonism, and harden boundaries between groups and individuals. Less systematic attention has been paid to the constructive role of emotions in overcoming divides, in maintaining and restoring pressured social relations: how emotions enable recognition, foster accountability, sustain fragile forms of coexistence, or make cooperation imaginable in contexts of deep disagreement. Here, much of the existing research has focused on issues of historical injustices, intractable conflict, and moral wrongdoings. Little attention has been paid to the less visible divides between more transient and ephemeral groups in society, such as opinion and identity groups, social classes, partisanship, issue coalitions, interest groups, or social movements. Yet, some existing works are highly conducive for understanding what we term *bridging emotions*: (a) research highlighting the role of collective emotions in rituals and their consequences for identity building and social integration; (b) studies emphasizing the importance of conciliatory affective stances such as forgiveness, excusing, and condoning; and (c) works pointing at the relevance of specific discrete emotions, for instance, hope, guilt, remorse, regret, and compassion. Although these works provide valuable insights into the causes and consequences of bridging emotions, they have largely remained unconnected and siloed in different disciplines. This interdisciplinary workshop, therefore, invites contributions from scholars that place emotions at the center of research on conflict transformation, reconciliation, and the bridging of social and political divides amongst different groups and communities in society. The workshop places particular emphasis on connecting different lines of existing research, such as sociology, political science, psychology, and philosophy, and on works that treat emotions as relational, culturally embedded, and institutionally mediated processes.

Topics of interest include (but are not limited to):

- Emotions in conflictual relations among opinion and identity groups, political camps, or issue publics
- Emotional practices and feeling rules that promote coexistence without consensus among antagonistic groups
- Bridging emotions in interest-based conflict, including labor disputes, environmental controversies, or distributional conflicts
- Moral recognition, respect, and emotional restraint in pluralist political orders
- Emotions and everyday boundary work between social, cultural, or lifestyle groups (e.g. class-based, generational, urban-rural, or value-based divides)
- Emotional regulation, ambivalence, and tolerance in heterogeneous publics
- Symbolic and emotional conditions under which disagreement remains legitimate rather than moralized or exclusionary
- Sociology of apologies, reparations, memory, and moral repair
- Emotional cultures, feeling rules, and moral boundaries in polarized societies
- Everyday emotional practices that bridge (or fail to bridge) ethnic, racial, religious, or political divides

### **Format and participation**

The workshop will be held in a hybrid format at Keio University, Tokyo, Japan. It combines in-person participation with online attendance to facilitate international exchange. Please note that we can assist in arranging travel and accommodation, but cannot provide any financial support. We welcome theoretical, empirical, and methodological contributions, including qualitative, quantitative, comparative, and mixed-methods approaches.

### **Submission details**

Please submit an abstract of no more than 300 words outlining your contribution. Early-stage work and submissions from doctoral and postdoctoral researchers are explicitly encouraged.

Please submit your abstracts by email to: [christian.von.scheve@fu-berlin.de](mailto:christian.von.scheve@fu-berlin.de)

Submission deadline: **February 15, 2026**

Notification of acceptance: **February 20, 2026**

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Keio University, and Freie Universität Berlin.*