

Call for Papers
EWIS 2026 – Izmir (July 1–3, 2026)
The Emotional Architecture of Global Peace: Gratitude, Empathy, and Affective Justice

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The discipline of International Relations (IR) emerged from the emotional and moral shock of the First World War. In the aftermath of unprecedented, industrialized violence, early institutions such as the Chair in International Politics at Aberystwyth, the League of Nations, and Chatham House, reflected a collective attempt to transform grief and moral outrage into knowledge and prevention. IR thus began as an affective and ethical project aimed at securing peace among nations.

As the discipline professionalized through the interwar period and the Cold War, this emotional impulse was progressively neutralized. Classical theories reframed peace as the product of rational design, institutional order, and structural constraint. Realism institutionalized fear through deterrence. Liberalism prioritized cooperation and interdependence while treating emotions as secondary. Constructivism emphasized norms and identity without fully theorizing affective interaction. Even where justice and reconciliation were addressed, emotions often remained analytically marginal. The result has been a persistent *affective blind spot* at the heart of IR.

In recent decades, the “emotional turn” across the social sciences has reopened this question. Research on fear, trauma, compassion, pride, resentment, and empathy has demonstrated that emotions are not epiphenomenal but constitutive of global politics. At the same time, the contemporary international system is again marked by heightened emotional volatility: renewed arms races, geopolitical polarization, ecological anxiety, institutional paralysis, and diffuse fear. Peace today appears as fragile and contested as it did a century ago.

Against this backdrop, this workshop proposes to theorize peace as an affective equilibrium sustained by three interrelated forces: gratitude, empathy, and affective justice, operating within an ambient condition of fear. Gratitude recognizes interdependence but can reproduce hierarchy when weaponized. Empathy enables connection across difference but remains unevenly distributed across power asymmetries. Affective justice concerns the right to feel with dignity and challenges the disciplinary power of emotional regimes that regulate whose emotions are legitimate or silenced.

The workshop invites contributions that engage with questions such as:

- How do gratitude, empathy, fear, and affective justice operate as constitutive forces in global politics?
- In what ways do different IR theories include, marginalize, or instrumentalize emotions?
- How are emotional norms institutionalized in diplomacy, peacebuilding, humanitarian action, or transitional justice?
- What methodological tools allow us to capture affective infrastructures in global politics?
- What ethical challenges arise when researching vulnerability, suffering, and emotional asymmetries?
- How can emotional insights be translated into practices of reconciliation, or mediation?

To ensure epistemic diversity, the workshop welcomes contributions from:

- Philosophical and normative theory
- Feminist and postcolonial approaches
- Constructivist, sociological, and critical IR theories
- Qualitative, quantitative, ethnographic, participatory, and visual methods

This workshop treats emotions as both the medium and condition of peace. Participants are invited to cross theoretical boundaries and collaboratively articulate an emotional grammar that renders peace not only institutional or procedural, but lived, felt, and ethically grounded.

Abstract deadline : 11 February 2026