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Affective Rhetorics of the Far Right and International Politics

Wednesday 3 June 2026 13:15 (1h 30m)

International Relations has long been attentive to questions of power, legitimacy, and political order, yet it has only recently begun to take seriously the emotional and rhetorical dimensions through which these foundational concepts are constituted. The international political landscape is currently reshaped by the global resurgence of right-wing movements - populist, nationalist, and otherwise - animated in particular by affective energies. This roundtable will shed light on how affect and rhetoric work in tandem as instruments of political mobilisation and legitimisation. It will show that emotions such as fear, pride, resentment, and joy are not merely epiphenomena of political discourse; they are integral to the construction of identity, the delineation of enemies, and the justification of violence and exclusion at both domestic and international levels.

By bringing together scholars working across different methodological and theoretical traditions, this roundtable seeks to advance a dialogue on how emotional and rhetorical practices underpin the international legitimacy and transnational diffusion of right-wing politics, and their practical impact on the liberal international order. Focusing on the nexus between rhetoric and emotion in right-wing politics from an International Relations perspective, it will explore how affective appeals shape foreign policy narratives, geopolitical imaginaries, and global hierarchies and in what ways emotional registers sustain visions of national destiny, sovereignty, or civilisation in the face of perceived decline or threat.

Track Classification: Emotions in Politics and International Relations Working Group