

**Taking Stock of Group Affective Tone, Emotional Climate, and Emotional Culture in  
Organizations: Where have we been and where are we going?**

**Panel Symposium**

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**Sponsors:** Managerial and Organizational Cognition  
Organizational Behavior  
Organization and Management Theory

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**Key words (OB):** *Affect in Organizations, Group Affect, Emotional Culture*

**Key words (OMT):** *Affect Networks, Affective Event Theory, Social and Emotional Capital*

*“As organizations ultimately consist of individuals, it is futile to contemplate management of organizations without giving due consideration to their human aspects such as emotions, moods, relationships and well-being” – (Härtel, 2008: 1260)*

The role of affect in organizations saw an increase in attention towards the end of the last century, sparking what was deemed to be an “affective revolution” (Barsade, Brief, & Spataro, 2003). Through a focus on employees' moods and emotions within organizational settings, researchers have detailed relationships to many important outcomes such as job performance, prosocial behavior, and employee turnover (Barsade & Gibson, 2007). Early work on affect was done primarily through an individual-level perspective (e.g., Bradburn, 1969; Diener, Larsen, Levine, & Emmons, 1985), although developments in group affective tone (George, 1990; 1996; 2002), emotional culture (Barsade & O’Neill, 2014; 2016; Ashkanasy & Härtel, 2014), and emotional climate (de Rivera, 1992) have paved the way for researchers to explore this important construct at the group level. Today, affect research is a dominant fixture in research on groups and teams (Barsade & Knight, 2015).

**Research on Group Affective Tone.** Group affective tone, emotional climate, and emotional culture represent prominent research avenues that explore the influence of affect in groups, and will be the focus of discussion for our panelists. Group affective tone is defined as a “consistent or homogenous affective reaction within a group” (George, 1990 p. 108). Positive group affective tone has been linked to a number of important outcomes such as absenteeism (George, 1990; Mason & Griffin, 2003), group cooperation coordination (Barsade, 2002; Sy, Côté, & Saavedra, 2005), and team creativity (Tsai, Chi, Grandey, & Fung, 2012). While negative group affective tone has been linked to negative outcomes such as reduced prosocial behaviors (George, 1990), it is important to note that positive group affective tone does not solely lead to positive outcomes and negative group affective tone does not exclusively result in

negative outcomes (Tsai, Chi, Grandey, & Fung, 2012; Collins, Jordan, Lawrence, & Troth, 2015).

Indeed, the influence and development of a group tone is complex process that is impacted by a number of factors including emotional skills (Troth, Jordan, Lawrence, & Tse, 2012), emotional intelligence (Kelly & Barsade, 2001), and emotional contagion susceptibility (Ilies, Wagner, & Morgeson, 2007; Collins, Lawrence, Troth, & Jordan, 2013). As such, advancements in group affective tone research benefits from research that studies these emotional influences at an individual or dyadic level (e.g., Kidwell, Lopez-Kidwell, Blocker, & Mas, 2020). Current research has explored the outcomes associated with shared group affect, detailed the processes involved in the convergence upon a group affective tone, and has highlighted the important role of influential group leaders on directly shaping and managing affective tone. Promising future research avenues in group affect include considering the role of affective diversity (affective divergence) from group tones as well as applying longitudinal data collection techniques to capture the varying nature of affect (Barsade & Knight, 2015; Emich, 2020; Leung, Liou, Tsai, & Koh, 2020).

**Research on Emotional Culture and Climate.** Understanding the role of affect at a group level is crucial to understanding the development of behaviors, norms, and the performance and cohesion of teams (Van Kleef, Cheshin, Fischer, & Schneider, 2016). To foster this understanding, researchers have developed a recent interest in viewing organizational culture and climate from an emotional or affective lens (Barsade & O'Neill, 2014; Ashkanasy & Härtel, 2014). There is, of course, a clear distinction between culture and climate (Denison, 1996; Ostroff, Kinicki, & Tamkins, 2003). An organization's emotional culture is defined through “behavioral norms, artifacts, and underlying values and assumptions reflecting the actual

expression or suppression of [emotions], and the degree of perceived appropriateness of these emotions, transmitted through feeling and normative mechanisms within a social unit” (adapted from Barsade & O’Neill, 2014, p. 558). Affective climate represents the culmination and collective perceptions of these behavioral and contextual factors and is used to describe an organization's affective culture in varying degrees of positivity or negativity (Schneider, 2000; Ashkanasy & Härtel, 2014).

Research on emotional (or affective) culture and climate has explored how managers can promote positive or healthy climates and avoid negative or toxic ones (Härtel, 2008), described the development and outcomes of specific positive or negative cultures (Ashkanasy & Nicholson, 2003; Barsade & O’Neill, 2014; 2016), and drawn from leader-member exchange (LMX) literature to describe the influence of affective climate on social exchanges in the workplace (Tse, Dasborough, & Ashkanasy, 2008). From a practical perspective, research on emotional culture and climate have found important links to organizational communication and positive emotional cultures (Men & Yue, 2019). Continued research on emotional culture and climate considers the role of interpersonal interactions in fostering these emotional responses (e.g., Barsade, Coutifaris, Pillemer, 2018). This line of research includes a social perspective of affect that includes networks, with a need for additional future research that considers the dynamic nature of values and assumptions from a social network perspective to better explore the development and impact of emotional cultures (van Kleef, Gelfand, & Jetten, 2019).

The purpose of this panel is to bring together well-established scholars from around the globe who have published articles relevant to affect at a group and organizational level in management's top journals. This panel offers a guided and interactive discussion that allows us to take stock of what has been done within this important stream of research, to detail how the

coinciding development of these fields contributes to our overall understanding of group affect, and to discuss important methodological concerns when studying affect at the group and organizational level. By tying together prominent research streams in group affect research, this symposium will allow for a discussion of how these research avenues can contribute collectively to future discoveries. This panel will open up an avenue to discuss future research opportunities and will showcase our panelists thoughts on the current state of research and highlight fruitful areas for researchers moving forward.

**Panelists.** We invited experts in the fields of group affective tone, emotions in teams, emotional climate, emotional culture, and emotional intelligence. Our panelists come from three countries - The United States of America, Taiwan, and Australia. All panelists have agreed to participate in this symposium, and a brief biography of each is listed below:

**1. Neal M. Ashkanasy, OAM** is a Professor of Management at the UQ Business School at the University of Queensland in Australia. He received his PhD in social/organizational psychology from the same university. He came to academia after an 18-year career in water resources engineering. Ashkanasy's research is in leadership, organizational culture, ethics, and emotions in organizations, and his work has been published in leading journals including the *Academy of Management Journal and Review*, the *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, and the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. He is Associate Editor for *Emotion Review* and Series Co-Editor of *Research on Emotion in Organizations*. He has served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* and Associate Editor for the *Academy of Management Review* and *Academy of Management Learning and Education*. Prof. Ashkanasy is a Fellow of the Academy for the Social Sciences in the UK (AcSS) and Australia (ASSA); the Association for Psychological Science (APS); the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP);

Southern Management Association (SMA), and the Queensland Academy of Arts and Sciences (QAAS). In 2017, he was awarded a Medal in the Order of Australia. In 2019, he was the Managerial and Organizational Cognition Division Distinguished Scholar.

**2. Sigal Barsade** is the Joseph Frank Bernstein Professor of Management at the Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania since 2003 and prior to that was a faculty member at Yale University for 10 years. Professor Barsade studies the influence of emotions on work behavior, particularly in groups and teams and on individual employee outcomes; organizational culture; emotional intelligence and the influence of diversity at work. She publishes in the journals such as *Academy of Management Journal*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Organization Science* and *Organizational and Human Decision Processes*, about the topics of emotional contagion in groups; the influence of work emotions on organizational outcomes generally - and on creativity, decision-making and negotiations specifically; emotional culture; emotional intelligence; the outcomes of specific emotions on work performance, such as loneliness and contempt; the influence of affective personality on managerial performance; and affective diversity and implicit emotions in organizations. Current research projects include research about emotional culture, loneliness, the influence of companionate love versus anger on sports performance, affective interventions at work and the creation of a new emotional intelligence test. She has served on the editorial boards of the *Academy of Management Review*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*; *Organizational Behavior & Human Decision Processes* and *Organization Science*. She was a co-associate editor for a special issue on the Psychology of Networks for Organization Science, and is currently the area coordinator of the organizational behavior group at Wharton,

and the past-OB Division Chair on the five year Executive Board track for the Academy of Management's Organizational Behavior Division.

**3. Nai-Wen Chi** is the Distinguished Professor and the Director of Graduate Institute of Human Resource Management, National Sun-Yat Sen University in Taiwan. He completed his Ph. D. degree at Department of Business Management, National Cheng Chi University. His research areas include group affective tone, moods at work, emotional labor, employee attitudes and behaviors, and team management. His papers have been published at *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Journal of Management*, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *Personnel Psychology*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *Human Relations*, *Journal of Service Research*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Human Performance*, *Group & Organization Management*, *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* and other outlets. Dr. Chi has won several research awards, such as the best paper awards of the Annual Meetings of Academy of Management, Asia Academy of Management, and Australian and New Zealand. In addition, he also won the Outstanding Research Award and the Ta-You Wu Memorial Research Award (achievement award for young researchers) from the Ministry of Science and Technology of Taiwan. Finally, he has served on the editorial review boards of the *Journal of Applied Psychology* and *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*.

**4. Marie T. Dasborough** is an Associate Professor of Management at the University of Miami, where she has worked for 12 years. She received her Ph.D. in Organizational Behavior from the University of Queensland in Australia. She currently serves as the Co-President of the Network of Leadership Scholars interest group at the Academy of Management. She is also the editor for

Journal of Organizational Behavior (Annual Review and Conceptual Development Issue), and serves on three editorial review boards. Dr. Dasborough's fields of scholarly interest include leadership, emotions, and teamwork. She has authored numerous articles and book chapters; published in the *Academy of Management Review*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *International Journal of HRM*, *The Leadership Quarterly*, and numerous others. To stimulate research ideas and to facilitate data collection efforts, she has consulted for a number of organizations, including: Bacardi, NBC Universal Telemundo, Barrick Gold Corporation, BSL Australia, McDonnells Law, Joondalup Health Campus, Miller School of Medicine, Main Roads Department Australia, and Coconut Grove Bank. She has won numerous awards for teaching and for her research. Her most recent accomplishments are receiving the 2020 Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award at the University of Miami; and at the 2020 Academy of Management conference, she was awarded Best Paper in the Conflict Management Division and she was also a finalist for another Best Paper award in the Human Resources Division.

**5. Virginie Lopez-Kidwell** (Panelist and Moderator) is an Associate Professor in the College of Business at the University of North Texas. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Kentucky in Management. Her research interests include social networks, the role of affect in organizational behavior and relational dynamics, emotional intelligence, as well as power and dependence. Particularly, her research examines the role of emotional and interpersonal dynamics, emotional intelligence, information and formal relational activity, social perception and influence. She has published in the *Academy of Management Journal*, *Organizational Science*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, the *Journal of Consumer Behavior*, *Group & Organization Management*, and *Social Networks* among others. She provides consulting with



various organizations regarding social network analysis as well as emotional intelligence training. She regularly performs ad hoc reviews for various journals including *Organization Science*, the *Academy of Management Review*, the *Academy of Management Journal*, and *Journal of Applied Psychology*, among others.

**6. Ashlea Troth** is a professor in organizational behavior and a scholar in workplace emotions at the Griffith Business School, Queensland, Australia. Ashlea gained her PhD in psychology at the University of Queensland. Her research interests include multi-level and multi-method approaches to examining emotions, emotional regulation and emotional intelligence in workplaces, and the impact of these phenomena on wellbeing and performance outcomes. She is also interested in the day-to-day work experiences of frontline managers and the role of their emotional regulation strategies on wellbeing when performing a range of tasks. Ashlea has published in journals such as the *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *The Leadership Quarterly*, *The Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, and *Human Resource Management*. She has also been a recipient of large Australian Research Council Discovery (ARC) grants investigating workplace emotional resilience and perceptions of unfair managerial treatment.

**Format.** The format of the 90-minute symposium will be as follows:

- Introduction to the topic and panelists (5 minutes)
- Time for each panelist to discuss the topic from their research perspective (~8 minutes each / total 50 minutes)
- Moderated Panel Discussion (20 minutes)
- Questions/Comments from the audience (10 minutes)
- Concluding statements from the panelists (5 minutes)

We have received emails from all participants formally agreeing to participate in this symposium, all of which have stated that they are not in violation of the *rule of three + three*.

**Interest in Sponsoring Divisions.** We believe this symposium that details the role of affect at the group and organizational level is of significant interest to the divisions of Management and Organizational Cognition (MOC), Organizational Behavior (OB), and Organization and Management Theory (OMT) both from a theoretical but also managerial perspective. For this reason and because this topic relates to the theme of the 2021 Academy of Management meeting, “Bringing the Manager Back in Management” by integrating multiple viewpoints and research approaches on affective processes in groups as well as the consideration of direct management and leader influences on affective tone, climate, and culture, this symposium is expected to draw wide interest from across the Academy, including - but not limited to - researchers and practitioners in in MOC, OB, and OMT.

**MOC.** The MOC division is devoted to understanding individual, relational, and collective cognition in organizational contexts and considers the role of groups, culture, and emotion in those processes. In taking stock of affect in groups, including the influences of emotional culture and climate, we will contribute to our understanding of shared cognition, its interplay with affect, and the resulting influences on group processes and outcomes.

**OB.** The OB division is dedicated to understanding, identifying, and improving the effectiveness of OB practices to facilitate organizational competitiveness nationally or internationally, encourage individual growth and development, and enhance individual performance, work-related attitudes, and well-being. Gaining important insights on how affect impact works relationships can impact a variety of organizational outcomes relevant to the OB division, including individual and team effectiveness.

**OMT.** Regarding the OMT division, affect research at a group and organizational level is rich in theoretical development that would be of interest to many OMT division members. In this

symposium, our panelists directly discuss affective events theory and networking theory. One of our panelists, Dr. Ashkanasy, will discuss a new dynamic model of organizational affective climate that highlights the continued theoretical development that is active within this line of research. Moreover, the various topics included in the symposium explore the links between affect that discuss links between theoretical developments and practical organizational outcomes which are also core themes of this division.

### **Panel Contributions**

**Neal M. Ashkanasy**

UQ Business School, The University of Queensland, Australia

Dr. Ashkanasy will discuss the dynamic model of organizational affective climate that, together with co-author Charmine Härtel, he first introduced in 2014. In this model, affective climate is proposed to reflect the circumplex model of affect (Tellegen et al., 1999), where positive and negative affective states are posited to be orthogonal dimensions that define four distinct quadrants affect quadrants (Figure 1) corresponding to high-high, high-low, low-high, and low-low affective climate respectively.

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 Insert Figure 1 about here.  
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Within this dynamic model, the organization's affective state can flip from quadrant to quadrant moment-by-moment, with the change driven by exogenous or endogenous "affective events." The model represents an extension of Weiss and Cropanzano's (1996) Affective Events Theory – from an individual level of analysis to the organizational level (see Ashton-James & Ashkanasy, 2008). In his discussion, Dr. Ashkanasy will illustrate application of this theory by

referring to a case study of an Australian biotech company's efforts to develop a COVID-19 vaccine.

### **Sigal Barsade**

University of Pennsylvania, United States of America

In this symposium, Dr. Barsade will provide a brief overview of her earlier work on group affect that provides insight into individual and group level outcomes, emotional culture, affective diversity, and group affect as a dynamic process (Barsade, 1995; Barsade & Gibson, 2012; Barsade & Knight, 2015). Further, she will discuss the role of processes such as emotional contagion in shaping emotional culture and group affect (Barsade, 1995, 2002; Barsade & O'Neill, 2014). Drawing from her model of an emotional culture of companionate love that she developed with her co-author Dr. O'Neill (Barsade & O'Neill, 2014), she will discuss the influence of positive emotional cultures on individual and organizational outcomes. Finally, she will note the important role that managers and leaders hold in recognizing and shaping positive emotional cultures (Barsade & O'Neill, 2016).

### **Nai-Wen Chi**

National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan

In this symposium, Nai-Wen Chi will provide a brief review of unaddressed questions regarding positive group affective tone (PGAT) and negative group affective tone (NGAT) on team creativity. Then he will propose a dual pathway model to explain the potential mechanisms (i.e., promotion- and prevention-focused actions) and boundary conditions (i.e., task complexity and team supportive context) of PGAT and NGAT on team creativity. Finally, he will offer some conceptual and methodological suggestions (e.g., fluctuations of GAT, and the roles of team composition and affective diversity) to improve the research on GAT and team creativity.

**Marie T. Dasborough**

University of Miami, United States of America

First, Dr Dasborough will review her early work on emotions in groups. In collaboration with Dr Herman Tse, Dr Dasborough studied what types of emotions are exchanged between team members, and the impact these emotions have on team member relationships (Tse & Dasborough, 2008). This work was then extended by theoretically and empirically examining how team member relationships are shaped by both leaders and the affective climate that exists within the team, as well as the role of emotional contagion as the meso-level process responsible for the effects (Dasborough et al., 2009; Tse, Dasborough, & Ashkanasy, 2008). Second, Dr Dasborough will discuss her more current work on emotions in teams. She will explain how the emotional processes within leader-member affective events theory (Cropanzano, Dasborough & Weiss, 2017) - emotional contagion and entrainment - also apply to TMX relationships. She will finish by discussing how moral emotions in teams drive team member behaviors, and how norms around empathy can promote moral emotions and ethical behavior (Dasborough, Hannah, & Zhu, 2019). Affective forecasting also plays an important role in teams, with anticipated emotional responses of team members shaping team member behaviors and contributing to the development of emotional cultures.

**Virginie Lopez-Kidwell**

University of North Texas, United States of America

In this session, Dr. Lopez-Kidwell would like to take stock of the research examining emotional intelligence (EI) from an inter-personal perspective above and beyond the more well-researched intra-personal nature of EI. Specifically, Emotional abilities (EA) encompass a set of skills that facilitate the processing of emotional information, including perceiving, facilitating,

understanding and managing emotions in oneself and others. Taking a social perspective of EA, she will briefly discuss the concept of dyadic emotional ability similarity (EAS) to explain key outcomes in interpersonal interactions beyond the effects of traditional variables in the similarity-attraction paradigm. Specifically, she will discuss how and why similar abilities to use emotional information between two people promotes relational success and consumer outcomes. Further, she will discuss the role of EA in building our social networks (the set of informal relationships in the workplace necessary to our functioning). The literature has established a robust link between emotional abilities and higher performance in the workplace, yet there is a dearth of evidence explaining these emotionally-skilled workers' higher performance. Her research examines one such explanation by investigating the impact of individuals' emotional abilities in shaping advantageous networks of relationships (stronger relationships as well as more diverse ones). Specifically, she will discuss on how EA enables individuals to forge strong socio-emotional bonds while also developing diverse social networks avoiding typical tradeoff of social networks. Last, she will discuss the role of EA on the exchange of four positive emotional resources (liking, energy, pleasantness and emotional support) within our social networks in the workplace, and in turn, the organizational consequences for recipients and providers alike in term of their occupational well-being and affective organizational commitment.

**Ashlea Troth**

Griffith University, Australia

In this session, Dr. Troth would like to take stock of the research examining group affective convergence and divergence. A particular focus will be on group affective tone (positive, negative, and mixed), what factors facilitate or hamper this process, and some subsequent outcomes. Group affective tone occurs when individuals in workgroups tend to

experience highly similar levels of state affect (George, 1990, 2002; George & King, 2007) and is theorized as an *emergent group state* (Kozlowski & Klein (2000)). Potential future research directions will be discussed including a need for a greater focus on dynamic temporal theorization and measurement, consideration of the dual turning of positive and negative affect in groups, and better integration of homogeneity and heterogeneity considerations in the study of group affect.

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**FIGURE 1****Four quadrants of organizational affective climate**