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Reflecting and revealing – new depolarization approaches in the climate debate

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Master in Psychology of Intercultural Relations

Supervisor:

Professor Paula Castro, Full Professor at ISCTE – Instituto  
Universitário de Lisboa

September, 2024



CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS  
E HUMANAS

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Department of Social and Organizational Psychology

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to extend my thanks to my supervisor, Paula Castro, for giving essential guidance in the writing and analysis process, allowing a confusing collection of transcripts and notes to turn into a coherent and readable thesis.

I also want to give special thanks to the team of Braver Angels, who were so open and excited about this project, and took precious time out of their schedule to provide me with the information I needed. Among many others, my warm thanks to Eliza Hawkins for her advice in the research design, and Martin Hunke, Sabrina Garland and Kerstin Lange for their help in moderating the workshops.

Thank you also to all my study participants for taking the time to show up and contribute to this project, as well as all the other people – researchers, moderators, and politicians that sat down with me and gave me their advice on this project.

Finally, I want to acknowledge my friends, family, and my partner Maria for all their support, both moral and practical, in walking this year-long journey. Thank you – this would not have been possible without you.

## **Abstract**

This study applied the method of “reciprocal group reflection”, previously used in the U.S., to address political polarization on climate policy in Germany. The method encourages participants to reflect critically on their own views while the opposing group listens, seeking to foster empathy and reduce stereotypes. Thirty-six German participants, divided into proponents (Group A) and critics (Group B) of rapid climate action, took part in five workshops. The study evaluated the method’s effectiveness in reducing polarization and analyzed the themes and dialogue dynamics that emerged. Quantitative results indicated significant changes in only one workshop, suggesting limited overall impact on reducing polarization. Thematic analysis showed that Group A emphasized urgency and Germany’s role as pioneer, while Group B focused on the effectiveness of climate policies and their economic impact. Both groups valued climate education and transparent communication. Most participants engaged constructively, though some showed dismissive attitudes. The study contributes to depolarization research by adapting a U.S. method to a German context, highlighting the nuances of political polarization in a multi-party system. It also shows which themes commonly emerge in discussions around climate change, and that there are actually significant areas of agreement between different groups. Finally, it emphasizes the need for more research about which interventions are most effective for different populations and gives insights for developing more inclusive and effective strategies for addressing divisive issues.

*Keywords:* Political polarization, climate policy, Braver Angels, depolarization, climate change

## Resumo

Este estudo aplicou o método da "reflexão recíproca em grupo", anteriormente utilizada nos EUA, para abordar a polarização política sobre a política climática na Alemanha. O método incentiva os participantes a refletir criticamente sobre os seus próprios pontos de vista enquanto o grupo oposto ouve, visando promover a empatia e reduzir os estereótipos. Trinta e seis participantes alemães, divididos em defensores (Grupo A) e críticos (Grupo B) de uma ação climática rápida, participaram em cinco workshops. O estudo avaliou a eficácia do método na redução da polarização e analisou os temas e as dinâmicas de diálogo que surgiram. Os resultados quantitativos indicaram mudanças significativas em apenas um workshop, sugerindo um impacto global limitado na redução da polarização. A análise temática revelou que o Grupo A enfatizou a urgência e o papel de liderança da Alemanha, enquanto o Grupo B se centrou nos impactos económicos e na eficácia das políticas. Ambos os grupos valorizaram a educação climática e a comunicação transparente. A maioria dos participantes envolveu-se de forma construtiva, embora alguns tenham demonstrado atitudes desdenhosas. O estudo contribui para a investigação sobre despolarização ao adaptar um método dos EUA a um contexto alemão, destacando as complexidades da polarização política num sistema multipartidário. Também mostra quais os temas que surgem normalmente nas discussões sobre a mudança climática e que existem áreas significativas de acordo entre os diferentes grupos. Por fim, sublinha a necessidade de mais investigação sobre quais as intervenções mais eficazes para as diferentes populações e fornece informações para promover estratégias mais inclusivas e eficazes para abordar questões polémicas como a política climática.

*Palavras-chave:* Polarização política, política climática, Braver Angels, despolarização, mudança climática

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## **Glossary of acronyms**

CC – Climate change

HMCC – Human-made climate change

GHG emissions – Greenhouse gas emissions

## Introduction

Since the Fall of 2022 activists from organizations like *Extinction Rebellion* or *Die Letzte Generation* (“The Last Generation”) started using more radical modes of protest such as traffic blockades of much-used roads. At the same time, many citizens from the German countryside are becoming increasingly dismissive of specific projects for transitioning to renewable energy (Mdr.de, 2022). Furthermore, between 2021 and 2023, public support for climate activism in Germany has halved, from 68 to 34 per cent, and the percentage of people that agree that the climate movement in Germany is acting for the common good has plummeted from 60 to 25 per cent. (More in Common, 2023). This may be suggestive of more polarized debate around climate policy in recent years.

Past research around the climate debate in Germany and Europe has shown that many climate activists tend to label opponents of energy transition projects as reactionary, non-future-oriented, or even right-wing sympathizers, whereas climate activists get labeled more and more as ‘green ideologists’ who are disconnected from the needs of the general population (Zilles & Marg, 2022; Kluge, 2023, Bashir et al., 2013). The literature has also started analyzing the arguments of German right-wing parties’ opposition to climate policies in the EU Parliament and their potential role in delaying climate action (Forchtner & Lumbarda, 2023). In this context, the purpose of this study is twofold: to explore and assess concrete interventions for bridging divides like this one, as well as to perform a more general exploration on the kinds of themes and ways of dialoguing that come up when people with different perspectives meet each other.

This is done to better understand the perspectives from both sides, so that a productive discourse on the topic of climate change policies can become more feasible again.



## Chapter 1 - Literature and Background

Having a variety of opinions on political topics is a normal and even necessary process that happens in healthy democracies. The problem is when ideological disagreement turns into what is increasingly referred to as *affective polarization* (Iyengar et al., 2012), meaning animosity toward people from other political groups. This means that people not merely disagree with others with differing opinions, but also actively *dislike* them – seeking less contact (Röllicke, 2023), having a more negative, stereotyped view of them, and in more extreme cases see them as less human (Martherus et al., 2019, Leyens et al., 2000, Bashir et al., 2013). Affective polarization has the potential to erode democracy: By liking one's own side and disliking others, people can become less focused on the issue itself. They are more likely to endorse or reject specific policies based on the suggesting party rather than the actual usefulness of the ideas (Cohen, 2003). Affective polarization is also associated with anti-democratic attitudes (such as disregarding the separation of powers when one's own side is in power; Kingzette et al., 2021; McCoy & Somer, 2019) and even support for violence towards the outgroup (Kalmoe & Mason, 2019). The resulting lack of a constructive social discourse can pose a threat to democracy. It is therefore crucial to investigate how political polarization happens and what can be done to counteract it.

### 1.1. Climate Polarization in Germany

Before going into various approaches for reducing political polarization, it is important to briefly describe how the topic of polarization looks like in Germany. Most research on political polarization has been conducted in the USA. This is important to keep in mind since the political system in Germany differs from the American system in several key ways. Most important in this context, Germany's political landscape is divided up into multiple political parties and does not have a clear two-party divide like in the US.

A systematic review of polarization studies in multiparty contexts by Lena Röllicke (2023) helps to give some guidance here: She notes that many studies in this field lack clear definitions, especially when it comes to identifying the out-group: They could be political parties, their supporters, or citizens with different political views. Furthermore, there is often confusion about how to define “dislike” — whether it is aimed vertically at political elites or horizontally, at fellow citizens. Moreover, there is no clear consensus on what political polarization is or exactly

is polarized. Röllicke defines polarization as a process, meaning “development of a less polarised state towards a more polarised state, which means a widening gap.” This gap can grow in three ways: through increasingly positive in-group evaluations, increasingly negative out-group evaluations, or both. The third scenario seems to result in the highest levels of affective polarization. A study about political polarization in a multi-party system like Germany would therefore have to define two sides or groups that have a mutual dislike for each other, and both have a positive evaluation of themselves and their own views.

In Germany, there does seem to be some division into opposing camps among several key issues (Mau et al., 2023). Climate policy seems to be one of these topics which could fit the criteria made by Röllicke: Previous research did discover distinct groups with different opinions who mutually dislike the other group and define the other as their counterpart (Zilles & Marg, 2022). It is important to point out that this polarization does not relate to a division between people who are concerned about climate change versus climate deniers. In fact, most Germans agree that climate change is already occurring, whereas the portion of people not believing in human made climate change (HMCC) is lower than 3% (Fronzel et al., 2021). Furthermore, most Germans also agree that climate change is a problem: According to a survey by Michael Schipperges (2020), around 90% of Germans reported being either concerned or very concerned about climate change.

And yet, there is a widespread perception that the public debate about climate policy in Germany is getting increasingly heated: In a recent survey by More in Common, 80 percent of Germans perceive the current climate debate as divisive and many tend to avoid conversations about it in their private lives (Gagné & Krause, 2021). Even though most Germans see climate change as real and express concern about it, 70% of respondents said that people in Germany do not take climate change seriously enough (Gagné & Krause, 2021). In their recent book *Triggerpunkte* (German for ‘trigger points’) Steffen Mau, Thomas Lux and Linus Westheuser (2023) posit that the climate polarization in Germany is not so much around whether or not the problem of climate change needs to be tackled, but more about what to do specifically, how quickly to do it and who is supposed to pay for it. They describe the debate as being situated between the following two collections of opinions: On one hand, many people focus primarily on the consequences of climate change (weather extremes, conflicts, damage to nature) and those most affected by it (poorer countries, future generations). Generally, change in the form of

energy transformation and restrictions is being seen as going too slow and not being strong enough. Germany is described as a rich country that is responsible for climate change and should go forth as a pioneer in tackling it. On the other hand, still according to Maus et al., there are people who focus more on the consequences of the transformation to more sustainability (unfair divides and violation in lifestyle) and those most affected by this transformation (people in rural areas, employees, people with lower income). People describe the policy changes as happening too fast and call for a gentler change that connects the speed of transformation to people's daily life. Furthermore, and still according to Mau et al., they describe Germany as already being a role model in climate policy. In order to not fall back in global economic competition, people suggest waiting until other countries follow suit with the climate measures Germany has already implemented. Table 1.1 describes these two collections of arguments in more detail. It is important to note that these two sides are not completely clear-cut, and there is some diversity in the opinions held by people (Maul et al., pp. 214-220). There is, however, a substantial correlation between most of the opinions listed, especially between the *too slow – too fast* and the *not enough – already a lot* domains. There is some research suggesting that similar dynamics are happening in other European countries: The majority of EU citizens seem to believe in HMCC (Poortinga et al., 2019), and the disagreements and polarization seem to largely center around the question of how many measures are needed to tackle climate change, not around whether measures are needed at all (Herold et al., 2023). Even far-right argumentation about climate change has shifted over time, from simple denial to opposition to climate policies (Forchtner & Lumbarda, 2023) and a distrust of “elites” and the EU's supranational climate policies (Kulin et al., 2021).

Although the types of disagreement described by Mau et al. (2023) are smaller and substantially different than the polarization in two-party systems like the US, Mau and colleagues do posit that a growing trend of voting for more extreme parties could turn this politization of topics into an affective polarization – especially through the effect of what they call *trigger points*. Maul and colleagues, these are certain points within public debates that seem to make discussions shift from cognitive to at times highly affective, even when there seems to be widespread agreement on core assumptions in these topics (like climate change, for example). According to Mau et al., these points are connected to implicit core expectations people have about life in society, which, if broken, trigger feelings of threat for one's self-concept and

relationship to the world. These expectations can be categorized into four themes: (1) differential treatments (such as in racist discrimination or affirmative action), (2) violations of normality – when societal actors go outside social norms in ways that go against people’s intuitive perceptions of common sense, order, hygiene, or societal rules (rich people’s decadent lifestyles, skipping school to protest, or traffic blockades), (3) Fear of things getting out of control – concerns about current societal trends continuing and getting to an extreme that cannot be reversed (e.g., catastrophic consequences of climate change, opening of borders, expansion of the welfare state), and lastly (4) infringement on autonomy (as in restrictive gender roles, speech reforms, bans, e.g., “veggie-days”). Many people, from both the progressive and conservative sides of the political spectrum, tend to perceive these *trigger points* as threats to important values like equality, autonomy, control, and predictability.

There is also other research pointing to developments around the climate debate that resemble some of the ideological divide processes that are happening in the US: There is decreased contact between both sides, negative affect, as well as stereotypes and enemy images (Küppers, 2020, Zilles & Marg, 2022, Krause & Gagné, 2019).

One qualitative study by Zilles & Marg (2022) has attempted to map out this divide between two key groups in the general population of Germany. By interviewing protesters from Fridays for Future as well as activists protesting against specific projects aimed at expanding sustainable energy in Germany (e.g., solar and wind energy plants in the countryside). The study found that each of these groups has its own identity made up of shared values, attitudes, and mindset.

Members of one group, that the authors name ‘Savers of Future’, advocate for more climate protection measures. They are cosmopolitan, future-oriented, and demand political action that aligns with scientific evidence and international treaties. They see their counterparts as reactionary, denying climate change, and living unsustainable lifestyles and often associate these counterparts with AfD (Alternative for Germany) sympathizers. The other group, that the authors name ‘Advocates of the Common Good’ view themselves as responsible citizens with a hands-on attitude and believe in protecting the common good by preserving the local environment. They have a strong connection to their *Heimat* (‘homeland’) and have a deep disappointment with and distrust of the politicians in charge. They see people from the other side as cosmopolitan, elitist ‘Green Ideologists’ who are disconnected from nature and from the places where the energy transition is taking place.

Both groups also acknowledge the other as their respective counterpart and both have a distorted negative perception of the other. At the same time, there seems to be some overlap between the groups on specific topics: Both sides are attached to preserving nature (the first group on a more global level, the second group on a more local level). Furthermore, both groups aim to serve the common good with their engagement (again with the difference of global vs. local levels). Finally, members of both sides expressed their deep disappointment with the performance of the politicians in charge.

Even though this study had a limited number of participants (N=40), it gives strong qualitative clues about a possibly developing polarization around the topic of climate change and is in line with the divides outlined by Mau et al. (2023), Roose (2021) and Herold et al. (2023). Albeit it not being as clear-cut as in the US, these findings suggest that a two-sided divide around the topic of climate policy does exist in Germany. There is therefore reason to assume that a two-sides-focused approach like those used in the US could be helpful in this situation as well.

**Table 1.1***Disagreements on Climate policy* – from Mau et al. (2021)

Perception of the problem		
<b>Primary Danger</b>	<b><i>Consequences of Climate Change</i></b> Weather extremes, damage to nature, climate conflicts	<b><i>Consequences of Transformation</i></b> Unfair divides and violation in lifestyle
<b>Relation to Justice</b>	<b><i>Those affected by climate change</i></b> Humanity, coming generation, poorer countries	<b><i>Those affected by the transformation</i></b> People in rural areas, employees, people with lower income
Relation to time		
<b>Speed</b>	<b><i>Too slow</i></b> We need to act fast to prevent future damages – “Apocalyptic times”	<b><i>Too fast</i></b> Gentle change that protects current needs Connect speed of transformation to daily life
<b>Role of Germany</b>	<b><i>Not enough</i></b> Germany is rich and is one of the countries most responsible for climate change. Climate protection as an economic chance	<b><i>Already a lot</i></b> Germany is already a role model in climate policy. Too much climate protection will put us in danger of losing in the global economic competition
Consequences		
<b>Individual range of influence</b>	<b><i>Wide range.</i></b> Individual behavior can have big influence	<b><i>Limited range.</i></b> Individuals cannot change much
<b>Ethos</b>	<b><i>Voluntary cutting-back</i></b> Freedom is seen as a conscious, deliberative choice. People are aware of ecological necessities and adjust their lives accordingly	<b><i>Free choice is endangered</i></b> Freedom seen as independence and the possibility of having a good life and a legitimate amount of luxury

## **1.2. Interventions to decrease political polarization**

Interventions to decrease political polarization can be categorized in various categories: Thought-based interventions emphasize correcting misconceptions and highlighting commonalities, while Relationship-based interventions focus on building dialogue skills and fostering positive contact. Interventions on the level of Thoughts target mainly the negative beliefs partisans hold about the outgroup (Hartman et al., 2022). Political factions can form warped perceptions of each other, wrongly believing that members of the other group hold extremely radical political beliefs (false polarization; Mernyk et al., 2021; Graham et al., 2012) or lack essential human traits (dehumanization; Martherus et al., 2019). Additionally, people may have an inflated sense of how much people from the other side dislike and dehumanize them (inaccurate meta-perceptions; Lees & Cikara, 2019; Moore-Berg et al., 2019). Indeed, research suggests that negative partisan attitudes can be decreased by addressing misperceptions about the prevalence of negative attitudes among partisans (Lees & Cikara, 2020; Ruggeri et al., 2021). Similarly, support for partisan violence can be reduced by correcting misperceptions about how much the other sides endorses such violence (Mernyk et al., 2021). Among US-Americans, Republicans and Democrats tend to overestimate the degree to which their opponents dehumanize them by 50-300% and providing corrective information in this area can help to decrease animosity (Moore-Berg et al., 2020). Furthermore, correcting misconceptions about the characteristics of the outgroup, such as clarifying exaggerated perceptions about the proportion of Democrats who identify as LGBTQ+ or the percentage of Republicans earning over \$250K annually, can also help to reduce animosity (Ahler & Sood, 2018). There is also some evidence that listening to out-partisans' thoughtful arguments (Stanley et al., 2020) and personal experiences (Hagmann et al., 2021; Kubin et al., 2021) can improve perceptions of the other side.

Another category of interventions to decrease partisan animosity is that of contact or Relationships (Hartman et al., 2022). Contact with out-partisans, especially if the experience is positive, seems to reduce affective polarization: Wojcieszak and Warner (2020) found that American Democrats and Republicans who have more contact with people from the other party also have lower levels of affective polarization. Furthermore, merely observing a positive or cooperative situation between a Democrat and Republican (vicarious contact) was already successful at improving participants' perception of the outgroup. Not every type of contact seems

equally effective at decreasing polarization. In fact, in some instances, contact can even increase polarization (Wojcieszak & Warner, 2020; Bail et al., 2020).

One of the ingredients that seems to make contact interventions work is preparing participants in the right way, for example by using dialogue trainings (Voelkel et al., 2021; Hartman et al., 2020). These often involve a shift in focus away from persuasion toward understanding, as well as an emphasis on personal experiences, rather than facts (Kubin et al. 2021; Hagmann et al., 2020).

The research on depolarization interventions is still quite limited. Many approaches show no effects or mixed effects, and often it is unclear how the effects happen. And even though some of the approaches listed here have significant effects, many of them do not show large effect sizes in empirical research. (Wojcieszak & Warner, 2020; Voelkel et al., 2021; Hagmann, 2020; Kubin et al., 2021). Furthermore, all the effects discussed above emphasize either intergroup contact, or focus on providing information of some sorts. None of them include active self-reflection on one's own group. The American NGO Braver Angels has developed a promising new approach focusing on reciprocal self-reflection.

### **1.3. The Braver Angels Framework for decreasing political polarization**

Braver Angels is an American nonprofit organization dedicated to political depolarization. It was founded by David Blankenhorn, Bill Doherty, and David Lapp shortly after the 2016 presidential election and has since spread all over the country, with representatives and workshops in almost all US states (Braver Angels, n.d.).

Different from other approaches for depolarization, Braver Angels rests their framework on the principles of couples therapy (Doherty, 2021). This includes using ground rules and formats that prevent reenactment of “old” conversations, stimulating respectful inquiry to foster “new” conversations that increase interpersonal understanding (Chasin et al., 1996). The approach differs from previous interventions in that it emphasizes reciprocal group reflection rather than intergroup contact, deliberation, or consensus-building (Baron et al., 2021). In reciprocal group reflection, focus is placed on party members reflecting on their own positions separately, within their own group, before coming together and sharing their insights with the other group. This is reflected in the exercises used in Braver Angels workshops: In their “Red/Blue” workshops, Braver Angels facilitators employ several activities, designed to help *Reds* (Republican and



Republican-leaning) and *Blues* (Democrat and Democrat-leaning) create a more complex perception of the other side and to lead both groups away from assigning all the responsibility for the country's problems to the other party (Doherty, 2021).

Concretely, the Red/Blue workshops are day-long events, moderated by two trained Braver Angels volunteers, and involve a balanced number of participants from both Republican and Democratic affiliations. There are typically 5-8 participants per partisan group and an equal number of observers.

Workshop activities include four exercises: In the Stereotypes exercise, Reds and Blues separate out into groups and individually reflect on stereotypes the other group might have of them. Both groups then reconvene and each share why these stereotypes are largely false, as well as how there might be a kernel of truth behind them. In the Fishbowl exercise, each side is asked to articulate the positive aspects of their own values and policies as well as their reservations or concerns about their own side. The other group observes without interaction, providing an opportunity for both groups to gain insight into the perspectives of the other. In the Questions and Answers exercise, participants divide up into red and blue groups again and come up with questions they would like to ask the other side. Moderators support them in producing questions that express genuine curiosity and a desire to take on the perspective of the other group. Both groups then ask their questions of the other side and answer the questions from the other side. Lastly, in the How Can We Contribute exercise, participants generate ideas on how they can reduce polarization in their communities, both individually and collectively, and then present their suggestions to the rest of the group (Baron et al., 2021).

The effectiveness of this workshop has already been evaluated by Hannah Baron and colleagues (2021) with a sample (N=165) from a US-American population of university students, composed of both Republican-leaning, as well as Democrat-leaning participants, being divided up equally into four Republican-Democrat balanced groups. The intervention was found to lead to a significant decrease in negative affect (both implicitly and explicitly measured) toward the other group, which partly persisted even six months later. This was measured using “(1) a ‘feeling thermometer’ capturing the difference between respondents’ feelings towards the in-party and out-party; (2) a dummy for respondents who report identifying with the in-party primarily out of opposition to the out-party; (3) an index capturing the difference between respondents’ trust in the in-party and out-party; 5 three-point Likert scales capturing how

comfortable respondents would feel having outgroup members as (4) close personal friends and (5) neighbors, and (6) how comfortable they would feel if their best friend married an outgroup member; and (7) a dummy for respondents who believe the out-party represents a ‘serious threat’ to the country” (Baron et al., 2021). For the implicit measurement of active polarization, they administered an implicit association test (IAT).

The researchers measured several potential mediators, including outgroup stereotyping, outgroup empathy, ingroup identity salience, and outgroup humanization, among others. Interestingly, none of these mediators were found to be significant. Therefore, it is unclear how exactly the intervention led to the effects it had. Baron and colleagues attribute this to both mismeasurement and unanticipated mediators. As an example for the former, their measure for empathy only focused on willingness to take the perspective of an out-party member. However, research shows that the concept of empathy consists of more facets than this, for example the valuing of other’s welfare or readiness to help them (Batson & Ahmad, 2009). To find out about unanticipated mediators, Baron et al. hypothesized several potential mediators from looking at qualitative data. By analyzing the workshop transcripts, they found that many participants voiced statements suggesting that they were able to see the heterogeneity of both their own group and the other group. Furthermore, they were able to see more commonalities between their group and the outgroup.

The present study intends to build upon the findings by Baron et al. (2021) by testing how the method by Braver Angels works in a non-American culture with a different political system and exploring which themes would emerge in such a setting. Furthermore, the study left the deeper analysis of arguments and how participants responded to each other unexplored. This work aimed to address this, too.

For the purposes of this study, I chose to exclusively investigate one part of the workshop: the Fishbowl exercise. Partly, this is due to logistical reasons, since conducting the entire workshop would go beyond the scope of a master’s thesis. The Fishbowl exercise has been used by the Braver Angels NGO as a standalone workshop in the past on specific issues not unlike that of climate policy, and key members of the organization have confirmed its effectiveness to me.

Furthermore, there is reason to believe that focusing on one exercise exclusively has important benefits in its own right. Baron et al. (2021) admit that full-day events like the

Red/Blue workshop take a long time to conduct and prepare and are difficult to scale. Shorter workshops with potentially similar effects could be an important stepping-stone in making these types of interventions more widespread and accessible. Furthermore, focusing on one exercise only will create a clearer picture of if and how these exercises work on their own, and what role the Fishbowl exercise might play within the broader context of the whole workshop.

#### **1.4. Ways of analyzing controversial dialogues**

Since this study is supposed to be an exploration of what kinds of themes and interactions come up between participants in this specific workshop, I will briefly outline several ways of approaching this type of analysis.

Batel and Castro (2018) describe two qualitative approaches for analyzing discourse and communication: Firstly, *thematic analysis* identifies patterns of meaning within text (Braun & Clarke, 2006), focusing on the content of discourse. It is best suited for explaining how a specific group frames understands the phenomenon being studied (Joffe, 2012). Secondly, *pragmatic discourse analysis* looks more at the function and process of discourse – what are the consequences and functions of saying certain things in certain specific ways. It focuses on how people use language in different situations, focusing on the purposes and contexts. It examines the techniques and strategies used in communication. Batel and Castro (2018) posit that combining these two methods can give a better understanding of the elements involved in social change by looking at both the content and the practical use of language.

Braun and Clarke (2006) gave very comprehensive guidelines on what thematic analysis is and how to perform it. These were later expanded by Terry, Hayfield, Clarke, and Braun (2017). According to them, it involves coding data inductively or deductively, grouping those codes into themes and gathering all data relevant to each theme into a coherent pattern. This allows for a rich and detailed overview of the types of arguments and topics that come up in discussions.

When it comes to pragmatic discourse analysis, a model suggested by Caillaud et al. (2020) looks at how in discussions, people can deny or recognize the knowledge and meaning systems of others. By drawing on the concept of cognitive polyphasia by (Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernandez, 2015), they described three different ways of consensus-making: (1) *Hybridizing* (combining the perspectives of both sides equally to come up with novel ways of looking at the problem), (2) *selective prevalence* (recognition of the meanings and knowledge of those from the

other side, but no integration into a new way of seeing things), and (3) *displacement* (solely relying on their own viewpoint with next to no acknowledgment of the other sides views).

### **1.5. Summary and specific goals**

There are a variety of approaches for increasing political polarization. One that stands out, with its focus on self-revelation and reciprocal sharing in small groups, is the one by the American NGO Braver Angels. There has to date not been a study applying this approach to a non-American population. The study at hand investigates how political polarization occurs in Germany, specifically around climate change and climate policy. It does this by using five workshops with 7-8 participants each, to explore what kinds of themes and arguments people bring to the conversation, as well as their ways of dialoguing. Furthermore, the study aims to shed light on the efficacy of the approach by Braver Angels in a German population.

## Chapter 2 – Method

### 2.1. Participants

Participants were 36 adult German citizens between the ages of 18 and 64+ ( $M = 29.75$ ,  $SD = 13.99$ ) divided over five workshops. Each workshop had a more or less equal number of participants from both sides of the debate (between three and four participants per side). The groups were referred to as Group A (proponents of faster and more radical climate policy measures) and Group B (skeptical about radical changes). Participants were divided into the two groups based on their answers to a questionnaire about their opinions, which they were given upon signing up to the study.

The participants were recruited via convenience and snowball sampling in a variety of places, including universities, political parties, political youth organizations, activist groups, and churches. Concretely, participants included members from The Last Generation, Fridays For Future, the Junge Union (youth organization of the centrist CDU party), the Young Liberals (youth organization of the economically liberal FDP party) and several Universities in the cities of Bonn, Cologne, and Nuremberg. It is worth noting that there was an attempt at recruiting members of left-wing environmental parties as well, but unfortunately no responses. I also attempted recruiting participants from car dealerships, without success either. I also considered recruiting sympathizers and members of the far-right AfD party, but decided against it, partly because getting in touch with them was harder since their events tended not to be open to the public. The main reason was that, though incredibly interesting and important, moderating workshops with members of a political party that is classified as a “suspected extremist” party by the German judiciary (Moulson, 2024) seemed a little too big of a task for a first tryout of this method.

Noteworthy as well was the gender difference (33% women, 66% men). Not only were there significantly more men who signed up for the study in general – there was also a difference in gender distribution between the groups: Group A, which favored faster and more radical implementation of climate policies consisted of 58% women while Group B, being skeptical about a fast transition, consisted almost exclusively of men.

The average age in Group A was 34, while it was 24 in Group B. This age difference was because Group A were recruited from a larger variety of backgrounds, while most of the Group

B participants came from the youth organizations of the CDU and FDP parties. It had proven much harder to find participants for Group B, and members of these two youth organizations proved to be the most willing to participate.

## **2.2. Materials**

Step 1 - All participants upon signing up for the workshop were asked six five-point Likert scale questions (strongly agree – strongly disagree) on their opinions about climate policy, to place them in one of the two groups. These questions were developed from the research of Mau et al. (2023) who distilled down a list of the currently most polarizing statements around climate policy in Germany. The full list of questions can be found in Annex A.

### ***2.2.1. Attitudes to outgroup***

Respondents' attitudes toward members of the other group were measured via self report measures in several ways. These include (1) a "feeling thermometer" measuring the difference between participants' sentiments towards the ingroup and outgroup<sup>1</sup> and (2) a so-called 'social distance' measure which included several 5-point Likert scale questions asking participant how comfortable they would be having people from the other side as friends, whether they thought that people from the other side were generally good people and whether they got angry thinking about people from the other side. Both were asked at the beginning of the intervention and then again after the intervention, to see if there was any change in these values.

Furthermore, the post-test included several 5-point Likert-scale questions on whether participants felt understood by those from the other side, whether they themselves were able to understand the other side and if they saw any commonalities.

Both the pre- and the post-test were administered via Qualtrics.

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<sup>1</sup> Participants indicate how their feelings toward their own group and the outgroup on a scale from 0 to 100, with 0 being most negative, 50 being neutral, and 100 being most positive. The two scores are then compared to see if there is a difference.

### **2.3. Design and Procedure**

The study had a focus group research design with some quantitative measurements. Based on the constraints of a master's thesis and the limited number of participants, there was no control group, nor was there a random distribution of participants across the workshops. For this reason, the study features not only quantitative variables but also a thorough qualitative analysis based on the methods described by Braun & Clarke (2006) and Caillaud et al. (2020).

For the quantitative measurements, the independent variable was the intervention, and the dependent variable was the openness of the participants towards the other group. In total, there were five groups, each one consisting of 7-8 people, with an equal number of proponents (Group A) and critics of climate policies (Group B). Two trained moderators were present to facilitate the meetings. The study was conducted fully online via the videoconferencing platform Zoom.

Step 2 – Upon joining the video call, participants were welcomed and received a brief overview of what was to come. After a brief introduction round, everyone completed the pre-test questionnaire described above. The moderator then explained the ground rules and asked for verbal or nonverbal agreement from the participants. A coin was flipped to determine which group would start with the exercise.

Step 3 – The groups then took turns reflecting on their views. They were asked two questions: (1) “Where do you stand on this issue, and why is your position good for the larger community?” And (2) “What are some potential downsides to your position?”. Each group had 20 minutes to take their turns; within those, each participant had three minutes to state their individual opinion, leaving six to eight minutes for the subgroup members to engage in a less structured exchange with each other. The moderators ensured that all participants had equal speaking time.

Step 4 – After both groups had their turn, participants from each side were invited to share what they learned about how the other side sees themselves and if they found any points in common.

Step 5 – After completing the respective activities, all participants completed the post-test questionnaire.

Step 6 – Finally, the intervention concluded with an oral debrief by the moderators and a reflection moment, inviting the group to share their experience of the intervention.

## 2.4. Analytic procedure

The workshops were recorded via the record function provided by Zoom and later transcribed word by word and translated into English. The translated transcripts of all workshops can be found in Annex B. Afterwards, qualitative analysis was performed on the transcripts. This was done in two phases. In the first phase, I made use of thematic analysis by identifying the types of arguments that each group brought up in the Fishbowl, as well as participants' self-admitted disadvantages to their own arguments. To do this, I created two documents, one for each side of the discussion, and collected quotations of arguments and downsides of arguments that participants listed in the Fishbowl. Afterwards, I searched for common themes and arguments, according to the instructions by Braun & Clarke (2006). After reviewing the themes and making sure they applied to the whole data set, I narrowed the scope to define and name reoccurring themes, as well as organizing them into a tree of themes and sub-themes. Efforts were then made to compare the two documents and look for common themes between groups A and B, seeing whether the transcripts showed any areas of agreement.

The second phase included looking more closely at the second part of the intervention where participants were asked directly for their feedback on the workshop and whether they had learned anything new about the other side and saw any commonalities. In this part of the analysis, I used a process analytical approach to investigate how participants reacted to each other's arguments. According to Caillaud et al. (2020), participants' *ways of consensus-making* can be categorized into *hybridizing* (combining the perspectives of both sides equally to come up with novel ways of looking at the problem), *selective prevalence* (acknowledging the other side, but still mostly relying on one's own way of seeing the issue), and *displacement* (solely relying on their own viewpoint with next to no acknowledgment of the other sides views).

To gain deeper insight into how accepting participants were of the arguments from the other side, I used these descriptions to analyze the last part of the workshops.

## 2.5. Ethical Considerations and Data Protection

Before launching the study, ethical implications were considered. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before the beginning of the study, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the intervention at any time without penalty. All data collected was completely anonymized to protect participants' privacy. The main investigators and



moderators had previously observed several Braver Angels workshops on their own and leading up to the study were in contact with key members of the Braver Angels organization to receive advice on the design of the intervention.

Since the recording of the workshops signifies the processing of personal data, several measures were taken to ensure the protection of participants' privacy and the legality of the intervention. The legal grounds for the processing were ensured by getting the participants' consent according to Art. 9(2)(a) of the GDPR. Nobody but me and the thesis supervisor had access to the recordings. The meetings were transcribed and fully anonymized. The original recordings of the intervention will be destroyed the latest 6 months after the dissertation defense.

## Chapter 3 – Results

### 3.1. Quantitative results

To explore the potential changes in affective polarization following the intervention, I performed a two-tailed T-test comparing the results of the *feeling thermometer* measurement for the outgroup in the pre- and post-test. Out of all the workshops, only Workshop 5 showed a significant increase in self-reported positive feelings toward the other side ( $t(6) = 2.61, p = .040$ ), with a mean change of 26.71, 95% CI [-51.71, -1.72].

None of the other workshops showed significant results ( $t(27) = 0.58, p = 0.57$ ). The mean change was 1.86, 95% CI [-8.42, 4.70], indicating no significant effect of the intervention.

For all five workshops together, the results were not statistically significant either  $t(34) = 1.89, p = .068$ . The mean difference was -6.83, 95% CI [-14.18, 0.52]. Although the difference was not statistically significant, it approached significance, suggesting a trend that may warrant further investigation. Among the social distance measurements, there were no significant changes from pre- to post-test.

### 3.2. Qualitative results

#### 3.2.1. Thematic analysis

This section reports the kinds of themes and arguments that participants from both groups brought to the conversation. For each group, there were four to six themes that commonly came up in most of the workshops. Participants in both groups were also able to admit to possible disadvantages. There were also several themes that participants from both groups had in common. Table 3.1 gives a summary.

**Table 3.1***Themes for both groups*

<b>Arguments</b>	
<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group B</b>
1) Call for rapid change 2) Painting a picture of the consequences 3) Germany as pioneer 4) Referring to scientific authority 5) Monetary arguments 6) Non-climate-related arguments – cleaner air, better quality of life	1) Balance between climate policy and other issues 2) Better and more effective solutions 3) Concern about losing in competition with other countries 4) Relativizing Germany's part in GHG emissions
<b>Disadvantages</b>	
<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group B</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative outcomes with rapid change</li> <li>• Discomfort with radical change</li> <li>• Critical reflection on own protest methods</li> <li>• Individual effects</li> </ul>	1) Approach might not be good enough 2) Danger of perfectionism 3) Losing track of CC when focusing on other issues 4) Others
<b>Common themes between both groups</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HMCC exists</li> <li>• Proper education/Communication about Climate Change</li> <li>• Taking farmers on board in solar and wind</li> <li>• Concern about societal backlash and disadvantaged groups</li> <li>• Concern about other countries not following suit</li> </ul>	

**Group A – Proponents of more rapid climate policy measures.**

Participants from group A brought up a variety of different themes in their arguments and advantages to their opinions. In general, the sub-groups were similar across the different workshops: Many of the same arguments mentioned came up in every workshop. However, there were also some other, smaller themes that only emerged in some workshops. Here is a summary:

1. Call for rapid change
  - a. Call for more measures
  - b. Call to do less harm
2. Painting a picture of the consequences
  - a. Future consequences
  - b. Already present consequences
  - c. Pointing to things that need to be preserved
3. Germany as pioneer
  - a. Practical – we should because we have the means
  - b. Moral – we should because we exploited others
4. Referring to scientific authority
5. Monetary arguments
6. Non-climate-related arguments – cleaner air, better quality of life

One of the most prominent themes was a (1) *call for rapid change* - wanting Germany to become sustainable as quickly as possible. This usually happened in one of two ways: Either as a *call to introduce more measures* ( “we are not doing enough”) or as a *call to do less harm* (“We can’t go on like this,” “We are taking too much from nature”)

Stefanie: “For me, that means we have to get out of fossil fuels, not tomorrow, not the day after tomorrow, but actually more like two days ago”

Another theme that was present in all five A groups was (2) *painting a picture of the consequences* of climate change. This was done either through referring to *possible future consequences* such as wars, resources scarcity and civilizational collapse, or pointing to *current consequences* such as recent extremes and natural disasters that are already occurring in parts of the planet. Finally, some participants also pointed to those *things they want to preserve* or are afraid of losing, such as democracy, freedom, or security.

Christian: “we must do everything possible to avert the catastrophes of rising sea levels, severe weather events, drought, loss of habitat, food, extraction problems, war, flight, suffering, etc. that are imminent as a result of climate change”

Sarah: “[...] it's 30 degrees in Spain right now. They have a water shortage in winter, which is kind of absurd. And another thing... Germany is ranked fourth in terms of Co2 emissions, that's 2%. We are responsible for 2%”

A less common theme that occurred only in two workshops was (3) *justifying the need for Germany to be a pioneer* in climate policy. This justification was either *practical*, by stating that Germany has the resources and knowledge necessary to make a change, or *moral*, by pointing

out how Germany has profited by emitting greenhouse gases (GHG) at the expense of poorer countries. Below are examples of both statements, respectively:

Linda: “At some point it's enough and at some point, you have to take a look and above all realize that we live in an extremely privileged situation in Germany. The problem is, of course, that it's a global problem. We in Germany alone simply can't change anything. That is of course super, super problematic. Nevertheless, I believe that we as Germany should also be a pioneer, because if we always just say well, if the others don't do anything, then we won't do anything either. Someone has to start; someone has to bite the bullet”

Julian: “I think it's about justice, somewhere. So, I believe in the concept of historical responsibility, in other words that we - our prosperity in Germany or in the whole western world, actually, to a certain extent we have also built on having exploited the other part or parts of the world. On one hand, as far as natural resources are concerned. and also, the Co2 emissions that we have been emitting for centuries over the last few decades, which is now helping to ensure that the situation is at its worst in the regions of the world, who make and have made the smallest contribution, especially also um That's – well – kind of an important point to me”

Another theme endorsed by two groups was (4) *referring to the authority of science*. This included mentioning the IPCC reports and pointing out the scientific consensus around the urgency of climate change.

Sarah: “So, for example, says the IPCC report, which is an entirely acceptable report because it's simply a collection of world scientists working on it. And it is then independently reviewed. So, if you don't believe it, you don't believe in science, I'm sorry”

Furthermore, some group A members also brought up (5) *monetary arguments*, arguing that in the long run, not protecting the climate is more expensive than protecting it.

Dieter: “It's not the case that everything has to get worse and more expensive. If we live more with nature, things may become even cheaper”

Finally, two groups also brought up (6) *non-climate related arguments*, stating that CC measures can also have other benefits such as cleaner air, more independence from other countries and safer streets.

Anja: “Whether it's the cleaner air, or that the roads are safer, that you save money and resources. So, it's actually more of a positive picture [...]”

Mia: “That children can play on the street again. We used to do that when we were kids. But now I don't see children playing on this street anymore. Often not even in the countryside. And I know how important that is. It's just a shame.”

### ***Disadvantages.***

Participants from group A pointed out several disadvantages to their own opinions. These were:

- 1) Potential of negative outcomes if change happens too fast
  - a. Potential for social tensions and alienation
  - b. Potential for some groups to be disproportionately hit
- 2) Discomfort with radical change (people from the other side criticized that this is not “real criticism”)
- 3) Critical reflection on protest methods by Last Generation members – “our methods are debatable”
- 4) Individual effects
  - a. Emotionalizing can be overwhelming
  - b. Feeling like an outsider in society

In several workshops the possibility that *(1) moving too fast might lead to negative outcomes* was listed in various ways. Participants mentioned the danger of *socially disadvantaged people to be disproportionately hit* by climate measures such as a carbon tax . Related to this, other participants mentioned the *potential for social tensions and alienation* if the measures introduced were seen as unfair by parts of the population.

Sarah: “A disadvantage of my position is that you might react too quickly and then it doesn’t work for it to be a socially just transformation, because you don’t include all people or all perspectives. and that shouldn’t happen. So, it has to be socially just climate protection”

Mia: “It’s very stressful. It’s very difficult and it’s a healing process in society, and then we just see how exhausting and how difficult it is and how divisive it is right now, and how much the societal tension grows”

Another downside that was mentioned by group A participants in almost all workshops was that *(2) radical change will be uncomfortable*, meaning that the measures they were proposing would not be easy for people to take in and that in the short term many people in society might need to give up many of the comforts they have in their daily lives.

Mia: “Well, one big disadvantage is that we humans can’t carry on as we have been, simply wanting to make bigger and bigger, more and more, the economy should become even stronger, even stronger gross domestic product etc.

Noteworthy here is that some members of group B criticized these types of points, describing them as “not real criticisms” but instead just a repetition of the initial argument, as in “we need to save more energy and the downside of that is that we need to save more energy.”

In two workshops, members specifically of the activist group Last Generation showed some (3) *self-criticism of their protest methods*. The LG is known for their more radical forms of protest that include disrupting traffic by glueing oneself to the streets and damaging public property such as the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin (AP News, 2023).

Julian: “In personal terms, of course, it can always be. The deeds that I do, that those somehow... that they are exaggerated, go in the wrong direction. None of this can be ruled out”

The last category of downsides I call (4) *individual effects*. This means how participants’ beliefs and opinions influence their mental health. Two participants mentioned how being an activist and being in touch with the topic of climate policy all the time can be *emotionally overwhelming*. Another participant described how he *feels like an outsider in society*.

### **Group B – Critics of more rapid climate policy measures.**

Participants from Group B brought up four general themes, divided into subthemes:

- 1) Balance between climate policy and other issues
  - a. Social issues
  - b. Economic issues
- 2) Better and more effective solutions
  - a. Criticizing the use of bans
  - b. Benefits of innovation
  - c. Deliberation and informed decision-making
- 3) Concern about losing in competition with other countries
- 4) Relativizing Germany’s part in GHG emissions

Perhaps the most common one was the wish to have more of a (1) *balance between climate policy and other issues*. These issues included *social issues*, as well as *economic issues*. The talk on the social issues centered mostly around getting the larger population on board with climate policy and making sure to create lasting change without inducing a societal backlash. The talk on economic issues had in the foreground the need for a functioning economy. The reasons for this varied. Some participants justified this by being able to keep German society’s current level of prosperity, others brought the argument that a functioning economy is necessary in order to have the power and the resources to create change.

Stefan: “I think there's a very, very famous video where certain politicians are asked, ‘why are we cutting back on one of the things we do best?’ and that is to build low-emission gasoline or diesel engines, and we are now limiting ourselves to ‘Okay, we are going all-in on electric, where the Chinese are much stronger than we are’ and ban

diesel... I think in 2030 or something like that. We are cutting ourselves off in an economy where we could get money in that we could invest in climate protection measures. And that's why I think that was too shortsighted and we made direct decisions that we will now have to pay for over the next 10 years”

Fabian: “And that is exactly the main part of my opinion, that this balancing between the measures that need to be implemented and the consequences of the measures should be designed in a way that, on one hand, the topics such as fear of social decline and fear of price increases in normal everyday life are decreased”

Another frequent topic was the wish for (2) *better and more effective solutions*. Many participants from group B criticized past attempts by the German government to lower GHG emissions. One of the most common subthemes here was the *criticism on the use of bans*.

Markus: “above all, we need to get away from this culture of prohibition. A culture of prohibition basically has two disadvantages: For one thing, it simply leads to a migration of the problem. If, for example, we now have extremely large companies that have a production line that is very negative for the environment. It will now migrate if we deal with bans. Point 2: at the end of the day, it unsettles and annoys society, and we only move a little further away from our goal”

Several participants also encouraged more *focus on innovation* in order to produce more effective solutions. Furthermore, many participants also called out past policies that had been criticized for being too hastily implemented and not working as well as intended with significant drawbacks. To aid this, they called for *deliberation and informed decision-making* – taking the time to develop well-thought-out solutions that work long-term. For some participants this involved giving more responsibility to individual citizens and companies, saying that in some circumstances, companies might be able to invent better solutions when they have more room to maneuver.

Liam: “Before we act quickly again and find another measure where we say okay, that's great, it works. And then in ten, five to ten years, we realize okay, maybe we should have done something different after all. I think it's better to take a bit more time and find a measure that really has a future”

[...]

Daniel: “In other words, the government is basically dictating what the right solution is. But they are not engineers or technicians, they are politicians. If you were to say now that every car manufacturer has to internalize the costs, the environmental damage that their product, their car, causes in its life cycle, we have to internalize these externalized costs. This means that car manufacturers bear the costs of the pollution that their product causes during its life cycle. And if they then bear the costs, they themselves have an incentive to reduce these costs. And whether this can then be solved with electricity, with hydrogen?



And then their engineers are in demand again and they are the experts, and they will find a good solution”

Another theme present in some (but not all) workshop was the (3) *concern about losing in competition with other countries*. Participants emphasized that if Germany alone was to employ radical measures against climate change, without other countries following suit, this would lead Germany to fall behind economically behind other countries:

Daniel: “[...] to be honest, I have to say that if we can really reach an agreement with other countries and not push ahead alone, so to speak, but then also take drastic steps, I would actually be behind that, that is, if we all cut back a little, are more frugal, perhaps a little less private transport. Then I could cope with these drastic measures. But not in the knowledge that the Americans and Chinese will be playing us up and walk all over us. But if they go along with it, then I could also cope with these drastic measures”

Finally, in two workshops, participants also (4) *relativized Germany’s part in GHG emissions*, saying that Germany is responsible for only a fraction of the world's CO2 emissions.

Furthermore, there are some arguments within group B that were only made by the small number of participants that questioned the validity of HMCC. Those included (a) *relativizing the effects and origins of CC*, e.g. “There have always been warm and cold periods,” (b) *focus on tangible environmental interventions* such as improving the air quality in cities, (c) *Differentiating between environmental and climate protection*, and (d) *freedom of debate and diversity of opinions*.

### ***Disadvantages.***

Participants from group B were also relatively vocal about the potential downsides of their opinions. Noteworthy here is that the replies here were quite diverse across workshops and even among individual participants.

These included the following:

- 1) Approach might not be good enough
  - a. Individual responsibility might backfire
  - b. More moderate measures might fail to motivate other countries
  - c. More rational approach might create enough action
- 2) Danger of perfectionism
- 3) Losing track of CC when focusing on other issues
- 4) Others
  - a. Lack of expertise
  - b. Downplaying of HMCC might to denying adjacent problems

The most common disadvantage listed across workshops was the doubt that one's proposed *(1) approach might not be enough* to effectively tackle CC. Participants that had suggested to give *more individual responsibilities* to companies and citizens admitted that this could backfire if those acted selfishly. Another participant stated that his preference for a *more rational approach* to the topic might not be able to provide the necessary emotional motivation for people to act. Finally, one member who had suggested *more moderate measures* admitted that this might not be enough to motivate other countries to join in.

Elias: "And then you definitely have to approach the matter less ideologically and less emotionally, but above all, yes, rationally based on facts. The disadvantages are that you can also overdo it. And that this is definitely a very important issue that has to be taken seriously, and you can't just deny it like some Republicans or whatever and pretend like nothing's happening"

Another disadvantage that was expressed in two workshops was the *(2) danger of perfectionism in solution-finding*, meaning that waiting too long to find the perfect solution could lead to not enough action happening or that action might come too late:

Jonas: "If you think too long about good measures for climate protection that don't affect the economy, it may be that by the time a decision is made, the climate is already being damaged enough that the decision is no longer really important"

In two of the workshops participants also considered *(3) losing track of CC when focusing on other issues* such as economic, social, or adaptation to climate change, saying that when paying too much attention to other issues, not enough things might end up being done to combat climate change.

Julius: "It's bad at the point where we overdo it, where we only adapt to the consequences of climate change and no longer take the measures to slow down Co2 emissions, not to reduce CO2 emissions, to slow down this process as much as possible. At the point where you focus more on adapting to the changed situation than stopping this process and slowing it down. At that point, it just becomes problematic if, by doing nothing, you ensure that the situation you have to adapt to gets worse"

Apart from these, several participants mentioned other *(4) downsides that did not really fit into any specific pattern*. One participant admitted to his *lack of expertise in the topic*, stating that "I don't have an expert opinion on it; it's felt. I don't have a scientific background on it." Two participants who were skeptical about HMCC stated that too much downplaying of HMCC might lead to *also denying the adjacent problems* such as scarcity of resources and environmental protection, which, according to those participants do deserve attention.

### *Common themes between the groups*

There are also certain statements that were made by participants from both groups, or certain moments when participants from one group would take up typical arguments from the other side. The most common themes were the following:

- 1) HMCC exists
- 2) Proper education/Communication about Climate Change
- 3) Taking farmers on board in solar and wind
- 4) Concern about societal backlash and disadvantaged groups
- 5) Concern about other countries not following suit

One common theme between both groups was the assertion that *climate change does exist* and that it is important to do something about it. Even those participants within group B who did not believe in HMCC asserted the importance of environmental protection and the switch to renewable energy for economic reasons and because of resource depletion. Many participants from both sides also mentioned how it is important to have good education about climate change and to communicate policies well to the wider public. For example, one participant from group A showed his support for taking local farmers on board when expanding on solar and wind energy. Another participant from group A emphasized that change should not be driven by a small bubble of intellectuals – a point usually brought up more by participants from group B and people that are more critical of climate protection measures (Zilles & Marg, 2022). Finally, another group A participant showed acknowledgement of a point usually brought up by group B, asking “what if other countries don’t follow suit?”.

This signifies that, while both groups brought up a variety of contradictory arguments, there was some amount of common ground to be found as well.

### **3.2.2. Process analysis**

Adapting Caillaud et al.’s (2020) framework, I defined the following categories for responding to the other side’s arguments:

- **Hybridization:** participants integrate perspectives from both groups during the feedback round. Look for signs of new, shared understandings or solutions that combine elements from both sides.
- **Selective Prevalence:** participants acknowledge the other side’s arguments but maintain their original stance, applying insights from the other group only in specific contexts or issues.

- **Displacement:** participants let their perspective dominate the conversation, with little to no acknowledgment of the other group's viewpoint, indicating a resistance to integrating opposing views.

### **Hybridization: The search for novel solutions.**

Hybridization was observed in four of the five workshops. Often, this would involve some acknowledgement and compliments to arguments of outgroup members. Typically, participants from group A appreciated group B's nuanced arguments about the shortcomings of current environmental policies and the need to involve the broader population:

Beate: "The first round [group B who spoke first] was a lot about struggling to find the right way to save energy, or how quickly and when e-cars should come and how things are with recycling. I think those are all important questions, too, so I didn't feel so far away with all that"

Dieter: "What I also noticed is that communication was mentioned again and again, and I think that's a big issue. I noticed again that this is actually mentioned by everyone. that this needs to be communicated properly [...] from climate activists or the people who have their problems with particular climate measures, yes, what Fabian said, I can understand that very well. You're supposed to recycle things, but it's being made difficult for you. And that there are also many issues in Germany. There are many problems, including many regulations that are not always climate-friendly."

Group A participants reported coming out of the workshop with a finer understanding of the intricacies of climate policies and with more ideas on what to pay attention to in order to make interventions work for the larger population.

On the side of Group B, participants often reported a newfound understanding of the urgency of the problem and some appreciation for the more personal and sometimes more emotional approach that people from group A took:

Julius: "[...] especially in group A, but also a group B that has a good balance of science and reason and at the same time a personal perspective and personal emotions. Because I don't think you can tackle the problem with just one or the other. We humans are a mixture of emotions and reason, and I experienced this in very different constellations in Group A, how much emotion and how much reason. But in each of the contributions, I heard this very strongly and was very pleased about it. Because that is often framed as: "They are tree-hugging cranks who don't know the facts. Or on the other side are cold bureaucrats who have no heart whatsoever for the concerns of the little man". There was no way you could perceive it like that. It was a mixture of ratio and emotio"

Jonas: "So what I found super interesting - and what I was hoping to get from the workshop - is simply to see other perspectives. I always like to relate it to either the

professional field or the background you have. That's where a lot of your own opinion comes from. I now see it from the perspective of the automotive industry, for example: Jan? You're coming now, for example: Do you have a background with forestry, for example, where I have no points of contact at all. I can't understand that very well. That's why I think it's super interesting that you brought up this aspect, or even if, depending on what you're studying, as you've just said, Sarah with social work. As I said, we don't have any points of contact with the other sector. That's why I think it's really important that we see what the other people's backgrounds are for their opinions”

To conclude, participants in these four workshops showed signs of respect and understanding towards the other group’s perspectives, making efforts to integrate them with their own.

Participants from both sides admitted to gaps in their knowledge and used the added perspectives of the other group to create new proposals, e.g., ‘Fast solutions – yes, but there needs to be an ongoing conversation with the larger population about their specific needs and concerns’.

### **Selective prevalence: Acknowledging yet insisting.**

Selective prevalence was the second-most common outcome, observed in three of the workshops. Participants generally respectfully acknowledged the other side’s points but showed little to no signs of appreciation or incorporating them into new arguments.

A-Stefanie: “[...] about what I’ve learned - so I wouldn't describe it as learnt, because these are not positions that are completely new to me, but I was reminded that keywords like prosperity and prohibition that are very decisive here and where there may be a disagreement about.... Uhm... about what that really means in the end. I wouldn't describe the measures I'm calling for as a ban, and I think this might be something that we could get further into dialogue over”

A-Sarah: “I found this distinction between environmental protection and climate protection interesting because I'd never thought of it that way before, because, for me... If you don't protect the climate, you can't protect the environment”

In both quotes, the group A participants show that they have understood the other sides arguments and concerns (bans, difference between environmental and climate protection), and then go into justifying their own position instead of trying to integrate the concerns (e.g., policies that empower businesses to be sustainable, environmental policies that protect both the climate and the larger environment).

Among group B members, selective prevalence often took the form of acknowledging the other side’s good intentions and their common ground of wanting to protect the planet, and yet making it clear that they disagreed with the concrete ways group A members suggested:

Markus: “Learned, not, but in any case, it's a confirmation. Our goals are definitely the same. We all want to live in a world which will also be used for many generations to come which is still really well habitable. As far as that is concerned, we have divided opinions on how to realize that goal. That's all I can say for now”

Some participants also noted again the emotionality in group A members, this time however more in a descriptive way that did not signify any judgements, positive or negative:

Patrick: “I noticed on the opposite side, or the side of the other opinion... how emotionally moving the topic is. So, the topic of climate change, how much one can be moved by the fear of it. And I don't mean that the result of this is somehow... In other words, that people who think about it emotionally, that the result they draw from it is somehow not very rational. I'm just saying that other people seem to be – let's say – moved by it differently than me. I notice that I'm trying to rationalize it a lot of the time, let's say”

To conclude, these participants stayed with their own positions. They managed to see the arguments of the other side, but did not see a way to integrate them and see them as equal to their own positions.

#### **Displacement: my position only.**

Displacement occurred in two of the workshops. group B engaged in displacement in both of these, while group A only showed signs of displacement only in one of the workshops. This happened in Workshop 4. Participants emphasized the importance of cutting back, expressing their misunderstanding of why people from the other side would be more critical of these issues:

Melanie: “Yes, so what I noticed is the difference in how the word renunciation is handled, that there is a great fear on the other side or a great resistance against renunciation or cutting back. And I, for example, experience it differently. For example [...] I've always found it a relief to be able to do without a car, meat and a big flat. It doesn't scare me. There are more things I could do without, if I knew what I was doing it for. And when I hear. that this is relativized, if the issue of climate change is equated with other problems, then I don't think it's enough”

Here, the speaker, who has quite some experience of living with less comfort, struggles to empathize with people who find changes like this daunting. By projecting her personal ease with renunciation onto others, the speaker might have a difficult time fully understanding the financial and psychological difficulties others face. One participant also expressed strong discontent about side B's criticism of bans:

Martin: I found it very stressful. I'm actually going out of it disappointed and frustrated because... this whole ban thing, in my eyes that's just a campaign. It started with Veggie-Day. Then a huge slap was brought out on 'The [political] party of bans.' Since then,

there's this generalization about bans - whenever there's talk of change, people immediately start shouting 'ban and fear.' I find that too destructive. I am very disappointed by this.

Instead of engaging with the other group's arguments here, the speaker attributes them to a broad political campaign against bans, therefore avoiding a more nuanced discussion on the necessity and potential complication of bans.

For group B members, the rhetoric included seeing confirmations of their pre-conceived notions about the other side and their perception that the other group did not critically reflect on their own arguments:

Felix: "I also saw few similarities between the two groups. The only thing we have in common is actually the topic we all talked about. I can see that one side is approaching the topic in a more extreme way and did not go into the topic in quite such detail. Unfortunately, I have to agree with the previous speaker, Nico here, and say that too little attention was paid to one's own criticism. It's like trying to sell your weaknesses as strengths in a job interview. [...] It is relatively difficult. Two - yes - you may have said at the beginning two not so very different approaches, but I would say that these two approaches were actually quite contradictory"

The speaker here focuses on his view that the other group did not critically question their arguments. While doing this, he dismisses the potential validity in their appeals to emotions and sense of urgency. Continuing the theme of emotionality, another form of displacement was the criticism of the amount of emotion that group A participants were using:

Markus: "I will personally not come out of this round frustrated, because in my opinion that's not an approach that you can build on. I can't buy anything from that. I can't develop any approaches from frustration either, but I have to look at how to deal with different situations. [...] I'm fascinated by how emotionally parts of Group A deal with it and also talk about it themselves. How personal it always is. I think it's often better to have discussions when you're a little emotionally distanced from them"

Here, the speaker focuses on the potential downsides of emotional responses and dismisses the potential power of emotions to motivate action. Furthermore, especially in workshop 4, group B participants placed much emphasis on their dislike of bans concerning climate policy and reacted with displacement when they saw this opinion challenged:

Markus: "I mean, I'm travelling to different companies and production sites every day that are extremely harmed by so many bans. Sorry, since I have to use this word again. Where real livelihoods are at stake. and if these livelihoods are taken here, they will be unpacked elsewhere [outside of Germany] and then that's really bad for the environment. We are in contact with different engineers every week, regardless of whether they work in process engineering, whether electrical engineers from all directions, in exchange. And

that means we have to work like this here on site, but realistically. And the bans are not the answer”

Based on prior experiences in his work life, the participant takes a strong stance against bans. This way, he does not leave much space for seeing the underlying intention of implementing certain bans, nor for the potential room for dialogue and compromise there.

These findings are summarized in Table 3.2 below.

**Table 3.2**

*Process analysis summary of consensus-making strategies*

	<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group B</b>
<u>Hybridizing</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appreciation of nuanced arguments on shortcomings of current environmental policies</li> <li>• Trying to find ways to involve the general population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newfound understanding of the urgency</li> <li>• Appreciation more the more personal and emotional approach of Group A</li> </ul>
<u>Selective prevalence</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respectful acknowledgement of other side’s argument, but no sign of integrating them into something new</li> <li>• Reaffirming one’s own position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledging the other side’s good intention and common ground, but clearly disagreeing with the concrete suggestions of Group A</li> <li>• Descriptive acknowledgement of emotionality in Group A</li> </ul>
<u>Displacement</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of renunciation without acknowledgement of other people’s specific needs</li> <li>• Discontent about other side’s criticism of bans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmations of their pre-conceived notions about Group A</li> <li>• Criticism and dismissal of emotionality</li> <li>• At times strong emphasis on criticism of bans</li> </ul>



### **Further findings.**

What is noteworthy is the difference between the workshops. There were two workshops in which hybridization was the only strategy to be observed, missing the other two completely. On the other hand, there was one workshop (Workshop 4) where selective prevalence and displacement dominated, without any hybridization. In most workshops, the groups seemed to mirror each other, having roughly even amounts of the same strategies. The exception was Workshop 2, where group B engaged largely in displacement, whereas group A made mostly hybridizing remarks. Another interesting trend was the difference in how emotionality was perceived by members of group B. In four out of five workshops, group B members pointed out the stronger focus on emotional speech in the other group. However, the way they appraised this emotionality varied widely between workshops and between participants. In the workshops that had a predominantly hybridizing dynamic, the emotionality was perceived as positive, whereas in workshops with more selective prevalence or displacement, it was rather appraised neutrally or negatively, respectively. This could mean that depending on the context, the emotionality is perceived differently, or that maybe that there are several types of emotionality and these influence what kinds of strategies (hybridizing etc.) people use.

Furthermore, a very common theme on both sides was the emphasis on a common ground. Almost all participants mentioned in one way or another that both groups wanted the same thing: A livable future on a healthy planet. Interestingly, this common ground was usually brought up, no matter if the participant was engaging in hybridizing, selective prevalence, or displacement. Even participants that heavily disagreed with what the other group had said would at times mention this commonality:

Markus: “Our goals are definitely the same. We all want to live in one world which will also be used for many generations to come”

Felix: “I also saw few similarities between the two groups. The only thing we have in common is actually the topic we all talked about”

Stefanie: “I would join Patrick in what is somehow the common ground: Lowest common denominator: Climate change is happening, and that's not a good thing”

This suggests that acknowledging common ground and finding common solutions together might be separate processes and can occur independently from each other.

## Chapter 4 – Discussion

### 4.1. Quantitative results and comparison to Braver Angels research

The outcomes and the process of the workshops were different than expected. Most of the workshops did not show many significant changes in political polarization measured by social distance or the feeling thermometer. This suggests that at least for more strongly polarized people this intervention might not necessarily reduce political polarization as measured by a feeling thermometer and social distance questions.

The study at hand also performed less well compared to the results of Braver Angels workshops: According to Braver Angels' own numbers, 70% of their workshop participants in the Red/Blue workshops felt more understood, 79% say they understand the other side better, and 75% see common ground (Jacobs et al., 2019). Compared to this, among the participants in the study at hand only 36% said they feel more understood, 56% say they understand the other side better, and 69% said they see common ground. One reason for this might be that in this study the groups are not as clearly defined as in Braver Angels Workshops. According to Röllicke (2023), having a clearly defined identity and mutual like and dislike for one's ingroup and outgroup, respectively, is a key component for determining affective polarization. Other than in an American context with clear party lines that are often also tied to personal identity and demographics like race, gender and age (Pew Research Center, 2020, Westwood & Peterson, 2020), the mere question about one's opinion on climate measures might not be sufficient to create a strong enough identity.

Furthermore, since a large number of participants in the study at hand consisted of members of activist groups or political parties, their reasoning might be motivated (Leeper & Slothuus, 2014; Bayes & Druckman, 2021) to cling to their positions more tightly because more of their identity as a volunteer, or at times even their livelihood as a politician depend on them believing in and defending the positions their organization stands for.

Another reason might be the gender distribution in the workshops: While in Braver Angels roughly two-thirds of all participants identify as women (Braver Angels, 2023), the gender distribution in this study was the opposite with 67% of participants identifying as male and only 33% identifying as female. There is some evidence that men tend to enjoy political arguments

and disagreements more (Wolak, 2020) while women tend to take on more compromising roles (Dildar & Amjad, 2017; Nikolova & Lamberton, 2016).

Interestingly, the only workshop that had a significant reduction in political polarization was a group that had participants that were not active in any political or activist groups and had less strong opinions in the first place. In all four other workshops, most participants were members of political parties or climate activist groups. This demographic is also most reflective of how a normal Braver Angels workshop is set up: People who differ in their ideology but are not necessarily members of a political party or have particularly strong beliefs (Baron et al., 2021, Braver Angels, 2023). Furthermore, this particular workshop also had a gender distribution that was balanced, even slightly skewed towards female participants, which is more similar to the gender distribution in typical Braver Angels workshops.

Finally, the intervention might have been less effective because it was not the full sequence that Braver Angels uses in their workshops: As described in the literature review, the typical “Red/Blue” Braver Angels workshops that prior research has been based on consist of four exercises, of which the Fishbowl is just one. While the Fishbowl has been used as a standalone workshop by Braver Angels at times, these workshops were not evaluated afterwards.

The other exercises include opportunities for participants to correct stereotypes about themselves, while admitting to a “kernel of truth” in them, an opportunity to ask the other side clarifying questions and a round of brainstorming actions to reduce polarization in their communities. These other exercises might have important effects that are not covered by the Fishbowl exercise. Decreasing negative stereotyping, giving more clarity about the other side’s actual positions, and having an experience of actually working together while brainstorming are all aspects that have proven valuable by previous research on polarization (Hartman et al., 2021) and intergroup contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2014).

## **4.2. Qualitative analysis and comparison to prior qualitative research**

### ***4.2.1. Thematic analysis***

Participants mentioned varied themes in their arguments. Group A (proponents of more rapid climate policy measures), whose arguments could be categorized into six different themes, primarily called for rapid change with Germany as a pioneer, highlighting the negative

consequences of climate change and expressing strong emotions like fear and despair. In contrast, Group B (critics of more rapid climate policy measures) brought up five different argumentative themes and emphasized balancing climate policy with other issues, seeking more effective solutions, and expressing concern about losing competitive advantage to other countries.

Participants from Group A acknowledged potential downsides such as social tensions, exclusion of disadvantaged people, and some self-criticism of their protest methods. They also noted the discomfort of the proposed changes, though some Group B participants felt this was insufficient criticism. Group B commonly brought up concerns that their measures might not be enough for addressing climate change, could be too perfectionistic, and could cause a loss of focus on climate change when focusing on other problems in society.

Common themes between the groups included acknowledging that climate change exists and that is important to tackle it. Furthermore, many participants from both sides agreed about the importance of good education and communication about the topic, as well as transparency by politicians and the participation of the wider public in the decision-making process.

In part, this fits with prior qualitative research by Zilles and Marg (2022). The themes brought up by Group A largely match with those observed in Zilles & Marg's 'Savers of Future' category: Demanding more measures, being future-oriented, belief in science and putting pressure on politicians.

The differences begin when looking at group B. Participants here seem to have brought up other arguments than those of the 'Advocates of the Common Good' group defined by Zilles & Marg. Unlike them, group B members generally did not criticize the establishment much. They even supported climate policy, just to a lesser extent and by different means than group A participants. While they also did engage for the common good, they lacked the positive attachment to the rural and 'pristine' landscape that characterized the 'Advocates of the Common Good' category. Their demographics were also different: Most group B participants were also from cities (as opposed to the countryside in Zilles & Marg's article), with cosmopolitan attitudes (though less so than group A participants) and trust in scientific institutions. This might be partly because participants were recruited through political youth organizations around the cities of Bonn and Cologne. I contacted more organizations from more rural areas as well, but did not get many replies. Zilles and Marg's recruitment of opponents of climate policies was

mostly done in the countryside, where these types of movements seem to be stronger (Neukirch, 2020, Reusswig et al., 2020).

In general, the dynamic in this study seemed to be less polarized: Apart from two exceptions, none of the themes expressed by the participants included a negative or distorted image of the other side, suggesting malicious intention or using derogatory language. Another difference was the fact that since they were asked to, participants were able to also reveal some of their doubts about their own side and arguments, which is an important aspect that needs to be explored more in qualitative studies about political beliefs. At the same time, there were also commonalities in the results of the two studies: All groups in both studies expressed disappointment with how politicians have managed the issue so far. Furthermore, the attachment toward serving the common good was an important theme in all groups in both studies.

This suggests that the debate around climate policy in Germany is more complicated than a split between two sides, and instead has multiple groups and stakeholders emphasizing various aspects of the debate. Overall, it seems like the groups of Zilles and Marg were narrower and defined themselves more clearly and were also able to define their opposite group. This study, on the other hand, had more loosely defined groups and tried to capture a broader social dynamic with diverging views among the entire population as opposed to specific groups.

One approach for future research would be to take this approach and apply it to more clearly defined opposing groups such as the ones in Zilles and Marg's study.

#### **4.2.2. Process analysis**

Participants would engage in all three categories of responding to the other's arguments: The most common one was *hybridization* – participants acknowledged the other side's arguments and reported a better understanding of the intricacies involved in the topic, such as including the general population, the difficulties of bureaucracy and a newfound understanding of the urgency of the topic. In *selective prevalence*, participants would show understanding of the other side's concerns, but instead of incorporating them into novel solutions, would go back to reinforcing their own position. This was the second-most common category, being present in three of the workshops. The least common category was *displacement*, being present in two of the workshops. These categories also were related to how participants perceived each other. In particular, Group A's emphasis on emotionality tended to be evaluated positively, neutrally, or

negatively by Group B members, depending on whether the workshop had more hybridizing, selective prevalence, or displacing dynamics.

Interestingly, the workshops with the highest amount of selective prevalence and displacement were the ones that also had a high amount of Group A participants from the more extreme *Last Generation*. Furthermore, these discussion strategies often co-occurred with themes like the use of bans in policy making, strong demands for a change of economic system or the use of disruptive protest methods.

This could be explained with the concept of *trigger points* outlined by Mau and colleagues (2023). The themes and dialogue patterns in the workshops with more selective prevalence and displacement reflected many of the common trigger points described in the book: (1) differential treatments, (2) violations of normality, (3) Fear of things getting out of control, and (4) infringement on autonomy. Members of The Last Generation are often seen and criticized for *violating social norms* and *infringing on people's autonomy*, both through their protest methods as well as through their political demands (Rucht, 2023). The topic of bans can be seen both as an infringement on autonomy as well as a danger of loss of control (“Where does it end?”) by critics of these bans. On the other hand, these critics can be seen as violating necessary social norms by those who are in favor of these bans. Advocating for a change in the economic system can trigger strong fears of things getting out of hand for people who rely on and believe in the current economic system. On the other hand, the reluctance to let go of the comforts of a high-carbon lifestyle can trigger perceptions of inequality compared to less wealthy people or people from poorer countries. This might be one explanation of why the workshops with more LG members and more discussion of these topics tended to have fewer hybridizing dynamics.

#### **4.3. The broader context of political polarization**

Among other things, the results of this study signify the variety of ways political polarization can unfold, especially when it is situated in a multi-party system. They suggest that there might be quite a difference on how polarization manifests, depending on whether it is connected to broader political identities (such as party affiliation, like in most American studies on the topic) or to specific political issues (such as climate policy opinions). The current state of research around issue-based affective polarization is that the degree of polarization is strongly linked to belief in that topic. In other words, the more strongly people feel about a certain opinion, the

stronger they tend to feel about people that agree or disagree with them, even if they do not know any other characteristics about the identities of these people (Herold et al., 2023). Among other reasons, this might explain why the results of this study were different to results of more identity-based polarization studies: Since people did not change their opinion about the issue at hand much, their general affective polarization towards people who disagree with them stayed the same. This might have been different if the identities of the outgroups in the study had been more clearly defined.

The systematic review of polarization studies in multiparty contexts by Röllicke (2023) gives some further context on this: She states that many studies in this field come with several ambiguities in their definitions: Firstly, it is often not very clearly defined who the out-group is. It can be political parties (or blocs of multiple parties), voters and supporters of political parties, or citizens with other political views and identities more generally. Secondly, the question of how to define “dislike” – whether it is directed vertically (i.e., at parties and political elites “at the top” of the political system) or horizontal (i.e., fellow citizens at the same level of the political system). Thirdly, lack of a clear definition of what political polarization actually is and who or what exactly is polarized. Röllicke ends up defining polarization as a process – meaning a “development of a less polarised state towards a more polarised state, which means a widening gap.” This gap can expand in three ways: (1) It widens due to an increasingly positive in-group evaluation, (2) it widens through an increasingly negative out-group evaluation, or (3) through both an increase in positive in-group evaluations and an increase in negative out-group evaluations. The third option seems to lead to the highest sense of affective polarization. All of this brings up important questions for the study at hand: The feeling thermometer, which, according to Röllicke is one way of measuring in- and outgroup evaluations did show that participants were evaluating people who agreed with them more favorably than they did people they disagreed with. However, it is worth noting that only 42% of participants actually evaluated the outgroup unfavorably, while all but one participant rated their own group favorably. This might signify that in this study there was only a moderate amount of polarization, which was more due to in-group favoritism than out-group dismissal. Furthermore, the groups in the study at hand were quite loosely defined, focusing just on opinions and their feelings toward people who agree or disagree with them – no clear identity groups like the ones of Zilles and Marg (2021), for example. This might not be enough to properly identify with one of these groups.

It is also not entirely clear toward whom the polarization was supposed to be directed. For example, many of the climate activists from Group A expressed discontent with politicians in the leading government coalition, as did the liberal youth party members in Group B. There is reason to doubt whether they really blamed each other, or other groups (e.g., political elites, as in vertical dislike) that were not present at the workshops.

Future studies might look at more clearly defined groups that have a higher degree of identification among their members and have a clearer affective polarization with stronger positive/negative evaluation against the in-/outgroup. Bringing back up the explorative research by Mau et al. (2023) and Roose (2021), these might not be big groups at the center of society, but more extreme groups tending more towards the fringes of the political spectrum that lead to the effect of an increased “felt polarization”. For example, two reasonably-sized groups in Germany that seem to show mutual negative out-group evaluation are supporters of the left-wing Greens and the right-wing populist AfD parties (Herold et al., 2023): Most voters of the Greens (92%) have negative evaluations of the AfD and likewise, most AfD voters (77%) have negative evaluations of the Greens (Roose, 2021). Mau et al. (2023) state that even though German society is far from being divided into ideologically well-sorted groups with contrary opinions across the board, this politization at the fringes could in the medium-term indeed lead to the polarization that so far has only been speculated about. This means that it might be fruitful to attempt depolarization interventions with these more extreme groups.

The groups defined by Zilles & Marg (2022) could also be good candidates for such polarization workshops, since they do have very clearly defined identities and each acknowledge the other group as their counterpart, respectively, with mutual dislike.

#### **4.4. Implications for the field of political polarization**

The study expands the current research around reciprocal group reflection, indicating that in a multiparty system, the intervention might be less effective – at least in the context of an issue-oriented discussion with a largely politically active sample.

It also expands the repository of qualitative research and confirms prior research in that the discussion around climate policy is more nuanced and has a different focus than most people think (Herold et al., 2023, Mau et al., 2023, Frondel et al., 2021): The debate is not about whether climate change should be tackled or not, but much more around how it should be



tackled, how much change should be happening in what pace, and who should pay for it. It expanded current research by a collection of common argumentative themes brought by both proponents and critics of rapid climate policy implementation as well as themes both sides have in common, such as the need for proper education and communication around climate policy measures and a concern about societal backlash and disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, this is the first study to date that encouraged members of polarized groups to critically reflect about their own opinions and share those reflections with people who disagree with them.

It also expanded the literature around cognitive polyphasia (Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernandez, 2015; Caillaud et al., 2020) and consensus-making and combines it with the concept of *trigger points*, suggesting that an increased presence of societal trigger points might be part of the reason why some discussions slip more into patterns of *selective prevalence* and *displacement*.

#### **4.5. Limitations and thoughts on future interventions**

All this being said, it is clear that this master's thesis also has its limitations. With a sample of only 36 people and without a control group, the quantitative results of this study are to be seen not as claims about the validity of reciprocal group reflection methods, but as explorations that can hopefully inform future research questions. There were also important limitations to the populations included in the sample. Due to the convenience and snowball sampling process, the sample was not representative of the German population: Most of the participants, from both group A and B had a university level of education, were from the city and white, without a migration background. And, as mentioned before, a majority of participants were also involved in political or activist organizations. Furthermore, there were some gaps in the recruiting of political activists as well. While the sample included many members of the German Liberal party (FDP) and some from the conservative Christian party (CDU/CSU), I did not manage to recruit people on the left side of the political spectrum, like the Social Democrats (SPD) or The Greens. While I did recruit climate activists, there is some research indicating there might be some difference in how climate activists practice dissent vs. people in institutionalized political parties (O'Brien et al., 2018). Furthermore, I did not recruit members of the far-right AfD party either. Future research should take a more balanced approach and recruit larger and more comprehensive samples from a more diverse pool of participants, from all income classes, ethnic

backgrounds, and geographical locations in Germany. If these studies include quantitative measures, they should include a control group in order to be able to make solid empirical claims.

Another promising recommendation for future research is to take the suggestions by Röllicke (2023) to heart and study more clearly defined groups whose members identify with their group and that clearly dislike the members of the other group, respectively, instead of directing the dislike to political elites or other societal groups. Examples for this can be supporters for the Greens vs. the AfD parties or the ‘Advocates of the Common Good’ and ‘Savers of the Future’ categories outlined by Zilles & Marg (2022).

Finally, future research could also investigate other interventions by Braver Angels that are less geared towards reciprocity and might be more geared towards issue-oriented polarizing topics. For example, their workshop ‘Depolarizing within’ places a greater emphasis on self-reflection and dialogue skills. It helps participants question their own biases and stereotypes about people that disagree with them and equips them with strategies for how to have more constructive discussions. A more abstract approach like this, still with a focus on self-reflection, could be applied more comprehensively to the range of opinions that are present in a multi-party system.

## **Conclusion**

In sum, the findings show that polarization in Germany is complex and multifaceted and might be better addressed by methods other than a two-sided approach like the one applied here. The study showed the importance of clearly defining one's groups and ensuring that there is clear, mutual polarization. It also provided a rich qualitative dataset giving insights into people's opinions on climate policy, and how they deal with hearing other people's conflicting opinions. Most importantly, the study showed that German society is not as divided around climate change as one might think. There is broad agreement that solutions are needed, and things cannot continue the way they are. And while there is disagreement on how this goal is supposed to be reached, the study shows that respectful conversations about these details are possible. My hope is that this paper gives some useful pointers to support approaches for addressing these crucial conversations in the future.

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### **Annex A - Questions to distribute the groups**

Five-point Likert-scale questions, ranging from 1 – ‘fully agree’ to 5 – ‘fully disagree’.

Questions 2, 3 and 5 are reverse-coded.

1. In order to combat Climate Change, Germany must introduce fast and drastic measures to prevent future damages.
2. We are risking our entire prosperity if put everything to the test now because of climate change.
3. Germany has already done a lot to protect the climate. Before we introduce more measures, other countries should first follow suit.
4. To protect the climate, significantly more wind turbines should be built, even if it has to be near populated areas.
5. I am tired of the constant demand to live environmentally conscious.
6. Regarding climate change, I think more extreme forms of protests like school strikes and street blockades are justified.

## **Annex B - Workshop transcripts**

### **Workshop 1**

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I would be interested to know who you are? Where are you from and what brought you here today?

**A - Sarah:** Exactly. So, I'm Sarah. I'm currently or have been in Freiburg for a while and am studying social work but I'm originally from Dresden. I can't remember exactly through which medium I got the message about this survey, well, I'm active in several climate protection groups and I assume it was sent into one of them. That's how I ended up here.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Wonderful. Thank you. Sarah. Now Max and then Jan.

**B - Max:** Yes, hello everyone. I'm Max from Dachau. That's in the north of Munich. I became aware of him through Lukas. He's a good colleague of mine, and I'm glad to be here today and to be able to help shape the whole thing, is to present my point of view, because I find the topic very exciting in principle.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. Thank you Max. Then Jan and then Jonas

**A - Jan:** I'm currently in Bonn. I grew up in southern Germany, actually in the corner of Freiburg. Lorenz, you came to us from an event where I got to know you and I was immediately enthusiastic about the topic. Or the idea of this round table.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you for being here. Jonas and then Klaus

**B - Jonas:** I've known Lorenz for a bit longer now. We both went to the same school in Nuremberg and did our A-levels together, and in general, the topic is currently very, very interesting, it's a big topic, and that's why I'd like to contribute something to it.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Jonas. Then Klaus and then Lena.

**B - Klaus:** Good evening. I am Klaus. I came to this topic through my wife, who is organist at the church where Lorenz's mother works. And he asked if anyone there was interested in this event. That's why I'm here today

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you. Klaus. Right then Lena and then Lukas.

**A - Lena:** I'm also originally from Nuremberg. I think it's [climate change] simply a topic that you should exchange ideas on and also try to get out of your bubble sometimes. I think it's important to talk about it and also try to understand the other side

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you. Lena. and last but not least, Lukas.

**B - Lukas:** That's right, I'm Lukas. I live in Munich. Lorenz asked me to take part in the exercise here because there seem to be few people in our generation who take a critical view of the topic.

Yes. And of course I find it very interesting to overcome the polarization in society, because it's not just the climate, as it says in the invitation, where society is very polarized, which then of course also reduces cohesion.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. Thank you very much, Lukas. I'm delighted that so many of you came and that so many different corners of Germany are represented. Then let's get started right away. Before we start - Sabrina will send you a link in the chat right now. It will take you to a questionnaire where you will be asked a few things about how you see the other side. - For some people it's uncomfortable to talk about sides - You could say questions about how you see people who have a different opinion on the subject. At the end of the workshop you will be asked the same questionnaire again, in the hope that maybe a few things have changed.

**B - Klaus:** I saw the questionnaire briefly, but now it's gone. I don't see it anymore.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Is it gone? Interesting.

**B - Klaus:** Yes, there it is again

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** When you're done, you can just quickly raise your digital hand.

**B - Klaus:** I don't quite understand how to fill this in yet, because it says. "How do you feel about those who agree with you?" I don't even know who agrees with me.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I would say people who have the same or a similar opinion that you have.

**B - Klaus:** So, it's not in relation to this meeting?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** No, in general.

**B - Klaus:** Okay.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. I think most of them are finished. How are things with you Klaus?

**B - Klaus:** I'm finished.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Ok, wonderful. Thank you then the actual exercise starts straight away

Just so that everything runs smoothly during the exercise, there are a few basic rules. The focus is on understanding and explaining. This is not a debate. It's not about us agreeing later. It's about understanding each other better. The second is - we only speak for ourselves - we stick to our own experiences and don't speak for other groups. The third one: We stay with the particular activity. There will always be relatively specific questions. Something like "What have you learned about how the other side views the issue, and have you found anything in common? I would ask you to really stick to the questions that are being asked, even though it might be tempting to keep bringing more arguments supporting your opinion. The rest are standard norms of respect - letting each other finish, listening, etc.

Does everyone agree? [looking for non-verbal agreement] Wonderful.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Sarah, you were still raising your digital hand. Is that from earlier, or did you have a question?

No?

All right.

Then briefly, explanations for the fishbowl. Those in the fishbowl talk, the people outside the fishbowl just listen. When we talk about our opinion, it is important that we're only talking about how we see our own side. You often hear people say things like "Unlike the other side, environmental protection is important to us, or "unlike the other side, we respect the Schwarze Null (German no-new-national-debt policy). That's it so far. Are there any other questions?

Wonderful, then we'll get started. we do a coin toss to decide which group starts. Then I would ask Lukas to say heads or tails

**B - Lukas:** Heads.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. Then let's see

All right, heads. Then group B starts. That said, I would now ask everyone who is Group A to turn off your videos and microphone.

Each person has three minutes to answer both questions. Both questions are important. Especially the second one is very important. If you are approaching the 3-minute mark, Sabrina or I may ask you to answer the second question.

Exactly, everyone has 3 min to answer the two questions, and then there is an open round where the four of you can just talk to each other about the topic, maybe also to see if you might not agree on everything. Perhaps there are also shades of gray that you may not have seen before.

Then I would invite Max, if you feel like it, to just start answering the two questions.

**B - Max:** With pleasure. Now I don't see the questions anymore, but I think I know roughly what they were

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Send. We'll also send it to the chat right away.

**B - Max:** Wonderful. Thank you.

**B - Max:** Why my opinion is good for society was, I think, number 1.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Exactly, and then maybe first to say briefly what exactly your opinion is.

**B - Max:** With pleasure. Uhm.. First of all, fundamentally. All of us, I suppose, we find it frightening when we see images on television or hear them on the radio. "There was another hurricane in Florida. Here again there was another forest fire". That's tragic, of course, and I suspect that many people don't perceive it positively. My opinion is that these are snapshots and that the backgrounds are partly not quite conclusively explained. I would briefly go into the example of forest fires, where I made a note of two keywords. There is the BIAS (Brandstifterinformationen und -auskunftssystem), the arsonist information and information system, which says that 90% of all forest fires were arsonry. Of course, there are also economic reasons for this, because if a forest is cleared, then building land can simply be created there. and then there are interests behind it, so to speak. And in general I also find that the influence of humans, i.e. anthropogenic, so to speak, is only explained throughout, without also addressing the influence of the sun or ocean cycles. I think this influence exists, or my research has shown this. I think there is still too little talk about this in the media. My question is always, which also arises with regard to Yes Is my opinion good or bad? IPCC - I think you will be familiar with it - and the PIC often talk about climate models. And Climate refers to a timeframe of 30 years –

that's what was decided on. I find it difficult to predict temperature trends for specific greenhouse gas emissions, because I... I always try to do this myself.

One example: If you look at the weather forecast in 2 weeks - how warm will it be? We are talking here about measures to reduce the temperature to 1.5 to 2 Kelvin. and when I observe that some of the weather forecasts are already more than 2 Kelvin wrong. If I now want to see how warm it will be in 2 weeks.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Max, if you could briefly go back to how your opinion is good for society.

**B - Max:** That's good. If you can keep me within the time limit a little... it's good because, in my opinion, science thrives on freedom and debate, and you can also benefit from other opinions.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay, and what are potential downsides in your opinion?

**B - Max:** Exactly.. The disadvantage is that if you respond to climate change categorically by saying "yes, it's not that bad. It's all okay, and there's too much panic about it" – that this can lead to people to equate climate protection and environmental protection. And that then people don't care about environmental protection either. But no, of course it makes sense to drive less and pay more attention to the environment. But I think it's important to make a fundamental distinction here. What is climate? What is the environment? and I'm definitely all for introducing measures or proposals for environmental protection.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Max. That was exactly 3 minutes.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good, then I would invite Jonas to give next. and then after Lukas.

**B - Jonas:** Well, I myself am working in the automotive industry. That's why I have a few points of contact with the topic: What are we doing to protect the environment? What are we doing for climate protection? Uhm... Here's my opinion on the subject. I think environmental protection is important. I think climate protection is important, but at what cost? That's my main concern. I think that a lot of measures were taken very quickly and very drastically, without paying too much attention to the possible consequences. We are noticing this very strongly in the automotive industry right now due to the increased focus on e-cars. Where voices are now being raised afterwards: "Okay, what do we do with the old batteries now? What do we do with



vehicles that break down, whether it's total damage from accidents or simply from wear and tear?" where the topic was simply not thought through far enough. Uhm... On the second part of the question, where it's about the extent to which my opinion is good for society - I have to agree with Max. I think it's important to have a discourse on the topic, not to go along with the mainstream and say that we're putting all our cards on just this one topic of environmental protection, climate protection, but that you question things. "Okay, how can we work in harmony with the economy? and look after the climate as well as possible without weakening ourselves in the economy?"

And on the second question, potential disadvantages. If you think too long about good measures for climate protection that don't affect the economy, it may be that by the time a decision is made, the climate is already being damaged enough that the decision is no longer really important. And as Max has already said, that some people equate climate and environmental protection or completely lose sight of it because they are too set on their opinion

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** All right. Thank you. Jonas.

Then Lukas and then Klaus.

**B - Lukas:** Okay, then I'll give you my opinion on the subject. So, climate protection. This is currently a much-discussed topic in the media, and there are many dimensions to climate and climate protection. and in my opinion, the media are very one-sided about it. By saying: "climate protection means no emitting of CO<sub>2</sub>. And this does not address so many effects of the climate. For example, that it has not been properly proven that less CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is bad for the climate or increases the temperature in the world. This does not take into account the fact that there have always been warm and cold periods on earth and we are currently still in the cold period. I could also... Somehow I haven't really prepared myself, to be honest

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** That's okay.

**B - Lukas:** Alright. Furthermore, the mainstream discourse on the topic doesn't acknowledge the fact that there is a microclimate and a macroclimate, i.e. a global climate. And you can certainly do something for the microclimate, e.g. if there are lots of trees in a city, it is simply cooler there in summer. That is simply a proven fact. But that we are always working towards this CO<sub>2</sub>. That bothers me a lot.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Could talk more briefly about how far the opinion is good for society?

**B - Lukas:** Exactly, the opinion is definitely good for society, because then Germany, for example, does not restrict itself. For example, in all other countries in the world, such as China, India, even neighboring countries like Poland, etc. Coal-fired power plants are being built, but not in Germany. They are just being shut down there. And Germany has little influence on world CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, in which under 1%, with a share of more than 1% of the world population. That means we're still in a very good position anyway. And if we limit ourselves, don't help ourselves, then we'll break more than it helps here.

And of course environmental protection measures have to be taken. In my opinion, climate and environmental protection are completely different things. Environmental protection is absolutely objective, because if there is no waste somewhere and the areas are not concreted over, for example. And if the air is clean, that can be proven objectively.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Could you respond to how somebody could the opinion you just said maybe too far?

**B - Lukas:** Now I just wanted to say briefly trees need CO<sub>2</sub> to grow. i.e. without CO<sub>2</sub>. No tree grows in the atmosphere. So, you can go too far with my opinion, by... denying the adjacent problems such as scarcity of resources and environmental protection and taking measures that are just bad for resource conservation and environmental protection.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. Thank you, Lukas: Then, last but not least - Klaus.

**B - Klaus:** Yes, so when I look at... at the debates that are going on about climate change. Then I notice that on the one hand, it's quite polarizing. On the other hand, real debates are not really possible at all on the subject, because it is simply lacking a definition. So it's not clear what it's all about.

On the one hand, people talk about climate protection, and then on the other side about environmental protection. But the one thing has nothing to do with the other. And for me, more or less definitions are missing. And it occurs to me that not every action is rational action. For example, it is claimed that we must change our behavior, and then we change the climate. and the question is, of course, whether this is true, whether it is realistic, i.e. whether humans can carry out such things. If they can influence or have a significant impact on things that are developing in nature

Another thing that strikes me is that... Uhm...

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** To what extent would you say that what you have said so far is good for our society? To what extent do we need this opinion?

**B - Klaus:** Yes, that such discussions should be more rational, not so emotional and so polarizing, because.... That prevents discourse instead of promoting it. That's actually the main reason.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** All right, and to what extent would you say are there any disadvantages to your position?

**B - Klaus:** The disadvantage could be that the non-polarization of opinions or even also the non-use of manipulation possibilities leads to nothing happening at all. It could be a potential disadvantage. And of course it's also the reason why, why such discussions are polarized.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes, all right. Thank you Klaus. We now have 6 to 8 minutes left of the 20 minutes. I would now invite you to talk about it in the group. Again with these two questions in mind: "What are the advantages of my position? And what are potential disadvantages, in your opinion? And also with a focus on where you agree with each other and where you may have differences. I'm curious to see what comes out. In the discussion.

**B - Lukas:** I'll start, so you all actually talked about the principle of environmental protection being right. Well, I also talked about it. That would be a point where we are more or less in agreement. The question now, of course, is where you draw the line between the environment and the climate. For me, it's very clear. How is it with you?

**B - Jonas:** Well, I definitely have to agree with you about the microclimate and macroclimate, that it's important what we do here for our environment, for our microclimate, as you said, that we don't cover all the ground with concrete, that we make sure there are enough green spaces in cities, that trees are planted. But that you don't see yourself too much as a pioneer now, that you don't have to change the world, as a pioneer for climate protection around the world.

**B - Lukas:** What I also see is, what I see is that we can definitely save the world at least partly not referring to Co2 emissions, of course, because in my opinion, it doesn't have a very big influence on the climate. It may have an influence, but in my opinion he is not very important for the climate. Not at the first decimal place, but at the earliest at the second decimal place of degrees or Kelvin. Exactly, but Germany can of course develop technologies, we have to

anyway, because we are dependent on resources from abroad, such as gas or oil. Then we can develop technologies that, like solar without the fossil fuels that are running out. You'll probably agree. Or do you? If not, then please say so

And of course export them to the world, because if solar is cheap, as it is becoming cheaper and cheaper, then people will also do it who are not necessarily motivated to use it out of a desire to reduce Co2.

**B - Klaus:** Yes. and that's exactly the point, I think, that you have to differentiate between climate protection and human protection. So what you've said just now... That actually looks like protection of the welfare of people and the climate. The climate doesn't change by planting trees in a city, but the microclimate in that city gets better and people feel better or can you live better there.

**B - Lukas:** Animals too, of course.

**B - Klaus:** Yes, exactly yes, but yes, not the climate.

**B - Lukas:** Not the global climate, exactly

**B - Klaus:** Exactly. That's exactly the... the point I was referring to earlier, that it's not really defined.

**B - Lukas:** Hm, exactly... What is climate change, what is nature conservation. Do nature protection or environmental protection have anything to do with climate protection? Does the climate need to be protected at all? Is climate something worth protecting at all, or is climate just something that occurs in our environment? Just as it gets dark in the evening, it gets bright again in the morning. And is the climate changing? If so, how is this changing and what effects does it have? Do we have to act, for example by planting trees? Or driving with e-cars, what influence does that have? Is it relevant or not?

**B - Max:** Right? I'm thinking of...

**B - Klaus:** The backgrounds that always come to my mind when I see such follow discussions or dialogs about the fact that they always are emotional and never have anything to do with the matter, but always just with other objectives, for example improving the microclimate in cities.

**B - Lukas:** Yes, and what I wanted to say briefly. Then you, Max. Excuse me. In the media, where the mood is created, this emotional and less rational mood, they always talk about things like how you have to restrict yourself and what you're not allowed to do, but the fact that you can also have an influence through positive things [doesn't get talked about much], like planting trees. Nobody has to limit themselves with that thought. And with that, we can also do something for the CO2 budget, if you just look at it this way. Nobody thinks about that, and that trees are also something productive, and not something destructive, like not driving a car, for example. Far too little light is shed on this. It's always just about bans and more taxes. People have also become rich through CO2 certificates because they have risen in value on the stock exchange. Exactly, sorry Max. Now you can have a go.

**B - Max:** Well, all good, interesting opinions in any case at this point. I wanted to pick up on the point you made earlier, Lukas, about the objective, measurable, yes, difference between microclimate and macroclimate or environment and climate protection. For example, if I want to measure how much CO2, how much CO comes out of it? Then I can measure that pretty accurately. I know, "Okay, how bad is what's coming out there," but none of us can say what the temperature will be like worldwide or in Germany in 100 years, and that's why there are these climate models that also work with variables. If you only adjust the variables at the decimal points accordingly, if there are many variables, the result will be different. It makes sense to many people. Accordingly, there are lots of assumptions being put out there, but in terms of environmental protection, we can do something proactively and immediately and better grasp the effect, so to speak.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I hear quite a lot of desire here to do something in the here and now and to work on the things where you can see an effect now and what Klaus also said: this uncertainty of "What are we even talking about and what does that mean? To what extent do things that we do now affect things that happen in a few decades?" and the concern or the point that, among other things. That we make sure that we take care of the things that are important now, on the subject of the environment and climate protection, have I understood that correctly so far?

**B - Lukas:** Yes, of course.

**B - Max:** Yes.

**B - Lukas:** Of course it's also about the future, but only about things that are really evidence-based. That there's no garbage lying around. That trees look good. The air is not polluted. You can measure that. Exactly. And resources are also running out, so I'm not saying that oil will last forever. Exactly.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes, would you now in the last 2 minutes in the exercise again briefly answer what you just said, from the perspective of the second question? So, this focus on tangible things, which—I think we all agree—is important. To what extent does this perspective have disadvantages, in your opinion?

**B - Lukas:** Disadvantages to this, in my opinion, are that when you say "emit less CO2 and hope that it doesn't make the earth warmer," that's nonsense. The disadvantages to that are that some

people might then not believe in environmental protection either. And that you generally even think, “I can virtually do without all of that. I don't care about any of that. I'm alive now and I don't care about anything else, and I don't care about other people either.” Exactly.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes.

**B - Jonas:** I think that's also a problem, that a lot of people who, I'll say, are more severely affected by the climate protection measures, that they equate climate protection and environmental protection and then don't want to do anything for either because they react very emotionally to the issue, because it is very restrictive. And that's why I'd say they get an even more polarizing opinion on the subject or get an even more extreme opinion on the subject, so that I would say that they would then [negatively view] all measures, including those that would do them good, and then are against them anyway, simply [in air quotes] out of principle.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** [Indistinct]

**B - Max:** [Indistinct]

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. All right. The 20 minutes are over. Unless there's anything else super important to say, I'd leave it at that. Then thank you very much, Max, Jonas, Lukas, and Klaus. Then I would ask you, we would swap, that you turn off your videos now. And I would ask Sarah, Jan, and Lena to turn on your cameras and mics.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Then I'd just invite Jan to get started. What is your opinion on the subject, and why is it good for our society? And the second: What are potential downsides?

**Jan:** Since various things have already been discussed, I'm not sure I can recall everything I wanted to say, but I'll give it a try. I would say I have a more extreme opinion on the matter. My stance is that we have to do as much as possible. Every decimal point we manage to reduce in terms of climate change is enormously important.

This view is informed by courses I took at university and what professors in this field say and publish. The situation, from what I gather, is getting really bad—almost to a point where it feels darkly humorous. If we can change anything now, we have to.

One of my professors, whom I worked for, mentioned that they no longer believe we'll make it. For them, the race is already over. They think it's nearly impossible to stay within the 1.5-degree target, and we're now headed toward 2.7 degrees. That's going to be catastrophic. This is why I believe we need to do as much as possible. I also think climate protection and environmental protection should be tackled together as one issue.

Most people in this field, including economists and climate scientists, agree that if we act now, we can reduce future costs—costs related to disaster prevention and the effects of climate change. I can't remember the technical term for these future costs, but I see it as an opportunity. We can do a lot.

There's a wide scope here—starting with governments worldwide, including the German government, and then down to us as individuals. It's a complicated issue, with complexity in multiple dimensions. I'm already at 1:47, so I'll just say that this approach is good for society. I also think it's important to differentiate on various issues.

Take nuclear power, for example. There are different perspectives: some see it as an economic problem, others focus on waste. You always have to weigh up these interests. It's the same with cars. I'm not a fan of electric cars, for example, because I think we're just replacing one problem with another. Even though we might emit less CO<sub>2</sub> in the short term, we'll face other issues because of how human systems are built. I think we always have to differentiate here.

One downside of my position is that it's quite extreme. There's a risk that moving too fast could lead to actions we might regret later. But I believe we have to take that risk.

It's challenging to ensure we work together and that things like environmental protection don't get overlooked in the process. But I would like to see a more nuanced approach to all of this. And now my 3 minutes are up.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thanks for staying within the time. Now, I would invite Lena next.

**A - Lena:** Well, I think that climate protection and environmental protection—I don't differentiate in the way that was just described—but it's just a big issue. No matter what we do, we have to do something, and we have to start somewhere. Personally, I don't even see it on a long-term level. In any case, every year, we reach more extremes. Every year it gets warmer, and there is less snow. Extremes have become more and more frequent. Of course, there may have been phases like this before, but I don't think that's a reason why we shouldn't try to change something. It's important for society because even if we have to take a hit or change our lives in a certain way, it can't get worse than the forecasts say. You have to change something for the forecasts to change. It's important to talk about it and educate people, not just throughout Germany either, because Germany is already doing a lot. We need to be a pioneer and serve as an example for other countries.

Like now in the USA, for example, I keep seeing reels on Instagram where people are discovering that we in Germany have a deposit system for recycling bottles. Of course, we've had it for a long time, but it's important to make it known through social media now. It's the age where we show other countries how it can be done. The disadvantages are that not everyone is prepared to reduce their standards in a timely manner, and it also depends on their living situation. People in villages may not have the opportunity to cycle to work. I probably wouldn't feel like cycling to work in winter either. But something has to be done, and there will be nothing that suits everyone. That's a big problem—that Germany alone can't have as much of an impact as would perhaps be necessary.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Lena. Next, Sarah, what is your opinion on the topic? Why is it important for society, and what are potential disadvantages?

**A - Sarah:** Okay, well, first of all, I would say that CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations and other greenhouse gases definitely have an influence. Even if there are cold and warm periods, they've never changed as quickly as they do now. This is due to greenhouse gases reflecting the heat rays, and this changes our Earth more than would actually be good. This leads to weather extremes. For example, it's 30 degrees in Spain right now, and they have a water shortage in winter, which is kind of absurd. Another thing—Germany is ranked 4th in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. We are responsible for 2%. What interests me even more are the social consequences, which are immense. All the social problems we already have will get worse—be it wars, water shortages, food scarcity. And who will suffer? People in the global South, as well as here in Germany. The people who are already suffering from social problems because they are financially weaker.

For example, the IPCC report says that by 2070, 3.5 billion people will be affected by environmental disasters. 3.5 billion people is a third of humanity—you can't even imagine that. So, we definitely have to act quickly and comprehensively, as a global community. Germany can lead by example because we emit a lot of CO<sub>2</sub>, and we're a very economically strong country. If we, as an economic power, can make changes, then other countries might say to themselves, "Maybe it's not so stupid to start, because here the sea level is rising." Why is my position good for our society? Because the climate crisis should not be underestimated. If you deal with it more intensively and communicate it, more people will realize it and stand behind the necessary measures.

The potential disadvantages of my position? We might react too quickly, and then it won't be a socially just transformation because not all people or perspectives will be included. And that shouldn't happen. So, we need socially just climate protection.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** 30 seconds to go.

**A - Sarah:** A disadvantage could be that people who already don't have much, and who haven't contributed much to climate change anyway, will be hit the hardest by the measures.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Like people who couldn't access subsidies for solar panels because they didn't know about them or couldn't apply?

**A - Sarah:** Yes, for example. There were subsidies for solar panels on the roof to connect your electric car or something like that. They were gone within 24 hours because the people who knew about it applied right away—people who watch the news, who are educated, who know how to apply. And the people who didn't know, had a language barrier, or hadn't heard about it couldn't take advantage of it.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Sarah. I'll now open the room for the three of you to discuss your opinions. It always helps to focus on your personal experiences—how you personally came to think this way. That always makes it easier to hear each other. And again, keep the two questions in mind.

**A - Lena:** Well, I can start with the disadvantages—what you just said, Sarah, about it being socially fair. The problem is that not everyone has the same knowledge and perspective, and not



everyone has the same life situation. I also think it's really bad if disadvantaged people or subgroups were to be further disadvantaged.

**A - Sarah:** That's right, and I wanted to add to that. That's exactly what I find problematic, but it's already happening. We saw that with the COVID measures—they definitely weren't tailored to all social groups, and some people suffered more than others. I think the issue here is that our current political system isn't working for us in this regard. I'm a big fan of climate councils or citizen councils, where you bring people from different social groups together with scientists. They then work on measures so that every perspective is considered. Because our parliament right now is mostly made up of lawyers and academics who aren't necessarily able to understand what it's like to live with less financial income, for example.

**A - Lena:** Yes, but the next problem is that by the time you get all of that through—until you get the rules and the permissions—it takes far too long. Something has to happen now. Personally, I see it very negatively. I'm at the point where I'm not sure if I want to bring children into the world. Why should I do that when I know they won't have a life when they grow up? It's about the future of our generations, and something should have been done much earlier.

**A - Sarah:** Yes, maybe—

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Jan, you wanted to say something?

**A - Jan:** No, Sarah can go first.

**A - Sarah:** Maybe we need more scientific advisors or social workers at the table because they know how people with weaker incomes are doing. Bringing in more scientific bodies could help improve things. Jan, sorry.

**A - Jan:** No problem. I just wanted to respond to what Lena said. For me, it started 20 years ago when I got involved because we have a farm with forestry, and we had our first real dry spell. We also had a water problem because we had our own wells. I started reading up on the subject, and with my family, we started eating a vegetarian diet. But I see it the same way—I don't know if I will have children because I know it's not good for the environment, and I know we probably have really bad times ahead.

Another point, which you, Sarah, made very well, is about the different dimensions we need to consider. How do we get everything into consideration? It's extremely difficult in our system. I mean, 20 years ago, we already knew all this—Al Gore gave a great presentation, and the first climate conference took place 20 years before that. The data was already there, but we've passed so much time without reducing CO<sub>2</sub>, methane, or nitrous oxide emissions. That's what makes me so emotionally numb now—I think, "Okay, then let's just tear it all up." I still want to do enough to make it somewhat okay, but I don't see how it can work unless we completely pull the handbrake. Otherwise, nature will do it by itself.

For example, the Ahr Valley flood—attribution researchers say it was eight times more likely because the higher temperatures allowed more water to accumulate in the valley. I know people who were affected by it—my good friend's grandfather passed away. Sometimes you sit there

and think, "Wow, that's heavy." It could have happened 100 years ago, but it's bitter because you know it could have been prevented. We know it will happen more often in the future, with a higher probability. In the end, as you said, Sarah, it will affect the socially weaker, and that includes us sitting here. We're not the kind of people who necessarily benefit from the fossil fuel industry.

**A - Sarah:** Well, we also belong to 10% of the world's richest population, most of us.

**A - Jan:** Exactly, we as Germans definitely.

**A - Sarah:** And what I would like to add to the point made by the others earlier, that you shouldn't emotionalize it—I find that totally wrong. The climate crisis is such a fictitious danger that it's hard to imagine, which is why many people can't quite grasp this dimension. If we don't take an emotional approach, it will affect even fewer people. Even fewer people will feel like it affects them because it's just not yet so noticeable for us here in Germany than elsewhere. I think that's something that needs to be addressed emotionally in any case. Without emotion, we can't take action. If I don't have an intrinsic motivation to do something, then I won't act, and that's why we definitely need an emotional debate, which is of course based on facts. But if you're just throwing facts back and forth, then no one will come up with anything. Maybe that's why nothing has happened in the last 40 years, because it's mostly been facts shooting back and forth.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** If I may just have a quick dig in there. I think that was an important point you just made. This argument of "we are deliberately emotionalizing it because we believe it will have a positive effect on society in the long run"—so that the abstract is made concrete and the emotions make us act. [Sarah nods] Yes. So, if you now—I'd invite you to take this argument again, and I think it has validity—to look: "What are the potential disadvantages of this approach of consciously emotionalizing?"

**A - Sarah:** Um, that it can be overwhelming. Then you immediately have an attitude like, "Oh God, that's so crass. I don't even want to deal with it. I just push it away." That can definitely be a reaction. And I'm noticing it in myself right now. I'm currently taking an "activism break"—it's just such a huge emotional burden on me that I then become incapable of acting again. Then it has exactly the other effect; it paralyzes you and doesn't motivate you quite so over-emotionalized, perhaps.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you.

**A - Jan:** Yes, I fully agree. I'm also on an activist break at the moment because I'm also writing my thesis. But it's a bit difficult. You shouldn't overemotionalize; I think it's good to get a drive because that also pushes you to act. I see it with my family with forestry. Then you read more about it and think: how can we make sure that the forest is really healthy later on? We have a real plantation agriculture—with spruces and such. That's a good drive, of course. Of course, it can also go right through the roof. So, there is activist burnout. That's really classic. But it's still important to remain rational. Even though I hear that debates are usually quite rational, the information we all get is... quite rational. And actually—even pictures may still trigger emotions.

But apart from that, I also find it extremely interesting psychologically. We as individuals, but also as a society, are sitting in a kind of shock, a paralysis. I don't know, you two [referring to the moderators] can say it better—how you do the [unintelligible]. That's your area of expertise.

**A - Lena:** Well, I think... I'm shocked, yes, but I think so too. I just had something. I've forgotten. Nah, you guys go on.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** We still have 20 seconds.

**A - Sarah:** I would also say, if you look at the Markus Lanz Show [a famous German talk show that can get into heated discussions sometimes], it's usually more rational. When activists are invited, then it gets emotional, I would say. But before that, when any politicians or scientists are there, it's more rational, and people argue about the facts and the disadvantages and what impact it has on the economy or whatever. So I don't actually find the media all that emotional. I wish they were more emotional.

**A - Sarah:** When you show pictures of natural disasters, you don't do it with the intention of emotionalizing people; it's just a disaster that has happened and the media's job is to report on world events.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** We're already a good minute over time.

**A - Jan:** May I still...

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** One more thing, something absolutely important there. Yes, one more sentence.

**A - Jan:** I would say that we also become numb because we see so many images.

**Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you. Sarah, Jan, and Lena, I would now invite everyone to turn on their videos again, and then we'll get to the next part of the intervention. Welcome back, everyone. I'll share my screen again.

Good, you must be able to see the presentation now. Right?

**MOD Sabrina:** Yes.

**B - Lukas:** Yes.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Perfect. Now it's about new insights. I'm sure we haven't convinced each other completely, but I can imagine you might have new things to say about what you've learned about each other. Maybe you've seen a bit of humanity where you thought, "Oh, I recognize that. I can get on board with that." At least, that's my hope. So I would now like to invite you to say a bit about it. This will take about 10 minutes. What have you learned about how the other side sees the topic, and have you discovered any similarities?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes, first Sarah.

**A - Sarah:** I found the distinction between environmental protection and climate protection interesting because I'd never thought of it that way before. For me, if you don't protect the

climate, you can't protect the environment. If it's too dry for the trees, then you can plant as many trees as you like, but it won't work. So, I found it interesting that the other group divided it up like that and also said, "Full environmental protection – yes. Climate protection – hmm?" I found that interesting. And where that came from, well, I strongly assume it somehow comes from the fact that it's right on my doorstep, and I can see the effect directly. That's why it's pleasant, and that's why I would do something about it, which is also totally psychologically justifiable. But yes, that was one aspect that I've never noticed before when I've had discussions like this.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes. Thank you, Sarah. Then Jonas next, and then Jan.

**B - Jonas:** Yes. What I found super interesting – and what I was hoping for from the workshop – is simply to see other perspectives. I always like to relate it to either the professional field or the background you have. That's where a lot of your own opinion comes from. I now see it from the perspective of the automotive industry, for example. Jan, you come from a background with forestry, where I have no points of contact at all. I can't understand that very well. That's why I think it's super interesting that you brought up this aspect. Or, depending on what you're studying, as you just said, Sarah, with social work. We don't have any points of contact with the other sector. That's why I think it's really important to see what the other people's backgrounds are for their opinions.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes. Thank you, Jonas. Then Jan next, and then Lukas.

**A - Jan:** I'm going to forget parts now, but yes, that's exactly what I wanted to say. I agree with Jonas. That's a really good point, and I think you can also see how important it is to think about these things together. I've noticed enormously that environmental protection is actually a concern for all of us. I think I can assume that, can't I? [all nodding (except Klaus)] I think climate protection is simply a matter of definition. You just have to include that in the mix. Maybe there's just the question of what you then do, of course, but I've actually seen a lot of overlaps, except maybe a few differences that you can still see in "how bad is it anyway?" and "how bad is what exactly?" Maybe that's the best way to put it, but perhaps not the nicest.

**MOD - Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Jan. Then next is Lukas.

**B - Lukas:** Exactly what I wanted to say is that people who are now in group B know position A probably a bit better than people from group A who know position B, because you hear position A everywhere in the media, and position B is actually not really present.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Lukas, you're assuming things about the other group.

**B - Lukas:** Sorry, then it's not.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I think many, many people from Group A also have experience with discussions with family members. So, I don't think it's helpful to make assumptions about the other side now.

**B - Lukas:** Okay. Yeah, sure.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I would really say – and thanks for your input, Lukas – let’s keep the focus on “what have you learned about how the other side sees it and do you see common ground?”

**B - Lukas:** Yes, it was certainly very interesting to hear the other side, and yes, similarities. Jan said it really well: environmental protection is definitely a common ground. And yes, the only thing that is not common is that Co2. I do not see this as a reason for the temperature to rise. That’s actually just one very small aspect of the whole range of topics. If you now go from climate protection to environmental protection and resource conservation.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes. What I hear are similarities in underlying values. It is important to preserve the environment so that we can live healthily, so our children can live and grow up. There is partial disagreement about what the facts are and, as Jan has also said, what now the truth is scientifically.

**B - Lukas:** Yes, and what I wanted to say is that there’s a lot of lumping together, that some say, “These people are completely for it, and those people are completely against it,” and then they pretend that climate protection is now just Co2. And that’s a bit of the problem and what I also wanted to say.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Right, we’re not making any more arguments again, Lukas.

**B - Lukas:** I just wanted to say...

I know a lot of people who are Russian and Ukrainian, they also meet in Germany. And of course, they have a huge conflict issue, and they learn to deal very well with the fact that people have a different opinion and they still meet amicably. That’s exactly what I just wanted to say as an outlook at the end, so that I can lower my hand.

That it is possible to talk across divides.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Um, I saw your hand, Sarah. I would still call Max again, precisely because he hasn’t spoken yet.

**B - Max:** Yes. Thank you, Lorenz. At this point, I would also put common ground first. Common ground: There is only one planet, and we should protect it, I’m all for that. Just because it was also mentioned in the group earlier. What always makes me a little annoyed, what always gets me a little carried away, is always the assertion that science...

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes.

**B - Max:** Yes, there are thousands of scientists who take a more critical view.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** It’s an important point.

**B - Max:** You on it.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Nevertheless, it’s still another argument, and it’s not the question: what have I learned about the other side.

**B - Max:** Exactly, so commonality at this point. Environmental protection, planet protection, i.e. protecting planet earth as best as possible and using resources efficiently.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you. I hope it doesn't come across like I'm stalling you guys here now. I just want to keep the context. I think it is important not to slip into the discussion again. [general nodding] Because that would open a whole new can of worms. That, I don't think is helpful right now.

**A - Sarah:** I also think that would lead to a new discussion. That's why I would leave it, too.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Which is not to say that discussion is not important.

**A - Sarah:** Yes, I will ask the question and you can let me know... So, I was wondering how to do this separation of environmental protection and climate protection without considering the impact of climate on the environment. But that is, I think...

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I think then we get back into the discussion of facts, and it's an important discussion. Um, I don't think this is the right time here and now. But thanks for making the point, Sarah.

Alright. Lena and Klaus. I would also like to hear from you. Whether you have anything else to say or if you have discovered things in common, what you have learned on the side.

**B - Klaus:** I noticed that in Group A, a lot of emphasis was placed on the idea that the topic must be emotional and approached emotionally in order to achieve the goals. That's exactly the issue: people should be made to show or change their behavior, and the best way to do that is through emotionality. That was actually what I gathered from listening to Group A. That's what I heard—we have to do something, and the best way to get people to do something is emotionality. That's actually what I was saying.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** What I heard is that it's one way. I didn't hear it was the main way, but it sounded like it was an important point.

**B - Klaus:** An important point about the behavior of people moving in the right direction.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes. Thank you, Klaus. Good, then from Lena.

**A - Lena:** A lot has already been mentioned. Our planet - that was a very good argument. I can't remember who made it, but we all want to survive as long as possible, and somehow everyone wants to do something. It's just different in the extent, and somehow you have to try to find a common denominator that covers as many groups as possible. I just wanted to say briefly: I study media studies. We have the task of covering all sides. There is not just one-sided reporting. If there were, there would be lots of bodies that would check that it wasn't the case, and every single person could file a complaint if they didn't feel represented enough. There are enough instances that try to do that somehow. Every opinion should somehow be reflected in the media.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Lena. Of course, it's debatable to what extent that really is the reality in our society and to what extent some groups find it difficult to bring their opinions into the discourse, whether there are perhaps certain hurdles. Or at least it seems that way. I think

that's another conversation. But thank you. Then I would move on to the next point and look at time. We're going to go a little bit over time. I'm sorry about that. If anyone has to leave or is tired, then please just go. The most important thing now would be to fill out the Posttests survey. There will be the same questions again as a few others earlier. Sabrina has already sent them to the chat. Please click on it again and fill it out. If you have any questions, please get in touch.

**B - Klaus:** But that's the same questionnaire again, isn't it?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes, this is the same questionnaire again. The idea is to see if anything has changed after the intervention and also with the intention. The question has already come up a few times—these groups that are mentioned, people who see things differently. It doesn't have to be limited to the people here in the workshop, but it can generally be the image that pops into your head when you think of people who see the thing.

**B - Lukas:** Done.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. When you're done, just raise your digital hand again.

**A - Jan:** With me. I think I'll do that afterwards. It's not loading right now.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Ah yes. Exciting. Okay. I'll send you the link again via text.

Most of the others are finished. Let me know when you're finished.

**B - Klaus:** I've been ready for a long time. I just can't find the digital hand.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Ah, yes. Perfect. All right. Good, then we're done, then that's it for the most part.

In principle, there would now be another debrief where I explain again what the study actually was. But I think we've explained it relatively well. It's about testing this approach, which has been used very successfully in the U.S. between Democrats and Republicans, to see whether it can also be done in Germany, because in Germany we are not polarized within parties and within certain issues such as climate policy, we do this on the issue. The intention was to test if this has an effect and also what kind of conversations develop among each other and exactly what people learn from it.

If you have further questions, you'll also get an e-mail later with detailed information. In the chat, Sabrina sent my e-mail again, but I think you all have it. And again, the Braver Angels website. That's the organization that does these workshops in the U.S., where Sabrina is also a member. If you're interested, feel free to click through. I think it's a very cool organization. Now is still the last building block of the event—to have an open reflection. To hear what that was like for you, what you took away from it. If anyone needs to go, it's half past now. If you have 10 more minutes, I would be super grateful. Otherwise, I'm opening up the space to share again now. What did you think, what feedback do you have? What do you take from it?

Lukas, you had your hand up already. That was from earlier?

**B - Lukas:** Yes, that was from before. But I can also give my feedback, or you can let Sarah go first.

[Sarah signals Lukas to go first]

**B - Lukas:** Then yes. I'll say briefly that it was great to hear the other side. You understand it better. You already know a lot, like I said, from what you see on TV, but really hearing the people is even better. I got a lot out of it. It was definitely difficult to not speak up in between, so I had to concentrate a bit on not turning on my microphone. But of course, I also held back, because... Exactly, yes. Exchange is possible and also that you don't hate each other now or anything.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Lukas. Then next Sarah.

**A - Sarah:** Yes, I can actually agree with that. I found it exciting to hear the other perspective. But it was also super difficult at the same time to not interrupt in between. During the process, I found it really hard, but in hindsight, I found it really good to let that sink in first and then reflect on it a bit for yourself. I think it is definitely a good method, but it's just unfamiliar. It's a culture of discussion that you don't know, and some people might not even describe it as a discussion. Yes, but I found it really exciting, because otherwise, I only know this... I have spoken a lot to people with different opinions, and I've only ever seen this back and forth and kind of going round in circles. That's why I think it's cool.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you. Lena will be next.

**A - Lena:** Well, I also wanted to say that I found the whole concept very refreshing and different. That you can talk again in your own groups—I came up with a lot more things because otherwise, when you're in a discussion like that, you always try to defend each other and come up with a new argument. That's kind of how it was. Just talking about what you think and not just trying to convince the other person somehow, or whatever, is much more useful. You understand the other side better than if you feel somehow attacked. It was a very cool experience.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Lena. Then I would ask Jonas next—although you have your hand up longer. Jan. But so that we have a change between A and B.

**B - Jonas:** Yes, well, I think so too. I've also heard about this kind of discussion before. I also find it a completely new experience—not the traditional way of conducting a discussion where one person brings arguments, and the other brings arguments, and you try to convince each other. But simply to present your point of view, so you really have the opportunity to present different aspects from the same "side." In our Group B, we had completely different backgrounds and highlighted totally different sides. What I think is also valuable for your own opinion is that, after you've already reflected and listened to the others, you can form your opinion a little. Then maybe you could have a different communication model where you go into discussions and take up points from others. Like asking, "How did you mean that?" or "How do you see this being implemented?" if we stick to the topic now. I could imagine that this could be interesting.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** It's actually like that in Braver Angels workshops. They have something similar to what we have here, just that it's an all-day thing. And the exercise we just did, the



fishbowl, is one of four exercises. In later exercises, there's exactly what you just said—an exercise where you ask each other respectful questions for clarification and brainstorm together about solutions that could work for all of us. Maybe in a couple of years, something like this will develop here. Alright, now Jan, and next Max.

**A - Jan:** I agree with everyone who came before me. I thought it was nice. I also think that if we had discussed it, it would have gone round in circles and wouldn't have achieved anything. But we simply listened to each other. That's wonderful. While others are struggling with an opposing viewpoint, we exchange ideas. This allows you to focus much more on listening rather than arguing, "Why do we disagree?" Just one thing I'd add: between Democrats and Republicans, this polarization, I'd say it's rather more of a social nature. It's not like we have time pressure there. But we have time pressure when it comes to climate action, and I don't know how we can manage that. All the complex issues involved, answering them in the best way possible for everyone, and finding solutions... I think that will also be quite interesting for future discussion formats.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Interesting point. Thank you, Jan.

**A - Jan:** Thanks very much for letting me take part.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes, thanks for being there. Alright, Max.

**B - Max:** Exactly. I can agree with the previous speakers to a large extent. I couldn't agree more, and I also found it very positive that you could give your point of view without being interrupted. In a classic, everyday situation, I'm sure some people would agree with me that it wouldn't have gone so smoothly. People would often interrupt each other, and that's a shame, of course. I think it's always very positive when you listen to the other person and try to start a conversation without devaluing them. If I may give you an example, on our side, the word "climate denier"—it works the other way around too. I believe that this brings advantages in any case.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thanks, Max. The thing is, I don't think everyone in Group B necessarily has to be people who say man-made climate change is not a thing.

**B - Max:** That's why I said it like that. It was in quotation marks; it was, of course, exaggerated.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes, all right. Yes, good. Alright. Then, Klaus, if you have anything else to say, any feedback, I'd love to hear it. But it's not compulsory.

**B - Klaus:** Yes, so I... I found this fishbowl concept quite exciting. It was completely unknown to me. I didn't know it yet. And I can only agree with the fact that there are benefits, but when you simply have to listen, or have the need to defend your position, or bring arguments very quickly... when everything is equalized and takes place one after the other, it works much better for me.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** All right. I'm glad to hear that. Thank you very much, Klaus.

Thank you all. That's it. Thank you again for being here. It's a huge help for my Master's thesis. Really, thank you.

**MOD MOD Sabrina:** Lorenz, may I say something?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes.

**MOD Sabrina:** I just wanted to jump in with some feedback. It was all so beautiful, and that's why I help with Braver Angels. I just want to encourage you all to remember that feeling you have now—that "it was cool to say something and not be interrupted" or "how refreshing it is to have a deeper understanding of the other opinion." We've had that same effect on people in the U.S., and I think it'll have a similar effect in Germany too. It's about trying to have those difficult but productive conversations.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes, thank you, Sabrina.

Well, then I'll let you go for this evening, and you'll get an email from me later. I'll also send you the Master's thesis when it's finished. If you don't want any more updates, just let me know. It's been a pleasure and an honor, and I hope our paths cross again later.

## Workshop 2

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Right then, I'd like to ask Beate to start. Who are you? Where are you from in Germany? What brings you here today?

**A - Beate:** Yes. Hello. I'm from the Rhineland, near Bonn. Um, yes, I'm involved with Psychologists for Future, which means I'm part of the climate movement and find such approaches interesting and important because of this.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thanks Beate. Then Felix next and then Julian.

**B - Felix:** Hello and greetings from beautiful Nuremberg. I am Felix. I'm a student of business informatics, and I met Lorenz at a New Year's reception, had quite an interesting conversation with him and then volunteered and declared to help him with his project here to help by expressing my opinion.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Felix. Then Julian next and then Nico.

**A - Julian:** Yes, hello from me too. My name is Julian and I'm from Leipzig. I've been with the Last Generation since the summer and became aware of the event in that context. I don't remember exactly, but it was shared in a chat and I found it interesting and I think I approached Lorenz via e-mail and I'm curious to see how things will continue.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you Julian. Then Nico next.

**B - Nico:** I come from Bonn, am currently studying economics and philosophy in Münster and am also a consultant at a management consultancy in the IT sector. I also came across this event relatively by chance via a chat in which there was a request for participation. I thought I'd maybe support and help, since I know how hard it is for people to find for something like that, I was of course very happy to get in touch. Maybe also important to mention is that I'm an RCDS member, where I was also state chairman in North Rhine-Westphalia last year.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes. Thanks, Nico and RCDS—for those who don't know—is the Ring Christlich Demokratischer Studenten, the CDU-affiliated student association, right?

**B - Nico:** Yes.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Great, then next we'll just get on with it—Paul next and then Werner.

**A - Paul:** Hello, I'm Paul [...]. I live in [...]. I'm one of the team coordinators from the Last Generation in Cologne also since 2022, so I joined relatively early. I got to know Lorenz at a brunch of the Last Generation in Cologne and said that I would be happy to take part in the project. I'm looking forward to perhaps hearing other opinions or critical views on the whole topic.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you Paul. Thank you, then Werner next.

**A - Werner:** My name is Werner, I'm from Nuremberg. And Lorenz asked me if I was willing to take part in a workshop. Yes, I am, because I am very environmentally oriented and hope to find impulses here to be found.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Werner. Then I'd say let's just get on with it. Support should be here soon. Then we'll slip that in again so that we can finish on time. I would ask you—we now have the first questionnaire, um—that you briefly click on the link that Kerstin has now sent to the chat. You'll be asked a few things about how you see the "other side," how you see people who have a different opinion than you vs. people who have a similar opinion to you. In that case, for group B, imagine people who have an opinion towards statement A or what you think Group A thinks. And for Group A, imagine people who are perhaps more in the middle or leaning towards B, so no extreme, super blatantly business-oriented climate deniers.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Hello, Stefan. I'll interrupt the filling out of the form for a moment so that we can welcome Stefan. Stefan has also agreed from group B to jump in. Thank you very much. Stefan, would you like to introduce yourself? Where are you from in Germany and what brings you here today?

**B - Stefan:** Hi. I'm Stefan. I'm also from Nuremberg and work at a car dealership, and I'm delighted to be here today and hope to be able to engage in some productive conversations.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you Stefan. Right then we can all come back to the questionnaire, which is now in the chat for you again, Stefan. Once you're done, feel free to just raise your digital hand. If you see below, right-center clicks on reactions, then I know.

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(Later, after everyone is done with the questionnaire)

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**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Alright—Beate? What's the situation? Are you still filling it out?

**A - Beate:** Should be there now.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Well, perfect. Well, Stefan, just let me know when you're ready.

**B - Stefan:** Yes, I'm done too.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. All right. Thank you then. Good. Then back to the screen share.

Right, then we'll start right away. Before we start with the fishbowl, a few basic rules about how the workshop works here, so that we can get along because it's a controversial topic.

Our focus is that we understand each other and explain our points of view to each other, not that we try to convince each other. It's not a debate. I don't expect anyone to leave here today with a completely different opinion. That is not the intention.

We speak for ourselves. We speak for any other groups that are not here today. and what I would recommend is that you focus on your own experiences and what made you think the way you think. This often leads to more understanding than just listing facts. Although of course facts are also allowed - they are of course also important. The next thing is very important: we stick to the respective activity, so there will be several relatively specific questions, and it is important that we stick to the questions. So, there will be a question later on: What did you learn about the other

side and did you see any similarities?" And there, it's often tempting to somehow go back and to talk about your own opinion again. I would kindly ask you to resist this temptation and really stick to the question. The rest is standard stuff - respectful interaction, that we listen to each other here, that we let each other finish speaking. So, no rolling our eyes or sighing loudly while someone is talking. Exactly. Just basic norms of respect that we all get along with each other. Exactly. I'll see if everyone is okay with it from nonverbal nods etc.

All right, wonderful. Then we can get started. So again, briefly, how the fishbowl works. The people who are in the fishbowl talk to each other, not to the people outside. You talk about how you see your own side, and I want to ask you to stick with that. It's always going to be tempting to kind of back-handedly criticize the other side. Saying things like yes, unlike the other side, environmental protection is important to us. Or "unlike the other side, the black zero is important to us" I would ask you to really stick to what makes your site great. And criticism has its place, but I would not bring to this workshop. For those outside the fishbowl. Would I ask you to remain invisible and inaudible, so your job then is to listen. And that's where the real magic of the workshop happens. When you hear, "what are the similarities that I see between me and the other side."

Alright, and with that I would start now. Are there any questions so far?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Wonderful, then I would ask Nico to say heads or tails.

**B - Nico:** Head.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Head. Alright, good, head it is. Then group B begins.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Then I would now ask Group A—Beate, Julian, Paul, Werner—to switch off your cameras and microphones.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** And then, let's pin Nico, Felix, and Stefan.

Then we come to the fishbowl. Each of you now has 3 minutes to answer the two questions "What is my opinion on the topic, and why is my position good for our society?"

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Each of you now has 3 minutes to answer the two questions: "What is my opinion on the topic, and why is my position good for our society? And what are the potential disadvantages of my position?" Nico, you can start, and then Stefan, then Felix.

**B - Nico:** So there's no specific theme or anything, or just in general?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Relating to those two sides—A and B—which I presented at the beginning.

**B - Nico:** Um, I think that option B is a bit too short-sighted. I believe that it's not just about the economic development, but that it's more about having a more effective climate protection globally and holistically. I believe that—at least for me, I am very sure that there is human-made climate change—but unfortunately, I have heard some opposing positions. And a good education is part of changing that. At the same time, I have little understanding for what is being done in Germany on this topic—both at legislative level and on a partially demonstrative level on the

street. Especially since you simply have to pursue a better policy and think globally. At least I also get the impression that people say that if everything in Germany were climate-neutral, then we wouldn't have any problems at all. And that's not the case, because other countries have considerably more emissions than we do. And no role model that we can set in Germany in any way will lead to an unimaginably poverty-stricken person in India to say, "I now prefer to go somewhere by bike or on foot rather than in my petrol car because I'm protecting the climate." No one will say, "I'll do without cheap electricity and can no longer afford to eat." That's why we simply have to make other adjustments than honestly first-world regulators, which we have here in Germany, in my opinion.

At least I believe that we also have to think more globally in terms of energy supply, reintroduce nuclear power in Germany, and then also focus on large projects, also in cooperation with development partners, such as in the North African countries, where considerably more energy can be produced at considerably lower prices and to create scientifically better performance so that the...

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** You still have 30 seconds. If you could briefly answer the second question.

**B - Nico:** I think my position is good for our society in that it is equally balanced and on the other hand also takes more everyone on board other than some of the numerous other positions I have heard. Is it perfect? Probably not. Am I perfectly familiar with it? Probably not.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** What would you say are the potential disadvantages?

**B - Nico:** Well. They are not based on any scientific academic training in any form. As I said, it's a very felt opinion. I'm happy to be proven wrong. But um, that's the way it is.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** All right. Thank you, Nico. Then Stefan next, and then Felix.

**B - Stefan:** Yes, so my opinion on the subject is, I now get it mainly from my professional environment, that there is now a very strong focus on e-mobility, for example, and that the state is pushing all the manufacturers into e-mobility. I'll just take e-mobility as an example. It's the same in other sectors, where climate protection is pushed in without really questioning "is it the best solution in the long term?" What do we do with the batteries from the vehicles that are no longer used at some point? What will we do if the technology develops further? That at some point, for example, the vehicles that have been built now or have been built in the last 4 or 5 years will all be completely obsolete. That is an incredible amount of electronic waste that is incredibly expensive to reuse, where no thought was given to: "What do we do with it in the long term?"

I think the second part of the first question is why my opinion is good for society. I think there's a very, very famous video where certain politicians are asked, 'why are we cutting back on one of the things we do best?' and that is to build low-emission gasoline or diesel engines, and we are now limiting ourselves to 'Okay, we are going all-in on electric, where the Chinese are much stronger than we are' and ban diesel... I think in 2030 or something like that. We are cutting ourselves off

In my opinion, the disadvantages are, of course, um... well... perhaps we are not doing enough to protect the climate if we think first and foremost about the economy.

Um... I'm more of a fan of thinking about something for longer and then acting on this matter with a very good solution, instead of maybe taking a solution that's just okay and then perhaps suffering bad consequences in the future.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I haven't quite understood this yet, but you would say a downside of this is that if you think about it too long and don't find a proper solution in time, that's...

**B - Stefan:** Exactly.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** ...

**B - Stefan:** Exactly, if we think about it for too long, it might be too late to act at some point. On the other hand, if you act too soon, you may not have found the perfect solution.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** All right. Thank you, Stefan. Then next up, Felix: What's your opinion on the subject? How far is it good for society, and what are the potential disadvantages?

**B - Felix:** Since my opinion is relatively similar to the two previous speakers, I'll try not to repeat too many points. I think I, as an information systems specialist... Why do I emphasize this? Because business informatics specialists have a way of thinking that sees or wants to see the bigger picture—solution-oriented thinking.

And in my studies, I often came across the term "complexity" and the definition of complexity, and it's just that many things influence each other far too much. So really, everything has an influence on everything. I think many of us are familiar with the butterfly effect, and I agree with that.

If you look at one thing in an unbalanced view, for example, climate protection—whether too much climate protection or climate change denial—there is an imbalance that also affects all other areas, such as social policy, the economy, and so on.

And accordingly, I simply think that in the overall policy approach, you should always try to be balanced and to reach strategic, long-term goals and not try to get away with extremism in the short term and try to achieve goals that then influence other sectors. I think this position is good for our society.

Because everyone should be included, not just one group of people should be punished, whether it's because of additional taxes, whether it's now because people in Africa are suffering more from climate protection than we are in Germany. And accordingly, you have to take this overarching approach.

And of course, my position also has disadvantages, like if you don't act drastically enough or quickly enough, it may be that we cannot exert enough influence on climate change. We all don't exactly know the consequences; we can't know them. We can speculate about it in terms of science, but ultimately we can't know that if we don't act now, tomorrow will really be a better day than today.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. Thank you. That was exactly 2 minutes and 54 seconds.

Then I would now open the space for you three to talk to each other a little more informally. Again, with these two questions in mind: "What are our positions? Why are they good for society? What are the potential disadvantages?"

And also, where do we agree, and where do we perhaps have different perspectives on the topic? Where do we perhaps also differ in order to make the shades of gray within the groups a little clearer?

We now have about 9 minutes.

**B - Felix:** It's hard to put my finger on it now since I think we've all said relatively the same thing. But I would like to take a stab now at...

My personal opinion on nuclear power is perhaps not quite the same as yours. I don't know about you.

I think, Nico, you mentioned it briefly. I can just see not only the advantages of nuclear power, but also the disadvantages—like nuclear waste, and I see it as very problematic. This nuclear waste can stay active for millions of years. Accordingly, I am very ambivalent about this. Yes, perhaps I could refine my statement a little—without getting argumentative. That's a bit difficult in three minutes.

**B - Nico:** Um, in the long term, of course, and in my opinion, there is a limit to nuclear power. But what we currently have is a trade-off because we have finite resources, and we are currently saying that we would rather have coal power than nuclear power. And that's a point where I say I don't understand. I also have a relatively different opinion because... if more informal language is allowed... with us, we have so many nuclear power plants in Europe. If one of them goes up, we're all screwed anyway, to put it bluntly, now as Germany, even if that's only a small proportion of the electricity we produce. As Germany, to say "We're simply switching off a relatively secure source of electricity in the biggest crisis we have" is to be questioned. At the same time, as far as I know, nuclear power plants can now also process the nuclear waste produced very well, so that it is almost minimized. You definitely have this problem, at least to some extent. It's not an optimal solution. And it would be best if I could make China climate-neutral in 10 years; then I don't think we'd really have to have this discussion. But as I said, nuclear power comes before coal power for me. It's as simple as that.

**B - Stefan:** When it comes to the topic of energy sources, well, I agree that we are limiting ourselves a bit by shutting down all the nuclear power plants. Um, I would be delighted if there was perhaps more to be done in this area—investing in science and research, in the direction of whether it's the dismantling of nuclear waste or perhaps in the direction of fusion. There simply needs to be more research, that we need a real alternative to fossil fuels, but we can also produce the electricity ourselves in Germany so that we don't have to buy it in at high prices from other countries where we don't know under what conditions the electricity was generated, such as the nuclear power plants in France, or that we have to lay expensive power lines from Libya to



Germany to somehow get solar power. More money should be invested in research. The question is: will we get results quickly enough to avert the climate crisis?

**B - Nico:** I agree with you on most points. There is one thing where I would bring a different opinion. Indeed, you mentioned power lines to Libya.

There was once this very large-scale, unfortunately economically somewhat difficult, project from Siemens, which was designed to create huge solar thermal power plants in the Sahara desert. I think that was in Morocco, because they simply have an efficiency there that we won't be able to achieve here in Germany in any physically possible way.

And that brings us to a challenge that is also more scientific, in addition to research into new methods of producing electricity, as well as fusion research, which is very, very strong in Bavaria, by the way—that's what I read the other day. Um, it's the question of power transportation—the economic viability of transporting electricity over long distances. I believe this is a very big challenge that we also need to work on globally, because such models will then be laid like a pipe through the Mediterranean and routed to Europe. Definitely a real economic option, so - in the distant future.

**B - Stefan:** I agree with you there. Well, if it can really be organized economically, if we can cooperate globally or at least continentally, then it's definitely an alternative for the other countries too, of course. If we pull the electricity from Morocco through Spain through France, then of course they should also benefit from it.

**B - Nico:** Yes, by the way, the local countries [in Northern Africa] too. We're talking about developmental aspects here too, where they also have other problems aside from the ones we've discussed here.

**B - Stefan:** Absolutely. It also creates jobs.

**B - Nico:** Yes, and also cheap electricity in those countries. You also have to see that sometimes, in these regions, people have to build a parabolic reflector just to cook something. Well, that's the reality of life for the people there, and I believe that green energy and the expansion of green energy, if you think globally, can be built up with the aspect of development aid in a way that helps a great many people.

We should still consider what is bad about our position. Um...

**B - Stefan:** It could be that it takes too long. So, I think the biggest issue is time. The debate isn't 1-2 years old; it's been going on for a long time. And I believe that too little has been achieved in the last 15-20 years, which is why time is now running out. I think that's also the reason why many decisions were made a bit hastily and weren't thought through fully. But that's probably the biggest disadvantage. The longer we look for an alternative or try to optimize the solution we have now, the more time we lose to turn the whole thing around.

**B - Nico:** That is.

**B - Felix:** It is.

**B - Nico:** There's still a disadvantage for me, and... [inaudible].

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Nico, I think Felix wanted to say something else. I'm interrupting now because I don't think Felix has said that much yet.

**B - Felix:** Well, I don't have much else to add, but yes, the 1.5-degree target is often used as a guiding point, which many people like to argue against from different perspectives. We just don't know if this 1.5-degree target or 2-degree target are tipping points, beyond which the system can no longer return to its original self-regulatory state. Accordingly, these quick-action alternatives are possibly good, but we can't be certain.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** We are now at 9 minutes. We still have time for a short, quick point.

**B - Nico:** I think a new disadvantage that stood out to me in this discussion is that, especially in a democracy, it's hard to communicate these things to citizens who aren't so politically involved. It needs to be done so clearly that they are prepared to go along with such measures. Just the topics we've discussed here alone could be the subject of 10 doctoral theses. How do you teach that to the average person who sees their electricity bill and says, "Something is wrong"?

**B - Stefan:** That's how I'm seeing it too.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. Thank you, Nico, Felix, Stefan—I found this very exciting. Let's switch sides now. I'd ask you three to turn off your videos, and Werner, Beate, Paul, and Julian to turn on theirs.

**A - Werner:** The video is no longer available. I only have the slider from my camera.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Ah, yes.

**A - Werner:** Start my video. Here it comes again.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay. Good. Then I already knew... and so. I am... Pin.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you. Exactly. All right. Then I would ask Paul to start and answer the two questions: What is your opinion on the subject, and why is it good for society? And what are the potential downsides? Where can it perhaps be taken too far?

**A - Paul:** My opinion is that we in Germany should become regenerative as quickly as possible, and also as autonomous as possible. I think that's perfectly feasible. I have to say that I'm very appalled by the policy of the last 15 years. This has gone in the wrong direction, and we have to try even harder to straighten it out somehow. You can see right now that 10-15 years ago, we decided to phase out renewables. We have a lot of really big problems because of this, because we are absolutely not able to generate and produce our own energy.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Just briefly: We decided to get out of renewables?

**A - Paul:** Yes, the CDU (centrist conservative political party in Germany) essentially implemented an exit from the expansion of renewables. In the last 10 years, we've had hardly any growth in renewable energy. For around five years, we've been stuck at 50% of electricity generation and 25% of total energy generation. There has also been virtually no growth in wind

turbines, and some have been replaced by more powerful ones, but the output has actually decreased. The expansion of large-scale solar plants has been suppressed by changes to the EEG (Germany's Renewable Energy Sources Act). Farmers, for example, could have benefited more from these projects.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Your opinion, then, is that we need to revisit this?

**A - Paul:** Exactly. We have to step on the pedal again. We have a huge energy problem. I don't think nuclear or coal energy are really alternatives. We need to undo some of the things that have been done.

**A - Paul:** The disadvantage, of course, is that it takes a lot of effort to reopen that whole issue now. Large-scale solar plants, for example, would be more effective in other countries because Germany's location isn't ideal for solar energy, and wind energy is also quite limited. You have to carefully consider where to set up these installations.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you. Next, Beate, and then Werner.

**A - Beate:** Yes, I'm going to move away from the energy topic a bit. My point is, which is why we really have to step on the gas with everything, is that we don't really have a choice anymore. I'm 65, and I'd love nothing more than a nice, quiet old age, but we simply don't have a choice. The climate crisis has been here for a long time. It's also there in Germany. Four years ago, when I started getting involved, you had to tell people about it somehow. Now I think everyone in Germany knows that too, that it is there, and not just because of the flooding in the Ahr valley and the thousands of deaths, which are now increasing every year due to the hot summers in Germany.

We simply no longer have this as something theoretical. The suffering in other countries is already on such a scale that people are simply losing their home, losing their life. I don't think we can take our time discussing the finer points. We will make mistakes in all of this, I'm sure, because we've never been in that situation before, as humanity, that we have to make changes to the earth so quickly. We simply have no experience with it, but we have to do it anyway. I believe that this is something that is also good for Germany, because on the one hand, I believe that we can do this in Germany in many respects. On the other hand, we live an incredibly privileged life. I think, if we want to look ourselves in the mirror, then we have to give up these privileges and give up something.

There are plenty of good suggestions from science and from all the climate reports. So that, as laypeople, we don't need to think about this in detail.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** We are now at... you still have...

**A - Beate:** Yes.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** ...30 seconds, Beate.

**A - Beate:** Then I'll move on to the disadvantages. I think the main disadvantage is that we can't stand it at all. I can hardly stand watching it myself. I'm often so desperate myself that I can't

understand why other people in Germany can't realize what situation we're in and therefore don't make sure and vote accordingly that everything that should happen can happen.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** All right. Thank you, Beate. Then Werner next and then Julian.

**A - Werner:** Well, I very much share Beate's view. Germany's environmental policy is a sham; real causes and measures are not being taken on. It is 5 to 12. There's a nice saying: We have only borrowed the earth from our children, and we are living beyond our means. The most important thing is that everyone understands this, and everyone can do something about it through the careful use of energy. The framework conditions set by politicians, these are things over which we have no influence, they take time and they have already taken far too long.

There will have to be restrictions for everyone, and these are, so to speak, the disadvantages of my position, that we can't just carry on living as we have done up to now. We have to conserve our resources. We live, we consume more resources than grow back. This can all be scientifically proven. It will also cost more money, because it doesn't come for free, and we need to become more creative. We don't need to take so many flights. Not everyone has to have a car. It's smart to share. You can achieve a lot with cars. If you travel by train and bike, you can also achieve a lot. I'm proud of the fact that I've never needed a car for my working life, with train and bike somehow. You have to be creative, but if you don't want to, nothing works, and politics does not create the framework conditions that are reasonably binding.

It will always be possible to travel by car. It might be a bit more uncomfortable, but if it continues like this, it will always be possible, and politicians are only interested in ensuring that nobody is restricted. More technologies are brought into play, but the most important source of energy and energy saving is forgotten far too much.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** If I briefly summarize, Werner, the state should regulate more, that life, the way we damage the environment with our lifestyle, that this becomes more difficult?

**A - Werner:** It should be more serious about what it has planned so far, really implement it and not create so many loopholes.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Mhm.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** How would you say one can take this opinion you've said now too far? To what extent can you mean it too well, so that it does more harm than good?

**A - Werner:** That the state intervenes too much and that this is an idealized idea that is not supported by the masses. There are a few people who understand this, and I am not consistent in my actions either. That's difficult. It means doing without, and when I see others simply using the resources, then I ask myself: why do I limit myself when others don't?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay. Thank you, Werner. Then, last but not least, Julian. What is your opinion on the subject? To what extent is it good for society and what are the possible disadvantages?

**A - Julian:** So I think what Werner has just mentioned is the most important thing for me, somehow. I think it's about justice. Somewhere. I believe in the concept of historical responsibility, in other words that we—our prosperity in Germany or in the whole Western world actually, to a certain extent we have also built on having exploited the other part or parts of the world, on one hand, as far as natural resources are concerned. And also the CO2 emissions that we have been emitting for centuries over the last few decades, which is now helping to ensure that the situation is at its worst in the regions of the world who make and have made the smallest contribution, especially also... That's an important point to me, that the climate issue is also essentially about social justice. Distribution issues precisely on what... what is our foundation of our livelihood? What is our economic success and prosperity based on? And how much of which came about unjustly somewhere?

I think that's an important topic, and also what Werner briefly mentioned. I think taking it seriously is also one of those things. In the economic field, for example, people are often expected to make rational decisions, which I also think that people can certainly act rationally. That there is this model, of the "homo economicus," for example, which is often referred to in economic theories. I think that as far as climate policy is concerned, or climate science findings, there is simply a disbalance somewhere. The findings that are made there are somehow not taken with the same seriousness and are like to be a bit marginalized or simply not given the same space on the political stage as it might deserve. And I also think it's an important issue that we follow our principles in this respect... I think that we should take them seriously, exactly about justice.

The disadvantage of the position is certainly also that we will have to accept restrictions somewhere. The status quo, as it stands now, we need to consider that we may not be able to keep everything, like internal combustion cars, for example, or fossil energy sources. At the same time, the diversity of consumption or the economic prosperity that we have now, and that all somehow has a price. I think we have to think about what is more important to us in the long term—our democratic foundations or economic success, or economic comforts.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Your time is slowly coming to an end.

**A - Julian:** Sure. That's right. Yes, and in personal terms, of course, it can always be. The deeds that I do, that those somehow... that they are exaggerated, go in the wrong direction. None of this can be ruled out.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Then we have about 5 min, I would say, 6 min left, where I would invite the four of you to talk about it again. What are the advantages of your position, although you've already talked about it a lot. I would also be interested. You've talked a lot about it now, when you talked about disadvantages, that disadvantages are that we have to cut back and so on. Which makes sense. And I think everyone agrees that this is a point that somehow is important when you demand something political. What would interest me is whether you see any disadvantages—maybe not about the disadvantages, but whether you see any way in which you can take the kind of demand too far in a certain way or that if you mean too well with it, it tips

over in some way that it can harm society or even climate policy in a certain way. If you understand what I mean. So, whether you can get too radical with it.

**A - Beate:** I think the whole thing is of course a balancing act, right? And I also think it's important that it's not just about disadvantages. I think it's actually about the fact that if we act, we have a lot to gain. It's going to take a lot out of all of us, but I mean, I'm a psychotherapist, and it's no coincidence that we've been getting the runaround for years and decades. The way we live our lives. But even before the climate discussion... that this [way of living] isn't making us happy in Germany either. And I believe that a lot of the changes that are now necessary because of the climate crisis, that these would also be things that we could all gain a lot from again, in the sense of really showing more solidarity and to really be living more happily.

**A - Julian:** If I could somehow... Exactly. If I could go into that briefly, I would actually also largely agree. I also believe that we can definitely manage to develop a kind of frugality. So, how much do you really need? In material terms. Sure, I'm also talking about it from a privileged perspective, I have a lot of things. I haven't experienced any real lack. And exactly... I believe that an economically poor position in relatively rich countries does not necessarily manifest itself in a lack of goods and that people are still not doing well. Um... I just think we need to rethink things like: What is important to us? What really makes a good life? That, I think, is somehow an important core point of all of this. And I think that on one hand it's clear that some material loss is somehow part of it. Maybe on the other hand, a lot could be gained. That, I believe too, yes.

**A - Werner:** Maybe we just see everything in a very negative light. Everything that is new is rejected first. But it offers opportunities to do it differently, to do it better, and maybe then you realize it's not that bad.

**A - Beate:** I still want to say—no, you first, Paul.

**A - Paul:** I would also like to make a negative comment. I think it was also about whether this also has a social or economic impact or can cause damage to general climate policy. We simply have the problem that we live in an economic system that has to grow endlessly, an obligatory growth imperative. And that's where I see a very, very big problem, because what we're striving for, i.e. a more ascetic lifestyle, less consumption, buying fewer things, collides very strongly with the capitalist economic system that's now in place here. And this whole story can also affect our, well, the expansion of our plans. Simply prevent us from becoming more regenerative. So, a fundamental change in the system would have to be made if we really had to or wanted to have a more ascetic lifestyle.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** So the point you just made is that if we strive for this more ascetic way of life—that this could lead to our economic system being overturned and that this could lead to further chaos, and we need to see how to deal with that?

**A - Werner:** Yes.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Mhm. All right. We have one minute left, Beate, you wanted to say something?

**A - Werner:** Yes.

**A - Beate:** It's also quite clear, including from the business community, that if we don't act, it will become much more expensive. In other words, for economic reasons, it's time to change things very quickly and very radically, because the system is already tipping over. You wanted to say something else, Werner.

**A - Werner:** Yes, well, the earth has enough resources. They are just unfairly distributed. The minority claims most of the resources for itself, and it needs to be distributed more intelligently. There isn't really any other option.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** And thank you. We are now through with the 20 minutes. Thank you very much, Paul, Beate, Werner, and Julian. Then I would ask everyone to turn their videos back on.

So, um... Exactly, then we're slowly moving toward the end. Right, before I say anything else—Nico, you have to leave in 7 minutes, right?

**B - Nico:** Yes

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Right then. The next point is... now - Have you had any new insights? I'll share my screen again.

There we go. I would be interested to now reflect on the exercises. What have you learned about how the other side sees the topic? And what similarities have you discovered? If there are similarities, then I would just ask Nico to go first, then you can go to your next appointment afterward.

**B - Nico:** Very difficult to answer that positively. Honestly. So, I'll just say how I think about it. Doesn't have to be positive. Well, I have to say, I didn't learn anything new about the other side. Unfortunately, the experiences I've had with this side have been very confirming in various situations. I see the link between climate protection and a very left-wing position on society and the economy confirmed here. That's nothing new for me. Also, simply pointing out the need for change without involving the population and raising awareness. In addition, which I also found very difficult, and not very nice either, I have to say. Also in the methodology, which we actually intended to adhere to, is that none of the disadvantages were somehow actual disadvantages or a criticism of one's own position. Which, at least for me, I tried to reflect on somehow. But [with the other side] it was always a very pretended disadvantage. So, "yes, we'll be worse off, and yes, we'll have to do without things." For me, and in my opinion, that's a very pretextual argument. I would have liked very much that the side would have simply tried to do a bit more reflecting on their own position. I have at least tried.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Without wanting to cut you down too much. We really don't have much time.

**B - Nico:** Then there is no...

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you for the honesty and for the feedback, really. I'd be happy if you send me an e-mail with more detailed feedback. I would just be interested to hear what the others have to say.

**B - Nico:** Yes, I honestly didn't have anything in common, except that we all believe in climate change. So that it's the...

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** All right. Thank you, Nico. Then, I'm curious to hear what other people have to say. I'm curious to hear from Beate what did you learn about how the other side sees the issue and did you see any similarities?

**A - Beate:** Please, I would prefer it if we really didn't just see each other this small [with the Zoom screen share], but properly [in Gallery view]. I think the... Sure enough. That's otherwise not so nice for an exchange.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Oh, very true.

**A - Beate:** Yes, I'm quite surprised now. Well, because for me it was actually somehow so that I thought we also had a lot in common. The first round was a lot about struggling to find the right way to save energy, or how quickly and when E-cars should come and how things are with recycling. I think those are all important questions, too, so I didn't feel so far away with all that.

But I also found that it was really noticeable in all of us. Such a sincere effort around this topic. For me, that's also a basis for us to be able to make progress, to be able to argue somehow about factual and technical issues. I think that's fine, we will have to.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Nico, I saw you shaking your head, and I would like to go into it, but we don't have the time. I'm sorry. [Nico denies] Oh, you didn't?

Good, very exciting. Do you want to say three more words about it?

**B - Nico:** I think that most of all the basic premises that are linked to the position and the development of ideas that we set in our conversation are just not compatible. But I believe those are just basic premises in society that are viewed differently.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay, there are ground rules that you think are different where it... where you find it difficult to find a common language? [Nico nods]

Alright, then next I would ask Paul, what have you learned about how the other side views the issue and have you seen any common ground?

**A - Paul:** In any case, I have seen similarities. I think that the other side talked about in great detail - how does the economy need to be transformed? How do we need to be set up to ultimately become climate neutral? At the end of the day, I really found it very disconcerting that it wasn't at all about distributing the resources we have more fairly. Also that we now have day X in March or April, when we have actually used up all the resources that have been set aside for us here in Germany. In other words, only a third of the year, which is somehow complete...



**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** You're bringing in more arguments right now. I know, Nico did that too, I didn't switch it so quickly. Because of the structure and the time constraints, I would ask you to really just stick to the commonalities. Even if it is a bit artificial.

**A - Paul:** Yes, that's fine. I think that we all would like to have better climate policy. Some people saw it more from an economic point of view, but also partly from a social point of view, i.e. taking globalization with them and saying: hey, if we produce hydrogen in Africa, for example, a cheap electricity system could really be created in Africa. I thought that was a very good approach, for example. Yes, nevertheless, I still think that a certain energy autonomy...

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Sorry, then I interrupt you because I also need the other people, because we want to be finished and we have 14 minutes. I would invite Stefan next: What did you learn about how the other side sees the issue, and did you see any common ground?

**B - Stefan:** Well, I generally found – something I was able to take away with me, was... Today I saw a completely different perspective on the topic because everyone has their blinders on in which they see the topic, but I was able to understand it a bit better today, like how urgent the topic is from a different perspective, and I think I have to agree with Beate that the biggest thing we have in common is that the topic is so close to all our hearts that we have come together today to talk about it, and I think we all have the potential to talk about it for another two or three hours. And I think we have already gained so much alone that it is important to all of us that we want to work together on this topic and that we can do it together, I think.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Stefan. Then Werner next and then Felix.

**A - Werner:** Well, I can clearly see on the other side the will and the intention to create improvements for our environment. The main methodology is research, creating knowledge, expanding knowledge, discovering new technologies, and testing what is possible. That is undisputed. And I don't see any ideologies there, just the belief in nuclear power, the... I think that this has now been researched, that the waste is not under control.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** You're making new arguments again, Werner.

**A - Werner:** Okay, good. Yes, but essentially, I would like to say that the other side also has good goals and tries to reach them by other means.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Werner, then Felix next, and then Julian.

**B - Felix:** I also saw few similarities between the two groups. The only thing we have in common is actually the topic we all talked about. I can see that one side is approaching the topic in a more extreme way and did not go into the topic in quite such detail. Unfortunately, I have to agree with the previous speaker, Nico, here and say that too little attention was paid to one's own criticism. It's like trying to sell your weaknesses as strengths in a job interview. And I was definitely able to take a lot with me anyway, not from the other side, not because I somehow gained new insights from the other side. I mean, I've had dialogs like this many times before. Accordingly, there was actually little that was new for me, but rather in the theory of decision-making, methodology, decision-making and the formation of collective behavior or consensus. It

is relatively difficult. Two - yes - you may have said at the beginning two not so very different approaches, but I would say that these two approaches were actually quite contradictory.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** All right. Thank you. Then last but not least, Julian. What did you learn about the other side, and did you see any similarities?

**A - Julian:** Yes, well, I found the approach interesting that Nico just mentioned, for example. About how to get people onboard with you on the whole topic. And how to distribute the decision-making process throughout society. Maybe I wasn't so aware of that at the time while I was talking, and I also thought it was a pity that... I also tried to criticize myself. I didn't seem to have succeeded so well. I can see that too, I take that with me, that people on the other side perceived me that way. What has been emphasized several times now is that we are all human beings living here on this planet. Accepting climate change as a fact is, I think, already a pretty important common ground, and I believe that is the essential common ground. Besides all that, which I found a bit of a shame, differences also came up somehow. I do find that encouraging somehow.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. Thank you, Julian. Then let's come to the end of the workshop as well. I would ask you to fill in the next questionnaire that Kerstin just sent in the chat.

Bye, Nico—thanks for being here. You will be asked the same questions again as at the beginning, and I'm curious to see if anything has changed. There are also a few new questions.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** You're done with the questionnaire?

**A - Werner:** Yes, that's what I meant.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Wonderful. Exactly. When you're done with the questionnaires, just raise your digital hand.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Exactly. Wonderful, then they all are. Then right now comes the so-called debrief. In the end, it has to be done by a psychologist. Where I have to explain, it was about the dialogue approach that is used relatively successfully in the U.S. between Republicans and Democrats. The idea is to see if this can be applied in Germany, specifically in the context of a polarized issue, and not between two polarized political parties, because the political landscape in Germany is not as polarized as in the U.S. Just not polarized around two clear parties. I

decided to focus on the topic of climate policy because that is one of the issues—along with a few others—that polarizes us as a society after all.

Now to the end for more information. You can contact me with further questions. You will also receive a debriefing email from me, where I will give you more detailed information. Otherwise, I would still be interested to know how you would like to use the time. We still have 4 minutes. I'd love to hear another 10 minutes from you all on what you thought of the workshop, or if you have any suggestions for improvement.

**A - Beate:** Yes. Um. I'll start at the back. How do I feel? I realize I'm sad. I have the feeling that somehow I've hardly reached the other side at all. I find that difficult. I would also like to continue the discussion. I'm not going to give up that easily, even with those who initially had the feeling that there wasn't much in common. I'm a bit dismayed. I really thought it would be easier to understand each other. Was that your question? Now, of course, I just stayed with the feelings again, me, the psychologist [smiles].

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** That's okay.

**A - Beate:** But I'm sticking with it. I'm just interested to hear what the others have to say.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** There were a few shocks in there. A few things that you maybe didn't expect?

**A - Beate:** No, not so much shocked. I think I was expecting something different in human terms. It's not that I think, "Oh God, what did they say?" More like a disappointment?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Mhm.

I'm not calling anyone now. If you want to say something, popcorn-wise, feel free to raise your digital hand.

Good, Felix?

**B - Felix:** I think it's relatively difficult to hold a critique session like this because you often don't know where to start. I'll perhaps briefly address Beate's criticism. If you don't mind me saying [Beate nods], that you are sad or disappointed, horrified that you perhaps couldn't quite reach our side. I think it's not quite that bad because, ultimately, as was already emphasized earlier, we have all come together here today because of this one topic and just want to go into this discourse and see what the other side thinks about it. I think it is the case that I could understand the thoughts from the other point of view, but still not quite thinking in the same

direction. And that is the case that I simply didn't take anything new with me, simply because I've already done this far too often. I've had this conversation, this dialogue, and I've already internalized a lot of it.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** If I understand that correctly, for you, it was more so that you have seen the similarities, and that the topic is important to both sides, but you've moved on from the things you knew up to now? The image you've had of other people, that nothing new has been added?

Thank you, Felix. Then Julian next.

**A - Julian:** Um. Yes, exactly. So, the first point was, so to speak, criticism of the format or in general. I also thought it was quite good to get together here somehow, just like Felix said. Everyone—that we were or are all humans who are interested in somehow getting in contact with the other side of a different opinion, to face each other and exchange ideas. That there is an open interest somewhere, so that you can talk to each other at all. And I think that not everybody does that. Well, I also associate it somehow with a certain willingness to get out of these blinders—I think the term was used earlier—which all people have somewhere, to break out a little. The same goes for being proven wrong, in whatever direction. Exactly that. That's why, I thought, the format was able to achieve this to some extent, that we were able to talk to each other separately and that there wasn't so much friction. Exactly, maybe it would be a bit more time. Sometimes, of course, it's difficult to somehow go that little bit further.

On an emotional level, on the one hand, I thought it was good that we discovered these similarities. But somehow, still, this sobering feeling, somehow, of how you could then get into action, what you could do as a common... We could somehow find a guideline for action to really tackle the issue that we have all recognized as urgent, to tackle and deal with it. Which I think we've been procrastinating on for quite a long time, as humanity, I'd say. Um, yes, exactly.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Julian. Alright, Stefan?

**B - Stefan:** In general about the format: I find the format very pleasant. I find it a very pleasant form of discussion because everyone can express their opinion freely. There is no possibility of being interrupted at all, and that you could also reassess yourself as a group. Because I say we were now divided into two sides, but each individual in the group still has their own opinion, some, I'll say a little, in one direction, some in the other. We were able to exchange ideas within our community of interest. I also found it very productive, and um... Yes, I have to agree with Julian. I believe that we both have the same goal. Just the path to this goal—I think it's very, very difficult to find it, because these paths are very far apart. And that's kind of the challenge here, to come to a common denominator and to be able to pull together to achieve the same thing.

Yes, I'd also have to leave at this point. I have to move on too. Thank you all for the exchange. Thank you, Lorenz, for the invitation—it was very cool. And yeah. I'll get back to you by e-mail.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you. Very good.

**B - Stefan:** Bye!

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Um Paul, if you have anything else to say, I'd be happy to hear.

**A - Paul:** I also find the format quite interesting and perhaps a little more time would have been nice with the big exchange. Apart from that, I found it interesting to hear different opinions, different approaches. But I haven't taken anything groundbreaking from the other side either. I'm just aware of a lot of things. Thank you to all.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Paul. Good, then I would close it for today. Thank you very much for being there. As I said, this is a huge help for my Master's thesis. Thank you for taking the time. I will of course send you the masterwork when it's ready if you want to see it. Otherwise, have a wonderful evening and a good time.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good, thank you.

**A - Beate:** Bye.

**B - Felix:** Thank you, everyone. Have a nice evening.

**A - Julian:** Yes, have a nice evening. Take care.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Bye, Julian.

### Workshop 3

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Perfect. I'm now interested in who you are. I've talked long enough. Please feel free to tell us, in one sentence, who you are, where you're from, and what brought you here today. I'll stop splitting the screen so that we can all see each other better, and then I would just invite Fabian to start.

**B - Fabian:** Yes, hello, first of all. I'm Fabian. I'm from Bonn. I'm primarily here because Lorenz really does have amazing stamina; over several weeks and months, he kept asking me to be here. What else is there to say about me? Politically, I come from a liberal [libertarian] background. Professionally, I'm working in a printing company in Düsseldorf. Yes, and that's it for now.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, and thank you for putting up with my stamina.

**B - Fabian:** Good.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Anja next and then Anton.

**A - Anja:** Yes, you're doing it alphabetically? I'm Anja, that's right. I come from near Cologne. I'm not so set in my ways professionally. I originally studied printing and media technology. I'm an engineer—that connects me a bit with Fabian, perhaps. Then I've been running a backpacker hostel in Cologne for 15 years and studying part-time Psychology at a remote university since 2017. In the course of this, I've also been involved with Psychologists for Future for a year and a half. That's actually what brought me here, because we are always concerned about what opportunities there are to make progress in terms of climate protection, what interventions there might be, and how best to tackle this. We discuss this a lot among ourselves, which is why I think the idea of dialogue across the groups totally makes sense, and I'm interested in how it can go from here.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Anja. Then next, Anton and then Noah, and again, with the thought in mind: if possible, in one sentence, otherwise we won't finish today.

**A - Anja:** Sorry.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** All good [smiles].

**B - Anton:** Then I'll try it a bit faster. I'm Anton, I'm 26 and I'm from Bamberg. I'm a businessman for insurance and finance. Lorenz asked me to join today because he thought he needed someone to represent his opinion more. I'm not that politically active and I'm not that deeply involved in the topic, but I think I can still say something about it today.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Noah next, and then Elias.

**A - Noah:** Hello, I'm Noah. I'm from Cologne. I'm currently studying physics and I'm active in the Last Generation. I came across this study through the Last Generation and found the whole thing very interesting.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Noah. Then Elias next and then Dieter.

**B - Elias:** I'm Elias, I'm still doing my A-levels. I also come from the Liberal Party like Fabian, and I'm also a member. And yes, I'm from Bonn.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you Elias. Then Dieter and then Mia.

**A - Dieter:** Yes, well, I came here through... I'm from Bonn. I'm active with Parents for Future, and I am also very active in [inaudible] for solar power. I am here because I am interested in this exchange.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Dieter. Next, Mia.

**A - Mia:** Hello everyone. I'm Mia. I live in Bonn. I'm nervous because I don't like talking to people I don't know very well. But that will go away as the evening progresses. I'm a psychologist and gave up my job last year to devote more of my life to the crises of our time, especially the climate crisis. That's something that bothers me a lot, that keeps me very busy. That's why I'm really excited about this format, because I really like it. I'm excited to see what we learn today. And then I'll pass on.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Mia. Then Julius next. Then we'll hear briefly from Martin.

**B - Julius:** I hope the connection holds. There were a few problems understanding Lorenz earlier. I'm Julius. I'm studying in beautiful Florence in Italy, studying economics. I'm also politically active with the liberals, and I'm looking forward to hearing more of your positions from the many different backgrounds that are here tonight.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Julius. Martin, you also wanted to say a few things.

**MOD Martin:** Yes, I will say a little bit more, but then I'll shut up for the rest of the workshop, because this is your workshop. I emigrated to the U.S. 30 years ago. I grew up in Germany, shoutout to Anja in Cologne. I come from [anonymized]. But that was a long time ago. I'm 56 now, live in Arizona, and I work here for a non-profit organization, Braver Angels. We try to bring Republicans and Democrats together, to talk to each other, similar to what you do today. But there are some things that remind me very much of Germany in the 1930s, and that is frightening. We're trying to bring people together. What fascinates me about the workshops and why I work for this organization is... I never used to talk to people on the other side. I saw it as not valuable to talk to each other, and today I see it a little differently. I think that every person, no matter what their views are—if I was really in their shoes and had lived their life and had their past, I would probably think similarly. I became fascinated with why someone can think differently. So if I have someone in a workshop today who presents a completely different emotional worldview to my own, I'm learning to listen first instead of trying to convince the other person of my own viewpoint, and instead to get to know the other person as a person. How did you become that? Why do you have the view you have? And it's hard to keep an open mind and be curious. I realize that if my curiosity goes away and I become small or defensive, then it all goes out the window. But if I can keep this curiosity, then something really interesting happens, and I hope that you might also feel that a little.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good, thank you very much, Martin, and thank you for your support. Let's move on then.

Before we start, Martin will send you a link in the chat to the questionnaire, which I would like you to complete briefly. This will take a few minutes and you will be asked a few things about how you see the "other side," compared to how you see your own side. Because this is a bit of a special workshop today, for the people who now have an A in front of their name, imagine people who perhaps don't have an extremely well-founded B-warning, but are more in the middle, like the people in a workshop, perhaps more in the liberal camp. And people who are in group B, imagine people today who have a well-founded A opinion. If you have any questions, please let me know.

**A - Mia:** I was just distracted for a moment because I was already at the poll. Did you mean, if we are A, should we think of a strong opinion or a medium strong opinion?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** It's a moderate one.

**A - Mia:** The way it is today.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes, the way it is today. Exactly.

**A - Mia:** Okay, good.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** When you're done with the questionnaire, you can just raise your digital hand here, and then I can see how many are already finished.

**MOD Martin:** Lorenz, Fabian probably has a question.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** You're done with the questionnaire, or did you have a question?

**MOD Martin:** So, okay, sorry.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Exactly. Noah, you're done too?

I think most people are done.

Exactly. Okay, Elias too. Wonderful. Good. Thank you.

Then, is it also possible... let's go. I'll share my screen again. Before it starts, I find a few more basic rules are important to ensure that everything runs smoothly here.

Martin has already touched on this. What is important here is that we focus on understanding and explaining each other and not try to convince the other side. So, I don't expect anyone here to go out tonight and have a completely different opinion. The focus is really to understand why the other side thinks the way it does, and perhaps have a bit more of a human connection than we had before, letting go a bit of the stereotypical images we might have about others. The second thing is: we only speak for ourselves—we don't speak for any other groups that might not be here today—we stick to our own experiences.



The next rule: we stick to the activity in question. So, you will always be asked relatively specific questions. For example, later there will be the question: "What have you learned about how the other side sees itself, and have you found common ground?" And it's important to stick to these questions and answer them. It will be very tempting to go back and talk even more about your own side and make even more arguments. I would ask you to resist that temptation and stick to the question.

And the rest are standard things of respectful interaction that we all know: listening to each other, letting each other finish. Don't sigh loudly or roll your eyes when someone else is talking. Exactly.

Does that sound good to everyone? I can live with a non-verbal nod, etc. Wonderful.

Then we'll start right away. The rules for the fishbowl are: when your video is on, only talk to the people who are in the fishbowl with you, and only talk about your own side. People like to subtly criticize by saying something like, "Unlike the other side, environmental protection is important to us," or "the no-national-debt policy is important to us, unlike perhaps other people." I would ask you to really stick to your side. If you bring in the other side and criticize, it makes it difficult for other people to listen to you.

Outside the fishbowl—that's actually where the real work takes place, where the real effect happens—in the people who remain invisible and inaudible and listen to see if they can find common ground.

That's it. Normally, we would now flip a coin and decide which group starts. I would say, if it's okay for you, that we'll just let Group A start. Simply because the last three workshops, the coin has always fallen in such a way that Group B started. And I just need some diversity so it's scientifically accurate.

That's why I would say Group A starts. I hope that's okay.

Exactly, the questions again: Martin sends them in the chat. They are both really equally important. What is my opinion on the subject? Why is my position good for society? What are the advantages and what are the potential disadvantages? My position. How can you possibly take it too far? It's an important question. I would ask myself, even if it is perhaps unpleasant, to think about it a bit self-critically and to see. Okay, to what extent can you do the thing that I'm proposing now, that I really believe in, in a way that is perhaps really not good for our society and that might achieve the opposite?

Or if it's hard to think of anything, then try and think, "Okay, maybe not me personally, but other people on my side with a similar opinion. Can I think of people who might be taking this too far?"

That is the intention. Now, I would ask all of you from Group B to turn off your videos, that we see the people in Group A here, and then I would pin your screens.

Wonderful.

Good. Perfect. Then I'll open the floor and I'd like to ask Mia to start answering both questions. You have 3 minutes: What is my opinion, why is it good for society, and what are potential downsides.

**A - Mia:** My opinion is that we are absolutely not doing enough for climate protection, and that it is imperative so that we humans survive on Earth and so do all other species on Earth. My opinion is also that... I find it very painful to watch how humans separate themselves from the rest of the world and from the rest of the living beings in our world. We all belong to a biotope. We are dependent on each other, and we need this cycle, of which we are also a part, to work. Otherwise, we can't live here on this Earth. And there is no planet B. I have great fears about this and deal with it and be active, and am committed to dealing with it, because otherwise I couldn't be dealing with these feelings that I have. Yes.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** It's good for society because it's about survival of our species, of the entire ecosystem, that everyone can survive?

**A - Mia:** That's exactly why. And what are the disadvantages of my attitude? Well, one big disadvantage is that we humans can't carry on as we have been, simply wanting to make bigger and bigger, more and more, the economy should become even stronger, even stronger gross domestic product, etc. Especially since... yes. Um... so we kind of have to stop what we've been doing for the last 100 years, since the Industrial Revolution. That's what our generation needs to stop doing now and... change our behavior. It's very stressful, it's very difficult, and it's a healing process in society, and then we just see how exhausting and how difficult it is and how divisive it is right now, and how much the societal tension grows.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** So you would say one disadvantage is that it also leads to social tensions, to have and demand such strong changes? That that could have side effects?

**A - Mia:** That's exactly a disadvantage. And it is a disadvantage that behavior modification is always very stressful because we simply don't automatically carry on as before, but think about what makes sense now. What needs to be changed? And change is always stressful.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** All right. Thank you Mia. We are exactly at 3 minutes. Then I would invite Dieter next and then Anja.

**A - Dieter:** I simply see that we cannot continue as we are doing now. We can see that the enormous CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are continuing to increase, that the temperatures are rising. I can remember when I was at school, back in the day—I'm a bit older now. Perhaps many people can't imagine that. But when it was 30 degrees in the summer, we were off school. I can still remember that we had that. But it wasn't that often.

Now I have learned that in 2014 there was the first time in Germany over 10 days of 30 degrees in summer one year. In the last 10 years, we have seen that the average is over 10 degrees. The first time was in '94. It was more days over 30 degrees. And since 2014 to 2021, it has been 30 degrees on average 13 days in Germany. We can also see that the summers have become much hotter and drier. And at 30 degrees, anyone can still live with that. At 40 degrees, it gets difficult.

We've already had the first few summers where it's over 40 degrees. And when it's over 50 degrees, you can no longer live outside.

This climate change will have a serious impact on all our lives, and it's not getting any better. Yes, humanity will not die out and nature will not be destroyed...

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** If you can add briefly to what you've said now, your opinion, to what extent is this good for our society?

**A - Dieter:** So, it's good for our society if we tackle climate change and don't build into these catastrophe scenarios. The problem is, of course, that we have to change a lot of things, as Mia has already said. There will of course be winners and losers, and there will of course be many people who may have to give away some of what they have. They would have a problem with that. And of course, we have the problem that other people—it is not so easy for society to live in a climate-neutral way because they are also disadvantaged. We have to do something about that.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. Thank you, Dieter. Then next, Anja, and then after Noah, to look again at the second question. The demands that you might have, to say we need faster, quicker changes and drastic changes. To what extent can these demands be brought too far, or to what extent can this perhaps be done in a way that is not good for the country? Or do you perhaps know people who are demanding such things that you then don't agree with?

**A - Anja:** Okay, yes, so my attitude is of course also that more needs to be done, more decisions need to be made by those responsible. That politics, above all politics of course, the decision-makers, but also the economy, large corporations, which also have an enormous position of power in our society, that more must be demanded and done from there, or perhaps indirectly, also via politics, that more must be demanded from society in this direction. And I would like it to be communicated more clearly that the changes are not driven by a small bubble of metropolitan intellectuals or something like that, but that the changes are simply necessary, vital, or even socially necessary.

Because so much is simply changing from the outside. It's imposed from the outside. That change is not actually a choice, but that we are faced with having to change, because a lot is changing around us and climate change is also being recognized as a fundamental problem, i.e., the scientific findings on this, which are also causing other crises, whether it's wars, wars over resources, what we are currently experiencing, including economic price increases, which are ultimately also damaging our economy, that there is simply better communication.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** So your proposal now was that it's not just big players deciding, but that it sort of comes from the general population somehow? That people from the general population have something to say?

**A - Anja:** Well, I do believe that the big actors have to decide, but also communicate this accordingly, and that there is actually no other option than to decide in such a way that it is received. Of course, I don't really know how this can be done, but I think it would be necessary.

And if you ask now—how can you overdo it? Perhaps the disadvantage is that if it's not communicated properly, it comes across as patronizing. I do believe that sometimes laws and regulations are necessary, also in order to simply change and manifest a social norm, but that this is exactly what is needed. Also, it stirs up fears and provokes resistance, which in turn is fuel for people who want to push through their own interests and take advantage of a polarized society.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you. Anja, we are exactly at 3 minutes. Wonderful. Then, last but not least, Noah, what's your opinion on this? Why is it good for society? How can you take it too far?

**A - Noah:** My opinion is that we should phase out fossil fuels as quickly as possible by 2030. Um, that we actually need a major political shift towards a climate-friendly world. And I believe that the position is good for our society because it is a catastrophe that none of us wants to live in. And that's not just those of us who, like me, are engaged in the last generation, but the alternative is a world full of war, full of resource wars, full of refugee movements. The economic system would collapse completely because of all the damage that would be caused. None of us want all that, all this destruction that is being caused is for me nothing that anyone wants, and I'm very afraid of that, and that's why I think the only right step is to get out of fossil fuels as early as possible.

Also, um, even if that might be a big lack (?), what might be disadvantages of this position is also very similar to things that have already been said. This is an incredibly big change. It's a state of emergency that I would like to see called for in Germany, because it's such a big change, but at the same time it scares me incredibly, because it can trigger a lot of fears, because it can divide, because it can polarize, because perhaps movements can come to power that exploit this fear and then perhaps go in the wrong direction, because it's all uncertain. And all of that scares me, but I know that one way or another, it's going to come to this state of emergency. At the latest with the climate catastrophe, in which everything goes down the drain.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Noah. Maybe when we get to your second argument, "We must lead the way as Germany," if you think about it, you can. Maybe there's also a way you could take it too far?

**A - Noah:** Yes, of course, one disadvantage could be that we don't get it right or that other countries don't follow suit. That is of course... Of course, that wouldn't be great. So yes, it could be that in the end our—Um—that it just doesn't work. So even if we start doing that, it won't be enough. And then you could say you did it here for nothing.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. Thank you, Noah. All right, we now have a good 9 to 10 minutes left in the group. There will now be a part where there is a freer conversation between the four of you. Right again, talking about it with these two questions: advantage of our positions and possible disadvantages in mind.

**A - Dieter:** Yes—again about your fear, Noah, that Germany is perhaps doing too much. Um, if we switch now, including wind and solar energy, and the rest doesn't, then at least for Germany

we will have improved the air, improved the water, and improved the environment. No matter what the rest of the world does. It also helps if we do something on our own.

**A - Noah:** Yes, not less.

I would actually agree that there is no way around it either way. If we do nothing, then we won't be able to get out of this catastrophe somehow. I would say that we have a responsibility to do something about it anyway. Because we in Germany have the chance to do something. We are the fourth largest economy in the world, that we are in a position to initiate change as a democratic country. We are historically one of the biggest emitters in the world and, from this perspective, we also have a historical responsibility and, above all, I don't think we can decide with a supposed majority here in the global North, in Germany, on the fate of billions of people who are suffering the consequences elsewhere in the world. I would also say in any case, we have to phase out by 2030. Yes.

**A - Dieter:** It's not that other countries aren't doing anything. The Americans have now taken a lot of money in hand, and the Chinese are the ones who are doing the most solar expansion. They a

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Then I ask you four to turn off your videos, and for Julius, Anton, Fabian, Elias, turn on your videos.

Good. So. Now, all right. Then I would invite you to answer both questions. You already know them: What is my opinion on the subject? To what extent is it good for our society and to what extent can it be taken too far or what are the potential disadvantages? Then I would invite Fabian to start and then Anton.

**B - Fabian:** Good, um, my opinion on climate policy in Germany and in general is that, like almost everything else, it is primarily a matter of consideration. It is a special matter of consideration because it is both a technical and a social matter of consideration. And that is exactly the main part of my opinion, that this balancing between the measures that need to be implemented and the consequences of the measures should be designed in a way that, on one hand, the topics such as fear of social decline and fear of price increases in normal everyday life are decreased. The second topic is actually also simple; it's a communication issue. The big issue of climate is, for most people in the country, too diffuse for them to actually be explained with simple means because it's just not possible for them in their normal everyday life because you don't have it so directly in front of you.

**B - Fabian:** As I said, I come from the business world, which also has a lot to do with this topic. Okay, we always blur the issues of sustainability and climate a little. For me, they are facets of the same big fish, so to speak. Our problem at the moment is that we have a lot of regulations that trigger exactly the opposite results. My favorite example is recycling. I've already said that I work at a print company. We actually take back the prints that we produce and the frames that we produce and then recycle them. The problem is, for example, with PET materials... There are very few chemical recycling plants in this country and in Europe in general. But the obligation

for many companies, even the larger ones, is that it has to be recycled, and the only possible legal recycling method is incineration. Okay, it's recycling because energy is being produced, but in terms of climate technology, for example, it's suboptimal, also suboptimal in terms of sustainability.

**B - Fabian:** At the end of the day, my opinion is that we really need to change our approach of how we use this big pot of money that we have in this country. The so-nicely-called "emitters" or these quote-unquote "pollutors" should actually be given the economic means to operate sustainably in terms of climate technology. What's the big disadvantage of that? It's an [inaudible] system. The big disadvantage is, of course, that something will always be missing somewhere at the end. One side will always be crunched away, and you have to decide who will be the one to suffer in the end. And in the end, this is an uncomfortable and dangerous political decision, which then also has consequences.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Fabian. Then Anton next and then Elias.

**B - Anton:** Yes, my opinion is that climate protection is definitely extremely important for all people and also for the environment and animals, of course. I think it's important that we in Germany also take extreme care to ensure that we can really protect the climate simply to create a future worth living for all those left behind. But my point now is that you have to weigh up how much you want to order, how far you really intervene.

**B - Anton:** The problem now, of course, is even if I really put a lot of obstacles in the way of companies, then of course they ask themselves: Why should I still produce in Germany? Of course, I'd rather go abroad, then I'll somehow go as a company to India or I don't know, to some other country, where climate protection really doesn't exist at all or only exists to a limited extent. And then I can produce as much as I want, and then it's probably even worse for the climate. Because now there are regulations in Germany. You have to comply with them. But if I really get so many obstacles in my way, then I'd rather go to another country. And then I don't care at all. Then I'll just throw my garbage there into any lakes or rivers that happen to be there. If you intervene too much, you as a company look for other options.

**B - Anton:** What perhaps speaks against my opinion now is that if we as Germany now don't take extreme actions, other countries might say, "Yes, we don't have to follow suit," and nobody really follows suit. That's the big problem for me.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. Thank you, Anton. If you want to keep talking - you have one minute left.

**B - Anton:** That's good.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** All right. Then next Elias and then last but not least, Julius.

**B - Elias:** I can actually only agree with Anton. So, of course, climate protection is very important, I'm also on board with that. However, it's always a balancing act, so sustainable development can't be one-sided. So, there can't just be ecological reasons for development, but

other things such as social aspects or economic aspects must also be taken into account and especially the competitiveness of Germany.

**B - Elias:** In this case, it would be very dangerous, because, as we also make money with cars, for example, the diesel engines and gasoline engines, etc. and in general, the industry is now simply being cut down, so to speak. Then of course that will have advantages for the climate. However, if this is generally not particularly advantageous in terms of sustainable development, simply because Germany will become uncompetitive, the economy will collapse, etc., I don't think it would be a better scenario. So I don't think it would be a better scenario than if we don't do anything now.

**B - Elias:** The problem is, of course, that the disadvantage of not doing anything now is that it has just as few advantages. So, as with new sectors, such as electric cars, etc. If we continue to do nothing, if we are left behind, there is a new market, but also renewable energies etc. and, above all, it is of course bad for the climate if we exaggerate this, so to speak, in terms of time.

**B - Elias:** There definitely needs to be a development, but not through some kind of prohibition culture, but rather by giving companies the means to stop, by giving them the opportunity to develop sustainably and not simply wiping out the best companies and saying: yes, that's bad - you're not climate-neutral. And then you definitely have to approach the matter less ideologically and less emotionally, but above all, rationally based on facts. The disadvantages are that you can also overdo it. And this is definitely a very important issue that has to be taken seriously, and you can't just deny it like some Republicans or whatever and pretend like nothing's happening. It's just stupid. Yes.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you Elias. Then Julius, what is your opinion on the subject, and why is it for society, and what are potential downsides?

**B - Julius:** Thank you very much, dear Lorenz, thank you to everyone who has already spoken before me. Elias has just mentioned the degree target: 1.5 degrees by the end of the century. What worries me most is—it's not as if climate change will be over by 2100. The warming will continue after that. And just because we limit it to 1.5° within this century doesn't mean that it will stop after that. I don't think 1.5 degrees in itself is the problem, but the speed at which this climate change is happening. I don't see climate change as something that we can still stop, but it is our duty to slow down this process as much as possible. Too little is being done to stop this process, to give us as humanity and nature the time to adapt to it. Species will become extinct. People will face unpleasant things, but we can slow down this process that has been initiated. We have to try to slow it down. And at the same time, where I see that being done far too little is in adapting to living in such a changed world.

**B - Julius:** We must adapt to the negative consequences of climate change and take precautionary measures to make agriculture possible even in 100 years with 2 degrees more, because we won't be able to keep to 1.5 degrees. This is essential so that people in other parts of the world or in Europe don't suffer from hunger because of climate change. I believe that an

important focus should also be on mitigating the consequences of climate change. Why is that a good thing? Because it helps people adapt to climate change and adapt to what this changed world looks like. It's bad at the point where we overdo it, where we only adapt to the consequences of climate change and no longer take the measures to slow down CO2 emissions. At the point where you focus more on adapting to the changed situation than stopping this process and slowing it down, it just becomes problematic. If you do nothing, you ensure that the situation you have to adapt to gets worse.

**B - Julius:** That's the disadvantage. If you walk into it with eyes wide open, saying, "Oh, we can't stop it now. Why stop it at all?" That's when you help to make things worse. The advantage is that we ensure that we are still viable in a world that has been transformed by climate change.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thanks, Julius. Also pretty accurate. 3 minutes.

**B - Julius:** I had a watch running with me [smiles].

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Wonderful. We also have about 9 minutes left. I would also be interested to hear a freer conversation between the four of you, where you agree with each other, and whether there are things where you say, "Ah, maybe I see that a bit differently." Still with these two questions in mind, advantages and possibly disadvantages.

**B - Fabian:** I think what we have in common here in this B-group is that we all started out pretty much the same way of: "Okay, we all agree that climate protection is important and must be done," but we have always put a "but" behind it. Now that, and that, and there are differences again, must not be forgotten, or it must be done in an economically just or socially just way, or whatever. And that, I think, is just the right approach at the end of the day, because if too much emphasis is placed on one side... If we throw everything out the window and focus only on climate protection, the economy will collapse. Economic growth is a big, undefined thing, but in the end, it means there's more money for people, more money for more people. Population growth is simply a relatively natural thing. But if people start to get poorer, then issues like climate change will quickly fall by the wayside.

We are in a recession, in a society that is becoming poorer, and also in a state that is becoming significantly poorer. We are not as rich as we always like to pretend. This balance has to be found. I have a very firm opinion on where the money can be taken from. We have over 100 billion in pension contributions [in Germany]. And I know it's a generational issue, but that's the real point of contention [laughs].

**B - Elias:** Yes, I would also definitely say that as far as the common denominator is concerned, there are of course a few things that we are starting to argue about, but above all that no one here is approaching the matter emotionally or ideologically. Each of us has looked at it based on fairly rational facts, and I think this economic aspect was also particularly important.

**B - Anton:** Another thing that just occurred to me—I was talking more about companies earlier, but of course, it's also important that everyone as a private individual tries to help protect the climate. It's really about looking at how you can protect the climate. And that's where it actually starts. If I eat a lot of meat, that's bad for the climate. That's what I've been trying to do for a year



or two now, to eat less meat. I used to eat meat every day, which is of course, firstly, not healthy, and secondly, extremely bad for the climate. So, it's about finding ways to contribute personally to ensuring that there is still an environment worth living in.

**B - Fabian:** I'm going to take a step back from the consensus here, because that's exactly the topic. The things that are always in the back of my mind—meat, sugar—of course, these are always cited as climate-damaging private expenses. This is actually something that the state can regulate relatively well via its tax system. That's another financing issue. In the end, you have to pay for all the necessary things for climate protection. It costs money. There has to be money for that. So, things like higher taxes on meat products or dairy products could make sense. You just have to work out what you take as a parameter to measure that. I know many people [within my own party] who would strongly disagree with me, but luckily they're not here today [laughs].

**B - Fabian:** At the same time, we need to ensure that this is communicated properly to people. That's the big issue. It simply has to be explained to people properly so that everyone understands that it just has advantages for them. It's not something intangible floating in the air. But at the end of the day, many people just don't care much about all this, because tomorrow is here first, and tomorrow there has to be enough on the table.

**B - Julius:** I'm one of those people who would disagree with you. I personally think very little of demanding a tax on meat, or a tax on milk, or a tax on cars that have a larger engine. I don't know much about cars—I don't have a driver's license. I think we need to start much more fundamentally, with a CO2 tax or CO2 certificate trading. No matter which of the two you choose, you make what is the problem, namely CO2, more expensive. It is not the meat that is the problem. If one day we have lab-grown meat, then people can eat as much lab-grown meat as they want, except in Italy, where it's forbidden [laughs]. But for me, personally, the laws make sense and are necessary to start where the problem is, and that's the CO2 emissions and other pollution—not meat per se.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay, so there's also a bit of dissent within the group.

**B - Elias:** I agree with Julius. A tax on certain products makes little sense, just attacking a certain company or industry. But a CO2 tax would probably make sense in any case. However, there is always the danger that this can be exaggerated very quickly. In other words, you can very quickly go in a direction where you hit the economy very hard at the same time. Of course, you can't somehow go through a major development without any loss if you are so heavily dependent on emitting so much CO2. But sustainable development is important in any case. You don't just have to offer something, but also make sure that money is being invested in the development of subsidies for electric cars, the expansion of charging stations for electric cars, etc. There are just a lot of issues that are not being tackled very much, especially in Germany. Often, there's much focus being put on this “Verbotkultur” [culture of prohibition], which is perhaps a little difficult, depending on the situation, because it doesn't do much good if I somehow prohibit something but don't have a solution. It's like if I build fewer roads but don't build any railroads. In the end, nobody gets anywhere. You definitely have to make sure it's balanced.

**B - Fabian:** Mhm.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** We now also have...

**B - Fabian:** Let's see, in the end you have to... and one of us said... Elias I think you even said that... Prevention is one side of the coin. You have to prepare for the possible actual state, and that's what's happening at the moment with the subsidies. Whatever vocabulary is used for this is simply not enough. We also need to—instead of focusing on completely preventing it—ensure or try to ensure, whether through research or infrastructure expansion or something else, that this can simply be mitigated, even if it occurs. That's simply being ignored a bit in the general debate. Maybe that's just my bias, but that's just how it feels.

**B - Julius:** If I may once again take the opportunity to contradict people.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Gladly, in the next 40 seconds.

**B - Julius:** I would like to disagree with Elias. I just heard the word prohibition culture again. Yes, I agree with you when it comes to things like meat. But a lot of what has ensured the quality of life in Germany has been regulation. Banning industry from pouring wastewater into the Rhine, banning CFCs because they increased the hole in the ozone layer. So there are many sensible bans. You're allowed to do that. You just have to justify it sensibly, instead of turning them into lifestyle bans, and instead focus on concretely prohibiting pollution instead of turning them into symbols.

**B - Elias:** Yes, I didn't mean to say that you don't need any bans at all, but of course, you need bans for certain things. My point was more about overdoing it. But yes, like not discharging wastewater into the Rhine—that definitely makes sense.

**B - Fabian:** I notice that communication is key. How you communicate all this in the end, and why you do certain things—that's the most important thing. I am relatively active in the German Sustainability Award through my company. Last year, the topic of the circular economy was brought up again. And a colleague of mine, who is a few semesters older than me, said, "Wait a minute, we had this before in 1982."

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** We still have 30 seconds.

**B - Fabian:** In short, communication is important. Don't let people fall away, and then it works better than with big emotional debates that simply forget half of the issue.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you very much, Anton, Fabian, Elias, and Julius. That was a very exciting round with a lot of different perspectives that interacted with each other well. Thank you. Then I would invite everyone back to the group.

Good. Welcome back. Nice to see you again. Now we are approaching the end of the workshop. I would like to know what new insights you have gained. What have you learned about how the other side sees the issue, and have you discovered any common ground? We have about 10 minutes for this. If everyone is to speak, each person would have to speak for about 1 minute 20. Noah, you're welcome to start.

**A - Noah:** One great thing that I learned was to see that all of us in this room have thought and worried about the future in one way or another. And not just one-sided worries either, but managing to somehow, yes, aim for a high quality of life in the future. And it was basically about very similar wishes—that we would be fine in the end. What I took away from Group B was a concern... my personal concern is that I'm afraid of the climate catastrophe. I don't want to live in that future, and for me, it's very much just, "We have to do something about it. We have to get out of there." But I noticed that a lot of other people have the other side of the concern—that maybe there's a lack of perspective or something, and I find that interesting because of course, I want perspective just as much.

But for me, psychologically, I just have this feeling: we just have to get out of coal now. But other people need it a lot more clear—where are we going then? What will it look like? And I think that's a very good point where we can come together more. I also give talks, and I realize that if I talk more about what our vision is, how we imagine the whole thing, which industry will grow as a result of renewable energies, how living together would look like in a more beautiful world, I feel like I would reach a lot more people than if I just talked about how "We're afraid of the future. It's going to be terrible, and that's why we have to do something now." Because what interests a lot of people just as much is not only what we're afraid of and who we want to avoid, but also where we want to go.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** A new perspective. Thank you, Noah. Any other voices—what have you learned about the other side and what did you see in common?

**B - Julius:** I thought it was very nice. I think it was mainly Anja and Dieter who said that this climate-friendly world, which we imagine very differently and want to achieve in different ways—all of this together represents a better quality of life. And that is an important point in the debate that you raised, for which I am very grateful. Because I feel like it's neglected in the public debate. That's why I was very pleased to hear it from you today.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Julius.

**B - Anton:** I would also like to say something briefly. I have realized here that we all really think we have to do something. Sure, there are differences in how we implement it, and that also depended on the group. In Group A, there was a very strong demand that we urgently need to do something now. For Group B too, actually, but there was still the aspect that you have to see how it works now so that it really works. What I really liked about this concept is that you could really let the other group have their say. That's actually nice instead of having a real discussion and then not letting you finish. I thought that was quite good.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** All right. Thank you, Anton. I think, Anja, you had your microphone on.

**A - Anja:** [laughs] Was that the sign, hmm?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes.

**A - Anja:** I definitely liked it a lot too. I have the feeling that we really have a common reality space. So, first of all, we take the climate crisis seriously, and we all have the need and the desire

that this is dealt with appropriately. And I often feel, when I ask around in the larger social debate, that I don't have much to say anymore. I often get the feeling that you somehow have a common basis—that's based on scientific findings—and if you go into the conversation like that, then I think you have to listen to the other side. Then it actually becomes clear that, yes, you have such a common basis, and then what the solutions look like, everyone has their own ideas, their own priorities. But I find it all very understandable where that comes from. That's why I think it's an important framework for starting a conversation.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. Thank you, Anja. Julius, you wanted to say something else?

**B - Julius:** Another point that actually relates less to the content than to the underlying thought processes and reasoning. I found that very exciting to observe, especially in Group A, but also in Group B, where there was a good balance of science and reason and, at the same time, a personal perspective and personal emotions. Because I don't think you can tackle the problem with just one or the other. We humans are a mixture of emotions and reason, and I experienced this in very different constellations in Group A—how much emotion and how much reason. But in each of the contributions, I heard this very strongly and was very pleased about it. Because that is often framed as "They're tree-hugging cranks who don't know the facts. Or on the other side are cold bureaucrats who have no heart for the concerns of the little man." There was no way you could perceive it like that. It was a mixture of ratio and emotio.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Julius. If Elias and Dieter have anything to say, I would be interested—no obligation, of course.

**A - Dieter:** I was very pleased that everyone actually thinks climate is a big issue. You mentioned that you couldn't find many people who were against it, or who weren't willing to take part. Of course, that makes it much easier to say straight away that I love people here. What I also noticed is that communication was mentioned again and again, and I think that's a big issue. I noticed that again, that this is actually mentioned by everyone, that this needs to be communicated properly.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** So, you mean communication from legislators?

**A - Dieter:** Yes, when it's about policy, but probably also from climate activists or the people who have their problems with particular climate measures. Yes, what Fabian said, I can understand that very well. You're supposed to recycle things, but it's being made difficult for you. There are also many issues in Germany. There are many problems, including many regulations that are not always climate-friendly.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Dieter.

**A - Mia:** I see it the same way as Dieter—there wasn't much difference between group A and group B. I really noticed that. We really do have a section of society that completely denies the climate problem. And that one wasn't represented here. I would have found it exciting to see how I'd react to it, to listen to those who take this stance. Unfortunately, that wasn't possible here, and I can understand why these people are not so willing to engage in dialogue. It's not your fault, Lorenz.

What I noticed is that we had a lot of agreement that it's also about looking at how the development is unstoppable and how we can give nature and people more time to adapt to climate change. And to do that, we need changes in the economy. We need to move away from climate-damaging production and towards climate-friendly production, but these changes also take time. And I somehow see that we can no longer give the economy this time because nothing has been done for too long. It has been known for a long time that changes are possible, but nothing has been done for too long.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Mia, you just brought up new arguments again.

**A - Mia:** Okay, yes.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Not that it's not important, but there's room for something else right now.

**A - Mia:** Yes, I see. I see a large part of the unity and difference perhaps in that people in Group A are committed to climate protection, and people from Group B are thinking for themselves. But maybe I'm overlooking something, or maybe not.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** In their own way?

**A - Mia:** Exactly.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Elias, if you want to say a quick word. We're just over the 10-minute mark, but...

**B - Elias:** I'm actually already used to this from school. There are also discussions about [inaudible]. That's why it wasn't surprising in any way, because it paints a similar picture at school. Of course, there are also isolated opinions that deny it, but they generally don't want to get involved. They usually prefer to keep quiet. But in any case, it was interesting that no one here really said that it wasn't such a big problem. Everyone was of the opinion that this is a big problem that needs to be tackled, and to a large extent, no one thought that we've done enough or anything like that. So, definitely interesting, but otherwise, I already know this from school. That's why I can't take away so many new things.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Then we are almost finished. Now Martin will send you another link in the chat for another questionnaire. There are mostly the same questions as before, plus a few others. The idea is to see if anything has changed.

**A - Dieter:** May I ask a question?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes.

**A - Dieter:** Does this mean people who disagree with me? Does this mean Group B or people in general who have a different opinion?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I'd say, imagine people who think like the people you saw in the workshop today.

**A - Dieter:** Okay.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. Then we're through, wonderful. That's basically it for the study. I'll share my screen again. Now comes the debriefing. Basically, you already know—it was about this dialogue approach, roughly the way we did it today with this fishbowl format, like Braver Angels, the organization in the U.S. between Republicans and Democrats. My intention with this study was to test: to what extent can we apply this topic in Germany?

Because in Germany, we are not divided into two big parties, and there isn't as much tension between the parties as there is in the U.S. No friendships ended because of differences between CDU and SPD, though AfD is its own topic. It's also interesting to take a look at this in the study. When it comes to climate policy, we're not as polarized as you might think. The topic has already come up a few times in the group—that we are not as polarized here in the group either. That's true, and that's also generally the case in the country. The percentage of people who say that man-made climate change doesn't exist is in the single digits. So, there aren't that many people, even if it sometimes seems that way. The polarization is more about how we go about it—do we bring in a lot of bans, make radical quick changes, or think it through and try to solve it through the economy with new innovations?

But you'll get the briefing email again with all the important stuff and a few recommendations. If you're curious, you can look up Braver Angels, the organization in the U.S.A. It's a very cool project. There's also a relatively recent book on the subject, which I based a lot of my study on. It covers issues like climate and other things that polarize us the most in our society right now, and what we can do about it.

Now it's 8:30 pm, so we're through. In principle, there's one more item on the program—an open feedback round. If you're tired or just want to go home after work, thank you for being here, feel free to go now. For those who still have time, I'd love to hear your thoughts—what did you think of the exercise? What do you take away? Any general feedback?

**B - Elias:** Yes, thank you very much. I'll be off then. I'm hungry, so yes, it was definitely quite nice—much better than a discussion, I would say, and also more effective. If you were discussing here now, you would be stuck in your opinion often, but... thank you very much.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Ciao.

**B - Anton:** I'd like to join Elias. Well, I'm off right now because I want to eat something. I said it earlier: I thought it was really good with this fishbowl concept that you really let the other group have their say first. You must listen, and then you can give your opinion afterward. Then, you can talk about it again—what you thought was good about the others, what you didn't think was so good. Well, I thought it was a really good concept, and then I wish you a nice evening.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Anton, for being here. Ciao.

**A - Anja:** I would also say goodbye and wanted to thank you again. I also think it's a great format and I can... well... good luck with your Master's thesis and so on, and it was fun.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you.

**A - Anja:** Bye bye.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good, then I want to say next to Noah, who has had his hand up for 2 minutes.

**A - Noah:** Well, I thought it was great. I learned a lot about other political opinions, and also somehow a lot more than if I had just started discussing and then thought, "What's the best way to get my point across and defend it, and what's the best way to attack the other side?" I think it's really great to be able to listen to what Group B had to say. I feel like I've understood a lot and also understood what things are important to you. And how I can also take up these things in my movement. Because in the end, it's about us coming together, and I feel like I got a really great basis. It was also fun, and it was much more relaxed than a heated discussion—just being able to listen.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Quite good.

**B - Fabian:** Yes, I would also agree with that. I also think the format favors this enormously, especially over Zoom, where the cameras and microphones can be turned off. If we were sitting in a room with two circles of chairs, it would probably be more of a self-discipline issue, which would be significantly more difficult. I found what Noah just said exciting because that's exactly the point I always like to highlight. Political discussions are very often seen as a battle. And this one step back, just sitting down, listening, letting it sink in, thinking about it, and then going into the conversation in a much more informed way—we've completely forgotten how to do that. Face-to-face in everyday life, it's much harder. That's why I welcome the fact that you're doing something like this. I hope it will become more popular.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Glad to hear it. Thank you, Fabian.

**A - Mia:** I would also like to thank you, Lorenz. I think it's a super nice concept. I think you guided this very nicely—very calm, very level-headed, benevolent. Yes, totally well-moderated, I think. The concept is super interesting. I'm thinking about where I could perhaps use it. I see that our society is increasingly divided, and people talk about each other more than they talk to each other. That worries me, and I think this kind of conversation is important. That's why the concept fits nicely. I am just a bit disappointed for myself because nothing was said that made my blood boil. Maybe I would have liked to challenge myself with that.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Mia. You were in the wrong workshop! Last week there was one with more extreme opinions [smiles].

**A - Mia:** Oh no...

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** [laughs] I need to find a few more people.

**A - Dieter:** Yes, I don't necessarily have to leave. I found it very pleasant to see that we have a lot of agreement between A and B. It's also encouraging that society isn't so divided.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you. Julius, if you want to say something else, go ahead.

**B - Julius:** Yes. Well, I think it's a shame that I didn't get Mia's blood pumping. I tried so hard with my introduction, which was supposed to play down the problem [laughs]. Too bad that

didn't work. To describe my personal impression—it was sometimes difficult for me personally, while Group A was talking, not to jump into a position of contradiction at individual points but to pause in the position of the observer. I also have a document that contains my observations, and there's a contradiction in brackets later on. So, I had to correct myself time and time again to return to the role of observer and to dampen down my eagerness for discussion.

As feedback to you, Lorenz, I find it very admirable how persistent you are. I think you wrote me 3 emails to remind me about the Doodle survey. It wasn't because I didn't want to participate, but because of the exam period. Thank you for that. Where I had to swallow a little in between was when I felt you interfered very strongly with some people's 3 minutes. I was glad you didn't do it with me—I would have been very annoyed. But if the others didn't mind, it seemed you did it in exactly the right places. I was very pleased with this evening; it was both entertaining and educational—about others, about yourself, and about how to carry out a digital fishbowl method. This was the first time I've done it digitally, and I was skeptical at first because I've only done it in person, but it went very well.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you for the feedback. Regarding the interruptions, does that resonate with others? Did you sometimes wish you could speak more freely?

**A - Noah:** Well, I was actually happy about it. I don't think you interrupted me once, but I thought it was fitting because it seemed you did it in places where people might have veered off track. I felt like there were so many people talking, and it's a challenge to hear so many different opinions, stay focused, and listen without switching into argument mode. So for me, it was actually quite pleasant to know that we had this time to listen and it wouldn't go on much longer. I didn't have to worry about speaking parts or anything like that.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay, thanks, Noah.

**B - Fabian:** It was also helpful for me because I was really tired from work, and I started to lose focus a bit. I could have rambled on for another 5 minutes if you hadn't kept me in check [laughs].

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Is there anyone who wished they could have spoken more freely?

**A - Dieter:** It didn't bother me. You interrupted me a few times, but that was okay.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** All right.

**A - Mia:** I also think it's rather helpful that you reminded us. Like, "Do you still have any disadvantages from your position?" Or, "You still have 1 minute to talk."

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Julius, if you feel like sending me that document you mentioned, I think it would be super helpful if you're up for it. Thank you for being here, everyone. I wish you a wonderful evening. Ciao.

**A - Dieter:** Good luck.

**A - Mia:** Yes.



**A - Noah:** Same here.

**B - Julius:** Take care.

**A - Mia:** I can just imagine how much effort this is compared to other studies like this and I think it's great.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Very pleased. Thank you.

**A - Mia:** You got support from the U.S. How did you actually do that?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I have contacts [smiles].

**A - Mia:** That's helpful. Cool. So, if you organize another workshop where it might get heated, I'd be happy if you invited me.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Sure!

## Workshop 4

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Well, I've talked long enough now. I'd be interested to know who you are. We don't have that much time. We all want to finish work on time. So I would ask you to explain briefly in one sentence: Who am I? Where in Germany am I from and what brings me here today? I would like to ask Patrick to start and then Martin.

**B - Patrick:** Hi everyone. I'm Patrick, I study in beautiful Bonn and, yes, I'm politically involved with the FDP, the Young Liberals, and the liberal university group and got to know Lorenz at an event, which is why I'm here now.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Chales. Then Martin and then Julia.

**A - Martin:** Hello everyone. My name is Martin. I live near Lübeck. I'm 54 years old and an electrical engineer. And what else... Now I've forgotten the questions we're supposed to answer.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** What brings you here?

**A - Martin:** My experience is that it's very difficult to talk to people who think differently. People often avoid political topics. Or I'd like to speak up, but I don't say anything because I don't want to cause any stress. Nevertheless, it's always on my mind, and yes, the general ability to speak [in society] has decreased dramatically. I think that's a shame, because I think we need to change something.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Martin. Next up, Julia—your name, where are you from, and what brings you here today?

**B - Julia:** That's right, I'm Julia. I come from [censored], near Cologne. I also know Lorenz from an event and, like Martin, I think it's a real shame that some of the communication has disappeared. That's why I think this is a really nice format.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Julia. Next up is Stefanie and then Christian.

**A - Stefanie:** Hi everyone. I am Stefanie, I'm 21 from NRW. I'm a student and an activist with the Last Generation. I got a request to join, which is why I'm here now. I think it's really important to stay in touch with people with both similar and different positions. I'm very excited to see what's here.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Stefanie. Next, Christian and then Markus.

**A - Christian:** I come from South Westphalia. So [censored] is familiar to me—best regards there [to Stefanie]. Now I'm a student in Bonn and a member of the CDU and JU, which puts me at the opposite spectrum to the Last Generation. I'm looking forward to the exchange. Lorenz spoke to me at our climate picnic in the Hofgarten—"our" meaning the JU. I found the idea important and would like to support it. I look forward to the discussion.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Here you can already see something interesting. You can see that Stefanie and Christian both have an "A" in front of their names. That means you're not that far

apart on the questions I sent you [in advance]. Yet you still have different values in certain areas, I assume. There are also shades of grey within the groups. I'm very curious about that.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Next, Markus and then Melanie—your name, where are you from, and what brings you here today?

**B-Markus:** Yes, hello everyone. My name is Markus. I come from the [censored] region and I'm involved in the Young Liberals and the FDP, specifically with the [censored] local association. My focus is on municipal budget planning and everything related to it. I work as a corporate customer advisor at a bank, and I also met Lorenz at a Julis event. I'm really looking forward to spending the evening with you.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you. For your information, Julis are the young liberal youth organization of the FDP. Then, last but not least, Melanie.

**A - Melanie:** I am Melanie. I come from the Stuttgart area, near [censored]. I am 51 and have 3 grown-up children who could all be about your age [smiles]. I'm actively involved in the Last Generation and joined through my son. I was relatively apolitical before, but now I've discovered a whole new world, and I'm fascinated by it—especially how difficult it is to have constructive conversations. I like being here.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Melanie. I'll be curious to see what kind of conversations develop today. This is one of the workshops I've been looking forward to the most because we have such a diverse group with different opinions.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Next, Rebecca will send you a link in the chat. The link leads to a questionnaire that I'd like you to complete. You're asked how your own group compares to other groups, such as people with a different opinion—those who tend to have opinion B and are in group B. If you have any questions, let me know.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** When you're done, please raise your digital hand so I know where we are.

**A - Christian:** Ready, filled.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay, all right. These are all... wonderful. Then I would now like to discuss a few basic rules that are important to ensure everything works well. There are 4 basic rules. One: we focus on understanding and explaining, not trying to convince each other. I don't expect anyone to walk out of here tonight having completely changed their mind. That's not the intention of this workshop. It's to better understand why other people think differently, and perhaps get a little closer to understanding with human empathy—asking, "How did the other person come to think the way they do?"

The second rule: we stick to the activity in question. For example, there will be a question after the fishbowl, saying: "What have you learned about how the other side views the issue and have you found areas of common ground?" It's important to really stick to the question. It will be tempting to add more arguments for your own side, but I'd ask you to resist that temptation so that the workshop stays within the structure. The rest is standard respectful behavior, which I

think we all know, such as letting each other finish, listening, not rolling your eyes or sighing loudly while someone is talking—basically bringing the best version of ourselves to a difficult conversation.

I'll have a quick look around the digital room to see if people agree via non-verbal nodding, etc.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes, all right. Then let's get to the explanation: For the people inside the Fishbowl who have their videos on, only talk to the people who are in the Fishbowl with you. Talk about your side and not about the other side. It's often tempting to criticize the other side by saying things like "unlike the other side, environmental protection is important to us" or "unlike the other side, we think the black zero is important and care about financial stuff." Even though these statements are tempting, they make it harder for the other side to hear you, and people will want to jump in and refute the arguments.

: I'd say focus on your own side. For those outside the Fishbowl, the most important thing is to stay invisible and inaudible. The real work and magic of the workshop happens when people watch and listen. It's about finding similarities or seeing a bit of humanity, even if you don't agree with the other person.

Now, in a normal workshop, there would be a coin toss to decide which side starts. However, since in the last few workshops, it was almost always group B that went first, and I need a few workshops where group A starts for scientific balance, I'd like to simply ask group A to start. Is that okay?

**Participants:** Yes.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good, then I would now ask the people from group B—Markus, Julia, and Patrick—to switch off your cameras. Martin, Stefanie, Christian, and Melanie, I'm pinning you now.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Wonderful. Now that we're together in the Fishbowl, I would invite you to answer these two questions: "What is my opinion on the subject, and how far is it good for society?" and "What are potential disadvantages that I see?" Christian, you had a question?

**A - Christian:** Do I have to answer the question in chronological order?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** More or less. Answer both questions within the 3 minutes per person. Then there will be room for discussion. Both questions are equally important, and even if it's difficult, I'd encourage you to talk about the concerns you have about your own side. The more open you are, the more open the other side can be later. Now, I'd like to ask Martin to start answering both questions. Christian, another question?

**A - Christian:** Since I'm in Group A, does that mean I have to take a radical position on climate change?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** No, you're expressing your own personal opinion.

**A - Christian:** Oh, okay. Based on the pre-sample I filled out, does that mean I'm already relatively radical?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** It just shows a tendency towards group A.

**A - Christian:** Okay, if you want me to represent my own opinion, I'll do that.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes, exactly. Do you see yourself more on side A or side B?

**A - Christian:** I can stay with A.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Perfect. Again, it's not about having the most extreme opinions—just tendencies. Now, please answer both questions: "What is an opinion that is good for society, and what are the potential downsides?"

**A - Martin:** Good, then I'll start now. My opinion on the subject of climate protection is that this is a significant problem, but our issue goes far beyond that. We are simply living beyond the resources that the earth can offer, and we are robbing ourselves of the foundations of life for the future. This has worried me for many years. I heard a lecture on climate protection in 2016 or 2017, and it really got me thinking again. I'm appalled that so many people ignore it in their everyday lives.

For myself, I've asked: what is the point of my life on earth, if we can't take anything with us? Do I just want to consume, or is there more? I want to be able to look myself in the eye and say I did what I could. I see that we are doing far too little for climate protection. We could do a lot more. I just don't understand it. I'm deeply disappointed and horrified by what's happening.

I was so happy when Fridays for Future came along. I thought, I'm not a student, I'm an adult—what can I do? I joined Extinction Rebellion for two years, and then continued with the Last Generation. But I'm also tired, weak, and disappointed.

The scientific findings are clear. It's all well-founded, what we stand for. You can argue about the methods, but the facts are solid. This brings me to the disadvantages of my position. I feel like an outsider in society. I don't feel understood. I wonder why I have these concerns and others don't. It frustrates me.

I experience very little understanding and problem-solving, and that takes strength—it's disappointing. That's it.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay, thank you. Martin. If you could maybe go back briefly and say a bit more about how someone might take your policy demands—what you want to see happen in politics—too far or mean them too well, where they might have the opposite effect?

**A - Martin:** Now I didn't fully understand your question. What I'd like to see is for us to simply take effective climate protection measures. What has happened so far doesn't seem effective to me; it's happening too slowly. I demand that we do this more quickly. And that means huge shifts are needed in society, but it doesn't necessarily mean we become poorer. We should simply be very flexible and adapt to what is necessary.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay, thank you, Martin. That was 3 minutes. There will be another time later when we have more room to talk. Now, I would invite Stefanie to answer both questions, and afterward, Christian. Again, both questions: What is my opinion on the topic? What do I want to see politically? And what are the advantages and disadvantages of what I am calling for?

**A - Stefanie:** Ultimately, I'm simply calling for science to be heard and for what it demands and clearly presents as a solution to be implemented. For me, that means we have to get out of fossil fuels—not tomorrow, not the day after tomorrow, but actually the day before yesterday. I think it's a huge failure and a closing of the eyes to the facts that are clearly there. We are in a situation where many of the climate tipping points are threatening to tip over. And then we can no longer change anything—this earth will develop in a way that's no longer worth living on for us and no longer viable. We don't even know if some of these points have already been tipped.

**A - Stefanie:** People acting as if the solution is avoiding plastic straws and using glass straws instead, or that we all need to drive electric cars—it makes me incredibly angry. In my view, the responsibility no longer lies with the individual consumer but in political decisions that must be made. Of course, it could become uncomfortable for all of us because it will affect our consumer behavior—like flying no longer being possible to the same extent. But I think it's worth it to pass on a world worth living in to future generations. Maybe I won't experience the worst of these disasters, but my descendants will. I want to be able to look in the mirror and say I've done something, ensuring my future generations find a planet worth living on.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Stefanie. If you could maybe say a little more in the direction of the second question. To what extent might your demands be taken too far, or how could they be implemented in a way that could have negative effects on society?

**A - Stefanie:** I think there will be people who are more affected by the measures, and to whom it hurts more or less. In my eyes, this isn't a disadvantage because those who are more affected are the main culprits right now. We can't afford the rich anymore—private jets and similar things. That's probably none of us here, but we are not the cause of the whole thing.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay, we're at 3 minutes. Feel free to finish your sentence.

**A - Stefanie:** Nope, all good.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good, then I'd invite Christian, and afterward, Melanie to answer the two questions: What is your opinion on the subject? What should be implemented politically? Why is it good for society, and what are the potential disadvantages?

**A - Christian:** One second... Yes. So, I think that climate change is one of the most pressing problems we are facing in this century—this millennium. The Club of Rome had already told us many decades ago that we were living beyond our means and couldn't continue like this. It's logical—simply that we can't consume three earths per year when we only have one available. The fact that we can't supply ourselves with sufficient resources from space, at least not in the foreseeable future, and it would also be nonsensical to destroy the planet we have instead of preserving it, which is theoretically possible for us.

**A - Christian:** We need to do something about climate change urgently and with determination. We need to get to a healthy level where we're not exhausting our resources, and we must do everything possible to avert the catastrophes of rising sea levels, severe weather events, drought, loss of habitat, food shortages, wars, displacement, and suffering caused by climate change.

**A - Christian:** What speaks in favor of my position? The advantage for our society would be that, ideally, we can maintain the high-quality lifestyle we enjoy in the First World.

**A - Christian:** For ourselves, for future generations, if possible. For all people who are not yet able to participate in Germany. By averting climate change, we will hopefully manage to avert the resulting threats to freedom, security, and stability. In the very worst case, it's about such banal things as having something to eat, sleeping in a safe place, having clean drinking water. Ideally, we would win this if we managed to put a stop to climate change.

What speaks against my position? Well, on one side of the spectrum, you can argue that I'm not radical enough to really achieve the most effective climate protection. I would possibly not achieve 100% climate protection and thus allow even more damage, as theoretically avoidable. On the other hand, I'm demanding change from people. That is uncomfortable for people, it puts them off, and with my position I am alienating people and, in the worst case, push them in a detrimental direction and therefore run the risk of missing the targets myself as a result of my actions. And that is the disadvantage of my position.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Christian. Then, last but not least, now you're again the last one, Melanie.

**A - Melanie:** [laughs].

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** What is your opinion on the subject? Why is it good for our society? And in what way can your opinion perhaps be taken too far? Or maybe to ask the question differently – maybe not you yourself. For some people it's easier to be asked the question like that – maybe not you yourself, but maybe you know people who have a similar opinion to you, but where you think, “Oh, they do it in a way that I don't like, because they take it too far.”

**A - Melanie:** Well, I grew up at a time when consumption was celebrated, in the 90s. We consumed so much. I know that there were people back then who... I was also critical, but I thought, naively, really, that if I understood the greenhouse effect, which was explained to me at primary school, then the scientists and the politicians and the clever people understand that too, and they'll sort it out. We separated our rubbish. We bought organic, collected rubbish, planted trees, and thought, or I thought, that's what I can do. I'm an educator and learning therapist by profession. I thought I could teach the children environmental awareness.

And then came Fridays for Future. Well, first came all the climate conferences and I thought we had it under control. I really thought we had it under control – they're clever. I myself grew up in a family that was rather far removed from science and had such a great deal of trust. And that [trust] completely collapsed. So I'm right there with Martin, really desperate and disappointed

and helpless, depressed. So, my action on the streets now [street blockades] gave me a sense of self-efficacy, and it was really important for me psychologically to do it.

I always feel good when I'm in action, and otherwise I could really fall into a depression. And my problem is that I find it really hard for the young, your generation, to want to forbid you from flying. I'm angry with my generation, who enjoyed it all and still want it. I don't understand why I can grasp this with my simple mind, and many people don't realize that the world is limited and that we go beyond these limits. I don't understand why I get ready to renounce and change, which is the difference. So in my head, because I am also an educator, I would like to know, how can I make it clear to others that they don't have to be against it. So, especially my generation. Okay, my three mins are over, right?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** You still have 30, 35 seconds.

**A - Melanie:** I realize how I get angry, how it upsets me. Fortunately, we've got another big campaign coming up right now [at Last Generation]. That actually always reassures me, but I know that... Basically, it's a matter of desperation. Yes, failing with dignity, says Thomas Metzinger. That's how I feel sometimes, that I can say I've tried it. Well, I did my best. And of course, I still know that I live in a society where I still consume too much. So even if I do my best... Yes, we are... We took a wrong turn somewhere and that hurts me.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Melanie. Good, then we are now at about 15 min in this group. We still have 5 minutes left where the four of you can talk. Again, under the umbrella of these two questions: advantages and disadvantages of our opinion, where I invite you again to talk to each other again, also with a view to where we agree? And where are there perhaps grey areas where we don't all agree, a bit more diverse thinking? The floor is yours.

**A - Martin:** I realized, with the second question: What are the potential disadvantages of my position? I obviously misunderstood, because I formulated it very, very personally, because it's very difficult for me personally to experience that. I didn't really think of it as standing over other people's political demands or anything like that, so I didn't really... I just realized that, I wanted to say that briefly.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** If you can think of anything more, please feel free to say so.

**A - Martin:** Yes, it's relatively simple – an excessive demand. You want to drive big changes, but many people are afraid of change, and it's a bit like arm wrestling. Someone once told me that pressure creates counter-pressure. And that's what I see. Then I thought, yes, good. But if I want to move a cupboard, I have to push harder and harder and harder until it moves. I hope that will happen at some point. But of course, this counter-pressure is precisely this anger, also towards “climate gluers” [derogatory term used against Last Generation people] and climate criminals, climate chaotic people, and everything that is not said there is part of the counter-reaction, which is of course triggered by the strong demands of the commitment. That's a big disadvantage.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** That this willingness to want great change and great pressure – that this can also cause a backlash, that many people react negatively to this, perhaps also with methods and protest methods that are used?



**A - Martin:** Yes, exactly.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** That many people react negatively to this, perhaps also with methods and protest methods that are used?

**A - Stefanie:** Yes, I just wanted to say something about the point that Christian had raised, with wars and things like that. I was asked again the other day: What are you so afraid of? If there's a climate catastrophe now, well, yes, then it'll just get warmer. Then it'll rain more, whatever. That will affect kind of our generation and maybe kind of the next one. And then, at some point, it will become critical. Firstly, of course, that's not right. We will see these effects much more quickly. Yes, much, much more than that. So, there are enough studies that show us that when it comes to the climate collapse that is now looming, we are talking about the collapse of our social system, the collapse of our democracy, of wars over food, over water, that you have to fight with your neighbour over who is allowed to have the last resources.

Of death zones from which a million people have to flee. If you make it at all and don't just die because the consequences are so devastating. For me again and again, when I think about it... I too am at a point where I'm blocking that out 80% of the time, because otherwise I would be at the point where I also say: It doesn't make any sense to do anything because everything's far too bad anyway, and I feel so bad. It's incomprehensible to me. I'm quite sure that you know that, and I'm sure that our politicians know that very well. Because they have the experts at their aide, you can't tell me that they are very badly advised. And I don't think so, or I hope not, that they are so badly advised that they can close their eyes to it. Your path of lobbying and representation of interests can continue.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Stefanie. Are there still other voices? We still have a good 30 to 60 seconds.

**A - Christian:** As a group consensus, I would positively state that we here agreed that our society needs to be nudged. Whatever is meant by nudging, let's leave it at that. Each of us has a different set-up. But I would take with me what group A thinks: we have to nudge our society.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** We have 30 seconds, if anyone else wants to say something about it, maybe again with the second question in mind. To what extent could one be too well-intentioned with this?

**A - Stefanie:** Of course, so in the very worst case scenario, which I think is very unlikely, we end up there and realize science was wrong. That overwhelming consensus has got it wrong. Which is incredibly unlikely, which I don't think will happen. But then you could say: this and that industry has broken away for climate protection and these and those measures were taken that were inconvenient for everyone for climate protection. And now the catastrophe is not true at all as it was painted. That would be a scenario that might be conceivable, but is definitely not realistic for me.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** You, Christian, you have 20 seconds to say something in response.

**A - Christian:** I would change the point slightly and say that the negative side of my view would be if I don't manage to convince people, but instead trigger the counter-pressure that was mentioned, that we then have too many people who refuse to protect the climate and it becomes worse than what I can achieve by fighting for climate protection.

**A - Stefanie:** But it has been proven that this is not the case. The radical wing effect has been proven enough to show that the radical wing of a movement generated more support for the non-radical wing than rejection of the whole issue.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay, thank you Stefanie. I see there is also some dissent in the group. There is a concern that certain pressure for change can generate counter-pressure. And some are worried that this will have a negative impact. Other people say it's still worth it and it's not that bad. Exactly, let's stick to it. Thank you very much. To you Martin, Stefanie, Melanie. And then I would ask you to switch off your videos and microphones now, and would invite Markus, Julia, and Patrick to switch on cameras and microphones.

Like this.

Good, I would invite Julia to start. What is your opinion on the topic? What should we do politically? Why is this good for our society, and how can it be taken so far? What are the potential disadvantages of this?

**B - Julia:** Exactly. So, I would first focus more on the measures and less on how I look at climate change, because I'm kind of seeing it like everyone else: Climate protection is actually a huge issue for us, and also super important. Personally, I also take great care to live in an environmentally conscious way. But I see the measures differently and would like to approach them more openly. I don't think it makes sense to go about it with bans, so to speak, but we should rather make sure that we have the most innovative ideas, so to speak, to tackle climate protection.

**B - Julia:** I'm also very open to technology, because I don't believe that it's always sensible to rely solely on one solution, like wind energy. I mean, wind energy certainly makes sense in certain situations, even in different locations, but you have to weigh things up and not make a blanket statement about how much wind energy we need to use. But yes, we should focus more on openness and support innovation and research in a way that allows us to get the best out of it in the long term. I believe that this is actually the best way to tackle climate change and reduce our emissions as much as possible.

Yes, those are my most important points, because I don't think it's any good for Germany to strictly adhere to bans, while other countries with even higher CO2 emissions simply continue as before and see us as foolish. You have to work a bit with education and explaining, and just show that both economic progress and climate protection are possible. I believe that this is how other countries can be persuaded to act similarly to us in the long term.

Now to the second point: In my position, it is assumed that everyone takes responsibility, i.e. every country, every company, and every individual must consider what makes the most sense for their own actions and weigh things up. I think that's the criticism—this responsibility that every entity has in the end.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. Thank you, Julia. You still have 30 seconds left; you can redeem them later [smiles].

**B - Julia:** Yes, in general, I just think that if you standardize something too quickly and impose things like heat pumps... You can't just demand that every house should have a heat pump, especially if it interferes with an oil heating system. Not every house is built in a way that such systems are possible, for example, in terms of insulation. I think you always have to decide on an individual basis, and that's where education and individual conviction become the most important things. Are the 30 seconds full now? [smiles]

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes, they are.

**B - Julia:** That's it.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Then Markus next, and then Patrick, if you like. What is your opinion on the topic? Why is it good for society and what are the potential disadvantages?

**B-Markus:** Let me start with my opinion and then follow up with individual possibilities of measures. In terms of climate protection, it's clear—society needs to be nudged further and made more aware of this issue. We live off finite resources—that's not in question. These resources simply need to be protected. The only question is how, and which path do we take? Do we go down a path that is scientifically, economically, and technologically unfeasible? Or do we take a path of realism, a healthy middle ground? Realism is what leads us toward proper implementation.

Above all, we must rely on the responsibility of individuals, companies, and society as a whole. We need to move away from a culture of prohibition. A prohibition culture has two disadvantages: first, it leads to the problem migrating. If, for example, large companies have environmentally damaging production lines, they'll simply move elsewhere if faced with bans. Second, prohibitions alienate and annoy society, pushing us further from our goals.

However, if we give companies, science, and development the chance to move forward and achieve a realistic goal together, we can progress. Destroying the economy is absolutely unrealistic from any angle, regardless of the clichés of flying private jets or going on holiday five times a year. We should not forget that the economy and the environment are interconnected, and I believe that leaves us at exactly 3 minutes.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I'll give you an extra 30 seconds. What would you say to the second question? To what extent could this approach be taken too far? What are the disadvantages?

**B-Markus:** One disadvantage is definitely the risk that a liberal approach to development leads to abuses of responsibility. Human greed could cause us to miss our targets. But I believe this risk is significantly lower than the opportunities presented.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. Thank you, Markus. Then, last but not least, Patrick. Your opinion on the topic—advantages and potential disadvantages.

**B - Patrick:** Yes, thank you. Where do I start? I think we can all agree that climate change is a problem, and we need to solve it. But it's not the only problem. The issue I'm seeing right now, both in the media and in social discourse, is that the climate issue is viewed in isolation. It's a very important issue, but there are other things to consider as well—like the economy, which has already been mentioned, and social issues.

Somehow, we have to try to bring these things together. If you take a very radical approach to the issue of climate change, you could ban everything that harms the climate, and that would help with climate change. But the problem is that you would destroy other areas with it, reducing the acceptance of this approach. And in a democratic society, acceptance is crucial.

**B - Patrick:** That's why we have to look at how we can achieve a strong effect on the climate without damaging other groups at the same time. On the contrary, it would be great if, through that, our economy could do even better because we are no longer dependent on fossil resources or similar things. That would all be really ideal. That's why I prefer efficient measures—measures that don't jeopardize individual prosperity but, rather, could even enhance it. On one hand, this increases acceptance within our country or democracy for these measures and helps us contribute to climate protection.

On the other hand, we have to acknowledge that we are only 1% of the world's population and contribute 2% of the world's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. If we start imposing extreme measures, like banning everything that emits carbon dioxide, big companies will simply move elsewhere. Small companies might go bankrupt, leading to social unrest. The big companies moving away would cause the so-called carbon leakage phenomenon, where emissions just shift to other countries. This might make us feel better, but it doesn't solve the problem.

So, we need to continue with climate protection strategies that promote prosperity instead of stifling it. We must aim to take the whole world with us and encourage other countries, especially those in the global South, to adopt similar approaches. We need openness to technology and market-based solutions rather than bans. Especially in the global South, there simply isn't enough prosperity to sacrifice for reducing emissions as we might expect.

My position, I believe, is good for society because it represents the only way to implement climate protection while preserving our prosperity. I would even go further and say it's the only way to implement climate protection efficiently.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** You're getting... actually, you're a bit over time, but that's okay. If you can, please respond to the second question now.

**B - Patrick:** Okay, the second question. The disadvantages of my position are that when you emphasize the connection of climate protection with other issues, there's a risk of losing focus on

climate protection. We cannot let that happen. That's why it's important to argue precisely and not let the conversation drift in the wrong direction.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Patrick. We still have about 7 to 8 minutes left. I'd like to invite everyone to reflect on their positions and look for points where we might disagree, again considering the advantages and disadvantages of our positions.

**B - Julia:** Well, I'd like to comment quickly on Patrick's position. I think we agree on most points. The only thing I don't believe is that we can maintain prosperity at the current level. I don't think that's possible. I'm not sure if you two see it differently, but I think everyone will need to limit themselves, and we might not have the same level of prosperity we have now or had in the past.

**B-Markus:** Prosperity in that sense? We definitely cannot keep it up as it is. That's not even a question. Even if we want to make changes without imposing bans, we would still upset the balance somewhere. If we reallocate funds for sustainability, it will have broader effects. I'm not talking about planting a tree on company premises. I mean real changes in production processes, food systems, and infrastructure. We have to make compromises, and whatever we do must still be affordable for the consumer. If consumption decreases, fewer resources flow into the system, and potentially with more taxes in some areas, we'll need to rebalance somewhere. Our prosperity will likely be affected by this.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I see there's some dissent in the group.

**B - Patrick:** Yes, I'd like to clarify my view on this topic of prosperity. I definitely agree with the point that changes in production methods cost money—that's not what I'm disputing. For me, maintaining prosperity doesn't mean that everything stays the same. In the long term, a change in production methods is possible. We may have less money for other things in the short term, but over time, this will create new opportunities. For example, if we move away from fossil fuels and invest in wind farms or fusion power plants, it costs money, but it reduces dependence on fluctuating, scarce resources like fossil fuels.

In the long term, I think we can maintain or even increase prosperity by adopting new methods. As an example, consider the Club of Rome's predictions about overpopulation. Thanks to more efficient agricultural methods, we were able to support a growing population—this was called the Blue Revolution. Similarly, technology can help us use resources more efficiently, which could ultimately increase prosperity. So, I believe it's possible, but now I've said enough.

**B - Julia:** Yes, I think we're all in relative agreement that innovation is actually the point we're trying to get at. It's about managing to maximize the benefits while using as few resources as possible, as you've just said. For example, what I find very good in Germany is that we've already established a bottle deposit system. It's something we could aim to implement in other countries too, and generally, systems like that can be expanded upon. But we also need to think more broadly, especially in the direction of energy supply.

**B-Markus:** My statement was not meant to imply that we have to give up prosperity entirely. I just believe that things may look economically worse for us during the investment period. But

once we've taken the step, I would like to see it done without bans. Not in a more extreme way, but more purposefully, especially when it comes to things like public transport. For example, I live in a small town with 20,000 inhabitants and I'm completely dependent on a car. I'd prefer it if I had better public transport options. That's just one example of where we need to start making changes. There are many places where we need to begin.

**B - Julia:** Yes, I'd just like to respond to that quickly. I think sometimes people talk past each other. We just have to see what is feasible. It's not always possible for a bus to run every 20 minutes. It's also not desirable for a bus to carry only one person. On the other hand, it's also not practical for someone to cycle 20 kilometers to work every day. We need to find the best ways to expand these services so they make sense economically. And, to be honest, the strikes happening now are very frustrating because they make the path to climate protection even harder. Even if people wanted to switch to public transport, it's not feasible at the moment, which makes it really hard to rely on it and give up a car.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Julia. This brings us to the end of the 20 minutes. I'll keep it short since a few people need to leave early. That's the end of the fishbowl. I invite everyone to switch their screens back on. Thank you all for participating. Now we come to the reflection round. I'd like to ask: "What did you learn about how the other side sees the issue, and did you see any areas of common ground?" We have about 15 minutes left, so if everyone wants to have their say, let's aim for about 45 seconds each. Patrick, since you have to leave early, would you like to go first?

**B - Patrick:** Sure, that would be great. I'll try to stay as long as I can. So, to the two questions: I think we all agree that climate change exists and something must be done about it. The opinions differ on how intensively and in what way, but that consensus is important and it's good that it exists.

What I've learned from the other side is how emotionally driven this topic is for some people. Personally, I approach it very rationally, and for me, climate change is a global issue that I don't have a huge influence over as an individual. I can sleep well with the idea that climate change exists and that we must address it. But I've realized that for others, this issue is much more emotionally moving, especially the fear it can cause. That doesn't mean their conclusions are less rational, just that they seem to be moved by it differently than I am.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good, thank you, Patrick. Other voices? What have you learned about the other side and have you seen any commonalities?

**A - Melanie:** Yes, what I've noticed is the difference in how the concept of renunciation is handled. There seems to be a lot of fear or resistance on the other side when it comes to cutting back or renouncing things. For me, for example...

I experience it very differently. I gladly do without things. I've always found it a relief to do without a car, meat, and a big flat. It doesn't scare me. I could give up more if I knew what I was

doing it for. And when I hear climate change being equated with other problems, I don't think that's enough.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Melanie, let's try not to bring new arguments now. Not that it's not important, it's just not the right time for that.

**A - Melanie:** You're right. Then I'll stop here.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Melanie. Other voices? What new insights about the other side and areas of common ground? Yes, Julia.

**B - Julia:** I think we all agree that we prioritize climate protection quite highly. The difference is how we proceed with the measures. I approach it similarly to Patrick. What I've learned is that I already try to limit certain things in my life for climate protection, like figuring out what I can do without. But I don't feel fearful about the future in the same way some others do. For me, it's more about how we create opportunities and approach this efficiently. It was helpful to see how others would tackle the topic.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Julia. More voices? Yes, Martin.

**A - Martin:** What I've learned about the other side is that the topic of bans is really big for you all. I didn't realize it was so important. I've also learned that you want to make this more the responsibility of individuals. But I'm glad to see that we all recognize the problem of climate change.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Wonderful, thank you, Martin. Christian, go ahead.

**A - Christian:** I'd like to ask Stefanie why you didn't agree with me when I said we need to nudge society.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Let's save that for after the workshop. I'd like to keep the structure for now, but I'm curious to hear what comes out of it later.

**A - Stefanie:** I would echo Patrick in saying that the common ground is that climate change is happening, and that that's not a good thing. I wasn't surprised by the positions here, but I was reminded that keywords like prosperity and prohibition are decisive, and there's some disagreement about what those terms mean in the end. I wouldn't describe the measures I'm calling for as bans, and I think that could be a point we dive deeper into.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Stefanie. Christian, you wanted to add something?

**A - Christian:** I'd love to add on, but it probably doesn't fit into the framework right now.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Can you hold it for another 10 minutes?

**A - Christian:** Yes.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Great. Markus, any final thoughts?

**B-Markus:** I wouldn't say I learned anything new, but in any case, it's a confirmation. We all want to live in a world that's habitable for future generations. As far as that is concerned, we have divided opinions on how to realize that goal. That's all I can say for now.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Markus. We're done for now. You'll receive a link to a questionnaire similar to the one you answered before, with a few extra questions. It's just to scientifically track if anything has changed.

**B - Patrick:** I received the link already during the question round, it's working for me.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Wonderful. That's from my co-moderator, sent privately to you.

**B - Patrick:** Oh, also great. Yes, yes. Okay.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Right. When you're done, feel free to raise your digital hand.

Exactly. I think most of us are ready. Martin, just let me know when you're ready.

Martin, you're still working on the questionnaire? No pressure, just checking in.

**A - Martin:** Yes, well, I'm finished now. It just got me thinking a bit.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. All right. Thanks for letting us know. Now, we're done with the workshop. Next, we'll do the debrief. This is standard in psychological studies, where I briefly explain the study's purpose. You already know most of it. We were testing a dialogue concept that originated in the U.S. between Democrats and Republicans, to see if it can work in Germany. While we aren't as polarized on some issues, like migration, climate policy, or gender issues, there is growing polarization, which is why we wanted to see if this dialogue model could be transferred to climate policy here.

The workshop drew from the Braver Angels organization in the U.S. and a book called *Trigger Points* by Steffen Mau. You'll get an email with more details about these sources, in case you're interested. Now, I'd love to hear your feedback on how the workshop was for you, what you took away, and whether there's anything you think could have been done differently or anything you missed. It's just after 8:30, so if you need to leave, feel free. But for those who have time, I'd really appreciate another 10 minutes for feedback. Christian and Emma, if you want to continue your chat afterward, you're welcome to.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Patrick, do you need to go?

**B - Patrick:** Yes, I'll just quickly share my thoughts before I leave. I found it even more interesting than I expected. It's always good and important to hear another perspective. It's easy to get stuck in filter bubbles, so this was a great exercise. The atmosphere was very relaxed. We didn't become enemies, which is refreshing. You don't see that as often nowadays. Thank you all, and I wish you a nice evening.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Patrick. Have a nice evening. More feedback? Stefanie, you had something to say, and then Julia?



**A - Stefanie:** Yes, Patrick mentioned the filter bubble. I realized how comfortable I feel in mine. It was hard for me to stay calm, even behind the camera. I didn't always succeed. It was interesting to observe how I wanted to react and interact. I know this fishbowl format from my studies, but usually in person. I found it exciting to see a group talk without interruption from the other side. I learned a lot about myself and the format. I'm glad to meet people who agree that the climate catastrophe exists and is critical, especially since you can hear many other positions these days.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Stefanie. Julia, your thoughts?

**B - Julia:** I'll keep it short because I agree with Stefanie. It's different hearing an exchange from people who share similar views, but not being able to respond directly. Normally, you'd react immediately, which can sometimes lead to more intense discussions. The atmosphere here was friendlier.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Julia. Other feedback? Melanie and then Martin.

**A - Melanie:** I realized I'm very emotional about this, and I even had a racing heartbeat in the background. I discuss a lot on Instagram under Last Generation pages, always non-violently. But there, I control how much I write and when I engage in a discussion. Here, I felt powerless at times. It was tense and exhausting, but I realize I need to stay more relaxed in these conversations. I envy those who can sleep peacefully. Yes, very emotional.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Melanie. Martin, your thoughts?

**A - Martin:** I found it very stressful. I'm leaving this feeling disappointed and frustrated. This whole "ban" issue—it feels like a campaign. It started with Veggieday, and then the whole "party of bans" thing. Since then, any talk of change gets immediately met with "ban and fear," which I find really destructive. I'm very disappointed by it.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes. So.

**A - Martin:** We want to achieve something instead of tearing each other's hair out over it. Of course excesses should be regulated by bans. We introduced compulsory seatbelts, which was also a ban. Nobody has a problem with that.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Something was triggered there by the fact that important things for you in the climate movement were thrown out of the window, so to speak, with the label "ban culture," and that this was used a bit too inflationarily for you?

**A - Martin:** I was surprised that it was so much because I thought [that it would be better]. It works. We want to think about what we can do. Perhaps we need a social council to come together and find solutions under scientific guidance. And the prohibition is not at all in the foreground, it's just a small instrument that we have somewhere along the way. In my opinion, because we're 30 years too late, we have to do this now. That really frustrated me. I'm saying this here now because it was expressly not requested earlier in the other round, but it's bothering me. I'm going to go into the evening with that.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes, thank you for saying that, Martin. Right, next then. I would say Markus, if you have anything else to say. After that, I would say Christian, if you have anything else to say.

**B-Markus:** I would also like to be very brief and to the point. I thought it was a very pleasant atmosphere. I will personally not come out of this round frustrated, because in my opinion that's not an approach that you can build on. I can't buy anything from that. I can't develop any approaches from frustration either, but I have to look at how to deal with different situations. I mean, I'm travelling to different companies and production sites every day, who are extremely harmed by so many bans—sorry, since I have to use this word again—where real livelihoods are at stake. And if these livelihoods are taken here, they will be unpacked elsewhere, and then be really bad for the environment.

We are in contact with different engineers every week, regardless of whether they work in process engineering, whether electrical engineers, from all directions, in exchange. And that means we have to work like this here on-site, but realistically. The bans are not the answer. I'm fascinated by how emotionally parts of Group A deal with it and also talk about it themselves. How personal it always is. I think it's often better to have discussions when you're a little emotionally distanced from them.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** There seem to be different opinions on how much emotion is involved in discussions and different views on how far bans play a role. Interesting topics that we don't have time to go into today, and thanks for sharing it, both of you. Good. Christian, you had one more question for Stefanie. Is that still alive?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** And Stefanie, do you still have time to go into this?

**A - Stefanie:** Yes. I didn't disagree with you. I would want to qualify that, depending on who you mean by society. Because I am convinced that we are at a point, in my opinion, where it is almost irrelevant what decisions the average consumer makes. This is not true for some extreme cases, but for individuals—well, for the masses, I think that's true. Nudge society. It is no longer enough. Let it be said that we nudge them to have more awareness and thereby put more pressure on governments. That was the point why I couldn't fully agree or fully disagree.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I'd say we have about 5 minutes left, so I'd like to break it up. Christian, has your question been answered?

**A - Christian:** So my question has been answered. Thank you very much. As a politically interested person, I would of course like to get involved in the discussion here and take the debate even further. But in view of the time available, I would leave it at that.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes, thank you. And since you haven't asked yourself yet, did you have any feedback for the workshop? What you liked, what you might have liked to see differently? What it was like for you. Your experience.

**A - Christian:** Well, I was surprised at how peaceful, how friendly, and how nice—really the word nice, bold and capitalized at this point—all participants were. I didn't expect that. I would actually take that as positive feedback. I almost want to leave it at that.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay, thank you. Julia, you wanted to say?

**B - Julia:** Well, I have a general question for the other position, but I think it will be less feasible in terms of time, right?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I'd say ask away and we'll see what happens.

**B - Julia:** Well, we've talked a lot now about to what extent climate protection plays a central role in life, and for whom. My question is more about what measures you are proposing. Stefanie has already touched on this—the renunciation of fossil fuels. But what exactly are your ideas on how to tackle this as quickly as possible, to slow down climate change, so to speak?

**A - Stefanie:** So primarily, I can repeat the demand you just mentioned, where we exceed and blow up our emissions to such an extent that for me only this very radical cut makes sense. And I also see that it's possible, um. Of course, it will cost in some places. In other places, it will bring profit. As far as how to concretely implement all of this, to exit fossil fuels, I think that would go beyond the scope of this discussion, and I'm not an expert in this area. But I think that's the most central thing.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Stefanie. I would close the workshop at this point. I see that many questions are still open and perhaps people still want to engage in further dialogue. If you would like to do so, please send me an email. I can exchange email addresses between you for those who are interested in further dialogue. If you want to meet for a digital or physical coffee, just let me know. Otherwise, yes, always.

**A - Stefanie:** I just have a quick question because these questionnaires asked for a surname and my email address. But it would be important to me that it doesn't appear anywhere. I can't really afford that at the moment.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Sure. Everything is anonymized, and the data is deleted as soon as I no longer need it.

**A - Stefanie:** Thank you.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes, Christian?

**A - Christian:** So, my email address can be passed on for my sake, in that sense. What I would perhaps say in conclusion, both to the advocates who have now got hung up on the word bans and to the members of the last generation and in general, and where I have a strong desire—where I perhaps see the way forward for me personally—is that we try to understand climate protection as something that is fun, to sell something that is fun and what gives life value instead of taking it away. If we take a look at how things have gone with nuclear power. Nuclear power in the 60s, 70s, 50s—the euphoria was a promise of prosperity. That was the promise of security.

That was the promise of autonomy. That was a totally positive thing—an image that has been created in society.

Whereas today, when it comes to climate protection and climate protection measures, we actually only have a negative narrative. We have this one narrative—bans, renunciation, and always negative. So, not like Melanie, as you said, a lot of renunciation is fun, but something is being taken away from me. I'm losing something, we're losing jobs, we're losing economic potential, we're losing competitiveness. In our storytelling, we have a totally negative narrative when it comes to climate protection, and the last generation also makes climate protection very unattractive in my eyes, and I believe in the eyes of many other people, simply very unattractive because you make sure that climate protection is personally associated with something negative—with being stuck in a traffic jam, with not getting anywhere.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Christian, I would like to interrupt you here. I'm already seeing the first hands being raised again.

**A - Christian:** [unintelligible] Thank you.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes, thank you, Christian. I see that we have started a new discussion, which you are very welcome to continue among yourselves. That sounds like an exciting idea. As long as it doesn't cause anyone internal pain not to say anything, I would leave the workshop where it is. Is that okay with you, Melanie, Stefanie?

**A - Stefanie:** Yes, I think it's unfortunate to close it like this now, and I think it's a bit unfair to open the point at the end now when nobody else has any more speaking time, but that can't be changed now, and that's fine.

**A - Melanie:** Yes, one more thing I wanted to say about the LG - it's because we actually celebrate life there. We celebrate the future, we celebrate our dreams. It's not destructive at all. Zero. It's a lifesaver for me [laughs]. Okay. Join us!

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Renate. Okay, I see the first people are already leaving. So thank you very much for being there. It was a huge help for the Master's thesis. Really. Thank you for your time. I'm sorry it's being ended like this, but I think we all want to go home. Christian has sent his e-mail address in the chat. You are welcome to contact him. Good, go ahead. Have a nice evening.

## **Workshop 5**

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay. I'll send you a link in the chat and I'll ask you to fill out this one survey that I'm sending you in there. it's a test to see. There are questions about your opinion of the other side and how much you like them. And at the end of the intervention, I'll ask the same questions again to see if anything has changed.

**B - Liam:** Should we do this now? Or afterwards? Right.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Please. Now. Yes.

**B - Liam:** Can. You can do it.

**B - Daniel:** With this feeling barometer. What is meant by on the issue?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Uh, the other side of the two questions, exactly. So the other side, in your case side A

**B - Liam:** Okay. Hmm. [inaudible]

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay, then. How does it look? Are we finished? Is anyone else sitting there?

**B - Liam:** We need another minute. .

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good.

**B - Liam:** Yes.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Wonderful. Okay. I'm very curious to see what I... Whether something changes. So right here guidelines. So basically the guidelines are we're here not to convince each other, but to understand each other better and explain our views. I don't expect anyone to come out of here with a different opinion, although that can happen. The other thing is, we speak for ourselves, so we speak for our own position and how we see our own side. We don't talk about how the other side thinks, or we don't talk about what groups that might not be here now think, we speak for ourselves and for our opinion. And the next thing is us. We stick to the activities we are currently involved in. So there will be certain spaces where we can express our opinions more freely and that's what they're there for. And there are other spaces where it's important that we stick to the topic we're doing. So there will be a question towards the end, for example What have you learned about how the other side sees the topic? And did you see any similarities? Then it's really about answering this question and not saying more about our opinions or picking up on another point. Exactly. And otherwise? Just standard things that are actually self-evident. So being respectful, letting each other finish, not interrupting, not rolling our eyes or sighing loudly if we don't agree with something someone says.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Things like that. Exactly. Just being respectful people. So exactly the rules to the FishBowl. I've basically already explained. It's about the people who are in the FishBowl talking to each other and not talking to the people who are outside. We talk about our own side, um, not criticize the other side. So it often works. It's just that when people talk about their own position and what's good about their own position, they say, "unlike the other side, environmental protection is important to us" or "the economy is important to us" - that's not the point. We say to ourselves Is environmental protection important or is it important to us. It's important that we do something economically, but we don't compare ourselves with the other side in this context, because that makes it harder for the other side to listen to you. Outside of the FishBowl, it is important that we are quiet and that we listen, that is actually the main thing about how this intervention works, that the main work is not done by the people who are talking, but rather by those who really listen and then look to see where there are similarities, where can I understand things, where perhaps not? Um, so, I think that's something from my side, from the explanations. How does it sound so far? Do you have any questions, any comments?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. All right. Well, let's go to the coin toss and see which side starts. I would just ask Daniel to say heads or tails, your group is smaller. So I think that would be fair, if you want. Heads or tails? Good.

**B - Daniel:** Number

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** And it's actually tails. Congratulations. Then. Begins side B, Then I would ask Linda, Deborah, Diana and Marina to turn off their cameras.

**B - Liam:** Thank you very much.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Um. Exactly. I'll see what I can do. Maybe I can just pin you guys. I can pin you. So I've pinned that so now I've pinned myself too.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yeah, I don't think it makes a difference. But yeah. Whatever. Um, exactly. Then I'll give you the room right now. So just to recap is. We will now answer these questions in turn. One after the other. Everyone has about - the numbers here are not quite right. You have about 3 to 4 minutes to answer both questions. During this time and afterwards, you'll have a bit of space to talk to each other. I'll also send the questions to the chat again. Right then.

Who would like to start?

**B - Daniel:** my opinion on the topic is the following. And that is that I think that we as Germany have already done a lot or have a high awareness of environmental protection. Which is not yet so widespread in other industrialized nations. And I want to avoid a situation where we now take overly radical environmental protection measures in Germany, while other industrialized nations do not and then leave us behind in terms of prosperity, so to speak. Because if these other nations then have more prosperity than we do, it also means that they have more power than we have and that we therefore lose our current good position economically and politically in terms of power if we restrict ourselves too much without other industrialized nations joining in. That's why I don't think we should push ahead alone, but if we do, then only together. Together with everyone and not as an advance. And the others are our free riders and remain richer while we restrict ourselves. The disadvantages of my position are probably that if every industrialized country thinks like this, we won't be able to get this problem under control and we'll really be heading for a situation where we're outside the parameters of sea level temperature that we've ever recorded before and then a lot of bad things can happen in the coastal regions and also in the climate. So, um, that's the downside of my position. Um, which can only be avoided if you force everyone. All at the same time. All countries. That's my position.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay. Thank you, Daniel. Paul you will continue. And after that Liam?

**B - Liam:** I'd love to.

So first of all, thank you Daniel for the beautiful chain of reasoning.

I can kind of Understand him on that too..

Now to my points. During the question, it was a little bit related to Germany.

Based on that, I agree that there are other countries that. Um need to act sooner because they have a bigger CO2 footprint. For example, China, which I think has 30% of the world's CO2 emissions and Germany has 2%, which is 15 times more, and we can regulate ourselves relatively well and will not be able to contain the problem because the problem is a global issue and Germany is just a small part of the world. In other words. Our efforts will not be as effective. As much as we hope. Yes, and now we come to the downside. Daniel has actually already said that. And that is. Someone has to start, be the pioneer. However you want to look at it. Otherwise no one will do it in the end. Yes... Can I think of anything else? No, that's enough for now.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay. Thank you Paul. Then we'll get to Liam.

**B - Liam:** Hello, I'm the third in the group. Now I'll try and think of something that the others haven't said yet.

Um.

**B - Liam:** Well, I think. Well, I have to agree with both Daniel and Paul on the fact that we shouldn't put ourselves in a bad position because other countries are not following the climate measures. I also think that we have already reached the point where we have already put ourselves in a bad position in some areas, in contrast to other countries. For example, let's take the issue of energy generation, renewable energies, etc., where we still have to buy electricity produced by French nuclear power plants in order to be able to cover our energy consumption at all. It has simply been badly solved and we boast that we are so incredibly good at using renewable energies, building wind turbines everywhere and generating energy from dams. But in the end, it's still not enough just to supply our country. Yes, I can also see the disadvantages, but I can almost only repeat them. So, of course someone has to start. Of course we also have to think about the future. Look. Okay. How long can we go on living like this without it reaching 50 degrees in summer at some point? And, like in Dubai, not actually being able to go outside at all and having storms without end in winter. So you have to find some middle ground.



**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay. Good.

Thank you, Liam. It was absurdly fast. Usually, in the American workshops, you always have to interrupt people because they talk so long. It was a very stark contrast just now. Exactly. We basically have 13 minutes left of your 20 minutes. So it was super fast. I would. I don't know if it makes sense to use it all up, but I still want to invite you to just chat about it again, the three of you, a little bit. What So maybe what? It's often the case with you in these workshops that even within one side of a group, people might disagree on certain aspects. Or that maybe one of you has learned something new from the others and maybe you want to pick something out again. There was another, another, different aspect to these two sides. There was this thing about we should do more, because we should lead the way versus other countries should follow suit. But there was also this general aspect. We should simply make quick and drastic, decisive decisions now versus We should proceed cautiously and deliberately and not ruin the economy. Exactly. I would really leave all this input alone and see what you make of it when you talk about it. Together.

**B - Daniel:** So I think even if you say now, as I said, this one aspect with the pioneer or letting the others do it, we've covered a lot of that now. If we now take that up with drastic steps, now or cautious steps. To be honest, I have to say that if we can really reach an agreement with other countries and not push ahead alone, so to speak, but then also take drastic steps, I would actually be behind that, that is, if we all **cut back a little, are more frugal, perhaps a little less private transport**. Then I could cope with these drastic measures. But not in the knowledge that the Americans and Chinese will be playing us up and walk all over us. But if they go along with it, then I could also cope with these drastic measures. I will approve of them. Because I am also aware of the threatening situation and I know that we have to act quickly. I agree with that. I just don't want the others to be free riders. But together we can also be drastic. I'd also like to adjust my own prosperity a little. If the ratio stays the same, that's okay.

**B - Liam:** I'll second that

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** "Together we can also be drastic". That sounds kind of strangely romantic.

**B - Liam:** I'll build on that. Yes, in the end it's similar to Daniel. Now you've just got three good-looking young men with a great overall understanding. Sorry, Lorenz, that's just the way it

happened. As far as I'm concerned, there can be very quick solutions. If everyone has them and not just one.

**B - Liam:** I almost have to say that I have to disagree, because I think that some, that some. That some decisions have already been made that are not at all promising for the future, where you think, okay, this was beaten through within I don't know two or three years and now we have the chaos. So I would rather say we should... We have to find some kind of measure. Where I agree with you is that everyone has to get on board. So it's no good if we find some great measure and then find ourselves alone again. As Paul has already said, we just - we have - what did you say? 2% of CO2 pollution and China has 30%. So if we find some great measure and the others don't follow suit, it still sucks, but. Um. Before we act quickly again and find another measure where we say okay, that's great, it works. And then in ten, five to ten years, we realize okay, maybe we should have done something different after all. I think it's better to take a bit more time and find a measure that really has a future. Well, I've now been a bit inoculated by the automotive industry. So the switch to electric cars was Absolute nonsense. It doesn't hold any promise for the future. We'll have an incredible amount of electric waste lying around because batteries are improving every year. And let me put it this way, in ten years' time we'll probably have a huge landfill somewhere where batteries are lying around because they can't be recycled properly.

**B - Liam:** Yes.

**B - Daniel:** I find that interesting. And there, I agree with that too. Um, exactly. I first said drastic measures. Yes, I would be there if everyone is there. But what Liam said about electric cars, I agree with that. I also think it was said too quickly that the government is now going all-electric and subsidizing it. In other words, the government is basically dictating what the right solution is. But they are not engineers or technicians, they are politicians. If you were to say now that every car manufacturer has to internalize the costs, the environmental damage that their product, their car, causes in its life cycle, we have to internalize these externalized costs. This means that car manufacturers bear the costs of the pollution that their product causes during its life cycle. And if they then bear the costs, they themselves have an incentive to reduce these costs. And whether this can then be solved with electricity, with hydrogen? And then their engineers are in demand again and they are the experts and they will find a good solution. It's better than saying hey, you have to go electric and all that, but rather internalize the costs to the companies and then let them develop the solution themselves carefully and not too drastically, as is the case. That's what I liked about Liam, yes

**B - Liam:** Normally, yes, politicians should be technical. Do they have a background? No, they do. They have people working for them. So technical editors. The extent to which they are trained is another matter. Yes. Just thinking and saying as an aside. So my question to Lorenz

Should we discuss things like this? Discuss things like. About electric cars well, about switching off nuclear power, well, discuss things like that individually, right?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I don't give you many, many guidelines on what to talk about. So whatever feels relevant to you. Always keep these two questions in mind. So, I would always look when you make a point, bring up an argument that you already have in mind. "Okay, what could be the potential limits or disadvantages of the argument now?"

**B - Liam:** Okay.

**B - Liam:** Well, the disadvantage of course. With my attitude, there is of course a time when you try to find the right or the best solution. Depending on how much time it takes, you then have a period of time where you either promote the pollution, let's say in quotation marks, or don't do anything about it yet. It's just a matter of weighing things up. Okay, is there any point in saying we'll do something quickly and then have the consequences in five to ten years' time? Or we do nothing about it for five to ten years. Then we'll have a good solution afterwards. If you have a crap solution afterwards, it's even worse, of course, but. That's just the risk you take when you go in. And I would rather take the risk and say okay, we now have maybe 5 to 10 years where we don't yet have an acute, so. There are always some measures that you can implement now, where you know from the outset that they are helpful and we won't suffer any disadvantages in the future. But the big things, where you then make really big political decisions and laws are passed. I think you should take a lot of time with things like that before you run into disadvantages. Yes, I think so.

[00:26:39] **B - Liam:** Always a little bit with the timekeeping.

Difficult because it's a nice thought so.

It takes a long time to find the optimal solution. But you might notice.

Even with yourself or where you work, now on a small level, if you try to take your time or if you try not to take your time and then look at how long it took, then you realize, dude, it took much longer than I thought. And then you say come on, let's take our time. Then it takes much, much longer. And then at state level. I have no idea what other factors are involved. Yes, that's why. It's a bit difficult, of course. The optimal solution would of course be to have the best solution as quickly as possible, which makes no sense, because just like today, it's the electric car

that's supposedly so great. Some people say that electric cars are shit because they somehow generate CO<sub>2</sub> during production. But you have to remember what the first combustion engine looked like. I don't want to know how many liters the first combustion engine puffed out. So it probably burned 200 liters per 100 kilometers. There is always time behind it, where development is behind it. You mustn't forget that.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay, we have just under 1 to 2 minutes left. If anyone else wants to make a quick point, go ahead.

**B - Liam:** I won't say anymore.

**B - Liam:** I am too. I've said it all.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay, let's leave it at that. Then. Uh. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. I found it very exciting. Then, uh, let's switch. I would now ask you to turn off the camera and turn on Marina and Linda. Diana is already here.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Well, then I would also say we start right away! Um. Diana, would you like to just start with. With the two questions?

**A - Diana:** Yes, I'd love to, of course.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** So again, the opinion. What's your opinion on the topic and why is your position good for society and what are potential downsides to your position?

**A - Diana:** So I think I would be lying if I said that I have a strong opinion. It's more of a tendency. Or maybe I just like the opinion better. Um, I would justify it by saying that for me personally it intuitively sounds right that you can't just take what you want from nature all the time, use resources and then expect that there won't be any consequences at some point. That's why it's perhaps a good opinion in that respect. Um. Yes. Disadvantages. Yes, that perhaps certain groups of people are somehow disadvantaged by drastic measures, which you perhaps don't even see in the first place or something and that it then somehow also leads to injustice because a certain group somehow has more disadvantages than others. Yes. I can't think of much off the top of my head right now.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. All right. You can also go back in later, after the others have spoken, if you think of something. well, then I would say now that Linda and then Marina.

**A - Linda:** Okidoki. Yes, so that's. I find it very difficult to find few words for such a big topic, because of course there are many sides to this issue and not everything is always black and white. But I personally think that our task is not to avert a climate crisis. We are in the middle of a climate crisis, we live in a very, very privileged position. I don't think many people realize what privileges we actually have. Other people, especially in non-industrialized countries, notice this climate crisis, they feel the effects much, much, much more. And I think so. My personal opinion is simply that we should really do more. We should open our eyes much more. We're already feeling the effects, especially in summer. I mean, the data simply shows that we have more and more tropical nights, even here in Germany. Tropical nights means that we have nights that are over 20 degrees, where the body can no longer regenerate so well. Apart from environmental disasters, which everyone is very, very aware of. I mean many. I mean, personally, I often think, okay, hey, I'm not really affected by the climate catastrophe myself and it doesn't affect me personally that much, but there are simply a lot of effects that we're already noticing. Of course. Well, I'm very much in the medical field now, I'm noticing it. These tropical nights, these hot summers, are particularly problematic for older people. So that's also the reason. People are dying very, very quickly in old people's homes. It has to do with the climate crisis.

**A - Linda:** That's another point where I personally think you just have to remember that the whole thing is already having an impact on us. It has an impact on people in our personal environment, where we simply can't wait to do something or do something again. And I also think it's important to raise awareness. We are simply in a different generation and of course that's a bit of a disadvantage now. There needs to be a lot of rethinking, there needs to be a lot, a lot, a lot of education. And I can understand very well if people who had a different reality of life simply don't see it as so drastic or dramatic now because they are used to a different life. And maybe I'm not talking about Gen Z growing up, who suddenly take to the streets with Fridays for Future and protest for the climate, but who say 'That's completely stupid, why should I change something that has always worked so far? But as Diana has just said, you can't just keep taking, taking and taking. At some point it's good and at some point you have to take a look and above all realize that we live in an extremely privileged situation in Germany. The problem is, of course, that it's a global problem. We in Germany alone simply can't change anything. That is of course super, super problematic. Nevertheless, I believe that we as Germany should also be a pioneer, because if we always just say well, if the others don't do anything, then we won't do anything either. Someone has to start, someone has to bite the bullet.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Linda, you're at three minutes. If you could just take a minute to answer the second question.

**A - Linda:** Exactly. Disadvantages are just It's a global project, it's a global problem. We as a single country cannot solve the problem. I think that's clear. And what I've just said about the many things that need to be uncovered and turned around, i.e. clarified and rethought, is that it simply takes a very long time. It also takes a very long time to create awareness and it takes a very long time for people to rethink and perhaps see the other side better. In my opinion, the problem is that we need solutions and changes now. Something has to happen now and not in five to ten years' time when we have rethought things. And so I think for a lot of people it can feel like you're simply making decisions over their heads and not involving them at all in a decision that has a huge impact on the reality of their lives.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Hm. Okay, here we go. Yes. Then I would go to Marina. And then Deborah.

**A - Marina:** Exactly. So I would address the issue of the pioneer. Because I think that we as Germany are now the first to take drastic steps. I actually think that's a good thing. So yes, of course we might do more than some other countries, but you can already see in our generation on Instagram or Tiktok or something that Americans are talking about us in Germany taking bottles back to Lidl and recycling them. So, it does make a difference, even if they don't think it's really that much. But somehow it has an influence and you have to make sure that this influence is not only passed on to Gen Z, but also to other generations. That other people perhaps also see that things can be done differently. And for that we need someone to show other countries that it can be done differently and then show them how it can be done differently. And I completely agree with Linda about this drastic change. I can well imagine older people in particular. My grandpa. If I tell him yes, you're not allowed to go anywhere by car anymore. Well, he thinks, okay, I survived the war – why shouldn't I be allowed to drive now? But that requires a lot of education.

**A - Marina:** And that's also a big disadvantage, I think, firstly that it takes forever and secondly that I feel extremely restricted. We also have to. So it would also be restrictive for us if we no longer went home for Christmas by car, but instead by train or bike or whatever. That's just something we have to accept. And we also have to somehow teach other people that. Not just across Germany, but also across the country. That there are ways to get used to it and that it might somehow become the new normal. So I think it would make sense for Germany to lead the way and perhaps it would be. Simply in keeping with the times. Someone has to do it and we are already in a relatively good position. Relatively. Yes, we've already started a few things, let's say. So climate Yes, in terms of climate technology, we are definitely better off than other countries.

We know that. And we just have to build on that to such an extent that other countries. Consider it important enough to see it the same way.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yes.

You've already said a bit about the second question. But if you could perhaps go back to exactly the statement you just made, which relates to the second question What are the potential disadvantages of that Position?

**A - Marina:** That we are the pioneers. Well, the disadvantage is what you might have heard in the first group, that it just feels like we're the only ones doing anything and that it doesn't make any difference anyway, that it doesn't have any impact, that it doesn't help, that we're the only ones who are backing down. But. Yes, maybe we just need to clarify whether or to what extent it really. Real difference or influence. So I can imagine that many people then feel that they are not seen and not represented by the state. And yes, that then maybe even more demonstrations, even more yes. I don't want to use violence or anything like that, but it could just lead to popular discontent.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay. Thank you, Marina. And now? Last but not least. Deborah.

**A - Deborah:** Well, first of all, I agree with everything that's been said. Um and I have very little basic knowledge about it. Everything I say is really just emotionally based. I just think so. I mean, you hear a lot about what could happen if the world continues to warm up or somehow I don't know, what will the world look like in 2030, what will it look like in 2000-2100 or something like that? And you can just see that it's going to end up pretty badly if we don't do anything. That's actually the main point I have. So if we just don't do anything now, then we'll all just die at some point and the world will continue to heat up. And there will be a huge number of disasters that may not yet affect us as a privileged, privileged Germany, as Linda said, but they will at some point. That's why I tend to be in favor of drastic measures. Because what else are we supposed to do? Um. And that is. So why the position is good for society. It's because yes, because it could help us and save humanity, so to speak, and potential disadvantages. Um are. I don't think I know at all how that should be implemented now. I read something about it once. I read something about what every country should be doing right now to stop the climate crisis. And I just don't see how that's going to happen. So who is supposed to make the decision that the whole world should somehow change its behavior? Um, I see that as a big disadvantage. A big problem. And I don't even know how to solve it.

**A - Deborah:** Yeah, that's it.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay, again very nice and very close. We're super on time. Wonderful. Exactly. We have about six minutes left for the four of you to continue the conversation internally.

**A - Marina:** So what Deborah just said. I also read a post at some point that when we're 60 at some point, parts of Germany or something like that - also very wild half-knowledge or something like that - but we can't live there anymore because it will be so drastic with storm surges and droughts that you can't actually live anywhere well anymore. And I'm also super pessimistic in that respect. **I think we'll all die from the problem at some point anyway.** And yes, as much as we can still change, it would make sense to do something. But right. So in the end, we probably won't be able to do as much as we should anyway. So.

**A - Linda:** Yes, but also such a big problem is that you always try to find a perfect solution. But I think in that respect it's really just the best thing to do and it doesn't have to be perfect. It doesn't have to be sophisticated for everything, we just have to do something and not spend ages thinking about what might be the best solution. Most of the things we do can be undone anyway. I always find it difficult when you think in black and white terms and say okay, I'm going to decide to go down this path and then I have to finish it. No, it doesn't have to be like that. We can do something now, take measures and say hey, okay, that wasn't good, it somehow doesn't work like that or doesn't have the same effect, you can just row back.

And I think a lot of people forget that it's not always so black and white. It's simple and you don't always have to finish everything. You can also simply evaluate the path once you've started something and say hey, it didn't work out, let's do it differently. I know it's politically difficult, but that's another issue, because of course it's not great for politicians if they can't keep their promises. I can keep, suddenly changes his mind. But I think it's important to remember that everything we can do is actually a good thing. Somehow. And it doesn't have to be the ultimate perfect solution.

**A - Diana:** I would also agree with that, especially if you just take this specific question: Is it better to wait or to act? So, I mean, you can only see in retrospect whether it was good or not. And if you have to act in order to see whether it's good or not. And the longer you wait, the later you see whether it's good or not. Even if the solution seems perfect in your head or just so at first and everyone thinks oh, that's great and then you realize somehow, maybe it's not so great after all.



Yeah. That's why yes.

**A - Marina:** I think that many people, especially politicians or people in power is perhaps also a problem or a disadvantage - they don't want to present themselves as a bogeyman or something, not as the person who has all the people against them and because it's more about the reputation of society instead of what's important. Which, of course, you could also compare with yes, but then people no longer feel comfortable or seen and so on, but it just needs someone to be the bad guy in that respect at a certain point.

**A - Linda:** Yes, I actually think that what Marina says is simply that you don't want to end up being the bogeyman in politics. Because I have to be honest and say that doing something for the climate is important. Of course, in most cases it's completely unattractive economically. That doesn't necessarily give you the votes if you say you want to somehow restrict people's quality of life, you might be restricting your economy. That might not have such a great impact on the country, especially on industry. That is of course super unattractive. So you have to be honest and say that we are not striving for maximum prosperity and economic growth here. It has to be said that this is much more desirable for the individual, especially in a privileged country like Germany.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay, we have another 2 to 3 minutes. We can continue the conversation if you want to say something.

**A - Deborah:** Uh, one more thing I wanted to ask. Actually, more because you were talking about being pioneers and so on earlier. Isn't it somehow - this is also just half-knowledge - that Denmark and Sweden and so on are actually already doing this much better than we are? So that there are already countries that. Are even more of a role model than we are and that we're not actually that good at this whole climate thing. Do any of you know anything about that?

**A - Marina:** I can well imagine.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I know a little bit about that. I can say afterwards. Okay, let's leave it at that? Okay, thank you very much. Then I would invite Paul, Liam and Daniel to turn their videos back on. So we'll be back. So, one time now. Okay, good.

Um. Then I'll share the screen again

So, you see the screen? Yeah, right. But. Good, now I'm curious to hear how that was for you. This exercise. And exactly, it's within a certain framework. I have a specific question just along the lines of so what did you learn about how the other side and other side in quotes because I don't think the opinions were super starkly different. But how the other group sees the issue. And did you perhaps discover similarities? And I would say we always take it in turns for someone from one side to speak and then we switch. Exactly. Are there any volunteers?

**A - Linda:** Well, I can start if it's okay.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Wonderful.

**A - Linda:** Um, so I think in any case, you've seen, with the disadvantages that everyone has said about their opinion, that the disadvantages are actually relatively the same, which you can see in your opinion. I mean, like you said. Lorenz, the opinions are not so polarized now, I mean, we all have a basic consensus, you have to say. For example, that it's a global project or that drastic changes can also be difficult. So I think we all agree on the pros and cons of the whole thing, but it's just a bit of a personal matter of which opinion A or B you hold more.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you Linda. Now someone from the other side? Are there any volunteers?

**B - Liam:** So what I found a really good point from Marina is the thing with the deposit system. I've also seen a few things that are somehow completely new abroad. I'll say it was completely new for others, for other nations. I also had a quick look to see for myself how long the deposit system has actually been in place in Germany. It's been around since 2003, when it was introduced that all water bottles have to be reusable, i.e. they have to have a deposit on them. And now I've also looked again to see which other countries still have this. So I'll say that in quotation marks. You only really know it from Germany. I've now read that the Scandinavian countries, Austria, Switzerland and Croatia now also have the deposit system. Um. And I think that the deposit system is one of the coolest climate measures, because it doesn't restrict the quality of life at all. And anyone who wants to can hand in their deposit and anyone who doesn't can throw it away. And then someone else is happy about it or puts it by the garbage can and someone takes it. So I think maybe if you were alone. I think that in the USA, an incredible amount of plastic waste would be avoided if a deposit system were introduced.

**B - Liam:** I'd just drop in for a second,

You just illustrated nicely that Germany has had the deposit system for 20 years. All the more frightening that the fucking Americans still haven't adopted it, the idiots. Honestly, this stupid nation.

**B - Daniel:** Yeah, yeah, really.

**B - Liam:** For 20 years. And now the young 18-19 year olds come to Tiktok and think it's really cool. We've been doing this for 20 years. Exactly the same topic. When they go shopping, yes, they have everything disproportionately in America. But the plastic bags are 20, are ten liters of plastic bags, that is per purchase. American families who just eat way too much anyway [laughs] need 20 plastic bags, they need 20, 30 plastic bags. But they don't have a plan. Yes, and a country like that emits 15% CO2. Cheers! So I just wanted to let out my frustration.

**B - Liam:** I absolutely agree.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** With short reminder because: as much as it is fun to rant about the US - Quick reminder to stay with the question What did I learn about the other side...

**B - Liam:** No, so I think the common ground is that. Both our group is now 2/3 actually in favor of taking drastic measures. That goes hand in hand with the consensus of the other group. And. Yes. So as I said, I am. I disagree a bit, but I can also completely understand why people say okay, we have to do something now, because we're already at the point where it's almost too late.

**B - Liam:** That's where I also liked Linda's point that you can just do something that's not perfect. That's true. And what she also said correctly is that. So for normal thinking people, it's clear that you have to admit the mistake and then move on to the next solution. But that doesn't suit the people who are really in charge. Which is a shame, but basically a good point.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you Paul. Thank you Liam. Very good. Anyone else from the other side? Diana. Marina. Deborah.

**A - Deborah:** I'm not sure if that's been said right now. Um. But we still had the common ground that everything we do doesn't help so much if all the other countries don't follow suit. But that's all I can think of

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I was, I think, a big commonality. I really think everybody said something along those lines. I think a couple people have talked now. I've lost a little bit of track of where we are with the back and forth. So I would just. Anyone who wants to can say something.

**B - Liam:** I think another thing we have in common is that Linda and I both still want to drive Mustangs, no matter what the climate looks like. Therefore. I would like to hear Linda's opinion again [laughs]

**A - Linda:** Yes, that's a bit what I meant, that for the individual there is simply a restriction in quality of life. And I think, and of course that also hurts, I mean, for example, my heart is still a motorcyclist's heart, for example, and the big hobby is running out of gas, right? And I think everyone has to give up a little bit, even if it hurts like hell. But that's kind of the point. I mean, how selfless is a person? Or, for example, do you really want to do without a car? Because I have to honestly admit that having a car - well, I don't have a car anymore, but owning a car is really cool. So you drive more often, simply because you can. And I think that's the big thing for a lot of people, it's a restriction on their quality of life, you have to be honest, you just have to accept that somehow. And if you look at yourself, what you do in your everyday life that is perhaps not so good for the climate, there are often things that you have to look at yourself. And I think that's exactly the point where we have to somehow reflect a little on the fact that the climate crisis has already reached us and that it really does have an impact. And if we carry on like this, it simply won't continue.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you Linda. I, I would now invite Diana, Marina and Daniel again. We have a few more... A few more minutes for this segment. I'm also curious to hear what you've learned about how the other side sees this issue.

**A - Diana:** So what I would see as a commonality is that somehow I don't think anyone really argued like that on an individual level, but that everyone saw the problem more in terms of society as a whole. So I don't know. I think with the other group, it was about broad topics like prosperity and the economy, but nobody said yes, it would somehow restrict me personally here

and there. And it was exactly the same with us, so no one really brought their own person into it. And.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yeah. Cool. Thank you.

Good. Daniel and Marina.

**A - Marina:** It feels like everything has already been said. The biggest thing that I noticed in common was that we can't do anything on our own. We either have to be a role model to show other people how to do it or we have to be the role model that nobody wants to be. But not much will change on our own, that's the biggest thing I've taken away with me. But I can't think of much to say right now.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you.

**B - Daniel:** Exactly. I also think that the biggest thing we have in common is that we see the problem as a global problem. We actually all believe that there is a need for action, that we have to act, that we are forced to act. Not acting is not an option. And that we all actually want that. As many countries as possible to take action. I think the only difference is the approach, how you get everyone on board, whether you lead by example or force them. I think we're still a bit apart on that. But the similarities are definitely that, yes

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Okay. Thank you. Okay, then that's it. Then we'll be finished relatively soon. I think it's about the evaluation again. You say we'll do that. I'll send another link to the. In the chat.

There's a link in there. If you can fill it out now.

**A - Linda:** Uh, very quick question Should we now base the evaluation of the questionnaire on just our group of people here or something like that? And all the experiences we have had with the people. The opinions here don't differ that much. That's why it's very difficult for me to judge.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Yeah, so...

**A - Linda:** So maybe I should have asked before, because that's how it works now.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I would relate it to the collective of people that you've had experiences with that think similarly to Paul Daniel and Liam. Okay, the yes?

**A - Marina:** Then nothing changes from what we filled out before. That's what I was thinking, because of course it wouldn't be exactly the same.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I thought the intervention has now, uh, yes, healed you and made you much more open.

**B - Liam:** Ideally, it will change.

**A - Marina:** So if I were to take it as a whole, my answers would still be the same. But if I now apply it to...

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Answer as you see fit? So if it's the same for you, then answer the same.

**B - Liam:** I'm done.

**A - Diana:** I'm done too.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Good. All done. Good, wonderful. Then that's basically it. Right. Me here, the debrief. This is important so that everything is scientific. A brief explanation, actually everything has already been explained. It was about finding out whether this approach, which is used in the USA, is also applicable in other countries and other cultures. And what happens? Exactly. And simply to see whether the approach we have now leads to more openness in conversation. So this is evaluated using these scales that I sent and then also by analyzing the recordings afterwards to see how the conversation patterns have changed. Do people seem more open Um, exactly, otherwise I am. Exactly, I'm still curious to hear in these last ten minutes, without asking any specific questions, what it was like for you, what you thought of it. What did you think?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I'm curious to hear. What did you think? The intervention. Did you think it was something? What was good? What did you find What did you find difficult to understand? Do you have any suggestions for improvement? Exactly.

**A - Linda:** So I think it's generally a great intervention concept, because every group, even with a different opinion, has its own fixed time to say its opinion and you have to listen even if you don't agree, because. For example, I'm the kind of person who likes to interrupt people or look at them so reproachfully that they practically stop talking, because then I have to say no, I don't agree at all. Instead, you're really forced to actively listen without being able to directly intervene yourself and perhaps deprive the other person of the time to make a point that you might agree with, because you don't let the person finish or simply want to get straight to the point with your opinion.

**B - Liam:** Thank you for that point. I also think that's a good point, because sometimes when you have a different form of discussion, it's the case that one or the other point can't be said at all and then perhaps it's misunderstood as it was actually meant. Should you have let the second half of the sentence be heard out? That's why That's good. Still, but it's based on the fishbowl principle, right? And there's probably one of those at the end. What is it called now, when you get together from word with C?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Consensus.

**B - Liam:** Yeah, so consensus building is not like that now, is not wanted. Now with the thing or.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Not at the workshop. So this organization, they have other workshops that are longer, where they also have consensus that now is not the time for that.

**B - Liam:** Yeah okay, just wanted to ask. And the one question, but I think I just misunderstood that too. The one question after both rounds were over, where it's about. That? Well, what you practically learned from the other group's perspective. Because I think I simply misunderstood that too. But somehow, maybe you should write it a bit more clearly in the slides, that it's really about referring to the other group and saying yes, how should I explain this now?

**B - Liam:** What they were thinking.

**B - Liam:** So not going into the arguments themselves, but just this understanding of the thought processes. That's the question, isn't it?

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** I would say yes, so also what the arguments are. But yes, what the thought processes behind it are. You would have formulated that more clearly? Yes, thank you. That's good feedback.

**B - Liam:** What I think is good is how the groups spoke individually, that after everyone has said their own opinion, I'll say, that you talk about it again as a group and also see whether you don't quite agree with other opinions within the group or that you can ask questions again How did you mean that? What is your opinion on it? Or in terms of what do you think about it? I think that's very cool.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Exactly otherwise how was the experience for you. What? What did you take away from it? What? What did you find exciting, what perhaps confusing?

**B - Daniel:** Yes, I also think it's a very good format. It's good for. to hear opinions that don't agree with your own, because.

**B - Daniel:** In social media. That's what you usually hear. That from a bubble that you're in yourself. And if something comes up that I think is stupid, then I press the three dots and no more ads and then I never get it again. That kind of content. If I'm not in the mood for it here. I can also well imagine that if it were even more controversial in the group now, that if you. But you're forced to listen to the others, so to speak, as they develop their points and so on, so that you find a better understanding. Um, for the other group's way of thinking and in a freer format, I think you would sort of fall out at the first point of disagreement and I wouldn't even hear what four or five other points the other party has behind it. Because we're now arguing about this one point and going round in circles. That's why I find it interesting that you can see and hear so many different points here. And I also think it's nice that everyone is forced to describe their own opinion. Then take a minute to reflect on the negative aspects of their own opinion. Um, then I think to myself, okay, that's a reflective person, you can talk to them. Like that.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Thank you, Daniel. Did you generally have that feeling now that he said that? That. Did it help you when you were in the listening role to hear people being self-reflective and critically questioning themselves?



**B - Liam:** Yes.

**B - Liam:** So I think that's something else when really extreme opinions clash and then someone who. So if you now let's say AfD politicians versus the last generation of climate sticklers and then let's say in quotation marks admit what the disadvantages of their attitudes are and.

**MOD Lorenz Kaplick:** Might happen :)

**B - Liam:** Yes, that's exactly why I say yes, I think that it's something completely different, because with us the disadvantages are more or less the same as the advantages of the others. And I think we're very close to a consensus anyway, for example, than people who really refer things to themselves, what? I don't know, I think Linda or Marina said earlier that we all talked a lot about society and no one referred to what exactly where, where you have to limit yourself or what the current situation is for you.