



Digital Programme

24 HOURS OF POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY 2026

6th SCIENTIFIC MEETING OF THE POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY NETWORK DE

February 26-27 2026

Meeting program and abstract booklet

V 3.2, 22.02.2026



**universität
wien**

Program Overview

Thursday, February 26

Währinger Straße 29, 1090 Wien

<i>Time / Room</i>	<i>Hörsaal 1</i>	<i>Seminar 3</i>	<i>Seminar 4</i>	<i>Seminar 5</i>
09:00 – 13:00	<u>Pre-conference</u> <u>Workshop:</u> Making psychology accessible: A pre-conference workshop on science communication			
	Lunch			
14:15	Welcome Address			
14:30 – 16:00	<u>A01</u> Prejudice, Tolerance and Measuring Bias	<u>A02</u> Discrimination, inequality and anti-sexism interventions	<u>A03</u> Extremism and radicalization (attitudes + development)	<u>A04</u> Political violence, war and conflict communication
	Coffee			
16:15 – 17:45	<u>B01</u> Democracy, participation and civic development	<u>B02</u> Institutional legitimacy and trust in science/ experts (incl. AI trust)	<u>B03</u> Polarization and cognition I	<u>B04</u> Polarization and cognition II
	Coffee			
18:00 – 19:30	<u>Keynote</u> Democratic Backsliding Is Not Inevitable: What Works to Strengthen Democratic Resilience			

Friday, February 27

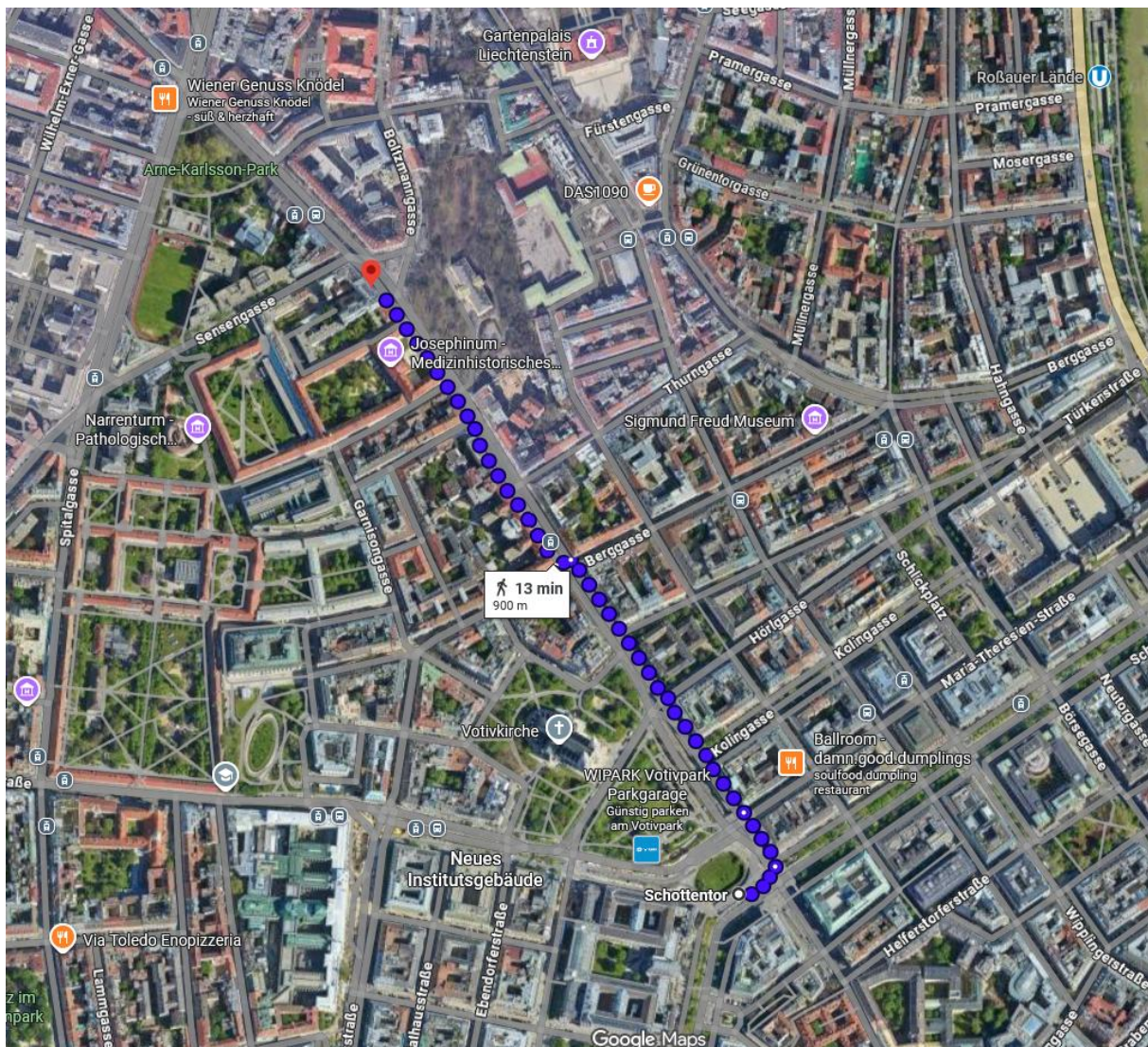
Währinger Straße 29, 1090 Wien

<i>Time / Room</i>	<i>Hörsaal 1</i>	<i>Seminar 3</i>	<i>Seminar 4</i>	<i>Seminar 5</i>
08:00 – 09:30	<u>C01</u> Digital media, influencers and online engagement	<u>C02</u> AI, technology, and political attitudes	<u>C03</u> Climate activism, protest tactics and mobilization	<u>C04</u> Climate policy perceptions and climate (mis)information
	Coffee			
09:45 – 11:15	<u>D01</u> Sustainability transitions and climate/energy governance	<u>D02</u> Populism, status politics, religion and culture wars	<u>D03</u> Migration/refugees and political agency (incl. migrant PPR support)	<u>D04</u> Interest groups, unions, conflict orientations and inequality-trust links
	Coffee			
11:30 – 13:00	<u>E01</u> Political development across the life course	<u>E02</u> Active polarization: measurement, dynamics and cultural sorting	<u>E03</u> Political communication, rhetoric, crises and mobilizing moderates	
	Lunch			
14:30 – 16:00	<u>F01</u> Climate psychology (responsibility, emotions, action/inaction)	<u>F02</u> Ideology, threats & belief-systems (incl. voting heuristics)	<u>F03</u> Misinformation: narratives, inoculation, source cues and debunking	
	Coffee			
16:15 – 17:45	<u>G01</u> Computational Political Psychology: Insights on Culture, Trust, Polarization, and Climate Activism	<u>G02</u> Social psychoanalytic perspectives on democracy and authoritarianism: narcissism, resentment and affective foundations	<u>G03</u> Democracy in Question: The Role of Different Forms of Generalized (Dis)trust, Populist Attitudes, System Justification Beliefs and Youth Civic Identity	
	After-Conference Drinks			

Venue and conference rooms

The conference will be held at [Währinger Straße 29, 1090 Vienna](#).

The building is within walking distance from the university main building. The nearest subway stop is [Schottentor](#), the nearest tram stop from there is Schwarzschanierstraße (tram lines 40, 41, 42 from Schottentor) or Sensengasse (tram lines 40, 41, 42 coming from the other direction) or Lazarettgasse (tram lines 5 and 12). From Vienna Central Station, the building is reachable using subway line U1 and U2 and tram lines 1, 71, D, as well as bus line 1A, followed by a short walk pictured below.



All rooms are downstairs from the ground floor of the building, which is accessible via stairs and elevator.

Talks will be held in Lecture Hall 1 and Seminar Rooms 3, 4, and 5, all on the same floor.

See the floor plan [here](#) and detailed information about the rooms [here](#).



Accessibility

Lecture Hall 1 is wheelchair accessible in the front and rear section as well as the lecturer's area. The lecture hall has an audio induction loop. The seminar rooms are fully wheelchair accessible and have audio induction loops.

Contact information

Conference website: <https://24hpolpsy.univie.ac.at/>

German Political Psychology Network: <https://polpsynet.netlify.app/>

Local Organizer Team

Dr. Julia Reiter, Department of Occupational, Economic and Social Psychology, University of Vienna, julia.reiter@univie.ac.at

Dr. Isabella Rebasso, Department of Government, University of Vienna, isabella.rebasso@univie.ac.at

Prof. Dr. Markus Wagner, Department of Government, University of Vienna, markus.wagner@univie.ac.at

Social event

After Conference Drinks

Date and time: Friday, February 27, 6:00pm

Location: Edison, Alser Straße 9, 1080 Wien

Acknowledgements and Funding Statement

We would like to thank the Social Psychology branch of the German Psychological Society, the ÖGPW (Austrian Political Science Association), and the City of Vienna for the financial support.

Join our community and become a member of Fachgruppe Sozialpsychologie: <https://www.dgps.de/mitgliedschaft/leistungen/>



Pre-conference Workshop

Making psychology accessible: A pre-conference workshop on science communication

By Jana Dreston (Universität Duisburg-Essen) & Rinat Meerson (Universität Wien)

Thursday 26th February, 09:00–13:00

Room: Hörsaal 1

Psychology is highly relevant to people's everyday lives and to society as a whole. However, communicating psychological research results can be quite challenging. Science has its own language, which is not suitable for everyday use. Psychological methods are complicated, and the results are not always clear-cut. In addition, reaching a larger audience can require considerable effort.

At In-Mind (<https://www.in-mind.org/>), our goal is to communicate psychological research to a broad audience. We are a volunteer project run by scientists. We offer interested researchers a platform to communicate psychological research while still following academic guidelines such as double-blind peer review.

In this workshop, we will draw on our experience as In-Mind editors to provide practical advice on communicating research to a broad audience. We will share our 'dos and don'ts' for writing popular science blogs and social media posts. During the workshop, you will have the opportunity to apply these principles, start writing your own blog post and receive peer-review feedback to further refine your text. If interested, these can later be submitted for review at In-Mind; please see <https://www.in-mind.org/content/for-blog-authors> for more information.

Session Information

Thursday, February 26

Conference Opening

Welcome Address

Session Info:

Thursday, 14:15 –
14:30

Room: HÖRSAAL 1

Session A01

Paper Session

Prejudice, Tolerance, and Measuring Bias

Session Info:

Thursday,
14:30-16:00

Room: HÖRSAAL 1

German translation and validation of a scale assessing tolerance for differences

Katharina Küper, University of Potsdam, Aileen Oeberst, University of Potsdam

A comparison of implicit association tests for names of different ethnic and gender groups and their link to explicit stereotype measures in nine European countries

Elli Zey, DeZIM Institute, Pelin Atay, DeZIM Institute, Long Nguyen, DeZIM Institute, Ely Strömberg, University of Amsterdam, Eva Zschirnt, University of Amsterdam, Bram Lancee, University of Amsterdam, Susanne Veit, DeZIM Institute

Admit or conceal? A comparison of explicit anti-Arab prejudice measures with a list experiment and an implicit association test

Susanne Veit, DeZIM Institute, Jörg Dollmann, DeZIM Institute, Jannes Jacobsen, DeZIM Institute, Richard Traunmüller, University of Mannheim, Elli Zey, DeZIM Institute

Disentangling Racial Colorblindness: The Role of Political Conservatism and the Acceptance of Migration in Color- and Power-Evasion

Mary Lam, Bielefeld University

Session A02

Paper session

Discrimination, inequality & anti-sexism interventions

Session Info:

Thursday,
14:30-16:00

Does Discrimination Lead to Spillover or Separation? An Analysis of Institutional Trust in Police and Judiciary among Immigrants and Their Descendants in Germany

Room: SEMINAR 3

Christian Czymara, Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute, Sabrina J. Mayer, University of Bamberg, Lisa Walter, University of Bamberg

From Premium to Penalty: The Headscarf Effect in Hiring Decisions

Juliane Wesselmann, Trinity College Dublin, Susanne Veit, DeZIM Institute

Holding the door – and the power? Perceived System Threat and Approval of Benevolent Sexist Men Among Women

Natalie Butterwei, Bielefeld University, Leon Walter, Bielefeld University

Remembering Hanau – How remembering right-wing extremism impacts political trust and justice-related satisfaction

Whitney Agunyego, Leibniz Institute for Psychology (ZPID), Sarah Scharding, Trier University, Marlene Altenmüller, Leibniz Institute for Psychology (ZPID)

Women's confrontation to sexism: Utilizing the confronting prejudiced responses model and the theatre of the oppressed methods for practicing confrontation

Sıla Kaya, Middle East Technical University

Session A03

Paper session

Extremism & radicalization (attitudes + development)

Session Info:

Thursday,
14:30-16:00

Room: SEMINAR 4

Cognitive pathways of political extremism and their consequences for democratic support

Sebastian Jungkunz, University of Bamberg and University of Bonn, Marc Helbling, University of Mannheim, Airo Hino, Waseda University, Hikaru Nukui, Waseda University, Nina Osenbrügge, University of Mannheim

Cyberhate Among War-Affected Ukrainian Adolescents

Julia Levin, University of Hamburg

Comparing predictive models of political engagement and radicalization among adolescents: A preliminary look at an ongoing longitudinal study

Julia Reiter, University of Vienna

Session A04

Paper session

Political violence, war & conflict communication

Session Info:

Thursday,
14:30-16:00

Room: SEMINAR 5

Can Experts Afford Emotion? The Effect of Emotional and Uncivil Language on Public Perceptions of the Russo-Ukrainian War

George N. Georgarakis, University of Vienna, Vera Axyonova, University of Birmingham

Conflict Styles in the Middle East

Christoph Hahn, Psychological University Berlin, Siegfried Preiser, Psychological University Berlin

Democratic Costs of Politicizing Violent Events: Evidence from Slovakia

Tadeas Cely, Aarhus University, Miroslav Nemcok, University of Oslo, Michal Toth, Masaryk University, Peter Spac, Masaryk University

Do left-authoritarian attitudes affect populist attitudes? Evidence from 7 Western European countries

Philipp Hoffmann, University of Bamberg

Session B01

Paper session

Democracy, participation & civic development
Session Info:

Thursday,
16:15-17:45

Room: HÖRSAAL 1

Against Voting: A Mixed-Methods Analysis of Anti-Voting Meanings

Carolina Plescia, University of Vienna, Ming M. Boyer, VU Amsterdam

Can Volunteer Services Turn You into a 'Good Citizen'? Evidence from a Three-Wave Longitudinal Study on National and International Volunteer Services

Luise Hamdani, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Jule Specht, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Deliberation or Cognitive Bias? The Mechanism Behind Simultaneous Referendum Proposals

Klaudia Wegschaider, University of Vienna

Facing a Dark Future: Young People's Future Anxiety and Political Attitudes

Olaf Borghi, Royal Holloway University of London and University of London, Katharina Lawall, University of Reading, Kaat Smets, Royal Holloway University of London, Manos Tsakiris, Royal Holloway University of London and University of London

Session B02

Paper session

Institutional legitimacy & trust in science/experts (incl. AI trust)

Session Info:

Thursday,
16:15-17:45

Room: SEMINAR 3

Better together? The impact of public participation on perceived legitimacy of science and politics

Katharina Teresa Dürmeier, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich and Leibniz Institute for Psychology (ZPID), Mario Gollwitzer, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich, Marlene Sophie Altenmüller, Leibniz Institute for Psychology (ZPID)

Extended Contact Reduces Climate Skepticism Among Evangelicals

Leonie Huddy, Stony Brook University, Art Aron, Stony Brook University, Steve Spector, Stony Brook University, Abigail Woodfield, Stony Brook University, Martin Meyer, Yale University

Building Trust in Political Science: Transparency and Relevance More Than Fixing Bias

Tadeas Cely, Aarhus University, Andrew Roberts, Northwestern University

Taking advantage: Using scientific authority for political statements unrelated to one's expertise

Lena Zohm, Leibniz Institute for Psychology (ZPID), Marlene Altenmüller, Leibniz Institute for Psychology (ZPID)

Unequal Representation of Political Views in Generative AI: Ideological Polarisation and Democratic Sustainability in Germany.

Mohammad Mafizul, Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences

Session B03

Paper session

Polarization & cognition I
Session Info:

Thursday,
16:15-17:45

Room: SEMINAR 4

"Canceled" people feel more affective polarized? Conjoint analysis

Monika Verbalyte, GESIS Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Ainė Ramonaitė, Vilnius University

Ambiguous Party Preferences: A Latent Class and Change Analysis of Propensity to Vote, Voting Behavior and the Interplay with Voters' Tolerance of Ambiguity in the Context of the 2025 German Federal Election

Moritz Leistner, Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg, Diana Steger, Leibniz Institute for Educational Trajectories, Gundula Zoch, Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg, Astrid Schuetz, Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg

Dismantling the Political Sophistication Bias

Klara Steinmetz, TU Chemnitz

Do we agree to disagree? How opinion variation among in-groups can skew perceptions of ideological polarisation

Peter Steiglechner, Agostino Merico, Leibniz-Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT), Paul Smaldino, University of California Merced, Mirta Galesic, Complexity Science Hub, Henrik Olsson, Complexity Science Hub, Victor Møller Poulsen, Complexity Science Hub

From Parties to Issues: How Idiosyncratic Opinions and Issue-Based Identities Drive Partisan Animosity

Alexander Dalheimer, University of Vienna

Session B04

Paper session

Polarization & cognition II

Session Info:

Thursday,
16:15-17:45

Room: SEMINAR 5

Cognitive Sophistication and Motivated Reasoning in Politically Motivated Contexts

Lara Grohmann, University of Würzburg, Fabian Hutmacher, University of Würzburg, Regina Reichardt, University of Regensburg, Christoph Mengelkamp, University of Würzburg

Divided Empathy: Bias in Empathy Beliefs Between Political In-groups and Out-groups, and Its Shaping by Social Groups

Yufang Liao, Giorgia Silani, Claus Lamm, University of Vienna

Ego Under Fire: The Role of Egocentrism and Identity in Adolescent Climate Conflict

Mykyta Kovalov, University of Vienna

From Complex Narratives to Complex Thinking: Testing How Complex Film Narration Shapes Cognitive Flexibility and Political Polarization

Mariken van der Velden, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Cynthia Cabañas, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Gaia Yonah, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Katalin Balint, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Elly Konijn, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Keynote: Heike Klüver

Session Info:

Thursday,
18:00-19:30

Room: HÖRSAAL 1

Democratic Backsliding Is Not Inevitable: What Works to Strengthen Democratic Resilience

Democracies across the world have come under increasing pressure in recent years, most visibly through rising electoral support for far-right parties as a central manifestation of democratic backsliding. While a large literature has focused on explaining these developments, we know far less about how democracies can be strengthened in practice. This book advances an informational theory of democratic backsliding that highlights the overlooked role of misperceptions. It argues that democratic erosion is driven not only by objective economic or cultural grievances, but by systematically distorted perceptions of societal problems, group-based disadvantage, and political unresponsiveness—distortions that far-right parties actively cultivate and that are amplified by social media environments rewarding emotional and polarizing narratives. Moving beyond diagnosis, the book asks a central question: what works to strengthen democratic resilience and contain far-right support? Drawing on original survey experiments, online field experiments, and large-scale field interventions, it evaluates three classes of corrective strategies: preventive interventions (digital literacy and party agenda-setting), informational corrections (norm recalibration and exposure of far-right hypocrisy), and experiential corrections (democratic innovations). The findings demonstrate that democratic backsliding is not inevitable: correcting misperceptions offers a comparatively low-cost, scalable, and politically feasible strategy to reduce far-right support and strengthen democratic resilience.

Friday, February 27

Session C01

Paper Session

Digital media, influencers & online engagement

Session Info:

Friday,
08:00-09:30

Aestheticizing Antifeminism: Investigating the Impact of Tradwife Content on Antifeminist Beliefs

Melanie Jacobsen, Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society

Room: HöRSAAL 1

Building Credibility in the 2024 U.S. Election: How Partisan News Influencers Signal Expertise and Trustworthiness

Eva-Maria Vogel, University of Zurich, Morgan Wack, University of Zurich, Christian Pipal, University of Zurich, Frank Esser, University of Zurich

Countering Misinformation in Messenger Communication: Psychological Inoculation Effects on Veracity Assessment and Sharing Intention — Roles of Critical Thinking and Motivated Reasoning

Amancay Ancina, University of Duisburg-Essen, Dev Pandya, University of Duisburg-Essen, Nicole Krämer, University of Duisburg-Essen

Does Online Civic Engagement Lead to Negative Outcomes in Youth? Bidirectional Links with Social Well-Being, Perceived Polarization, and Sense of Control

Jan Šerek, Masaryk University, Michal Mužík, Masaryk University

Why do we listen to what we like? The role of political views and intellectual humility in selective exposure and avoidance when choosing climate change-related podcasts to listen to

Cornelia Sindermann, Charlotte Fresenius University, University of Stuttgart

Session C02

Paper session

AI, technology, and political attitudes

Session Info:

Friday,
08:00-09:30

Artificial Intelligence as a Cross-Cutting Issue? Ideological Dimensions of AI Attitudes in Germany

Sabrina Mayer, University of Bamberg, Verena Benoit, University of Bamberg, Valentin Berger, University of Bamberg, Philipp Hoffmann, University of Bamberg

Room: SEMINAR 3

From Demographics to Political Identification and Climate Change Policy Preferences: AI Attitudes as a Mediator

Verena Benoit, University of Bamberg

Inferring individual belief networks from open-ended narratives

Peter Steiglechner, Complexity Science Hub Vienna, Victor Poulsen, Complexity Science Hub Vienna, Henrik Olsson, Complexity Science Hub Vienna, Mirta Galesic, Complexity Science Hub Vienna

Classifying Moral Reasoning in Political Discourse: Demonstrating Interrater Reliability and Testing an AI-Based Classification Approach

Felix Schmirler, Freie Universität Berlin, Rudolf Kerschreiter, Freie Universität Berlin

Session C03

Paper session

Climate activism, protest tactics & mobilization

Session Info:

Friday,
08:00-09:30

Activism or extremism? Radicalisation of the conflict on climate policies in contemporary Poland.

Aleksandra Prusak, University of Warsaw

Room: SEMINAR 4

Artistic Activism: Employing Art for Disruptive Climate Protests

Marlene Altenmüller, Leibniz Institute for Psychology (ZPID), Berend Barkela, RPTU University Kaiserslautern-Landau, Christina Schäfer, RPTU University Kaiserslautern-Landau

Designing a Greentervention – Can Populist Appeals Spur Environmental Collective Action?

Dániel Komáromy, University of Amsterdam, Jan-Willem van Prooijen, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Public Participation Reduces Psychological Reactance to System-Level Policies

Leonhard Reiter, University of Vienna, Armin Granulo, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Robert Böhm, University of Vienna, Christoph Fuchs, University of Vienna

Session C04

Paper session

Climate policy perceptions & climate (mis)information

Session Info:

Friday,
08:00-09:30

Broadening Perspectives, Reducing Misperceptions? The Role of Online Deliberation in Controversial Mobility Policy

Katharina Götting, Technical University Berlin, Lisa Walsleben, Technical University Berlin, Vanessa Hiess, Technical University Berlin, Jonas Ludwig, Technical University Berlin, Elke U. Weber, Princeton University

Room: SEMINAR 5

On the relation between climate-related uncertainty and anti-immigrant attitudes

Oshrat Hochman, GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Andrew Bell, University of Sheffield

The gateway (mis)belief model: How misinformation impacts perceptions of scientific consensus and attitudes towards climate change

Hannah Logemann, University of Duisburg-Essen, Jacob B. Rode, University of Cambridge, Rakoen Maertens, University of Oxford, Sander van der Linden, University of Cambridge

German citizens misjudge the mitigation potential of currently debated policy options for climate action

Jonas Ludwig, Technische Universität Berlin, Arian Trieb, Technische Universität Berlin, Eli R. Sugerman, Columbia University, Eric J. Johnson, Columbia University and Technische Universität Berlin

Fairness perceptions and social norms mitigate the detrimental impact of conspiracy beliefs on wind farm opposition

Leonie Ströbele, University of Hohenheim, Kevin Winter, University of Hohenheim, Laura Henn, University of Hohenheim

Session D01

Paper Session

Sustainability transitions & climate/energy governance

Session Info:

Friday,
09:45-11:15

Conflict over Urban Greening: Psychological Perspectives on Just Urban Transitions

Mia Lehn

Room: HÖRSAAL 1

COVID-19 was just a warm-up – climate change's triage is in a different league. Evidence on trans-context consistency of scarce resource allocation preferences in different global emergencies

Friedemann Trutzenberg, Freie Universität Berlin, Michael Eid, Freie Universität Berlin

Engaging Citizens in Social Research on Climate Change: Insights from a Playful Workshop for Participatory Data Analysis

Katharina Koller, Centre for Social Innovation, Barbara Kieslinger, Centre for Social Innovation, Claudia Fabian, Centre for Social Innovation

Governing the Energy Transition in Germany: Citizenship and Role Expectations in Energy Cooperatives

Anna Theis, University of Vechta, Neneh Braum, University of Vechta

Experiencing floods has only marginal effects on pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors

Nils Brandenstein, Heidelberg University, Kathrin Ackermann, University of Siegen, Jan Rummel, Heidelberg University

Session D02

Paper session

Populism, status politics, religion & culture wars

Session Info:

Friday,
09:45-11:15

Room: SEMINAR 3

Does hard work pay off? Meritocratic beliefs activate radical right support in status-seekers

Dániel Komáromy, University of Amsterdam, Matthijs Rooduijn, University of Amsterdam, Gijs Schumacher, University of Amsterdam

Conflict extension through ideological narratives

Tadeas Cely, Aarhus University

Faith and Identity under Political Islam: Public Practice, Private Belief, and Partisan Attachment in Turkey

Ali Çarkoğlu, Koç University

Shaping Public Opinion? Populist Radical Right Parties' Representative Claims and Support for Transgender Rights

Sarah Magdihs, Trinity College Dublin

Societal Recognition and Voting Behavior: Evidence from Germany

Niklas Donth, University of Stuttgart

Session D03

Paper session

Migration/refugees & political agency (incl. migrant PRR support)

Session Info:

Friday,
09:45-11:15

Room: SEMINAR 4

Measuring Discrimination by Childcare Providers towards Ukrainian applicants in Germany, Great Britain, Hungary and Switzerland

Pelin Atay, DeZIM Institute, Susanne Veit, DeZIM Institute

Motives for choosing Poland as a destination country of migration in the perspective of Ukrainian migrant women representing pro-European values

Joanna Stepaniuk, Józef Piłsudski University of Physical Education in Warsaw

Why immigrant-origin individuals turn to the radical right: The role of conservative moral orientations in support for the Alternative for Germany (AfD)

Philipp Hoffmann, University of Bamberg

Session D04

Paper session

Interest groups, unions, conflict orientations & inequality–trust links

Session Info:

Friday,
09:45-11:15

Not like other politicians: Politician stereotypes and willingness to associate

Jule Kegel, University of Vienna

Room: SEMINAR 5

Nothing but conflicts? Perceptions of and ideas about dealing with social conflicts in times of polarized political debates

Dirk Lampe, Bielefeld University, Stefan Skolarski, Bundeskriminalamt, Anna Nowak, Bielefeld University

Policy capacities of interest groups - an international comparison

Petra Strehmel, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences

Research for, with, and about trade unions – a systematic review of psychological research in German-speaking countries

Britta Wittner, Technische Universität Braunschweig

Shall they care how you feel? Scrutinizing the susceptibility of political trust towards inequality-elicited emotions

Sonja Zmerli, Sciences Po Grenoble UGA

Session E01

Paper Session

Political development across the life course

Session Info:

Friday,
11:30-13:00

How Recent Is Recent? A Retrospective Analysis of Inflation and Recency Bias in U.S. Elections

Rishi Gupta, Cambridge Centre for International Research Ltd

Room: HÖRSAAL 1

Mapping the Development of Political Belief System Constraint During Adolescence

Irene Arahal, Royal Holloway University of London

Political attitudes over the lifecycle. Evolution and mechanisms of attitude change over adulthood.

Onno Steenweg, Trinity College Dublin

The Development, Levels and Context-Dependence of Affective Polarization Among Adolescents

Jakob Kasper, University of Amsterdam, Gijs Schumacher, University of Amsterdam, Eveline Crone, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Lysanne Te Brinke, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Bert N. Bakker, University of Amsterdam

Voting Competence in Adolescence: Development, Predictors, and Implications

Anna Lang, FernUniversität in Hagen

Session E02

Paper session

Affective polarization: measurement, dynamics & cultural sorting

Session Info:

Friday,
11:30-13:00

Room: SEMINAR 3

Measuring Affective Polarization in Multi-Party Systems – An Empirical Comparison of Different Feeling Thermometer Operationalizations

Larissa Knöchelmann, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Jule Specht, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Symbolic and Realistic Threats: Emotional Pathways to Partisan Divides

Elena Heinz, University of Vienna, Ruthie Pliskin, Leiden University, Markus Wagner, University of Vienna

The Role of Marginalized Group Attitudes on Out-Partisan Evaluations

Cansu Paksoy, University of Deusto, Ali Çarkoğlu, Koç University, Markus Wagner, University of Vienna

Transitional Patterns of Affective Polarization before and after Germany's 2025 Federal Election

Leon Walter, Bielefeld University, Yann Rees, Bielefeld University, Jonas Rees, Bielefeld University

Polycrisis, fear and affective polarization in Germany

Evelyn Bytzek, RPTU University Kaiserslautern-Landau

Session E03

Paper session

Political communication, rhetoric, crises & mobilizing moderates

Session Info:

Friday,
11:30-13:00

Room: SEMINAR 4

I voted therefore I am not - Political self-effects through voting and social media interactions in the U.S. and German Federal Elections

Jana Dreston, Universität Duisburg-Essen, Josephine Schmitt, Universität Duisburg-Essen, German Neubaum, Center for Advanced Internet Studies Bochum

Manipulation of Heuristic Cues in Binary Ideological Campaigns: A System Dynamics Simulation of Voting Behaviour

Yavora Kazakova, University of York, Penka Petrova, Scenario Simulation Laboratory

Political Rhetoric in Transition: Reassessing Persuasive Strategies and Style in Contemporary Discourse

Ofer Feldman, Doshisha University, Kyoto University

The Reluctant Ally: Mobilizing Moderate Opinions to Advance Social Change

Adrian Lüders, University of Hohenheim, Dino Carpentras, ETH Zurich, Philip Warncke, University of Limerick, Michael Quayle, University of Limerick

Mapping Democratic Support: A Multi-Method Typology for Targeted Persuasion

Philipp Mendoza, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Alexander Wuttke, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Session F01

Paper session

Climate psychology (responsibility, emotions, action/inaction)

Session Info:

Friday,
14:30-16:00

Room: HÖRSAAL 1

Change by Compassion: How Moral Framing Shapes Reactions to Pro-Environmental Advocacy

Daniel Florian Dorji Gratzner, University of Vienna, Jana Katharina Köhler, University of Vienna

Cognitive Dissonance and Climate Inaction: A Political Psychology Approach to Emotional Coping Strategies in the Climate Crisis

Sabri Efe, İstanbul Medeniyet University

Dimensions of Conservatism and their relationship to concern for global climate change versus regional nature

Michael Zehetleitner, Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Timo Kuhle, Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Katharina Mayer, Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

Do We Owe the Future Anything? Perceptions of Responsibility and Intergenerational Justice in the Age of Environmental Crises

Isabell Diekmann, Paderborn University

Citizen misestimation of mitigation impact of climate policies in France

Vanessa Hiess, Technical University Berlin, Jonas Ludwig, Technical University Berlin, Elke Weber, Princeton University, Eric Johnson, Columbia University

Session F02

Paper session

Ideology, threats & belief-systems (incl. voting heuristics)

Session Info:

Friday,
14:30-16:00

Room: SEMINAR 3

How Maintenance, Avoidance, and Approach Orientations in Natural Texts Influence Conservatives' versus Liberals' Political Support Across Democratic Systems

Yael Ecker, University of Cologne, Joris Lammers, University of Cologne

Keep Calm or Worry on - A Multi-Study Investigation of how Citizens Cope with and Emotionally Regulate Societal Threat

Linda C. Bomm, University of Amsterdam, Bert N. Bakker, University of Amsterdam

Limits of an Open Mind: Intellectual Humility's Role in Motivated Reasoning

Josef Lolacher, University of Oxford, Marlene Sophie Altenmüller, Leibniz Institute for Psychology (ZPID)

When Do Citizens Follow or Lead? Unpacking the Role of Voters' Attitude Certainty

Beatriz Lasheras Mas, University of Vienna

Who Do Citizens Vote For? Theory and Evidence on Whether Citizens Vote For Themselves, Society, or Those in Between

Luca Versteegen, University of Vienna, Greta Gross, Berlin Social Science Center (WZB), Lilliana Mason, Johns Hopkins University

Session F03

Paper session

Misinformation: narratives, inoculation, source cues & debunking

Session Info:

Friday,
14:30-16:00

Room: SEMINAR 4

Optimal Allocation of Fact-Checking Resources on Long-Term Prevalence of Online Misinformation

Morgan Wack, University of Zurich, Patrick Warren, Clemson University, Mustafa Alam, Clemson University

Politricks: Teaching How Political Misinformation Spreads in the Field

Shaye-Ann Hopkins, WU, Rebecca M. Rayburn-Reeves, ICCM, Joseph J. Sherlock, King's College London

The effects of (un-)congenial media sources on conspiracy debunking: pulling conspiracy believers out and pushing conspiracy non-believers in?

Chiara Valli, University of Bern, Tobias Rohrbach, University of Bern, Silke Adam, University of Bern

The Role of Group Identity and Issue Type in Predicting Misinformation

Cansu Paksoy, University of Deusto, Cengiz Erişen, Yeditepe University

Session G01

Research panel

Computational Political Psychology: Insights on Culture, Trust, Polarization, and Climate Activism

Session Info:

Friday,
16:15-17:45

Room: HÖRSAAL 1

Chair: Mauricio Dias Martins

When Culture Follows, Not Leads: The Case of Exogenous Democratization in Germany (1871–1945)

Michael Kvasin, University of Vienna, Claus Lamm, University of Vienna, Mauricio Dias Martins, University of Vienna

When Institutions Falter: Modeling Trust in Authorities, Peers, and Shocks in the Age of Climate Crisis

Mauricio Dias Martins, University of Vienna

Uncovering the Moral Foundations of Polarised Movie Reviews

Mehmet Tan Güneş, University of Vienna, Olaf Borghi, Royal Holloway University of London, University of London, Manos Tsakiris, Royal Holloway University of London, University of London, Claus Lamm, University of Vienna, Mauricio Dias Martins, University of Vienna

Radical climate protests shaped portrayals of moderate activists and reader attitudes in German news media

Lukas Mayrhofer, University of Vienna, Simon Fassnacht, Max Planck Institute for Biological Cybernetics, Markus Foramitti, University of Vienna, Jana K. Kohler, University of Vienna, Boryana Todorova, University of Vienna, Claus Lamm, University of Vienna, Mauricio Martins, University of Vienna, Universidade Lusófona

Session G02

Research Panel

Social psychoanalytic perspectives on democracy and authoritarianism: narcissism, resentment and affective foundations

Session Info:

Friday,
16:15-17:45

Room: SEMINAR 3

Chair: Gavin Sullivan

Social Psychoanalysis in the Shadow of Fascism and Racism

Roger Frie, Universität Wien

Democratic Subjects in Mourning? Young People, Rural Peripheries, and the Affective Foundations of Democracy

Paul Obermeyer, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin, Christopher Steffen, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin, Philip Jammermann, University of Innsbruck, Marion Näser-Lather, Goethe University Frankfurt, Claudius Wagemann, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin, Goethe University Frankfurt, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Phil C. Langer, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin

Turkish nationalist diaspora organisations in Germany: Exploring political grievances, solidarity and ongoing ambivalence

Gavin B. Sullivan, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin, Buse Alkoyak, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin, Philipp Wunderlich, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin

"Grandmas against the Right" - Emotional sharing and affective practices in resistance to the far right

Philipp Wunderlich, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin, Gavin B. Sullivan, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin

Collective Narcissism in a Fragile Present: A Social Psychoanalytic Perspective on Contemporary Nationalism

Katrin Voigt, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin, Thomas Kühn, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin

Session G03

Research Panel

Democracy in Question: The Role of Different Forms of Generalized (Dis)trust, Populist Attitudes, System Justification Beliefs, and Youth Civic Identity

Session Info:

Friday,
16:15-17:45

From Moderate Trust to Alienated Distrust: A Longitudinal Study of Political (Dis)Trust Profiles and Their Links to Well-Being and Civic Participation among Czech Youth

Jakub Brojak, Masaryk University, Jan Šerek, Masaryk University

Room: SEMINAR 4

Chair: Anna-Maria
Mayer

Fostering Democratic Resilience: School's Role in Mitigating Populist Attitudes Among Youth

Elise Grunwald, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Astrid Körner, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Peter Noack, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Tobias Koch, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Katharina Eckstein, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena

System justification as a buffer against environmental threat among young Czech

Michal Muzik, Masaryk University, Jakub Brojac, Masaryk University

Motor of change: The effect of everyday experiences on Youth's short-term civic identity formation

Anna-Maria Mayer, Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Katharina Eckstein, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Elise Grunwald, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Peter Noack, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Julia Dietrich, Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

Strengthening Democratic Competencies among Youth Through a School-Based Basic Law Initiative

Katharina Eckstein, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Elise Grunwald, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Luisa Heinrichs, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Ole Nettels, Universität Bonn, Victoria Lacis, Universität Münster

Abstracts

Session A01: Prejudice, Tolerance and Measuring Bias

German translation and validation of a scale assessing tolerance for differences

Katharina Küper, University of Potsdam, Aileen Oeberst, University of Potsdam

Tolerance has often been conceptualized as the opposite of prejudice, whilst more recently researchers have advocated for a clearer conceptual separation between the two. Hjerme et al. (2019) defined tolerance as a value orientation towards diversity and developed a scale that measures reactions to difference, rather than attitudes towards specific social groups. We translated the 8-item scale to German and confirmed its three-dimensional factor structure (acceptance of, respect for, and appreciation of difference) in a pilot study ($n = 566$).

Subsequently, we validate the German translation in a non-representative, cross-sectional online study by examining its associations with related constructs including pro-diversity beliefs (PDBS, Kauff et al., 2018), social dominance orientation (SSDO, Aichholzer & Lechner, 2021), right-wing authoritarianism (KSA-3, Beierlein et al., 2014), group-focused enmity (Mokros & Zick, 2023), human value orientations (HVS, Schwartz et al., 2015) and social desirability (Satow, 2012), as well as with self-reported external criteria, such as political party preference, right-left orientation, affective polarization, intergroup contact, and openness to engaging with politically other-minded people. We will present our findings and discuss the multidimensional approach to tolerance for difference and its implications for future research and practice.

A comparison of implicit association tests for names of different ethnic and gender groups and their link to explicit stereotype measures in nine European countries

Elli Zey, DeZIM Institute, Pelin Atay, DeZIM Institute, Long Nguyen, DeZIM Institute, Ely Strömberg, University of Amsterdam, Eva Zschirnt, University of Amsterdam, Bram Lancee, University of Amsterdam, Susanne Veit, DeZIM Institute

Prejudice and discrimination remain central challenges for diverse societies, shaping social cohesion, political conflict, and minority well-being. Understanding how biases operate across contexts and groups is therefore crucial for advancing both research and policy. This study examines implicit and explicit biases against minority groups across nine European countries: Belgium, Czechia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Using data from $N = 17,485$ respondents, we administered Implicit Association Tests (IATs) to assess pro-majority bias toward three minority groups (African, Muslim, Roma) under different gendered name conditions (female-only, male-only, mixed). We then analyzed how these implicit associations relate to explicit prejudice measures. Results show a consistent implicit preference for majority over minority groups across all countries ($D\text{-score} = .46$). While descriptive patterns suggested somewhat stronger bias against Roma compared to Africans or Muslims, cross-national analyses revealed that differences among minority groups were not systematic but largely country-specific. Gendered name conditions did not systematically influence the implicit bias. Explicit attitudes reflected similar patterns: minorities were evaluated less positively than majority groups, with Roma receiving the coldest ratings, Africans the warmest, and male-only name groups evaluated less favorably than female-only or mixed groups. Importantly, implicit and explicit

measures were modestly but consistently linked: higher IAT D-scores correlated with colder ratings on a feeling thermometer and heightened perceptions of intergroup threat. Taken together, these findings highlight the persistence of both implicit and explicit prejudice across diverse European contexts. They also demonstrate the value of combining implicit measures with explicit self-reports in order to capture a fuller picture of intergroup bias. The present study explores the persistence of both implicit and explicit prejudice across Europe, emphasising the necessity of employing multi-method, intersectional, and cross-national approaches to comprehensively understand discrimination.

Admit or conceal? A comparison of explicit anti-Arab prejudice measures with a list experiment and an implicit association test

Susanne Veit, DeZIM Institute, Jörg Dollmann, DeZIM Institute, Jannes Jacobsen, DeZIM Institute, Richard Traunmüller, University Mannheim, Elli Zey, DeZIM Institute

Measuring prejudice remains a persistent challenge in psychology and the social sciences. Explicit self-report measures are vulnerable to social desirability bias, while indirect methods such as the Implicit Association Test (IAT) face criticism for low correlations with explicit measures and limited test-retest reliability. List experiments aim to mitigate social desirability effects but only provide group-level estimates, reducing their precision and utility for individual-level analysis. Given these methodological trade-offs, no single instrument can fully capture the complexity of prejudice. Nonetheless, few studies have systematically compared these approaches within the same population. This study ($N \approx 3,000$) addresses that gap by empirically comparing three types of survey-based instruments for measuring anti-Arab prejudice using data from the German DeZIM.panel, a probability-based sample of adults in Germany. We employed explicit self-reports (Feeling Thermometer, Modern Racism Scale, Anti-Arab Prejudice Scale), a List Experiment (with a sensitive item from the Anti-Arab Prejudice Scale), and an Implicit Association Test (IAT). All three approaches identified the presence of anti-Arab prejudice and showed significant intercorrelations. As expected, the IAT indicated a higher estimated prevalence of anti-Arab bias than explicit self-reports. However, contrary to expectations, the List Experiment yielded a lower prevalence estimate than the corresponding explicit item, suggesting potential limitations in its sensitivity or design. By providing a direct empirical comparison of widely used instruments within a single dataset, this study contributes to both the methodological and substantive literature. It offers critical insights into the strengths and limitations of common prejudice measures and informs future research on anti-Arab attitudes and broader issues of prejudice in Germany and comparable contexts.

Disentangling Racial Colorblindness: The Role of Political Conservatism and the Acceptance of Migration in Color- and Power-Evasion

Mary Lam, Bielefeld University

The Color-Blind Racial Ideology serves as a central theory of Racial Colorblindness (RCB) (Neville et al., 2013) and describes RCB as a construct consisting of two dimensions: Color-Evasion (CE) and Power-Evasion (PE). CE describes the “denial of racial differences” and “[n]ot seeing race” (Neville et al., 2013, p. 455 and 456, respectively). Therefore, CE appears to be a fair strategy, as it views and treats everyone regardless of their cultural background. PE describes the denial or minimization of racism. However, some studies either conceptualize

RCB solely in terms of CE and disregard the political ambiguity of CE, which can be interpreted both as liberal or racist (Wang, 2024; Plaut et al., 2018) while others do not differentiate between CE and PE at all. Therefore, the aims of this present study were (1) to examine the differentiation between CE and PE in their social psychological predictors and (2) to investigate how political conservatism is associated with CE and PE. Additional analyses addressed the extent to which the acceptance of migration plays a role within the framework of RCB. Based on structural equation modeling (N = 1.007 German participants), preliminary results indicate that both CE and PE are positively associated with political conservatism, although only CE negatively predicts the acceptance of migration. This implies that individuals who deny race tend to oppose migration more strongly than those who deny racism, given that CE, as a seemingly neutral belief, can serve to legitimize exclusionary positions. Therefore, these results underscore that not seeing race should be given greater consideration when examining the attitudinal foundations of anti-immigrant sentiment.

Session A02: Discrimination, inequality and anti-sexism interventions

Does Discrimination Lead to Spillover or Separation? An Analysis of Institutional Trust in Police and Judiciary among Immigrants and Their Descendants in Germany

Christian Czymara, Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute, Sabrina J. Mayer, University of Bamberg, Lisa Walter, University of Bamberg

"While previous research has shown that discrimination experiences can erode trust in specific institutions, less is known about whether such effects are confined to the directly involved institution or can also spill over to others. Building on previous work on discrimination and trust in the police, we investigate the reciprocal relationship between experiences involving the police and trust in the judiciary, and vice versa. Citizens place particular importance on impartiality and fair treatment in these institutions, so when they are perceived as biased, it can seriously erode both general social trust and broader social cohesion.

We chose these two institutions for two reasons: Both are clearly distinct institutions with different tasks and belong to different powers – one is part of the executive, the other part of the judiciary. Nonetheless, they are often perceived as a combined law-and-order unit. Trust in the police and the legal system correlate moderately to strongly across Europe ($r = 0.5-0.7$, ESS Wave 8), which shows both a connected perception but also their distinctiveness.

Drawing on longitudinal data from the DeZIM.panel, we examine (1) whether discrimination by the police affects trust in the judiciary, (2) whether discrimination by judicial actors undermines trust in the police, and (3) how these spillover effects vary across minority groups.

While previous research has largely focused on trust in the police, our panel data enable us to examine how discriminatory experiences affect trust in both the judiciary and the police over time, and whether discrimination experiences have short- and medium-term effects on

trust. This perspective is not only of theoretical and political importance (given the judiciary's role as a potential remedy for injustices caused by the police) but also highly relevant for psychological research, as it illuminates how perceived injustice affects trust in institutions, which can undermine democratic legitimacy."

From Premium to Penalty: The Headscarf Effect in Hiring Decisions

Juliane Wesselmann, Trinity College Dublin, Susanne Veit, DeZIM Institute

"Research on hiring discrimination frequently finds that women enjoy higher callback rates than men, particularly in service-sector jobs. Yet this "female premium" varies across applicant groups and occupational contexts. This paper examines when gender-based advantages persist, shrink, or reverse by analyzing the intersection of gender, migration background, cultural distance, and Muslim religious signaling. Using data from the ADIS correspondence experiment (Veit & Yemane 2018), we analyze approximately 3,500 randomized applications sent to real vacancies in four gender-balanced occupations in Germany (reception, sales, cooking, industrial clerical work). Applications systematically varied gender, migrant background, cultural distance, headscarf presence, and Muslim organizational engagement, while keeping qualifications constant.

Preregistered multilevel logistic regressions confirm an overall female premium, particularly in high customer-contact jobs. However, this advantage is not uniform: it is weaker among applicants with a migration background, declines with greater cultural distance to Germany, and disappears for women who signal Muslim identity by wearing a headscarf, and here even reverses into a disadvantage. Customer-facing jobs amplify these patterns, with headscarf-wearing women experiencing the strongest penalties.

Together, these results demonstrate that gendered advantages in hiring are conditional and shaped by multiple intersecting identities. The study contributes to research on intersectional discrimination by showing how gender, ethnicity, and religious signalling interact to produce heterogeneous outcomes in recruitment. These findings highlight that gender equality in access to employment cannot be understood without considering cultural distance and visible markers of minority identity."

Holding the door – and the power? Perceived System Threat and Approval of Benevolent Sexist Men Among Women

Natalie Butterwei, Bielefeld University, Leon Walter, Bielefeld University

Previous research has shown that women generally rate hostile-sexist profiles of men negatively (Becker & Wright, 2011). However, the perceived attractiveness of benevolent-sexist men is not yet understood (Bohner et al., 2010; Gul & Kupfer, 2018). Although benevolent sexism could undermine women's societal position and reinforce gender inequality, System Justification Theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994) may provide an explanation for why women may still find benevolent sexist men attractive: Perceived system threat may function as trigger for system justification and lead women to defend the status quo (i.e., approve of benevolent-sexist men). This raises the question of whether greater perceptions of societal threats (i.e., by the climate crisis, fear of war or rising costs of living) may lead

women to find benevolent-sexist men more appealing. This study will examine how perceived system threat may influence women's romantic preferences in two online studies imitating the environment of modern dating apps. Additionally, it will also investigate if a woman's self-identification as a feminist (SIF) may alter the evaluation of benevolent-sexist and non-sexist profiles. Findings of two studies with young women (aged 18-40) who are romantically interested in men will be presented. Study 1 will investigate whether higher perceived system threat is associated with women's approval of benevolent-sexist dating profiles (compared to egalitarian profiles). Study 2 will be a 2 (system threat: high system threat vs. control) x 2 (profile types: benevolent-sexist vs. egalitarian) between-subjects experiment. In both studies, attractiveness, desire to date and likeability will be assessed, and SIF will be included as a potential moderator. As men and women in Western nations drift apart ideologically, this project attempts to derive possible implications for gender relations in the ongoing poly-crisis.

Remembering Hanau – How remembering right-wing extremism impacts political trust and justice-related satisfaction

Whitney Agunyego, Leibniz Institute for Psychology (ZPID), Sarah Scharding, Trier University, Marlene Altenmüller, Leibniz Institute for Psychology (ZPID)

Germany is internationally regarded – and likes to present itself – as world champion of remembrance culture. It has been described as successful in handling the atrocities committed during the Holocaust and its fascist Nazi past, learning from it, and striving to prevent it from happening again. However, for years racist and antisemitic attacks as well as right-wing politics are on the rise in Germany and many migrant communities feel unsafe and unprotected by German authorities. Relatives of victims of racist attacks such as in Hanau on February 19th, 2020, where a right-wing extremist killed nine racialized individuals, are often left to build a remembrance culture on their own (#SayTheirNames: Gökhan Gültekin, Said Nesar Hashemi, Mercedes Kierpacz, Sedat Gürbüz, Vili Viorel Păun, Fatih Saraçoğlu, Hamza Kurtović, Ferhat Unvar, and Kaloyan Velkov). Thus, the question arises whether the successful handling of past fascism extends to the present. In our work, we examine the impact of perceiving Germany as successful (versus failing) in dealing with its present-day right-wing extremism on attitudes towards public authorities. Thereby, this work presents a conceptual replication and extension of Kazarovytska et al. (2022) who evaluated the consequences of perceived success versus failure in dealing with a perpetrator past for demand for closure. More specifically, we experimentally investigate how perceived success versus failure in dealing with and remembering right-wing attacks such as in Hanau can impact trust in political institutions and justice-related satisfaction. Moreover, we test how these perceptions might differ depending on minority vs. majority group membership. In sum, our work contributes to the psychological understanding of remembrance culture and its role for societal cohesion.

Women's confrontation to sexism: Utilizing the confronting prejudiced responses model and the theatre of the oppressed methods for practicing confrontation

Sila Kaya, Middle East Technical University

"Sexism is a detrimental issue that permeates various areas of women's lives. One of the effective ways of combatting sexism is confrontation which has been shown to diminish future prejudiced behavior of perpetrators, increase well-being of the targets and help set new norms for a less prejudiced environment. Current thesis utilized the Confronting Prejudiced Responses (CPR) Model with five steps: determining that the witnessed response is prejudiced, assessing the urgency of confronting, feeling personal responsibility to confront, deciding how to respond and taking action. The CPR scale, developed in line with the recommendations of this model, was adapted to Turkish in the first study, which revealed three subfactors: Detection and Emergency, Cost, Responsibility and Action. Building on this framework the thesis developed a four-week intervention program in the second study using Theatre of the Oppressed methods, coined by Augusto Boal, which use interactive drama techniques to explore and challenge social oppression, to help women practice different responses to sexism. A total of 29 participants ($M_{age} = 23.48$, $SD = 4.12$) took part in the program. Using the adapted CPR Scale and the Self-Silencing to Sexism Scale (SSTS), participants' progresses were assessed. Wilcoxon signed-rank tests revealed significant increases for the CPR subfactors, indicating the effectiveness of the intervention in enhancing women's capability to confront sexism. Semi-structured interviews held with participants further supported these findings, highlighted the positive outcomes of the intervention and provided valuable suggestions for future implementations.

Session A03: Extremism and radicalization (attitudes + development)

Cognitive pathways of political extremism and their consequences for democratic support

Sebastian Jungkunz, University of Bamberg and University of Bonn, Marc Helbling, University of Mannheim, Airo Hino, Waseda University, Hikaru Nukui, Waseda University, Nina Osenbrügge, University of Mannheim

Research on political extremism has relied heavily on explicit self-reports of anti-democratic attitudes, yet such measures systematically underestimate extremism due to social desirability, strategic self-presentation, and preference falsification. We develop a dual-process framework of political extremist attitudes that distinguishes between explicitly endorsed, deliberative judgments and implicitly held, automatically activated evaluations. Building on this framework, we theorize and demonstrate attitude dissociation—systematic incongruence between implicit and explicit extremist attitudes—and introduce a four-fold typology: True Extremists (high implicit, high explicit), Latent Extremists (high implicit, low explicit), Performative Extremists (low implicit, high explicit), and Democratic Citizens (low implicit, low explicit). Drawing on three large-scale studies across seven democracies ($N=16,600$), we combine a novel Implicit Association Test of political extremism with validated explicit measures. We find substantial shares of Latent and Performative Extremists across contexts, indicating that extremism is both more prevalent and more complex than self-reports alone suggest. Dissociation arises through two pathways: motivational suppression (deliberate concealment of extremist views to avoid social costs) and

preconscious filtering (dispositional differences in impulse regulation and cognitive style). Crucially, we show that dissociation has significant political consequences. Latent Extremists, despite outwardly endorsing democratic norms, exhibit elevated sympathy for extremist citizens and greater willingness to support anti-democratic leaders when democratic commitments are challenged. Performative Extremists, by contrast, express radical views without implicit endorsement, reflecting strategic or identity-driven signaling. By conceptualizing dissociation as both a psychological mechanism and a driver of political behavior, our study provides a new framework for understanding how hidden extremism shapes democratic stability.

Justifying Violence as a Mean to Protect Democracy

Rebekka Kesberg, University of Sussex

Violent attacks against politicians are increasing across European democracies and are often condemned in public as unacceptable. But what if the victims are perceived as a threat to democracy? We explore this question across 3 experimental studies and a qualitative study of U.K. online newspaper comment sections. In three experiments, participants (total $\sim N = 1,200$) served as jury members on a fictional court case in which supporters of a political party were harmed. Participants indicated the appropriate length of punishment and the moral acceptability of the crime. In line with ingroup favoritism, moral acceptability was lower when their in-group was attacked compared to an out-group. We found no ingroup favoritism for length of punishment. However, perceived democratic threat of the victims impacted moral acceptability and length of punishment. Moral acceptability increased and length of punishment decreased when the victims were seen as a threat to democracy. The analyses of the most popular reactions in the online comment section to articles about real-life attacks ($N \sim 1,500$) complete these findings highlighting that individuals use concerns about democracy as both a means to justify and condemn violence. Predominately, people condemned the attacks emphasizing that, independence of politicians' political views, violence is not acceptable in a democracy. However, individuals also mentioned that some politicians are a threat to democracy and engage in victim-blaming.

Cyberhate Among War-Affected Ukrainian Adolescents

Julia Levin, University of Hamburg

This study investigates cyberhate among Ukrainian adolescents during active warfare ($N = 4,160$, ages 10–25; March–June 2024), situating digital aggression within the broader context of political violence and collective trauma. Using structural equation modeling, we examined the victim–perpetrator cycle, coping mechanisms, and motivational dynamics underlying cyberhate perpetration. Findings demonstrate that both cyberbullying and cyberhate victimization strongly predicted subsequent perpetration, underscoring the role of social learning processes in conflict environments. Male participants exhibited significantly higher perpetration rates, though residence in active war zones did not directly predict perpetration, suggesting that exposure to collective violence exerts its effects primarily through interpersonal victimization rather than contextual proximity alone. Motivational analyses revealed revenge as the central mediator linking victimization to perpetration, highlighting retaliatory dynamics consistent with conflict escalation models in political psychology.

Proactive motivations such as entertainment and social reward, while correlated with victimization, did not predict perpetration directly. Coping mechanisms such as social support seeking and technical strategies offered weak or nonsignificant protection, particularly for females, despite higher reported usage. This suggests that in contexts of pervasive hostility and war-related stress, adaptive coping strategies may lose their protective function. Overall, results point to a self-reinforcing cycle of online aggression in which revenge motivation dominates, traditional coping is undermined, and gendered pathways to aggression emerge. The findings implicate that interventions in conflict-affected populations must prioritize prevention of initial victimization, address revenge-based motivations, and recognize the limited efficacy of individual-level coping under conditions of collective trauma and politicized hostility. Understanding digital aggression as an extension of political conflict underscores the urgent need for conflict-sensitive, gender-responsive strategies to disrupt cycles of online hate.

Comparing predictive models of political engagement and radicalization among adolescents: A preliminary look at an ongoing longitudinal study

Julia Reiter, University of Vienna

As children enter adolescence, their understanding of society and their place in it begins to expand, and they develop political views and ideas about whether and how they might participate in shaping society. This decision process may lead to disengagement and political apathy, democratic engagement, or indeed radicalized engagement that is marked by support for undemocratic, violent means. Across disciplines (psychology, political science, and criminology), different theoretical frameworks are used to explain what turns adolescents towards versus away from radicalization – e.g., the quest for significance model, the uncertainty-identity-model, a justice seeking and unfairness judgement model, a criminological model based on general strain theory, and a gender-identification based model. This talk presents data from the first three waves of a longitudinal study running from 2024 – 2026 (6 waves total) in five Austrian states (Vienna, Upper Austria, Carinthia, Burgenland, and Salzburg). 1616 students in the 8th grade of different school types (Mage = 13.97 years, SD = .88 years, 49 % female / 48 % male / 4 % other) participated in the first wave of data collection in spring of 2024, with the second wave taking place in November and December of 2024 and the third wave in March and April of 2025. Using one lesson in school to participate in the study, students filled in a survey containing various age-adjusted measures of predictors pertaining to the above-mentioned explanatory models. This talk presents preliminary analyses of the distribution and prevalence of these predictors in the sample and their relations to different political attitudes and behavioral outcomes, such as voting intentions, attitudes towards voting, engagement in collective action, and support of radicalized and violent political means.

Session A04: Political violence, war and conflict communication

Can Experts Afford Emotion? The Effect of Emotional and Uncivil Language on Public Perceptions of the Russo-Ukrainian War

George N. Georgarakis, University of Vienna, Vera Axyonova, University of Birmingham

Expert communication plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion on international crises, yet little is known about how variations in expert rhetoric influence public perceptions and policy support. This study investigates the effects of emotional and uncivil expert language on public perceptions of experts, message evaluations, and support for Ukraine in times of war. Using a survey experiment (N = 1,068) conducted in the United States, we randomly assigned participants to expert statements featuring neutral, emotional, or uncivil rhetoric. Our findings demonstrate that uncivil language significantly diminishes perceptions of expert competence and credibility, whereas emotional language enhances engagement and slightly improves expert evaluations. However, none of the treatments meaningfully altered support for Ukraine, suggesting that attitudes toward the war remain entrenched. These results highlight the reputational risks of incivility, the persuasive potential of emotional appeals, and the limits of expert rhetoric in shifting long-standing foreign policy attitudes. The findings have broad implications for expert credibility, crisis communication, and public diplomacy in international conflicts.

Conflict Styles in the Middle East

Christoph Hahn, Psychological University Berlin, Siegfried Preiser, Psychological University Berlin

"The terrorist attacks by HAMAS on October 7, 2023, mark an escalation of violence. They affect the lives of millions of people in the region and have an impact on international politics and societies worldwide. These events are part of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that involves multiple dimensions and has not been sustainably resolved.

This conflict has been examined mostly from religious, historical, and socio-cultural perspectives. Its psychological dimension has received comparatively less attention. This study examines to what extent conflict styles from the private sphere are associated with attitudes towards political conflict management in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

According to the theory of political socialization, children first gain fundamental values and norms through the context of family (Preiser, 1994). In the secondary part of political socialization that starts in adolescence, people are increasingly confronted with concrete political information and attitudes that contribute to the development of a political identity (Reinders, 2016).

Therefore, with the support of Israelis and Palestinians and experts from various fields, a German questionnaire assessing political views towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was developed. In a preliminary investigation, it was presented to N = 140 participants and then analyzed using factor analysis. After modification and translation into Arabic and Hebrew, it was carried out alongside the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II-C) to measure private conflict styles in Israel, in the West Bank and in Germany. A total number of N = 433 people took part in the main investigation.

Political conflict facets followed a pattern similar to that of the private conflict facets measured by the ROCI-II-C. Moreover, the hypothesized associations between conflict styles in the private and political spheres were largely confirmed across the full sample. Most of

these correlations were significantly positive, suggesting a partial overlap in how individuals approach interpersonal and political conflict."

Democratic Costs of Politicizing Violent Events: Evidence from Slovakia

Tadeas Cely, Aarhus University, Miroslav Nemcok, University of Oslo, Michal Toth, Masaryk University, Peter Spac, Masaryk University

Diverging from longstanding norms, instances of political violence are increasingly instrumentalized by elites as political tools. Despite growing scholarship on political violence, the societal consequences of its politicization remain understudied. This paper examines the unprecedented 2024 assassination attempt on Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, which—despite no evidence linking the attacker to any party—was heavily politicized by governing politicians. Using a nationally representative survey with an embedded experiment ($N = 1,358$), we investigate how partisans internalize such rhetoric and whether it intensifies political animosity, weakens democratic norms, and fuels support for violence. We find that individuals adopting the rhetoric are evaluated far more negatively by out-partisans, while co-partisans express only somewhat reduced sympathy toward them. We also observe increased support for restricting the free speech of such individuals. Encouragingly, however, we find no evidence that politicizing a single violent event normalizes or increases support for political violence among Slovak respondents.

Do left-authoritarian attitudes affect populist attitudes? Evidence from 7 Western European countries

Philipp Hoffmann, University of Bamberg

"While individuals who hold a mix of economic and cultural positions can usually find political parties that represent their views (e.g., right-authoritarian or left-libertarian parties), those with left-wing economic views and right-wing cultural stances are often overlooked. In many Western European countries, such left-authoritarian parties are notably absent, even though a significant portion of the electorate holds these views. This left-authoritarian supply and representational gap leads to lower turnout, less democratic satisfaction, and lower political trust. In addition, while current research shows that poor representation affects populist attitudes, it mainly focuses on the absence of specific parties or the socio-economic dimension of attitudes. Thus, this paper broadens the literature by examining how the absence of representation for individuals with left-authoritarian views shapes populist attitudes. Since these individuals are often neglected by political parties, this underrepresentation should directly lead to populist attitudes. As the will of the people is not adequately addressed alongside anti-establishment sentiments ("the unrepresentative elite"), left-authoritarian individuals are more likely to develop populist attitudes. Additionally, as left-authoritarians tend to be politically disaffected, the link between their views and populism is likely mediated by political dissatisfaction, which is itself a driver of populist sentiment.

Using panel and longitudinal data from 2009 to 2025, this study compares countries with (Finland, Netherlands, Sweden) and without (Austria, Germany, Spain, United Kingdom) a left-authoritarian party. The findings support the expectations: in countries without a left-authoritarian party, left-authoritarian attitudes are positively associated with populist

sentiments, while no such effect is observed in countries with a left-authoritarian party. Additionally, in the absence of a left-authoritarian party, political disaffection mediates the relationship between left-authoritarian views and populist attitudes. These effects are specific to left-authoritarian individuals and do not extend to right-libertarians, right-authoritarians, and left-libertarians."

Session B01: Democracy, participation and civic development

Against Voting: A Mixed-Methods Analysis of Anti-Voting Meanings

Carolina Plescia, University of Vienna, Ming M. Boyer, VU Amsterdam

While much is known about what drives people to vote, a citizen-perspective on voting is often missing. Against a backdrop of declining turnouts and democratic backsliding, this paper aims to illuminate the psychological underpinnings of what people dislike about voting – and what such anti-voting attitudes and cognitive representations relate to.

Using answers of 23,828 citizens from 12 highly diverse countries, this paper uses a mixed-methods approach to analyze the question "'what does 'voting' mean to you?'" The initial aim is to create a citizen-perspective classification of anti-voting meanings. These may include both existing psychological interpretations of voting (lack of political efficacy, political disillusionment, lack of political interest, perceived costs of voting) as well as novel cognitive and affective perspectives inductively gathered from citizens' own words. In a second step, these meanings are quantitatively related to institutional and individual factors within our unique dataset.

To achieve this ambitious project, any answer that is negative about the act of voting is manually coded by several coders. Subsequently, these answers (N = 1775) are inductively analyzed through a grounded theory approach to investigate what citizens dislike about voting – creating a novel classification of anti-voting meanings. A final round of quantitative coding of this novel classification enables the quantitative analysis in relation to other variables in the dataset, such as societal position, level of democracy of the country or political preferences.

Can Volunteer Services Turn You into a 'Good Citizen'? Evidence from a Three-Wave Longitudinal Study on National and International Volunteer Services

Luise Hamdani, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Jule Specht, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

"Every year, roughly 100,000 young German adults participate in a year-long state-run volunteer service taking place either in Germany or abroad. An explicit goal of these services is not just the performance of the social, ecological, political, or cultural work itself, but also the personality and civic development of the volunteers. So far, little is known about whether volunteer services might attract individuals who already are democratic, engaged, competent citizens (selection effects) and/or whether volunteering helps young adults to grow in these qualities (socialization effects). In this preregistered study, we collected three-wave longitudinal data across one year in three groups of young German adults (N = 1,498): (1) Individuals doing a volunteer service in Germany (e.g., "Freiwilliges Soziales/Ökologisches Jahr"), (2) individuals doing an equivalent volunteer service abroad (e.g., via "weltwärts"), and (3) a demographically similar control group not doing any such service. We used logistic

regressions to test selection effects and latent growth models to assess socialization effects, always comparing all volunteers to the control group and, in a second step, national to international volunteers. We measured nine civic competencies, including political engagement norms and intentions, political efficacy, social justice attitudes, and political knowledge.

Results showed that volunteers started out with similar or even lower scores in civic competencies compared to the control group, and also did not show a more positive development of these outcomes over the course of their service. Across the volunteer groups, participants of international volunteer services had higher scores in all civic competencies before starting their service and a more positive trajectory in internal political efficacy, political knowledge, and gender equality attitudes compared to national volunteers. Overall, our findings show that volunteers do not improve in their civic competencies due to volunteer services. Thus, these services need to be adapted to achieve their stated goals."

Deliberation or Cognitive Bias? The Mechanism Behind Simultaneous Referendum Proposals

Klaudia Wegschaider, University of Vienna

Prior research shows that simultaneous proposals increase popular support for reform. Specifically, if two similar proposals are on the ballot, the more moderate proposal receives a higher vote share than if that same proposal is presented individually. Yet, the mechanism behind this effect is contested. Is it the result of cognitive bias or deliberation triggered by the added choice? The answer is crucial for deciding whether simultaneous proposals should, in future, become a more widely used format for referendums. With a set of survey experiments, I assess the impact of simultaneous proposals on a range of topical policy areas—climate, redistribution, integration—and test for the underlying mechanism. Finally, I assess the impact of this design on various additional outcomes.

Facing a Dark Future: Young People's Future Anxiety and Political Attitudes

Olaf Borghi, Royal Holloway University of London and University of London, Katharina Lawall, University of Reading, Kaat Smets, Royal Holloway University of London, Manos Tsakiris, Royal Holloway University of London and University of London

Amidst multiple crises, reports indicate that young people are anxious about the future. Yet how future anxiety relates to adolescents' political attitudes remains largely unknown, presenting a critical research gap in times of democratic dissatisfaction. Across three studies, we present important insights into the relationships between young people's feelings about the future and their political attitudes. In a first cross-sectional study of UK adolescents ($N_1 = 988$), we explored associations between future anxiety and political ideology, support for authoritarian or democratic principles, and political participation. Against common narratives, our results indicated that young people most anxious about the future were also most supportive of democratic principles and most willing to participate in politics. However, follow-up analyses revealed notable interactions with gender and emotion regulation abilities. We present extended replications of these findings in a second cross-sectional sample of younger UK adolescents ($N_2 \approx 1000$; ages 12–17). Finally, we will present first insights from a pre-registered survey experiment ($N_3 \approx 1000$; ages 16–21) using emotionally

evocative social media posts to investigate how different feelings about the future—anxiety, optimism, or an emotionally neutral control—affect young people's pro-democratic attitudes and political participation. Together, these studies provide an important empirical foundation on the psychological determinants of pro-democratic attitudes and political development in times of multiple crises, focusing on young people growing up amid these crises but also holding the potential to initiate societal change.

Session B02: Institutional legitimacy and trust in science/ experts (incl. AI trust)

Better together? The impact of public participation on perceived legitimacy of science and politics

Katharina Teresa Dürmeier, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich and Leibniz Institute for Psychology (ZPID), Mario Gollwitzer, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich, Marlene Sophie Altenmüller, Leibniz Institute for Psychology (ZPID)

"Societal institutions such as politics, the media, and science rely on the public's acceptance. Today's populist narratives often mount direct challenges to these institutions, risking the gradual erosion of their perceived legitimacy as societal authorities. While political decision-making processes in democracies base their legitimacy on citizen participation, decision-making processes in science typically remain more insulated from the public. Citizen Science – that is, the inclusion of non-experts in the research process – aims to overcome this segregation and, thus, to increase the public's perception of the scientific system as trustworthy and legitimate.

Empirical evidence for the notion that citizen participation increases legitimacy perceptions is sparse. In three studies, we investigate how citizen participation affects the perceived legitimacy of working groups in science and politics. In Study 1 (N = 373), we found no significant effect of citizen participation on the perceived legitimacy of a scientific project; however, perceptions of the research team's trustworthiness significantly decreased when laypersons participated. Similarly, Study 2 (N = 496) did not show any significant effect of citizen participation on the perceived legitimacy of a scientific or political project. Here, trustworthiness remained unaffected by public participation in both scientific and political projects. Thus far, the findings challenge the idea that citizen participation increases the perceived legitimacy of (expert) groups in societal institutions. For trust, public participation might even be counterproductive. We are currently conducting a third study to further scrutinize these findings. "

Extended Contact Reduces Climate Skepticism Among Evangelicals

Leonie Huddy, Stony Brook University, Art Aron, Stony Brook University, Steve Spector, Stony Brook University, Abigail Woodfield, Stony Brook University, Martin Meyer, Yale University

Public climate skepticism poses a problem for policy makers intent on finding solutions to the climate crisis. Past research has focused on two broad types of interventions to improve the acceptance of human-caused climate change: (1) cognitive / informational and (2) social / emotional. The transmission of accurate scientific information typically leads to minimal belief change, increasing research interest in socio-emotional interventions that can leverage

deeper psychological factors to bypass traditional "knowledge deficit" barriers. In the current research, we assess the effects of a combined social and informational intervention on climate skepticism among American evangelical Christians. In two studies (combined $N=1,200$), evangelical climate skeptics are exposed to an experimentally altered video that depicts extended contact between a climate scientist, who discusses the scientific consensus on climate change, and a friend. In one condition the friend is described as an evangelical Christian and in the other condition he is not. In both studies, the video markedly reduces climate skepticism and increases trust in scientists. There is evidence of heightened belief change and trust in the evangelical condition mediated by enhanced feelings of closeness to the climate scientist, but the evangelical condition also generates a backlash. We discuss the practical implications of our findings and assess the power of extended contact to effectively convey scientific evidence on contentious issues such as climate change.

Building Trust in Political Science: Transparency and Relevance More Than Fixing Bias

Tadeas Cely, Aarhus University, Andrew Roberts, Northwestern University

Political science—especially in emerging contexts—tends to be among the least trusted scientific disciplines. Evidence on the sources of, and remedies for, this trust deficit is scarce and rarely tailored to political science. We also know little about political scientists' awareness of the problem and their perceptions of shortcomings in their own field. Using a representative survey of the Czech public ($N = 1,518$) and a parallel survey of political scientists ($N = 286$), we examine levels and sources of trust in the discipline from the perspectives of both publics and experts. Despite generally low trust, we find only weak associations with perceptions of ideological bias and policy influence. Descriptive analyses likewise indicate little bias; experts overestimate it. Distrust is strongest among older, lower-income, and anti-Western respondents. In an embedded experiment, we show that open-science practices and methodological rigor significantly increase the perceived trustworthiness of political science research. Our findings underscore the need to build relevance, rigor, and transparency, and suggest that ideological bias may be a less central driver of distrust.

Taking advantage: Using scientific authority for political statements unrelated to one's expertise

Lena Zohm, Leibniz Institute for Psychology (ZPID), Marlene Altenmüller, Leibniz Institute for Psychology (ZPID)

Scientists and scientific arguments are granted an elevated position of (epistemic) authority in societal discourses and support for policymaking based on scientific evidence is generally high. This is grounded in scientists' role as reliable knowledge providers for their – often quite narrow – areas of expertise. Thus, if scientists publicly make political statements unrelated to their specific expertise in their role as experts (e.g., in media interviews), this might be seen as morally wrong trespassing for one's own gain: exploiting epistemic authority for advancing political stances. We are currently investigating how using scientific authority for political expressions plays into public perceptions of trustworthiness, morality, and persuasiveness. We manipulate static roles (scientist vs. layperson) and active role-taking (scientific vs. private) in a 2×2 between-subject experiment: Participants read a fictitious

interview on the psychological consequences of climate change with either a scientific expert (professor for clinical psychology) or an informed layperson (psychotherapist; i.e., the static role manipulation). In both versions, the interviewee closes with a statement on climate politics that is unrelated to their specific expertise. While doing so they actively state whether they are speaking from scientific authority (e.g., "as a scientist...") or as a private citizen (i.e., the active role-taking manipulation). Participants indicate perceived interviewee's trustworthiness, moral judgment, and policy support. The results will shed light on potentially detrimental effects of using scientific authority in political expressions and yield insights into how scientists might still engage in political debates beyond their own expertise (e.g., by active role-switching).

Unequal Representation of Political Views in Generative AI: Ideological Polarisation and Democratic Sustainability in Germany.

Mohammad Mafizul, Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences

"This study will examine how unequal representation of political views in generative artificial intelligence (AI) may influence ideological polarisation and democratic sustainability in Germany. Although generative AI tools such as ChatGPT have become integral to information access, their political neutrality remains uncertain. Early evidence suggests that algorithmic systems privilege particular ideological perspectives, thereby shaping civic attitudes and public trust. The proposed research, with its potential to inform policy and ethical AI design, aims to assess whether such asymmetries in AI-generated content affect civic engagement and confidence in democratic institutions, with a specific focus on SDG 16 and the resilience of parliamentary democracy. The study's potential to contribute to the development of ethical AI guidelines and policy recommendations will inspire hope and optimism in the audience.

The study will adopt a mixed-methods design comprising three stages. First, a computational audit will be conducted to evaluate political bias across major generative AI models through a set of balanced prompts referencing key German political parties. Second, the study will perform a content analysis to identify ideological variations in stance, tone, and salience. Third, an experimental survey with German citizens will measure how exposure to politically skewed AI outputs influences perceptions of fairness, willingness to engage in civic activities, and trust in parliament. Semi-structured interviews with journalists and civil society actors will contextualise the quantitative findings.

This pre-analysis plan outlines the research framework, hypotheses, and analytical strategy to ensure transparency and replicability before data collection begins. The expected contribution lies in advancing theoretical and practical understanding of political bias in generative AI, developing a mitigation toolkit for ethical communication, and offering policy insights aligned with the EU AI Act. The project seeks to strengthen democratic resilience by integrating digital governance, civic responsibility, and ethical design for sustainable and peaceful societies. The findings of this study could inform the development of AI models that are more politically neutral and the formulation of policies that promote such neutrality. "

Session B03: Polarization and cognition I

"Canceled" people feel more affective polarized? Conjoint analysis

Monika Verbalyte, GESIS Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Ainė Ramonaitė, Vilnius University

"The goal of this conjoint experiment is to analyse the content of affective polarization in Lithuania, i.e. what political aspects specifically create animosity between people. Although party support is often emphasized in affective polarization research, it is neither the only nor necessarily the most important factor driving political hostility. Therefore, we examine a range of political issues alongside party support to determine which ones prevail when evaluated against each other in a conjoint experiment, e.g. views on the Soviet times, attitudes toward the legalisation of same-sex marriage, mandatory COVID-19 vaccination or military support for Ukraine. We expect that the most significant factor driving interpersonal animosity will be most pressing political issues in current Lithuanian politics, such as military support for Ukraine (a) and the legalization of same-sex marriage (b). Especially when presented in contrast and misaligned, party support is expected to be less important in generating hostility toward a person than the stance on specific political issues.

In a framework of theories of left-behindedness and resentment, or deep-rooted and chronic feeling of bitter anger about an unfair disadvantage in society paired with a sense of being in no power to overtly express and challenge this illegitimate harm, we also believe that people who think that they cannot freely express their political opinions in public are opposed and develop more hostility around progressive political agenda, i.e. same-sex marriage (a), and strongly dominant political positions, such as support for Ukraine (b), mandatory COVID-19 vaccination (c), support for the EU (d). They are also generally more affectively polarized than others."

Ambiguous Party Preferences: A Latent Class and Change Analysis of Propensity to Vote, Voting Behavior and the Interplay with Voters' Tolerance of Ambiguity in the Context of the 2025 German Federal Election

Moritz Leistner, Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg, Diana Steger, Leibniz Institute for Educational Trajectories, Gundula Zoch, Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg, Astrid Schuetz, Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg

Although Tolerance of Ambiguity has long been discussed as a stable personality trait that also impacts political attitudes, empirical evidence supporting this claim remains limited. Drawing on the 2025 German federal election, this preregistered study investigated the role of personality, in particular Tolerance of Ambiguity (ToA), in predicting party preferences, voting behavior, and changes in Propensity to Vote (PTV) over time. Based on 1020 participants from a repeated online-survey and latent class analysis (LCA), we identified six distinct voter profiles. Class membership based on voting intentions and reported post-election voting behavior was associated with differences in ToA dimensions and personality. Conservative and right-wing populist voters displayed higher Moral Absolutism but lower Discomfort with Ambiguity, Emotionality, and Openness than progressive voters. Our findings underscore the importance of ToA as a robust predictor of political orientation and voting behavior, while showing differential effects of ToA dimensions.

Dismantling the Political Sophistication Bias

Klara Steinmetz, TU Chemnitz

Research on political sophistication assumes that individuals who are highly politically sophisticated—meaning they possess a well-developed and differentiated belief system characterized by extensive political knowledge and cognitive engagement—are particularly prone to bias. This phenomenon, known as the political sophistication bias, suggests that such individuals are especially susceptible to motivated reasoning, thereby contributing to polarization and misperceptions—arguably major threats to democratic functioning.

Drawing on an extensive literature review, I offer a critical examination of the lack of theoretical conceptualization and the inconclusive operationalization of political sophistication. Consequently, I challenge the notion of the political sophistication bias and propose alternative explanations. Specifically, I argue that the observed bias can be better understood through research on political identity and motivated cognition, which together account for the effects of the “partisan brain.”

First, I analyze a longitudinal dataset collected during the 2024 U.S. presidential election campaign across four waves (NT1 = 900), examining the mediating role of partisanship on the relationship between political attention and interest—common indicators of political sophistication—and affective polarization.

In a second step, I conduct an experiment (N = 150) to further investigate the influence of partisanship on opinion formation processes, specifically regarding the subjective perception of being sufficiently informed. Using a fictional issue to exclude pre-existing opinions, I demonstrate that individuals feel adequately informed about a polarized topic as long as the information they receive aligns with their partisan beliefs—even when the information is presented in a one-sided manner. Overall, the project contributes to a more nuanced understanding of political cognition by integrating research on sophistication, identity, and motivated reasoning.

Do we agree to disagree? How opinion variation among in-groups can skew perceptions of ideological polarisation

Peter Steiglechner, Agostino Merico, Leibniz-Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT), Paul Smaldino, University of California Merced, Mirta Galesic, Complexity Science Hub, Henrik Olsson, Complexity Science Hub, Victor Møller Poulsen, Complexity Science Hub

There is a widespread perception that society has been polarizing into groups with increasingly divergent opinions. Multiple studies have sought to quantify the degree of opinion divergence (or ideological polarization), typically relying on differences between self-reported opinions, and have reached mixed conclusions. We propose this inconsistency can be explained by the way individuals' subjective perceptions are shaped by their social identities. We introduce a formal framework to analyze opinion data that accounts for such asymmetric, dynamic perceptions. When members of an in-group become increasingly homogeneous on a given topic (that is, when the variance of opinions in that group decreases), they perceive deviant opinions as increasingly distant from their own. Consequently, these individuals may perceive greater polarization than an objective, neutral

observer would. Applying the framework to data on the opinions of Germans about climate change, we show that perceived polarization may depend as much on the dynamics of in-group variance as it does on actual opinion divergence in society. Moreover, we show that the direction of this effect may vary over time and across different partisan groups. Our framework offers an explanation why people might sometimes perceive higher levels of ideological polarization than surveys indicate, independent of social segregation, polarization-enforcing cognitive biases, or affect-driven attitudes towards out-groups.

From Parties to Issues: How Idiosyncratic Opinions and Issue-Based Identities Drive Partisan Animosity

Alexander Dalheimer, University of Vienna

Recent research shows that partisan animosity is driven not only by partisan identity but also by policy disagreements (Orr & Huber 2020; Dias & Lelkes 2022; Orr, Fowler & Huber 2023). A growing strand of work—termed issue-based affective polarization—argues that political identities can also form around policy issues (e.g., Hobolt & Tilley 2021; Rodon 2022; Wagner & Eberl 2024). Yet many voters hold idiosyncratic opinions: positions on different issues that cannot be easily reduced to ideological dimensions as they lack ideological consistency (Vivyan, Lauderdale & Hanretty, forthcoming). Because such opinions are rarely represented by existing parties, they may be especially likely to form the basis of issue identities (Hobolt & Tilley 2025). Existing research largely overlooks the role of these idiosyncratic opinions in shaping partisan animosity. This project addresses this gap in two ways. First, I use a dynamic-tailored conjoint design (Velez 2025) that allows respondents to identify the issues most salient to them—those most likely to serve as identity markers and sources of animosity. Second, I use a perception-based measure of in-party stances (to capture perceived representation), an issue-based identity scale, and a text-as-data approach that maps participants' positions onto ideological dimensions to assess idiosyncrasy. This design enables testing whether the effect of policy disagreements on partisan animosity is stronger among individuals with idiosyncratic opinions and issue-based identities.

Session B04: Polarization and cognition II

Cognitive Sophistication and Motivated Reasoning in Politically Motivated Contexts

Lara Grohmann, University of Würzburg, Fabian Hutmacher, University of Würzburg, Regina Reichardt, University of Regensburg, Christoph Mengelkamp, University of Würzburg

Prior research has suggested a stronger partisan bias for individuals with higher cognitive sophistication—presumably due to an enhanced ability to defend prior beliefs against challenging information. However, other studies either failed to replicate this polarizing effect of cognitive sophistication, demonstrated contradictory evidence—cognitive sophistication mitigating motivated reasoning—, or found mixed results. These mixed findings might be explained by different contextual influences. In general, individuals' reasoning may unconsciously and under the illusion of objectivity be directed by motivational goals other than to arrive at the most accurate judgment. One such motivational goal behind motivated reasoning may be to maintain a positive social identity and for that to protect the beliefs of

one's social group against contradictions (identity protective cognition account). This motivation—and the speculated supporting effect of cognitive sophistication—may thus be especially pronounced in contexts in which the challenged social identity is relevant to the reasoner's self-concept and particularly salient. Yet only one study experimentally examined this moderating role of political identity salience to date: whereas cognitively sophisticated individuals were more biased in the control condition, an instruction to explicitly reason through a 'political lens' reversed the effect—potentially by making individuals aware of their bias and suppress it. Hence, aim of the current study is to reexamine the hypothesized enhancing role of contextual identity salience on sophisticated motivated reasoning with a more subtle salience manipulation based on previous social identity research: a sample of US-Americans was randomly assigned to either reflect on their political identity or on their group membership as a smartphone (non)user. Motivated reasoning was operationalized as higher agreement with and higher evaluation of congenial compared to uncongenial arguments concerning climate change threat. Cognitive sophistication was measured with the Cognitive Reflection Test. Results of preregistered analyses will be presented and discussed at the conference.

Divided Empathy: Bias in Empathy Beliefs Between Political In-groups and Out-groups, and Its Shaping by Social Groups

Yufang Liao, Giorgia Silani, Claus Lamm, University of Vienna

"Empathy fosters supportive behaviors and strengthens connections between individuals. In political contexts, empathizing with others can influence political attitudes. However, people are often more motivated to empathize with their political ingroup than the outgroup, a bias that exacerbates polarization and group conflict.

Empathy beliefs (EBs) - the extent to which individuals consider empathizing with a target desirable - play a key role in political intergroup communication. This study examines (1) whether EBs are biased toward political ingroups, (2) how group beliefs shape these biases, and (3) the impact of biased EBs on behavior.

Two experiments were conducted, and the third experiment will be completed by November. Experiments 1 and 2 explored the effects of exposure to ingroup and outgroup EBs in general political contexts, while Experiment 3 replicated Experiment 1 using a real-life scenario involving tweets and comments. Participants, young British adults recruited via Prolific, were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: ingroup biased, outgroup biased, or unbiased. EBs were measured before and after exposure to the average EBs of their ingroup (Experiments 1 and 3) or outgroup (Experiment 2). In biased conditions, participants were informed that empathizing with one group was more desirable than the other, while the unbiased condition emphasized equal desirability.

Preliminary results show that (1) empathizing with the ingroup is more desired than with the outgroup, (2) participants exposed to ingroup biased EBs exhibit stronger biases than those in the unbiased condition, and (3) unbiased participants are more likely to engage with outgroup-related social media content.

This study highlights how biased empathy can be shaped by social environments, challenging the tradition of viewing empathy as a personality. The findings suggest strategies for fostering an unbiased empathy culture and reducing group polarization."

Ego Under Fire: The Role of Egocentrism and Identity in Adolescent Climate Conflict

Mykyta Kovalov, University of Vienna

Rampant incivility in climate debate often targets the person rather than the position, a pattern that may be especially consequential for adolescents - highly visible in climate activism and developmentally attuned to threats to the self. This preregistered study integrates Social Identity Theory with contemporary accounts of adolescent egocentrism to explain when and for whom uncivil personal attacks heighten affective polarization, operationalized as social distance. Two parallel survey experiments are fielded in Austria with (a) adolescents aged 15-22 (IP-PAD project) and (b) an adult general-population sample, enabling generational comparisons. Participants read a counterattitudinal message on the climate movement from a new neighbor that is randomly presented in either a civil disagreement or with an uncivil personal attack that questions the recipient's intellect, motives, and moral standing. The primary outcome measures willingness to invite, confide in, debate with, or entrust the new neighbor. Two moderators are tested: (a) climate-movement social-identity strength and (b) adolescent egocentrism (imaginary-audience and personal-fable components). The paper hypothesises that: (H1) incivility (vs. civility) increases social distance; (H2) this incivility effect is stronger among those with stronger climate identities; (H3) independent of identity strength, higher egocentrism magnifies the effect of uncivil attacks; and (H4) these effects are larger among adolescents than adults. The design, measures, and analysis plan are preregistered; data collection has not yet begun. Substantively, the study clarifies why adolescents - central actors in modern climate politics - may be uniquely vulnerable to polarizing effects of uncivil discourse and gauges whether these vulnerabilities exceed those in adulthood. Theoretically, it demonstrates how personal-attack incivility jointly activates group-based and self-protective mechanisms and introduces egocentrism as a developmentally grounded moderator of identity-protective cognition. Materials and code will be made publicly available upon completion.

From Complex Narratives to Complex Thinking: Testing How Complex Film Narration Shapes Cognitive Flexibility and Political Polarization

Mariken van der Velden, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Cynthia Cabañas, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Gaia Yonah, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Katalin Balint, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Elly Konijn, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

We live in a world marked by growing social, cultural, and political complexity. People often respond to this complexity with oversimplification, rigid ideologies, or withdrawal, rather than with constructive adaptation. Developing the capacity to tolerate ambiguity and respond flexibly to change is therefore critical for individual resilience and for the health of democratic societies struggling with political polarization. Narrational complexity in film offers a unique experimental window into these processes. Contemporary cinema increasingly embraces nonlinear, puzzle-like storytelling—seen in works such as *Memento*, *Arrival*, or *Westworld*—that invites viewers to grapple with disrupted causality and interpretive uncertainty. Building

on the Cognitive Playground hypothesis (Kiss & Willemsen, 2017; 2021) and the recently proposed TENCo model (Cabañas et al., 2025), we conceptualize engagement with narrational complexity as involving cognitive (inference, reflection), affective (confusion, curiosity), and appreciative (insight, awe) processes that may foster cognitive flexibility and tolerance for ambiguity. The present preregistered and well-powered experiment (N = 200, 80% power for medium effects) tests whether exposure to narrationally complex film segments can influence these cognitive dispositions and, in turn, affect political polarization. Participants view edited scenes from *Memento* (nonlinear, linear, and scaffolded versions) or a control film (*Still Alice*), providing a four-level manipulation of narrative complexity. Pre-post measures assess cognitive flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, and multiple facets of polarization, including divergent thinking about a societal issue, social sorting, and affective polarization. By combining process-level measures of cognitive engagement with individual differences in preference for narrative complexity, this study rigorously examines whether narrationally complex cinema can cultivate the flexible, reflective habits of mind needed to navigate social and political division.

Session C01: Digital media, influencers and online engagement

Aestheticizing Antifeminism: Investigating the Impact of Tradwife Content on Antifeminist Beliefs

Melanie Jacobsen, Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society

Against the backdrop of a documented rise in antifeminist as well as right-wing beliefs, scholars have increasingly investigated the role of social media in fostering such attitudes. Existing research has mostly focused on male online spaces and antifeminist beliefs of young men regularly frequenting them, and how these spaces might function as entry points into right-wing ideology. Far less attention has been directed toward female-dominated online spaces and their infiltration by seemingly apolitical actors promoting antifeminist and right-wing values. A particularly prominent example and growing trend within this context is that of so-called “tradwives”, a subculture of influencers who advocate for a traditional, stay-at-home lifestyle. Visually, their profiles are highly curated and often evoke an idealized, vintage aesthetic reminiscent of the 1950s, featuring muted tones, modest fashion, and nostalgic imagery. While their content may not be perceived as overtly political, its polished aesthetic may increase persuasive potential. Given that a large share of Instagram users is young, the increasing popularity of tradwives has thus raised concerns over a potential undoing of feminist advances within younger generations. Drawing on framing theory and media priming research, the present study therefore aims to investigate how visual and verbal cues in tradwife content influence young female social media users’ agreement with antifeminist messages. Using a 2x2 factorial between-subject design (tradwife vs. non-tradwife female influencer content; antifeminist hashtag present vs. absent), the study will test whether the more visually attractive tradwife content will lead to more antifeminism than less stylized content, and whether this association weakens when the content is framed in a clearly political manner through antifeminist hashtags. By investigating these dynamics, the study

contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how lifestyle influencers may function as subtle vehicles for ideological priming in female online spaces.

Building Credibility in the 2024 U.S. Election: How Partisan News Influencers Signal Expertise and Trustworthiness

Eva-Maria Vogel, University of Zurich, Morgan Wack, University of Zurich, Christian Pipal, University of Zurich, Frank Esser, University of Zurich

"The rapid rise of news influencers has disrupted political communication by challenging gatekeeping and agenda-setting roles and taking on functions once held by journalists and campaign surrogates. While prior research has examined credibility construction in the domains of marketing and branding, we know far less about how political news influencers establish credibility with their audiences and how such strategies resonate across partisan groups.

This study investigates the mechanisms through which news influencers construct source credibility, distinguishing between appeals to expertise and trustworthiness, and how these strategies shape audience responses.

First, we conducted a large-scale content analysis of all posts made by the fifty most-followed U.S. news influencers on Instagram, TikTok, and X during the eight weeks leading up to the 2024 U.S. Election. Using a validated coding scheme, we examine how credibility is signaled and whether influencers' reliance on expertise versus trustworthiness differs by the partisan leaning of the influencer. Second, we complement this supply-side analysis with a survey experiment. Participants will be recruited through Prolific and balanced across party lines. Stimuli are derived from the content analysis: we identify common prototypes of influencer communication and use them to generate prototypical stimuli through AI avatars. This design allows us to test whether expertise-based vs. trustworthiness-based appeals are differentially persuasive for Democrats and Republicans and whether these dynamics help explain influencers' success in spreading political information.

By integrating cross-platform data with experimental evidence, this project advances understanding of how credibility is constructed and contested in digital political communication. It contributes to debates on partisan psychology, political trust, and the mechanisms enabling influencers to maintain authority in polarized online environments."

Countering Misinformation in Messenger Communication: Psychological Inoculation Effects on Veracity Assessment and Sharing Intention — Roles of Critical Thinking and Motivated Reasoning

Amancaj Ancina, University of Duisburg-Essen, Dev Pandya, University of Duisburg-Essen, Nicole Krämer, University of Duisburg-Essen

Messenger services such as WhatsApp or Telegram have become increasingly relied on to exchange news and updates. At the same time, they enable rapid, unmoderated dissemination of misinformation. This preregistered experiment seeks to identify effective strategies for mitigating the negative influence of misinformation within messenger communication by testing inoculation-based interventions. According to inoculation theory, much like vaccinations, individuals can build resistance to persuasive misinformation by being

exposed to a weakened dose of it. Past research shows that inoculation techniques can reduce belief in and sharing of misinformation, whereas narrow-spectrum approaches seem to be more effective. However, the effects of these techniques in messenger communication remain underexplored. Moreover, assessing the effectiveness of more privacy-preserving techniques (e.g., broad-spectrum approaches) is important, as they do not depend on topic-specific content inspection. Using a messenger-like setting, we investigate whether psychological inoculation (“prebunking”) can reduce the perceived veracity of misinformation and intentions to share it. Participants (planned $N = 450$) are randomly assigned to one of three conditions: narrow-spectrum inoculation (topic-specific warning and refutation), broad-spectrum inoculation (general information about misinformation and manipulation techniques), or control (no warning). Each participant views a simulated group chat containing four thematically related messages (two true, two false) on various topics that are currently polarizing in Germany (e.g., climate change and migration) and then completes scales assessing perceived veracity and sharing intention. We additionally examine whether individual differences in critical-thinking ability and motivated reasoning moderate the effects of these inoculation measures. By investigating the effects of different inoculation techniques within messenger communication, we aim to provide insights into how the spread of misinformation can be countered and which individual factors enhance or reduce inoculation effectiveness.

Does Online Civic Engagement Lead to Negative Outcomes in Youth? Bidirectional Links with Social Well-Being, Perceived Polarization, and Sense of Control

Jan Šerek, Masaryk University, Michal Mužilk, Masaryk University

Civic engagement in online environments, particularly on social networking sites, is sometimes assumed to have negative consequences for individuals. Exposure to phenomena such as polarized political debates or hate speech may heighten perceptions of political polarization and contribute to various forms of alienation. Young people may be especially vulnerable in this regard, as they are still in the process of forming their civic and political identities. To address this issue, our study examines how online civic engagement relates to three potential outcomes – social well-being, perceived polarization, and sense of policy control – among late adolescents and young adults. We aim to investigate not only the magnitude of these effects but also their directionality. The data come from a seven-wave longitudinal study conducted in the Czech Republic ($N = 1,257$), in which participants aged 18-30 were followed for 1.5 years and repeatedly completed self-report questionnaires. We distinguished between passive and active dimensions of online civic engagement, each assessed with two items. Analyses employed random intercept cross-lagged panel models to disentangle between-person and within-person effects. The findings revealed no consistent within-person effects of either form of online engagement on social well-being, perceived polarization, or policy control. Reciprocal effects were also largely negligible, with the exception of a negative effect of social well-being on active online engagement. Overall, the results suggest that online civic engagement is not detrimental to the studied outcomes among youth, at least in the short term. If anything, it may provide a space for participation when young people experience lower levels of social integration and belonging.

Why do we listen to what we like? The role of political views and intellectual humility in selective exposure and avoidance when choosing climate change-related podcasts to listen to

Cornelia Sindermann, Charlotte Fresenius University, University of Stuttgart

"Podcasts are a popular medium to learn about important topics, including climate change adaptation and mitigation. While prior research suggests that individuals prefer podcasts consistent with their preexisting attitudes, i.e., negative or positive on climate change adaptation and mitigation, the role of individual differences in these preferences remains underexplored.

Based on theory and empirical research on (dis)confirmation biases and intellectual humility, we aimed at investigating the prevalence of selective exposure (seeking information consistent with one's attitudes) and selective avoidance (avoiding information inconsistent with one's attitudes) tendencies when selecting podcast episodes on climate change strategies. Moreover, we aimed at investigating how preexisting attitudes, attitude extremity, and intellectual humility relate to these tendencies. We hypothesized that intellectual humility would attenuate the positive relations of attitude extremity with selective exposure and avoidance.

In an online study, N=556 (53% men; quota sample) German adults completed validated scales on attitudes toward climate change adaptation and mitigation and intellectual humility. Additionally, participants were presented with descriptions of six podcast episodes adapted from Spotify. Half of the descriptions depicted a negative stance on climate change adaptation and mitigation, whereas the other half depicted a positive stance. Participants were asked to select all episodes they want to listen to.

Generalized linear models revealed that participants preferred episodes consistent with their preexisting attitudes, and this preference increased with greater attitude extremity. However, there was limited evidence that intellectual humility moderated these relations.

These findings underline the existence of selective exposure and avoidance in podcast selection, which can shape public opinion on politically relevant issues like climate change. However, large parts of the inter-individual variation in these tendencies remain poorly understood. Future research should thus examine additional variables, like actively open-minded thinking, and employ behavioral measures – e.g., tracking actual listening behavior – to understand podcast-based information selection in politically relevant contexts. "

Session C02: AI, technology, and political attitudes

Artificial Intelligence as a Cross-Cutting Issue? Ideological Dimensions of AI Attitudes in Germany

Sabrina Mayer, University of Bamberg, Verena Benoit, University of Bamberg, Valentin Berger, University of Bamberg, Philipp Hoffmann, University of Bamberg

Digitalisation, particularly the integration of artificial intelligence (AI), has gained considerable relevance worldwide. In Germany, this development led to the establishment of a dedicated

Ministry for Digitalisation and State Modernisation in 2025. At the same time, individual-level research on AI attitudes is growing, yet we know little about how such attitudes are structured by political ideology and how this varies across different domains of application.

We conceptualize political ideology as a two-dimensional construct: a socio-economic dimension and a socio-cultural dimension (globalization as well as “new politics” issues such as environmental protection). This framework reflects the core dimensions of party competition in contemporary Western democracies.

Existing studies report a broadly critical stance on AI, though varying by domain (e.g., health, election campaigns). US research suggests that political ideology affects attitudes towards AI, with individuals on the left seemingly being more open, however results are mixed. However, most analyses fail to simultaneously account for both the different dimensions of political ideology and the domains of AI applications.

Our paper addresses three interrelated research questions: To what extent are general attitudes towards AI linked to socio-economic and socio-cultural ideological orientations? How do domain-specific AI applications relate differently to these ideological dimensions? Do left- and right-leaning individuals differ in which ideological dimension relates more to their AI attitudes?

We argue that general AI attitudes are structured by both dimensions of: for right-leaning individuals, they are more closely tied to socio-economic attitudes whereas for left-leaning individuals, socio-cultural attitudes are more salient. For domain-specific applications, we expect socio-cultural attitudes to be more important. We draw on original data from Germany where AI is politically salient but partisan divides remain shallow, allowing us to examine whether ideological orientations rather than partisan cues structure public opinion.

From Demographics to Political Identification and Climate Change Policy Preferences: AI Attitudes as a Mediator

Verena Benoit, University of Bamberg

The growing presence of artificial intelligence (AI) in everyday life underscores the need for systematic research on its societal and political implications. This study investigates how individuals' attitudes toward AI function as a mediator between their socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics and their political identification in general, as well as their attitudes toward climate change policies in particular, while also assessing the direct effects. Climate change policies represent a highly salient and politically polarized issue, while also being intertwined with questions of technological innovation. This is especially relevant against the background that current AI applications require vast amounts of energy and at the same time offering opportunities to develop strategies for mitigating climate change. Climate change policies therefore provide a relevant case for examining how attitudes toward AI shape both political identification and specific policy preferences. Prior research has established that socio-demographic factors are strong predictors of attitudes toward AI, as well as of political identification and issue-specific preferences. Moreover, digital technologies have been shown to influence political behavior, though the specific role of AI has been largely overlooked. Using original survey data from Germany, this study advances

existing work by disentangling the mediating and direct effects of AI attitudes. In doing so, it provides new insights into whether AI-related attitudes operate differently when linked to specific policy issues compared to broader dimensions of political identification.

Inferring individual belief networks from open-ended narratives

Peter Steiglechner, Complexity Science Hub Vienna, Victor Poulsen, Complexity Science Hub Vienna, Henrik Olsson, Complexity Science Hub Vienna, Mirta Galesic, Complexity Science Hub Vienna

The fact that beliefs tend to form reliable clusters across people motivates the study of belief networks, where individual beliefs are treated as interconnected instead of independent. Most research has used questionnaires with fixed questions (on some scale) to study belief networks and their properties (e.g., centrality, dynamics, etc.). Two challenges with this framework is that belief networks can only be inferred at the population level (across people), and that questionnaires introduce demand effects and limit the expressive range of participants. But what if one individual only has one relevant belief in some domain, and another person has an elaborately structured ideology? How can we capture this if they are both forced to answer the same number of predefined questions? We design a system where a Large Language Model (LLM) conducts a semi-structured interview with a participant in some target domain. We choose meat eating as our target domain because (1) it is consequential, and (2) because many people have dissonance between their beliefs and their behaviors. Another LLM extracts summaries from the interview in real time, and participants use a custom graphical interface to connect things that influence each other. The hope is to validate a protocol for automatic extraction of personal belief networks from open-ended text. Participants also complete standard questionnaires in the field of meat eating, allowing us to compare a standard survey methodology (questionnaires) with our alternative approach. Previous work has shown that personalized persuasion can be more effective than general interventions (e.g., educational). We hope to ground this insight in a formalized statistical physics model of how beliefs (and other influences) constrain each other.

Classifying Moral Reasoning in Political Discourse: Demonstrating Interrater Reliability and Testing an AI-Based Classification Approach

Felix Schmirler, Freie Universität Berlin, Rudolf Kerschreiter, Freie Universität Berlin

"Moral dilemma research shows that conservatives tend to favor rule-based (deontological) judgments, whereas liberals rely more on outcome-based (consequentialist) judgments. Understanding whether such differences also appear in deliberative discourse such as online debates or political speeches could reveal how polarization develops and inform interventions to reduce affective divides.

This study presents a validation of an approach to classify moral reasoning in political discourse using large language models (LLM). Data were drawn from the Moral Foundations Reddit Corpus (16k posts) and the Open Discourse Corpus of the German Bundestag (900k speeches). Texts were sentence-split and a novel extension of the Distributed Dictionary Representation (DDR) method (Garten et al., 2018) was applied to pre-sample 576 sentences with sparse moral content. In this approach two validated dictionaries for the target

constructs were extended for the target constructs with AI-generated exemplars to capture semantic reasoning across debates beyond general keywords like “consequence” or “duty”.

Between two expert raters, interrater reliability improved across three codebook iterations to excellent reliability (Krippendorff's $\alpha = .56-.68 \rightarrow .92-.93$). Agreement between human and AI-assigned labels (based on cosine similarity) were subsequently also sufficient to demonstrate the feasibility of classifying moral reasoning styles in large text corpora through LLMs (Krippendorff's $\alpha = .70-.73$).

Building on this validation, a subsequent study aims to improve the AI-based classification approach. It will apply the method to a larger bilingual (German–English) corpus of approximately 12,000 sentences drawn from political speeches, social media comments, and newspaper articles to analyse ideological and temporal patterns in moral reasoning across ideological and cultural contexts."

Session C03: Climate activism, protest tactics and mobilization

Activism or extremism? Radicalisation of the conflict on climate policies in contemporary Poland.

Aleksandra Prusak, University of Warsaw

EU climate policy regulations (e.g. Nature Restoration Law, Green Deal, EPBD) are a source of social conflicts and radical protests in many member states (e.g. farmers' protests or the Yellow Vests movement). In Poland, climate movements and groups opposed to climate policy have intensified their activity recently. Moreover, they are increasingly turning to new and radical forms of protest. This paper aims to trace the radicalisation of the forms of activity of social movements and organisations involved in the conflict on climate policy in contemporary Poland. The analysis of the changes in the scope of strategies of these movements is based on individual in-depth interviews with representatives of the most important Polish climate and farmers' movements. Particular attention is also paid to how these movements justify the increase of radical forms of their activity, how they perceive their opponents, and how their actions affect their reception in society.

Artistic Activism: Employing Art for Disruptive Climate Protests

Berend Barkela, RPTU University Kaiserslautern-Landau, Christina Schäfer, RPTU University Kaiserslautern-Landau, Marlene Altenmüller, Leibniz Institute for Psychology (ZPID)

Activists face a dilemma: The more disruptive their protest, the more attention they receive—but they are also viewed more negatively. One possible way out of this dilemma is to engage in ameliorating protest tactics such as artistic activism. Artistic activism refers to diverse forms of art-related expressions during protests and beyond, ranging from creative protest banners to artistic performances (e.g., the Red Rebel Brigade). In two experiments ($N_1 = 828$; $N_2 = 1,203$; German access panel), we investigated whether such artistic activism could alleviate adverse effects of disruption in the context of climate protests. Specifically, we tested whether artistic tactics are judged more positively than non-artistic tactics at similar levels of disruption regarding participants' perceptions of (extremity, immorality), attitudes toward

(emotional connection, identification), and support for the protesters. While we observe clear evidence for negative effects of disruptiveness, the effects of artistic activism were mixed and small: Artistic actions might even increase extremity perceptions of nondisruptive, peaceful protests, but, at medium levels of disruption (i.e., disobedient, yet nonviolent), they might slightly improve protest perceptions. In conclusion, we find rather weak support for the notion that artistic activism attenuates adverse effects of disruptive protests.

Designing a Greentervention – Can Populist Appeals Spur Environmental Collective Action?

Dániel Komáromy, University of Amsterdam, Jan-Willem van Prooijen, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Can populist rhetoric mobilize individuals for public-sphere environmental collective action? This thesis investigates the role of populist communication in climate activism through two complementary studies. First, an automated content analysis of Extinction Rebellion and Fridays for Future Twitter accounts ($n=3,200$ Tweets) demonstrated that populist frames, particularly positive, people-centrist appeals, significantly predicted retweeting behavior and mediated the effects of fear and hope. Second, a between-subjects experiment ($N = 512$) compared the impact of a pluralist versus a populist text about global warming (both structured around a fear–anger–hope emotional flow) on collective action intentions. As expected, the populist text elicited greater moral outrage than the pluralist one. Contrary to hypotheses, however, it did not increase collective efficacy or environmental identification, and thus failed to enhance collective action intentions. Exploratory analyses revealed the importance of pride and enthusiasm in environmental mobilization. Together, the findings suggest that positive in-group emotions may be central to left-wing populist identity construction and mobilization.

Public Participation Reduces Psychological Reactance to System-Level Policies

Leonhard Reiter, University of Vienna, Armin Granulo, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Robert Böhm, University of Vienna, Christoph Fuchs, University of Vienna

"Addressing global challenges, like climate change and pandemics, requires large-scale behavior change. Governments can accomplish such behavior change by either targeting individuals by means of individual-level policies (e.g., nudges or boosts) or changing systemic conditions by means of system-level policies (e.g., taxes, mandates, or bans). While individual-level policies are common, policymakers often hesitate to implement system-level policies due to concerns about public backlash. A main driver of this backlash is psychological reactance—negative emotions and cognitions that arise before policies are implemented because citizens perceive their freedom to be threatened. Because psychological reactance poses a significant barrier to successful policy implementation, interventions designed to reduce reactance prior to policy rollout are essential.

In this project, we posit that involving citizens in the policy decision-making process—either by giving them a choice (e.g., through referenda) or a voice (e.g., via citizen forums)—can reduce psychological reactance. We test this hypothesis using secondary data and preregistered experiments (current $N = 8,110$; 47% female; data collection ongoing).

Preliminary evidence consistently indicates that observing others having choice and/or voice in the policy decision-making process reduces psychological reactance across various policy domains, such as bans and taxes; meta-analytic Cohen's d with robust standard errors = -0.15 , $SE = 0.04$, $p = .008$). In ongoing studies, we investigate whether the attenuating effect is stronger for participants who actively have choice or voice (i.e., those who vote and discuss) compared to participants who are passive (i.e., those who observe others' vote and discuss). We also test the psychological processes underlying these effects.

Our initial findings suggest that involving citizens in policy decision-making can effectively reduce psychological reactance to system-level policies prior to implementation."

Session C04: Climate policy perceptions and climate (mis)information

Broadening Perspectives, Reducing Misperceptions? The Role of Online Deliberation in Controversial Mobility Policy

Katharina Götting, Technical University Berlin, Lisa Walsleben, Technical University Berlin, Vanessa Hiess, Technical University Berlin, Jonas Ludwig, Technical University Berlin, Elke U. Weber, Princeton University

Public debates on mobility policies in Germany are often marked by polarization between groups who identify with different modes of transportation, such as car drivers, cyclists, and public transport users. This study examines whether structured small-scale online deliberation can help reduce such polarization by fostering mutual understanding and broadening the perspectives that participants consider when evaluating policies.

We used a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys with a qualitative analysis of online focus groups. Participants took part in one of three conditions: (1) a survey-only control group; (2) an information group that received balanced background materials on safe, fair and affordable mobility; or (3) an experimental group that took part in a two-hour online discussion in addition to completing the surveys. Participants in the discussion groups primarily identified as car drivers, cyclists, or public transport users, with each group with each group comprising a range of these perspectives. During the discussions, participants considered seven concrete mobility measures, weighing up the pros and cons according to fairness, affordability and safety criteria. They then ranked these measures together and reached a consensus on the final ranking.

Survey data collected before and after the intervention ($n_{t1} = 800$; $n_{t2} = 600$) were used to evaluate changes in open-minded cognition, dialogic advocacy, and pluralistic ignorance, as well as stability in the ranking of mobility measures and the breadth of justice perspectives considered. Additionally, discussion session transcripts were analyzed to explore which fairness principles participants relied on and how consensus was negotiated across transport identities.

These analyses provide insights into the potential and limitations of small-scale deliberative formats for addressing polarization in controversial policy areas. The findings contribute to

ongoing debates in political psychology about how structured interaction and exposure to diverse viewpoints can influence political cognition, reduce misperceptions, and shape the scope of justice in policy evaluations.

On the relation between climate-related uncertainty and anti-immigrant attitudes

Oshrat Hochman, GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Andrew Bell, University of Sheffield

This paper investigates the relation between climate-related uncertainty and anti-immigrant attitudes in Europe. Following the social-identity perspective and specifically, its insight on the role of uncertainty in intergroup relations, we suggest that climate-related uncertainty, fosters negative attitudes towards immigrants. We rely on socio-psychological theories according to which, uncertainty, leads individuals to operate in terms of their ingroup interests, and resort to outgroup derogation. We test this hypothesis using two cross-national European survey programs namely, the European Social Survey and the European Values Study. First, using two high-quality data sets based on random national samples, we test for cross-cultural generalizability of the theoretical mechanism and second, we test whether cross-national variation in the effect of climate-related (lack of) control on anti-immigrant attitudes are associated with how well the respective countries are doing in terms of pollution, perspiration, and average temperature. Our analyses thus far indicate that individuals do seem to hold more negative views towards immigrants the less control they feel they have over climate change-related processes. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the data, we use, we cannot show a direct causal relation. Given that we use different measures for anti-immigrant attitudes as well as (lack of) control over climate change processes, these findings seem to be quite robust. The next step in our analysis will be the estimation of multilevel models with cross-level interactions.

The gateway (mis)belief model: How misinformation impacts perceptions of scientific consensus and attitudes towards climate change

Hannah Logemann, University of Duisburg-Essen, Jacob B. Rode, University of Cambridge, Rakoen Maertens, University of Oxford, Sander van der Linden, University of Cambridge

Climate change is one of the greatest threats to humanity, necessitating immediate action to combat its consequences. Although there is a nearly unanimous scientific consensus that climate change is human-caused, misinformation doubting its causes continues to circulate widely. In this study, we test the Gateway (mis)Belief Model (GmBM) which assumes that misinformation affects perceived scientific consensus negatively, which then cascades down to lower support for public action to mitigate climate change via changes in key beliefs about the issue. We present a reanalysis of data from two online studies in which U.S. participants (N1 = 207, N2 = 755) were exposed to misinformation using a pre-post mixed design manipulating assessments of the scientific consensus on climate change. Results showed that misinformation indeed leads to lower estimations of scientific consensus, which cascade down to lower support for public action via corresponding beliefs. However, the pattern of significance of direct effects did not exactly replicate those in the original GBM, though misinformation still had negative direct (Experiments 1–2) and indirect effects (Experiment 2) on several downstream climate outcomes. These findings are further affirmed by an internal

meta-analysis. Overall, this study highlights the negative impact of misinformation on climate attitudes and policy support.

Fairness perceptions and social norms mitigate the detrimental impact of conspiracy beliefs on wind farm opposition

Leonie Ströbele, University of Hohenheim, Kevin Winter, University of Hohenheim, Laura Henn, University of Hohenheim

The energy transition requires the construction of infrastructure such as wind farms. However, public opposition can severely hinder its progress. Previous research has identified conspiracy mentality - the general propensity to believe in conspiracy theories - as a key determinant of opposition to wind farms and the acceptance of related misinformation in hypothetical scenarios. In contrast, perceived fairness and favourable social norms have been shown to foster acceptance. In this study, we investigated whether conspiracy mentality predicted the local residents' reaction to a planned wind farm project and whether fairness perceptions and subjective social norms could moderate and potentially overcome the detrimental impact of conspiracy beliefs. We conducted a field survey with $N = 1018$ residents living near a planned wind farm site where public participation processes had already taken place. Wind farm opposition was measured through three indicators: (1) low general support for the local wind farm project, (2) belief in false negative information about the project, and (3) intentions to protest against it. The results revealed a strong association between conspiracy mentality and all three opposition indicators. However, individuals' conspiracy mentality no longer predicted opposition when institutional decision-making processes were perceived as fair and when important others approved of the project. These findings suggest that establishing fair institutional processes and favourable social conditions can mitigate the adverse impact of conspiracy beliefs in local wind energy projects.

Session D01: Sustainability transitions and climate/energy governance

Conflict over Urban Greening: Psychological Perspectives on Just Urban Transitions

Mia Lehn

"As part of an interdisciplinary early-career research group based at the University of Augsburg and the Institute for Ecological Economy Research (IÖW), Berlin, I examine conflicts around socio-ecological transformations in the context of developing and protecting urban green infrastructures. My dissertation, situated within environmental psychology, focuses on the factors and barriers that influence residents' attitudes and engagement in urban greening initiatives as part of a just transformation of their neighborhoods.

Drawing on theories of social identity and social norms (van Zomeren et al., 2008; Reese et al., 2014), conflict theory (Baasch & Blöbaum, 2018; Kühn & Sommer, 2023), acceptance and participation research (Zoellner et al., 2009), as well as theories of just transition, we aim to

investigate these conflicts in the context of urban greening projects. The dissertation combines a systematic literature review with the analysis of a database of past green infrastructure initiatives to identify effective activation strategies. Building on these insights, it experimentally tests and evaluates participatory activation approaches in living labs (Reallabore).

A second focus of the project is on heterogeneous vulnerability to climate change impacts within urban areas. While psychological research increasingly explores the mental and emotional effects of climate change (Manning & Clayton, 2018), less is known about the interplay between subjective vulnerability and local environmental conditions. The dissertation therefore integrates psychological measures (Wullenkord et al., 2021) into resident surveys to assess perceived burdens and combines these with objective spatial and participatory mapping data provided by physical geography.

At the time of the Annual Meeting of the German Political Psychology Network, the research group is in the initial phase of topic refinement and empirical design. In my presentation, I will outline the current state of the project, introduce key theoretical frameworks, and present potential case studies for our living labs in Augsburg and Berlin. The aim is to discuss emerging ideas, receive conceptual feedback, and explore opportunities for collaboration with other scholars in political psychology interested in just transition processes.

**COVID-19 was just a warm-up – climate change's triage is in a different league.
Evidence on trans-context consistency of scarce resource allocation preferences in
different global emergencies**

Friedemann Trutzenberg, Freie Universität Berlin, Michael Eid, Freie Universität Berlin

Climate change is considered one of the most existential threats humanity has faced throughout history. Despite mitigation efforts, extreme weather events such as floods, droughts and heavy storms are likely to become commonplace in the coming years, major world regions inhabitable, clean drinking water and nutrition scarce.

These manifestations of climate change inevitably evoke distributive justice dilemmas of global scale. Who has access to clean drinking water? How should aid goods be distributed in large humanitarian crises? (How) Should novel technologies to fight climate change be shared internationally?

Conflicts about scarce resources are more than mere intellectual exercise, but have often even led to wars in the past. Therefore, the global community is advised to find answers to these pressing questions quickly – and to learn from a very recent other global emergency: During the COVID-19 pandemic, global leaders did not succeed in establishing a consensual and effective health resource distribution regime. As we have recently shown, this did not only contravene ethical and epidemiological advice, but also the will of the people: Both in 2021 and 2024, large representative samples of citizens in the UK and Germany preferred distributing scarce health care resources equally, equitably and efficiently across the globe, rather than prioritising some countries based on merit or financial capacities.

What do citizens think regarding resource allocation in the context of climate change? Can insights on public opinion regarding pandemics be extrapolated onto climate change, or does each justice context show individual preference patterns?

For the current study, we recontacted our representative German sample from 2024. Using an adaptation of our justice measure from the pandemic context onto climate change, we asked the N=723 responding participants to rate twelve distribution strategies.

Data are currently analysed. We will present our findings and outline implications for research and practice.

Engaging Citizens in Social Research on Climate Change: Insights from a Playful Workshop for Participatory Data Analysis

Katharina Koller, Centre for Social Innovation, Barbara Kieslinger, Centre for Social Innovation, Claudia Fabian, Centre for Social Innovation

Public engagement is crucial for developing socially acceptable strategies to address the climate crisis. Participatory approaches in research place citizens' concerns at the centre of research, promoting outcomes such as knowledge and self-efficacy while democratising the co-production of knowledge. In practice, such approaches remain difficult to implement: they require substantial time and effort, often appear exclusive or difficult, and are frequently limited to data collection rather than the full research cycle. To address these challenges, we designed and tested a participatory data analysis workshop using a global survey on attitudes toward climate change and video games as a case study. The format was deliberately short (2 hours), accessible, and engaging, integrating game elements such as storytelling, fictional characters, and structured "levels" of collaborative challenges. Throughout the workshop, participants developed shared understandings of the research topic, formulated questions, analysed survey results, and drew preliminary conclusions. Our initial pilot recruited respondents from the case study survey, yet only 4 of 109 registered participants attended, despite pre-survey results showing high interest in learning, meaningful involvement, and climate concern. Additional workshops with international computer science students ($n = 27$, in three groups) provided richer data. Post-workshop surveys showed that participants valued exchanging perspectives, and those who enjoyed the workshop reported higher collective efficacy for climate action. While qualitative analysis of participant contributions is ongoing, preliminary observations suggest diverse research interests and questions, alongside clear challenges in conducting and interpreting data analysis. From a researcher's perspective, the workshops generated new insights into the data's limitations and outlined directions for future research. Overall, this study demonstrates how participatory and playful formats can address barriers to public involvement in climate research, though motivational and structural challenges remain. Furthermore, this contribution exemplifies how participatory research can contribute to theory and practice in psychology by emphasising citizens' perspectives.

Governing the Energy Transition in Germany: Citizenship and Role Expectations in Energy Cooperatives

Anna Theis, University of Vechta, Neneh Braum, University of Vechta

"Sustainability transitions require cooperation among multiple stakeholders. Energy communities exemplify collective action, involving citizens in collaboration with local governments to develop and implement energy projects. Such approaches are widely recognised as forms of participatory governance capable of addressing complex, normatively driven societal problems. In this context, "energy democracy" (Szulecki, 2018; van Veelen & van der Horst, 2018) serves as an umbrella term for various normative conceptions of how energy policy can be shaped, controlled, and legitimised within a co-governing democratic society. Individual engagement within energy democracy is commonly described as "energy citizenship" (Devine-Wright, 2007; Hamann et al., 2023). However, there is limited research on how citizens engaged in the energy transition view their own and the government's responsibilities, as well as governmental responsiveness.

In this interdisciplinary contribution, we approach this question from both psychological and political-science perspectives, focusing on energy cooperatives in Germany. We combine insights from two separate qualitative studies (narrative and semi-structured interviews, as well as qualitative content analysis) that span two levels of actors - cooperative leaders and ordinary members - and examine their perceptions of their own responsibilities in relation to the political system. In addition, we explore whether engagement in an energy cooperative affects institutional trust and attitudes towards state institutions. We hypothesise that participation in energy cooperatives is associated with a strengthened sense of responsibility and new expectations of state institutions, with variation across cooperatives.

Taking a critical view of citizenship in energy cooperatives, we identify heterogeneous perceptions and potential mismatches between assumed responsibilities, which also shape the character of cooperatives and their democratic impact. These findings underscore the need to clarify citizens' role expectations and governmental responsiveness in governing the energy transition in Germany."

Experiencing floods has only marginal effects on pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors

Nils Brandenstein, Heidelberg University, Kathrin Ackermann, University of Siegen, Jan Rummel, Heidelberg University

Floods and other climate change induced natural disasters are becoming increasingly common. Previous research has examined how experiencing such events first-hand influences individuals' pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors - key factors modern climate change mitigation approaches aim to target to reduce the likelihood of future climatic events happening. While previous findings suggest direct experience to foster individual pro-environmental responses such as increased risk perception or climate adaptation behavior, most study designs suffer from methodological limitations which not only reduce their ability to isolate a causal effect of direct experience but likely contributed to diverging findings in the literature. To address these gaps, we conducted a 2x2 quasi-experimental study comparing N = 398 individuals affected by the 2021 floods in Germany with those not affected on different pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors before and after the event. To isolate a causal effect of the event and incorporate prior domain knowledge, we conducted propensity score matching of affected and not affected individuals and analyzed

the data using Bayesian mixed models. Our findings suggest that flooding experience impacted pro-environmental attitudes and behavior of individuals only marginally. Although we observed small effects on some pro-environmental outcomes, such as personal norms to act against climate change and political participation, individuals affected by the floods did not differ from those not affected on most other outcomes over time. We discuss our results in the context of broader factors shaping individual pro-environmental engagement and derive practical implications for climate change mitigation strategies.

Session D02: Populism, status politics, religion and culture wars

Does hard work pay off? Meritocratic beliefs activate radical right support in status-seekers

Dániel Komáromy, University of Amsterdam, Matthijs Rooduijn, University of Amsterdam, Gijs Schumacher, University of Amsterdam

Populist radical right (PRR) parties are gaining momentum across the globe, posing a serious challenge to democracy. Research suggests that concerns about both cultural and socio-economic status substantially drive PRR support. One explanation lies in the social transformations of the 1980s and 1990s, marked by the rise of meritocratic individualism. As a legitimizing ideology (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), meritocracy frames inequalities as the outcome of fair competition for social status. By emphasizing individual responsibility and fostering competition for recognition, propagating meritocratic values may have eroded solidarity among social groups, which led to the disintegration of traditional class identities. As a response, PRR actors have successfully constructed a new collective identity spanning across lower- and middle-class citizens who experience economic and cultural status grievances. Our previous work, integrating personality- and grievance-based approaches, shows that social status cues (SES- and prestige-based comparisons) interact with status-related traits (narcissistic Rivalry and Vulnerability) in shaping PRR support. Specifically, high perceived SES amplified Rivalry, likely by triggering dominance-oriented status seeking, while low perceived SES activated Vulnerability, fueling support for populist leaders who promise protection against sliding further down the socio-economic ladder. Building on these findings, in our next experiment, participants will be primed with inequality as well as with a meritocratic and an anti-meritocratic justification for it. We expect that (1) inequality salience will strengthen the Vulnerability-PRR support link by activating injustice sensitivity, and (2) priming meritocratic beliefs will amplify the Rivalry-PRR link by activating dominance-based strategies and/or system-justifying beliefs."

Conflict extension through ideological narratives

Tadeas Cely, Aarhus University

The ideological innocence of the large portion of the public in the United States and other Western democracies can no longer be sustained. At the same time, opposing sides have abandoned restraint and promote their views aggressively. Yet we still lack a theoretical framework to integrate these findings. In a new model, I outline how elite ideological narratives shape how citizens understand politics by linking disparate policy issues into

coherent worldviews. These ideological frames contribute to robust dividing lines, in which many types of conflict extend each other. Using embedding regression of elite speeches, from the United States (1947–2025) in the first step, I map narratives across domains such as taxation, immigration, and civil rights, assessing whether they align more with partisan divides than with the issues themselves. Survey experiments in the United States evaluate how exposure to these narratives—compared to policy-focused communication—shapes mass ideology, opinion polarization, and willingness to exercise restraint in advancing one's agenda, with future extensions planned for cross-national settings. This research will be extended to other Western democracies. The analysis underscores the role of ideological narratives in driving conflict extension—intensifying partisan conflict and fostering divides that become resistant to resolution through democratic means and compromise.

Faith and Identity under Political Islam: Public Practice, Private Belief, and Partisan Attachment in Turkey

Ali Çarkoğlu, Koç University

This paper examines the political implications of shifting forms of religiosity in Turkey over the past three decades (1990–2023). Using nationally representative survey data (WVS, ISSP, Turkish Election Studies), I distinguish between identity-driven religiosity, public practices such as mosque attendance that signal communal belonging, and belief-driven religiosity, private practices such as prayer or beliefs that reflect individualized faith. I hypothesize, first, that identity-based religiosity is positively associated with partisan attachment to the pro-Islamist Justice and Development Party, which has been in power since 2002, as public practice functions as a visible marker of loyalty. Second, I expect that belief-based religiosity, while stable across cohorts, is linked to weaker partisan ties and greater ambivalence, as private devotion is less politically legible. Third, I hypothesize that younger, urban, and educated cohorts are more likely to withdraw from identity-based practices while maintaining their private beliefs, reflecting a symbolic opposition to state-religion conflation. The results show that while communal practice has declined, private religiosity persists, with a rise in “believers with doubts.” These findings highlight how the politicization of religion under long-term AKP rule has transformed faith into both a regime-aligned identity and a privatized sphere of reflexive belief, illustrating the need to disaggregate religious identity from personal belief in explaining political behavior in hybrid regimes.

Shaping Public Opinion? Populist Radical Right Parties' Representative Claims and Support for Transgender Rights

Sarah Magdihs, Trinity College Dublin

"Across Europe, policymakers have increasingly pursued policy innovations that allow transgender individuals to change their legal gender and first name through self-identification procedures. Opposing these expansions of transgender rights, populist radical right parties (PRRPs) have strategically claimed to defend various social groups, framing transgender rights as a threat to women, children, and “biological reality”. The recently passed Self-Determination Act (SDA) in Germany exemplifies these dynamics, as it sparked public debate and strong opposition from the German PRRP (Alternative für Deutschland).

Previous research shows that arguments appealing to women's safety can depress support for transgender rights. Yet, it remains unclear whether these effects persist when such arguments are voiced by PRRPs, and which factors moderate this relationship. Drawing on framing theory, political psychology, and research on political representation, this project asks: does exposure to PRRPs' claims of representation influence individuals' support for transgender rights?

To answer this question, I compare the influence of two claims: 1) women-centred frames that emphasise protection of women's rights, and 2) anti-gender claims emphasising "biological reality" and opposition to "gender ideology". Focusing on the German context, I propose an original survey experiment. It is expected that exposure to either frame will reduce support for transgender rights, but the appeal to women's interests is more persuasive. I hypothesise that the impact of these frames varies with the perceived credibility of PRRPs as claimants and individuals' gender attitudes (e.g. benevolent sexism).

By conceptualising representative claims-making as a key strategy through which PRRPs seek to legitimise their opposition to gender equality and influence public opinion, the paper contributes to broader debates on gender backlash, public support for transgender rights, and the populist radical right in Europe. Additionally, it highlights PRRPs' capacity to threaten the rights of marginalised groups.

Societal Recognition and Voting Behavior: Evidence from Germany

Niklas Donth, University of Stuttgart

"The rise of populist radical right (PRR) parties across advanced democracies has often been attributed to economic insecurity or cultural backlash. Yet these explanations overlook a key psychological mechanism that cuts across grievances and unites politically seemingly unrelated societal groups: the perception of being socially unrecognized. This paper argues that a lack of societal recognition - defined as the belief that one's social group is undervalued in the economic, cultural, and political spheres - helps explain both enduring support for PRR parties and dynamic patterns of vote switching.

Focusing on Germany and the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), I examine whether perceived group-based societal misrecognition predicts individual-level shifts in vote intention as well as vote choice. Drawing on rich cross-sectional as well as panel data from the German Longitudinal Election Study, the analysis employs extensive modelling random effects within-between models to disentangle stable between-person differences from short-term within-person changes. The findings reveal that individuals who increasingly feel societally unrecognized are significantly more likely to switch their vote intention to the AfD. Substantively, increases in perceived misrecognition raise the probability of switching to the AfD by a non-negligible margin, underscoring the political salience of recognition-based grievances on top of clearly delineating AfD voters from the voters of the other German parties.

These results advance two contributions. First, they extend the vote switching literature by demonstrating that perceived misrecognition constitutes a distinct motivational pathway beyond protest or policy dissatisfaction. Second, they integrate economic, cultural, and

territorial dimensions into a multidimensional framework of recognition, bridging fragmented debates on the "losers of globalization." In doing so, the study highlights how subjective perceptions of one's group neglect shape electoral realignments and sustain PRR mobilization, even after ideological reservoirs appear exhausted."

Session D03: Migration/refugees and political agency (incl. migrant PPR support)

Measuring Discrimination by Childcare Providers towards Ukrainian applicants in Germany, Great Britain, Hungary and Switzerland

Pelin Atay, DeZIM Institute, Susanne Veit, DeZIM Institute

Since the military invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022, there has been an influx of migration and asylum-seeking by Ukrainians in various European countries. We examine barriers in access to childcare faced by Ukrainian refugees in this context. In a harmonized field experimental study in Germany, Hungary, Switzerland, and the UK, we contacted childcare centers per email, inquiring about the availability of a childcare spot. Among other information, we varied the name of the applicant between names perceived as belonging to the national majority group of the respective country ($n = 2127$) and names perceived as Ukrainian ($n = 1352$). The perceptions of the names had been tested in a previous survey. For applications with Ukrainian names, we also varied whether the email mentioned the applicant being from Ukraine (an exception being the sample from Switzerland, where this information was always provided). We hypothesized that the probability of receiving a positive response would be a) lower for individuals with Ukrainian names compared to those with national majority names (German, Hungarian, Swiss, and British) and b) lower for individuals with Ukrainian names who do not mention their Ukrainian origin compared to those who explicitly state that they moved from Ukraine. However, preliminary results paint a picture that is more mixed, with differing patterns of discrimination in each country. Drawing on intergroup contact theory and the role of empathy and humanitarian concerns in minority support, we aim to examine how factors like population composition, the influx of Ukrainians due to the war, and a country's geographical proximity to Ukraine and Russia, in combination with national differences in childcare allocation systems, can explain discrimination patterns against Ukrainian families across countries.

Motives for choosing Poland as a destination country of migration in the perspective of Ukrainian migrant women representing pro-European values

Joanna Stepaniuk, Józef Piłsudski University of Physical Education in Warsaw

The topic of the presentation concerns the situation of Ukrainian female migrants living and working in Poland. The Author's conducted a few years of qualitative research in a group of women coming from Ukraine. In the course of it, she managed to realize dozens of individual interviews, participant observations, as well as a review of extensive literature on the subject in Poland and abroad. As a result, the researcher collected extensive research material on what pro-European values are represented in everyday life by migrant women from Eastern and Western Ukraine. At the same time, on the basis of the Ukrainian women's statements it

was possible to create a hierarchy of the most important motives determining the choice of Poland as a destination migration country. The knowledge of both the values held by Ukrainian women and the motives for their arrival to Poland made it possible to find or exclude mutual similarities and differences between migrant women coming from the Eastern and Western parts of Ukraine.

Why immigrant-origin individuals turn to the radical right: The role of conservative moral orientations in support for the Alternative for Germany (AfD)

Philipp Hoffmann, University of Bamberg

"The electoral success of radical-right parties in Europe is often attributed to anti-immigrant sentiments, which makes support from immigrant-origin citizens appear paradoxical. Yet, recent research has shown that individuals with a migration back-ground are increasingly supporting anti-immigration parties and politicians, including the AfD in Germany, the Sweden Democrats, and Latino support for Donald Trump. While existing explanations largely mirror those applied to voters without a migration background, such as anti-immigrant attitudes, national identity concerns, and perceptions of threat and competition, one important dimension has been overlooked: traditional moral attitudes. Immigrant-origin voters frequently express more conservative views on issues such as same-sex marriage, euthanasia, and abortion. At the same time, many mainstream conservative parties have shifted toward more liberal positions on these questions, whereas radical-right parties have adopted traditionalist stances. In Germany, this trend is particularly visible, as the CDU/CSU and FDP have moved in a more liberal direction, while the AfD has emphasized conservative moral views. This suggests that immigrant-origin voters may be drawn to the AfD not despite, but partly because of, its traditionalist moral positions.

Surprisingly, little is known about whether conservative moral orientations translate into support for the AfD among immigrant-origin citizens. This study addresses this gap by examining the potential conservative alignment between immigrant-origin voters and the AfD. Drawing on data from the Immigrant German Election Study I and the DeZIM.panel, the analysis shows that immigrant-origin individuals support the AfD due to conservative moral attitudes. Notably, this effect emerges only for the AfD in comparison to other mainstream German parties and is specific to individuals with a migration background, while it is absent among the majority population. "

Session D04: Interest groups, unions, conflict orientations and inequality-trust links

Not like other politicians: Politician stereotypes and willingness to associate

Jule Kegel, University of Vienna

"Contact between citizens and politicians is normatively important for democratic representation, yet politicians are among the most disliked groups in society. While previous research suggests that contact can reduce mistrust toward politicians, it is unclear who people actually consider a "typical" politician, and whether this categorization shapes their willingness to engage with them. Building on the continuum model of impression formation and research on stereotypes of disliked groups, this study investigates which attributes

increase the likelihood of being perceived as a typical politician, and how such perceptions affect willingness to associate.

I test these questions with a conjoint experiment in Austria. Respondents are randomly assigned to evaluate politician profiles that vary across seven attributes, including gender, age, occupation, political level, party affiliation, leisure activities, and image (warmth, competence, communication style). For each profile, respondents indicate whether they see the person as a typical politician and whether they would want to meet them.

I hypothesize that individuals perceived as typical politicians will elicit lower willingness to associate, especially among those with high anti-elite attitudes, and that atypical attributes (e.g. women, younger age, working-class background, local-level office, populist party affiliation, low-cost leisure activities, direct communication style, warmth) will reduce perceptions of typicality. The study contributes to our understanding of how citizens categorize politicians, and how these categorizations may open or close pathways for democratic engagement."

Nothing but conflicts? Perceptions of and ideas about dealing with social conflicts in times of polarized political debates

Dirk Lampe, Bielefeld University, Stefan Skolarski, Bundeskriminalamt, Anna Nowak, Bielefeld University

Social conflicts are an integral part of democratic processes and democratic societies. It is therefore not surprising that these conflicts play a central role in the major theories of political psychology, political science and sociology. The causes and consequences of social conflicts, as well as their dynamics and possible solutions, are researched and analysed in the respective disciplines, albeit with different thematical and methodological foci. However, there is a certain gap in this profound research knowledge with regard to individual conflict orientations of the citizens of democratic societies. This research gap is to be addressed by the "Konfliktmonitor" of the Bielefeld based Conflict Academy "ConflictA".

This talk will present the results of the first two surveys conducted as part of the Konfliktmonitor (panel survey with N1 = 2,900 participants; N2 = 2,100 participants). Particular attention will be paid to general and topic-specific conflict perceptions as well as measurements of the respondents' conflict orientations with regard to the attribution of causes of social conflicts, preferred ways of dealing with social conflicts and the effects of social conflicts on the respondents' everyday lives and mental health. Finally, in line with the conference theme, data on conflicts around climate change and climate policy will be presented.

Policy capacities of interest groups - an international comparison

Petra Strehmel, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences

Interest groups (lobby organizations) strive for influence on political decisions for the benefits of their members. Whether they succeed in doing so depends, among other things, on the priorities and structures in the political arena, organizational structures, strategies and policy capacities of the interest groups as well as the political skills of the actors involved. An international project investigates in the political capacities of interest groups on different

levels of the educational systems in Norway, Finland and Germany. Policy capacity is defined as a combination of general resources, analytical capacity, political capacity, communicative capacity and relational capacity. Analytical and relational capacities help to develop political positions, while communicative and political capacities are more important to enforce their demands. The extent to which they can become effective depends, among other things, on the lobbyists' political skills as well as the willingness of policy-makers to build relationships with them, to exchange information and to negotiate on political demands.

The paper examines the question of how interest groups (associations) for providers of early education build up and use policy capacities in the context of the political systems of the three countries involved. In addition to document analyses to describe the respective political structures, guideline based qualitative interviews were conducted with representatives of interest groups and with policy makers. The three countries show different patterns in the composition of members of the interest groups and in the resources and strategies to build political capacities. At the same time, different framework conditions and strategies to build relationships for the exchange with political decision-makers are emerging. They are interpreted in the context of the respective national political systems and -cultures. Research desiderata and methodological challenges of research in political systems and lobby organizations are discussed.

Research for, with, and about trade unions – a systematic review of psychological research in German-speaking countries

Britta Wittner, Technische Universität Braunschweig

"As trade unions have lost members over the past decades, interest in research focussing on employees interests also declined. Particularly Social and life sciences can have a positive influence on working conditions of employees with their findings and how authors discuss them, e.g. by calling for collective measures instead of individual solutions. Nonetheless, STEM subjects also benefit from research that is closely related to the world of work (Kock, 2018). Supposedly, trade union research has recently focused on strategies currently successful in trade union movements (Labour Revitalisation Studies, Brinkmann et al., 2008). However, there is no comprehensive overview of the recent research landscape.

To provide an overview, we used a scoping review approach (Tricco et al., 2018; Elm et al., 2019) to comprehensively scan papers from four databases in order to answer the question: What research on trade unions has been published in German-speaking countries over the past 15 years? The aim is to analyse disciplines and topics, including studies that focus on trade unions themselves or, for example, research on interest groups that use trade union samples or collaborate with them in the design of the research (research questions, funding, samples, discussion, etc.).

A strategic search in Scopus, Ebscohost, Web of Science, and PubMed databases yielded N = 6082 abstracts. The presentation focuses on the results from the PubMed database in order to examine psychological research in particular. In a first step, papers were included if the title and abstract suggested a trade union reference and met inclusion criteria, and were integrated into the evaluation if this was confirmed after reviewing the entire paper.

The results provide an up-to-date overview of research and thus contribute to a faster overview for researchers and trade unions alike. In addition, they enable closer networking among researchers and possibly more intensive cooperation.

Shall they care how you feel? Scrutinizing the susceptibility of political trust towards inequality-elicited emotions

Sonja Zmerli, Sciences Po Grenoble UGA

This paper aims to explore and better understand the affective underpinnings of political trust with a particular focus on emotions elicited by different types of economic inequality representations. Based on a comparative population study, conducted in 2024 in France and Great Britain and in 2025 in Sweden as an integral part of the POLINEQUAL project, we, first, set out to scrutinize whether distributive fairness perceptions of income and wealth in society affect political trust differently. In a next step, we investigate the interrelationships of a previously tested selective set of eight emotions, such as sadness, anger, indifference or admiration, elicited by a sub-set of representations of economic inequality, such as income, wealth, the poor, the rich, social beneficiaries and tax payers, with trust in the national parliament. Our preliminary linear regression analyses suggest that political trust is not only differently associated with distributive fairness perceptions of income and wealth but also appears to be malleable to affective inequality stimuli. Notwithstanding, the British institutional and societal context seems to be more strongly affected by these inequality-related attitudes and affects. We will resume by discussing the implications of catering to citizens' affective dispositions in view of the political and media arena who, presumably, stand to be particularly fertile grounds for affective mobilisation.

Session E01: Political development across the life course

How Recent Is Recent? A Retrospective Analysis of Inflation and Recency Bias in U.S. Elections

Rishi Gupta, Cambridge Centre for International Research Ltd

Recency bias is defined as a cognitive bias in which individuals tend to weigh recent events more heavily than earlier ones. In conjunction with retrospective voting, which is when voting decisions are based on the past performance of the incumbent or incumbent party, recency bias is frequently used to explain voting behavior in the U.S. political landscape. It is not easy to determine how "recent" an event must be to have a significant influence on voting. However, retrospective voting can provide clues about voting patterns. This study aims to quantify recency bias using inflation, more specifically CPI, as a proxy and quantitative indicator for the economic condition. If people's perception of the economy is negative, or if inflation is high, we expect voting to go against the incumbent party and vice versa. We use regression and prediction models to see the effect of monthly CPI values leading up to the election on the incumbent party's margin of victory. This helps us to pinpoint a potential time window where events related to inflation are still prominent enough to influence voting decisions. This study uses U.S. presidential elections (1916-2020) and U.S. House elections (1978-2022). Analysis was conducted for changes in monthly CPI with time intervals of 1

month, 3 months, 6 months, and 12 months. Results from both elections suggest that a time window of approximately three months was when inflation-related events had the most significant impact on voters' decisions. This window extends up to six months, but anything beyond that is deemed insignificant. While recent events do hold a disproportionate weight in voters' ultimate decisions, this study refines the understanding of how recent those events must be. Comparing different time intervals, the findings indicate that recency does not range as long as one year, but it also does not range as short as one to three months. This is significant as it may influence political strategies for both the incumbent and the challenger. More broadly, this approach opens the door to quantifying biases using measurable variables, contributing to a more precise and quantifiable understanding of voter behavior.

Mapping the Development of Political Belief System Constraint During Adolescence

Irene Arahal, Royal Holloway University of London

Adolescence and young adulthood are key phases in the political maturation of citizens. During these years, they are first confronted with questions such as how and by whom societies should be governed, what role should the state play in the economy, or how should authorities handle the climate crisis, if at all. Fundamental to political development, the beliefs acquired in these phases crystallise, becoming more stable and harder to change. However, while attitudes may become stronger, real-world acts of political decision-making such as voting go beyond the activation of single elements of the political belief system; they require the coordination of multiple, interrelated attitudes, identities and beliefs. In this study, I approach political development from the angle of belief system alignment. I examine two ways in which belief system alignment can manifest: first, through greater interconnection between issue-specific political attitudes (horizontal alignment), and second, through the increasing predictive power of ideological identity – specifically, left-right self-placement – on other political attitudes (vertical alignment). Drawing from three distinct cross-sectional samples of British young individuals aged 12 to 22, I use Belief Network models to map and compare the structure of political belief systems across age groups, asking the question of whether early political socialisation implies a higher ideological constraint.

Political attitudes over the lifecycle. Evolution and mechanisms of attitude change over adulthood.

Onno Steenweg, Trinity College Dublin

"Europe is ageing, and this demographic shift has profound political implications. Age is systematically associated with differences in political behavior — such as higher voter turnout, greater authoritarian tendencies, and more conservative or risk-averse attitudes. Yet the underlying reasons for these age-related patterns remain unclear. Classical political science typically explains them either through cohort effects, whereby generations carry distinct formative experiences, or through period effects, whereby all age groups are simultaneously shaped by shared political realities. These approaches cannot account for attitude changes over adulthood.

My PhD project, which I began this year at Trinity College Dublin, approaches this problem from a different angle. I argue that generalizable trends in political attitudes across adulthood are driven by psychological life-cycle processes, such as the development of personality,

shifts in life satisfaction, and age-related changes in cognitive flexibility and information-searching patterns. The central research question is: How do individual-level cognitive and emotional mechanisms associated with age shape the development and transformation of political attitudes across the adult life course?

Existing research has often treated adulthood as a period of stability, with limited attention to change beyond adaptation to political events. By contrast, I propose an explanatory framework that foregrounds individual-level psychological factors as key drivers of political attitude change.

Methodologically, the project combines longitudinal survey data with experimental approaches. Panel data will be used to detect systematic age-related trends in political attitudes, while experiments will help isolate specific mechanisms, such as motivation, cognitive flexibility, and goal orientation.

At this early stage, I wish to present my project to peers in political psychology, discuss its theoretical and methodological choices, and receive feedback that will help shape the direction of the research."

The Development, Levels and Context-Dependence of Affective Polarization Among Adolescents

Jakob Kasper, University of Amsterdam, Gijs Schumacher, University of Amsterdam, Eveline Crone, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Lysanne Te Brinke, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Bert N. Bakker, University of Amsterdam

"Politicians, media, and the public have expressed concerns that affective polarization is rising among adolescents, who will play a central role in shaping future societal systems. This concern is pressing because adolescence is a formative period in which political identities stabilize. While research on political development has focused primarily on the emergence of party identification, comparatively little is known about how affective ties to those identities develop. Addressing this gap is essential, as affect is a central lens through which to view current societal divides and to evaluate whether worries about a uniquely polarized next generation are warranted.

Drawing on survey data from adolescents (ages 11–25; N=7,192) and adults (ages 11 - 25; N=10,007) across five countries, we examine three questions: (1) whether levels of affective polarization vary across stages of adolescence, (2) whether adolescents are as polarized as adults, and (3) whether adolescents' levels of affective polarization are sensitive to societal events.

We find that both the level and the variation in affective polarization remain stable between ages 11–25, suggesting that adolescence may not be a particularly sensitive period for its emergence. Contrasting some previous findings from the US, our data from the Netherlands, the UK, and Austria show that adolescents are less polarized than adults in those countries. Finally, we find evidence that the levels of affective polarization among Dutch adolescents increased during the 2023 election campaign and subsequently declined.

Taken together, these results demonstrate that, while adolescents already display some degree of affective polarization, they are not more polarized than adults, nor do we observe sharp increases during adolescence. Adolescents also show a sensitivity to societal events that mirrors patterns observed in adults, illustrating that their levels of affective polarization are malleable. This suggests that concerns about a uniquely polarized next generation may be overstated."

Voting Competence in Adolescence: Development, Predictors, and Implications

Anna Lang, FernUniversität in Hagen

"At what age are young people able to make meaningful voting decisions? This question lies at the center of debates about lowering the voting age and about the design of civic education, which is often expected to at least ensure that young people become competent voters. A widespread assumption is that adolescents must first acquire sufficient cognitive and political skills before they are able to cast competent votes.

This talk examines the development of voting competence, defined as the ability to cast a vote that is consistent with one's own political preferences, among young people aged 12 to 25 in Germany. Drawing on empirical studies across different voting contexts as well as meta-analytical evidence, it will be shown how voting competence relates to theoretically relevant predictors, including age, education, family background, political interest, political knowledge, and susceptibility to peer influence.

Findings suggest that voting competence is unrelated to age but tied to political interest and knowledge. Results concerning education and family background are heterogeneous and inconclusive, while susceptibility to peer influence—often highlighted in public debates—plays no role. Notably, a substantial share of adolescents who report little political interest or knowledge nonetheless make voting decisions consistent with their preferences. This raises important questions about which strategies young people may rely on when making voting choices.

The talk concludes by discussing the implications of these findings for societal debates on youth enfranchisement, the design of civic education, and theoretical models of political decision-making."

Session E02: Active polarization: measurement, dynamics and cultural sorting

Measuring Affective Polarization in Multi-Party Systems – An Empirical Comparison of Different Feeling Thermometer Operationalizations

Larissa Knöchelmann, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Jule Specht, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Measuring affective polarization in multi-party systems is challenging as ingroups and outgroups can be defined in multiple ways: as all but the favorite party, the most- or least-

liked party, or as broader divisions such as radical right versus other parties, coalition versus opposition, or left–right blocs. While some studies compare subsets of these operationalizations, a systematic empirical comparison across many measures remains absent. This project aims to systematically compare several feeling thermometer approaches to assess vertical affective polarization using four waves of a large-scale longitudinal panel survey in Germany ($N \approx 4,000$ per wave). We examine (a) convergent validity across operationalizations, (b) criterion validity with established correlates of polarization (e.g., satisfaction with democracy, support for political violence, political interest, turnout), and (c) longitudinal stability (mean-level and rank-order stability and individual differences in change). Preliminary analyses indicate that least-liked group paradigms, spread-scores, and multiple-outgroup approaches are moderately to strongly associated. In contrast, the division-approaches lead to smaller, sometimes even insignificant associations with other operationalizations, suggesting that they measure unique phenomena. Notably, criterion validity of all approaches is quite low ($R^2 \leq 7\%$), questioning the meaningfulness of feeling thermometer affect for societal outcome variables discussed in the literature. Substantial differences also emerge in rank-order stability with division-approaches and spread scores achieving higher stability than least-liked group paradigms. We will critically discuss these findings in light of which measures are more or less suitable for different contexts or research questions, including their theoretical implications, such as whether approaches allow for testing social identity processes, and underlying normative assumptions, such as the degree to which dislike toward different (blobs of) parties is assumed to be equally problematic for liberal democracies.

Symbolic and Realistic Threats: Emotional Pathways to Partisan Divides

Elena Heinz, University of Vienna, Ruthie Pliskin, Leiden University, Markus Wagner, University of Vienna

While the term "affective polarization" implies the presence of affect or emotion, most research on polarization relies on feeling thermometers, while discrete emotions and their antecedents remain underexplored. Intergroup threat has been identified as a key antecedent, yet significant gaps remain regarding which types of threats elicit specific emotions and how these emotions contribute to prejudicial attitudes towards out-partisans. This paper addresses these gaps by examining how different types of threat evoke fear and anger toward out-partisans and how these emotions, in turn, shape partisan prejudice. Using data from an original 13-country survey, we find that realistic threats -concerns about resources, status, and security- are predominantly associated with fear, whereas symbolic threats -challenges to values, culture, and worldview- are more likely to elicit anger. Anger is positively associated with heightened prejudice toward out-partisans, in line with our hypotheses. In a second step, we conduct a survey experiment to test the causality of this relationship. This experiment uses the emotion regulation strategy "cognitive reappraisal" to help participants down-regulate their anger responses to (political) stimuli. The reappraisal of anger is expected to decrease prejudice towards out-partisans. This research highlights the crucial role of threat and related emotions in deepening polarized rifts and driving supporters of opposing parties further apart. In doing so, it provides critical insights for future interventions aimed at mitigating polarized attitudes and fostering intergroup understanding.

The Role of Marginalized Group Attitudes on Out-Partisan Evaluations

Cansu Paksoy, University of Deusto, Ali Çarkoğlu, Koç University, Markus Wagner, University of Vienna

"In the current study, we test how minority group attitudes are related to affective polarization. Inspiring from the social sorting hypothesis of Mutz (2015; 2018), and theories in cognitive-political psychology, we expect that attitudes towards disadvantaged groups are likely to expand partisan attitudes in polarized settings. For this aim, we will conduct experiments to test the effect of positive indirect intergroup contact with various disadvantaged groups on partisan prejudice, focusing on Turkey. Specifically, AI-generated standardized vignettes to induce positive contact experiences with Syrian minorities, Alevis, LGBTI+ individuals, and Kurdish individuals will be tested, utilizing around 360 individuals. Upon deciding on the most successful vignettes, in the main study, we will recruit 1280 participants via Facebook Ads to conduct the survey experiments testing the effect of contact with disadvantaged groups on partisan attitudes.

We expect that the effect of positive contact experiences on partisan animosity depends on the out-party's policy stance. Therefore, positive attitudes towards a minority group will decrease animosity toward parties that support that minority group's rights while increasing prejudice toward those who support a party opposed to that minority group. Specifically, positive attitudes towards Syrians will increase warmth towards the AKP while decreasing it towards the CHP. Second, contact with the LGBTI+ community and Alevis will boost warmth towards pro-social rights CHP and DEM Party supporters while decreasing the warmth ratings for AKP and MHP supporters. Third, contact with the Kurdish minority will boost warmth towards pro-Kurdish DEM Party supporters while decreasing it towards far-right MHP supporters.

The current investigation has a vast potential to contribute to AP literature by highlighting the critical role of various non-political social groups and identities in predicting partisan prejudice, and providing new insights into depolarization studies targeting different ethnic and social identities instead of "thick" partisan identities to yield stronger depolarization effects."

Transitional Patterns of Affective Polarization before and after Germany's 2025 Federal Election

Leon Walter, Bielefeld University, Yann Rees, Bielefeld University, Jonas Rees, Bielefeld University

Affective polarization (AP) captures the extent to which supporters of different political parties perceive each other with hostility. While AP has been widely studied in the U.S., its dynamics in European multi-party systems remain less understood, despite evidence of comparable intergroup tensions across party blocs. Elections represent critical junctures in these dynamics: campaigns heighten intergroup competition, while electoral outcomes and coalition formation may either open possibilities for de-escalation between camps or further entrench partisan divides. Using feeling thermometer data at three time points from N = 400 respondents in the Bielefeld Federal Election Survey, we examined AP toward all major German parties around the 2025 Federal Election. Applying Latent Transition Analysis, we

traced shifts in AP profiles directly before, after, and three months after the election. Preliminary results suggest that patterns of intergroup evaluations among parties from the center-left to center displayed notable movement across the election period, whereas positions toward the far-right AfD remained largely stable. Findings will be discussed in light of the dual nature of electoral cycles in multi-party systems: they may foster fluidity and re-alignment within party camps and potential collaborators while leaving entrenched boundaries toward radical challengers intact.

Polycrisis, fear and affective polarization in Germany

Evelyn Bytzek, RPTU University Kaiserslautern-Landau

"The increase of affective polarization in Western democracies causes concern in the political science community. Consequently, there is a growing field of research on explanatory factors with one avenue looking at the role of emotions. Currently, these studies focus on the effect of anger on affective polarization and find the expected positive link. However, the emergence of a political polycrisis (climate change, immigration, war/terrorism) makes citizens not only angry, but also afraid. Still, how fear and affective polarization are linked is unclear: Renström and colleagues (2023) find a negative effect (i.e., the more afraid, the less polarized), while Yu et al. (2021) argue for a positive relationship since the unpleasant experience of feeling afraid will most likely be attributed to the political opponents and thus increase affective polarization. The proposed paper aims at contributing empirical evidence to this on-going debate and therefore studies the link between fear of several political crises and affective polarization by making use of survey data gathered around the 2025 German federal election.

Session E03: Political communication, rhetoric, crises and mobilizing moderates

I voted therefore I am not - Political self-effects through voting and social media interactions in the U.S. and German Federal Elections

Jana Dreston, Universität Duisburg-Essen, Josephine Schmitt, Universität Duisburg-Essen, German Neubaum, Center for Advanced Internet Studies Bochum

"When people express themselves (e.g. their political views), it affects not only their environment, but also the individuals themselves (Bem, 1972). The latter form of impact is called a self-effect. This phenomenon was initially studied in offline contexts, but social media renewed interest in it, as political actions mediated by social media, such as political discussions and sharing political posts, have been found to affect people's self-concepts.

This pre-registered study expands upon previous research by examining the impact of voting, the most fundamental political behavior, on political self-concepts. Furthermore, it analyzes how offline voting behavior interacts with online political expression on social media, such as sharing one's vote choice and political talk. Using a longitudinal pre-post-election design, we test our hypotheses in two electoral contexts: the 2024 U.S. presidential election (N = 1,148) and the 2025 German federal election (N = 658).

We did not find positive, but null and negative self-effects (concerning political self-concepts such as political identity, self-efficacy, subjective knowledge, political interest) in either election context. Furthermore, we did not find any self-effects of social media sharing or political talk. While these results are not in line with self-perception theory, an analysis of results through the lens of the winning-losing framework and prospect theory helped shed further insights: We found that while political self-concepts did not change for Trump voters, Harris voters reported weakened political self-concepts after the election. For the German sample, we found no interaction between vote choice and a consistent negative effect of voting across all parties.

Our results suggest that while the mere act of voting or sharing information on social media may not necessarily increase people's political self-concepts in the form of self-effects, the outcomes of elections may affect people's political self-concepts, especially in highly polarized political system. "

Manipulation of Heuristic Cues in Binary Ideological Campaigns: A System Dynamics Simulation of Voting Behaviour

Yavora Kazakova, University of York, Penka Petrova, Scenario Simulation Laboratory

"Political campaigns rarely rely on rational deliberation but on carefully managed framing strategies that amplify or diminish the influence of heuristic cues. This study develops a system dynamics model to examine how campaigners' use of framing manipulates the salience of risk aversion, availability, representativeness, affect, anchoring and adjustment, and value- and identity-based appeals, and how these manipulations interact with voters' personality traits and campaign dynamics to shape adoption or rejection of yes/no ideological positions.

Heuristic cues were modelled as manipulable campaign variables, expressed as percentage weights that could be strategically increased or decreased through framing. Personality dispositions were modelled using the Big Five personality model parameterised to moderate responsiveness to heuristic cues. External factors - such as the aggressiveness of media strategies, proportional reliance on social versus traditional platforms, and the daily frequency of statements - were parameterised as systemic drivers. The model employed system dynamics approach, including mathematical formulations, parameter variation, and Monte Carlo simulations to explore interdependencies and feedback loops within and across subsystems.

Simulations revealed that outcomes depend on which heuristic cues are emphasised and to what extent. Framing that amplified representativeness, affect, or value-based appeals reinforced diffusion when aligned with trait predispositions. Availability and anchoring/adjustment effects were influential at the system level but showed no strong correlations with specific personality traits. Personality traits moderated the impact of other manipulations: neuroticism made individuals more likely to adopt messages when the risk aversion variable was strongly emphasised, openness heightened responsiveness to changes in the composition and relative strength of heuristic cues. Agreeableness increased susceptibility to value-based arguments. External campaign aggressiveness shaped diffusion, but both social media and traditional channels stabilised adoption. Balancing and reinforcing

loops across subsystems occasionally produced counterintuitive outcomes, such as instances where increasing the strength of framing led to a reduction in message uptake."

Political Rhetoric in Transition: Reassessing Persuasive Strategies and Style in Contemporary Discourse

Ofer Feldman, Doshisha University, Kyoto University

Political rhetoric is more than just language—it is a strategic psychological tool designed to influence perception, emotion, and behavior. This paper explores the intersection of psychology and political rhetoric, demonstrating how politicians use cognitive biases, emotional appeals, and identity-based narratives to mobilize support, shape public opinion, and maintain power. Drawing from research in cognitive psychology, social identity theory, and political communication, the paper will break down common rhetorical strategies and their psychological underpinnings by focusing specifically on the evolving features of modern political rhetoric across both Western and non-Western societies and uncovering how political rhetoric has adapted in response to changing social, cultural, and historical contexts. Utilizing data from political speeches and public discourse across a diverse set of countries (e.g., Germany, Poland, Indonesia, Spain, Japan, China, Israel, the UK, Malaysia, Australia, the Philippines, and Brazil), the paper traces the trajectory of rhetorical shifts, highlighting changes in argumentation strategies, modes of delivery, and framing techniques employed in addressing mass audiences. One of the key contributions of this paper lies in its global scope. Rather than focusing solely on one country, Western democracies, or well-documented political systems, the paper integrates case studies from a broad range of national contexts to understand both convergences and divergences in rhetorical styles. Through this lens, the paper explores how local traditions, institutional frameworks, media landscapes, national character, group membership, and ideologies influence the development of modern rhetoric. The paper also considers the impact of technological advancements and social media, which have redefined how politicians engage with the public and present themselves in the digital age. The findings reveal a complex interplay between enduring rhetorical traditions and innovative communication tactics tailored to contemporary audiences.

The Reluctant Ally: Mobilizing Moderate Opinions to Advance Social Change

Adrian Lüders, University of Hohenheim, Dino Carpentras, ETH Zurich, Philip Warncke, University of Limerick, Michael Quayle, University of Limerick

Within democratic societies, mobilizing attitudinal moderate and ambivalent citizens reflects a key challenge for groups seeking to advance social change. This talk presents a network-based approach suitable to explore relationships between "strong" and "moderate/ambivalent" opinion-based groups at the macro-level. The approach models spatial distances between belief systems within a given sample based on correlations between item-response options, positioning co-selected item-responses in relative proximity and unrelated item-responses further apart. As a result, the obtained network provides information about the range of response-opinions that "belong" to a specific belief-system. We demonstrate the utility of this strategy to inform both fundamental psychological processes as well as societal outcomes. For example, using data from the Wellcome Global Monitor (N = 150.000), we predict vaccination coverage within populations based on the

relative isolation of pro-vaccination belief-systems in previous waves. In addition, using quasi-experimental data, we show that belief systems align with latent group identities, and that greater network distances between beliefs predict less favorable social evaluations and stronger outgroup categorization. The talk concludes with a critical reflection on strategies to advance social change. Drawing on the social identity-approach it highlights the paradoxical effect that the same identity-management strategies that enable groups to maintain perceptions of agency and coherence may, at times, undermine broader social allyship and even provoke backlashes.

Mapping Democratic Support: A Multi-Method Typology for Targeted Persuasion

Philipp Mendoza, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Alexander Wuttke, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Maintaining citizen support for democracy is crucial to preventing democratic backsliding. Yet, interventions to foster such support are usually designed as one-size-fits-all, overlooking that citizens vary in both their substantive commitments to democracy and in the strength with which they hold them. As a result, strategies that may work for some audiences are less effective for others. This paper takes the first step toward tailoring democratic persuasion by developing a multi-dimensional typology of democratic support in Germany. Drawing on the first wave of a new national panel, we integrate multiple measurement paradigms. Standardized survey items capture diffuse and specific support for democratic principles. Open-ended definitions of democracy and brief word associations reveal latent themes that fixed response options may miss, reducing social desirability bias and uncovering unanticipated fissures. Behavioral indicators provide an additional lens on willingness to act: participants can sign real pro-democracy petitions, allocate survey rewards to civil society organizations, or spend a short period of paid free time on pro-democratic activities. We apply latent profile analysis on these data to identify audience segments without presupposing their number or character. Profiles are described with theoretically relevant covariates such as political trust and efficacy, and with indicators of attitude strength, including perceived importance, certainty, and the depth of articulated considerations. Together, these measures distinguish what people believe about democracy from how firmly those beliefs are held. The result is a transparent, multi-method map of democratic support in Germany. Situated within the DFG project “How to Make the Case for Democracy”, this diagnostic contribution not only clarifies where commitment is robust, fragile, or conditional but also lays the foundation for theorizing and testing targeted persuasion strategies that can strengthen democratic resilience.

Session F01: Climate psychology (responsibility, emotions, action/inaction)

Change by Compassion: How Moral Framing Shapes Reactions to Pro-Environmental Advocacy

Daniel Florian Dorji Gratzner, University of Vienna, Jana Katharina Köhler, University of Vienna

"People often respond negatively to those they perceive as morally superior—a phenomenon known as do-gooder derogation (DGD). This reaction can reduce support for pro-environmental behaviour and hinder socio-ecological transformation.

Since DGD serves to protect one's moral self-concept, the way individuals relate to themselves plays a crucial role in how they respond. To explore this, we integrate existing research on DGD with insights from mindful self-compassion and nonviolent communication. We propose two contrasting constructs that operationalise this connection: moralistic (self-)evaluation (ME/MSE) and compassionate (self-)evaluation (CE/CSE). These describe how people communicate behavioural requests, and how observers respond—either with self-criticism and defensiveness or with self-kindness and openness to change. We hypothesised that moralistic messages trigger MSE and increase DGD, while compassionate framing fosters CSE and strengthens intrinsic motivation for change.

We tested this framework in a pre-registered within-subject online experiment ($N = 458$ non-vegan German speakers). Participants viewed video clips of a vegan woman explaining her motivations, using either moralistic or compassionate language. Messages framed with compassionate evaluation led to significantly greater likability ($r(rb) = .88$) and persuasiveness ($r(rb) = .74$). Mediation analysis showed that likability fully mediated persuasiveness ($\beta = 0.69$), eliminating the direct impact of perceived message morality.

These findings suggest that moralistic messaging—arguably aiming at extrinsic motivation via fear of judgment—undermines communicative effectiveness. In contrast, compassionate messaging supports intrinsic motivation and self-compassion, enabling behavioural change without triggering resistance.

Our study contributes to political psychology by introducing a bridging conceptual framework that links DGD to moral framing and identity threat. It also offers practical guidance for activists and science communicators on how to promote behavioural change without provoking defensiveness.

Cognitive Dissonance and Climate Inaction: A Political Psychology Approach to Emotional Coping Strategies in the Climate Crisis

Sabri Efe, İstanbul Medeniyet University

Despite increasing public awareness of the climate crisis, the gap between knowledge and action remains a significant concern. Individuals often acknowledge the severity of climate change, yet this acknowledgment does not sufficiently translate into behavioral engagement. This study addresses this paradox within the framework of political psychology, focusing particularly on the emotional and moral discomfort produced by inaction through the lens of cognitive dissonance theory.

A mixed-methods approach will be employed. In the quantitative phase, a survey will be administered to approximately 250 participants to measure climate awareness levels, emotional responses (e.g., guilt, anxiety, anger), behavioral intentions, and dissonance-reducing strategies such as denial, trivialization, or externalization of responsibility. The qualitative phase will involve in-depth semi-structured interviews with 20 participants to explore how individuals justify their inaction and how they make sense of this psychologically.

This dual-method design allows for a comprehensive understanding of the psychological barriers to climate action.

Preliminary findings suggest that individuals with high climate awareness frequently resort to emotional defense mechanisms to cope with the discomfort of inaction. Many externalize responsibility (e.g., blaming governments or corporations), minimize their own impact, or disengage entirely from distressing information.

This study aims to contribute both theoretically and practically by combining the emotional, cognitive, and political dimensions of climate inaction. The findings are expected to contribute to more effective climate communication and policy design from a psychological perspective.

Ultimately, the study underscores that knowledge alone is not enough, offering a political psychology perspective on urgent discussions surrounding climate justice and collective responsibility.

Dimensions of Conservatism and their relationship to concern for global climate change versus regional nature

Michael Zehetleitner, Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Timo Kuhle, Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Katharina Mayer, Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

Conservatism reliably predicts negative attitudes towards global climate change. However, conservatism is a heterogeneous phenomenon including varying degrees of intensity for conventionalism, fiscal restraint, xenophobia, misogyny, out-group aggression, sociocentric values, religiosity, system justification, populism and reduced individualism.

This preregistered study (N=1,300) investigates the differential predictive powers of these markers of conservatism with regard to global climate change versus regional nature. Analytic strategies combine variable-centred Bayesian regressions and conditional Bayesian networks to identify general and direct/screened-off associations and person-centred clustering to detect conservative subgroups with environmentally friendly views.

By disaggregating various dimensions of conservatism and moral values, modelling conditional dependencies, and integrating person- and variable-centred approaches, the study moves beyond averaged relationships between variables towards identifying eco-conservative groups and their moral and attitudinal profiles.

The regression relationships reveal a nuanced picture: Socio-centric variables and xenophobia positively associated with regional nature and negatively with global climate concern; conventionalism, misogyny, and fiscal restraint negative with global climate, populism positive with regional nature concern; social dominance negative with regional; care positive with both and fairness with regional. Two typically conservative values relate positively to climate concern: system justification and purity. Between 3% and 29% of the sample exhibit both high conservative attitudes and high concern for climate change.

The Bayesian Network analysis reveals direct relationships between pairs of variables conditioned on all other variables. The direct associations with climate change are regional concern, system justification, fairness and purity (positive) and loyalty conventionalism, fiscal

restraint, liberty and xenophobia (negative). For regional nature concern, these are global climate concern, liberty, xenophobia, care, loyalty (positive) and out-group aggression (negative). Furthermore, there are suppressing and cancelling paths, eg. for religiosity.

These patterns suggest a multidimensional perspective: conservatism is not monolithic and has a differentiated relationship with concern for global climate change and regional nature.

Do We Owe the Future Anything? Perceptions of Responsibility and Intergenerational Justice in the Age of Environmental Crises

Isabell Diekmann, Paderborn University

Environmental crises constitute a profound and ongoing threat to younger generations, with projections indicating that children born today will face the conditions of the year 2100, including increased frequency of extreme weather events and rising global temperatures. This looming reality has catalyzed youth-led movements demanding intergenerational justice, exemplified through protests and strategic legal actions. Consequently, the issue of “today-tomorrow” inequality has gained increasing prominence within social and political discourse.

This study investigates intergenerational justice by examining individuals’ perceived environmental responsibility of current generations toward future ones. Utilizing a cross-sectional survey design with a final sample of $N = 1,140$ participants, the study assessed attitudes regarding the willingness to make personal sacrifices—such as reducing living standards—to safeguard environmental conditions for future generations.

The data reveal that 77% of respondents in Germany express willingness to lower their living standards for the sake of future environmental protection. Key predictors of perceived responsibility include threat appraisal of climate change, recognition of its current impacts, and active engagement in environmental stewardship behaviors. Notably, religious affiliation emerges as a positive correlate of heightened responsibility, while trust in technological progress shows a modest positive association with intergenerational responsibility, challenging some expectations regarding reliance on technological solutions.

These findings contribute to the growing body of research on the determinants of intergenerational justice perceptions, advancing our understanding of motivational factors underlying pro-environmental responsibility. Moreover, the results provide valuable implications for designing interventions aimed at fostering sustainable attitudes and mitigating potential conflicts between present and future generations.

Citizen misestimation of mitigation impact of climate policies in France

Vanessa Hiess, Technical University Berlin, Jonas Ludwig, Technical University Berlin, Elke Weber, Princeton University, Eric Johnson, Columbia University

France, like other governments around the world, is proposing various policy solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. An important precondition for successful implementation of such policy is citizens’ support, which is closely linked to perceived policy effectiveness in terms of reducing emissions. But do citizens know which policies have the greatest potential to reduce carbon emissions? For example, would establishing limited-traffic zones in French cities have greater emissions impact than a nation-wide glass deposit system? In Study 1 (N

= 288) we show that citizens' ability to adequately assess the emissions impact of national climate policy is limited and systematically biased by external factors. This observation aligns with the theory of attribute substitution, which suggests that decision-makers can rely on easier, more accessible information when answering complex questions. In this case of judgments of mitigation potentials, we find that participants rely on misleading cues like how much they personally endorse, or to what extent they are familiar with a policy proposal. In Study 2 (N = 399), we tested an intervention aimed at reducing the distorting impact of attribute substitution by having participants think more on a system-level frame, such as thinking about how many people and how often people would be affected by the policy. There was no impact of this intervention on judgment accuracy, emphasizing the persistence of judgmental biases in this paradigm.

Session F02: Ideology, threats & belief-systems (incl. voting heuristics)

How Maintenance, Avoidance, and Approach Orientations in Natural Texts Influence Conservatives' versus Liberals' Political Support Across Democratic Systems

Yael Ecker, University of Cologne, Joris Lammers, University of Cologne

Predominant theoretical frameworks conceptualize conservatism as fundamentally rooted in an epistemological need for structure—a drive for order, predictability, and clear knowledge. Drawing from the ternary goal model, which distinguishes approach, avoidance, maintenance goals as separate basic goals, we argue that conservatives' need for structure reflects an underlying affinity for maintenance goals. While some research links conservatism to threat sensitivity—suggesting conservatives favor avoidance goals—we propose that in the absence of threat conservatives' central motivation is maintenance. We tested this by examining how goal orientations in political communications influence support across democratic contexts. Using a multilingual deep learning model, we rated authentic political statements from U.S. (2008/2012), German, Belgian, and Dutch election platforms on three dimensions: maintenance (preserving valued states), protection (preventing negative states), and progress (achieving desired states). Across five pre-registered studies (N=1,390), participants rated their support for these real-world political statements. Results showed that conservatives supported messages more as maintenance-orientation increased and less as protection-orientation increased. This pattern held across environmental policy in all but the Dutch sample and extended to broader political domains in the U.S. sample. These findings support our theoretical framework, suggesting that conservatives' epistemological need for structure facilitates maintenance rather than avoidance goals, offering new insights for reducing political polarization through strategic communication that appeals to conservatives' fundamental maintenance motivation.

Keep Calm or Worry on - A Multi-Study Investigation of how Citizens Cope with and Emotionally Regulate Societal Threat

Linda C. Bomm, University of Amsterdam, Bert N. Bakker, University of Amsterdam

Citizens worldwide are confronted with a multitude of threats spanning across geopolitical, environmental, societal, economic, and technological domains. These threats have the

potential to evoke strong negative emotions. However, it is unlikely that citizens constantly remain in this emotional state. Instead, citizens likely regulate their feelings of threat. How the feelings evoked by societal threats are regulated may considerably shape the socio-political consequences of these threats. Yet, little is known about how exactly citizens cope with societal threats. In this multi-study investigation, we address the two research questions: 1.) How do citizens cope with societal threats?; 2.) Does the way citizens cope with societal threats differ between different threats?

We investigate our research questions across three studies, drawing from the emotion regulation literature (e.g., Gross, 1998). In Study 1 (N = 1927, Netherlands), we explore self-reported threat coping strategies in a qualitative approach. In Studies 2 (N = 1341, Netherlands) and 3 (N = 2572, Austria), we quantitatively investigate threat coping strategies, using new survey-based measures informed by the insights from Study 1.

We find that the strategies citizens employ to cope with societal threat include some, but not exclusively established emotion regulation strategies. For example, the established emotion regulation strategy reappraisal (i.e., cognitively changing how one perceives a threat) emerges as a consistently at least moderately relevant coping strategy, across different threats. At the same time, the newly emerged strategies motivation to act (i.e., wanting to contribute to action against a threat) and resignation (i.e., emphasizing that there is nothing one can do about a threat) are also employed to cope with societal threats. Comparing the coping patterns across different threats, we find that different threats are coped with in different ways. This project sets the foundation for a research agenda on coping with societal threats.

Limits of an Open Mind: Intellectual Humility's Role in Motivated Reasoning

Josef Lolacher, University of Oxford, Marlene Sophie Altenmüller, Leibniz Institute for Psychology (ZPID)

Political opponents increasingly diverge not only in their policy preferences but also in the acceptance of policy-relevant facts. This is often fuelled by motivated reasoning—the tendency to privilege evidence supporting one's prior beliefs while dismissing contradictory information. Intellectual humility (IH)—the awareness of one's cognitive limitations and openness to revising beliefs—has been proposed as a potential remedy to this bias and a pathway to reducing political polarization. We examined this claim in an experiment (N = 1,002; approximating a representative German sample) in which participants evaluated policy-relevant research on two contentious issues: immigration and gender-conscious language. Across both topics, participants rated researchers as more trustworthy, findings as more credible, and they reported more support for policymaking informed by that evidence when results aligned with their prior attitudes. Contrary to theoretical expectations, IH did not moderate these effects, suggesting that even intellectually humble individuals are vulnerable to motivated cognition in politically charged contexts. However, IH predicted higher general levels of trust in science, irrespective of evidence congruence. Exploratory analyses and a replication study point towards the robustness of these findings, underscoring the pervasive nature of motivated reasoning and its potential to erode shared factual ground relevant for evidence-based policymaking.

When Do Citizens Follow or Lead? Unpacking the Role of Voters' Attitude Certainty

Beatriz Lasheras Mas, University of Vienna

How do voters achieve congruence between their issue and party preferences despite limited knowledge of party positions? Understanding this is crucial, as voter-elite alignment is a cornerstone of democratic health. I argue that whether voters adjust their positions to align with their party or choose a party based on their pre-existing preferences depends on how certain they feel about their stance on an issue. When voters are uncertain about their positions—such as on redistribution—they use social identities like partisanship as heuristics, aligning their positions with their party's stance without considering policy explicitly. Conversely, voters with certain positions achieve congruence by selecting a party that matches their views, rather than adjusting their attitudes to fit their party. I test this argument using panel data from the British Election Study, focusing on voter responses to the Labour's shift toward increased redistribution under Jeremy Corbyn. By tracking voters' positions and party preferences before and after the shift, this study seeks to disentangle the role of self-reported attitude certainty in explaining why voters sometimes appear to follow their parties blindly.

Who Do Citizens Vote For? Theory and Evidence on Whether Citizens Vote For Themselves, Society, or Those in Between

Luca Versteegen, University of Vienna, Greta Gross, Berlin Social Science Center (WZB), Lilliana Mason, Johns Hopkins University

Political scientists have produced extensive evidence on the many factors explaining why citizens vote the way they do, including attitudinal, strategic, psychological, and supply-side aspects. Who they vote for, however, has received much less attention. In this paper, we advance the widely used but underdeveloped distinction between egotropic vs. sociotropic voting, which discusses the extent to which personal or societal interests motivate citizens' vote. Specifically, we argue and empirically demonstrate that the distinction between "personal" and "societal" is conceptually fuzzy and neglects the many shades between oneself and society. Therefore, we propose to understand citizens' motivations on a continuum, ranging from personal through group-based to societal and even supranational layers. We develop our critique and the proposed continuum by means of text-analyzed interview, open-response survey, and experimental data from Germany and the US. Our novel classification on who people vote for raises opportunities for future research and far-reaching practical implications.

Please note: This project is at an early stage, but we are currently substantially developing a political psychology account to explain the distinction between egotropic and sociotropic. We believe that this conference could provide useful feedback to this project, thus allowing us to maximize its impact.

Session F03: Misinformation: narratives, inoculation, source cues and debunking

Optimal Allocation of Fact-Checking Resources on Long-Term Prevalence of Online Misinformation

Morgan Wack, University of Zurich, Patrick Warren, Clemson University, Mustafa Alam, Clemson University

We use a stylized compartmental model to analyze the long-term dynamics of misinformation propagation in social networks, focusing on the allocation of fact-checking resources. We conceptualize a false narrative as spreading through multiple types of claims, which can differ in their virality and resistance to fact-checking interventions. The analysis reveals that harder-to-debunk claims can persist when fact-checkers concentrate on easy-to-debunk claims — an approach commonly arising from crowd-sourced, consensus-based systems such as Community Notes. As a result, these practices ultimately become the primary vector sustaining false narratives over time. We characterize the optimal allocation of fact-checking effort and show that, given sufficient resources, effective long-term mitigation of misinformation requires devoting resources to both easy and hard-to-debunk claims, no matter their initial virality or perceived cost. These findings challenge the prevailing focus on short-term fact-checking "successes" and underscore the need to supplement crowd-sourced interventions with targeted professional fact-checking of complex or resilient misinformation. The theoretical framework provides actionable guidance for platforms and policymakers seeking to minimize the long-run societal impact of persistent false narratives. Prior to the conference we plan to pair this theoretical model with a survey involving posts which have been identified through the Community Notes program. The survey aims to test the implications of the model and determine whether consensus-based systems risk exacerbating the threat of online conspiracies.

Politricks: Teaching How Political Misinformation Spreads in the Field

Shaye-Ann Hopkins, WU, Rebecca M. Rayburn-Reeves, ICCM, Joseph J. Sherlock, King's College London

In an age of excess information, the rise of misinformation poses a growing threat to democracy. Inoculation theory suggests that exposing individuals to manipulative techniques can strengthen their resistance to misinformation, improve discernment, and increase their confidence in that ability, with effects persisting over time. However, little research has directly compared the effectiveness of active learning tools, such as gamified interventions, to passive learning methods, like informational guides, or examined how these resources can effectively reach target populations.

To address this gap, we developed two tools designed to enhance users' ability to recognize election-related misinformation: an interactive game (Politricks) and a passive inoculation guide.

Through a field study, we examined engagement with online ads linking to Politricks and its impact on discernment. Results show that X (formerly Twitter) ads can effectively drive individuals engaging with misinformation to the game. Furthermore, there is evidence of increased detection of manipulative content at post-test, suggesting inoculation effects can be generalized to real-world scenarios.

The effects of (un-)congenial media sources on conspiracy debunking: pulling conspiracy believers out and pushing conspiracy non-believers in?

Chiara Valli, University of Bern, Tobias Rohrbach, University of Bern, Silke Adam, University of Bern

Conspiracy beliefs that attribute the causes of significant events to secret plots of powerful and malevolent actors are widespread in our societies. While growing body of research seems to suggest that debunking can reduce belief in conspiracy theories, debunking may fail – and in some cases even backfire – depending on message, receiver and source characteristics. In this article, we seek to test how journalistic source cues shape the acceptance of debunking messages. Drawing on the political motivated reasoning account, we expect that debunking messages from ideologically aligned sources will be more persuasive than those from uncongenial sources. We also seek to understand whether – and how – the perceived ideological alignment of the media sources interacts with the predispositions of message recipients. Two questions guide our inquiry. First, focusing on people with a strong conspiracy mentality, we ask whether receiving a debunking message from a congenial media source can reduce the likelihood of resistance or backfire effects. Second, focusing on people with weak conspiracy predispositions – who are typically more receptive to debunking messages – we explore whether uncongenial sources can undermine message acceptance and, in turn, activate conspiratorial thinking. In doing so, we contribute to a new field of research that seeks to understand the interplay of source effects and predispositions on debunking success. To test our assumptions, we conduct an original experiment with a quota-based sample of approx. N = 1000 Swiss-German citizens, in which the media outlet – and thus the ideological source cue – of the debunking article is randomized.

The Role of Group Identity and Issue Type in Predicting Misinformation

Cansu Paksoy, University of Deusto, Cengiz Erişen, Yeditepe University

The present study focuses on political and non-political (scientific) issues and compares the effects of belief accuracy in two types of misinformation. Drawing upon the Identity-based Model of Political Belief (Van Bavel & Pereira, 2018), we argue that political information implies partisan identities; thus, political misinformation might be more prone to the political group identity effect compared to the non-political misinformation. We expect that political group identification will be negatively associated with belief accuracy in political misinformation (i.e., higher motivated directional reasoning) (H1), while it is unrelated to belief accuracy in non-political (scientific) misinformation (H2). We tested these hypotheses utilizing a representative survey data from Turkey (n=1016). Specifically, we tested how political group identification and political identification strength are related to political (issues on economy, immigration flow) and scientific (GM foods, Vaccines, Climate Change) issues. We found that party identification and party identity strength matter mainly for the political issues, with the exception of the climate change issue. We discuss findings in the light of literature discussing issue variance in misinformation and politicization of non-political issues such as climate change.

Session G01: Computational Political Psychology: Insights on Culture, Trust, Polarization, and Climate Activism

Panel Abstract

Political psychology seeks to explain how individuals and groups navigate authority, morality, and collective challenges such as the climate emergency. These demand that societies coordinate action under risk, uncertainty, and polarization. Yet political psychology increasingly faces questions that require tools capable of addressing scale, complexity, and dynamics across time. Computational approaches—ranging from agent-based models to large-scale natural language processing—are uniquely suited to meet this need. This panel discusses four projects that illustrate how computational political psychology can advance theory by linking cognitive mechanisms with cultural, institutional, and communicative processes.

The first paper examines democratization and authoritarianism in Germany (1871–1945). Using diachronic text analysis of a corpus of fiction and news articles, it tracks changes in prosociality, trust, anger, and authoritarianism across regimes, highlighting cultural preconditions for political change.

The second paper develops a computational model of epistemic trust, explaining why citizens may abandon institutions even when they process information more accurately than peers. Simulations demonstrate how institutional “stickiness” stabilizes trust during quiet times but creates fragility under shocks, providing a framework for understanding the collapse of trust in science and governance.

The third paper analyzes over 10,000 film scripts and 6 million reviews to investigate how moral framing and narrative complexity influence polarization in cultural consumption, revealing how political polarization extends into non-political spaces.

The fourth paper directly addresses climate activism, testing the radical flank effect in Germany. Large-scale NLP of news and comments shows how radical protest by Last Generation shaped portrayals of Fridays for Future, producing asymmetric effects across political camps.

Together, these studies demonstrate how computational political psychology can illuminate cultural, institutional, and communicative dynamics that determine societies’ capacity for collective action. Peter Turchin will serve as discussant, linking the panel’s findings to cliodynamic approaches that explore long-term cycles of cooperation, polarization, and collapse.

When Culture Follows, Not Leads: The Case of Exogenous Democratization in Germany (1871–1945)

Michael Kvasin, University of Vienna, Claus Lamm, University of Vienna, Mauricio Dias Martins, University of Vienna

Germany's recent history has been characterized by economic and political crises, fascism, and two global wars. While obstacles existed until the final establishment of democracy, the

underlying cultural preferences remain understudied. Here, we compiled a corpus of German fiction and analyzed the expression of cooperation and tolerance, replicating previous studies on democratization. We developed bag-of-word dictionaries measuring multiple facets of cooperation and tolerance to track their diachronic trends through 1890 and 1945 across the German Empire, Weimar Republic, and Third Reich. We tested whether cooperation and tolerance 1) increased over time, 2) preceded democratic shifts, and 3) followed socioeconomic performance (proxied by real wages and GDP per Capita). Generally, those hypotheses were not confirmed. First, while Openness increased over time, other proxies did not. Second, unlike shifts in England and France, cultural changes followed (not preceded) regime transitions, with Sympathy increasing during democracy and Prosociality and Positivity increasing during autocracy. Finally, while Real Wages and GDPpc may predict Sympathy and Prosociality, these results lacked robustness. We discuss how these findings might have been impacted by the exogenous character of Weimar's democratization, the world wars, and data availability bias due to censorship and a lack of digitized literature from the Nazi-era.

When Institutions Falter: Modeling Trust in Authorities, Peers, and Shocks in the Age of Climate Crisis

Mauricio Dias Martins, University of Vienna

Why do people sometimes distrust experts, even when they provide more accurate information than peer networks? This puzzle is central to political psychology today: trust in epistemic institutions such as science, media, and politics has eroded, undermining society's ability to confront collective challenges—including the climate emergency.

We address this puzzle with a computational model of epistemic trust. The model includes a decision process sensitive to the cognitive costs of information aggregation and a learning process driven by prediction-error minimization. Based on these assumptions, we hypothesized that because individuals expect experts to be more accurate, they overreact to expert mistakes, leading to a decline in trust. At the same time, epistemic authorities provide processing advantages by integrating information more efficiently than peers. Our simulations show that the cognitive benefits of following experts can be outweighed by overreacting to their errors. This effect is particularly pronounced when the environment is unstable and when epistemic authorities are biased.

Building on this foundation, we extend the model with three realistic features of epistemic environments. First, we introduce structured landscapes in which information is clustered, capturing polarization. Second, we model institutional stickiness, reflecting the slow pace at which authorities update internal beliefs. Third, we incorporate periodic shocks, which suddenly alter the informational environment. Results show that authorities retain an advantage in structured landscapes but become fragile under repeated shocks: stickiness stabilizes trust in quiet times yet magnifies vulnerability when rapid adaptation is required. Large shocks, in particular, leave long-lasting scars on institutional trust.

Our work provides a cognitive and information-theoretical account of why institutions, despite their processing advantages and the stabilizing role of stickiness, remain vulnerable under certain conditions. This fragility helps explain why trust in epistemic authorities can

collapse abruptly, undermining societies' capacity to coordinate responses to complex challenges such as climate change.

Uncovering the Moral Foundations of Polarised Movie Reviews

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Are political morality and cultural polarization reflected in movie preferences? We analyzed over 10,000 movie scripts and 6 million critic and audience reviews using Natural Language Processing and Moral Foundations Theory. Compared to audiences, critics gave higher ratings to movies in which liberal moral themes were salient but negatively valenced (e.g., depictions of harm), and used positively valenced liberal moral language in highly rated reviews. Among audiences, movie rating polarization was strongly predicted by the use of divergent moral framings across reviews. However, movie scripts' moral content differences themselves did not robustly predict polarization. Across models, narrative complexity consistently emerged as the strongest predictor of rating divergence between and within groups. In contrast, cast diversity showed no significant effects. These findings suggest that while moral framing matters—particularly in how both critics and audience reviewers respond and disagree—non-political factors like plot complexity may more robustly explain cultural divides in taste.

Radical climate protests shaped portrayals of moderate activists and reader attitudes in German news media

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The radical flank effect (RFE) describes how radical factions influence third-party support for more moderate factions within movements. In the context of climate activism, this effect may explain how radical protests increase public support for climate action by boosting approval of less extreme organizations. However, existing research yields mixed results, neglected underlying mechanisms, and is largely confined to short-term experimental settings. We tested the RFE through a longitudinal case study. Using a novel language processing approach, we analysed shifts in media portrayals and public perceptions of Fridays for Future (FFF) following the rise of the more radical group Last Generation (LG). After validation, we used GPT-4 Turbo to annotate 2,376 news articles and 225,121 user comments from eight German news outlets and tested how (1) LG's emergence, (2) the volume of media coverage, and (3) the expression of anger in coverage influenced stances towards FFF. Our findings show that short-term LG coverage was associated with increased support for FFF in news articles and left-leaning user comments, but decreased support in right-leaning comments, relative to coverage of FFF alone. We found no robust evidence for long-lasting RFEs. Additionally, anger expressed in climate activism coverage predicted lower FFF support in news articles and higher support in user comments but did not appear as underlying mechanism of the RFE. These results highlight how political orientation and media dynamics

shape reactions to radical protest, offering new insights into the contextual and temporal limits of the radical flank effect.

Session G02: Social psychoanalytic perspectives on democracy and authoritarianism: narcissism, resentment and affective foundations

Panel Abstract

Social and relational psychoanalytic frameworks and explanatory concepts developed initially by social psychologists such as Erich Fromm in response to the rise of fascism in 1920s and 30s Germany have enduring relevance for political psychology. In this symposium, historical and contemporary examples of individual and collective forms of resentment, ressentiment, narcissism are used to highlight the affective foundations of democracy and authoritarianism.

Social Psychoanalysis in the Shadow of Fascism and Racism

Roger Frie, Universität Wien

With the contemporary growth of fascist political movements and the pervasive increase of racist thinking, how might today's psychologist or psychoanalyst respond? In the 1930s, during the rapid rise of National Socialism in Germany, a group of left-wing psychoanalysts in Berlin sought to bridge the divide between the political and the psychological. Their approach became known as social psychoanalysis and their most prominent representative was Erich Fromm. What made Fromm stand out was that he was virtually the only psychoanalyst to publicly argue against the threat of fascism at a time when the profession of psychoanalysis believed the interaction with the patient should be the sole focus of attention.

This talk will introduce the progressive social psychoanalytic tradition. I will examine Fromm's arguments against both fascism in the late 1930s and early 1940s and against racism during the height of the Civil Rights movement in the United States in the 1960s. Drawing on Fromm's critique of authoritarianism and on his notion of racial narcissism, we will consider what we can learn from the past in order to respond to the threat of destructive political and social forces in the present. How might contemporary progressive approaches in psychoanalysis seek to address these dual threats? What might today's clinicians and academics learn from a social psychoanalytic perspective?

Democratic Subjects in Mourning? Young People, Rural Peripheries, and the Affective Foundations of Democracy

Paul Obermeyer, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin, Christopher Steffen, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin, Philip Jammernann, University of Innsbruck, Marion Näser-Lather, Goethe University Frankfurt, Claudius Wagemann, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin, Goethe University Frankfurt, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Phil C. Langer, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin

How does democracy become meaningful for young people in their everyday lives? And what happens when its promises are experienced as fragile or broken? This paper draws on the ongoing research project YouReACT – Young People in Remote Regions: Prospects for

Strengthening Democratic Attitudes and Participation (2025–2030), which investigates political attitudes and forms of civic engagement among 18–27-year-olds in rural and border regions of Germany. Based on qualitative interviews, ethnographic observation, and participatory formats, the project explores democracy as a lived practice. It understands democracy not merely as an institutional framework, but a mode of social relatedness that has to be affectively attractive and symbolically compelling.

Our early findings suggest that democratic experience in these regions is structured by ambivalence: young people express desires for recognition, belonging, and agency, but these desires are often met with disappointment, disillusionment, or exclusion. To conceptualize this tension, the paper draws on psychoanalytic notions of mourning and loss: democracy demands investments in promises that can never be fully realized, and subjects are repeatedly confronted with the work of binding disillusionment without falling into resentment or withdrawal. From this perspective, democratic participation can be understood as a form of collective mourning work that transforms frustrated expectations into renewed social ties and civic commitment.

By combining empirical insights with psychoanalytic theorizing, the paper argues that democracy in peripheral spaces is tested both institutionally and psychologically. Its viability depends on how citizens negotiate loss, sustain hope, and invest libidinally in collective life. This has implications for political psychology more broadly: the future of democratic culture may hinge on cultivating spaces where disappointment can be acknowledged without devolving into resentment.

Turkish nationalist diaspora organisations in Germany: Exploring political grievances, solidarity and ongoing ambivalence

Gavin B. Sullivan, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin, Buse Alkoyak, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin, Philipp Wunderlich, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin

Turkish diaspora communities and organisations are known particularly in Germany for supporting conservative, Turkish nationalist and far-right and extreme political stances. In this paper, we report on focus groups conducted with 21 male and female members of a Turkish community organisation in Berlin. Within an affective practices framework and using Reflexive Thematic Analysis, we examine sources of resentment and grievance, look for any instances of resentment, examine how grievances and/or resentment are shared in and/or managed in group interactions and explore possibilities to resolve or improve possibilities for political representation and participation, including greater understanding about Turkish Muslim people living in Germany. Preliminary thematic analysis highlights the frustration and powerlessness of many participants about politicians and politics in Germany, including complex views of anti-immigration stances (e.g., the perceived prioritization of others such as Ukrainian refugees). Group discussion indicated a vital role of community groups in providing support and solidarity for shared frustrations and deeper and related feelings of belonging neither in Germany nor in Turkey and persistent difficulties negotiating inclusion without loss of cultural and religious identities. Discussions on overreactions to displays of the nationalist, rather than far-right, “Grey Wolf” symbol provided rich insights about conditions in which

grievances can become sedimented. A further theme identified in our analysis focuses on potential improvements and possible political inclusion against currents of reactionary and "returning home" to Turkey which participants acknowledged as not providing belonging and acceptance. The implications for policies promoting democratic participation and resisting autocratization are discussed.

"Grandmas against the Right" - Emotional sharing and affective practices in resistance to the far right

Philipp Wunderlich, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin, Gavin B. Sullivan, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin

The initiative "Grandmas against the Right" ("Omas gegen Rechts") is one of relatively few groups in Germany that successfully mobilize civic resistance against the mainstreaming of far-right politics. In this contribution, we draw on data from focus groups accompanied by individual interviews and 360°-video of protest activities to explore the role of emotions and affective practices in the group's activities and in the way that members understand their own involvement. First, our participants emphasize compassion and engage in the solidaric sharing of emotions in the face of threat and rejection. Shared emotions include fear for their own safety and for the future, humiliation, as well as powerlessness and frustration. Second, they playfully engage with their identity as "Grannies", combining sometimes self-deprecating humour with fierce and dignified conviction. Our participants see themselves as deeply committed to values of liberal democracy, tolerance, and solidarity. They trace this commitment back to shared experiences of the post-worldwar generation, and a wish to preserve a liberal society for their grandchildren. Last, participants express anger and indignation not only towards far-right political actors but also towards mainstream parties, the media, and idle bystanders, with which they are deeply dissatisfied. But although many of the "Grannies", counterintuitively seem to share this distrust with those most susceptible to far-right rhetoric, they struggle to extend their solidaric sharing of emotions. Although they acknowledge social issues and legitimate distrust in politics as sources for far-right parties' successes, the "Grannies", themselves often relatively well-situated, deem some of the supporters of those parties as beyond their reach and even express a certain contempt towards them. Accordingly, the group can be both seen as a resistance movement of principled, civic-minded individuals, and as running the risk of conveying a "resentment from above".

Collective Narcissism in a Fragile Present: A Social Psychoanalytic Perspective on Contemporary Nationalism

Katrin Voigt, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin, Thomas Kühn, International Psychoanalytic University Berlin

This presentation explores nationalism in contemporary Western democratic societies through the lens of Erich Fromm's concept of collective narcissism. Departing from the common focus on extreme or fringe manifestations of nationalism, we argue—following Fromm—that nationalism must be understood as a pathology of normalcy, embedded deeply within the psychic and social fabric of everyday life in a world structured by nation states. Rooted in a psychoanalytic-materialist framework, Fromm's notion of collective

narcissism offers a powerful explanation for the current resurgence of nationalism in different Western societies: as a compensatory response to widespread threats to self-esteem in the context of neoliberalism, globalization and multiple crises such as the climate emergency.

Building on the concept of nationalism of the centre (Voigt), we show how nationalist practices are not confined to the political margins but are actively reproduced within the liberal-democratic mainstream, often unconsciously and in banal forms. These practices maintain and mask social inequalities while offering individuals a narcissistic attachment to an imagined superior national identity. Simultaneously, as the concept of an ambivalent national identity (Kühn) demonstrates, such attachments are fraught with internal contradictions, producing unstable and context-dependent national identifications.

Together, these theoretical lenses offer a comprehensive social psychoanalytic understanding of nationalism as both socially structured and psychically motivated. By reintroducing Fromm's critical humanism into the current debate, the presentation outlines how collective narcissism not only reveals the deep insecurities of contemporary subjectivity but also points toward the urgent need for alternative forms of belonging beyond the nation-state.

Session G03: Democracy in Question: The Role of Different Forms of Generalized (Dis)trust, Populist Attitudes, System Justification Believes, and Youth Civic Identity

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Panel Abstract

In the face of growing global challenges (i.e., climate crisis) and perceived inactivity of the government, voters increasingly turn to populist movements in search for positive change. This trend is by far not an issue of the elder generations alone. Rather, youth are increasingly supporting anti-democratic movements. This is worrisome, since adolescence and emerging adulthood are formative periods for political attitudes (Sears & Funk, 1999; e.g., Rekker et al., 2015) and identity formation (Erikson, 1989), making any interference potentially impactful throughout adulthood. Against this backdrop, this symposium aims to investigate critical areas of political development, such as distrust, populism, system justification, and identity. It does so by bringing together four contributions based on longitudinal research. The first presentation differentiates between constructive (moderate) and alienated generalized distrust, highlighting how these distinct forms of distrust affect (dis)trust in individual democratic institutions, civic participation and overall well-being. The second paper examines the development of populist attitudes in adolescents, and how school-based factors may foster democratic resilience. The third study dives into the palliative function of system justifying beliefs for attenuating the harmful effect of perceived environmental threat on depressive emotions. The fourth presentation explores short-term factors in civic identity formation among youth, offering insights into daily contexts that shape political attitudes and inclusive identity. Finally, findings from a longitudinal intervention study aiming at fostering democratic competencies among adolescents through a school-based basic law Initiative are

presented. Collectively, these studies underscore the evolving landscape of democratic values and institutional trust among youth, offering a foundation to better understand and potentially counteract the forces that erode democratic engagement. This panel provides timely insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers aiming to foster a resilient democratic culture amid rising populism and scepticism.

From Moderate Trust to Alienated Distrust: A Longitudinal Study of Political (Dis)Trust Profiles and Their Links to Well-Being and Civic Participation among Czech Youth

Jakub Brojak, Masaryk University, Jan Šerek, Masaryk University

Distrust in democratic systems and institutions is often perceived as a threat to democracy's future. However, research remains inconclusive on whether distrust exists in distinct forms, some potentially beneficial to democracy and others more harmful. Understanding whether distinct forms of distrust exist and affect democracy differently could reveal new ways to bolster democratic engagement and resilience. This study addresses these issues by 1) applying latent profile analysis (LPA) to identify different types of trust and distrust, utilizing constructs such as political alienation and social interpersonal (dis)trust. Diverse profiles of (dis)trust are anticipated, with particular focus on two types: liberal distrust and alienated distrust. 2) Using general linear modelling, we hypothesize that liberal distrust profile will link with higher civic participation and emotional well-being compared to the alienated form. Conversely, the alienated profile is expected to link with a strongly interconnected distrust network across institutions, along with lower levels of civic participation and reduced emotional well-being. This study draws on longitudinal data from seven waves, comprising 1,301 Czech young adults aged 18-30, to test these hypotheses. The findings will indicate whether distinct forms of distrust exist and if these forms have varied impacts on civic participation, inter-institutional distrust, and emotional well-being. This research provides insights into potentially more threatening forms of generalized distrust and offers a way to focus on them, rather than on those forms that might be vital for the democratic system.

Fostering Democratic Resilience: School's Role in Mitigating Populist Attitudes Among Youth

Elise Grunwald, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Astrid Körner, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Peter Noack, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Tobias Koch, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Katharina Eckstein, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena

In the context of growing global challenges and increasing support for populist movements, educating democratically engaged citizens has become increasingly urgent. Even established democracies face the spread of populist and potentially anti-democratic narratives. This longitudinal study examines the development of populist attitudes from a youth psychology perspective, a focus particularly relevant as adolescence represents a critical phase in political attitude formation. While schools are legally mandated to provide democratic education, they also function as crucial socialization contexts influencing young people through both formal curriculum and informal processes like classroom climate. Despite concerning populist trends among youth evidenced in recent elections, research on school-based influences on adolescent populist attitudes remains limited. Data for the present study were collected in two survey waves (early 2024 and 2025) from N = 564 participants (44% female) aged 14-25

from Lower Saxony and Thuringia, attending academic ($n = 245$) and vocational ($n = 319$) school tracks. Using a longitudinal bifactor model with latent change factors, we specified a general populism factor comprising three dimensions: people-centrism, anti-elitism, and Manichean outlook. The bifactor measurement model revealed good model fit. The specified change factors assess intraindividual changes over the one-year period. Additional latent state models for each populism dimension indicated very high correlations over time, demonstrating remarkable rank-order stability in populist attitudes even in this young age group. The central research question—whether school experiences can mitigate the development of populist attitudes over time—is addressed by introducing democratic classroom climate and civic education experiences as predictors, controlling for age, gender, and school track. This longitudinal research aims to identify school-based factors that may foster democratic resilience among young people during a formative period for political attitude development, informing educational policy and practice in strengthening democratic values.

System justification as a buffer against environmental threat among young Czech

Michal Muzik, Masaryk University, Jakub Brojac, Masaryk University

System-justifying beliefs are assumed to fulfill human epistemic, existential, and relational needs, thus serving a palliative function by affecting our perception of the social world. Our research proposes that system justification also serves as a bulwark against the negative emotional consequences of threat perceptions. Specifically, perception of environmental threats is known for its impact on everyday life and causes psychological distress, especially among young people. We are interested in how perceived environmental threat and system-justifying beliefs are associated with unpleasant emotional consequences. Stemming from system justification theory, we assumed that system-justifying beliefs serve as a moderator for the relationship between threat perception and depressive emotions. We expect that perceiving environmental threat will have a positive association with such emotions, but this association can be diminished by system-justifying beliefs. We test our assumptions on a three-way longitudinal sample of 849 young people (18-30 years of age, $M_{age}=23.0$). We employed a random intercept cross-lagged panel model with the moderation effect of the between-person part of system justification beliefs on the within-person effect of environmental threat on depression. Results showed that, on the between-person level, people with stronger system justification perceive less environmental threat and experience less depressive emotions. Conversely, perceiving environmental threat was positively correlated with depression. However, on the within-person level, the changes in system justification were associated with both an increase (between wave 1 and 2) and a decrease (between wave 2 and 3) in depressive emotions. Such results suggest potential limits of the palliative function of the system justification or the instability of the effect over time. Also, despite positive between-person correlations, higher environmental threat predicted a decrease in depressive emotions. Changes in environmental worry were not predicted by either system justification or depression. Lastly, the proposed moderation effect was not supported.

Motor of change: The effect of everyday experiences on Youth's short-term civic identity formation

Anna-Maria Mayer, Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Katharina Eckstein, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Elise Grunwald, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Peter Noack, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Julia Dietrich, Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

The results of recent EU parliament elections (2024) and national elections in various European countries (e.g., Austria) suggest a rising support for far-right and nativist parties. Of the parties' supporters, a sizeable share were young people. Adolescence and emerging adulthood are formative periods for the development of rather stable political attitudes and identities marking them as important periods to examine formation processes. By extension, by understanding which contexts, interactions, and experiences are formative for the development of inclusive and civic identities, we can develop measures to foster those. Research on the daily or short-term development of inclusive and civic identities is still scarce. Nevertheless, following dynamic-system-models, daily or short-term experiences can be the motor for longitudinal developmental change. This study aims to address this gap by examining inclusive and civic identities on a daily and bi-weekly basis. It further aims to examine the contexts, situations, and experiences that self-reportedly shape youth's identities. This study will assess 100 youth (18-24 years) on a daily (n=50) or bi-weekly basis (n=50) on 14 days. Participants will be prompted to report whether they felt today identified with the European group or their civic identity. Data will be collected via voice messages, which will be deductively-inductively content coded. We expect to find at least three categories: persons of interaction, space of interaction, expressed behaviour. Our results will contribute to research on the formation of inclusive and civic identities. Especially, it might shed light on short-term experiences that are particularly relevant for developing those identities.

Strengthening Democratic Competencies among Youth Through a School-Based Basic Law Initiative

Katharina Eckstein, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Elise Grunwald, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Luisa Heinrichs, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Ole Nettels, Universität Bonn, Victoria Lacis, Universität Münster

Amid increasing susceptibility to anti-democratic and populist attitudes, civic education for youth has become of utmost importance. The constitution, as the political foundation of liberal democracies, provides a crucial starting point.

This study investigates whether young people's democratic competencies can be strengthened through an active learning initiative focusing on the German Basic Law (Grundgesetz). At its core is an established volunteer initiative that delivers educational content aimed at fostering basic constitutional knowledge in German secondary schools. These sessions are typically conducted by trained lawyers in the format of a double lesson.

The study evaluates the effects of this initiative by comparing students who participated in the program with students from parallel classes who did not. It is assumed that the initiative will have a significant effect on students' awareness of the importance of the Basic Law, while also fostering critical reflection and stimulating interest in the topic.

The research employs a mixed-methods design, consisting of a quantitative longitudinal survey across three measurement points at 10 schools (grades 8–11; N = approximately 300 adolescents; T1: pre-survey one week before program start, T2: post-survey immediately after program completion, T3: follow-up one month later). In addition, qualitative focus groups will be conducted with students at three of the participating schools. Data collection is ongoing in schools across Germany and will be finished by January 2026. The presentation will report first results and discuss their implications for both research and practice.