



Political Emotions in Times of Crisis: Climate, Inequality, and Democracy
March 11-12th 2026

Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence,
Location: Palazzo Strozzi (5th floor)
Piazza degli Strozzi, 50123 Firenze FI

Wednesday 11 March 2026

14.00-14.10 (Room: Altana)

Introduction:

Manuela Caiani (SNS)

14.10-16.10 (Room: Altana)

Keynote lectures:

Åsa Wettergren (University of Gothenburg): “Feeling the end. Intra-apocalyptic emotive-cognitive work and the temporality of post-apocalyptic environmentalism.”

Anna Durnová (University of Vienna): “Emotional Infrastructures of Democracy: Vulnerability, Crisis, and the Boundaries of Belonging.”

Chair: Manuela Caiani (SNS)

Time	Panel 1: Far-Right Politics and Climate Change	Panel 2: Reflections from the Fields
16:10–17:40	Chair: Nikolaos Saridakis (SNS) Discussant: Batuhan Eren (SNS) Room: Altana	Chairs: Manuela Caiani & Ipek Demirsu (SNS) Discussant: Giovanni Daniele Starita (SNS) Room: Pollaiolo
Papers	<p>-Manuela Beyer & Manès Weisskircher (Dresden University of Technology): <i>Far-right environmentalism as ‘space of love’ – Disentangling the emotional appeal of the Anastasia settler movement in Germany</i></p> <p>-Balša Lubarda (University Pompeu Fabra): <i>Exclusionary environments in an empirical context: Environmentalism and scapegoating in Serbia and Montenegro</i></p> <p>-Alexander Mesarovich (EUI): <i>Learning to Talk Back: Diffusion of Anti-Climate Discourse in Central and Eastern Europe</i></p> <p>-Tim Koch (St. George University of London): <i>Far-Right Networks and the Geopolitics of Net-Zero</i></p> <p>-Veronika Velička Zapletalová (Masaryk University): <i>EU ETS 2 Under Fire: Far-Right Narratives, Policy Contestation, and Carbon Pricing in Central and Eastern Europe</i></p>	<p>-Manuela Caiani & Giovanni Starita (SNS): <i>Farmers’ Protest in Europe and Climate</i></p> <p>-Eduardo Miguel Alvares Pereira Lima Goncalves (SNS): <i>Powered by Distance: Collective Mobilisation Born in the Peripheries and the Case of Anti-Mining Activism in Barroso</i></p> <p>-Nicole Milman-Dörr (University of Siegen): <i>Climate Justice Activists’ and Farmers’ Decolonial Visions of World Order from the Margins</i></p> <p>-Michal Kolmaš (MUP), Ipek Demirsu (SNS), Veronika Frantová (MUP), Martin Páv (MUP), Manuela Caiani (SNS): <i>Voices from the Fields: Emotional Framing of Climate Change Among Czech and Italian Farmers</i></p> <p>-Cecilia Longo (SNS): <i>Tractors, Trade, and Transition: Policy Feedback and the 2023–2024 Farmers’ Protests under CAP 2023–2027</i></p>

Thursday 12 March 2026 (Room Pollaiolo)

Keynote lecture. 09.00-09.45: Luigi Pellizzoni (SNS): “The times of climate emotions.”

Time	Panel 3: Ambiguous Emotion and Climate Change	Panel 4: Emotional Conflicts around Energy Transitions
09:45–11:10	Chairs: Raili Marling & Anna Durnova Discussant: Sussanna Soosaar Room: Pollaiolo	Chairs: Sonja Blum & Nora Habelitz Discussants: Mutual discussant system Room: Strozzi
Papers	<p>-Sarah Helena Schäfer (University of Vienna): <i>Looking Back to Move Forward: The Role of Nostalgia in the Spiritual Climate Discourse of Tibetan Buddhism</i></p> <p>-Sussanna Soosaar & Raili Marling (University of Tartu): <i>Ambiguous Emotions in Estonia’s Climate Policy Debates</i></p>	<p>-Nora Habelitz (Bielefeld University): <i>How Do Emotions Shape Italy’s Policy Debate on Energy Poverty?</i></p> <p>-David Palomera & Peter Starke (University of Southern Denmark): <i>Narratives of Growth and Welfare in the Climate Crisis</i></p>

	<p>-Zsolt Boda & Ana Stojilovska (ELTE Centre for Social Sciences, Budapest): <i>Affective Dynamics in Policy Conflicts: Mapping the Emotions in Discourses around Energy Poverty</i></p> <p>-K.-Ulrike Nennstiel (Hokusei-Gakuen University, Sapporo): <i>Emotional Engagement and Apathy Regarding Climate Change in Japa</i></p> <p>-Sigrid Kroismayr (Vienna University of Economics and Business) & Dimitri Prandner (Johannes Kepler University Linz): <i>How citizens in rural and urban areas think about the environmental and climate crises</i></p>	<p>-Giulia Garzon (Johannes Kepler University Linz): <i>Love, Hate, Us and the Others: Emotion-Laden Resistance to Energy Projects through an Energy Justice Perspective</i></p> <p>-Lovisa M. Mundschenk (UZH), Lisa Janssen (Ghent), Hannah Werner (UZH), Andres Reiljan (EUI), Lorenzo Cicchi (EUI): <i>Heated Opinions: Issue-Based Affective Polarization over Climate Change</i></p> <p>-Christopher Smith Ochoa (University of Duisburg-Essen): <i>Balancing the Transition through Emotional Storytelling: European Civil Society Policy Narratives</i></p>
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Time	Panel 5: Political Emotions in Social Media	Panel 6: Gendered Political Emotions
11:45–13:15	<p>Chair: Fabienne Lind & Hans-Jörg Trenz</p> <p>Discussant: Veronika Ebner</p> <p>Room: Pollaiolo</p>	<p>Chair: Emanuela Lombardo & Ipek Demirsu</p> <p>Discussants: Linda Coufal, Giada Bonu Rosenkranz</p> <p>Room: Strozzi</p>
Papers	<p>-Veronika Ebner, Fabienne Lind, Hajo Boomgaarden (University of Vienna): <i>Hope for the Climate? Constructive Elements in Journalism on TikTok and Their Influence on Social Media Engagement</i></p> <p>-Paolo Gerbaudo (Complutense University of Madrid): <i>Rethinking “Sentiment” as a Dynamic Force in Social Movements</i></p> <p>-Marcos Echevarria Eirea (EUI) & Julià Tudó-Cisquella (University of Bergen): <i>Support and Contestation to the Energy Transition on Social Media</i></p> <p>-Svea Kietzmann (Technical University Dortmund): <i>Between Emotion and Engagement: Protest Communication of the “Last Generation”</i></p>	<p>-Gill Allwood & Helen Kezie-Nwoha (Nottingham Trent University): <i>Gendered Political Emotions in Climate Impact, Adaptation and Resilience</i></p> <p>-Michael Orsini & Shelley Miller (University of Ottawa): <i>Toward an Archive of Feeling: Environmental Activism, Gender, and the Felt Politics of Ableism in Canada</i></p> <p>-Enzo Colombo & Paola Rebughini (University of Milan): <i>Political Emotions and the Politics of the Imaginary among Italian Environmental Activists</i></p> <p>-Selina Mabrouki (Stockholm University): <i>Gendered Temporalities and Political Emotions</i></p> <p>-Marco Giugni (University of Geneva) & Maria Grasso (Queen Mary University London): <i>Gendered Participation in Times of Crisis</i></p>
Time	Panel 7: Climate as a Question of Inequality	Panel 8: Reinvigorating Democracy
14:30–16:00	<p>Chair: Dominik Želinský & Michal Kolmaš</p> <p>Discussant: Irina Aguiari</p> <p>Room: Altana</p>	<p>Chair: Timothy Stacey & Jesse Hoffman</p> <p>Discussant: Christina Klubert</p> <p>Room: Pollaiolo</p>
Papers	<p>-Till Hilmar Hilmar (University of Vienna), Sylvia Herzog Hilmar (University of Vienna), Patrik Gazo (Slovak Academy of Sciences), Janina Hahne Hahne (University of Valladolid), Dominik Želinský (Slovak</p>	<p>-Christina Klubert, Timothy Stacey, Jesse Hoffman, Maarten Hajer (University of Utrecht): <i>Rehearsing Political Participation: Confronting the Tragedy of Democratic Disenchantment</i></p>

<p>Academy of Sciences), Magne Flemmen (University of Oslo): Climate Boundaries: Class and Everyday Perceptions of “Us” and “Them”</p> <p>-Katharina Zimmermann, Laura Lüth (University of Hamburg), Vincent Gengnagel (University of Magdeburg): Entitlement under Pressure: Eco-Social Risks and the Contestation of Welfare Claims</p> <p>-Gabriel Navarro Tilloca (IMT Lucca): Energy and Transport Poverty in Southern Europe</p> <p>-Katharina Crepaz & Alexandra Cosima Budabin (EURAC Bolzano): Heroes, Villains, and Victims of the Alpine Climate Crisis</p> <p>-Ondrej Cisar (Charles University), Manuela Caiani (SNS), Nikos Saridakis(SNS), Linda Coufal (Charles University): <i>Citizens’ Emotional Responses to Climate Activism: Exploring the Reception of Activist Repertoires Through a Visual and Participatory Method</i></p>	<p>-Alice Dal Gobbo & Louisa Parks (University of Trento): Emotions and Democracy in Climate Justice Movements</p> <p>-Alexander Krahmer (University of Applied Sciences Erfurt): Much ado about nothing? – On the strategy of emotionalization in the fight against wind turbines</p> <p>-Wiebke Lass & Fritz Reusswig (Potsdam-Institute for Climate Impact Research, Germany): Climate-related emotional polarization in Germany and the perspectives of transformative changes</p>
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16.15-17.45: Climate change through a photographer’s lens (Room Altana)

Speakers: Edoardo Delille & Giulia Pirmartiri

Discussant: Emma Marzi (SNS)

‘Atlas of the New World: Interactive multimedia presentation on climate change and the future of local communities’

The Atlas of the New World project—developed by Edoardo Delille and Giulia Piermartiri since 2019—creates visual dialogues between present-day landscapes and imagined future scenarios. By overlaying speculative imagery onto environmentally fragile regions such as California, the Maldives, Mozambique, and the Mont Blanc massif, the project reveals not only the ecological consequences of climate disruption but also its profound human toll. In particular, it draws attention to climate-driven migration as communities are forced to relocate due to rising seas, extreme weather events, and diminishing resources. Combining artistic vision with scientific insight, Delille’s interactive presentation will examine the dramatic transformations that climate change may impose on the world map in the coming decades, inviting audiences to reflect on how global landscapes—and human mobility—could evolve in the near future.

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS:

Panel 1

Beyer, Manuela & Weisskircher, Manès (Dresden University of Technology) manuela.beyer@tu-dresden.de

Far-right environmentalism as ‘space of love’ – Disentangling the emotional appeal of the Anastasia settler movement in Germany

The contemporary far right focuses on climate change and environmental issues not only in the arena of party politics, but also within the social movement arena. Existing research has demonstrated that far-right environmentalism is rooted in ideological traditions such as völkisch thought, and nature mysticism as well as in strategic considerations. However, comparatively little attention has been paid to the emotional dynamics through which far-right environmental ideas are articulated, normalized, and mobilized. This paper addresses this gap by examining how emotions—particularly love—are mobilized, structured, and politicized within the far-right environmental movement ‘Anastasia’. The Anastasia movement in Germany is an ecological settler community that has been spreading in rural areas over the past decade. Drawing on the Anastasia novel series, which form the ideological core of the movement, Anastasians promote a self-sufficient rural lifestyle centered on organic farming and spiritual connections to nature. These practices are framed as an alternative to what is portrayed as an emotionally “toxic,” and degenerate modern society. In June 2023, Germany’s domestic intelligence service officially classified the Anastasia movement as a “suspected case of right-wing extremism,” highlighting its political relevance.

The paper analyzes the movement’s emotional discourse with a particular focus on love. Methodologically, the study combines qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews with Anastasia activists, internal movement documents, the Anastasia novels, and media reporting. This multi-source approach allows us to trace how emotions are articulated, normalized, and strategically deployed across different communicative contexts. Our analysis identifies three key dimensions of the movement’s love discourse. First, Anastasians explicitly reject negative emotions such as fear or anger, which are framed as destructive forces associated with modernity, liberal democracy, and urban life. Second, the movement constructs rural settlements as emotionally purified “spaces of love,” where harmonious social relations and natural order are assumed to prevail. These spaces function as affective counter-worlds to perceived societal decline. Third, love operates as a discursive tool of political legitimization: by framing exclusionary ideas—such as ethnic homogeneity and gender hierarchies—in the language of love, care, and harmony, the movement renders its ideology morally acceptable and emotionally appealing. By foregrounding love as a key emotional mechanism of far-right environmentalism, the paper contributes to emerging debates on “authoritarian sustainability”. More broadly, it sheds new light on the emotional underpinnings of contemporary far-right mobilization and demonstrates how seemingly positive emotions can play a central role in anti-democratic and exclusionary political projects.

Lubarda, Balša (University Pompeu Fabra)

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Exclusionary environments in an empirical context: Environmentalism and scapegoating in Serbia and Montenegro

Exclusionary environmentalism refers to forms of ecological thought and practice that mobilize environmental concerns through exclusion, coercion, and boundary-making, thereby undermining the universalist promise of environmentalism as a collective cause (Lubarda and Rodriguez-Labajos forthcoming). It can be conceptualized along two overlapping dimensions: as environmentalisms that are explicitly exclusionary (e.g., ecofascism and green populisms) and as environmentalist frames that implicitly reproduce exclusion as a constitutive element of identity-making (e.g., through ableism, racism, nativism, classism, sexism, speciesism). This paper empirically operationalizes the notion by focusing on one dimension of exclusionary environmentalism that operates across both registers: “scapegoat ecologies” (Schmitt 2019), narratives and practices that attribute environmental harm to marginalized groups, often through humor, irony, or indirect accusation. Such scapegoating obscures the systemic drivers of ecological degradation while redirecting blame.

Drawing on an experimental mixed-methods study in Serbia and Montenegro, the analysis combines a survey of a representative sample of the two populations (n=2,000) and a sub-sample of environmental activists, alongside 36 semi-structured interviews with activists, to unpack how environmentalists and the broader population react to ecological scapegoating frames. This semi-peripheral setting of The Balkans is particularly significant: it produces ironic, irreverent, and dissident sensibilities that resemble what Seymour (2019), although looking into US context, terms “bad environmentalisms,” forms of ecological discourse that trouble mainstream pieties and reveal the contradictions of global ecological politics. By examining how scapegoat ecologies circulate in postsocialist environmentalisms, the paper not only advances the empirical study of exclusionary environmentalisms but also reflects critically on the limits of mainstream environmentalism and the ways in which marginal, semi-peripheral perspectives generate alternative affects, critiques, and political possibilities. In doing so, it contributes to a broader understanding of how exclusionary environmentalisms sustain hegemony while opening space for rethinking transformative ecological politics in the current conjuncture.

Mesarovich, Alexander (EUI)

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Learning to Talk Back: Diffusion of Anti-Climate Discourse in Central and Eastern Europe

The European Union (EU) has been intensifying efforts at decarbonization in recent years, with a wealth of new policies and even the launch of its own “Green Deal”. However, resistance to such policies has also been growing and increasingly a backlash against such policies has gathered strength. Adopting a mixture of new and old anti-climate change tropes, pairing old anxieties with new emotive frames, and pairing it with new conspiracy theories and practices of performance and legitimacy, this new movement transcends national borders. This paper investigates the role of the transnational far-right epistemic community in building this increasingly effective transnational anti-climate coalition. Specifically, it conducts a social network analysis of transnational far-right think tanks, NGOs, and research institutes to trace the diffusion of anti-climate

frames across Central and Eastern Europe from 2020-2025. Further, it links the emergence and activities of these groups to national and EU-level political parties, helping to highlight the practices and locations of socialization which have helped drive recent changes in national and EU-level policy. In doing so, it identifies the role of central individuals and organizations in the development of anti-climate rhetoric, shifts in narratives, and the evolution of emotive and policy frames around climate policy in the region.

Koch, Timothy (St. George University of London) timo.koch@citystgeorges.ac.uk

Far-Right Networks and the Geopolitics of Net-Zero

International far-right networks have historically contributed to spreading climate science misinformation, transforming denial into political mobilization through emotional attachment. Despite growing awareness of think tanks' role in climate policy, little is known about how they collaborate within wider international far-right networks. This paper addresses that gap by proposing the theoretical model of the right-wing "popular front" to conceptualize these networks. I argue that collaboration among actors opposing climate policies is built through three interconnected clusters: policymakers, civil society, and knowledge brokers. The concept of the popular front, rooted in 1930s left-wing anti-fascist alliances, serves as a lens to understand strategic unity across ideological divides, a phenomenon now visible on the right. Knowledge brokers, including think tanks and foundations, play a heightened role by providing resources and media access, though they do not act alone. Their central purpose is alternative knowledge production that challenges mainstream climate science. Through brokerage, they engage with movements and policymakers to test and amplify resonant frames, developing overarching master frames that shape policy and communication. Through analysis of networks like the Alliance for Responsible Citizenship (ARC), I demonstrate how knowledge brokers produce and legitimize these frames. They broker them to activist movements, which amplify frames, and to policymakers, who institutionalize the resulting discourse. This process fuels the far right's transnationalization, creating a unified front from disparate actors. The popular front model reveals how emotional mobilization, centered on fears of economic and cultural loss, is systematically engineered, creating the potential to move climate denial from the fringe into mainstream political conflict. Ultimately, this paper shows how far-right networks weaponize political emotions to polarize debate, reshape identities, and undermine climate governance. It contributes a framework for analyzing the collaborative mechanics of far-right opposition to the global net-zero transition.

Velička Zapletalová, Veronika (Masaryk University)

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EU ETS 2 Under Fire: Far-Right Narratives, Policy Contestation, and Carbon Pricing in Central and Eastern Europe

The introduction of EU ETS 2, extending carbon pricing to buildings and road transport, represents one of the most politically salient elements of the EU's decarbonisation framework. Unlike the first phase of the EU ETS, which largely affected industrial emitters, EU ETS 2 directly influences household energy and mobility costs, thereby increasing its visibility and political contestation. As implementation debates intensify, it is increasingly evident that the perceived legitimacy of ETS 2 is shaped not only by its policy design, but also by the ways in which political

actors communicate and frame its social and economic consequences. This makes the scheme a critical case for examining the politics of climate communication. Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) constitutes a particularly important (yet understudied) context for this analysis. The region is characterised by lower income levels, a stronger dependence on fossil-fuel intensive energy systems, and persistent ambivalence toward EU integration (Perdana & Vielle, 2026). These structural and historical conditions provide fertile ground for political actors to mobilise distributive concerns, national-sovereignty claims, and Eurosceptic narratives in response to climate policy. Recent research shows that far-right parties have increasingly shifted away from explicit climate scepticism toward narrative strategies that reframe climate policy as economically harmful, socially unjust, or imposed by distant EU elites (Schwörer & Fernández-García, 2023). However, we know far less about how these evolving rhetorical patterns are deployed specifically around EU ETS 2, whose household-level impacts create new political opportunities for reframing. This paper examines how far-right parties in CEE narrate and politicise EU ETS 2. Our research applies the Narrative Policy Framework to analyse how policymakers strategically mobilise narrative elements to delegitimise ETS 2 and contest its implementation. The paper explores whether far-right narratives emphasise distributive injustice, national protection, or moralised portrayals of “ordinary citizens” bearing the costs of climate transition. Empirically, the study analyses parliamentary debates, party manifestos, and political speeches of far-right parties in Czechia, Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary between 2022 and 2026. The analysis identifies cross-national patterns and national specificities in narrative construction, with particular attention to how EU ETS 2 is embedded within broader critiques of the European Green Deal and EU climate governance. By situating EU ETS 2 within the communicative strategies of CEE far right, the paper contributes to debates on the politicisation of carbon pricing (Patterson, 2022), climate policy legitimacy (Buzogány, Parks, & Torney, 2025), and the evolving relationship between Euroscepticism and climate governance (Buzogany & Četković, 2021).

Panel 2:

Caiani, Manuela & Starita, Giovanni (Scuola Normale Superiore) manuela.caiani@sns.it

Farmers’ Protest in Europe and Climate

In recent years, farmers across several European countries have mobilized in increasingly intense opposition to climate-related agricultural policies. While the climate crisis and globalisation have deepened farmers’ economic vulnerability and social marginalisation, these dynamics have also made agricultural groups more receptive to populist and far-right discourses. Farmers’ protests have been driven by a combination of material grievances—such as declining incomes, market volatility, and competition from global trade—and opposition to perceived burdens imposed by EU environmental regulations, particularly within the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). From the Netherlands, to Belgium, France, Spain, Ireland, Germany, and the United Kingdom, protest actions have included tractor blockades of roads and ports, occupations of capital cities, and highly symbolic performances aimed at attracting public and media attention. These developments have raised concerns among mainstream political actors about a potential “climate backlash” and its exploitation by right-wing populist forces.

This article provides a comparative analysis of farmers' protest movements related to climate change in Europe between 2020 and 2025. Using Protest Event Analysis based on coverage from major national newspapers, we examine protest events in five EU member states (Spain, France, Italy, Poland, and the Netherlands) as well as at the EU level, focusing on mobilizations taking place in Brussels. The study analyzes the scale, intensity, and evolution of farmers' protests, with particular attention to action repertoires, including disruptive, performative, and violent strategies; organizational targets and issue framing; and the national versus supranational scope of mobilization. We also assess the extent and characteristics of far-right involvement in these protests and its relationship to protest framing and political opportunity structures. Our findings show that while farmers' protests share common grievances across countries—such as low farm-gate prices, unfair competition, and the regulatory burden of environmental policies—the form, intensity, and framing of mobilization are strongly shaped by national contexts. In particular, the institutional strength and political legitimacy of far-right actors play a key role in influencing protest narratives and alliances. Despite their locally embedded character, contemporary farmers' protests reveal transnational patterns that underscore the growing tension between climate governance and social acceptance. These dynamics highlight the urgency of designing a just and inclusive transition toward more sustainable agricultural systems in the current European political cycle.

Goncalves, Eduardo Miguel Alvares Pereira Lima (Scuola Normale Superiore)

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Powered by Distance: Collective Mobilisation Born in the Peripheries and the Case of Anti-Mining Activism in Barroso

This article defines the peripherals as a vast and heterogeneous group of people excluded from the real or perceived centers of decision-making, prosperity and recognition and argues that multidimensional processes of peripheralization in the context of accelerated socio-structural transition are capable of shifting social identities, therefore generating new political cleavages and rekindling forms of collective mobilisation. Such notions were applied to the green transition pushed by the European Union and specifically to the case of the lithium exploration projects in the north of Portugal. If the socio-structural shock represented by the energy transition depends on objective conditions of peripherality that facilitate extractivism and dispossession of vulnerable populations, the multiplication of peripheries can also bring about reinforced social identities and result in a wave of collective mobilisation. Through the lens of social movements and resorting to a triangulation of sources and data, it has been proven that the anti-mining activist groups in Barroso heightened the feelings of subjective peripherality – economic, political, geographic and cultural – in order to gather popular support, build international and intersectional alliances and go beyond politics as usual.

Milman-Dörr, Nicole (University of Siegen)

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Climate Justice Activists' and Farmers' Decolonial Visions of World Order from the Margins

This paper aims to present alternatives to existing visions of world orders that emerge from climate justice activist groups and farmers, foresters, midwives and other nature professionals working together to save endangered nature spaces and species in Europe and Latin America. I focus on interviews with activists as well as digital visual practices of storytelling. I highlight the affective and emotional nature relationships of farmers

and care workers and rural workers living in extractivist nature regions, learning and adopting decolonial visions of climate justice translated by transnational youth climate activists. I show how urban-based youth climate activists join rural communities in Germany to live there, echoing the importance of marginalized Global South voices and their visions of world order from the margins of social movement communities that regard established world climate politics as insufficient. Addressing the crisis of anthropogenic and capitalist versions of global climate change politics, the paper conceptualizes world order through the perspective of social movements, which create and translate new and alternative visions of climate justice through affective storytelling and radical non-violent direct action protests at nature sites such as forests, farms, water reserves with village communities threatened by extractivism. I conceive of questions of cultural and political translation as being central to understanding how critical voices from the margin become visible within broader, transnational public spaces and digital media debates about climate change. I focus on the transnational Fridays for Future (FFF) movement and the Dannenrod forest occupation in Germany and the visual practices of BIPOC and transnational activists in bringing perceived marginalized voices and political visions into the digital conversation in FFF Germany's (trans)national, publicly accessible online spaces.

Kolmaš, Michal (Metropolitan University Prague); Demirsu, Ipek (Scuola Normale Superiore); Frantová, Veronika (Metropolitan University Prague); Páv, Martin (Metropolitan University Prague); & Caiani, Manuela (Scuola Normale Superiore) michal.kolmas@mup.cz

Voices from the Fields: Emotional Framing of Climate Change Among Czech and Italian Farmers

The agricultural sector is highly vulnerable to climate change, yet it also contributes substantially to greenhouse gas emissions. Farmers therefore occupy a paradoxical position, as they are directly affected by climate impacts yet often contest policies that they perceive to be ineffective, unjust or bureaucratic. While existing research has largely emphasised cognitive perceptions, it has paid limited attention to the emotional dimensions of farmers' climate narratives, particularly within the EU. This article introduces an *emotion-to-frame* approach that links specific emotions — fear, anger, resentment, pride and hope — to interpretive frames of vulnerability, injustice, stewardship and resilience. Based on 35 go-along interviews with farmers in South Moravia (Czechia) and Veneto (Italy), two cases representatives of both strong agricultural traditions and recent climate change impacts, we demonstrate that emotions play a key role in meaning-making, influencing how farmers interpret climate change, allocate responsibility, and engage in societal debates. Comparative findings reveal both cross-contextual commonalities and the influence of local historical and political conditions. By foregrounding emotions, this study provides a novel analytical framework for climate discourse and offers practical insights for climate communication and policy design.

Longo, Cecilia (Scuola Normale Superiore) cecilia.longo@sns.it

Tractors, Trade, and Transition: Policy Feedback and the 2023–2024 Farmers' Protests under CAP 2023–2027

Between autumn 2023 and throughout 2024, farmers' protests erupted across the European Union (EU), with mass mobilisation flaring up simultaneously in France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Poland, Romania, and other Member States (MSs). Given the EU-wide nature of the mobilisation,

these protests represent a qualitatively distinct episode of agricultural contentious politics, hence marking a critical moment in the politics of the EU climate transition. While protests drew on national triggers and sectoral particularities, they nonetheless converged around three common issues at the EU level: perceived pressures on farm incomes, more burdensome and stricter environmental regulations, and perceived unfair trade competition. To make sense of EU-wide mobilisation, this contribution investigates how the design of the post-2020 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), newly incorporating the Green Deal objectives, contributed to these protests by reshaping farmers' identities, political positionalities, and emotional landscape(s). Employing a combined approach of policy analysis and protests' discourses analysis, it explores whether and how the new CAP architecture, marked by the layering of conflicting goals such as income support, environmental sustainability, and strategic trade openness, generated shared negative interpretive feedback that catalysed cross-border mobilisation.

Employing Policy Feedback Theory (PFT) as the theoretical framework, and particularly focusing on its interpretive dimension, the contribution conceptualises the CAP not merely as a distributive instrument but as a meaning-producing institution that shapes the perceived social status and legitimacy of its target groups. Amid the shift from "exceptionalism" to "post exceptionalism" in CAP, the post-2020 CAP reform, with its layering of conflicting goals, is analysed as an incoherent policy architecture that sends conflicting signals to farmers regarding their role in the EU polity in the midst of the green transition: were they partners in sustainability, global market competitors, or disposable relics of a past policy paradigm? Methodologically, the contribution employs a comparative case study design based on Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD), selecting France and Italy as case studies. Combining policy analysis of CAP texts and National Strategic Plans (NSPs) with discourse analysis of protest narratives, it finds that despite national differences in agricultural structure, political context, protest organisation, and national CAP implementation, farmers in both countries experienced the CAP reform as a delegitimising force. Protest narratives centred on symbolic exclusion, loss of recognition, and moral grievances linked to perceived feelings of betrayal, policy injustice, and existential threat to traditional agricultural identities. The shared interpretive grievances suggest that, while national variables shaped the form and tone of mobilisation, EU-level layered policy design proved decisive in overriding local buffers and fostering convergence in protest narratives.

Panel 3:

Schäfer, Sarah Helena (University of Vienna) sarah.helena.schaefer@univie.ac.at

Looking Back to Move Forward: The Role of Nostalgia in the Spiritual Climate Discourse of Tibetan Buddhism

This paper examines the ambiguous emotional sphere of nostalgia in the climate change discourse of spiritual communities. Taking the case of Tibetan Buddhism, it analyses how nostalgia integrates both sadness over environmental degradation and the decline of spiritual knowledge as well as hope in future generations and the potential for inner emotional and outer structural transformations. The paper advances the sociology of emotions by analysing how nostalgia operates as an epistemic infrastructure in spiritual climate discourses. Understanding emotions as a form

of knowledge, rather than as contrasts to scientific rationality, the study conceptualises nostalgia as a complex emotional sphere that is not merely underpinned by a romanticised version of a remembered past. Rather, nostalgia in this case contributes progressive elements into the discourse on climate action.

Drawing on 15 interviews conducted with monastics in India as well as texts by Tibetan Buddhist leaders, the study uses Interpretive Emotions Analysis to highlight the role of emotions in shaping environmental memory and traditional Tibetan Buddhist ecological knowledge across generations. The argument put forward is that such spiritual climate discourses challenge hegemonic technocratic debates in international climate governance. Instead, Tibetan Buddhism proposes a pluralistic understanding of climate expertise grounded in relational cosmologies, emotional transformation and the intergenerational transmission of ecological values.

Soosaar, Sussanna & Marling, Raili (University of Tartu)

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Ambiguous Emotions in Estonia's Climate Policy Debates

Research on climate emotions tends to assume climate change as the object of strong feeling. This paper asks what happens when it is not: when affects circulate through climate discourse but fail to specifically attach to climate. We analyze Estonia's recent debate over climate legislation in different genres of public discourse. Our analysis traces how emotions are performed and directed in public discourse, focusing on where emotional intensity accumulates and where it dissipates. The Estonian debate is emotionally charged, but the emotions in circulation rarely focus on climate. Anxiety, resentment, frustration, fear, and concern attach instead to proxies, such as European regulatory overreach, economic disruptions, political antagonism or institutional failures. These are not arbitrary objects and function to organize concern around threats to economic freedom. Economic framing dominates because it offers what climate cannot: bounded objects, identifiable victims and antagonists, and grievances that can be named. Emotions that might otherwise attach to ecological issues are neutralized, giving way to questions of cost and competitiveness. Climate policy becomes a surface onto which pre-existing grievances are projected, but climate itself remains affectively inert.

Drawing on work by Ahmed (2004), Ngai (2005), and Berlant (2011), we characterize ambiguous emotions as diffuse and persistent rather than acute. They lack clear objects and do not resolve into action or catharsis. They are not the sharp emotions of a defined political crisis but the ambient feelings of prolonged uncertainty, and they shape climate politics precisely by failing to find climate as their object. Estonia's position as a small nation, dependent on EU markets and policy frameworks makes these dynamics particularly visible, especially during an economic downturn that has created an insecurity in local common sense assumptions about economy. Climate policy becomes a site where anxieties about sovereignty, peripherality, and economic precarity find expression. The paper contributes to research on emotional ambiguity in climate contexts by shifting attention from what people feel about climate change to how climate functions, or fails to function, as an object of feeling. The emotions that cannot attach to climate do not disappear. They migrate elsewhere, animate adjacent conflicts, and may leave climate governance disconnected from the discontent that surrounds it.

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Affective Dynamics in Policy Conflicts: Mapping the Emotions in Discourses around Energy Poverty

What is the role of emotions in policy conflicts? It is often assumed that a higher level of emotionalization of policy issues increases the chances of policy entrepreneurs for being heard: emotional framing gives a higher political weight for focusing events, emotionalized narratives strengthen the legitimacy of the policy positions and lived emotions provide extra motivation for the policy actors to fight for their cause. However, the role of emotional dynamics in policy conflicts may vary according to social, political contexts and by actors. Durnová and Hejzlarová (2023) demonstrated how emotional discourses can be discredited and delegitimized by policy experts; Fullerton et al. (2023) showed how emotional clues help forming policy alliances, but, at the same time, act as hindrances to cooperation across policy coalitions; and the emotional exhaustion of some policy actors is a well-documented phenomenon. That is, emotions can act in many ways as hindrances to policy success. Our exploratory study aims at mapping emotions in policy discourses and analysing the ways affective dynamics are used by policy actors focusing on energy policy issues: the social effects of energy transition and energy poverty in Hungary. The corpus consists of interviews and focus-group transcripts made with members of vulnerable social groups (low-income people and immigrant women), interviews with NGO activists and local politicians (mayors), as well as policy papers. The analysis is conducted by both using an LLM-powered AI-tool to detect emotions in political texts (MORES Pulse), and qualitative methods. We expect politicians to use an emotionally detached, technocratic language and to downplay the legitimacy of emotionalized frames. We expect vulnerable people to express negative feelings, mostly anxiety, fear and sadness, and maybe anger as well, depending on the internal political capacity of the person: less desperate and politically more active people are expected to express anger. We expect NGO activists to be caught between different motivations and expectations: their conflicting internal desires to both express their emotions and regulate them in order to cope with the psychological load on their work; and the external environment which may encourage or, on the contrary, reject the use of emotions.

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Emotional Engagement and Apathy Regarding Climate Change in Japan

Despite numerous climate change-related disasters in Japan, "climate change" itself is arguably a far less emotionally discussed than in many Western states, in Japanese politics as well as in everyday life. However, Sugiyama Taishi, who is considered a professional in the field, has drawn attention not only of Japanese professionals and some journalists but also of Western media like the "Guardian" and NGOs for his emotional arguments denying climate change. He has been a member in various national and international government boards and expert committees and a leading writer of reports to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in the name of the Ministry of Environment. The paper will examine how individuals like him and the discourses they provoke on the one hand, and the low interest or even pronounced apathy regarding climate change - especially among young people - on the other hand, are interrelated. Various national and international comparative survey data

relating to climate change will be analyzed. Fear of climate disasters seems to invoke emotional activism in some people, but feelings of helplessness and apathy in others. The paper will discuss whether emotionally engaged climate change deniers such as Sugiyama strongly influence young people in Japan, whether factors elaborated in Espen Stoknes's theory of the "climate paradox" are decisive, or whether other explanations apply.

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How citizens in rural and urban areas think about the environmental and climate crises

Rural and urban areas face vastly different challenges in domains that are perceived as key drivers of the climate crisis: mobility and unsustainable land use (Steffen et al., 2015). When it comes to transforming their everyday life into climate-friendly living, rural areas have clear disadvantages due to the lack of public transport and single-family homes as the most common form of housing, which entails greater land use per person. This raises the question of the extent to which these differences influence attitudes towards environmental and climate issues. The reason why we address this question is the so-called rural-urban divide. In recent years, election outcomes have shown that it was especially the voting behaviour of people in the countryside that has contributed to the success of right-wing parties, which are known for the rejection of climate targets. Based on the Austrian data from the fourth wave of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) module on environment, the question will be raised: what role does the place of residence play for environmental attitudes and behaviour, and what conclusions can be drawn from that to support a socio-ecological transformation? Firstly, are there rural-urban differences in environmental worldview, concern, willingness to act, and environmental engagement, and secondly, do the differences persist when socio-demographic factors are controlled? The results show that both urban and rural populations equally perceive the climate crisis as a significant threat. However, there are also differences when controlling for gender, age, education, income, and political preferences. These differences can be largely explained by the circumstances of living that shape rural and urban lives.

Panel 4:

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How Do Emotions Shape Italy's Policy Debate on Energy Poverty? *Policy Narratives and Deservingness in 2019 and 2022*

Energy poverty illustrates how energy transitions exacerbate inequalities, framing it as a 'eco-social risk' that evokes strong emotional responses. How policymakers navigate these inequalities and emotionalise affected actors, however, remains underexplored. Italy, with high affective polarisation and climate vulnerability, provides an important case. This paper examines discrete emotions in Italy's policy narratives on energy poverty, comparing 2019, when the National Energy and Climate Plan first addressed the issue, and 2022, during the energy crisis. Extending the

Narrative Policy Framework, it considers the role of deservingness constructions and moral emotions in shaping narrative characters. Using dictionary-based and implicit emotion coding across different text types, findings indicate an expansion and intensification of emotionalisation, particularly in portrayals of narrative victims, offering insights into energy transitions and inequality debates.

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Narratives of Growth and Welfare in the Climate Crisis

Debates about climate change increasingly unsettle deeply held ideas about economic growth and social protection, touching on emotions of insecurity and loss. While critiques of infinite economic growth and the promises of ‘green growth’ have gained traction in recent years against the background of continuously rising carbon emissions (for the latest, see Hickel and Kallis 2020; Vogel and Hickel 2023), post-growth or degrowth strategies continue to provoke unease and resistance across the political spectrum. A key reason is that economic growth is widely understood as a foundation of welfare states, emotionally associated with security, hope and fairness. Without growth, welfare is often imagined as vulnerable and unsustainable (Walker, Druckman, and Jackson 2021).

In this paper, we analyze how such emotionally laden narratives structure political conflict over climate policy and welfare reform. Using the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) (Jones, McBeth, and Shanahan 2014; Shanahan, Jones, and McBeth 2018), we reconstruct dominant and emerging narratives about the coupling of economic growth and welfare state maintenance across center-left, green and center-right parties in three countries: Denmark, Germany and Spain after 2020. Based on a systematic empirical analysis of narrative forms (characters, plots) and narrative content (political ideas, strategies) in key political speeches and party manifestos, we show how widespread the dominant narrative of ‘production-led welfare’ is among mainstream parties but also point to emerging counter-narratives of a welfare state as part of circular economics/economics of care. These narratives attempt to shift emotional orientations away from loss aversion and anxiety toward care, responsibility, and collective resilience, thereby reframing perceived eco-social trade-offs. We explore the connection between these narratives about how economies “really” work with specific policy reforms proposed and legitimized through them.

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Love, Hate, Us and the Others: Emotion-Laden Resistance to Energy Projects through an Energy Justice Perspective

Energy projects have become increasingly polarized arenas in which climate policy intersects with political emotions, social identities, and democratic contestation (Zilles & Marg, 2023). Emotions actively shape how communities interpret energy transitions, and mobilize in support of or resistance to climate-related infrastructure. This paper investigates how political emotions—particularly “love” and “hate” toward energy projects—are connected to resistance to onshore wind parks and small nuclear power plants. We address these questions through a cross-national vignette-based conjoint survey conducted in six countries (Italy, Austria, Sweden, Germany, Norway, and Türkiye). Respondents evaluate four hypothetical energy projects proposed near their hometown. The experimental design varies core features of these scenarios: the

type of project and developer (e.g. government, national or international energy providers, citizens), siting context (nature reserve, industrial area, agricultural land, proximity to cultural heritage), visibility and perceived landscape change, prevailing local social norms, forms of compensation, and the timing of public consultation. Resistance is measured as an ordered set of behavioral intentions ranging from active support and passive acceptance to complaints, peaceful protest, civil disobedience, and violent protest. Respondents are also asked about emotions that the projects evoke in them. This structure allows us to examine how emotional orientations translate into differentiated repertoires of political action. Additionally, the survey captures respondents' general attitudes toward energy projects, social identity aspects and their evaluations of energy justice dimensions, including distributional, procedural, recognition, restorative, and intergenerational justice. The analysis advances two interconnected claims. First, we show how emotional attachments and the perception of in-group out-group dynamics are linked to resistance intensity and to the construction of community boundaries. Second, we investigate the correlation between resistance and energy justice dimensions, assessing the ways different forms of compensation and democratic participation moderate resistance, theorizing that justice-based evaluations operate as emotion-laden lenses through which the development of energy projects is interpreted. Results are analyzed for different sociodemographic groups, including gender, socio-economic status, education, age, family composition and political affiliation. By combining experimental variation with a focus on political emotions, justice, and identity, this study contributes to interdisciplinary debates on energy justice and the emotional foundations of resistance to energy projects.

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Heated Opinions: Issue-Based Affective Polarization over Climate Change

As climate change has moved from a technocratic policy issue to a highly contested terrain of identity, sovereignty, and distribution, political conflict has increasingly taken an emotional form. Radical-right actors across Europe now frame climate action as an economically burdensome and elite-driven project, mobilizing resistance in opposition to far-reaching interventions. Yet to what extent this elite-level polarization corresponds to an affective polarization among ordinary citizens—mutual dislike between opposing camps—remains empirically unclear. This matters because affective polarization can undermine social cohesion, impede democratic compromise, and create implementation barriers for climate transitions even where broad concern about climate change persists. We provide a comparative analysis of issue-based affective polarization over climate policy across six European countries (France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, and Poland) using original cross-national survey data. We conceptualize climate-related affective polarization as differential warmth toward “opinion-based groups” defined by the growth–climate trade-off: citizens who prioritize limiting climate change even if it comes at economic cost versus citizens who prioritize economic growth even if it accelerates climate change. Using feeling thermometers, we compute affective polarization as an in-group minus out-group warmth score. We combine descriptive profiles with country-specific OLS models that include a quadratic term for climate position and standard

controls (age, gender, education, political interest, issue importance). To directly test symmetry, we compute mirrored first differences comparing matched intensities across sides (k vs. $10-k$ on the climate scale).

Four findings stand out. First, meaningful climate-related affective polarization exists in all six contexts. Second, polarization is systematically asymmetric: for comparable attitude strength, pro-climate respondents exhibit substantially stronger affective polarization than growth-oriented respondents. Third, we identify non-trivial patterns of reverse warmth among the pro-growth camp—especially in Italy and Hungary—where a sizeable share evaluates pro-climate opponents more positively than their own side. Finally, despite pronounced affect on the pro-climate side, climate-related affective polarization does not translate into political intolerance and discussion refusal: across the spectrum, respondents largely affirm opponents' rights to political participation and expression. By offering one of the first cross-national mappings of climate issue-based affective polarization in Europe, the study refines prevalent “two hardened camps” narratives. It suggests that while emotional divisions are real and consequential, an across-the-board mass anti-climate backlash is overstated. This opens analytical and practical space for coalition-building and for climate governance strategies that reduce identity threat while sustaining democratic legitimacy.

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Balancing the Transition through Emotional Storytelling: European Civil Society Policy Narratives

The impassioned debates surrounding the recent German Building Energy Act (2023) highlight the complex interplay between the ecological transition and its unequal social impacts, particularly on the most economically vulnerable. Across Europe, climate and energy reforms have been debated and enacted against the backdrop of rising poverty and underfunded social infrastructure, raising questions about how the interests of the poor are represented in the policy process. This is particularly relevant given research showing individuals experiencing poverty exhibit declining political trust and increasing voting abstention, alongside waning responsiveness by elected officials, pointing to a growing democratic legitimacy crisis in advanced welfare states. In response, welfare associations and anti-poverty advocates in several European states with (neo-)corporatist social systems (e.g., Germany, Portugal, Austria, Spain) have formed alliances with ecological organizations to articulate social concerns in energy and climate policymaking. Despite their growing relevance in climate policies, collective third-sector actors remain underexplored in research on the social-ecological transformation. Drawing on the Narrative Policy Framework and interpretive policy analysis, this paper presents a comparative research design to examine how these organizations mobilize policy narratives to challenge established dogmas in administration, media, and politics. The analysis focuses in particular on the use of emotional and personal storytelling, through which the third sector problematizes climate and energy policy as principally affecting the materially marginalized, demanding more equitable structural reforms. Based on a narrative analysis of leading print media, press releases, and joint documents with environmental organizations from several European countries, this project will first identify policy narratives employed since 2015. Second, using semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, it will provide insight into alliance-building strategies, engagement with state institutions, and problematizations used to contest climate, energy, and social policy. Ultimately, the comparative project contributes to understanding how third sector actors throughout

Europe advocate for the economically vulnerable by engaging in policy conflict amidst the ongoing social-ecological transformation and democratic representation crisis.

Panel 5:

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Hope for the Climate? Constructive Elements in Journalism on TikTok and Their Influence on Social Media

Engagement

Constructive journalism as an antidote to overly problem-oriented news coverage recently gained popularity in journalism practice and research. It is deemed particularly promising in the domain of climate change coverage where negativity and fear appeals have long dominated journalistic practices. While content analyses of traditional constructive journalism formats exist, studies investigating social media – where space to fulfill defining criteria of constructive journalism is limited – are missing. Social media analyses bear the advantage of analyzing content in combination with audience reactions, e.g., engagement metrics or comments. This study, therefore, first investigates to what extent climate change coverage by German and Austrian media outlets on TikTok uses constructive journalism elements. We selected 20 Austrian and 28 German accounts in the period from 2022 to 2025, including accounts from traditional media outlets (public broadcasters and private media) as well as constructive media formats in both countries. By utilizing multimodal computational content analysis, TikTok short-form videos are classified in terms of the presence of solution-orientation, future-orientation, and (positive) emotions. A codebook is used to manually label a subsample of the data for validation purposes of the automated measures. Secondly, the paper analyses how these different constructive journalism elements correlate with likes, shares, views, and emotions in comments. This study advances multimodal content analyses of constructive journalism to social media short-videos. Moreover, it adds a new perspective to audience effect studies by uncovering how social media engagement and climate emotions in comments correlate with different constructive journalism elements appearing in the videos.

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Rethinking “Sentiment” as a Dynamic Force in Social Movements

In the study of social movements and emotions, it is relevant to recuperate and critically assess the notion of sentiment. This is a term with a long philosophical pedigree in the work of authors such as David Hume, Adam Smith and Max Scheler, who used the term to come to grips with the complex nexus between human psychology, rationality and ethics. However, in the context of the study of online public opinion the term has been used in a far more technical sense. It is framed as a quantifiable variable typically a positive or negative polarity that can be algorithmically extracted from text data. This operational definition transforms complex human emotion into structured data for tasks like opinion mining and trend forecasting, often using lexicon-based methods or machine learning models. Developing a methodological-theoretical critique of this

concept, my proposal shall be that we need to advance a new sentiment agenda in three directions. First, it is necessary to pay attention to more granular emotions: for example, not just negative, but fear, anger, sadness, anxiety, preoccupation etc. Second, it is necessary to pay attention to complex emotional dynamics which often involve not just an amplification or suppression of given emotions but also their respective transmutation (for example from fear to anger, from preoccupation to calm). Thirdly, we need to develop methodologies that can capture non-verbal and non-textual emotional cues, given that these have become all the more relevant in the context of an increasingly visual and video-dominated digital public sphere. I shall conclude, by illustrating some uses of these different methodological approaches and discussing what they can practically add to our understanding of the dynamics of social and political movements.

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Support and Contestation to the Energy Transition on Social Media

Transitioning to cleaner energy sources is central to achieving the climate goals established by the Paris Agreement. Although clean technologies such as photovoltaic and wind power are becoming increasingly competitive, these options face growing resistance from multiple sectors. Building on the literature on public acceptance of renewable energy, this article explores how different energy sources are discussed on TikTok and YouTube, which, despite being among the most popular platforms, remain comparatively understudied. The specific affordances and interactions of these platforms offer theoretically interesting variation, showcasing the development of energy discussions across diverse online environments. Importantly, they permit the collection of data for research purposes through their respective APIs, to which we have access. Using posts from regular users, we examine which sentiments are most associated with different clean energy sources, as well as what types of posts generate higher levels of engagement. Specifically, we analyze posts mentioning nuclear, wind, hydropower, solar, and geothermal energy—i.e., the main sources of clean electricity. These are collected for a set of Western countries, where the ‘green’ transition forms part of the larger political and economic discussion. The collection is undertaken via Python- and R-based API calls, filtering content with relevant hashtags and keywords. Crucially, we here leverage the video format of TikTok and YouTube content to move beyond the study of emotion as merely textual or linguistic, pushing the quantitative literature on social media communication by incorporating crucial aspects inherent to political discussion online, i.e., audio and visual components of emotion. This article contributes to the literature on climate politics on social media by focusing on the discussion of key energy sources. In doing so, we highlight the role of digital platforms in shaping public debates about the energy transition and offer insights into the communicative challenges that policymakers and advocates face when promoting clean energy solutions.

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Between Emotion and Engagement: Protest Communication of the “Last Generation”

Climate activism increasingly relies on emotional communication to generate public attention, mobilize support, and legitimize far-reaching social transformations. The German climate activist group Last Generation strategically employs moral urgency, affective appeals, and civil disobedience to foreground the perceived imminence of climate collapse. Emotions are not merely articulated as expressions of individual concern but function as collective and communicative resources that amplify political claims and frame participation in climate-related transformation as a moral imperative. Founded in 2021, Last Generation positions itself as the final generation capable of preventing irreversible climate catastrophe. Its protest communication is structured around apocalyptic narratives, generational responsibility, and imaginaries of an unlivable future. Central themes in its narrative repertoire include generational justice, the construction of (un)livable futures, and the moral legitimization of climatic and societal transformations. The group’s protest communication is deliberately organized through digital channels, particularly blogs, which function as affective spaces. These spaces circulate emotional and normative messages and enable the articulation of emotions and narratives that are often marginalized or selectively reframed in mainstream media discourse.

This study presents a sociology of knowledge approach to discourse analysis (SKAD) of selected blog posts published by Last Generation. It reconstructs recurring narrative patterns, rhetorical strategies, and affective repertoires and analyzes their intended purposes. Particular attention is paid to narratives of responsibility and urgency, depictions of the apocalyptic, and the construction of despair, anger, uncertainty, and hope as communicative strategies for maximizing emotional resonance and motivating collective action. The analysis shows that these emotional and narrative strategies operate ambivalently. On the one hand, they foster internal cohesion, intensify engagement, and stimulate dynamic online discourse, functioning as a driver of social and political change and as an accelerator of digital engagement. On the other hand, they render social inequalities and moral conflicts visible, reinforce polarization and complicate constructive public dialogue. Emotional protest communication thus emerges as both a mobilizing force and a site of democratic tension. The study contributes to research on climate activism and protest communication by empirically demonstrating how emotions function as relational and performative elements within digital protest narratives. It thereby advances a differentiated understanding of emotional communication as a mechanism that simultaneously enables political participation and exposes the limits of democratic deliberation in highly polarized contexts. By conceptualizing blogs as digital affective spaces, the study offers analytical tools for examining the moral and emotional dimensions of contemporary climate protest beyond simplistic mobilization-versus-backlash frameworks.

Panel 6:

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Gendered Political Emotions in Climate Impact, Adaptation and Resilience

Uganda is the 13th most vulnerable country to the impact of climate change, and this impact is felt most harshly by women and other marginalised groups. Uganda's national adaptation plan recognises this, but solutions proposed at the national level do not always translate into action at the local level. This paper presents some of the findings from our project on the impact of climate change on, and the pathways to climate resilience of (i) women refugees (ii) women displaced by climate change to urban areas (iii) women subsistence farmers in three districts in Uganda. Using feminist participatory research methods, we investigate obstacles to their participation in climate decision-making and privilege their voices and experiences in proposals for change.

In our 26 focus group discussions, participants talked about the stress of losing their source of income, of having to choose between food and school fees, of shouting at their children 'not because you are angry, but because you are frustrated at not being able to provide for them'. They talked of stress leading to quarrels in the household and to increased gender-based violence. They talked of worrying about their livelihoods and survival. They talked of fear that more climate disasters would occur and more family member would be killed. They talked of the burden of care, stress and trauma which often falls on women. Many of our participants talked about the heartbreak of seeing their children go hungry and of the worry that keeps them awake at night.

In response to questions about climate policymaking, participants said 'we feel forgotten', 'we feel like our voices are not being heard', 'even when we have ideas, no-one listens to us'. But they also spoke of their collective strength, of working together towards a collective goal: 'When we come together and raise our voices as one, we are more likely to be heard by leaders, decision-makers and organisations. It is through unity and shared efforts that we can push for the changes we want to see'.

This paper contributes to our understanding of the extent to which the voices and experiences of women and marginalised groups are included in, or excluded from, local and national climate policy making and implementation, and to our understanding of women's agency in climate adaptation and resilience. We argue that when women's knowledge and experience feeds into policy making it improves climate adaptation and resilience for everyone.

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Toward an Archive of Feeling: Environmental Activism, Gender, and the Felt Politics of Ableism in Canada

Movements communicate their desire to 'overcome' injustice, but they may overlook how oppression is rooted in ableist structures. For disabled people, ableism can be a structuring feature of life that shapes how they 'feel' the political. Thinking about the nexus of political participation and disability requires us to look closely at social movements outside of disability. Bridging elements of social movement theory, intersectional

disability studies, and the study of emotions and affects, this paper focuses on how the Canadian environmental movement has reckoned with ableism in its movement practices, and how it frames struggles for social justice, including the ways in which ableism intersects with gendered constructions of fitness, capacity and ability. How did the movement's routine activities reflect normative ideas of an abled body and mind? How did its organizing trouble the separation between body and landscape, human and more than human? We highlight ableism here to focus on intersectional commitments that leave out disability, with an eye to foregrounding a "reparative reading" of these omissions. Moreover, a focus on ableist practices can illuminate how histories of disability oppression are enmeshed with racist constructions of pathologized bodies and minds. Centering ableism also ensures that the critical work done in the name of intersectionality does not lay the foundation for harmful legacies such as eugenics.

Drawing on archival research of Canada's leading environmental organizations, this paper is motivated by a desire to build a theory of action that resists normatively gendered and ableist ideas of ability, strength, or capacity. We seek to enrich the study of ableism as a structure that penetrates different social movement spheres outside of formal disability activism, and to center the affective entanglements associated with a felt politics of ableism. Some movements are invested in chest-thumping, masculine expressions of their brute force, but are there other ways to persuade authorities of the value of their claims? What happens when gendered assumptions about political participation co-mingle with ableism? Specifically, in the context of the environmental movement, organizations such as Greenpeace have staged dramatic protests to garner public attention, many of them featuring hyper-masculine leaders engaged in David vs Goliath-type struggles against corporations or other wrong-doers. While movement leaders may not engage in overtly ableist practices, their actions nonetheless can reflect ideas about the bodies and minds that are deemed necessary to fight for the environment.

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Political Emotions and the Politics of the Imaginary among Italian Environmental Activists

The question of political emotions within environmentalism can be meaningfully linked to the theme of the imaginary, to grasp the cultural dimension of political action. The social imaginary, as a battleground for the hegemony of the meaning to be attributed to reality, is deeply intertwined with emotions and their political significance. The perception of crisis prompts a critique of the present and the past through the collective imagination of a different future. The centrality of the emotional dimension in the development of the social imaginary is particularly evident in climate change activism, where anxiety, fear, hope, anger, and indignation cannot be separated from the possibility/capacity to imagine a future different from the present. The concept of care constitutes one of the main axes on which a different future takes shape and translates into a drive for critical action against the present reality.

Starting from a recent qualitative research study conducted with 90 young environmental activists, we explore how the concept of care provides a framework in which political critique, based on the imaginary, and emotions as a political resource operate together. Specifically, we explore how a notion like care, born primarily within feminist movements, is today a unifying reference capable of mobilising everyday practices, where

lifestyles and concrete activism merge. The extension of this concept and its emergence as one of the many buzzwords in contemporary debate will be explored by showing how it is applied empirically in the field of environmental activism.

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Gendered Temporalities and Political Emotions: How Populist Masculinities Shape Affective Responses to Climate Crisis and Democratic Inequality

This paper examines how gendered temporalities and political emotions interact within populist movements responding to climate change and rising inequality. While existing scholarship highlights the emotional dimensions of populism—fear, anger, resentment—less attention has been paid to how these emotions are structured through temporal and gendered logics. I argue that contemporary right-wing populist leaders mobilize what I term hypermasculine temporalities, affective rhythms grounded in immediacy, crisis intensity, and linear acceleration, which in turn shape public emotional responses to ecological loss, socio-economic precarity, and democratic erosion.

Building on feminist theories of time and embodiment, I conceptualize hypermasculine temporality as a political affective regime that privileges rapid action, crisis-based mobilization, and simplified future imaginaries (“restoring”, “protecting”, “taking back control”). These temporal frameworks resonate particularly in contexts marked by climate anxiety and widening inequality, where individuals experience emotional uncertainty, temporal fragmentation, and a diminished sense of long-term stability. Populist leaders harness these affective states through gendered performances of strength, decisiveness, and emotional containment—affective scripts traditionally associated with hegemonic masculinity. The paper argues that this masculine-coded emotional regime produces two key effects: (1) Emotional delegitimization of care-oriented, long-term, or precautionary climate politics, which are framed as slow, naïve, or “feminized.” (2) Affective polarization, in which anger and resentment become politically valorized while grief, vulnerability, and interdependence—emotions central to climate justice and democratic cooperation—are marginalized.

Drawing on examples from Europe and the Americas, I show how populist discourse constructs climate action as an assault on national vitality, working-class masculinity, or economic autonomy, while inequality is reframed as moral failure rather than structural injustice. This emotional reframing transforms climate politics and socio-economic grievances into identity conflicts, making democratic compromise more difficult. The paper contributes to debates on political emotions by integrating feminist temporal theory, affective populism studies, and research on climate-related emotional states. It proposes that addressing democratic fragility in the climate crisis requires understanding not only material inequalities but also the gendered emotional-temporal regimes through which political meaning is produced. Ultimately, the argument suggests that democratic resilience depends on reclaiming emotional repertoires—care, interdependence, collective grief—that hypermasculine populist politics actively suppresses.

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Gendered Participation in Times of Crisis

Crises of various types including linked to political and economic contexts and also the environment have become central for political life. In this historical juncture it is therefore critical that individuals engage with the democratic system and participate actively in political affairs to try to address major social challenges. At the same time, scholars have emphasised the role of emotions as well as important differences in the democratic engagement of social groups in the current context, often highlighting its gendered nature. This paper examines from a gendered perspective democratic engagement in times of crisis, including levels of democratic support as well as of participation in various kinds of political activities, from protest to boycotting or buycotting certain products for political, ethical or environment reasons and including engagement in social movement organisations such as environmental organisations. We hypothesise that psychological (emotions) and contextual (economic and political instability) factors will have impact on democratic engagement in gendered ways. Moreover, we investigate the interplay between such psychological and contextual factors for different gendered patterns of democratic engagement. Our analysis is based on an original survey conducted across nine European countries (France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom) in the context of a EU-funded project. The comparative framework allows us to capture cross-national variations in economic and political conditions and gauge their impact on democratic engagement from a gendered perspective. The analysis will describe variations, gauge direct effects and examine the interaction between psychological and contextual factors.

Panel 7:

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Climate Boundaries: Class and Everyday Perceptions of “Us” and “Them” across Norway, Slovakia, Spain and Austria

In this paper, we draw on 120 interviews and 12 focus groups in four countries (Norway, Slovakia, Spain, and Austria) to analyze how people make sense of climate and climate inequalities in affective ways. We use the sociological concept of symbolic boundaries – everyday perceptions of social differences and ideas of “us” and “them” in terms of behavior and attitudes – and make it analytically fruitful in the context of climate and climate inequalities. Our comparative analysis reveals many similarities across the four cases, and we foreground these similarities in this presentation. We show how people relate to climate issues from their everyday experience, which also includes forms of rejecting what is perceived as "excessive" climate action. Emotional ways of relating to climate and inequality vary by class position, and this becomes visible through the analysis of boundary-drawing. We propose the concept of “climate boundaries” to capture how moral, socio-economic, and cultural criteria are interlinked in the ways people understand climate and inequality through these relational forms of sense-making.

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Entitlement under Pressure: Eco-Social Risks and the Contestation of Welfare Claims

This paper examines how responses to eco-social risks in different welfare states intersect with welfare legitimacy through the perceived violation of social claims and entitlements. Welfare states do not merely redistribute resources; they also produce and legitimize social entitlements and claims. These are both material (such as secure pensions, housing, or unemployment protection) and symbolic (recognition, status, belonging), embodied in institutions such as unemployment insurance and rooted in principles of reciprocity, merit, or universality. When such entitlements erode, conflicts emerge as individuals and groups perceive broken promises, violated deservingness norms, and losses of recognition—often accompanied by emotions such as resentment, frustration, or distrust. Climate change and climate policies may destabilize these institutional constellations and intensify such tensions, particularly where environmental risks and policy costs intersect with existing social inequalities.

Drawing on focus groups conducted in seven countries—Belgium, Slovenia, Germany, the UK, Poland, Sweden, and France—this paper analyzes how citizens in different socio-economic positions and national contexts articulate expectations, interpret perceived breaches of entitlement, and assign responsibility for compensation or adaptation. As we observe, from flooded homes to unaffordable cars or drought-damaged food supplies, climate change and climate policies unsettle citizens' security and social status. These experiences are linked to distinct forms of social and political conflict, ranging from climate change denial and distrust in institutions to the devaluation of other lifestyles and social groups. Situating these findings within comparative welfare state research, the paper shows how eco-social risks challenge welfare legitimacy and contribute to emotionally charged contestations over justice, responsibility, and inequality in the context of climate transformation.

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Energy and Transport Poverty in Southern Europe

In Europe, as elsewhere in the world, we are struggling with multiple and multidimensional social, economic and energy-related issues reinforced by the climate crisis. In this 'problematic' context, the topic of energy, and more specifically the rising prices of energy services, have their own weight in the lives of many households. As in the past, the nature of energy services as essential goods means that the cost of purchasing them has a greater impact on less affluent families. As proposed by Upham et al. (2023), in democratic nations, policies aimed at decarbonising energy and transport systems need broad public backing to justify their implementation. Therefore, in this study, we aim to examine the perspectives of two groups within regional, urban, and rural levels, as policymakers and as well as expert stakeholders, to better understand their perceptions regarding these policies. We want to take the cases of Sardinia, Corsica and Balearic Islands, at the time when energy prices increase and apparently the process of energy transition is in a deep crisis, due geopolitical issues and pandemics, for instance. The study addresses two main

questions: How do, in the three case studies, regional and local policy makers and expert stakeholders perceive various decarbonisation policies in terms of their impacts on energy and transport poverty, and why? How the territorialisation and the multilevel and reframed way of governance of EU, may help to solve EP and TP?

The contribution of this research is twofold. First, it extends political ecology and regional studies by providing the first framework analysis of energy transition policies and EP and TP using a rich and solid sample of 90 interviews. Second, it refines our understanding of energy transitions where energy transition efforts coincide with structural economic weaknesses and marked territorial disparities and furthermore, offering evidence on the structural conditions that sustain the different stakeholders. Methodologically, we adopt a framework analysis approach combining document analysis and semi-structured interviews. The source for the first part will be secondary organizational material and online interviews of the actors mentioned above, plus a number of primary interviews with regional and local (urban and rural) policymakers, NGOs and associations directors and scholars. We will conduct 8-10 semi-structured interviews (with open and closed questions), in each case, for a total of about 30 interviews. The content of the interviews will try to grasp: i. the positioning of these actors on methodological challenges of energy transition across diverse contexts. ii. the reasons and motivations (i.e. justification) of these positions.

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Heroes, Villains, and Victims of the Alpine Climate Crisis

South Tyrol offers a revealing context for analyzing how climate and energy transitions are contested through policy narratives that reflect and reinforce persisting tensions across ethno-linguistic groups. This paper develops a theoretically driven application of the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) (Shanahan, Jones and McBeth 2016) to three ongoing controversies: the historical and contemporary narrative struggles surrounding the Lago di Resia/Reschensee hydropower plant, emerging debates over hydrogen energy development in the Val d'Ultimo/Ultental, and the intensifying conflict over overtourism and ecological pressure. The analysis examines how narrative elements in policy statements and media coverage—setting, plot, characters, causal mechanisms, and moral evaluations—structure public sensemaking and political behavior in unexpected ways in a region where autonomy, identity, and environmental governance are tightly interwoven. We argue that these narratives reveal what we call *affective minority politics*, in which identity, historical memory, and majority-minority dynamics shape the political landscape of climate change.

Using NPF concepts, the paper shows that these conflicts are shaped by competing narrative structures that reflect affective minority politics in different ways. Hydropower at Lago di Resia/Reschensee is embedded in a master narrative of historical injustice and cultural erasure, where displaced communities function as enduring victims, state-backed utilities as villains, and heritage activists as heroes defending collective memory. In Val d'Ultimo/Ultental, hydrogen development is narrated through plots of technological uncertainty and anticipatory risk, producing storylines in which local residents position themselves as potential victims of externally driven experimentation and frame regional agencies or

corporate actors as untrustworthy narrators of a green transition. Overtourism, meanwhile, is articulated through decline and boundary-crossing plots, in which the landscape and its inhabitants occupy the role of threatened protagonists, while mass tourism and profit-oriented governance appear as villains undermining ecological sustainability and cultural integrity.

Across all three cases, narrative dynamics are mediated by affective cues—fear, anger, loss, distrust, and protective attachment—consistent with NPF research on the role of emotional appeals in narrative persuasion and coalition formation as well as minority themes related to group identity, historical legacies, and territorial connections. Moreover, these emotions serve not as epiphenomena but as mechanisms of narrative uptake and boundary maintenance, reinforcing “us–them” distinctions central to minority–majority relations.

By applying the NPF to a multilingual, autonomously governed, and economically hybrid region, the paper contributes to theoretical debates on how narrative structures operate in minority contexts where policy issues are inseparable from minority conflicts and policy-making. It argues that successful climate governance in areas with minority dynamics depends on recognizing how policy narratives reflect affective minority politics that may shape perceptions of legitimacy, agency, and risk. The outcome would then be to develop transition strategies that implement—rather than circumvent—an inclusive and more sensitive approach to the contentious narrative landscapes through which minority communities construct meaning and evaluate change.

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Citizens’ Emotional Responses to Climate Activism: Exploring the Reception of Activist Repertoires Through a Visual and Participatory Method

This paper offers a novel approach to the public reception of climate activism by investigating how citizens perceive and evaluate selected forms of climate protests from the lenses of political emotions. While recent scholarship has explored the tactics and motivations of environmental activists, little attention has been paid to how ordinary citizens representing the wider ‘public’ of such actions, interpret climate protests and emotionally respond to different activist strategies. For this aim, we utilize deliberative focus groups (DFGs) utilizing visual cues. This method confers agency to citizens owing to its participatory approach where the participants are not only asked to reflect upon different protest events, but also to reconstruct an ideal scenario, while concurrently offering the possibility to observe emotional reactions in interaction with others. Drawing on empirical data from seven DFGs conducted in Italy and the Czech Republic with a total of 72 participants, this study investigates responses to fictional yet realistic protest event scenarios with the help of visual stimuli, allowing to elicit emotional background into the resonance different repertoires of action generate, also known as the ‘activist’s dilemma’. Citizens engage critically and emotionally with protest strategies, while reflecting on their own emotions, ranging from empathy to frustration and urgency, shaped by personal identities and by specific deliberative interactions with emotionally expressive others. This innovative methodological approach reveals how citizens navigate tensions between activism and social legitimacy, and where symbolic boundaries are drawn. In particular, we focus on dimensions of gender and

socioeconomic inequality. By comparing two national contexts, the study contributes to broader debates on the reception of climate activism in Europe, offering both theoretical and practical insights into how climate activism is perceived by the public.

Panel 8:

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Rehearsing Political Participation: Confronting the Tragedy of Democratic Disenchantment

In an effort to maintain public support for climate policy, public officials increasingly turn to citizen participation. In many countries, such participatory processes have become legally obligatory alongside the implementation of projects. Yet these processes remain contentious and are often marked by disenchantment and frustration - on the part of policymakers as well as citizens. As citizens' trust in democratic processes declines, civil servants frequently report uncertainty about how to navigate the tensions that emerge. To unlock the potential of participatory democracy, it is therefore essential to understand the role that the policy process itself plays in shaping emotional responses to it. Over the course of more than a year, Klubert conducted ethnographic research on regional and local energy projects, covering the entire policy trajectory - from the initial design of participatory processes to the engagement of citizens. To do so, she adopted a sociocultural perspective on emotions, enabling an understanding of emotions as they emerge in interaction. This perspective was complemented by a dramaturgical approach, which allows us to comprehend the dramatization of participatory processes themselves: their scripting, settings, and staging; the roles of the actors involved; and frontstage and backstage practices. Together, these elements reveal how emotionality is enacted by both citizens and policymakers.

Drawing on her work, we contend that there is a tragedy inherent in contemporary citizen participation: even as civil servants themselves seek deeper forms of engagement with citizens, the emotional regimes in which they operate lead them to produce participatory processes that manufacture citizens' disenchantment and contribute to their own burnout. In a sense, they are designing their own failure. Building on these observations, we have experimented with 'rehearsing for democracy' by scripting and re-enacting participatory processes with researchers and policymakers. Drawing on our findings and the other contributions to this panel, we aim to jointly explore how democracy might be performed differently by acknowledging and engaging with the role emotions play within it.

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Emotions and Democracy in Climate Justice Movements

Emotions are having a moment in both academic interests and activist practices regarding climate change. Climate and environmental crises have pushed considerations of both knowledge and politics in non-dualistic ways, leading to a reevaluation of embodied responses to current

precarious conditions (Dryzek and Pickering 2019). Contemporary climate justice movements rely strongly on emotions in their communication and performative action in an effort to move publics and convey urgency (Oosterman 2016; Martiskainen et al. 2020). They also make space for emotions within the movement, practicing mutual care and “regenerative cultures” (Sauerborn 2022). In this sense, climate justice politics go beyond conceptions of democracy built around disembodied, dispassionate models of decision-making: they make space for fragility, interdependence, embodiment, and ecological embeddedness (Knops 2021). In turn, emotions are deeply linked with the democratic imaginaries of climate movements (Machin 2022): they draw lines of engagement with, and critiques of, existing institutions (Celis et al. 2021) while also pushing for forms of participation that can be inclusive for minorities and fragile subjects.

Nevertheless, our empirical research suggests that neither democracy nor emotions have unambiguous roles in CJMs. While it is true that democracy is a largely shared political imaginary in these movements, their organisation does not always “prefigure” a democracy of emotions and care (see van de Sande 2022). Groups sometimes sacrifice broad internal participation to gain effectiveness and rapidity; emotional care is not always prioritised *vis à vis* the urgency to communicate climate emergency. Activism is sometimes pushed more by moral duty rather than emotions (Cassegård et al. 2025).

These ambiguities are not always registered in the literature, yet we think they may be important in understanding the democratic political practices of climate justice at a time when the rejuvenation of democracy and governance is crucial. What is the relation between the means of transformative social action and its ends? To what extent can transformative political cultures embody the change they wish to see in times of crisis? How can affective and emotional politics be integrated in climate democracies? What methodologies can capture these lived ambiguities? We describe and propose a *participatory emotional mapping* exercise carried out with activists from local, national and international CJMs across Europe. This method asks activists to collectively participate to draw images (maps) of democracy within and outside their movement, investigating the emotionally charged aspects of these maps. Triangulated with in-depth interviews and the study of movements’ self-narratives from their website, data from mapping exercises will be the basis for thinking about the ambivalent emotions-democracy nexus in CJMs.

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Much ado about nothing? – On the strategy of emotionalization in the fight against wind turbines (with a case study from Germany)

The “energy transition” proclaimed in response to climate change gave a significant boost to alternative energy projects, such as the construction of wind turbines. At the same time, protests against such facilities increased. To this day, they remain at a high level, while the fronts have hardened in some cases. One reason for this is a wide range of motives on the opposing side, including both political and commercial interests. Another set of causes is emotions and related phenomena, which appear to be omnipresent in the conflicts but are rarely addressed adequately. Although research recognizes that emotions play an integral role in the acceptance of the energy transition and related construction projects (Martiskainen/Sovacool 2021; Arifi/Winkel 2020), conflicts about wind turbines continue to show that their role is downplayed and that attempts are constantly being made to return to, reason’ and an ‘objective logic’. As a result, neither the range of emotions nor the associated motives

(justice, equality) are recognized, nor are the strategies pursued by some opponents, who deliberately seek to fuel resistance by emotionalizing these conflicts. In fact, different actors (political parties, NGOs) can be identified among the antagonists, who exploit both the stirring up of “anti-emotions” (Scheer 1998) and the effect of positive emotions to mobilize protest among sometimes very heterogeneous groups. This contributes to their strategy of emotionalization, which I will examine in more detail in my presentation. The results presented are from a research project funded by the German Ministry of Education (BMFTR) that deals with various areas of conflict in Germany. My contribution is divided into four parts: First, I will introduce the research context and a specific conflict in Thuringia (Germany), before providing insight into the significance of emotions and the strategy of emotionalization by some actors. These “polarization entrepreneurs” (Mau et al 2023) operate at various political levels, undermining local dialogue efforts while attempting to “reverse” the energy transition at a national and even international level. They are aided by the backdrop of a societal polycrisis, by widespread skepticism toward science and the rise of new right-wing parties, which treat wind turbines in particular as a ‘scapegoat’ for different conflicts. The article concludes with a look at countermeasures and the longer-term consequences of emotionalization for democratic decision-making processes.

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Climate-related emotional polarization in Germany and the perspectives of transformative changes

The latest rise in right-wing populism has exacerbated climate backlash. The possibility of neo-imperial extractivism is looming on the horizon, with right-wing populism acting as a main driving force. Climate policy in Germany has seen many ups and, more recently, downs. While still being supported in general by a majority, climate issues have developed into controversial ones, with significant minorities actively undermining their basics and their political implications. Based on empirical research in a transdisciplinary project exploring the interconnections between conflict, emotions, and space, we would like to shed light on the emotional dimension of the current climate conflicts in Germany and to explore how the current impasse of the climate transformation project might be overcome by using conflicts and emotions in a constructive way.

We would like to do so by (1) highlighting the role of emotions for human understanding and action, being ‘partners’ instead of ‘opponents’ of reason. We will then (2) underline this statement with respect to specifically climate (and climate policy) related emotions, which have seen a dramatic increase in width and depth in recent years. Taking an explicit conflict-oriented perspective, we would then (3) like to illustrate the polarized character of climate-related emotions, based on qualitative analysis of the German climate discourse. In particular, we would like to focus on the role of an--often underestimated--multitude of emotions that can be found at the right-wing populist side of the political spectrum. This multitude resonates with an ambivalence of its sustainability transformation-related discourse. (4) Based on a brief critical analysis of the dominant ways in which politicians react emotionally to both the climate crisis and the polarized discourse, we sketch an alternative way of dealing with contradicting and ambivalent climate-related emotions in a democratic manner. (5) We try to underpin this by stressing the need to anchor new emotional narratives of climate transformations in existing social milieus and their worldviews. In this context, we claim that the

term 'climate transformation' is often unclear, hiding a multitude of possible decarbonization scenarios with very different social settings. Against this background, climate backlash can be seen as an opportunity to rethink both research and policy agendas of the progressive camp.