

START MAGAZINE

Script for StartWeek 2023



Polarization

Welcome to the StartWeek 2023

Imprint

StartWeek 2023 Polarization

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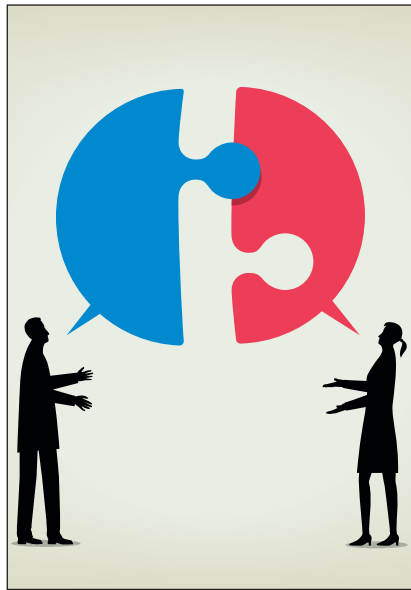
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Edited version



Dear students,

You have decided to study at the University of St.Gallen (HSG). Founded as a commercial academy in 1898 — in the heyday of the embroidery industry — it is now a university of management, economics, law, social sciences, international affairs and computer science. The university celebrates its 125th anniversary this year.

Ahead of you now lies a new three-to-five-year phase of your life in St.Gallen. As the Chinese saying of Laozi goes, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” The StartWeek is your first step of your studies, where you will be prepared for your studies in terms of organization, content and personally under the guidance of your tutors (students from higher semesters), so that you can put any uncertainties behind you as quickly as possible. For this purpose, your tutors have already prepared themselves during two seminar days in terms of content, methodological-didactic and organizational aspects. The StartWeek is therefore to a large extent a project by students for students.

After the StartWeek, you will be familiar with the HSG infrastructure, have access to necessary learning materials and be familiar with counseling and additional services, the examination concept, the campus and the city of St.Gallen. You will have worked academically and interdisciplinarily in a team on a group project, and you know at least some of the 1,700 new students more personally. These contacts will help you afterward throughout your studies. In short, after the StartWeek, you will be ready to take up your studies at the HSG.

To study means to deal with challenging questions critically, solution-oriented, creatively, responsibly, in interaction with experts and other students, and thus to make a contribution to society. During StartWeek, you will therefore work on a case study. In the team of the StartWeek, we strive to choose a topic that is interdisciplinary, forward-looking and socially relevant. At the moment, the world seems to be coming apart at the seams: climate change, culture war and another war in Europe. In many countries, increasing social polarization can be observed, leading to deep rifts in society. These prevent the constructive search for solutions to local and global challenges such as climate, hunger, water, energy, demography or migration. Democracies have become more polarized in recent years. Against this background, working out compromises has become much more difficult. With polarization as the topic of this year’s case study, we want to explore this issue and analyze how we as individuals and society can counteract such a trend. In doing so, we have to be realistic. During the StartWeek, the focus will be on sensitization, selective experience and questioning. In the course of your studies, you will explore such topics more deeply.

The case study requires intensive cooperation. Various inputs from experts support the processing of the questions. In this magazine, you will find relevant materials and tasks to work on. Further research will be required. Your personal experiences, attitudes and thoughts are also of importance. The University of St.Gallen is a place of thought and discussion, to face future challenges in a responsible way. Every single student contributes to this.

I wish you, dear students, an engaging case study, an exciting StartWeek and a successful start to the Assessment Year.

Prof. Dr. Roman Capaul

Academic Director of the Assessment Year and StartWeek



HSG Alumni Evening

Tuesday, 12 September
17.30 to 18.30
Lecture hall 01-014

♥ welcome to HSG, #classof2023!
Get valuable tips for your studies from
successful graduates at the HSG
Alumni Evening.

Info at hsgalumni.ch/startwoche



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StartWeek as the beginning of your studies

In the week before lectures kick off, the StartWeek takes over the campus of the University of St.Gallen (HSG) to welcome new students. A week of new experiences, first friendships and challenging group work — the beginning of a new phase of life.

At first, new students have any number of pressing questions: about studying, bidding, acquisition of learning materials for the first semester, sport opportunities or where to get groceries after 7 p.m. The StartWeek provides an ideal platform to clear up many of these uncertainties. New students learn about the IT infrastructure, how to research and borrow a book in the library and how studies are structured at the University of St.Gallen. Likewise, a first, intensive group work involves solving a case study. In doing so, new students experience crucial work processes that will be of great importance during their studies. They also have the opportunity to make their first social contacts. It is not uncommon for the foundation to be laid during the StartWeek for friendships that will last far beyond their studies.

Case study

The work on the case study should enable the new students to gain first insights and experiences with regard to academic and group work at HSG. The topics of the case studies are deliberately interdisciplinary, current and of high social relevance. The case studies are developed with a view to the future, tailored to the needs of new students and prepared accordingly in terms of methodology and didactics. The topic should make students aware of their responsibility in the future and sensitize them to it. The goal is for them to create innovative ideas and concepts in the area of the current topic as a think tank and to be able to approach the future actively, critically and constructively from this experience.

Procedure of the StartWeek

During the group work, new students will be introduced to the working methods of the HSG and will be supported in numerous processes and questions by their Supervising Tutors and the Support Crew. In addition, the Media Team provides multimedia coverage of the StartWeek. Numerous content-related inputs round out the introductory week. With the StartWeek, new students are prepared for the Assessment Year.

A look behind the scenes

A large event with some 2,000 participants, a precisely timed schedule, numerous internal and external partners and the development of a case study does

not organize itself. Behind it all stands a great effort with corresponding preparations that take place over the course of the year. At first glance, it may not be obvious how much work is involved to hold the one-week event in mid-September. In addition to the preparation of the content of the case study in the form of this magazine, there is the recruitment, training, preparation and supervision of the tutors, Media Team and Support Crew, as well as the numerous coordinating tasks, starting with the maintenance of the website, through contacts with internal and external agencies, to the room and time planning of the week.

Team of the StartWeek

The core of the team of the StartWeek is the project management team: Roman Capaul, as academic director, has been responsible for the academic orientation of the StartWeek since 2006. Miriam Mrisi, part of the team since 2011, is responsible for leading the team and the overall

conception of the StartWeek as project manager. Tanja Gresch joined the project management in February 2023 and bears the administrative management of the StartWeek. This is the fourth year that Maria Fuchs has been involved with the StartWeek. After two years in the student team, Silvan Zeller joined the project management in 2022. Together with Maria Fuchs, he bears the didactic responsibility. Severin Fässler is responsible for the room and time planning during StartWeek this year after two years in the student team. The four student project managers Valentin Bangerter, Noemi Ganz, Joel Lüchinger and Julia Riederer take responsibility for various sections in their departments. The team of the StartWeek develops this important institution at HSG from year to year. One of the annually recurring goals of the StartWeek is to make the start of studies and the beginning of the new phase of life an experience to remember for all new students.

Project management



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Case study overview

The case study on polarization comprises five tasks, which are divided into several subtasks. Here you will find an overview of the structure and procedure of the case study as well as the most important deadlines.

Within the scope of the case study, you will work on five tasks, with each building on the one before. In this StartMagazine, you will find all the tasks with their individual steps. In addition to the StartMagazine, you will find supporting templates and documents on Canvas.

At the beginning of the case study, a lot of information is collected and you acquire a basic understanding of the topic of polarization. In Task 3, polarization is brought to life through a roleplay on a topic with focus on environmental or social sustainability. Polarization is dealt with broadly in Task 1 and then increasingly in-depth using a specific example. This is visualized using the metaphor of a funnel (see illustration at right).

Using the insights gained from reflecting on the roleplay, you will generate a variety of approaches to counteracting polarization. From the specific topic of the roleplay, the focus of the case study broadens again with the creative idea generation in Task 4. Four approaches to counteracting polarization in tense situations are then formulated into a roughly outlined depolarization strategy. As a group, you decide on one strategy, describe it in detail and develop the associated final products in Task 5. The topic of depolarization is first approached broadly with idea generation and then gradually narrowed down to a final strategy — this is visualized with the lower funnel (see illustration at right). You will submit the final products on Thursday afternoon digitally via Canvas and physically on the USB flash drive your tutors received.

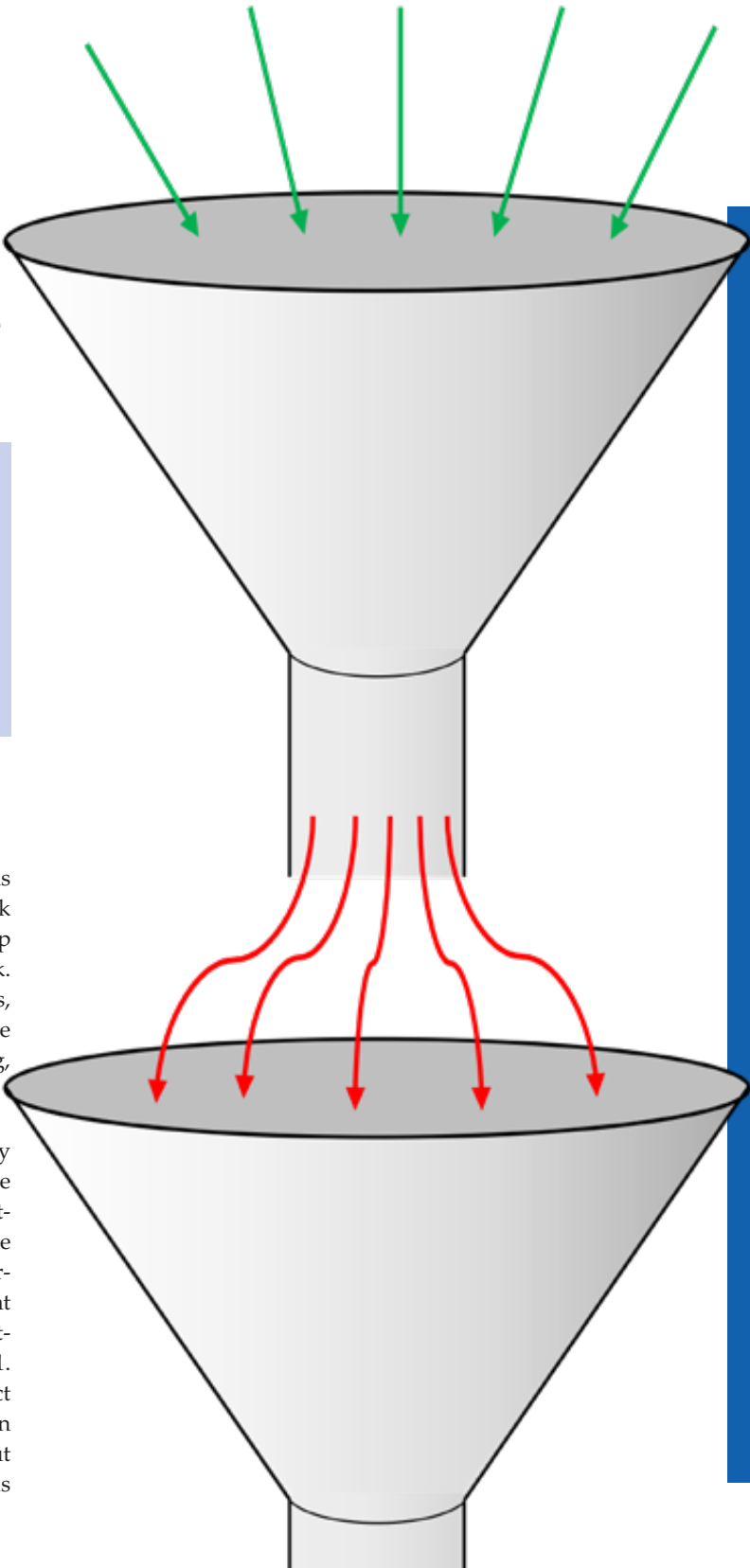
Deadlines

Submission of question for the panel discussion (Canvas)
Tuesday, 12 September 2023, 5 p.m.

Submission of final products (Canvas and USB flash drive)
Thursday, 14 September 2023, 5 p.m.

Evaluation of group performance

The preliminary committee of experts is tasked with selecting the six best StartWeek Groups. Members will visit each group on Wednesday and evaluate your work. After you submit your final products, the preliminary committee will evaluate your submissions. On Friday morning, you will play your promotional video or perform your staging and present your elevator pitch to the preliminary committee. The preliminary committee will select the top six depolarization strategies. These StartWeek Groups will have the opportunity to present their depolarization strategy to the entire Assessment Year cohort at the culmination of StartWeek, the Closing Event in Olma Hall 2.1. At the Closing Event, the jury will select the winning group, which will receive an exciting prize. Detailed information about the grand prize can be found on Canvas (Module 4 > Additional Documents).



Task overview

Group processes and reflection (3h)	Task 1 (1h) Getting started and introduction			Bidding process (2h)
	Task 1.1 (10 min) Why a case study in the StartWeek?	Task 1.2 (50 min) Topic introduction		
	Task 2 (1h 15 min) Gaining an overview			
	Task 2.1 (25 min) Case study work	Task 2.2 (30 min) Preparation for the panel discussion	Task 2.3 (20 min) Panel discussion	
	Task 3 (3h 10 min) Experiencing and reflecting on polarization			
	Task 3.1 (1h 15 min) Preparation for the roleplay	Task 3.2 (55 min) Perform the roleplay	Task 3.3 (1h) Reflect on the roleplay	
	Task 4 (2h 15 min) Developing, defining and justifying depolarization strategies			
	Task 4.1 (50 min) Collect strategy ideas	Task 4.2 (30 min) Concretize strategy approaches	Task 4.3 (55 min) Select and refine depolarization strategy	
	Task 5 (4h 5 min) Creating the final products			
	Task 5.1 (30 min) Introduction to final products	Task 5.2 (3h 35 min) Create final products in subgroups		
Preliminary committee (10 min): Promotional video/staging, elevator pitch and discussion and question section	Jury (6 min): Promotional video/staging, elevator pitch and answer questions from the jury			

Task 1.1: Why a case study in the StartWeek?

Assignment

The first step is to familiarize yourself with the purpose and characteristics of case study work so that you have a basic understanding of why you are dealing with the topic of polarization in the form of a case study during the StartWeek. (Time: 10 min)

Objectives

- You know the purpose of case study work.
- You know the characteristics of this case study.

Output

- No output

Methodology/procedure

Step	Task	Method	Time
1	Read “Why a case study in the StartWeek?” on p. 9.	Individual work	5 min
2	Discussion to clarify questions and ambiguities.	Plenum	5 min

Materials

None

Why a case study in the StartWeek?

The overall goal of the StartWeek is to prepare new students for their new role at the University of St.Gallen (HSG).

The introduction to the scientific way of working in an academic context takes place within the framework of an initial group work. New students are able to experience the requirements of the HSG’s academic approach, while at the same time simulating group work in the Assessment Year (academic integration) and having the opportunity to get to know each other and network within their group (social integration). To work on the case study, the new students also use the main learning and collaboration tools of the University of St.Gallen (e.g., Canvas and MS Teams). This supports the administrative integration. Thus, the case study contributes significantly to the overall goal of the StartWeek.

Case study method

A case study is a learning method that focuses on a challenging problem. The challenge results from its complexity and interdisciplinarity. While working on the case study, an intensive examination of actual incidents from practice should take place. These events should have social relevance, topicality and significance for the future. For this complex, interdisciplinary and practical problem, it is necessary to work out possible solutions in a team. Today’s globally networked working world demands skills such as an interdisciplinary approach to work, successful teamwork (team spirit and the ability to cooperate), efficient research and interpretation of information, and

the development of one’s own ideas and approaches to solutions. These skills are to be developed and tested during your studies by, among other things, solving case studies. A first opportunity to practice this is offered by the StartWeek. In a case study, students are put in the position of decision-makers. It follows from the different decisions that a case study is to some extent open-ended. This means that for a problem — in contrast to a simple task or single question — there is no one-size-fits-all solution; instead, there are various different avenues to explore or a result can perhaps present only partial solutions.

Case study 2023

For the StartWeek 2023, new students approach the topic of polarization, which can be observed in growing gaps in politics, the economy and society. It can be seen that parties are increasingly discussing hardened positions against each other instead of with each other. However, the ability to engage in transnational dialogue is absolutely essential when it comes to solving global problems. The Polos Foundation has tasked the new students with conducting basic research on polarization in the role of futurologists. The new students are introduced to the topic with expert inputs and specially prepared texts. The research is based on independent research and students’ own experiences on a cognitive and affective level. From this, a depolarization strategy is to be derived, in order to counteract polarization.



Task 1.2: Topic introduction

Assignment

During the Welcome Event, you were introduced to the topic of polarization. Reflect on and answer the polarizing questions posed by your tutors from your own perspective. To do this, stand on the corresponding side of the room. Afterward, you will receive an overview of the topic of polarization. (Time: 50 min)

Objectives

- You recognize the diversity of opinions among your group members on polarizing issues.
- You identify points of connection to your own everyday life and personal experiences.
- You have an overview of the topic of polarization.
- You learn about the diversity of perspectives on the topic.

Output

- No output

Methodology/procedure

Step	Task	Method	Time
1	Watch the case study trailer shown by your tutors.	Plenum	2 min
2	Introduction to the “left side – right side” method by your tutors.	Plenum	3 min
3	Personal expression of opinion on various questions with the help of the “left side – right side” method. The questions are asked by your tutors.	Plenum	15 min
4	Read the text “Understanding polarization” on pp. 11-13. After reading, consider the cover of the StartMagazine. <i>Questions</i> a. What is shown in the image? b. How does the image affect me? What feelings does the image trigger in me? c. How is the image connected to the case study?	Individual work	18 min
5	Discuss and interpret the cover image with the person sitting next to you. <i>Questions</i> a. What do I associate with the image? b. How do divergent opinions/attitudes arise? c. In what situations have I experienced disagreements? d. How do I deal with other opinions? What are possible consequences of differences of opinion?	Pair work	7 min
6	Discussion in plenum to clarify questions and ambiguities.	Plenum	5 min

Materials

- Canvas (Module 4 > Additional Documents): Case study trailer

Understanding polarization

Of elephants, donkeys and cowbells

In 2020, we witnessed a heated U.S. election campaign between hardened fronts of Republicans (represented by the elephant) and Democrats (represented by the donkey). On 6 January 2021, the unthinkable happened: An angry mob stormed the sacred halls of American democracy, the Capitol in Washington, D.C. (Merkel, n.d.)

At the same time that the Americans were deciding who would lead their democracy for the next four years, the Swiss had to decide on changes to the Covid 19 law. While the measures taken by the Federal Council at the beginning of the global pandemic in spring 2020 were widely supported by the population, masks and vaccinations increasingly divided society. Private conversations and public debate became increasingly aggressive. In the referendum campaign, the “Freiheitstrychler” became a symbol of resistance. With cowbells and William Tell paraphernalia (see p. 12), they regularly marched against Corona measures (Hofer, 2022).



Political polarization

In recent years, hardened political fronts could be observed not only in Switzerland and the U.S. In Poland and Hungary, for example, more radical political forces came to power, and voices critical of Europe became louder and more acceptable, moving from the fringes to daily conversations.

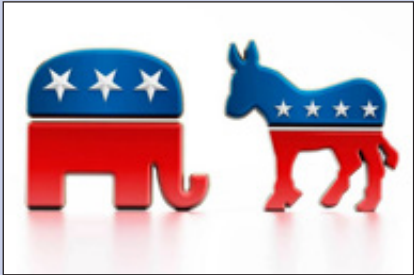
Not only is there a high degree of polarization in certain countries, but also at the international level the situation is more tense than it has been for decades. Since last year, tensions between the U.S. and China have significantly increased. The visit of Nancy Pelosi, then Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, to Taiwan in August 2022 caused a considerable stir, to which China immediately responded with large-scale military exercise off Taiwan. In February 2023, the conflict between China and the U.S. reached a new climax when the U.S. accused China of piloting a spy balloon over its territory. On the instructions of U.S. President Joe Biden, the balloon was destroyed by the U.S., while China firmly denied all accusations. The war between Ukraine and Russia is causing global conflicts between the allies of these two states. There is still no end in sight to the war, and concerns that the conflict could spread to other parties or, in the worst case, even result in World War III are pervasive. Terms and language that most of us know only from history books are suddenly encountered in current reporting: East versus West, democracy versus autocracy, cold war, ...

What has happened to our open, cosmopolitan society? What are the causes and drivers behind these new lines of conflict? What does polarization do to individuals, societies and democracies? And how can we create an appreciative, de-escalating dialogue that allows us to search together for constructive solutions to pressing local but also global problems (e.g., climate, migration)?

The history of the American political mascots

The donkey as a symbol of the American Democratic Party goes back to the election campaign of 1828. Opponents of the Democratic presidential candidate at the time, Andrew Jackson, liked to call him a “jackass” (ntv, 2006). Jackson was not deterred by this and turned the tables by using the donkey as a symbol of his campaign (TierWelt, 2016). Successfully, it turns out, as he won the election and served as American president from 1829 to 1837 (Freidel & Sidey, 1996, cited in The White House, 2006). Later, the German-American cartoonist Thomas Nast revived the Democratic donkey in a drawing for *Harper’s Weekly* magazine. Nast also invented the Republican elephant. (Schulte von Drach, 2004)

To this day, the donkey symbolizes modesty, comfort, efficiency, courage and kindness for Democrats, while Republicans see it



as stubborn, stupid and ridiculous. In the elephant, Republicans see dignity, strength, intelligence and a good memory, while Democrats consider it pompous, stupid and conservative. (Schulte von Drach, 2004)

Read how the mascots of the American political parties came about:



On the concept of polarization

The concept of polarization has its origin in the Greek word *polos*, which means axis of the earth or vault of the sky (Padrock & Sievers, n.d.). We find polarization in different disciplines: in the natural sciences, for example, as a physical process or in the social, political and economic sciences to describe social dynamics (cf. Duden,

n.d.a). In education, the term generally refers to the creation and “separation of a group into different camps with opposing views” (Padrock & Sievers, n.d.).

We encounter polarization in numerous areas of life. In Switzerland, we grow up as Coop or Migros kids, as country folk or city kids, depending on our parents’ shopping and living preferences. Later, we have to choose between vocational training or university, between the liberal

arts and science. Every day we have to decide — meat or vegetarian in the cafeteria, thumbs-up or -down on social media?

With personal politicization, we position ourselves left or right, progressive or conservative. And more and more frequently, we have to question media reporting: Is it based on actual and truthful facts, on scientifically sound statements, or is it so-called “fake news” or “alternative facts”?



References to pagan customs and a national hero

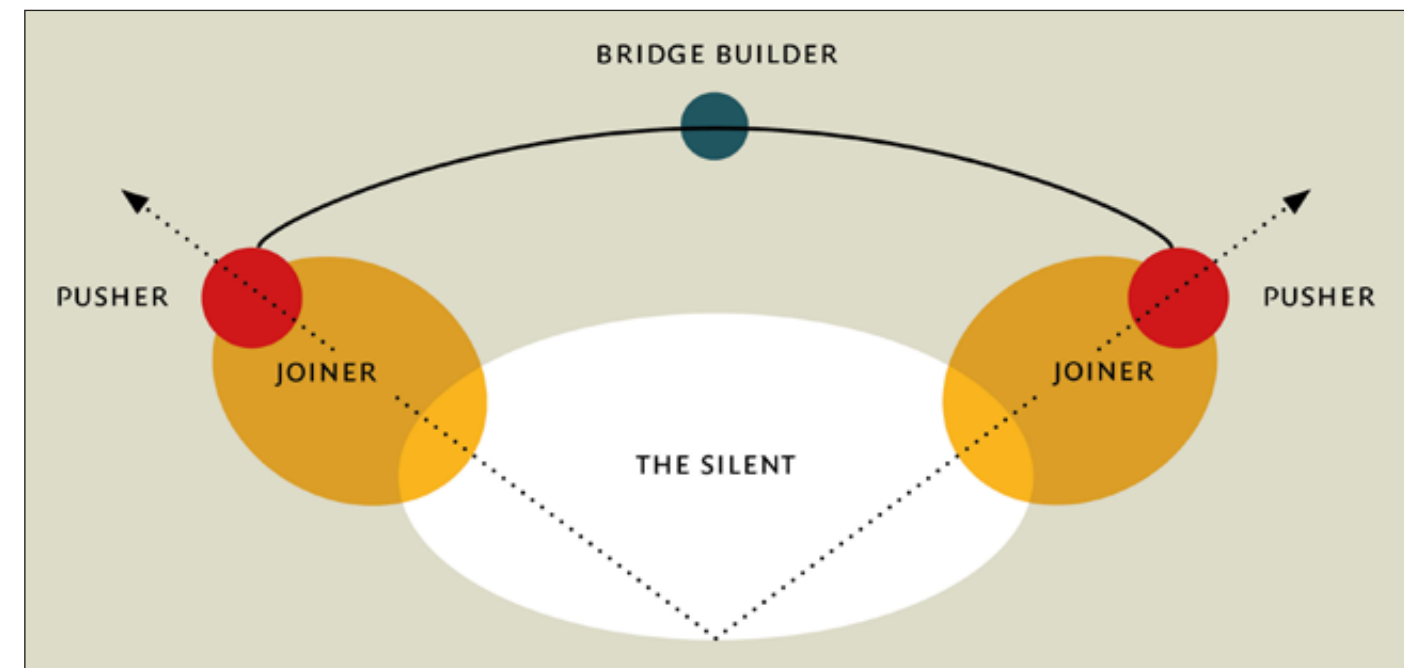
Heavy with symbolism and pathos, the “Freiheitsstrychler” have appeared at rallies protesting the federal government’s pandemic policy, wearing white shepherd’s shirts with gentian, edelweiss and the Swiss cross and carrying large cowbells on a wooden yoke on their shoulders. Treicheln is not a political activity per se, but rather a centuries-old custom dating back to pagan times. In the week between Christmas and New Year’s, the Treichlers would parade through villages with their bells to drive away evil spirits. (Weder & Ramp, 2021)

Crossbows and apples were similarly used to refer to the story of William Tell, a legendary figure who is said to have lived in the



13th and 14th centuries, at a time when the original Swiss cantons had to fight against oppression and tyranny. With his uprising against the tyrant Gessler, he decisively

shaped the self-image of a free and independent Switzerland and is revered as a national hero to this day. (Uri Tourismus, n.d.)



The players of polarization

Brandsma (2018; cf. Inside Polarisation, n.d.a, n.d.b; see illustration above) distinguishes five players in a polarized situation: *Pushers* (opinion leaders) are located at both poles. They work to stir up the debate and win as many supporters as possible for their cause. As a result, the poles become stronger and more pronounced. Pushers are responsible for increasing polarization. They are the opinion leaders of the respective side and make polarizing statements in the public spotlight.

Joiners (supporters) gather around the pushers at both poles. They describe themselves as less extreme than the pushers, but find certain points made by the opinion leaders very relevant. Pushers depend on their joiners to mobilize the masses for their cause.

The third player is the large number of people who do not take sides. Members of the middle can hold an indifferent opinion or actively advocate a moderate position. Workers who must take a neutral stand because of their profession (e.g., teacher or police officer) are also in the middle. As visibility and attention increase toward the two poles, members of the middle are referred to as *the silent*.

In a polarized situation, one player wants to mediate between the poles and start a

dialogue. *Bridge-builders* tend to be well-known individuals, often holding a political office. However, they usually play into the hands of the pushers by providing them a platform from which to broadcast their views. By directly confronting pushers, bridge-builders end up empowering them, further inflaming the discourse, and their intended de-escalations usually fail.

In extreme situations, a fifth player appears. The joiner camp grows at the expense of the silent. At a certain point, it is no longer possible to remain in the middle. Pushers consider the other side the enemy, but their target group is the silent. They want to win them over as supporters. In the worst case of polarization — a civil war — people who do not want to join one or the other of the poles run the risk of becoming *scapegoats*. Both members of the silent and the bridge-builders can slip into the position of scapegoat and be defamed by pushers of both poles.



Polarization: on a razor’s edge

Opposing poles with different points of view are a part of life, making it diverse and exciting. Polarization can awaken positive forces, generate initiatives and bring about change. Democracies thrive on the discourse and engagement. Depending on the political system, the poles are stronger (e.g., in the two-party U.S.) or weaker (e.g., in multi-party Switzerland). It becomes dangerous when irrational dynamics get out of hand, when togetherness turns into aggressive, rage-filled antagonism without understanding for those who think differently, and when opposing poles turn into radicalized groups (Brandsma, 2018). Not to be underestimated is the role of the media, which has been fundamentally changed by the disappearance of traditional print and the rise of social media. Algorithms carry the risk that we will only be reinforced in our views and lose sight of diversity.

The tendency toward increasing polarization in recent years and the current global political situation give us pause and make the topic of StartWeek 2023 especially topical. Dive with us into a socially relevant topic and develop ideas on how we can use the positive aspects of polarization to create more understanding for each other again.

Task 2.1: Case study work

Assignment

You will engage with the assignment and get an overview of the case study work during the week, the final products to be developed and how they will be presented to the preliminary committee and, possibly, the jury at the Closing Event. (Time: 25 min)

Objectives

- You understand the assignment of the case study.
- You know the process of case study work.
- You know the final products and their deadlines.
- You know the procedure of presenting to the preliminary committee and, possibly, the jury at the Closing Event.

Output

- No output

Methodology/procedure

Step	Task	Method	Time
1	Familiarize yourself with the assignment and the procedure of the case study work. To do this, read the assignment on p. 15 and the text “Case study overview” on p. 6. <i>Questions</i> a. What is our assignment? b. What is our perspective as a StartWeek Group? c. What criteria should the depolarization strategy to be developed meet? d. What are the final products? e. What needs to be presented, when and to whom?	Individual work	10 min
2	Your tutors will summarize the most important information about the assignment and process of case study work and answer any questions.	Plenum	15 min

Materials

- Canvas (Module 4 > Additional Documents): Information about the grand prize



Assignment

The case study is based on an assignment from the fictitious Polos Foundation.

University of St.Gallen (HSG)
StartWeek
Dufourstrasse 50
9000 St.Gallen

St.Gallen, 11 September 2023

Call for proposals: Depolarization strategies wanted

The German-British sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf once said that democracy is an experiment that is constantly in danger of failing. Democracy doesn’t simply run on its own; instead, it must be actively cultivated and lived by the people. Democracy is based on dialogue, consensus, compromise and majority decisions accepted by all.

The Polos Foundation has been observing with concern the widening gap in politics, the economy and society that has been growing for years. Tendencies toward polarization are increasingly driving us apart. More and more often, we are taking hardened positions and using them as a platform to talk at each other instead of with each other — and this at a time when joint action is urgently needed to solve global problems.

This polarization poses a danger to our peaceful coexistence. Strategies are needed that can counteract political and social division. Because we can only solve the major challenges of today and the future together and across national borders. With this call for proposals, the Polos Foundation commissions 68 StartWeek Groups as futurologists to conduct basic research on the causes and effects of polarization and thus to counteract it:

- You will work to get to the bottom of the issue of polarization during StartWeek 2023, try to understand it cognitively and experience it affectively in the context of a roleplay.
- Based on your findings, you will develop a depolarization strategy.
- To illustrate your strategy for presentation to the preliminary committee and, possibly, the jury, you will develop the core message into an elevator pitch, a strategy plan, and a promotional video or a staging. You will also provide an interview for the Polos Foundation website and create your own website.

The 24 members of the preliminary committee will select the six most convincing depolarization strategies to present to the Polos Foundation. At the final Closing Event, the three-person jury will then select the most outstanding strategy and award the grand prize.

Convince us with your depolarization strategy.

We are looking forward to your exciting findings.

On behalf of the Polos Foundation

Dr. Polo Fuchs

Managing Director

Task 2.2: Preparation for the panel discussion

Assignment

The group will actively participate in the panel discussion on Wednesday in the Audimax. For this purpose, the group will split up to develop numerous questions before coming back together to select a question to be directed at a participating expert. (Time: 30 min)

Objectives

- In your subgroup, you will formulate a well-founded question for a panel expert.
- You present the question developed with your subgroup and, in plenum, select a question to be asked.

Output

- Question for panel discussion
- Submission by 5 p.m. Tuesday on Canvas

The moderator of the panel discussion will go through the questions and identify key issues for the experts at the panel on Wednesday.

Methodology/procedure

Step	Task	Method	Time
1	Split up into four subgroups, with each assigned one of the experts (two subgroups deal with the same expert in each case) by your tutors.	Plenum	5 min
2	Read the information about the panel discussion and the CV of the expert assigned to your subgroup on Canvas and briefly research the person. <i>Questions</i> a. From which perspective does the expert view the topic of polarization? b. How does the expert view the future (polarization trends)? c. What critical events could occur in the expert's field and what measures would the expert take against them?	Individual work	10 min
3	Develop a question related to polarization for your assigned expert. – Gather findings from reading and individual research within the subgroup. – Discussion based on the above questions and joint elaboration of a question.	Group work	7 min
4	Present the questions in plenum with subsequent discussion and vote on the question to be submitted.	Plenum	8 min

Materials

- Canvas (Module 1 > Panel Discussion on the Case Study Topic): Information about the panel discussion and expert CVs
- Canvas (Module 4 > Submissions): Submission of question for panel discussion

Task 2.3: Panel discussion

Assignment

Students attend the panel discussion on Wednesday in the Audimax and individually note down the central points of the panel. These notes are then compiled in plenum. (Time: 20 min)

Objectives

- You make note of information from the panel discussion about how to counteract polarization tendencies.
- You will use this later in the development of your depolarization strategy where appropriate.

Output

- Collected notes from the panel discussion

Methodology/procedure

Step	Task	Method	Time
1*	Attend the panel on Wednesday and take notes on key points. These will serve to guide the development of your depolarization strategy. <i>Questions</i> a. How can polarization tendencies be countered (depolarization approaches)? b. What strategies do the experts use?	Individual work	45 min
2	After the panel, compile all notes under the guidance of your tutors. Record them in a document and place the document in your StartWeek Group team on MS Teams (to be used in Task 4.1).	Plenum	20 min

* The time for Step 1 is not included in the task overview.

Materials

None



Task 3.1: Preparation for the roleplay

Assignment

The first two tasks have introduced you to the topic of polarization. With the help of a roleplay, you will now experience a polarizing debate and reflect on what you observe. In the roleplay, two opposing basic positions will clash. Each basic position has two roles. In your subgroup, inhabit the role assigned to you and bring it to life. Together, clarify and discuss the position of your role and develop an argumentation strategy. Also, familiarize yourself with what other roles will be participating in the debate, what perspectives they will bring and how you can respond. (Time: 1h 15 min)

Objectives

- You know your assigned role.
- You develop an opening and closing statement for your role as well as arguments for the debate.
- You know the other participating roles and think about the positions they will take and how to counter their arguments.

Output

- Completed worksheet *preparation roleplay*

Methodology/procedure

Step	Task	Method	Time
1	Read the texts “Roleplay as a method for exploring social dynamics” on pp. 20-21 and “Conceptual embedding of the two roleplays” on pp. 22-23.	Individual work	15 min
2	The tutors announce which topic will be the subject of the roleplay and subsequently give an introduction to the topic, method, and procedure of the roleplay.	Plenum	10 min
3	Formation of four subgroups and assignment of roles by your tutors.	Plenum	5 min
4	Read up on your topic and your assigned role. <i>Roleplay Energy transition in aviation:</i> First read the introduction on pp. 24-27 and the role descriptions on p. 28. Next, read the detailed description of your assigned role on Canvas. <i>Roleplay Mandatory citizen service:</i> First read the introduction on pp. 30-31 and the role descriptions on p. 32. Next, read the detailed description of your assigned role on Canvas. Open the worksheet <i>preparation roleplay</i> on Canvas. Try to get inside the role and take notes on the worksheet as you read. These reflections will help give the role character and facilitate identification.	Individual work	20 min
5	In your subgroup, prepare for the roleplay. Compile your notes from Step 4 and complete one worksheet <i>preparation roleplay</i> together. Make sure that every member of your subgroup has access to it.	Group work	20 min

6	<p>For the roleplay, divide up tasks in your subgroup:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Identify three participants who will represent your role in turn in the ensuing debate. Change after each stage. <i>Stage 1:</i> Opening statement, entry into substantive debate (Participant 1: focus on presentation skills) <i>Stage 2:</i> Substantive debate (Participant 2: focus on debate skills) <i>Stage 3:</i> Conclusion of substantive debate, closing arguments (Participant 3: focus on active listening, as closing arguments may need to be adjusted)– All other subgroup members are observers who actively follow the discussion and fill out the <i>observation sheet</i> (see Canvas) (observers: focus on reflective competence). <p><i>Important:</i> There is a break of five minutes between each stage. During these breaks, you should confer as a group to sharpen or adjust your argumentation as necessary. Therefore, it is important that all group members actively follow the debate and thus optimally support the participants.</p>	Group work	5 min
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Materials

- Canvas (Module 4 > Additional Documents): Detailed role descriptions
- Canvas (Module 4 > Additional Documents): PowerPoint presentation *procedure roleplay and reflection*
- Canvas (Module 4 > Additional Documents): Worksheet *preparation roleplay*
- Canvas (Module 4 > Additional Documents): Observation sheet



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Roleplay as a method for exploring social dynamics

Roleplays are a form of simulative action. They enable cognitive and affective experiences in relation to a topic or issue.

Why a roleplay in the StartWeek?

Polarizing debates sometimes leave us perplexed or even speechless. It can be difficult to rationally comprehend the views of the other party or to convincingly introduce one's own position into a discussion. The goal of the case study assignment is to better understand the dynamics of polarization. A roleplay allows you to put yourself in the shoes of the different players, experience their position first-hand and gain valuable insights from it.

What is a roleplay?

A roleplay is a method that makes it possible to simulate selected conflict or decision-making situations in social life in a playful way. The participants of a roleplay take on different, sometimes opposing perspectives, which are designed as roles. By adopting a particular point of view, the ability to explore and reflect on one's own and others' actions and thoughts is promoted. The insights into behavioral patterns and values gained in roleplay enable the development of starting points for conflict management strategies and the initiation of change. (Strangl, 2022)

The roleplay is a didactically prepared form of social learning. Social learning refers to the promotion of interpersonal skills (the ability to deal with feelings, to take on a perspective and have empathy, to perceive oneself and others, or

communication and cooperation skills and the ability to deal with conflict constructively). Social competencies are not practiced and acquired in quiet self-study, but in a group setting (DeGeDe, n.d.). To a certain extent, one always exposes part of one's personality through this. It is therefore all the more important that social learning takes place in a protected environment and according to clear rules. Collegial, cooperative behavior and open communication within the learning group are important (Reich, n.d.a). In a roleplay, it is important to emphasize that the participants take on the assigned role and perspective exclusively for the performance. The views and standpoints represented do not in any way reflect the personal opinions of the actors. A clear distinction must be made between the role and the actors (Uhlenwinkel & Wienecke, 2013, p. 42).

Actors and sequence of the roleplay

In order to bring the topic of polarization to life, you will conduct a roleplay in the context of this case study. Your tutors decide which one of the two specifically prepared topics will be discussed in the roleplay. Four defined roles (see. p. 28 or p. 32) debate the "Energy transition in aviation" or the "Mandatory citizen service" under the guidance of a moderator (your tutors take on the role of game leaders). The observers follow the polarizing debate with alert eyes and open ears and record their findings.

All players contribute significantly to learning success. Game leaders are committed to a balanced discussion and a strife-free process. They ensure a comfortable, appreciative and safe learning environment (Reich, n.d.a). The actors embody their assigned perspectives as authentically as possible. With a lot of empathy, as vividly and convincingly as possible, they bring the point of view and the argumentation of the role into the debate. The observers follow the events from an impartial point of view. They document the behavior of the roles and the course of the discussion so that conclusions can be drawn from the observed behavior patterns and values.

The procedure follows the four phases of a roleplay (based on Uhlenwinkel & Wienecke, 2013, pp. 42-43; Reich, n.d.a):

- The warm-up phase serves as preparation for the upcoming learning experience. Players become acquainted with the method, the topic to be discussed and the participating roles. The characters and argumentations of the roles are worked out in detail in subgroups. In this first phase, you will practice the skills of perspective-taking and empathy.
- The roleplay is brought to life in the play phase. Under assured moderation and with authentic actors, a polarizing decision-making situation is brought to life and recorded in detail by attentive observers.



- The release phase is of great importance for drawing the line between the roleplay and reality. The release phase ensures that a clear separation of role and actor can take place. Any conflicts from the roleplay or criticism of the role behavior must not be transferred to everyday reality or become criticism of the person playing a role.
- The learning experience is concluded by an extensive reflection phase. This debriefing is important in order to classify the experience, to make subliminal experiences visible and to gain insights on how to counteract the polarization. To ensure that reflection also remains factual, it is advisable to follow the group rules for feedback (see box).

Every roleplay, even if it is guided, lives from the dynamics of the participants. Therefore, no two roleplays will turn out the same and each StartWeek Group will gain its own experiences and insights.

Rules for a successful reflection phase

You will encounter reflection and feedback situations again and again during StartWeek and in your studies. A few basic rules (Reich, n.d.b) help to create an open atmosphere for feedback and reflection.

Rules for the feedback giver

1. Positive feedback first
2. Feedback should describe, not evaluate
3. Give concrete, clearly formulated and comprehensible feedback
4. Formulate feedback as "I" messages
5. Show consideration for all participants

Rules for the feedback receiver

1. Listen attentively and actively
2. Ask questions if feedback is unclear
3. Neither justify nor defend your behavior¹
4. Consider helpful suggestions, shake off the rest¹
5. Give feedback to the feedback giver

Giving and receiving feedback are always interrelated. Not only does the feedback receiver learn about their impact on others, but also the observations of the feedback giver are related to their own person and life history (Reich, n.d.b).

The above rules are taken from Reich (n.d.b), slightly shortened and adapted to the reflection phase of the roleplay.

¹ These rules are listed but mainly concern feedback situations that explicitly involve feedback on a person's behavior (e.g., feedback on a sales pitch). In roleplaying, however, a clear distinction must be made between the observed behavior of the role and that of the actor.

Conceptual embedding of the two roleplays

Triple Bottom Line

The two roleplays are based on the concept of the triple bottom line (see illustration at top of p. 23). This is also referred to as the “three-pillar model of sustainable development” (cf. Holden et al., 2017). The exact origin of the model is not clear (Lexikon der Nachhaltigkeit, 2015). Since 1998, the model has received considerable attention in theory and practice (Lexikon der Nachhaltigkeit, 2015). This framework serves to sensitize decision-makers, offering a clear and coherent orientation for their actions. Consequently, companies are striving to overtly align their strategies with this paradigm.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that the model is not exempt from criticism: The goals are not clearly operationalized (cf. Brand & Jochum, 2000, pp. 71-75). Some are bothered by the fact that the dimensions are not weighted. For example, the ecological dimension should be given priority, since the protection of natural living conditions is the basic prerequisite for economic and social stability. In reality, the economic and social dimensions are often weighted more heavily. (cf. Deutscher Bundestag, 2002, p. 68) The triangle of goals is “magical.” It is not possible to fulfill all three dimensions immediately and simultaneously.

According to the model, a problem should be balanced within the triangle with economic, ecological and social goals. It forces integrated thinking and action. In the two roleplays, arguments from the three perspectives “profit” (economy, labor market, energy), “people” (gender justice, generational justice) and “planet” (ecology, nature, climate) are introduced accordingly. The Swiss Federal Constitution and the UN Sustainable Development Goals serve as a frame of reference. The illustration on p. 23 visualizes these relationships.

Five P’s

“People

We are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

Planet

We are determined to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.

Prosperity

We are determined to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.

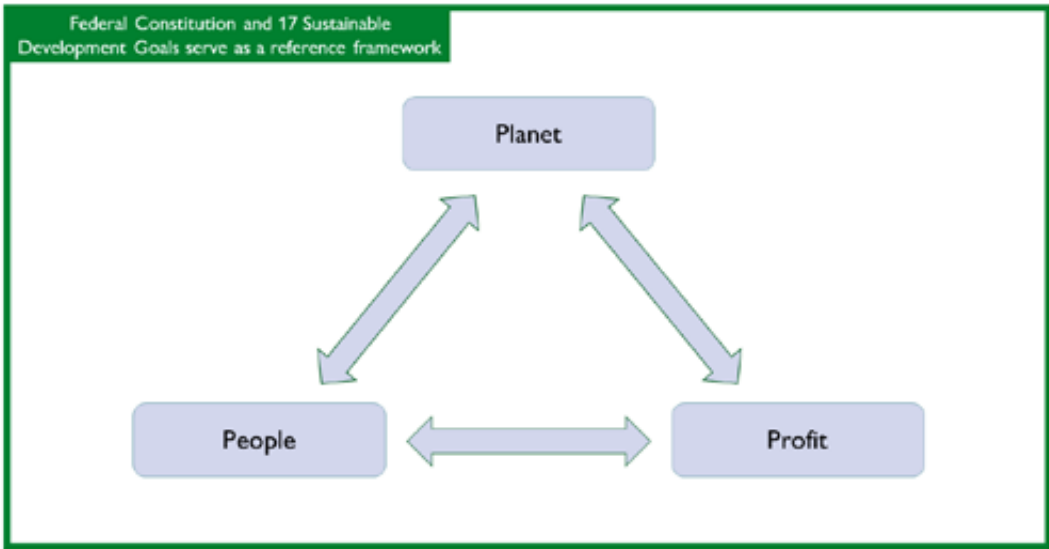
Peace

We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.

Partnership

We are determined to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.

The interlinkages and integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals are of crucial importance in ensuring that the purpose of the new Agenda is realized. If we realize our ambitions across the full extent of the Agenda, the lives of all will be profoundly improved and our world will be transformed for the better.” (United Nations, 2015, p. 2)



The model of the Triple Bottom Line is extended and differentiated by additional dimensions, depending on context and intended use. The preamble of the UN General Assembly resolution is interesting in this context (United Nations, 2015, p. 2). It was adopted on 25 September 2015, and circumscribes the five “P’s” (see box on p. 22). With these five P’s, a transnational and more global view is possible. Additional arguments can be derived from this in the roleplay.

17 goals for sustainable development

In its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations formulated

17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; see below) with 169 subgoals (United Nations, n.d.). By 2030, the goals are to be achieved globally and by all UN member states. They are to be considered integrated and thus indivisible. In a balanced manner, they take into account the three (see illustration above) or five P’s (see box on p. 22) of sustainable development. The illustration below shows an overview of the goals.

The roleplay “energy transition in aviation” emphasizes ecological sustainability. In the catalog of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the following goals in particular emphasize environmental sustainability: clean water (Goal 6), life under water (Goal 14), affordable and

clean energy (Goal 7), sustainable consumption and production (Goal 12), sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11), climate action (Goal 13), and life on land (Goal 15).

The “mandatory citizen service” roleplay emphasizes social sustainability. In the catalog of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the following goals in particular emphasize social sustainability: end poverty and hunger (Goals 1 and 2), healthy lives for all (Goal 3), inclusive and quality education (Goal 4), gender equality (Goal 5), reduce inequality within and between states (Goal 10), safe and resilient cities and settlements (Goal 11), and peaceful and inclusive societies (Goal 16).



Detailed information, current facts and figures as well as news and publications on each of these 17 goals can be accessed via the following QR code:



Roleplay 1: Is government intervention needed for an energy transition in the aviation industry?

Climate change is one of the greatest current challenges for politics and for us as a society. Aviation contributes to the greenhouse effect by emitting pollutants. In this roleplay, you will use the example of aviation to discuss various questions in order to initiate an energy transition: Is the free market sufficient to solve the problem or is government intervention such as flight restrictions or a tax on aviation fuels necessary? Are legal restrictions necessary? Is it enough to simply appeal to individuals to choose a sustainable lifestyle?

Historical view of climate change

For almost 200 years, scientists have been concerned with the question of how the temperature of our planet comes about (cf. Holly, 2021). Initially, the man-made greenhouse effect and the associated global warming were not a cause for concern, but raised hopes: “By the action of the increased [...] [CO₂ content] of the air we hope gradually to approach times of more uniform and better climatic conditions, especially in the colder parts of the Earth; times when the Earth will be able to support many times increased harvests for the benefit of the rapidly growing human race” (Arrhenius, 1906, cited in Ell & Westram, 2021).

During World War II, the German meteorologist Hermann Flohn first warned of the unpredictable consequences of anthropogenic climate change. The complexity of the interrelationships and the fragility of the climatic equilibrium worried the researcher: “A progression of this very slow increase in temperature [...] must be expected. Thus, however, the activity of man becomes the cause of an Earth-wide climatic change, the future significance of which no one can foresee” (Flohn, 1941, cited in Ell & Westram, 2021). Because reliable data was lacking and climate models could not holistically represent the

complex processes, for a long time there was a great deal of uncertainty about the development and exact consequences of climate change (Ell & Westram, 2021).

In 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) declared climate change as settled science and not refutable (IPCC, 2007, p. 82). Human influence on climate was described as “very likely” (IPCC, 2007, p. 82). Three years later, the then 194 member states of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) agreed on a target that global warming should not exceed 2°C above pre-industrial levels (UNFCCC, 2010, p. 3).

Why is the energy transition necessary?

The *energy transition* – the move away from non-renewable fossil fuels and the phase-out of nuclear power as a source of electricity – is driven by two factors: scientific findings and political decisions. From a scientific perspective, the advance of man-made climate change requires radical changes in our energy consumption and behavior. The implementation of possible measures to combat ongoing global warming is a matter of dispute in both national and international politics. Sustainable solutions are (still) a long way off, despite the urgency of the issue.



Scientific need for energy transition

Today, climate research unanimously warns of the irreversible consequences of climate change. Global warming is progressing faster and with more far-reaching damage than previously assumed. The consequences – extreme weather events, rising sea levels, landslides and rockfalls – are already being felt, demonstrating the vulnerability of people and nature (see IPCC, 2019a, p. 10; IPCC, 2019b, pp. 6 & 10; IPCC, 2021, pp. 8, 14-15, 24 & 27; BR, 2022).

To minimize the impacts of climate change, rapid, comprehensive and sustained reductions in harmful greenhouse gases are needed. However, achieving the 2°C target is proving extremely difficult. To ensure that global warming does not exceed 2°C compared to pre-industrial



levels, all the pledges and targets made by individual nations must be met. But even then, warming is estimated to be 1.9-2°C. (Meinshausen et al., 2022)

Political decisions toward energy transition

Global warming and its potential consequences for humanity have been on the international political agenda for 30 years (cf. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; United Nations, 1992, Article 2); however, the first agreement, the 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, turned out to be insufficiently concrete and binding. With the Kyoto Protocol of 1997, industrialized countries committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels, and concrete targets were adopted in the Paris Agreement in 2015. With this, the global community laid the foundations for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions starting in 2020. (BAFU, 2018a & 2018b)

Switzerland has been committed to all international climate agreements from the outset. In 2007, it adapted its energy strategy to the targets of the Kyoto Protocol. In 2011, however, parliament adopted a radical energy transition suddenly, unexpectedly and independently of growing concerns about global climate change. In the wake of the nuclear incident in Fukushima, Japan, the Federal Council drafted the Energy Strategy 2050, which aims to improve the energy efficiency of buildings, machinery and transportation, increase the share of renewable energy and decommission existing nuclear power plants at the end of their operating lives without replacement. (EDA, 2019)

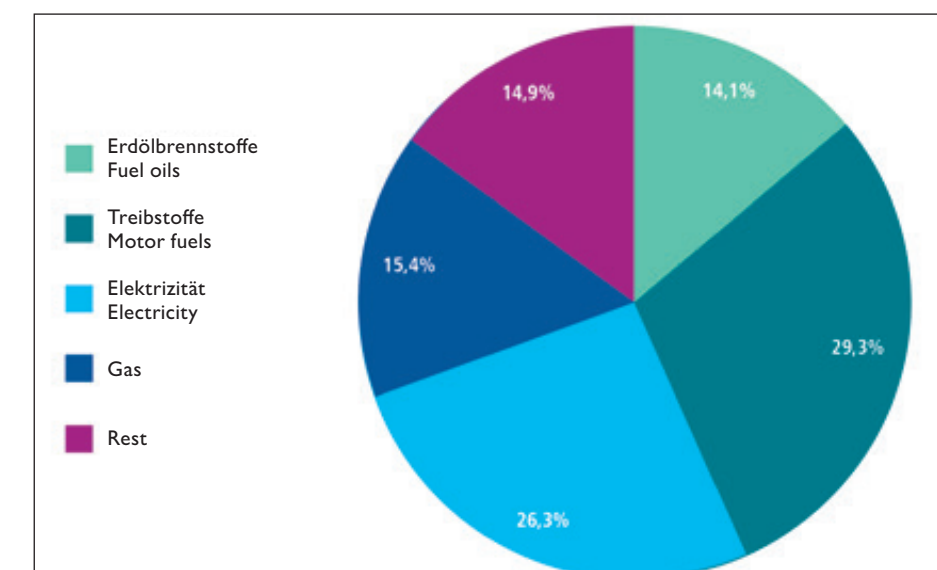
Contrary to the Federal Council's original energy strategy, which outlined the replacement and construction of new large power plants for electricity production, the ambitious climate targets of the Paris Agreement must now be achieved without being able to rely on comparatively CO₂-friendly nuclear power plants. The revision of the CO₂ Act, which would have been necessary for the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement and the commitment to halve greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 1990 levels, failed at the ballot box on 13 June 2021. Thus, it is currently open how Switzerland will meet its greenhouse gas reduction commitments. (BAFU, 2018b; Bundeskanzlei, 2022)

Energy consumption in Switzerland

In order to identify levers for the energy transition and the reduction of greenhouse gases, it is worth taking a look at

overall Swiss energy statistics. This provides information on the sources from which we obtain our energy and which sectors consume how much energy (cf. BFE, 2022).

With the Energy Strategy 2050 and the move away from nuclear power, the production of electricity – and thus an energy transition primarily in the narrower sense as an electricity transition – came to the fore in the public perception (Brunner, 2018, p. 10). The focus became how the electricity currently produced by nuclear power plants could be replaced after their decommissioning at the end of their operating life. Looking at the breakdown of final consumption by energy source (see pie chart), electricity accounted for 26.3% of the Swiss energy mix in 2021 (BFE, 2022, p. 4). However, with regard to an energy transition in the broader sense – massive reduction of greenhouse gases and compliance with the objectives of the Paris Agreement – the consumption of non-renewable fossil fuels and the shift



away from them must also be of interest. In 2021, final consumption of fuel oils was 29.3%, motor fuels 14.1% and gas 15.4% (BFE, 2022, p. 4). Non-renewable and climate-damaging energy sources accounted for the lion's share of the energy mix, totaling 58.8%.

Swiss energy statistics further show consumption by sector. It is noticeable that transport consumes 31.8%, or one-third, of the total. Another third (30.3%) is used by households and 36.6% by the economic sectors industry (19.3%) and services (17.3%). (BFE, 2022, pp. 5 & 10)

The statistics make it clear that, for climate policy and the energy transition, transport policy and transition are central. Combine this with the fact that more than 90% of the energy demand for transport is covered by petroleum products (gasoline, diesel and aviation fuels) and transport thus accounts for almost 32% of Swiss green-

house gases (cf. flow process chart below, BFE, 2022, p. 10; BAFU, 2022a; VÖV, 2020, p. 30). A transport transition therefore requires less traffic as well as lower energy consumption (Brunner, 2018, p. 10). This requires courageous and uncomfortable decisions by politicians and a change in behavior by each and every one of us (Haudenschild, 2018, p. 3).

Why focus on aviation?

Air traffic grew exponentially in the years leading up to the Covid pandemic, both nationally and internationally. In 2019, 58.6 million arriving and departing air passengers were registered in Switzerland (BFS, 2020, p. 14; BFS, 2022). After a sharp decline during the pandemic, the current trend is clearly pointing upward and is approaching the 2019 figures again with large steps (statista, 2023). Globally, air traffic has almost tripled since 1990 (WWF, n.d.).



Although international air traffic accounts for a comparatively small share of global CO₂ emissions (cf. BDL, 2019, p. 2), aviation emissions are particularly harmful to the climate. This is because the pollutants (CO₂ and others) are emitted at high altitudes, triggering complex processes directly in the atmosphere (WWF, 2021, p. 1). For example, flying on vacation contributes more to global warming than driving a car for a year and heating a home with petroleum (WWF, n.d.).

There is a lack of agreement about the best measures to reduce greenhouse gases from aviation. Several factors make it difficult to find solutions quickly. First, the global nature of aviation is an obstacle to rapid, joint and coordinated action by the international community. To date, there is a lack of global and legally binding instruments in aviation. The guidelines of the UN Climate Convention distinguish between domestic flights and international flights departing from a country. However, only emissions from domestic flights are included in the greenhouse gas inventory of a nation, which gives a distorted picture because domestic flights account for only a small fraction of total air traffic. (BAFU, 2022b)

While domestic flights are subject to the obligations of the Kyoto Protocol and the subsequent Paris Agreement, international civil aviation has long been excluded. It was not until late 2016 that CORSIA — Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation — was adopted as a carbon offset and reduction program. However, participation by countries is voluntary until 2027, which means that the environmental damage of aviation continues to be insufficiently reflected in the pricing mechanism (BDL,

2019, p. 3; Klimaschutz-Portal des BDL, n.d.). In addition, international air traffic does not have to pay a tax on aviation fuels, and air passengers do not pay VAT on international air travel (VCS, n.d.).

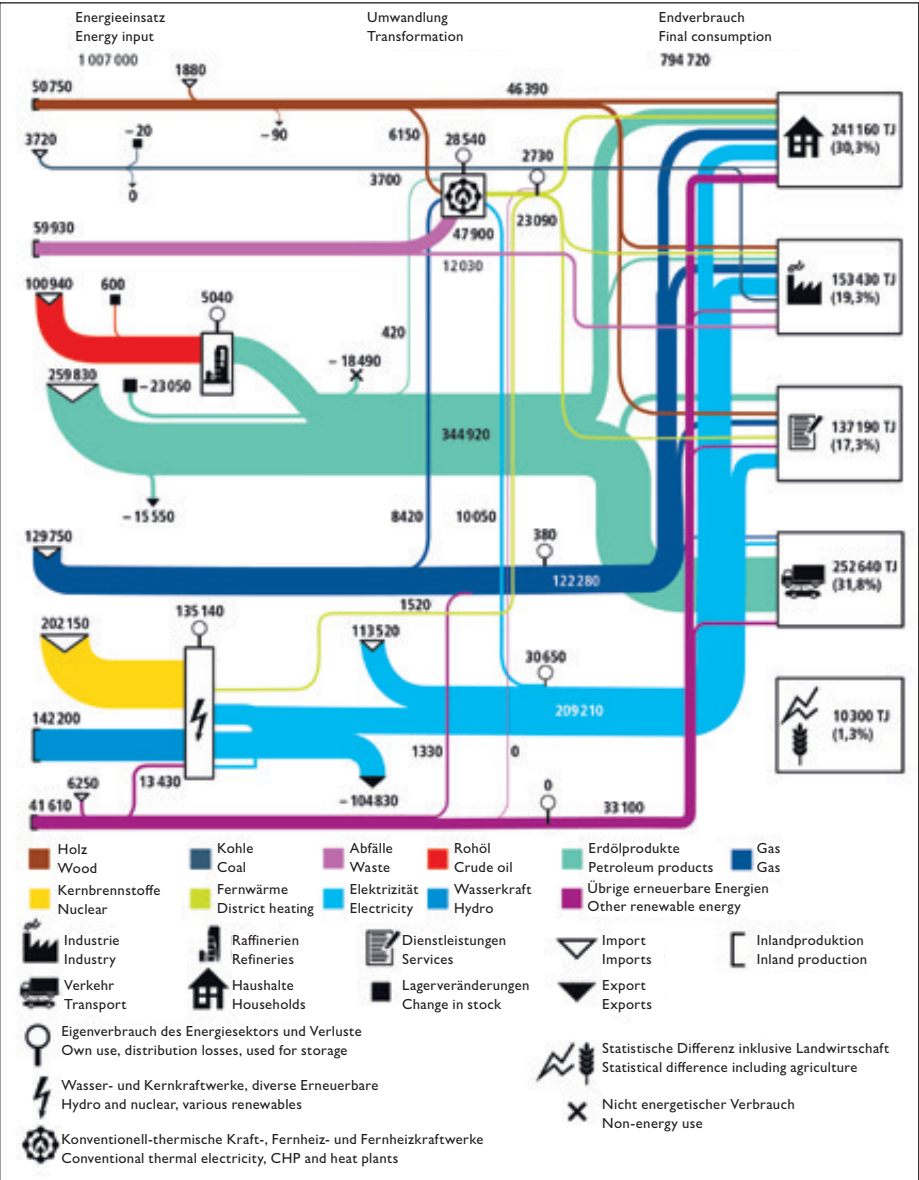
Secondly, there are still no market-ready technological alternatives to kerosene-powered aircraft. The Lufthansa Group writes, accurately reflecting the current state of research: "Aviation is still a long way from an electric or hydrogen engine for large aircraft. The core problem is the lower energy density of batteries — and the storage of large quantities

of hydrogen is still extremely complex" (Lufthansa Group, n.d.). Airbus' ZEROe aircraft, which pursues the vision of hybrid hydrogen aircraft, is still in the development stage. Market introduction is not expected before 2035. (Airbus, n.d.)

The development of renewable fuels, so-called Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), is somewhat more advanced. Second-generation biofuels (obtained from waste, biomass, waste oils or fats) are already in use today. However, they are only available in extremely small quantities (0.01% of global demand) and are about three times as expensive as conventional aviation fuel. The "power-to-liquid" research approach raises a lot of hope: Electricity from renewable sources is used to produce hydrogen in a complex technical process. CO₂ is then added. This produces a synthetic liquid fuel. Since the CO₂ was taken from the atmosphere during production, no new CO₂ is released during consumption. However, this technology has not yet reached market maturity. (BDL, 2019, pp. 7-8; Lufthansa Group, n.d.) From a technological perspective, fleet modernization — replacing old aircraft with new and more energy-efficient models — is currently the fastest way to reduce CO₂ in aviation (BDL, 2019, p. 6).

A third lever is the personal travel behavior of each and every one of us. Almost 80% of passengers who started their journey at a Swiss airport in 2019 were headed for destinations in Europe (BFS, 2020, p. 17). With a view to reducing greenhouse gases in aviation, one of the goals must be to replace short-haul flights in particular with more climate-friendly means of transport, such as trains or buses. However, a good rail infrastructure and functioning local transport are prerequisites for this.

The concept of sufficiency crops up again and again in the debates on the energy transition. Sufficiency means critically questioning one's own behavior and changing it with regard to a conscious and conscientious approach to consumption (cf. SES, 2022a). Individual behavioral changes, even if they begin on a small scale and at first glance seem less than promising, hold great energy-saving potential. After all, every mile not flown is the most ecological mile flown (cf. SES, 2022b). Changing one's own actions is no easy task. Nevertheless, it is the one measure that each of us can implement immediately and thus make a direct contribution to the energy transition.



Discussion topic and participating roles

What is being discussed?

The four roles will discuss whether government intervention in aviation is needed for the ambitious energy transition. The focus of the debate should not be on technical aspects or solutions. Rather, it is about whether the transition can be achieved without political measures — that is, if we rely only on airlines and the personal responsibility of air passengers. Are we willing of our own accord to change our travel behavior because we see the ecological necessity? Do we compensate for our air travel voluntarily and without government orders? Or does it take the state because the immediacy for our behavior change is not there? Can a global problem be solved with national instruments? And how far should government measures intervene in the lives of individuals?

Who is taking part in the discussion?

Four *fictional* roles participate in the roleplay:

Moana Tong

The 27-year-old biologist and doctoral student lives and conducts research on Kiribati, an island nation in the Pacific Ocean that is severely threatened by rising sea levels. Being directly affected, Moana is convinced that we can only bring about greenhouse gas reductions in aviation through government intervention. Personally, she takes care to keep her carbon footprint as small as possible.

Erwin Felchlin

The 67-year-old retiree prefers to spend his time in his alpine hut in a remote Schwyz valley. He only flies to visit his grown children, who live on different continents. He describes himself as apolitical but strongly believes that government is best when it stays out of the lives of individuals.

Cornelius Gerber

The 47-year-old mechanical engineer works for a think tank and advises companies in the transport sector. He believes that any CO₂ reduction in aviation will only succeed if effective political guardrails are set, due to the global, long-term nature of the problem and the lack of technological alternatives in the airline industry.

Paula Molina

Flying is the passion of the 39-year-old spokeswoman for the Professional Association of Cockpit Personnel. The aviation industry has already done a lot to make flying more climate-friendly. The Swiss Confederation is already a leader in the international community and has signed all the relevant agreements on aviation. The former flight attendant can live with targeted support measures but not with any additional restrictions.



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Roleplay 2: Does our society need a mandatory citizen service?

Initial situation

Globally, but also in Switzerland, we are facing growing challenges in the areas of security, environment, social peace and justice. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (n.d.; see p. 22-23) could be better achieved if all persons in Switzerland would perform a mandatory citizen service of one year. The question of a mandatory citizen service should be put before the citizens as a plebiscite.

This would be a big change compared to the status quo, according to which only Swiss men are obliged to do military service. Accordingly, this question is being discussed controversially. Since sustainability issues are also highly relevant in the curriculum of the University of St.Gallen, we want to examine a possible mandatory citizen service in the context of a roleplay, from the perspective of four different people, based on the following question:



Should a mandatory citizen service be introduced in Switzerland for all persons (regardless of gender)?

The question will be considered primarily from an individual perspective. Different personal concerns and attitudes are expressed and made tangible in the roleplay. Arguments meet counter-arguments. The question is placed in the context of Switzerland. The Swiss legal framework applies. European and international developments are taken into account in the argumentation.

Mandatory citizen service

The question on mandatory citizen service emphasizes social sustainability, especially intergenerational equity and gender equity. Specifically, a committee would like to launch the following federal popular initiative by 26 October 2023 – this date corresponds to the end of the signature collection period (see box; Service Citoyen, n.d.):

“For an engaged Switzerland (Service-citoyen-initiative)”

“The Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation of 18 April 1999 (SR 101) is amended as follows:

Art. 59 Service in favor of the general public and the environment

1. Every person with Swiss citizenship shall perform a service for the benefit of the general public and the environment.
2. This service shall be performed as military service or in the form of another equivalent militia service recognized by law.
3. The target stock of crisis intervention services is guaranteed; this applies in particular to:
 - a. the armed forces;
 - b. the civil protection.
4. Persons who do not perform a service for the benefit of the general public and the environment, although they are obliged to do so, shall owe a levy; the law may provide for exceptions. This levy shall be imposed by the Confederation and assessed and collected by the Cantons.
5. The law determines whether and to what extent persons without Swiss citizenship perform a service for the benefit of the general public and the environment.

[...]” (Service Citoyen, n.d.)

Controversial question

According to the website of the initiative committee, the project could come to the ballot box in 2026. The public discussion on the concrete question is therefore not yet underway. But the question of the social engagement of citizens is discussed again and again. The social and ecological challenges demand that as many citizens as possible take responsibility. The Covid pandemic seems to have given impetus to the idea of a mandatory citizen service. However, a compulsory duty with a coercive character remains a controversial issue by its very nature.

With the motto “all for all”, the initiative focuses on a sense of duty, active solidarity, and individual and collective responsibility (militia idea). A common, meaningful commitment to the community leads to solidarity. This has a depolarizing effect and thus strengthens our democracy. Such commitment is considered part of basic education. All persons, regardless of gender and – if the legislature so stipulates – also foreigners and

migrants, should be employed according to their strengths. This would be a step toward a more integrative and inclusive society. The citizen service should help strengthen social cohesion and a sense of belonging. It makes it possible to build bridges between different communities and strengthen cohesion in the diverse Swiss society. (Service Citoyen, n.d.) Whether all these ideas will pass if the initiative is adopted is another question. In the context of parliamentary debates, the legislature would have to regulate the details.

Nowadays, the concept of security is defined more broadly. Accordingly, the army’s security services are not sufficient. Cyber threats, natural disasters, climate damage, social violence, nursing emergencies, etc. also require human resources. With a mandatory citizen service, targeted citizens could be deployed to counter threats and emergencies.

On the other hand, mandatory citizen service can be perceived as overregulation by the state. It undermines the personal free-

dom and autonomy of individuals. When people rely on the state, they themselves take less personal responsibility in their lives. Through personal initiatives, more flexible and innovative solutions can be worked out than in a service for the state with a coercive character. (cf. Meier & Lempert, 2022, p. 15)

Social innovation

The idea of a mandatory citizen service can be related to the concept of “social innovation”. The term captures two strands of topics. One is about human social behavior and the other is about change or innovation. In 2003, at the Center for Social Innovation at the Stanford Graduate School of Business, the term “social innovation” is paraphrased as “the process of inventing, securing support for, and implementing novel solutions to social needs and problems” (Phills et al., 2008). In other words, it is the process of creating, implementing, and disseminating new social practices in different social domains.



Discussion topic and participating roles

What is being discussed?

The four roles discuss whether a mandatory citizen service should be introduced for all Swiss citizens. Advantages and disadvantages of a mandatory citizen service are discussed in the roleplay, and the topic is evaluated against the background of social and economic sustainability.

Who is taking part in the discussion?

Four fictional roles participate in the roleplay:



Task 3.2: Perform the roleplay

Assignment

The two poles of your roleplay topic meet in a moderated debate. The debate is divided into three stages. In **Stage 1** (10 minutes), the debate is opened. The discussion is started with an **opening statement** by each of the four roles. The focus of **Stage 2** (20 minutes) is the **substantive debate** on the topic. The roles debate the different points of view. The debate concludes with **closing arguments** by all four roles in **Stage 3** (10 minutes). Between each stage, there is a short break of 5 minutes so that the subgroups can confer. You will either actively participate in the debate by embodying an assigned role or observe, recording your findings on the *observation sheet* and assisting the participants in preparing for the debate. (Time: 55 min)

Objectives

- You actively engage in the debate and respond according to your role (participants).
- You understand the arguments of both sides and try to relate to them (everyone).
- You adapt your argumentation as necessary (everyone).
- You observe the argumentation, the different opinions and how the roles interact (everyone).
- You record observations on the *observation sheet* (observers).

Output

- Observers and Tutor 2: Completed *observation sheet*

Methodology/procedure

Step	Task	Method	Time
1	Set up the room for the debate according to tutor instructions and take seats.	Plenum	5 min
2	<i>Conduct Stage 1 of the debate: Opening statements</i> Participant 1 from each role makes an opening statement. Tutor 1 moderates the debate. Observers and Tutor 2 observe the debate and record their findings on the <i>observation sheet</i> .	Plenum	10 min
3	Break: Return to your subgroup for consultation (participants and observers consult together). Discuss how the debate is going and whether to adjust the strategy for the next stage.	Group work	5 min
4	<i>Conduct Stage 2 of the debate: Polarizing discussion</i> Participant 2 from each role participates in the debate. Tutor 1 moderates. Observers and Tutor 2 observe the debate and record their findings on the <i>observation sheet</i> .	Plenum	20 min
5	Break: Return to your subgroup for consultation (participants and observers consult together). Discuss how the debate is going and whether you need to adjust your closing arguments.	Group work	5 min
6	<i>Conduct Stage 3 of the debate: Closing arguments</i> Participant 3 from each role makes a closing argument. Tutor 1 moderates. Observers and Tutor 2 observe the debate and record their findings on the <i>observation sheet</i> .	Plenum	10 min

Materials

- Canvas (Module 4 > Additional Documents): PowerPoint presentation *procedure roleplay and reflection*
- Canvas (Module 4 > Additional Documents): Observation sheet

Task 3.3: Reflect on the roleplay

Assignment

You are now entering an extremely crucial phase in the case study. You have experienced a polarizing debate. Now reflect together on how the discussion between the two poles has affected you personally and what you have observed objectively. Record your findings. This reflection forms the basis for the transition of the subjective and objective findings to the subsequent elaboration of a depolarization strategy. (Time: 1h)

Objectives

- You reflect on what the roleplay has triggered in you cognitively and emotionally.
- You analyze and reflect on the roleplay in terms of content (course of conversation and argumentation) and affectively (values, attitudes and interests).

Output

- Insights into the behavior of the roles in the debate, level of affect and the course of the debate
- Completed *analysis sheet* with important findings from the debate and reflection as a basis for Task 4

Methodology/procedure

Step	Task	Method	Time
1	Tutor 2 explains the process of reflecting on the roleplay.	Plenum	5 min
2	<p><i>Participants: Reflect on subjective perception of the roleplay</i> Take time to reflect on how you personally felt as a participant during the debate. Record your reflections and feelings in writing.</p> <p><i>Questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. What did I think during the debate? (cognitive component)b. How did I feel during the debate? (affective component) <p><i>Observers: Reflect on objective perception of the roleplay</i> Review your <i>observation sheet</i> and add to it if necessary.</p>	Individual work	5 min
3	<p>For each of the four roles, the participants now sit together and the observers sit together. This division of the original subgroups creates a total of eight subgroups.</p> <p><i>Participants</i> Discuss your personal impressions from Step 2. Record the results of the discussion in your subgroup so that they can be presented in plenum afterward.</p> <p><i>Observers</i> Discuss your impressions from Step 2, which you recorded on the <i>observation sheet</i>. Note the central points in your subgroup so that they can be presented in plenum afterward.</p>	Group work	10 min

4	<p>In plenum, the eight subgroups present their most important findings. Each subgroup has two minutes to present their findings. The participants (roles 1, 2, 3, 4) start, then the observers (roles 1, 2, 3, 4) describe their main findings.</p> <p>Tutor 2 moderates the presentations, and Tutor 1 records the findings in the <i>analysis sheet</i>.</p>	Plenum	20 min
5	<p>You have now heard the consolidated findings from participants and observers. Briefly consider for yourself the implications of these insights in terms of the depolarization strategy to be developed.</p> <p><i>Questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. What do you think led to the two sides moving closer together or further apart?b. What cognitive insights and affective feelings of the participants help in understanding what polarization does to people?	Individual work	5 min
6	<p>Follow up with a plenum discussion, led by your tutors, about what contributed to the two poles moving closer together or further apart. Also discuss what polarization does to individuals.</p> <p>The tutors record the findings in the <i>analysis sheet</i> and save the document in your StartWeek Group team on MS Teams (will be needed in Task 4.1).</p>	Plenum	15 min

Materials

- Canvas (Module 4 > Additional Documents): Analysis sheet
- Canvas (Module 4 > Additional Documents): PowerPoint presentation *procedure roleplay and reflection*



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Task 4.1: Collect strategy ideas

Assignment

After you have dealt with the topic of “polarization” in detail in the first three tasks, the focus shifts to “depolarization” in Tasks 4 and 5 (see illustration on p. 37). In this task, you will first read introductory texts that will later help you to work out your own depolarization strategy. Then you will collect ideas for possible depolarization strategies. (Time: 50 min)

Objectives

- You learn about approaches to depolarization strategies from science and consulting.
- You know the requirements for your own depolarization strategy.
- You collect the initial ideas for depolarization strategies from the reflection on the roleplay.

Output

- Completed *analysis sheet*

Methodology/procedure

Step	Task	Method	Time
1	<p>Read “Preparing for your depolarization strategy” on p. 37-38, “Depolarization strategies: Suggestions from science and consulting” on pp. 39-41, and “Develop your own depolarization strategy” on p. 42.</p> <p><i>Questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. What strategy approaches do the experts recommend?b. Can the experts’ suggestions be combined with our findings from reflecting on the roleplay?c. Which approach appeals to me the most? Why?	Individual work	20 min
2	<p>On the <i>analysis sheet</i> from Task 3.3, you worked together to collect and contrast subjective perceptions and objective observations. In Step 1, you just learned about ideas from science and consulting. In pairs, consider which depolarization approaches you can derive from this and record them in writing.</p> <p><i>Questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Do the insights from the reflection on the roleplay provide initial approaches for strategy development?b. What suggestions from science and consulting can we use for our strategy development?	Pair work	10 min
3	<p>In plenum, collect possible depolarization approaches that you have developed in individual work (Step 1) and in pairs (Step 2). Write down these approaches in the <i>analysis sheet</i>. Consider expanding the <i>analysis sheet</i> to include other approaches from Wednesday’s panel discussion. Refer to the notes from the panel (see Task 2.3) to do this.</p>	Plenum	20 min

Materials

- MS Teams (StartWeek Group team): Notes on the panel discussion from Task 2.3
- MS Teams (StartWeek Group team): *Analysis sheet* from Task 3.3

Preparing for your depolarization strategy

The goal of the 2023 case study is for you as a group to develop your own depolarization strategy. In the following, you will learn where you are currently in this process and what the next steps are. In addition, key terms relevant to the development of the depolarization strategy will be explained.

Progress of the case study work

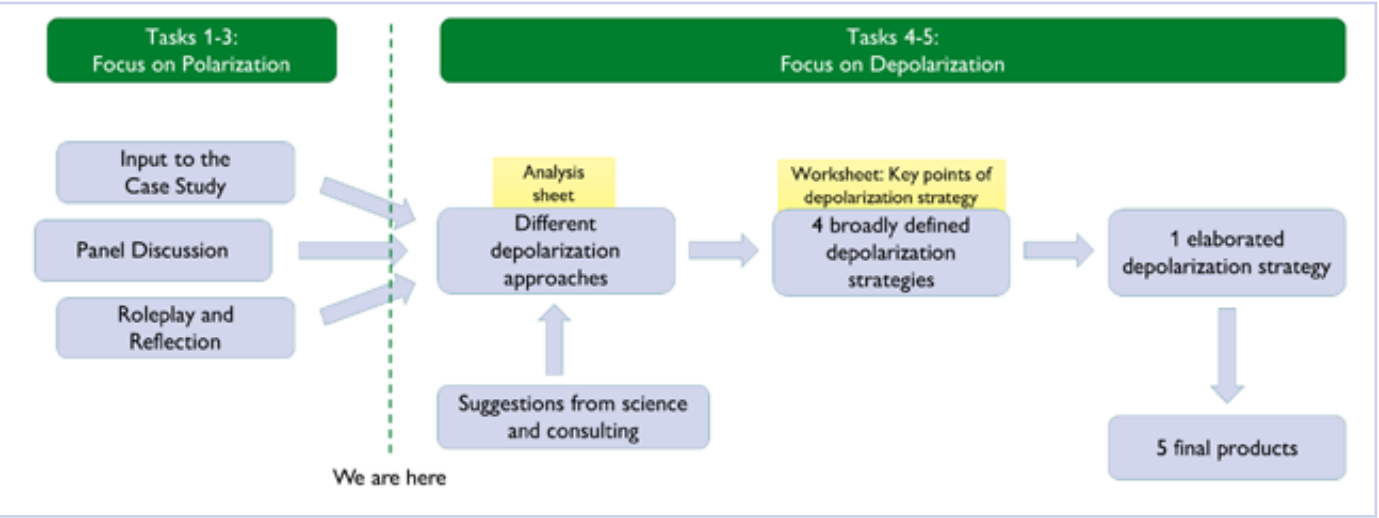
In the first two tasks you learned about different aspects of polarization. The input on the case study topic by Claudia Brühwiler showed you current polarization tendencies. The panel discussion looked at polarization from different angles and discussed initial approaches to depolarization. In Task 3, you experienced polarization affectively and cognitively by yourself. The roleplay gave you the opportunity to immerse yourself in a polarizing debate and experience it emotionally. With reflection, you identified positive and negative aspects of polarization and what behavior tended to reconcile or separate the two poles.

Change of perspective

Now there will be a change of perspective: The focus in the upcoming assignments will be on the topic of “depolarization”. In the text “Depolarization strategies: Suggestions from science and consulting” on pp. 39-41, you will be introduced to various approaches to depolarization. Combine this information with the findings from the first three tasks. Derive your own ideas, so-called depolarization approaches, from all this gained experience and generated knowledge. The goal of this idea collection is for your group to generate as many and as diverse approaches as possible. From this list of depolarization approaches, you decide as a group on four promising ideas, which are further developed in subgroups with the help of the worksheet *key points of depolarization strategy*. This step results in four roughly outlined depolarization strategies that are presented in plenum.



Based on the results presented, your group decides on the most promising depolarization strategy. This chosen strategy is further concretized and forms the basis for the development of the final products. The final products describe and visualize your depolarization strategy in a comprehensible way.





Understanding strategy

The concept of strategy dates back to Greek antiquity (to 800 BC) and was originally used exclusively in a military context (Schuh et al., 2011, p. 64). Only in the course of the 20th century was strategy also applied in mathematical, economic, and political contexts (Schuh et al., p. 65). According to Schubert and Klein (2018), a strategy comprises the “development and implementation of an overall concept directed toward a long-term (overall) goal”. This definition, which tends to be abstract, is placed in the context of depolarization in the following and thereby made more precise.

Depolarization strategy

In Tasks 4 and 5, you will deal with possible solutions for the sustainable depolarization of tense and polarized situations and discussions. A constructive and appreciative debate is to be made possible and the negative aspects of polarization are to be mitigated. The depolarization strategy you develop consequently aims at developing an overall conception to counteract the increasing polarization (cf. section Understanding strategy). The

overall concept is structured on the basis of the seven key points of the depolarization strategy:

- Vision
- Description
- Target group
- Time
- Location
- Stakeholders
- Resources

Strategy approaches

Before starting to develop a depolarization strategy, various ideas should first be



collected. These ideas, also called strategy approaches, are derived from the knowledge generated during the case study and the experience gained. The strategy approaches will be described in as much detail as possible, but will not yet follow a schema. The key points of the depolarization strategy can help to formulate the approach, but not all key points need to be precisely defined. The aim of the strategy approaches is to generate as diverse an array of ideas as possible in a first step, and to compare these ideas with respect to their potential in a second step. Based on the description of the strategy approaches, a selection is made as to which ideas are to be pursued further and formulated into a depolarization strategy.

Note on the elaboration

Before you start working on the final products, the seven key points should be described as precisely as possible, despite the time constraints. This will generate a clear understanding of the depolarization strategy and allow potential weaknesses to be identified and revised. This will create a high-quality and promising overall concept that will form the basis for the development of the final products.

Depolarization strategies: Suggestions from science and consulting

Important insights into depolarization have been gained from scientific research and experiments. These are also used by consulting companies to offer consulting services in polarized situations. The following sections list selected, central suggestions. They serve as an aid for developing one's own depolarization strategy. The terminology (e.g., interventions, game-changers) is taken from the original sources, so they may not be consistent. However, they all describe approaches to depolarization.

Interventions against political polarization

Polarization in politics is made tangible and measurable through affective polarization – that is, what feelings and emotions supporters of one pole exhibit toward supporters of the opposite pole or party (Jennings et al., 2021, p. 3). Negative affective polarization typically results in four effects: Misinformation is spread, political processes are delegitimized, members of the opposition are dehumanized, and the behavior of those involved becomes more authoritarian. Jennings et al. (2021, pp. 5-8) describe six interventions to counteract these effects:

- *Strengthening political interpersonal relationships:* Working to address the way people communicate and debate with each other. Small group trainings and dialogue sessions between diverse groups promote non-partisan collaboration and shared understanding.
- *Building a diverse coalition to strengthen the community:* Building an extremely diverse and multi-ethnic coalition can

foster empathetic conversations with citizens. The coalition develops into a positive force in the long run. Adequate measures mobilize a large number of citizens to actively participate.

- *Electoral and governmental reforms:* Simplified access to elections and voting are intended to reduce structural inequalities in voter turnout. At the same time, politicians should increase accountability to their voters through targeted reforms. Initiatives in this area are being launched by both small interest groups and large institutions.
- *Improve relations and transparency between government and citizens:* A government perceived as incompetent can be a driver of increased polarization. Information channels that report on

government decisions made and disclose the reasons for those decisions help the population to better assess the government.

- *Civic education:* The gradual acquisition of democratic competence is anchored in the curricula. As a result, young people already understand how a democracy works and what political rights they are entitled to. This allows for the formation of an engaged, democratic electorate.
- *Media reforms:* Various initiatives have been launched to increase trust in the media and news and bring communities closer together. Investments in new forms of local journalism and media with built-in trust indicators are part of media reform.



Game-changers of depolarization

Brandsma (2018; cf. Inside Polarisation, n.d.a) takes a different approach to depolarization. He theorizes that poorly chosen measures or inadequate communication may even have a detrimental effect in the worst case, causing the poles to drift further apart. Brandsma (2018; cf. Inside Polarisation, n.d.a) names four game-changers that can be used to counter polarization on a particular issue.

Bart Brandsma is an expert on polarized situations. He has already been quoted on p. 13 to explain the five players of polarization. Brandsma runs a consulting company. He writes about his experiences from years of international work in the “Polarisation Framework”. The four game-changers are taken from this framework. (Inside Polarisation, n.d.c)

Since opposing poles are populated by heterogeneous individuals with diverse motives, the first game-changer is concerned with defining target groups that are homogeneous in themselves. Not all supporters of the two poles think in black and white. In particular, people who are not located at the extremes of the poles are suitable for being clustered into target groups and addressed with precise messages. Communication optimized for the



target groups increases the likelihood that they will move back toward the middle (cf. p. 13).

Second, a (sub-)topic must be found that is highly relevant to the middle. This actively involves the middle in the debate and contributes to finding solutions. More moderate opinions gain more attention and more diverse points of view are represented in public than if only the two poles discuss with each other.

The third game-changer is to change one’s own position and to very precisely understand the opinion of the middle. Discussions with people from the middle contribute to a deeper understanding. Here, however, the opinion of the persons should not be asked directly. The

question “What would the effects of the various possible solutions be for you and how do you feel about them?” offers the opportunity to uncover deeper reasons and opinions. At the same time, this question can also be answered extremely authentically by mediators, which can have a strong, positive impact on the parties to the discussion.

The fourth game-changer deals with the tone of the debate. If you want to depolarize a debate, you have to radiate a certain calmness and make sure that you don’t add fuel to the fire with thoughtless statements. Moderation and mediation skills as well as empathy are of great importance for the fourth game-changer. (Inside Polarisation, n.d.a; Brandsma, 2018)

Through each of these four game-changers, the middle is strengthened and the poles are weakened. Of course, the greatest effect can be achieved when all four game-changers are combined and considered in the depolarization strategy. A successful application of the game-changers forms the basis for a constructive and solution-oriented debate with less pronounced poles. (Inside Polarisation, n.d.a)

Political identities

According to Huddy (2001, pp. 147-148), all individuals possess multiple political identities that go beyond party affiliation. However, these political identities are far from stable: They can be influenced by political opinion leaders, their intensities can fluctuate depending on the target, and

current prevailing issues shape the different prevailing political identities.

Levendusky (2017, p. 60) took this as the basis for an experiment. He found that affective polarization in politics can be reduced by emphasizing commonalities and views held by both poles. As part of the experiment, Levendusky (2017, p. 63) was able to prove that affective polarization between Republicans and Democrats was reduced when study participants first read reports about the strengths of the United States and wrote a short text about it themselves. This assignment reinforced participants’ national identity, resulting in the predominant political identity being that as Americans. Even people with opposing political views were considered as members of their own group: Americans. This “in-group identity” ensures that rejection of another political party or of people with different political views can be significantly reduced. (Levendusky, 2017, p. 63)

A common challenge has a depolarizing effect

Depolarization between members of different political parties is also mentioned by Foa et al. (2022, p. 27). Dealing with the Covid pandemic in the spring of 2020 presented a huge societal challenge. This brought society closer together (at least at the beginning) (Foa et al., 2022, p. 27). During the first weeks of the pandemic, a clear depolarization between opposing parties could be observed in Europe (Louwerse, 2021, p. 1045). Foa et al. (2022, p. 27) see the reason for this depolarization in the common goal of overcoming the pandemic. A common, societal challenge causes extreme views to lose supporters and society to grow together. This also works at the international level. Russia’s war of aggression on Ukraine ensured that the U.S. and European countries moved closer together and remain jointly committed to Ukraine to this day.

In November 2019, French President Emmanuel Macron even called NATO brain-dead (The Economist, 2019), because of the war in Ukraine, NATO is now stronger and more united again.

Social media

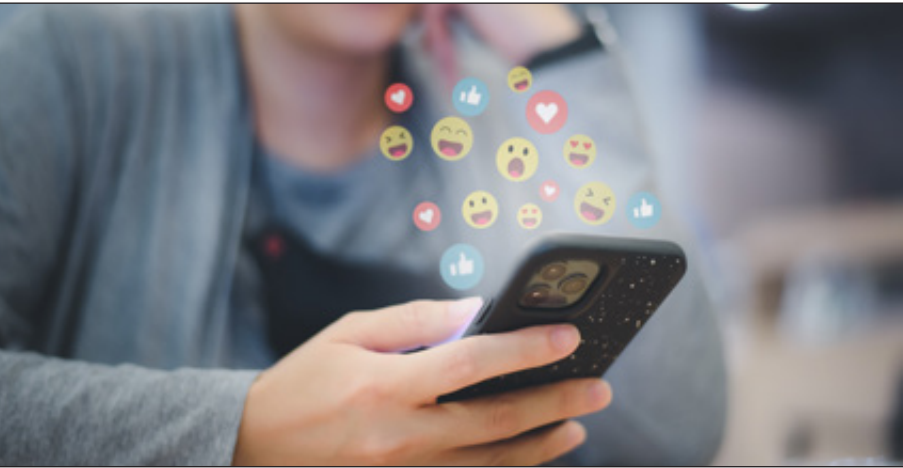
Another driver of polarization is social media. Hate and hurtful messages can spread very quickly in these channels. Anyone can become a perpetrator – even anonymously. Targeted responses to polarizing, extremist or hateful messages and comments ensure that harmful texts are invalidated and sometimes even deleted by the author (Benesch et al., 2016, p. 2-3). There are five proven methods of responding to hate-streaming comments that have been shown to be effective and successful:

- 1. The author can be made aware of the consequences of their own text and who can read the comment on the Internet.
- 2. The author can be made aware of why the comment is dangerous and what this message can do to other readers.
- 3. Affiliation can be used to establish a connection with the author. For example, a response can start with “I am also a member of party XY, but ...”.

- 4. Humorous responses to very serious topics – for example, propaganda from the terrorist organization ISIS – have proven very successful. Social media users have responded with creative and humorous reasons why they cannot join ISIS.
- 5. Cartoons and humorous images can be a powerful tool for responding to polarizing comments. Images can convey a much more expressive and emotional message than pure text.

These five methods¹ can be used by individuals at any time. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee of success for the application of a specific method; however, it has been observed that these five methods can have a de-escalating effect. (Benesch et al., 2016, pp. 3-6)

¹ Specific examples for each of the five methods can be found here:



Develop your own depolarization strategy

In the previous texts, you have received a lot of information and input that helps you to develop your own depolarization strategy. The following text provides you with a frame of reference for your strategy and provides information on expectations and requirements.

Goal of the depolarization strategy

The depolarization strategy aims to reduce societal polarization with respect to a specific issue. Its main goal is to reduce tensions between the two opposing poles and counteract the negative effects of polarization. With your depolarization strategy, you create a basis to promote cooperation and consensus building between individuals or groups with different views. In this way, you make a significant contribution to social progress.

Collect depolarization approaches

In the following steps of Task 4.1, the focus is initially on a broad and creative generation of ideas. At this stage, the ideas or approaches do not yet follow a fixed structure. In Task 4.2, your group will further develop four depolarization approaches and describe them in detail using the key points of a depolarization strategy. As you think about possible approaches, it can be helpful to keep these key points in mind: Vision, description of

the depolarization strategy, target group, time, location, involved stakeholders, and resources needed.

You have the opportunity to define different elements of your own depolarization strategy and combine them in almost limitless ways. The morphological box below presents some possible design elements. Let the morphological box inspire you. Note, however, that the contents of the morphological box are not exhaustive. Be creative and develop suitable ideas for your own depolarization strategy.

Design elements	Possible characteristics			
Range	Local		Regional	
Target group	Small and specific		Broad and general	
Interaction target group	No interaction		Extensive interaction	
Scope of application	Education	Media	Politics	Public
Time frame	Long-term, continuous campaign		One-time event	
Ownership	NGO		Governmental	
Form	Digital		Analog	
...

Task 4.2: Concretize strategy approaches

Assignment

Select four depolarization approaches to work on in subgroups. By describing the key points, the potential of each strategy approach should be revealed. (Time: 30 min)

Objectives

- In plenum, you decide on four depolarization approaches whose key points are to be described.
- You create the key points of the depolarization approach assigned to you in subgroups.

Output

- One filled worksheet per subgroup with the key points of the respective approach

Methodology/procedure

Step	Task	Method	Time
1	You have found different strategy approaches in Task 4.1 and collected them in the <i>analysis sheet</i> . Now decide in plenum which four approaches should be pursued to form a roughly outlined depolarization strategy. <i>Questions</i> a. Which approaches does your StartWeek Group find most interesting to investigate further in a next step? b. Why do we consider these approaches promising? Give reasons.	Plenum	10 min
2	Form four subgroups and distribute the depolarization approaches selected in Step 1 among them. In the subgroups, work out the key points of your depolarization approach. You can use the worksheet <i>key points of depolarization strategy</i> on Canvas provided for this purpose. If necessary, do research to give your depolarization approach as much substance as possible. If necessary, revisit “Depolarization strategies: Suggestions from science and consulting” on pp. 39-41. Save your subgroup’s worksheet <i>key points of depolarization strategy</i> in your StartWeek Group team on MS Teams.	Group work	20 min

Materials

- MS Teams (StartWeek Group team): *Analysis sheet* from Task 4.1
- Canvas (Module 4 > Additional Documents): Worksheet *key points of depolarization strategy*

Task 4.3: Select and refine depolarization strategy

Assignment

Present the strategies worked out in the subgroups. In plenum, decide on one depolarization strategy and specify the key points. Also check whether any elements of the other strategies could be implemented in the selected depolarization strategy. Important: Record your ideas as precisely as possible, because your findings on the depolarization strategy will serve as the basis for creating the final products in Task 5. (Time: 55 min)

Objectives

- You present your developed strategies in plenum.
- You decide as a group which depolarization strategy will serve as the basis for creating the final products.
- You refine the selected strategy where necessary.

Output

- Revised worksheet with explanations of the key points of the selected depolarization strategy

Methodology/procedure

Step	Task	Method	Time
1	<p>Each subgroup presents their elaborated strategy approach for a maximum of four minutes. Clarify open questions about the elaborated strategy approaches.</p> <p>Afterward, discuss and decide which is the most promising depolarization strategy that the group wants to implement in the final products.</p> <p><i>Questions</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Are the key points of the depolarization strategy clear?Which strategy is best suited to pursue and create the final products?	Plenum	30 min
2	<p>In plenum, finalize and optimize the depolarization strategy selected in Step 1. It is important to describe the key points in as much detail as possible so that the final products can be developed in subgroups in a coordinated manner in Task 5 and remain consistent and come together to form a cohesive whole. A tutor documents the points mentioned in the discussion directly in the worksheet of the selected strategy. Discuss whether any elements can be adopted from the strategy approaches that were not selected.</p> <p><i>Questions</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Which key points must be specified so that the final products, which are to be developed in subgroups, remain consistent and come together to form a cohesive whole?Which elements of the unselected strategy approaches could be integrated into the selected depolarization strategy?	Plenum	25 min

Materials

- MS Teams (StartWeek Group team): Filled worksheet with the key points of the depolarization strategy from Task 4.2

Task 5.1: Introduction to the final products

Assignment

In the previous task, you decided on a depolarization strategy and worked out its key points. Your tutors have summarized the results in a worksheet. You now gain an overview of the final products to be created, the formal requirements that must be observed and the procedure for presenting the final products to the preliminary committee and, possibly, to the jury at the Closing Event. The group will be divided into five subgroups to create the final products. (Time: 30 min)

Objectives

- You have an overview of the formal requirements for the final products.
- You know the evaluation criteria and the assignments of the subgroups.

Output

- No output

Methodology/procedure

Step	Task	Method	Time
1	Summarize the strategy chosen and concretized in Task 4.3 and clarify any questions in plenum.	Plenum	5 min
2	Your tutors will give an overview of the final products to be developed (see also p. 47) and the procedure of the presentation to the preliminary committee and, possibly, to the jury at the Closing Event (see also Canvas).	Plenum	10 min
3	Read “Formal requirements and evaluation criteria” on p. 48. Think about which final product you would like to work on.	Individual work	5 min
4	Discuss in plenum how you want to proceed so that despite the division of labor among the subgroups, it can be ensured that the final products created are consistent and coherent, that they work together as a whole. Then, split up into five subgroups, each of which will develop a final product. The time and effort required to develop each final product may vary. Therefore, keep in mind that the members of your StartWeek Group <i>do not</i> have to be divided equally among the subgroups.	Plenum	10 min

Materials

- Canvas (Module 2 > Preliminary Committee): Information about the preliminary committee
- Canvas (Module 1 > Closing Event and Jury): Information about Closing Event and jury
- MS Teams (StartWeek Group team): Filled worksheet with the key points of the depolarization strategy from Task 4.3



Task 5.2: Create final products in subgroups

Assignment

On Friday morning, you will present your depolarization strategy to the preliminary committee. The six most compelling strategies will compete in the grand finale in front of the jury and the entire new Assessment Year cohort at the Closing Event, the culmination and conclusion of StartWeek. The most outstanding strategy will be chosen by the jury and wins an exciting grand prize. Your StartWeek Group will create five final products based on the conceptual work that has been done.

Note: Use the filled worksheet with the key points of your depolarization strategy to develop the final products.

- Product 1: For the presentations, you prepare a 90-second *elevator pitch* that gets to the heart of the core message of your depolarization strategy, creatively illustrates it, and manages to convince both the preliminary committee and the jury. Submission consists of three PowerPoint slides that visually support your elevator pitch as well as notes on the speech of your presentation.
- Product 2: Write an *interview* with a representative of the team that developed the depolarization strategy. The interview will be published on the Polos Foundation website.
- Product 3: Create a *promotional video* (70-90 seconds) *or* prepare a *staging* (70-90 seconds) to illustrate the core message of your depolarization strategy as well as address the target group in an appealing way.
- Product 4: Create a *strategic plan* that further explains and justifies your depolarization strategy in more detail and describes its implementation.
- Product 5: Design a *website* that provides all the information about your depolarization strategy.

Organizational: Members of the subgroups that finish their final product earlier shall support the other subgroups until all final products are ready to be submitted.

(Time: 3h 35 min)

Objectives

- You design an *elevator pitch*.
- You write an *interview* for the website of the Polos Foundation.
- You create a *promotional video* or prepare a *staging*.
- You create a *strategic plan*.
- You design your own *website* for your strategy.

Output

- Elevator pitch (three PowerPoint slides, not animated, pdf) and notes on your speech (pdf)
- Interview (pdf)
- Promotional video (m4v, mp4 or mov) *or* script of your staging (pdf)
- Strategic plan (pdf)
- Website (tool: moqups; insert link in pdf)
- Submission of all files digitally via Canvas and physically with the USB flash drive until 5 p.m. on Thursday.

Methodology/procedure

Step	Task	Method	Time
1	Work in subgroups to develop the final products.	Group work	1h 30 min
2	Present the intermediate status of your final product in plenum and ask any questions that may have arisen. Give the individual subgroups constructive feedback on the intermediate status of their final products.	Plenum	20 min
3	Incorporate the feedback you received in Step 2 and continue to develop your final product.	Group work	1h 30 min
4	Show your results in plenum. If there is enough time, the group can give feedback on the final products again.	Plenum	10 min
5	Optional if necessary and if there is time: Revise your final products in the respective subgroups according to the feedback received.	Group work	As time permits
6	Submit the final products via Canvas and with the USB flash drive.	Plenum	5 min

Product 1: Elevator pitch

Subgroup 1 develops the elevator pitch (90 seconds). An elevator pitch is based on the concept of explaining the most central contents of a certain topic to a fellow passenger during a short elevator ride with the aim of convincing the counterpart in the shortest possible time. Watch the video by Michael Berndonner on Canvas with valuable tips on how to make a professional elevator pitch.

The elevator pitch is designed to convey the core message of the depolarization strategy. It is to be presented in the form of three PowerPoint slides. The slides must not contain any animations and must be submitted as a pdf. The subgroup is responsible for identifying two people from your StartWeek Group to present the elevator pitch to the preliminary committee and, possibly, the jury at the Closing Event.

Use the *elevator pitch* and *speech notes* templates and watch the *elevator pitch* video on Canvas. Formal requirements are listed on p. 48.

Product 2: Interview for the Polos Foundation website

Subgroup 2 writes an interview with a representative who provides information about the depolarization strategy on behalf of the development team. In this fictitious interview, the personal opinion of the representative on polarization is collected and insights into the development process are given. The interview contains 5,000 characters.

Use the *interview* template on Canvas. Formal requirements are listed on p. 48.

Product 3: Promotional video or Staging

Subgroup 3 illustrates the core message of the depolarization strategy. Either shoot your own promotional video (70-90 seconds, landscape format and video self-recorded) or prepare a staging (70-90 seconds and max. 5 performers) to be performed live in front of the preliminary committee and possibly at the Closing Event. The promotional video or staging should communicate the core message in a creative way and address the target group in an appealing way.

Watch the video *promotional video* on Canvas if you decide for the promotional video. Use the *staging script* template on Canvas for the staging. Formal requirements for the promotional video / staging are listed on p. 48.

Product 4: Strategic plan

Subgroup 4 explains the depolarization strategy in writing. Justify why you have chosen this strategy and describe how you will implement the strategy and what needs to be considered. The strategic plan helps to better understand your depolarization strategy and serves to convince the preliminary committee. The strategic plan contains 5,000 characters.

Use the *strategic plan* template on Canvas. Formal requirements are listed on p. 48.

Product 5: Website

Subgroup 5 designs a website for your depolarization strategy. The website should be clear and contain all relevant information about the strategy. It will be created as a mock-up using the online tool *moqups*. Read the instructions on Canvas for developing a website mock-up. The website is used to convince the preliminary committee.

See the document *instructions and hints website* on Canvas. Use the *website* template to submit the link. Formal requirements are listed on p. 48.

Materials

- Canvas (Module 4 > Additional Documents): Video *elevator pitch*, Video *promotional video*, Instructions and hints website
- Canvas (Module 4 > Templates): *Elevator pitch* template, *Speech notes* template, *Interview* template, *Staging script* template, *Strategic plan* template, *Website* template
- Canvas (Module 4 > Submissions): Submissions final products

Formal requirements and evaluation criteria

*It is mandatory to comply with the formal requirements.
The final products are evaluated based on set criteria.*

Templates for final products

For the majority of the final products you will find templates on Canvas. By using these templates, the final products appear in the same layout, ensuring comparability of the submissions. Only the promotional video and the website design are not based on a provided template. However, for these two final products, you will find relevant information and tips on Canvas.

Specifications for the submissions

It is mandatory that you submit your final products digitally via Canvas and physically with a USB flash drive between 2-5 p.m. on Thursday afternoon. Upload the elevator pitch (including speech notes), the interview, the promotional video or the script for the staging, the strategic plan, and the link to your website on Canvas in the respective submission folder and save all documents on the USB flash drive that will be handed out to your tutors on Thursday. Make sure to follow the formal requirements for each of the final products (see box to the right). This will allow the final products to be comparable across groups.

Evaluation criteria

Use the adjacent evaluation criteria as a guide when developing the final products. The general and content-related evaluation criteria apply to all final products. Performance criteria refer to the elevator pitch. During the development of the final products, constantly check whether you are considering all the evaluation criteria.

Formal requirements

File naming

- “Groupnumber_Product.Fileformat” (e.g., “01_Interview.pdf”)

Product 1: Elevator pitch

- Duration: 90 seconds (cutoff after 90 sec)
- 3 PowerPoint slides based on *elevator pitch* template, non-animated, and *speech notes* template, both pdf

Product 2: Interview

- Interview template as pdf
- 5,000 characters (including spaces +/- 10% tolerance)

Product 3: Promotional video

- Length: 70-90 sec (cutoff after 90 sec)
- File format: m4v, mp4 or mov
- Resolution: Full HD (1920x1080) or 720p (1280x720)
- Landscape format (!): 16:9
- Good sound quality
- Video filmed by yourself (use downloaded content only if necessary)

Product 4: Strategic plan

- Strategic plan template as pdf
- 5,000 characters (including spaces +/- 10% tolerance)

Product 5: Website

- Website template as pdf
- Using the tool *moqups*

or Staging

- Length: 70-90 sec (cutoff after 90 sec)
- Max. 5 performers (presenters of the pitch are not allowed to participate!)
- 3 wireless handheld microphones available
- Any props must be organized independently and brought with you
- Performers are not allowed to leave the stage during staging
- There is no power connection available
- Staging script template as PDF

Evaluation criteria

General

- The formal requirements are met
- The submissions are on time and the files are named correctly
- There is a common thread and an arc of tension
- Linguistic quality is good (wording, spelling)

Content

- Technically correct statements and terms, expertise and knowledge in the subject area
- In-depth preparation of the topic
- Justified, detailed and clearly presented depolarization strategy
- Convincing and creative presentation of the content
- Novelty and innovativeness of the depolarization strategy
- Feasibility of the depolarization strategy
- Depolarization strategy shows promise of being successful

Performance (elevator pitch)

- The performance is convincing, confident and authentic
- The language is clear, understandable, fluent, structured and appropriate to the target group
- The time limit of 90 seconds is adhered to

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