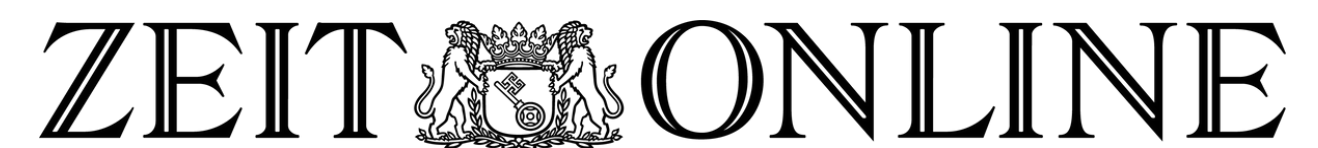
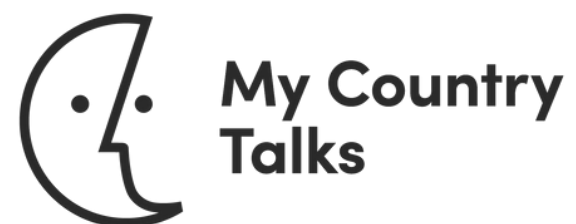


**DEPOLARIZATION
UNCONFERENCE**

Wrap-up





Dear participants,

thank you so much for contributing to our UnConference. We have never set up anything similar before and it's been great to see such an inspiring group come together. We have tried our best to summarize the most important take-aways and we hope you enjoy reading it!

Sincerely,

Sara, Hanna and the *My Country Talks* team

The conference would not have been possible without help from Lea Henkel, Christine Gleisner, Ulrike Zimmermann and Stefanie Walz.

Thank you to silent green Kulturquartier, and MARS | Café & Bar.

Photos are credited to Marcus Glahn

Logo design by Jannick Choon Wai Teoh (www.jcwt.de)



Agenda

08:45 - 09:15 Coffee and registration

09:15 - 09:30 Welcoming remarks

09:30 - 10:45 Keynote speeches

- Affective polarization and why conversations matter - Adrian Blattner, Stanford and Martin Koenen, Harvard University
- I HEAR you - Julia Minson, Harvard Kennedy School

10:45 - 11:00 Coffee and breakout session selection

Participants can vote on the topics for breakout sessions.

11:00 - 12:30 Breakout sessions

- Designing interventions to reduce polarization - Atelier 2
- Depolarizing discourse about energy crisis and inflation - Atelier 3
- Engaging radicalized citizens and the limits of de-polarization - Atelier 4

12:30 - 13:30 Lunch

13:30 - 14:15 Flash lectures

- The public is not mainstream - Sham Jaff, Newsletter "What Happened Last Week?"
- "Why do you think that way?" behind the scenes of a dialogue podcast - Jana Simon and Philip Faigle, Die ZEIT and ZEIT ONLINE
- News audience polarization in Europe and the US - Richard Fletcher, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, Oxford University
- Fighting polarization in Poland - Wawrzyniec Smoczyński, New Community Foundation

14:15 - 15:45 Breakout sessions

- Tackling polarization through innovative journalism - Atelier 2
- Engaging communities in public debate - Atelier 3
- Breakout session #6 - suggested by participants - Atelier 4

15:45 - 16:15 Coffee and break

16:15 - 17:30 Sum-up session: what have we learned?

17:30 - 18:00 Closing keynote

- Depolarizing the future, Shanto Iyengar, Stanford University

18:00 Networking, snacks and mulled wine

Breakout Session 1

Designing interventions to reduce polarization



1. Beware of unintended consequences - a negative experience might do harm to the treatment group
2. Think about scaling - what can we learn, and what can we actually accomplish in the real world?
3. To recruit more / different people or make a bigger impact, think about the language used to frame the intervention
4. For recruitment, think about spaces where people are already interacting - school, church, the doctor, etc.

Breakout Session 2

Depolarizing discourse about energy crisis and inflation



1. There is a growing sense of loss of control since 2020
2. Hypothesis: People might be too busy or tired to protest, but the sense of dissatisfaction is still there
3. Hypothesis: People feel the lack of an “adult in the room”, assuring everything will be fine
4. Inflation is complex, conveying complexity is difficult; less pro-and-con reporting
5. Do people always have an opinion? Or only when asked a direct question?

Tip for a good holiday dinner: “Looping” mediation technique

Breakout Session 3

Engaging radicalized citizens and the limits of de-polarization



1. Who is “radical”? We eliminate people from dialogue when we don’t want to engage with certain ideas.
2. Talk to the broad center, you’ll reach the majority
3. Conversations alone are not enough, something more is needed in order to build bonds.
4. Why do we engage? And what do we want from these formats? Define goals e.g. to get people to the mainstream or better decision making
5. "A good dialogue is when I feel a shift in my boundaries of what is possible"

Breakout Session 4

Tackling polarization through innovative journalism



1. Real conversations do not mirror how we tell stories - what are the limits and ethics of adding entertainment?
2. Can we make de-polarization more entertaining, or even viral? For example, Dr. Phil for depolarization
3. Journalists should show themselves learning from new perspectives. We need to model for readers how to learn and listen
4. How can we measure the success of such formats?

Breakout Session 5

Engaging all communities in public discourse



1. The "usual suspects problem" means there will usually be more participation by men and the majority identity
2. When designing spaces for discourse, make sure to get a plurality of input
3. You can decrease disenfranchisement if you change the expectation of what people will gain from participating
4. If a platform works well for one community, test why that is the case and try to scale your learnings
5. Model and then recruit - show how the experience will be before asking people to sign up

DEPOLARIZATION UNCONFERENCE

Thank you to all participants!

Let's keep in touch! We want to hear your feedback

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