

Politicians and climate change – perspectives and expectations for deep decarbonisation

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

1. Why am I receiving this information sheet?

You are invited to take part in an interview for a research study about how politicians factor in public opinion and expectations in their role in parliament, particularly in relation to climate change. Politicians are often uniquely placed in their role in decision-making and ability to respond to changing political situations. We are therefore interested in your experiences and beliefs around leadership, climate policy, and the challenges you face as a politician. You have been invited to take part because our research on publicly available parliamentary speech, and your public participation in interviews and social media has shown that you are a prominent figure in relation to the topic of climate change.

This sheet provides information on the research and why it is being undertaken, to help you decide if you wish to take part. Please read this carefully and note any questions that you may have, such as what you do not understand or want to know more about the study.

Participation in this research study is voluntary and your identity will not be disclosed to third parties (see section 7).

2. Purpose of this study

This research aims to understand politicians and their role as senior decision makers. Current research on climate politics tends not to explore the motivations and experiences of politicians, despite the major role politicians and governments play in changing society. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the understanding and engagement of politicians with the topic of climate change and how they perceive the public's expectations to address it. This information is being gathered for the purpose of understanding how and why policy action to mitigate climate change and meet targets, such as achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions, succeeds or fails.

To generate data that will give us insight into the experiences and struggles faced by politicians, we are conducting in-depth interviews with 40-80 sitting, national-level politicians in Germany and the United Kingdom. We already have 35 interviews with German politicians. The findings from these interviews contribute to two research projects looking at addressing climate change from the perspective of members of the public and those involved in democratic processes. This research will therefore help policymakers and academics better understand the opportunities and constraints in this area and may improve processes and approaches to act on complex, global problems, such as climate change, in the future.

3. Who is carrying out the study?

The interviews are being carried out by Dr. Chantal Sullivan-Thomsett of the School of Environmental Sciences at the University of East Anglia (UEA) or another member of the UEA research team.¹ The pseudonymised interview data will be analysed by a research team led by Prof. Andy Jordan FAcSS FBA in the School of Environmental Sciences at the University of East Anglia in Norwich (UK). This team

¹ The UEA research team consists of [Prof. Andy Jordan](#) FAcSS FBA – Project PI, [Prof. Irene Lorenzoni](#) Project CO-I, [Dr. Lucas Geese](#) and [Dr. John Kenny](#).

includes researchers from both UEA and the University of Heidelberg (Germany).² This study is funded by two research funding bodies for research purposes:

Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST)

(Economic and Social Research Council. UKRI project reference: ES/S012257/1)

Deep Decarbonisation: The Democratic Challenge of Navigating Governance Traps

(European Research Council. Grant agreement ID: 882601)

For further details, see <https://www.deepdcarb.org/> and <https://cast.ac.uk/>

4. What does the study involve?

Taking part in this study this will involve an in-person interview of approximately 30-40 minutes with Chantal or another member of the UEA research team, at a convenient time, date and location for you. The interview will only take place online if unforeseen circumstances necessitate (e.g. public health). Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researcher or anyone else at the University of East Anglia now or in the future. You are free to withdraw from the study within 14 days of the interview having taken place, at which point all information you have provided will be deleted.

If you choose to take part in the study, you will be asked to complete a consent form either before or at the beginning of the interview (attached for your information). We will audio record the interview and destroy the audio recording once the interview has been transcribed and pseudonymised. We will send you a copy of the transcribed interview to confirm it is an accurate record of our discussion and, if you have given consent for us to do so, may pose up to two further written questions for you to answer. You may refuse to answer any particular questions during any stage of the interview. You are free to stop the interview at any time. If so, we will ask if you want the research team to keep the interview data. If you do not, any data provided will be destroyed and no information will be included in the study results. You may refuse to answer any particular questions during the interview.

All data collected through this study will be partially pseudonymised for use in publications: specifically, your **gender**, **party-affiliation** (depending on party size), **basic constituency characteristics** (e.g. whether it is a rural or urban district and/or a party stronghold) and **leadership roles will not be pseudonymised**, but all other identifying features and characteristics (such as names, places, etc) will be pseudonymised. Every effort will be made by the research team to ensure your privacy and to treat personal and sensitive information confidentially, as per the DeepDCarb Disclosure Policy, available on the project [website](#).

5. Are there any risks or costs involved in taking part in the study?

Aside from the time you provide for taking part, no risks or costs are expected with taking part in the study. Participation is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw from the study until the point this is possible (14 days after interview), without any consequences.

Some may find talking about the topic of climate change uncomfortable. If this is the case during the interview, I will ask you whether you want to take a break, move onto a different question, and whether you are happy to continue the interview.

You may fear that the answers you give on a sensitive topic may pose a risk for negative consequences should you be identified (e.g. defamation or negative career impacts). To prevent this from happening your data will be partially pseudonymised, as mentioned above. The partial pseudonymisation for

² The Heidelberg research team consists of Prof. Dr. Jale Tosun, Dr. Simon Schaub and Joan Enguer.

publications involves only retaining details important for analysis (gender, party, constituency characteristics, leadership roles); these will be carefully used in publications so that your identity is not revealed.

The transcripts will also be deposited with the UK Data Archive to make them available for scholarly and educational purposes (this is required by ESRC funding rules). These details will be **fully pseudonymised in the archived transcripts** (i.e. not include your name or any directly identifiable information about you) and stored indefinitely for non-commercial use and with safeguarded access. You have the right to consent to taking part in the study, and to not consent for your interview to be archived.

6. Are there any benefits associated with taking part in this study?

Your insights will be extremely valuable in helping us to develop an understanding of the role of politicians in the field of climate policy. As a hard to access group of people with notable expertise, we greatly appreciate your participation, as this will contribute to overcoming our lack of knowledge in this area. Furthermore, by agreeing for us to store your fully pseudonymised data indefinitely, your contribution to this study will not just assist the two research projects named here, but also provide hard to obtain data for future academic researchers.

Most significantly, you will have the opportunity to have a detailed discussion with an outsider knowledgeable on climate change politics and how parliaments and governments currently legislate and govern in this area. You may find this enjoyable or stimulating for your own work, or potentially leave the conversation seeing the issue in a different way.

7. What happens to data collected during this study?

If you decide to take part, any information you provide will be used as outlined in this information sheet and the consent form. Once pseudonymised, only the UEA and Heidelberg research team will have access to the data from the interviews for analysis. Data management will follow the EU GDPR, 2018 General Data Protection Regulation Act and the University of East Anglia Research Data Management Policy (2015). Your personal information will be stored and analysed securely on a university-managed device and in the secure UEA central file-store, and only pseudonymised interview data will be shared via university-specific cloud-based services (UEA Microsoft One Drive) and only members of the UEA/Heidelberg research team will be able to access it. The only sharing of the data outside of the research team will be to our contracted transcription providers, who have signed confidentiality and data processing agreements and have contractually agreed to not retain the data outside the process of transcription.

The above processes and obligations keep your data confidential. There are only two instances where this confidentiality cannot be kept in line with the project's Disclosure Policy on 'unexpected findings':

1. If the researcher becomes aware of the existence of illegal or criminal activity
2. If the researcher has legitimate concerns about the welfare of a research participant or individual

In these cases, the researcher is legally and ethically required to disclose this information to the relevant authorities and subsequently comply with any legal investigations.

The findings of this study may be published and used in presentations, reports, publications, websites, broadcasts, peer reviewed articles, reports, notes, media summaries, etc. Although every effort will be made to protect your identity, there is a risk that you might be identifiable due to the nature of the study on a small, specific cohort of people (politicians). All transcript data will be fully-pseudonymised before being archived under safeguarded, non-commercial access with the UK Data Archive and kept indefinitely.

8. Can I have access to the results of the study?

If you wish to receive feedback about this study, you can indicate this on the consent form or let us know before, during or after the interview. You will then receive a short summary of the findings after the study is finished.

9. I would like further information, or have other queries.

When you have read this information, Dr. Chantal Sullivan-Thomsett, School of Environmental Sciences, University of East Anglia, Norwich, NR4 7TJ, UK (Email: c.sullivan-thomsett@uea.ac.uk) will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact Prof. Irene Lorenzoni, School of Environmental Sciences, University of East Anglia, NORWICH NR4 7TJ, UK. Email: i.lorenzoni@uea.ac.uk, or the Principal Investigator of this project, Prof. Andy Jordan, School of Environmental Sciences, University of East Anglia, NORWICH NR4 7TJ, UK. Email: a.jordan@uea.ac.uk

10. What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved under the regulations of the University of East Anglia's Science Faculty Research Ethics Committee [ID: ETH2223-0684] and the University-wide Research Ethics Committee. If there is a problem please contact Irene Lorenzoni, who is working on this project, via the University at the following address:

Prof. Irene Lorenzoni, School of Environmental Sciences, University of East Anglia, NORWICH NR4 7TJ, UK. Email: i.lorenzoni@uea.ac.uk

If you would like to speak to someone else you can contact the Principal Investigator of this project:

Prof. Andy Jordan, School of Environmental Sciences, University of East Anglia, NORWICH NR4 7TJ, UK. Email: a.jordan@uea.ac.uk

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the Head of School for Environmental Sciences:

Prof. Ian Renfrew, School of Environmental Sciences, University of East Anglia, NORWICH NR4 7TJ, UK. Email: I.Renfrew@uea.ac.uk

11. I want to take part – what do I do next?

You need to fill in and sign the consent form before we can begin the interview. As the interviews are planned to take place in person, the interviewer will provide a paper copy for you to sign at the start of our meeting. If unforeseen circumstances move the meeting online, you will complete the form online with an electronic signature and email this back prior to or at the start of our virtual meeting. Please keep this information sheet.

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information for the purposes of this research study. Your information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise. Data management will follow the EU GDPR, 2018 General Data Protection Regulation Act and the University of East Anglia Research Data Management Policy (2015).

Thank you for considering this research

This information sheet is for you to keep