

member pointed out. She went on to say that some studies had shown that continued economic growth would always remain unsustainable and in order to really achieve change, there would have to be *negative growth*. She was however the only one in the group who thought this would be sensible and present many advantages such as more time for private matters. The rest of the group did however not deem this desirable or realistic. One participant was convinced of green growth being the solution to reach the transformation towards a *zero-carbon future*.

6.8 Flying is indeed something that I don't prohibit for myself – Teachers

Table 11: Overview: The focus group of teachers

Group: Dimension	Teachers
Responsibility	Climate action seen as task for the whole of society (state, corporations, individuals); own occupational group carried special responsibility due to its role in education; thus responsible for leading with a good example, being a role model for younger generations; students took responsibility (e.g., <i>Fridays for Future</i>) – but a lot of them also just follow along (to get out of school)
Efficacy	Relatively pronounced expectation of individual efficacy, at the same time moderate trust in collective action for meaningful climate action (e.g., this accusation of following along within <i>Fridays for Future</i>)
Knowing	Very well informed and reflected, focus on factual knowledge, value agency gap raised (in relation to own person but also <i>Fridays for Future</i>); consideration of the practice of travelling long distance, its educational effect as opposed to its consequences for the climate
Denial tendencies	Little denial, overall reflected and strong emphasis on own responsibility

The male-female ratio in this group was balanced and the educational level was homogeneous. Some participants stood at the beginning of their professional lives, some were middle-aged. Climate responsibility was practiced only to an extent in these teachers' everyday lives. Members of the group were for instance willing to pay extra for climate-friendly clothes, but found the supply that was being offered to be very limited up to this point. Textile production in countries with low labour costs was criticised due to there being poor labour conditions – climate reasons were not raised, however. One group member stated that flying was still more important to

her than protecting the climate. Yet her tone was quite defensive. Overall, the group detected a lot of conflicting information in relation to climate action, rendering climate action a much more difficult endeavour.

Responsibility

Initially the group thought that everybody was responsible for climate action, so in a first instance the individual was mentioned. It was thought to also be the job of individuals to form groups that could then have a larger impact. From this interview it emerged that the participants practiced climate action only rudimentarily in their everyday lives:

G?w: Flying is indeed something that I don't prohibit for myself, somehow. That's something that I have to admit I do myself. And I love travelling and seeing the world. And I am actually not willing to stop doing so. I would be ok with paying more, but then...

In relation to this, some members of the group said that they paid to carbon-offset their journeys, for example when travelling by coach and that this was not expensive at all. At the same time, they thought that this was morally objectionable to an extent as one was simply buying oneself a clear conscience. Here it was emphasised that one should generally travel with more consciousness. The group also discussed feeling guilty when flying but thought that the majority of society did not experience this. Especially young people were increasingly taking flying for granted and believed they had an intrinsic right to have been to exciting places. Here one group member heatedly expressed that when she was growing up, flying used to be a luxury that one had to save up for and young people had shed all modesty when it came to this topic, which she was very angry about. Someone else then said that it was problematic that those who could not afford to fly would end up being the only ones responsible if flying was made more expensive. It was deeply unfair for those people to miss out on flying (also on the learning experience afforded by travelling).

G?m: I think everybody being able to afford flying is actually very democratic and anti-capitalist. [...] that this now goes into the direction of everybody being able to emit, that is a problem. But I don't think that this democratic equality should be forgotten.

The group then said that at the end it was however mainly the responsibility of corporate- and political decision-makers who had to be role models in relation to climate action. Teachers too were seen as role models and thus endowed with a special responsibility, also to be consistent when it came to climate matters. Yet not every-

one in the group was willing to invest extra time to support the *Fridays for Future* protests, for example. Here, the teachers were annoyed that the school headmaster simply expected them to do so. Then the group questioned whether the student protestors were actually taking responsibility for climate action in their everyday lives as they themselves were demanding during their demonstrations. Instead, the teachers thought that many students simply followed along in the protests.

The responsibility initially attributed to the corporate sphere was then relativised as companies were exposed to European and international competition which left the largest share of responsibility with politicians. The global nature of economic practices nowadays made this much more complex, however. One group member voiced that German corporations actually had the potential to be pioneers but it would help if they were nudged into the right direction by political players. It was also politics that was responsible to regulate free returns in e-commerce or (particularly cheap) flying for more climate action. Politics should also finally subsidise going by train as this was currently so expensive that it had become an 'elite practice' to take the train within Europe. This was debated in a quite heated and emotional manner.

Everyday efficacy

Initially, the group disagreed with respect to individual efficacy: on the one hand, it was stated that the individual foregoing consumption hardly made a difference, even if more than a couple of idealists did so. Politics had much larger levers as this participant believed. On the other hand, it was said that consumption decisions did indeed have a substantial impact. Ultimately, the individual was expected to have a certain limited efficacy in their own small social environment (relational efficacy) whilst political and corporate agents were thought to be the ones that could truly make a difference. Here it was pointed out that there had been considerable change in terms of how people in society now thought about vegan diets or plastic bags for example.

The group members also thought that their role as teachers endowed them with particular efficacy:

G?m: I do indeed tell my students that I don't own a car. I leave it at that but then they at least have a role model, negative or positive, does not matter, but at least they know someone who has no car. And is kind of normal (laughter).

G?w: At least you think that they think so.

The group did not unequivocally deem the student protests efficacious and at times their authenticity was questioned. However, the point at which scientists endorsed

the statements made by the students was thought to have made a big difference for the legitimacy of *Fridays for Future*.

The group also questioned the efficacy of politicians as they were problematically influenced by lobbying. The German environmental minister arguing that people had to be rationally convinced of the necessity to protect the climate indicated that politics still relied much too heavily on voluntary measures (and a knowledge concept resting on information deficits), which had failed as experience had shown. What was needed instead was concrete political legislation although one was unsure how the public would then receive having to pay more for climate action. Therefore, the group expected politics to water down its legislation once again leaving it very long-term and vague. Overall, the group was very dissatisfied with political decisions related to climate action.

Corporate actors were also criticised for not doing enough to protect the climate. For example, Germany was far behind other countries in the e-mobility sector. Corporations also often practiced *greenwashing* that they tailored to their respective target group. Sustainable fashion was still deemed a niche-product, which showed the limited efficacy the group attributed to the corporate sphere. Here, it was thought to also be the task of educational institutions to train economists so that they were not exclusively presented mainstream economic rationales as these conflicted with meaningful climate action. One group member replied to this by saying that companies had to act in terms of shareholder interests and thus their efficacy was curtailed. Therefore, only politics could initiate actual progress in this respect.

Embodied information practices

The extent of the negative impact of flying for the climate had been internalised by this group only to a limited extent. Meaningful climate action was thought to be made much more difficult by conflicting information. For example, both batteries and energy provision for e-mobility were perceived to be unresolved issues, which made it much less straight-forward to switch to it. Besides, there often existed practices in people's professional everyday lives that were so counterproductive that they left people demoralised with regard to making an effort for the climate as private individuals. For example, people had reported that retail used that much plastic behind the scenes that any effort to avoid it by people in their private lives seemed completely pointless. This was also the case for organic produce that one would initially assume to be superior. At other times, there was too little information in the group's perception as it did for example not know what best to do with used clothes. The notion of knowing in this group was quite encompassing, however. The group appreciated both, factual and emotional information and proposed a *mixture of both*. It was seen to also make a sizable difference how somebody had grown up and been socialised.

Extent of denial

This group denied the imperative to protect the climate only to an extent. The group members reported that in some areas, they were not acting according to what was best for the climate, for example with respect to flying. Overall, they had however extensively reflected on the issue, including its complexity and multi-dimensionality. There was very strong emphasis of one's own responsibility, both as an individual and as a teacher.

Denial strategies

At times, this group kept information, for example about the extent of the climate impact of flying, at arm's length for not having to feel so guilty about still practicing it. Here, awareness existed, however, of the possibility to offset emissions, which some group members already practiced. One second denial strategy consisted in questioning the authenticity of the *Fridays for Future* student protestors, yet this was certainly also related to other reasons within the occupational field of school education. Overall, the group was quite aware of the need to protect the climate, its members did however not substantially integrate climate action into their own everyday lives.

6.9 Conclusion

The groups analysed each displayed specific denial patterns that were sometimes dependent on whether or not climate action played a role in the participants' everyday work sphere. Here, it is thus particularly relevant how members of a professional field define themselves collectively. Consequently, the necessity and urgency of acting on climate change and integrating this into one's everyday life is interpreted differently, depending on societal location. Climate-cultural leanings identified in these group discussions also displayed varying patterns of climate-relevant material and discursive practices and differing interpretations of media reporting on climate change. Further, the analysis shows that not only the constellations of this study's three key concepts, responsibility, efficacy and knowing differ along climate-cultural location but also the specific climate-cultural interpretations what each of these notions mean. Thus, each group displays its own particular logic of climate action, i.e., a specific climate habitus, which makes visible diverse inter- and intra-group power constellations. Emerging alliances between groups hitherto perceived as substantially different that however (and somewhat surprisingly) did show similar climate-cultural propensities to deny proved to be particularly telling.