

# #REMforum

10<sup>th</sup> St. Gallen Forum for Management of Renewable Energies  
May 23-24, 2019 – Olma Messen St. Gallen

# Social Acceptance of Energy Solutions in a Polarized World

Prof. Dr. Rolf Wüstenhagen  
University of St. Gallen



#REMforum  
@wuestenhagen

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# A warm welcome to all of you – in particular to participants and alumni of our executive education programme REM-HSG

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**REM Alumni Lounge**

Executive Education Programme  
Management of Renewable Energy (REM-HSG)



Good Energies Chair for  
Management of Renewable Energies

# Social Acceptance of Energy Solutions in a Polarized World

## 5 Propositions

1. Four emotions are prevalent in the energy & climate debate.
2. Individual-level emotional dynamics lead to stages of grief.
3. Collective emotional dynamics lead to polarization.
4. To get towards social acceptance, decision makers should address the 10-30-40-20 problem with a CCMS strategy.
5. A remaining challenge is the trade-off between urgency of change and speed of democratic decision-making.

# We live in emotional times



**Climate fear**



**Solar joy**



**Wind anger**



**EV curiosity**

# Audience Polling Q1

**What is your predominant feeling this morning?**

1. Climate fear.



2. Wind anger.



3. Solar joy.



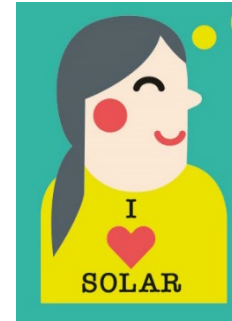
4. EV curiosity.



# We live in emotional times



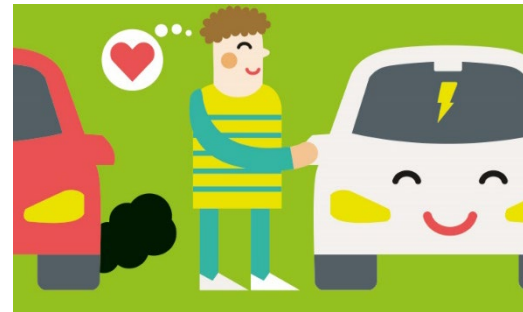
**Climate fear**



**Solar joy**



**Wind anger**



**EV curiosity**



# How do emotions play out over time?

## 5 Stages of Climate Grief

ARCHIVE  
REMforum 2017

Emotional Stages

Denial

Anger

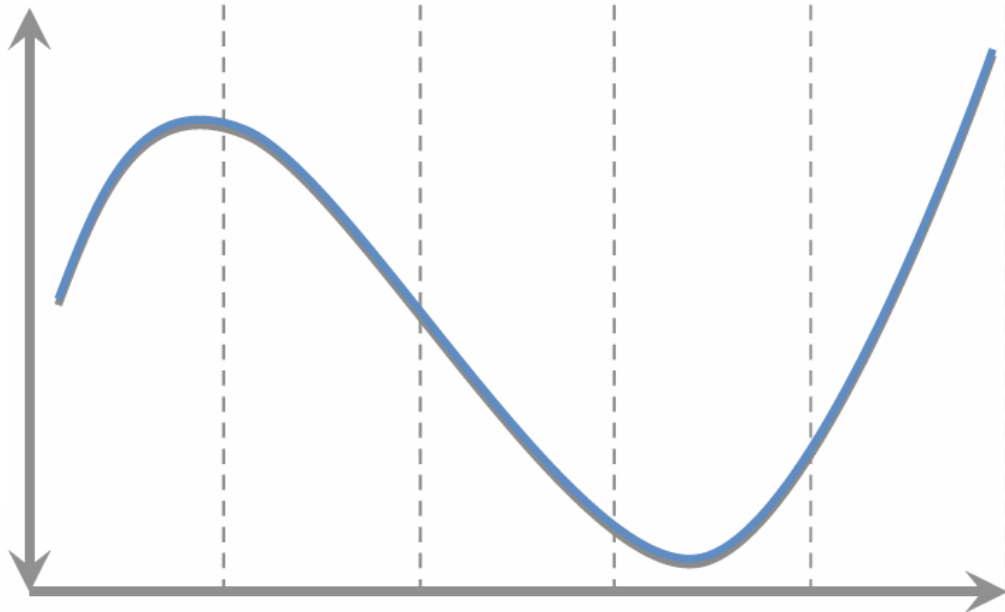
Bargaining

Depression

Acceptance

Positive

Negative



Article

**Leading Organizations Through the Stages of Grief: The Development of Negative Emotions Over Environmental Change**

Elmar Friedrich<sup>1</sup> and Rolf Wüstenhagen<sup>1</sup>

Business & Society  
2017, Vol. 56(2) 186–213  
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DOI: 10.1177/0007650315576151  
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# Polarization: From individual-level emotions...

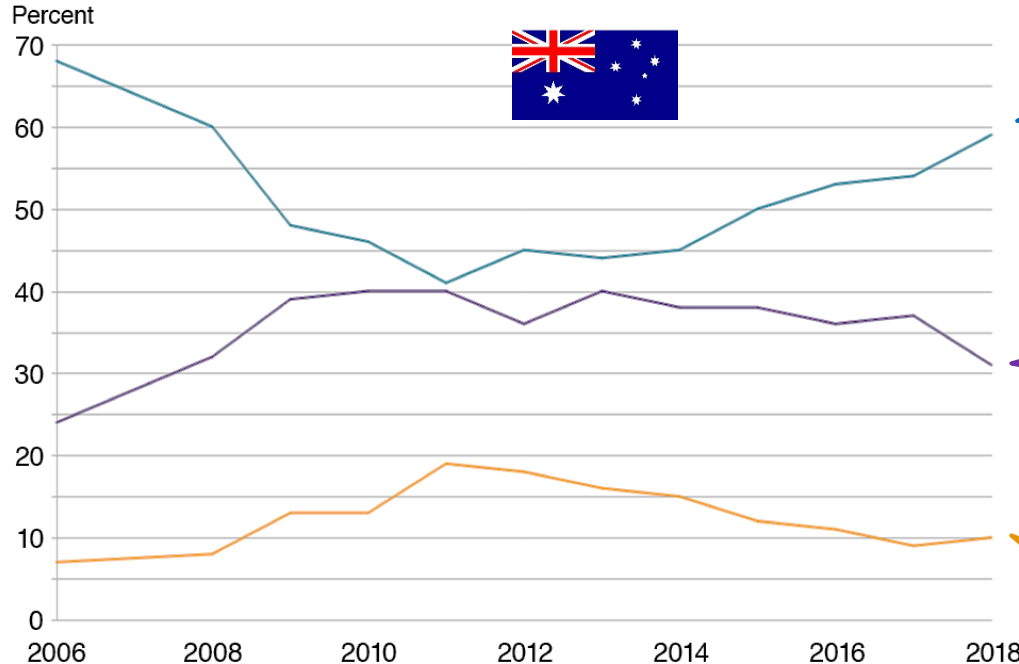




# ...to collective emotions and actions



# A majority appreciates urgency of climate action while vocal minority often dominates the headlines



60%

*“Global warming is a serious and pressing problem. We should begin **taking steps now even if this involves significant costs.**”*

30%

*“Global warming should be addressed, but its effects will be gradual so we can **deal with the problem gradually.**”*

10%

*“Until we are sure that global warming is really a problem, we **should not take any steps** which would have economic costs.”*

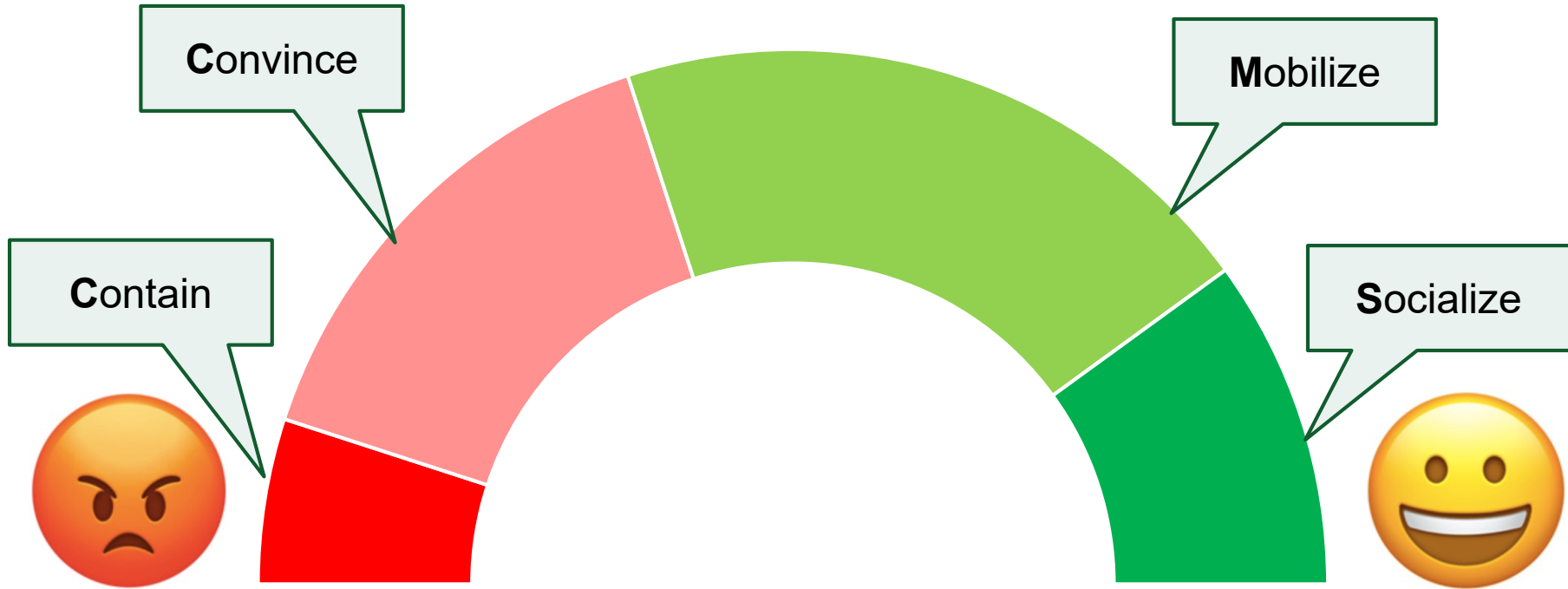
Methodology: Online and telephone poll, designed to be nationally representative, of 1,200 Australians 18 years and older.

Source: Lowy Institute poll, 2018

BBC

# Managing social dynamics of climate change

Addressing the 10-30-40-20 problem with a CCMS strategy



# In some cases, vocal minorities win the case...



STANDORT

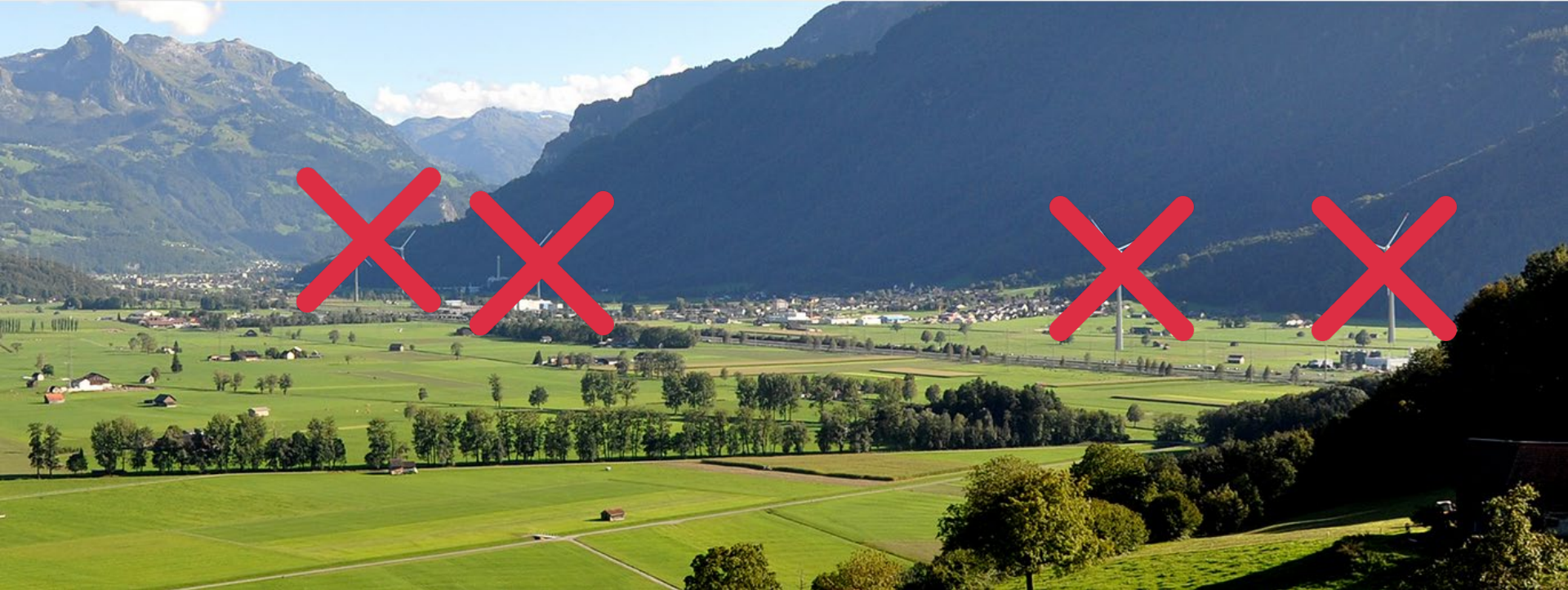
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# ...while in other cases, social acceptance prevails

PARC ÉOLIEN  
**Montagne de Buttes**

Un projet de Verrivent SA  
avec les communes de  
Val-de-Travers, La Côte-aux-Fées et Les Verrières



- 19 wind turbines
- 59% support in referendum (2014)
- Construction permit granted May 2019





# And more often than not, projects get delayed



Photo: Keystone



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# #ClimateEmergency to ensure timely solutions?

SRF TAGESSCHAU

Instagram

klimastreikschweiz

**BREAKING**

IRLAND RUFT KLIMANOTSTAND AUS!

Australia

**ACT parliament declares climate emergency**

**KANTONE UND KLIMA-NOTSTAND**

# Audience Polling Q2

## Is declaring #ClimateEmergency helpful?

1. No, national emergency should be left to more serious issues.
2. Rather no, this is purely symbolic.
3. Rather yes, but what matters more are specific policies.
4. Yes, this is the best way to prioritize climate action.



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