Klimajournalismus nach dem Greta-Effekt – was leisten, wissen, anders machen?

Prof. Dr. Torsten Schäfer, Hochschule Darmstadt

climate change – some basic findings

• Daily or weekly weather phenomenons do not correspond to CC

• CC = *changing **weather** phenomenons over 30 years* (WMO): drought, storm, floods, warming ➔ ADAPTATION

• **Ecological consequences**: desertification, soil degradation, seal level, rise ➔ MITIGATION

• **Social and economical consequences**: water supply, crops, pests, damages, migration, unemployment, poorness…

➔ *"In the end, CC is not a technical or economical problem. It's mainly a question of how the society deals with it and is aware of its consequences."*

Prof. Dr. Dirk Messner, Umweltbundesamt
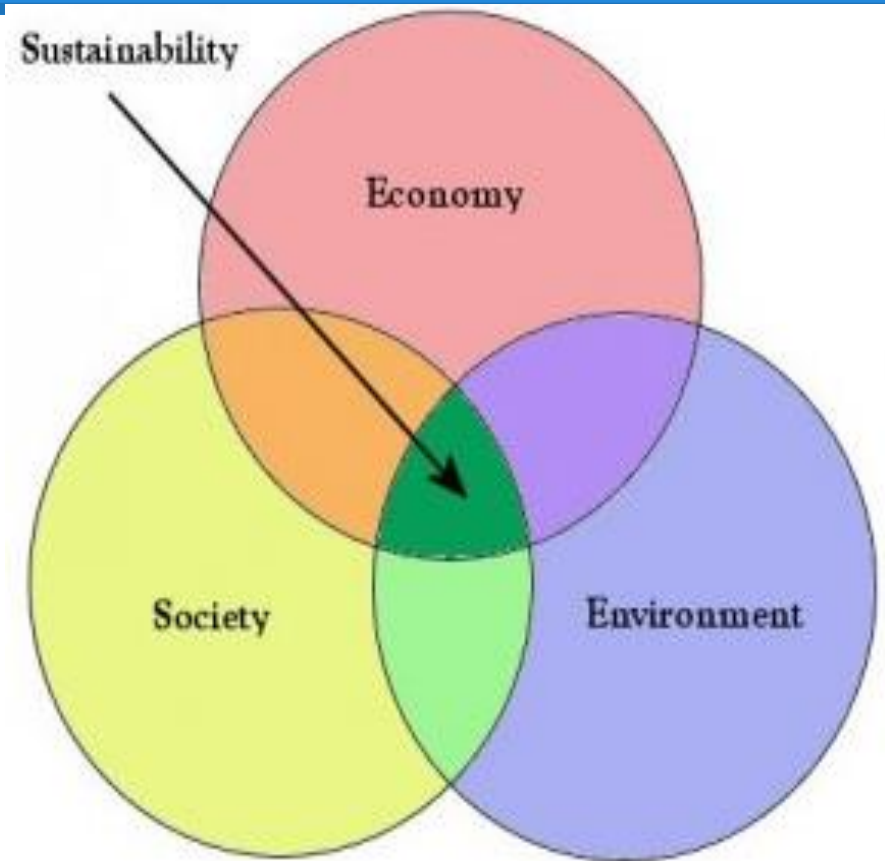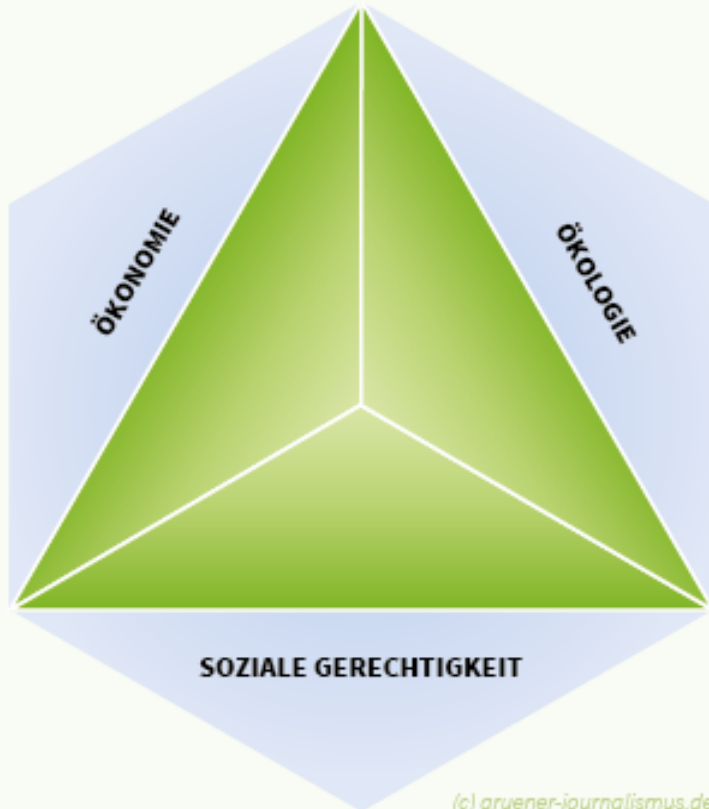
What is climate change as a media topic?

- sustainability topic => CC = big room, walls + roof = Sustainability

- **Sustainability = universal value** => peace, democracy, gender equality

- Misunderstanding: triangle of sustainability => ecological priority necessary

- Misunderstanding: privacy of sust. // public task: law + order

- CC = dimension, not a topic ==>

Where's CC in your story: how + where to **name it?** front door/backyard

How to **frame it**: explicit or implicit treatment => core topic/ story context ?

Sustainability triangle: balance

Sustainability pyramid from Gruener-Journalismus.de
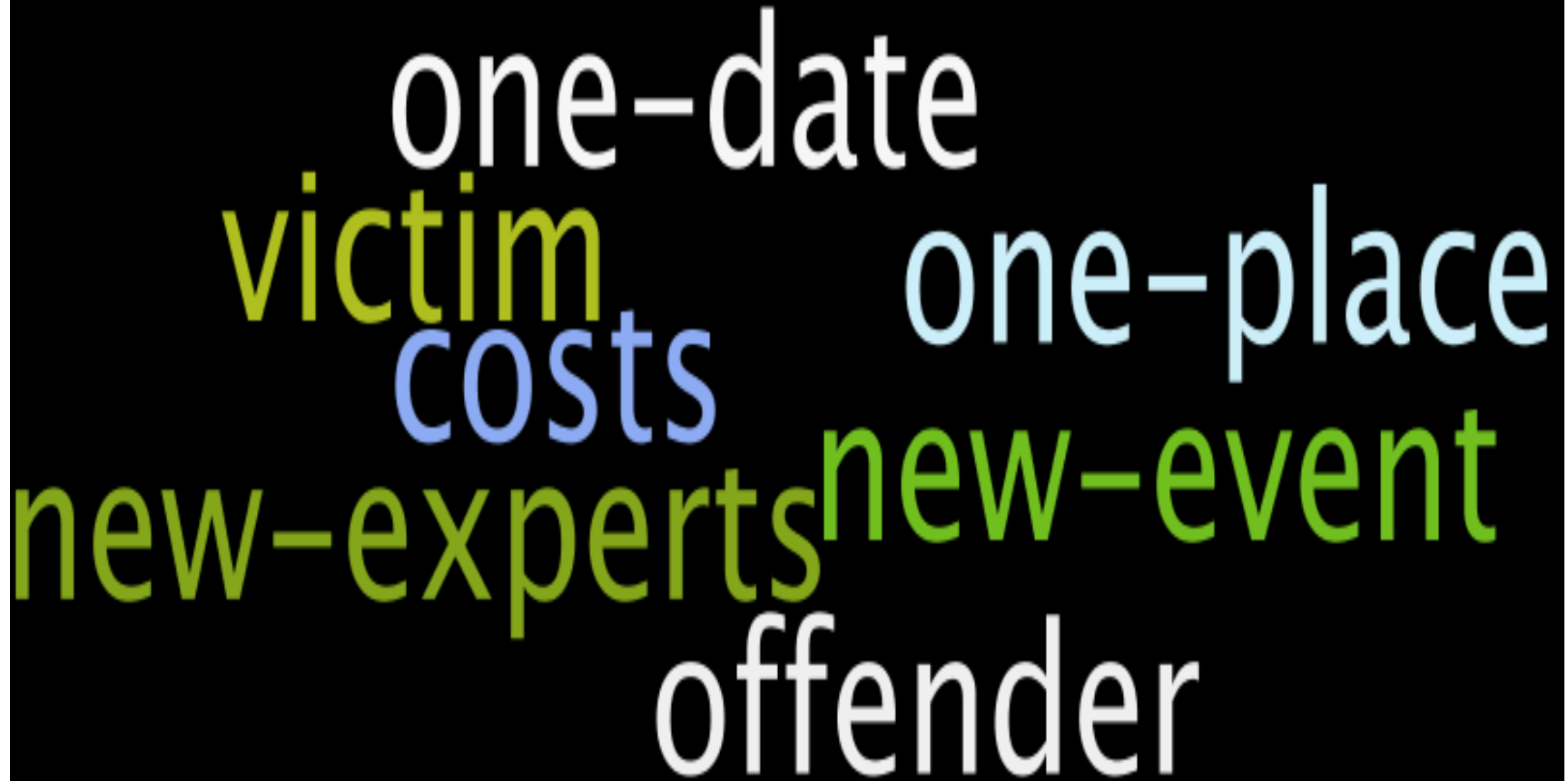
What is climate change NOT?

 - attractive, easy to understand, sexy, full of stars, stories + events

- a new topic, it's getting old => lots of repetitions, same approaches

- a question mainly of technology + economy => dominant framework

- alternative frames: society, arts, culture (indigenous), daily life, health

Why is CC so difficult to understand?

- bad technical language, "climate talk" !

- reporting on CC is often science reporting => translating task!

News structure of environmental disasters

News structure of CC

unclear-costs

many-places

no-stars

many-victims

many-offenders

always+later

repetitions

many-events

But there are options to take….

Language + Storytelling

Prof. Dr. Torsten Schäfer, Hochschule Darmstadt

Stupid, it's language: how to fight climate talk

Examples of Simplified Scientific Terms

OBSCURE WORD	BETTER UNDERSTOOD WORD
Anthropogenic	Human induced, man-made
Mid-Pleistocene	1 million to 600,000 years ago
CH4	Methane
IPCC	The group of scientists who issue comprehensive assessments on climate science, and were awarded the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for their work on climate change.
Forcing	Incoming and outgoing (radiation) energy
385 ppm	2008 level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere

GRÜNER JOURNALISMUS

GONGO für REDDplus auf COP

3. SEPTEMBER 2020 | IN KATEGORIE BERICHTEN + ERZÄHLEN, KLIMAWANDEL

Auf der Klimakonferenz hat es die Völkerverständigung schwer. Das liegt auch an der Geheimsprache der Diplomaten. Wer Englisch zur Muttersprache hat und einen doppelten Doktortitel in Jura und Linguistik führt, ist klar im Vorteil.

Von Bernhard Pötter

Narratives + Storys

• „**Anthropocene**" = new meta narrative

• ICS decides about Anthropocene (epoch of humans, P. Crutzen 2002) instead of Holocene (12.000 years). **We have already…**

• *altered 75 % of the planet's surface*

• *moved more sediment that rain, rivers or wind do*

• *create new species and spread local ones over the planet*

• *This is a new story/narrative!*

• **You can create stories since more and more people are affected by, suffer from, work with CC**

CC: the human impact => stories!

What is storytelling?

• topic and tool, technique and research field => theory and practice

• stories are used in campaigns, marketing, business and journalism!

• not entirely new, very trendy => why? dangers? lack of research

• reaction to a factual overload, social media driven

• individualization, entertainment society…

• "everybody is an author today"

• story = *"emotional information through describing the development of a protagonist in a factual framework"*

Why storytelling?

• Facts "convince the mind but not the heart" = Storytelling as entertainment, creating emotions

• Styt. = to attract more readers + attention, sell copies

• beauty of words, fun of telling stories, right of people to be heard

• *To ease the understanding of complex and relevant topics that are often neglected or suffer from reduced and standardized reporting*

• stories have always captured people + help us **make sense** of things

• can inspire people to act (short term perspective)

• but the **psychological impact** is sometimes overestimated

Research project "climate stories"

• actors, narrational aproaches, genres, journalism cultures

• comparing the narrational cultures of cc journalism in Germany, Vietnam, Lapland, Norwegen) from 2015 to 2018

• *how do env. journalists judge cc reporting + storytelling?*

• *in how far can storytelling improve cc reporting?*

• *how can we improve cc reporting?*

• *what narratives exist in the climate context?*

• *what forms and genres are useful and possible?*

"Climate stories": German case, key findings

- more CC reporting, not much climate denial

- strong focus on current events/disaster ➜ **CONTEXT** + background

- difficult: be a specialists as well an allrounder

- lack of resources: money, people, knowledge, **TIME**

- demand for more solutions, ideas, options to take in CC writing

- demand for **broader view** of CC => different frames + narratives

- demand for new (narrational) forms, but sceptic towards storytelling

"Climate stories": broaden the narratives

Ökonomisch + Technologisch

Erhalt von Städten, Regionen, Staaten
Schadensvermeidung betreiben
Kostenersparnisse erzielen
Technologieförderung, Innovation
Arbeitsplätze schaffen
neue Märkte + Geschäftsideen
Forschungsdynamik auslösen
Autarkie (von Öl, Kohle)
Investorenforderungen, Planbarkeit

Neue Gesellschaftsbilder:
- *Zukunftsgerechtes Wirtschaften*
- *Kapitalismusreform*
- *Postwachstumsgesellschaft*
- *Dekarbonisierung*

Stabile und nachhaltige Teilsysteme:
- *Wirtschaften*
- *Energieversorgung*
- *Ernährung*
- *Gesundheitsschutz*
- *Gesundheitsschutz (saubere Luft, Wasser, Böden, Produkte, z.B. Plastik)*
- *Landwirtschaft*
- *Konsum*
- *Mobilität*
- *Biodiversität*
- *Nachhaltiger Konsum*

Politisch + Sozial

Sicherheit
- Wasser/Land-/Energiekonflikte

Migrationsursachen bekämpfen
Internat. Kooperation stärken
Entwicklungspolitik stärken
Globale Machtverteilung ändern
Standortpolitik (regional)
Regionen werden unabhängiger
lokale Gemeinschaften stärken
Klimaöffentlichkeit herstellen/folgen

Kulturell

Wissenschaftlichkeit folgen
Intellektueller Austausch
Wertewandel anstrengen
Heimat / Kulturräume erhalten
Lifestyle kreieren
Visionslust, Zukunftsfähigkeit
Indigene Kulturen stärken
Lebensqualität erhöhen:
- *Zeitgewinne*
- *Gemeinschaft + Partizipation*
- *„Gutes tun"*
- *Umwelt als psych. Ressource*
- *Wiedervereinigung mit Natur*
- /

Ökologisch

Biodiversität stärken
Erhalt bestimmter Ökosysteme
Landschaftspflege:
- *Ästhetik*
- *Kultur*
- *Wasser, Boden, Luft*

Ethisch

Generationenverantwortung
- *Intergenerationell*
- *intragenerationell*

Menschenleben
Klimaflüchtlingen helfen
Klimaopfern helfen
Armut bekämpfen in EWL
Anthropozän, Weltgärtner
Artenschutz
Tierschutz

Further results: broaden forms + genres

- product stories: ("mobile phones + rare earth elements")

- self testing: living without plastic, car, meat => seminar, at home,

- role models: expressing visions, success => solution journalism

- mail/dialogue, diaries, quiz, game, scrollytellings

- patchwork reporting, long form observations, nature + travel writing

- follow the money, follow a chemical

- animalize the story = alternative heroes

Solution approach, Global Ideas, DW

Global ideas, climate reporting and species reporting, Deutsche Welle

Patchwork reporting, GEO magazine

GEO International: 38 small stories from 30 countries, 2010

Multimedia + Scrollytelling: SWR

Local: a river portrait in a climate context

VRMStories
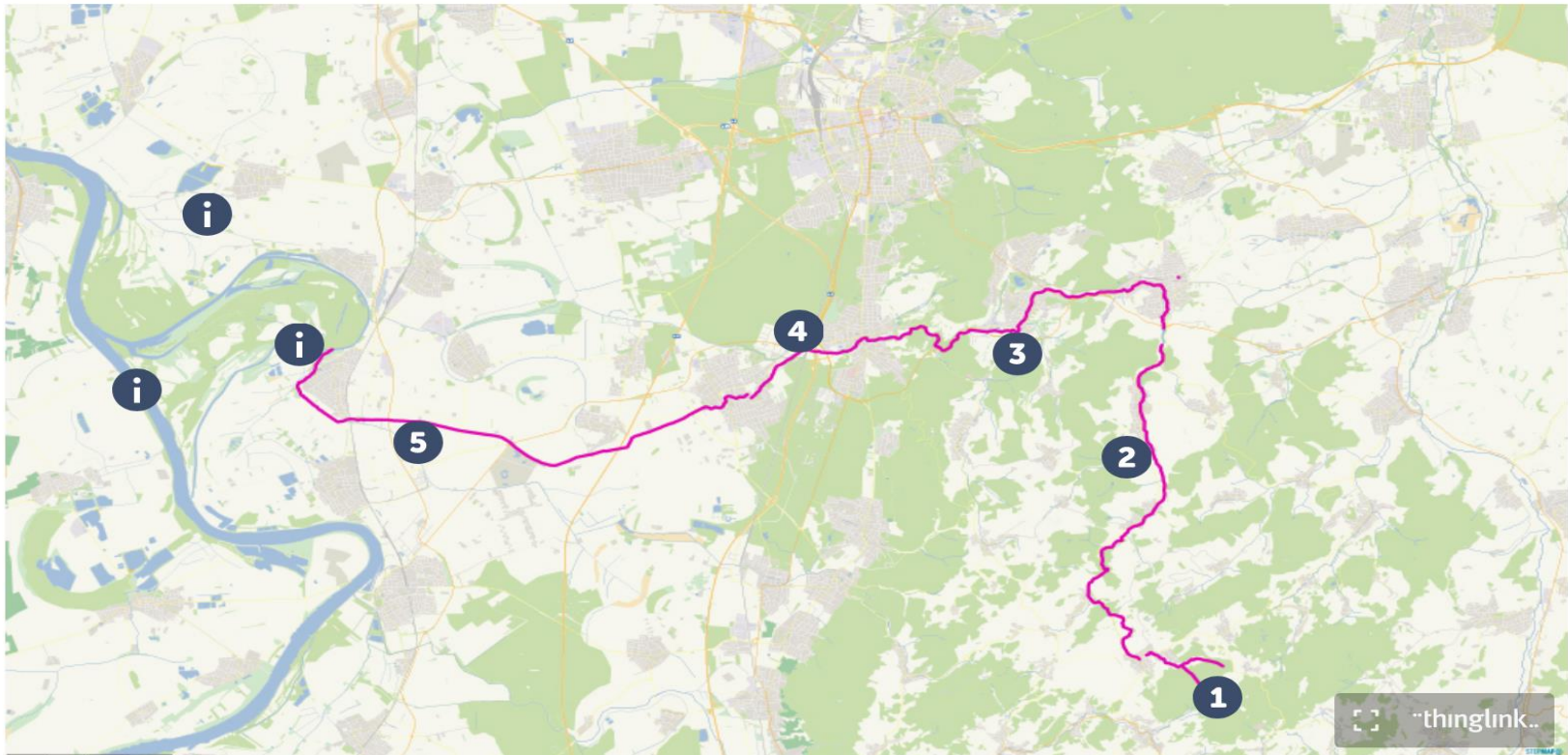
| KAPITEL 1: MODAUTAL | KAPITEL 2: OBER-RAMSTADT | KAPITEL 3: NIEDER-RAMSTADT | KAPITEL 4: EBERSTADT | KAPITEL 5: RIED |

Journalism + Nature writing

Nature writing class in BA Online Journalism, Darmstadt

Summary: We need to...

- offer advanced training courses + deepen knowledge about sources

- create study programs/options for climate/environmental journalism

- teach new methods such as storytelling and data journalism

- improve research conditions: fonds, teams, journeys = **time factor**

- establish sustainability as an ethical key framework in journalism + set up the CLIMATE CONTEXT in all fields of reporting ➜ **climate context as the daily routine of journalists**

- Shift our role towards a **transformativ communication science** => exp: *Krikowi*, *network for media ethics*

- Open ourselves for a new ethical discourse + holistic perspectives