

Abstracts

Franziska Weder: Cultivating Sustainability. Public Communication on Environment, Climate, Sustainable Development and Transformation

This article outlines disciplinary roots, interdisciplinary approaches and research insights on climate, science, and sustainability communication. On this basis, it discusses the possibilities of differentiating sustainability communication – in particular from environmental and climate communication. This is followed by an attempt to theorize sustainability communication, which at the same time points to the necessity of understanding sustainability as a point of reference for ethical considerations, as a new (universal) value for communication and media studies themselves. This should be increasingly recognized in research, teaching, and method development, but also in university micro-politics, transfer services and commitment.

Torsten Schäfer: Transformation and Repositioning. Challenges in the Face of Climate Crisis and Species Extinction

Species extinction and the climate crisis demand from journalism and its theory to open up with regard to location, landscape and nature with new ethical concepts, role models and language habits. This essay outlines challenges and needs for action in the areas of media content, theory building, and practiced communication science. Impulses for the future are derived in particular from media ethnographic research on indigenous and traditional climate narratives in Scandinavia.

Michael Brüggemann: A Plea for a Modest World Improvement. Transformative Journalism and Communication Science

Global ecological crises confront journalism and communication studies with the question: How do we contribute to the ecological transformation of our society? Both professions hide behind the dogma of distanced and neutral world observation, thus avoiding the question of their own socio-ecological footprint: which consists not only of air travel and material consumption, but also in the choice of certain research questions, for or against intervening in the debates on the ecological transformation of our society. Transformative communication science could play reflexivity back into these debates, critical, solution-oriented, and always ready to think through its own bias and correct its own mistakes.

Alexandra Rank: Ecologically Sustainable Journalism. In Collision with Journalistic Quality Standards?

Media criticize unsustainable actions of others, but hardly address their own ecologically (un)sustainable behavior. A qualitative survey was conducted to investigate the extent to which journalists can work in an ecologically sustainable manner and whether this can be reconciled with journalistic quality criteria. A central result of the survey was that the ecological influence of the journalistic process is rated as being low, and the responsibility is primarily placed on the media companies. Until now, costs have inhibited development, although a paradigm shift is taking place in this regard. However, the ecological factor will never be the most important decision criterion for or against a story in journalism. Nevertheless, there is potential for change in the mobility, energy, and resource consumption of journalists.

Beatrice Dernbach: Training Skills for Sustainability Journalism. Reporting on Societal Transformation Requires Knowledge, Expertise and Skills

Sustainability is a current, complex subject area that is becoming increasingly visible in media of all kinds. On the part of media professionals, this requires sound factual, technical and communication skills: They require knowledge, skills and abilities that are essential for research, classification, and comprehensible presentation in view of the societal „Great Transformation“. This article discusses – after a brief review of the history of ecology reporting – the extent to which the competencies necessary for journalistic practice can be taught and learned in basic and advanced training.

Thomas Bohrmann: Companies Give Themselves “Green” Image. Sustainability as a Subject in Commercial Advertising

Sustainability is a topic that is becoming more and more embedded in politics, society, and business. Especially the economy, which increasingly promotes sustainable and environmentally conscious products with targeted commercial communication, has a major impact on global consumption. Advertising companies consciously communicate with „green“ themes and present themselves as socially and environmentally responsible actors. However, basic standards apply to advertising presentations, among which the prohibition of “greenwashing” stands out above all.

Volker Lilienthal: Self-Regulation in Tabloid Journalism. Criticism of „Bild“ in the Perception of the Journalists Concerned

The German tabloid „Bild“ is a permanent media ethics controversy. „Bild“ is the medium most often reprimanded by the German Press Council. Criticism is also voiced on the part of academia, media journalism and social media. But how is the perceived social rejection dealt with by the editorial team itself? A survey of 43 „Bild“ journalists and an observation of editorial conferences revealed that although the boundaries of tabloid journalism are discussed internally, they are interpreted rather broadly. The Boulevard Press is not only a format but is also considered a license for the greatest possible journalistic freedom. Aggressive „Bild“ bashing on Twitter tends to lead to internal solidarity and thus remains ineffective.

Magdalena Hoffmann: Intentional Self-victimization as a Strategy. A Quantitative Study of the AfD's Twitter Account

From an electoral perspective, the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) is the most successful new party foundation in the Federal Republic of Germany. A special feature of the party is its communication strategy: The AfD operates intensively on social media. Intentional self-victimization as a component of its communication strategy has been alleged. Whether the AfD uses this strategy on Twitter was investigated from November 2020 to April 2021 with a quantitative content analysis of 1000 tweets and retweets of the Germany-wide AfD Twitter account. The results show that intentional self-victimization constitutes a permanent component of AfD communication on Twitter. The empirical findings also demonstrate an intertwining of intentional self-victimization with populist communication practices.

Claudia Nothelle: Robber Synod, Placebo or Hopeful Awakening? Personal Observations on the Coverage of the Synodal Way

Public and media perceptions of churches have changed dramatically in recent years. Allegations of power misuse and abuse are the focus of journalistic scrutiny of these institutions. On the part of the Catholic church the Synodal Way is intended to force a reappraisal and at the same time to create solution-oriented perspectives. Journalistic coverage thereof and evaluations have been varied. This essay takes a subjective look at selected examples of these evaluations and attempts to place them in the context of journalistic parameters.