

Workshop “The language of debate and communication  
about climate change”

**Book of abstracts**

**Tuesday 21 September 2021**

## KEYNOTE

### **“Climate stories”: From science and politics to citizens’ opinions**

*Kjersti Fløttum*

In this talk I will first give an introduction of the cross-disciplinary research group LINGCLIM, constituting the background of the research presented (<https://www.uib.no/en/rg/lingclim>). We have for more than a decade been undertaking research on linguistic representations of climate change discourses and their interpretations (Fløttum 2017), currently focusing on lifestyle questions in the new project CLIMLIFE.

Then I will give a short overview of our main theoretical framework, including 1) narrative theory, inspired by the textlinguistic approach of Jean-Michel Adam (2008) and the political science approach developed by Michael D. Jones and colleagues in the Narrative Policy Framework (Jones et al. 2014), and 2) linguistic polyphony (multivoicedness), as generated in the Scandinavian ScaPoLine theory (Nølke et al. 2004).

The core part of the talk will centre on various constructions of “climate stories” in different genres, including personal stories in text answers to open-ended survey questions. Questions as the following will be presented: 1) how do various actors construct their climate agenda, 2) how are different voices manifested and what are the relations between them, 3) to what extent do the voices convey different narratives, 4) what kind of narrative characters or roles are attributed to the various voices (heroes, villains, victims)? Different narrative roles may display different conceptions of responsibility (for causes of and solutions to climate change) according to the actual context and time perspective.

In a few final remarks, I will invite to a discussion of current issues raised about the focus in climate change narratives.

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## Bio

**Kjersti Fløttum** is professor of French linguistics, Department of foreign languages, University of Bergen. She was vice-rector for international relations 2005-2009 and has since 2013 been a member of the university board. She has had numerous local, national and international commissions of trust. Her research interests cover text- and genre theory, narrative structures, semantics, pragmatics, linguistic polyphony, and discourse analysis.

The major part of her empirical research is oriented towards enunciation, polyphonic (multivoiced), lexico-semantic and narrative analysis of academic, political and climate change discourse. She has led several large projects (KIAP, EURLING, LINGCLIM) and has often collaborated in international and cross-disciplinary contexts. She is since 2012 head of the cross-disciplinary LINGCLIM research group and head of the CLIMLIFE project 2020-2023. Fløttum has published substantially in international journals and is co-author of Academic Voices (2006), and editor of Speaking to Europe (2013) and The role of language in the climate change debate (2017).

Fløttum is member of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters and of Academia Europaea.

# **Young climate activists' identity work on Instagram**

*Dorien Van De Mieroop and Kim Schoofs*

Youngsters have been playing an important role in media attention for the debate on climate change and have increasingly attempted to weigh on political decision making in this respect. Prior to the pandemic, this mainly took the form of 'physical' activities, started by Greta Thunberg's 'Skolstrejk för klimatet' (school strikes for the climate) in 2018 in Sweden. This example was followed in several other countries, e.g. by the Belgian 'Youth for Climate'-movement, led by, among others, Anuna De Wever and Adélaïde Charlier. Their initiative gained momentum in 2019 when the 'Klimaatmarsen' (climate marches) gradually attracted increasing numbers of secondary school youngsters, with media attention culminating at various points, e.g. when Greta Thunberg joined the Belgian youngsters' protests. These school strikes were followed by a range of activities, many of which were abruptly halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing the youngsters to advocate their ideas through other means, such as social media.

In particular, we will focus on the popular social media platform Instagram, to investigate how the activists mentioned above – Greta Thunberg, Anuna De Wever and Adélaïde Charlier – present themselves there. We specifically chose this focus because Instagram challenges its users to engage in a careful balancing act. This is because constructing 'singular' identities as climate activists and doing identity work in terms of expertise (e.g., as an activist knowledgeable about climate issues) increases the activists' credibility, but, as a downside, may not be as attractive to followers and thus diminish influence (Archer, Wolf & Nalloor 2020). To increase influence, a more personable identity is often needed, although this may potentially undermine expertise. Hence, to 'solve' this double bind, a careful navigation of a "heteroglossia of voices" (Bakhtin 1981) may be needed, e.g. by constructing intersectional identities that meet both demands (Schoofs et al. 2021).

Methodologically, we apply a multimodal discourse analytic lens to study the visual, aural and verbal resources (Page 2018) with which these activists construct their identities on Instagram since the start of the pandemic. Combining both quantitative explorations and qualitative analyses, we aim to uncover the similarities and differences in these activists' identity work, which we finally relate to the social context's demands and the social media platform's constraints and affordances.

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# Dutch “opwarming van de aarde”, English “climate change”, French “réchauffement climatique”, German “globale Erwärmung”: How Dutch, English, French and German Wikipedia entries present the topic of climate change.

Tanja Mortelmans

In my talk, I will compare the Dutch, English, French and German Wikipedia-pages on ‘climate change’, with the aim of finding out how climate change is presented by (and for) writers/speakers of different linguistic communities. More specifically, I will zoom in on linguistic and more general commonalities and differences in these four entries, which I will take to reflect a particular disposition towards (i.e. a particular construal of) the topic of climate change in different linguistic communities.

I will first pay attention to the general structure of the entries and their subsections. Generally, every entry (with a text size of between 8,000 words (Dutch) and 25,000 words (French)) is divided into about 10 subsections (e.g. “Terminology”, “Observed temperature rise”, etc.). On the one hand, we see a considerable overlap between the different entries on climate change. It is probably safe to assume that the English version should be regarded as a baseline text, i.e. a source of direct inspiration for the other ones. So, each of the four articles in the corpus has at least one section on the causes of climate change and a section on reactions to it. On the other hand, some of the language entries contain (sub)sections that are absent in other entries or stress particular aspects related to climate change more prominently than in other entries. To give but one example: In the German Wikipedia article, the fact that climate change is anthropogenic (“menschengemacht”/“anthropogen”) is much more present than in the other entries (evidenced by the high relative frequency of the adjective ‘menschlich’ in the German article). As will be shown, this will also impact on other elements in the German entry.

In a second step, I will zoom in on a particular subsection dealing with the “scientific consensus on climate change”, a subsection present in all four entries. Here, I will have a closer look at the use of epistemic and evidential markers and/or strategies used to describe the scientific consensus (see also Fløttum & Drange 2017). One of the main findings pertains to the fact that a wide range of strategies is used to portray this consensus, ranging from ‘strong’ evidentials like Dutch *blijken* ‘turn out’ (Mortelmans, accepted), direct quoting from influential reports and the use of adverbially modified epistemic adjectives like ‘extremely likely’/‘ausreichend sicher’. Epistemic modal verbs are more or less absent, though; typically, less ‘subjective’ constructions (in the original sense of Langacker 1991) are clearly preferred to discuss the scientific consensus on climate change (e.g. “der wissenschaftliche Konsens zum Klimawandel besteht in der Feststellung, dass”, “Il existe un très large consensus scientifique sur le fait que”).

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# **Whose language? A linguistic ethnographic perspective on collaborative practices in the field of air quality**

Seppe Goddaert, Geert Jacobs and Sofie Verkest

One of the more subtle ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting our lives is that it has put the uneasy relationship between science and politics at the centre of public scrutiny, but the topic is certainly not new and it has been widely demonstrated that the interaction is not of a simple, one-way nature as researchers and research institutions often take on the role of advocates for scientifically grounded policymaking and attempt to raise awareness through science communication involving – to name but a few essential partners – wide-ranging news media and educational organizations. In this context, media scholars have recently noticed a rise in coverage of societal problems linked to science and technology in policy debates about how we should lead a sustainable and healthy life (Muncott and Williams 2013). When it comes to climate change, for example, there are a lot of challenging intersections between the scientific and political domains: should we incentivise buying electric cars? Should we ban diesel cars from city centres? Should we invest more in public transportation? In these and other intersections, we see scientific expertise constantly being deployed in societal, political and often mediatised debates (Collins and Evans 2002).

In this presentation, we turn to a key issue in the field of health and the environment, viz. air quality, and we report on the linguistic ethnographic study of two recent large-scale citizen science projects concerning air quality in Belgium. Essentially, by pursuing an ethnographic line of inquiry, we set out to focus on “the real historical actors, their interests, their allegiances, their practices, and where they come from, in relation to the discourses they produce”(Blommaert, 1999:7). Taking a field-based, interaction-oriented approach, our aim is to explore how a discourse-sensitive analysis of a broad data-set, including audio- and video-recordings of interviews, training sessions and meetings with key stakeholders, can help shed light on the complex, sometimes messy collaborations between journalists, researchers, educators, policy makers and the general public. In doing so we align with emerging postfoundational perspectives that see collaboration, along with participation and engagement, as the new baseline for everyday sensemaking practices (see Declercq et al 2022). Tying in with the workshop’s theme of the language of debate and communication about climate change, we zoom in on the metapragmatic struggles (Peterson 2015) between the various parties involved as they revisit common grounds, negotiate professional boundaries, and eventually define the projects’ scope. In doing so we address the question whose language is actually determining the debate on air quality.

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# **The media climate: public communication about climate change in news and social media.**

*Mike S. Schäfer*

Media representations – both in news and in social media – are crucial for the public perception of climate change. Therefore, an increasing number of scholars has analyzed these media representations, their production, characteristics, uses and effects in recent decades. The talk gives an overview over this scholarship. It highlights, e.g., the different frames through which climate change is presented in media, the different effects on knowledge, attitudes and behaviors, and the diverse audiences of climate change communication.

## **Bio**

Mike S. Schäfer holds the chair for science communication at the Department of Communications and Media Research (IKMZ) of the University of Zurich. He is the Director of the University's Center for Higher Education and Science Studies (CHESS), President of the AGORA Commission for Science Communication of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and Speaker of the "Science Communication in Times of Digital Transformation" expert group of the Swiss Academy of the Arts and Sciences (A+).

Prof. Schäfer's work focuses on mediated science communication (in traditional legacy media as well as in social media and on digital platforms), on public perceptions of science, and on communication theory. He has written widely on these issues, co-editing handbooks like the "Oxford Encyclopedia of Climate Change Communication" as well as publishing empirical analyses in leading journals of the field.

Mike S. Schäfer was a visiting researcher at Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Oxford and Monash University. He is an elected member a member of acatech – the German National Academy of Science and Engineering and tweets under @mss7676

## **Global-local duality in climate change discourse: A comparative analysis of positions in the Danish, Dutch and Flemish press.**

*Godelieve Laureys*

In my contribution I want to elaborate on the concept of “domestication” (Eide & Kunelius 2010; Kunelius et al. 2017 and Painter & Schäfer 2018). Domestication is defined as “the degree to which the media in different countries domesticate global climate politics by opening up national spaces of interpretation” (Kunelius et al. 2017: 84).

Climate change is an inherently global problem. The targets and norms put forward on international fora (especially on the COPs) and embodied by the EU directives, however, have to be coped with by the national states. A comparative analysis of the discourse on legitimisation of the national/regional policies and an elaboration on the trading off mechanisms among countries can both shed a light on the vulnerability of European cooperation and yield a perspicacious analysis of the underlying ideological and pragmatic arguments on behalf of the countries involved.

The above-mentioned paradox is often mirrored and even reinforced by the press. Sometimes national rivalry is explicitly expressed in the discourse, but more often the representation of competitiveness is implicit, as reference is made to auto- and heterostereotypes and to presupposed attitudes. Biased assumptions and prejudices are triggered through the texts. Very often a lack of contextualisation and a selective usage of underlying arguments enhance the effect.

My approach is purely qualitative and the analysis is based on a sample of headlines and meta-texts where the respective national positions are explicitly at stake and/or commented upon. Often articles in the national press are triggered by external events on the global scene that have repercussions for the countries involved. This yields a good opportunity for a comparative analysis, since the related facts are similar, but the stances in the three countries can be quite different. I am especially interested in the way internationally spread information is treated differently in the local press in such cases. I am looking at differences with regard to the selection of arguments, the cited sources, the framing and the way information is foregrounded or backgrounded. By establishing “parallel catalogues” of relevant citations dealing with the same topic extracted from media in the respective countries I hope to be able to map the underlying stances and to illustrate not so much the degree but rather the concrete mode of domestication.

According to Painter & Schäfer (2018: 11) “climate change is perceived, interpreted and contextualized differently in different countries”. The authors claim the necessity of “a robust, commonly-applicable framework for analyzing the main drivers of these differences.” In my analysis I have taken different variables into account, both at the level of the journalistic traditions and with relation to the societal values in the countries concerned. A very rough and tentative characterisation of the climate narrative in Denmark is based on the adage “we ought to be the best”, whereas the premise of the

narrative in the Netherlands rather is “we think we can become the best” and the Flemish stance could be summarized as “we do our best”.

In an ongoing study I examine a similar paradox with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic (Laureys, forthcoming). The urgency of the climate crisis being even stronger, its impact higher and the measures to be taken having a more long term character, disentangling the different modes of awareness raising in this domain is indisputably relevant.

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## **The covid-19 pandemic and climate change: scale and the mediatized representation of what we know, where we stand and what we should do.**

*Stef Slembrouck*

This paper concentrates on similarities and differences in the discursive articulation of climate change and the covid-19 pandemic, as manifest in our language use about them. While both threats to human existence tend to be fundamentally viewed as “global” problems which affect the planet and its population in its entirety, it is the lower-scale end of the individual human body which is presented as primarily at risk. In this paper, I want to illustrate – on the one hand - how the discourses of the pandemic and of climate change rely simultaneously on “objectifying” orientations with numbers which amass to recognizable units of measurement at a particular scale (cities, regions, countries, continents) and “subjectifying” orientations which speak “the truth” about individual experiences (of lay people, scientists, etc.); both do so in relation to “risk management”. However, there are also important differences to be noted. If anything, unlike mediatized discourses of climate change, the past one and half years of the covid-19 pandemic have been unprecedentedly characterized by excessive daily reporting of short-term and long-term progress, of statistics at different geographical scales, of individual and collective responsibilities in the world’s combat against threatening factors, as well as speculations about how societies can act durably and responsibly in the face of uncertain knowledge and outcomes. Imagine what the newspapers would look like if climate change were covered in ways comparable to the covid-19 pandemic.

# **Inconvenient climate predictions and the state's duty to inform: the case study of landslides in Southern Styria**

*Rutger Lazou, Carlotta Garofalo and Nicole Ritzhaupt*

Climate change poses humanity one of the greatest challenges it has ever faced. While many debates focus on the mitigation of climate change, the inconvenient truth is that some effects of climate change will not be avoidable and will occur already in the near future. The question arises how such inconvenient predictions should be communicated to the public. This article will explore the state's duty to inform the citizens on future climate risks, applied to a specific case study: the landslide risk in Southern Styria (Austria). The article is the planned outcome of an interdisciplinary research bringing together the physical, philosophical, and legal disciplines.

Firstly, the article will present the impacts of the landslide events that occurred in Southern Styria in 2009. Based on the information and studies gathered after that event, it will examine the likelihood of such events and the magnitude of their consequences in the future, and ultimately how the people are likely to be affected. An analysis of the possible ways to adapt to these impacts will be included. To evaluate the state's response, the article will provide a discourse analysis of a set of public communication tools to assess in which way state representatives have been informing the citizens on the nature and entity of the risk.

Having provided all the relevant factual information, the article will investigate the normative and legal grounds for establishing a duty to inform. Firstly, our analysis aims to assess whether citizens in Southern Styria have an interest to be informed about the climate impacts that will be imposed on them. To this purpose, the normative analysis will focus on the interest theory of rights, considering both the intrinsic and instrumental value of the truth. On the legal perspective, our analysis draws on different legal concepts and sources, such as the right to be warned about environmental risk, as protected by the Strasbourg jurisprudence under art. 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights, and the right to be informed on environmental matters, as recognized by the Aarhus Convention. The normative and legal doctrine of legitimate expectations will also be considered.

The second step in our normative and legal analysis is exploring how far the corresponding duties of the Austrian state or its responsible governmental agents reach. The article will explain why states have a special responsibility to inform and to what extent they should communicate predictions about climate impacts. It will be argued that states should inform their citizens in a way that respects their dignity and makes it possible for them to make practical decisions. The article will also explore the question of how scientific uncertainties should be communicated. Based on our factual and theoretical analysis, it will be concluded whether Austrian governmental agents have met the identified normative and legal duties.

**Wednesday 22 September 2021**

## KEYNOTE

### From Climate Change to a Climate for Change

*Yves Pepermans and Pieter Maeseele*

This presentation starts from the idea that if we wish to protect the atmosphere, we must first and foremost understand and change the ethnosphere: the ideas, values and myths articulated in the public sphere. Rather than dismiss these political aspects of climate change, communication (research) should help to clarify them. This can contribute to a communication climate that stimulates engagement with the systemic changes needed to respond effectively and democratically to climate change.

During the summer of 2021, climate-related risks (such as floods, heatwaves and droughts) became increasingly tangible not only in developing countries or small island states, but also for people in wealthier countries like Belgium who previously expressed a large psychological distance to climate change. Using examples of media reporting, we show how such events can be framed in two different ways.

First, we illustrate how particular representations limit the possibilities for societal debate and political change. We find these in news discourses which frame weather extremes as inevitable natural disasters that befall individuals, or which define climate change as a technical problem whose solution is hampered by irresponsible actors who failed or refused to do the ‘right’ thing.

Second, we also find alternative representations that manage to expose the political choices that increase the likelihood and impact of climate risks. Furthermore, the issue is expanded with alternative courses of action. Consequently, an event is presented as a fork in the road where we can collectively decide to take a different path. We conclude with a discussion of journalistic practices and forms of civic engagement that can contribute to a democratic debate about our socio-ecological future.

#### Bio

**Yves Pepermans** completed his PhD on the (de-) politicization of climate change in media and citizen discourses in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Antwerp in 2015. He is particularly interested in how the political aspects of climate change are highlighted or downplayed and how this shapes public debate and civic engagement with the issue. Together with Pieter Maeseele, he has published the chapter on "Climate change communication in Flanders" in the Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Climate change. He currently works as a policy advisor at the Province of Antwerp where he supports municipalities in translating global climate disruption into local action plans.

**Pieter Maeseele** (PhD Ghent University) is a Research Professor at the Department of Communication Studies of the University of Antwerp (Belgium), where he is vice-chair of the research group Media, Policy & Culture. His research and teaching are situated on the nexus between media studies and political communication, with a

particular focus on understanding the relation between mediated discourse and democratic debate. His research centers on the representation of scientific and environmental issues as well as political and economic developments in mediated and public discourse for such topics as climate change, energy, socio-economic policy reform, ethical consumption, etc.

International recognition as a leading expert in his field is apparent from his various positions in international academic associations, as Chair of IAMCR's Environment, Science and Risk Communication Working Group (2013-2021) and Vice-Chair of ECREA's Science and Environment Communication Section (2012-2018), and Scientific Committee member of the PCST Network for the Public Communication of Science and Technology (2014-2016) and the Belgian Science, Technology & Society Network (2014-2020). He is also a member of the editorial boards of Science Communication, Journal of Alternative and Community Media, Journal of Science Communication, and Frontiers in Science and Environmental Communication.

## **Responsibility for the climate – in the eyes of adolescents**

*Jan-Ola Östman*

Great Thunberg's instigation of the Fridays for Future Movement has undoubtedly raised people's, including politicians', awareness and importance of the challenges we face due to climate changes.

Greta Thunberg herself keeps stressing two points. One is that she is just a messenger: "Don't listen to me, listen to Science, listen to the scientists!". The other, and equally important aspect is that of responsibility. "How dare you" leave the world to her and future generations in its present state!?

The reference to scientists is always a difficult one. Science is not static; new results come to the fore every day. It is thus not difficult to find scholars with opposing views about the climate. But the matter of responsibility is definitely something that politicians and others in power should relate to.

Still, responsibility is not often referred to in active top-down activities. My hometown Uppsala in Sweden organized a climate week, "Uppsala klimatvecka 2021", March 21–27 this year. The seven days were filled with talks from morning until late in the evening, but in only one (1) session, organized by an association of psychologists, the issue of responsibility (*ansvar*) was touched upon, under the heading "Are you sustainable, my dear friend?". The situation is very similar in other administrative and political debates and in newspaper editorials. Has Greta Thunberg's appeals had no effect at all?

In this talk I will have a closer look at a set of essays that 9<sup>th</sup> graders (15–16-year-old adolescents) wrote in their national exam in the fall of 2020. At present, the data consist of 55 essays (39,000 words) by students from different parts of Sweden. The essay topic was "Far och flyg" (lit. 'Travel/go and fly').

The data consist of essays written by two groups of students, those with Swedish as their heritage language (SVE), and those with another language as their heritage language (SVA). There were very few differences between the two groups, but I find it interesting that words like *miljö* ('environment'), *smart* ('smart') and *utsläpp* ('emission') were somewhat more frequent in the essays by SVAs, whereas words like *flygnings* ('flying'), *jobb* ('job') and *företag* ('business') occurred more frequently in the essays by SVEs.

Bigram and trigram analyses indicate that the word that occurs most frequently together with *klimat* ('climate') is that of *påverka(n)* ('influence, impact'). A simple collocational analysis shows that *ansvar* most often cooccurs with *utsläpp*; and the responsible agents are either countries or vehicles, but also "we", and "people".

The very fact that the essay topic was flying (not the climate, nor responsibility) by itself indicates the importance for adolescents of issues connected to climate change. To me, this clearly shows that Greta Thunberg's mission has not been in vain – for future generations, who in turn will educate their future generations.

# **Anchoring and Positioning the Self and the Other in Chinese, Hong Kong, and Taiwanese Press Accounts about Climate Change**

*Lut Lams*

Given the current role of China as a key player in international negotiations concerning environmental change, this paper looks at how communicative practices about climate change intersect with national interests by conducting a comparative discourse analysis of (English-language) media narratives concerning the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Summit in three areas within the Greater China Region, namely China, Hong Kong, Taiwan. Based on theoretical insights from Social Representations Theory and methodologies from Language Pragmatics and Critical Discourse Analysis, the study demonstrates how antagonistic group representations about the actors involved in the climate debate underlie the accounts investigated. Through the use of various linguistic tools, the three corpora show evidence of ideological positioning and blame attribution/self-glorification by focusing on the negative aspects of the ideological Other, while promoting the positive aspects of the Self, albeit at different degrees. These insights provide a complementary angle to the notion of Orientalism, in that positional superiority may be inspired by national interests rather than mere culturalist ethnocentrism.

# **Climate communication between Flemish politicians and citizens on Facebook**

*Kristin Davidse, Wout Van Praet and Anne-Marie Vandenberghe*

In Belgium, no political parties or (mainstream) media outlets would challenge the consensus that climate change is real and requires strong action. Important political disagreements, however, still exist (e.g. about the choice of technologies such as nuclear energy, the urgency and timing of implementations of policy instruments) (Pepermans & Maeseele 2017). These disagreements are potentially exacerbated by new forms of *soft denial*, which slow down climate action, e.g. by questioning the impact of solar panels, advancing miracle solutions like geo-engineering, etc. (Boussemaere 2021).

The aim of the study is to expose (dominant or non-dominant) discourses in the Belgian climate debate that could undermine effective climate action. The study focuses specifically on the language Belgian political parties use to communicate about climate change on Facebook and how audiences react to these Facebook posts. Two questions will be addressed: (i) which ideological positions on climate change are established through the language use in climate posts and comments (e.g. through word choices, topic choices, presuppositions); (ii) how can expressions of praise or criticism in comments to climate posts feed back into more effective and constructive climate communication by experts, politicians, government officials, etc.? Ultimately, this will allow us to counter harmful discourses with positive alternatives.

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# **The Value of Sustainable Fashion: The Influence of Sustainability Cues and Fashion Style on Brand Values and Attitudes**

*Barbara Behre and Verolien Cauberghe*

Fashion branding increasingly incorporates sustainability to respond to consumer demand for greener products (Sharma & Joshi 2019; Diallo et al. 2020). Building on signalling theory (Tarabashkina et al. 2020; Berger 2019), the use of sustainability cues defined as a piece of information signalling the sustainable origin of a fashion item may increase the sustainability perceptions of a fashion brand (Cowan & Guzman 2017). However, the impact of these cues had some unexpected sight-effects; they evoked negative perceptions related to the image of the clothing item, i.e. in terms of fashionability.

In the minds of consumers, eco-friendly clothing is conventionally not associated with fashionable garments (Wagner et al. 2019). Yet, there is a lack of research examining the function of fashion style in sustainable fashion branding (Cho & Jung 2017).

In fashion branding, the use of sustainability signals is indicated to influence brand values (emotional, social and functional) in general (Şener, Bişkin & Kılıç 2019). Sustainable fashion consumption is said to hold emotional and especially social value for consumers (Ritch 2020), and this for both social and environmental sustainability dimensions in an equal manner (Currás-Pérez et al. 2017). Further studies discerning the importance of fashion for impression management (Jung & Jin 2016) also place the influence of the social brand value central when evaluating a fashion brand (Cho & Jung 2017).

A differentiated branding approach might advance sustainable fashion consumption, but little is known about how specific aspects of sustainability, according to Elkington's (1997) *Triple Bottom Line*, add value to apparel brands, and how style influences attitude towards sustainable fashion brands. Using a consumer-centric multi-dimensional approach, this study aims to investigate if applying a cue which focuses on another aspect of sustainability, namely social welfare of workers, might circumvent the negative reactions to occur.

Hence, we investigate, in a 2 (environmental vs. social cue) x 2 (casual vs. trendy fashion style) between subjects factorial design, the effectiveness of adding a sustainability cue in an online shopping context to a clothing item on brand value perceptions (emotional, social and functional value) and brand attitude.

Our results among 358 respondents, however, indicate that the environmental outperformed the social cue, having a positive effect on brand attitude. We also discovered that environmental cues in combination with trendy style further increase brand value. Yet, only for items with a trendy fashion style, sustainably cues may increase social brand value in a fashion context, and hereby brand attitude.

This study offers valuable theoretical contributions to the sustainable fashion branding literature, as well as managerial implications for the implementation of sustainability cues in fashion branding. Considering the influence of the perceived social value of a

fashion brand for brand attitude as antecedent of behavioural intention, positioning a trendy brand in terms of its pro-environmental attributes may thus be beneficial for brand relationships.

Future research is needed to confirm and elaborate on our findings to better understand the role of sustainability cues and the interplay with fashion style in consumer-brand-relationships.

## **Observing the climate change debate online: open tools and techniques**

*Tom Willaert,*

The study of the online language and opinion dynamics surrounding climate change foreground a need for accessible (social) media data, methods for (linguistic) data analysis, and data visualization. Addressing these methodological challenges and questions, the present talk will offer an overview of the outcomes of the H2020 ODYCCEUS project (opinion dynamics and cultural conflict in European spaces), thereby providing an update on the state of the Penelope ecosystem of tools and techniques for computational social science. Penelope is a cloud-based, open and modular platform that consists of tools and techniques for mapping landscapes of opinions expressed in online (social) media. The platform is used for analysing the opinions that dominate the debate on certain crucial social issues. Catering to interdisciplinary approaches, the talk will discuss and illustrate the applications of Penelope modules for the study of online opinion dynamics on climate change, with an emphasis on the methods and design choices behind three main tools: the reddit language propagation observatory, the Penelope climate change opinion observatory, and the Penelope opinion facilitator.

### **References**

The Penelope platform. Tools and Techniques for Computational social science.  
<https://penelope.vub.be/>

# **From the endangered polar bear to children: the promising role of the intergenerational narrative in the U.S. political and judicial climate movement**

*Carlotta Garofalo and Giulia Interesse*

After years of obstinate climate denialism, in a political environment of extreme polarization, climate change has turned into a major campaign issue in the last U.S. elections. Such political shift can be attributed to at least two factors: the number of extreme weather events affecting the North American territory, and the rise of a youth-led climate movement.

The present paper focuses on this latter aspect, aiming to analyze how intergenerational justice has become, over the last decade, a major motivation for climate action in the U.S. political discourse. Particularly, the paper argues that children, by becoming a new symbol of the campaign for climate justice, seem to have replaced a role that had previously been occupied by the “endangered species” *par excellence*: the polar bear. By resorting to media framing analysis, the paper aims to show that the intergenerational narrative, i.e., the identification of children as victims of climate change but also positive drivers of climate justice, might be more promising than communicative strategies previously used by environmental movements, that tended to focus on the adverse effect of climate change on the natural world (“environmentalist narratives”). Through the media framing analysis of relevant articles in two widely popular U.S. newspapers – the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*–, the paper explores how the “polar bear” and “children” have been represented in the U.S. media, in their role as symbol, motivation, and drivers for climate action, and with what attitudes.

Secondly, the paper aims to investigate how law and legal mobilization have affected the two narratives, and by so doing, to gain understanding on the possible impacts of climate litigation on the public discourse on climate change. To this purpose, the second part of the paper focuses on the media reception of the “*Polar Bear*” and “*Juliana*” cases, respectively aiming to the recognition of the polar bear as an endangered species due to climate change, and of children, as victims of the present and future violations of the right to a stable climate. The comparability of the two cases is enhanced by their nature as strategic high-profile climate lawsuits, i.e., legal actions aiming to ambitious symbolic and policy purposes and thus able to gather significant media attention. Differently from the first content analysis, the study of the cases’ reception resorts to a larger set of news resources. By exploring the representation of the polar bear and the children in the lawsuits’ commentary, the paper aims to understand if and to what extent the two legal actions have contributed to enhance or else lessen the credibility and popularity of the two symbols for climate justice.