

The German press disparages dissenting voices on climate change

November 30 2020

The German media have disparaged dissenting voices on climate change, according to research published on 8 October in the high impact factor journal *Media Culture & Society*. Its authors are Lena von Zabern, UPF alumni who won the award for best master's degree final project in UPF Planetary Wellbeing, and Christopher D. Tulloch, who supervised her work and is a researcher with the Department of Communication.

The study is one of the first on the [media](#) representation of Greta Thunberg and the so-called "Fridays for Future" demonstrations protesting for the implementation of more environmental measures by the European youth to reverse climate change.

In their work, the researchers performed a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the German newspapers Bild.de, Zeit Online and FAZ.net, between August 2018 and March 2019. Their results reveal that while Zeit Online shows a framing towards intergenerational justice, the coverage of FAZ.net and Bild.de strongly adheres to the protest paradigm.

The researchers reveal that most newspaper articles studied guarantee protesters a voice, but this voice is often reduced to apolitical testimonies and the protesters' self-agency is undermined through disparagement. It highlights how the press, both popular (Bild) and quality (FAZ), uses a set of eight frames to undermine legitimate protests. "Thus, German media coverage tends to reproduce existing power structures by marginalizing and depoliticizing the political agenda

of a system-critical protest," Zabern and Tulloch assert.

However, the study also demonstrates that the idea of climate change as a matter of intergenerational justice and children's rights has become established on the agenda of the media studied.

Work on planetary wellbeing driven by the University

Lena von Zabern is an alumni of the master's degree in International studies on Media, Power and Difference of the Department of Communication and her work won a prize awarded by the UNESCO Chair in Life Cycle and Climate Change ESCI-UPF and the UPF Barcelona School of Management, as part of the awards for the best bachelor's degree final project (TFG) and master's degree final project (TFM) on social responsibility and planetary wellbeing. Now, this work has resulted in the article published in a high impact factor journal. Tulloch stresses that "this is not the first time a student of this master's degree program has published on environmental issues in a highly indexed journal." Indeed, in 2018, Elida Hoeg published an article on refugees of [climate change](#), also in conjunction with Christopher Tulloch, in the *Journal of Communication Inquiry*.

More information: Lena von Zabern et al, Rebel with a cause: the framing of climate change and intergenerational justice in the German press treatment of the Fridays for Future protests, *Media, Culture & Society* (2020). [DOI: 10.1177/0163443720960923](https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443720960923)

Provided by Universitat Pompeu Fabra - Barcelona

Citation: The German press disparages dissenting voices on climate change (2020, November 30) retrieved 10 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-11-german-disparages-dissenting-voices->

[climate.html](#)

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.