Potential Master’s Thesis Topic:

CELEBRITY ADVOCACY AT THE UN CLIMATE SUMMIT IN PARIS

Celebrities have become agenda-setters and most cited spokespersons in global environmental politics. Leonardo DiCaprio’s speech in front of the 2014 UN Climate Summit Meeting in New York made more headlines than any of the talks given by a head of state. The 2015 UN Climate Summit in Paris is likely to receive very high media attention. As environmental NGOs frequently find themselves at the whim of ever-shifting political and media agendas, celebrities can lever news entry, providing them with a powerful hook. However, studies on celebrity advocacy also suggest that NGOs run risk that their core messages become muted. Celebrities exercise power in emotional rather than rational terms. They transmit messages in a very unidirectional way that ‘embezzles’ knowledge on the complexity of climate change.

This Master’s thesis should review the literature on the impact of celebrity advocacy and examine their impact around Paris through a textual analysis of international (or German) newspaper coverage, focussing on campaigns of major NGOs, involving celebrities, such as of Greenpeace and Oxfam. If you are interested in this topic, please join my course on “Environmental Movements and NGOs” in January 2016. Before making an appointment for supervision, please read:


Please contact this email for further details: lena.partzsch@ifp.uni-freiburg.de