

KlimaCampus Kolloquium

Prof. Mike Hulme

at the invitation of the Helmholtz-Zentrum Geesthacht

The Dangers of Climate Emergencies

Emergencies are dramatic, crisis-fuelled constructions, and they can take on many shapes and guises: humanitarian, public health, security, environmental, political. Emergencies and the language and imagery they conjure shape the way we see the world, our place in it and the possibilities and limits of human agency. More importantly, emergencies demand a response, often quick, often radical. Emergencies cannot be ignored, and therefore they provide a justification for action. It is important to recognise this emergency-shaped world we now inhabit when reflecting on how and why a climate emergency discourse is used as a justification for radical techno-fixes for a changing climate. Placing the human relationship with (global) climate into the 'emergency' category immediately changes the scope of the types of actions that may be justified and the actors who may legitimately undertake them. Many commentators invoke a future climate emergency as justification or warrant for research into sunlight reflection methods and their possible deployment. In this talk I will give some examples of how the climate emergency frame is used in such discourse and outline some of the many problems of invoking climate emergencies to justify radical techno-fixes for climate change. Depicting the future in terms of climate emergencies may well become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

KlimaCampus Hamburg

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