Bodies in Environments: The History of Knowledge of a Precarious Relationship Leander Diener

"Soon it would be too hot." This is the beginning of the dystopian novel *The Drowned World* by J.G. Ballard from 1962. In the novel, the protagonist Kerans wakes up at five in the morning to be able to work for at least four to five hours "before the heat became unbearable." This bleak vision of the future, in which the natural environment had become unhealthy due to heat and radiation, has a worrying twenty-first century equivalent.

The Lancet Countdown not only lists the financial damage caused by storms or the number of heatrelated deaths, but also the horrendous numbers of lost working hours due to excessive heat. The WHO also publishes annual figures on people who work outside and are therefore exposed to particular health risks. However, it is not only the economically interesting figures on the loss of productivity as a result of global warming that are recorded in figures, but also more subjective perceptions such as 'weather sensitivity' or rheumatic illnesses.

Yet, these phenomena can hardly be surveyed on a global level because weather conditions alone defy definition, not to mention culturally specific concepts of the relationship between living bodies and the weather and climate. Granted, climatic factors such as UV radiation or ozone and other specific pathogens and toxic chemicals are well understood. But what about things like weather sensitivity (the wonderful German 'Wetterfühligkeit'), experienced by half of the population, disvalued by most scientists? What about particular climatic conditions and illnesses such as arthritis?

This project is the first historical account which aims to explain the ongoing difficulty of scientifically determining the relationship between weather, environments, and bodies, between planetary and human health. Focusing on the history of knowledge of bodies in specific climatic environments in Western Europe and the US from 1800 until today, it disentangles our difficulty to take psychosomatic diseases, stress-related disorders and syndromes such as burnout, but also heat-induced stress and other medical consequences of climate change seriously.