

Event or Context? Episodic and Thematic Climate-Change Framing Across Global North and Global South Newspapers During COP26–COP30

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ABSTRACT

Climate journalism might also manifest climate change as a series of individual happenings or as a structural issue inherent in scientific, political, economic and historical relations. Based on the Iyengar IEP/ITC difference between episodic and thematic framing, I conducted a comparative study of narrative orientation of 4,755 English-language newspaper articles discussing the climate change topic at the standardized COP26COP30 coverage periods (20212025). The New York Times, The Guardian, and the Sydney Morning Herald were sampled as the Global North; Dawn, The Nation, and The Times of India were part of the Global South sample. The paper also visualizes the quantity of coverage in each of the newspapers, regions and sequence of COP. COP30 generated the highest volume (1,271 articles, 26.7%), followed by COP29 (957), COP28 (950), COP27 (840), and COP26 (737). The statistical significance but small values of regional volume differences across COPs were, 35.40, 4,755, 001, Cramer V =.086. The most significant distinction was in the form of narrative: 63.06% of the coverage in the Global North was in the form of narratives, and 76.92% of the coverage in the Global South was episodic. The association between region and narrative orientation was strong, $\chi^2(1, N = 4,755) = 763.26, p < .001, \phi = .401$. The results are all that regional variations on climate journalism are articulated more through contextualization than total attention. The article urges climate journalists to employ a journalism style that equally focuses on the immediacy of events but grounds itself more in structural explanation and is necessary in high-risk environments that would otherwise see disaster-related news dominate the external discourse.

Keywords: climate change, episodic framing, thematic framing, Global North, Global South, COP, climate journalism

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Introduction

The fact that climate change manifests itself in the form of events and the reasons and ways out are structural makes it a unique problem to journalism. Droughts, floods, heat waves, wildfires, protests, summit announcements, crop losses, policy disputes, and protests are concrete news pegs. But all of these events taken in isolation are not comparable to the climate problem. To comprehend climate change, we need time and scale: the long-term trends of science, the energy systems, the pathways of emissions, the infrastructure, the governance, adaptation, finance, the social disparity, and the responsibility of nations. It is not just what is being covered in the journalism question but how immediate events are framed or not, within broader contexts.

The difference between episodic and thematic framing by Iyengar (1991) offers a fruitful avenue to the study of this matter. Episodic stories offer issues on certain situations, cases, characters or events. They are put in larger social, political, economic, scientific, historical, or institutional patterns through thematic stories. In the case of climate journalism, an episodic article can focus on a flood, a heat death, a negotiation dispute, or a single policy statement. A thematic paper can clarify the relationship between that event and more extended climatic variability, a governmental framework, emissions, change adaptation mechanisms, financing structures or vulnerability patterns. Both of the forms can be valid and provide viewers with diversified ways of understanding.

The difference is particularly applicable in the comparison between the Global South and Global North. There is no even distribution of climate vulnerability. The newsrooms of the countries where devastating consequences of climatic effects are observed daily and instant can face the necessity to face the frequent catastrophes and great requirements of online coverage. Meanwhile, varying newsroom resources, access to specialized science reporters, access to expert sources and institutional capacity can have a role in the level of contextualization (Nguyen and Tran, 2019; Schaefer and Schlichting, 2014). On the other hand, Global North news outlets might enjoy more frequent access to climate policy networks, science organizations, and specialized reporting materials, which might facilitate more thematic coverage. They are general propensities and not laws, and must be empirically validated.

COP meetings provide an imposed comparative environment, in that they synthesize the intensity of events with structurally complex subject matter. Individual conferences are themselves significant news stories, and issues on the table in negotiation, such as mitigation, adaptation, climate finance, energy transition, loss and damage, technology, accountability, and equity, require background knowledge to be well versed in. The coverage of COP can thus disclose the difference between the coverage of the newspapers as a sequence of separate events concerning climate politics and that of a systematic problem that is being tackled. Frequent comparison of multiple meetings can be especially helpful since the media coverage of the summit can differ significantly between meetings (Schmidt et al., 2013).

This paper analyzes 4,755 news stories on climate change of six newspapers over five consecutive COPs in 2021-2025. It answers three questions that are related. The first question is how the amount of climate coverage changed between the newspapers and COP periods. Second, are there differences in the temporal patterns of attention of Global North newspapers and Global South newspapers? Third--and most significant of all--were there differences between the two regions in the use of episodic and thematic framing? The article elucidates the patterns of attention as related to the form

of narrative by identifying two dimensions that can be confused: being able to see the effects of climate change in the news and whether such visibility is provided in structural context.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Climate communication, Media Attention and Events

Traditional news principles have traditionally presented challenges with climate change. It is a gradual, accruing process which does not necessarily have a distinct start, finish, or agent. Journalism, in its turn, is habitually biased towards novelty, conflict, immediacy, and recognizable events. This discrepancy is one reason explaining why the interest in climate tends to focus on summits, tragedies, a scientific report, a political scandal, and any other newsworthy event as opposed to being steady over time. McComas and Shanahan (1999) theorized climate coverage as a dependent on the narrative and issue cycle, whereas Schmidt et al. (2013) made significant international difference in media coverage. Schafer et al. (2014) also demonstrated that there is cross-country and time variation in issue attention.

Global environmental summits are particularly strong agenda signals due to their focus of bringing together several actors and issues in a specified time-frame. They lure political figures, the negotiators, scientists, activists, companies and journalists, creating a mass of pronouncements and controversy. Eide and Kunelius (2018) introduced COP21 as a transnational journalistic profession influenced by universal expectations, yet national circumstances of journalism. A comparable survey of interpretations co-production was conducted by Lück et al. (2016) on the UN climate conferences. These reports imply that COPs are capable of momentarily harmonising media coverage across the border despite the presence of nationalism in terms of coverage form and meaning.

Volume, though, is a partial measure of climate communication. A newspaper might give a lot of articles on climate which are event based, or a few articles which give a lot of thematic coverage. Comparative studies must thus isolate quantity and have narrative quality and structure. Thematic is not employed as a measure of better journalism in all cases in the present article. Sometimes episodic tales would be required especially during emergencies. The analytical issue is whether the reporting of climate in a media system is so much focused on single cases that causal and institutional and policy relationships become obscured.

Episodic and Thematic Framing

Episodic-thematic distinction was developed by Iyengar (1991) in a study regarding the framing of political issues and responsibility by television news. Episodic framing frames an issue based on specific cases, or events, but thematic framing presents more generalized evidence, trends, and circumstances. The difference has since been applied in various fields of communication studies since it describes a basic decision in the degree of abstraction to which social issues are told in stories.

This difference is particularly compelling in the context of climate communication. A flood may be a local emergency that includes deaths, attempts to save people and broken houses or it may be related to infrastructural, evolving wetness and dryness patterns, land use, adaptation strategy and historical evidence of vulnerability. A COP conflict can either be termed as a conflict between two leaders or it can be placed in the extended history of climate funds and various interferences of responsibility. The announcement

of a renewable energy can be understood as a single act of policy or associated with the national energy transition, employment, and emission trends and targets in the international context. Episodic and thematic storytelling can therefore be sustained by the same event but the construction of the context by the journalists.

The theory of framing explains why it is an important decision. Entman (1993) focuses on selection and salience: a story promotes specific definitions of the problems and their causal interpretation by foregrounding specific facets of the reality. Structural causes and policy choices in a collective policy can better be brought into the limelight by thematic climate reporting, whereas immediate consequences and identifiable actors can be brought into better focus by episodic reporting. They are not functions that are mutually exclusive. Powerful climate journalism can employ an episodic portal and then provide thematic contextualization, connecting the more personal to larger systems.

Fragmentation is the possible risk of greatly episodic coverage of climate. Viewers can be exposed to calamities repeatedly with no view of the connection of these calamities among themselves and policy-making decisions. Repeated delivery of climate effects as disasters can also foster an idea of a chain of exceptional shocks, instead of systemic ongoing. On the other hand, thematic coverage without any attachments may be abstract, technocratic, and heartless. Although they emphasize visual and emotional appeal, O'Neill and Nicholson-Cole (2009) depict the more general communication issue that transforming climate change in a way that is meaningful and actionable instead of merely alarming.

North-South Worldwide

Comparative climate journalism should not presume that the newsrooms possess the same resources, or are under identical political and environmental conditions. The meta-analysis of Schafer and Schlichting (2014) reported the asymmetrical distribution of climate communication studies, where a significant literature on the topic was found in industrialized nations. Climate journalism faces possible constraints in the Global South regarding the special staffing, less robust access to scientific organization, development-focused interests, and strong exposure to the immediate recognition of environmental effects. Nguyen and Tran (2019) reveal the challenges that facing the climate problems, journalists may have to address in developing media settings, on a professional and institutional level.

The study of South Asia makes the context more vital. Billett (2010) demonstrated that Indian climatic cover depends on the development and political national issues. Gurwitt et al. (2017) have discovered that even communicating about a global phenomenon is culturally and nationally infused by climate communication. Nasir et al. (2018) captured climate news in Pakistani English-language newspapers, and Rahman (2018) covered Bangladesh. In these environments, there is the opportunity to have powerful news hooks that may be offered by extreme events and vulnerability. This has the potential to make the climate more visible, but can also intensify event-based reporting when news organizations do not have the time or means to tie the events to structure.

On the other hand, Global North newspapers frequently have even better access to environmental desks, international bureaus, scientists and environmental-policy establishments. The meaning of climate according to Boykoff (2011) is based on the source structures and journalistic practices. It does not assure thematic journalism and Global North media have also issues of politicization and commercialization along with

the news routines of episodic news. However, institutional capacity might enable sustained contextual reporting to be a possibility.

This should then be a comparison between the facts but not the stereotypes of what is good or bad. Should Global North coverage be more thematic and Global South coverage more episodic, the outcome could be a variety of newsroom resources, climate vulnerability, news values, policy environments, and audience priorities. It would not mean that one region will be aware of climate change and the other not. Neither would it mean that thematic stories are always best. The weight of the difference is the point; what it tells us is important is the type of climate knowledge that is being routinely made available by news.

Comparison over Time across COPs

The second contribution of the current study is that this study had a repeated event design. A lot of COP studies are targeted at a single summit. Single-event studies are often detailed in rich information, but are susceptible to the extra-ordinarily circumstances of a given year: host-country politics, negotiation agenda, disasters, or diplomatic crises, or important policy announcements. With COP26 and COP30 with the same sampling window, the current study will be able to find out whether attention remains constant or varies between sequential events.

The longitudinal approach is significant as the media salience may be important in itself due to which the framing process may take place. Higher-attention COP can give rise to more varied types of stories, more expert coverage, and more background reporting than a low-attention conference. On the other hand, the reduction in volume can signify news fatigue, other issues competing, or disparities in expectations during conferences. The current data is unable to tell the mechanism of causal anatomy of the changes with time in terms of volume, but they can tell whether there is a systematic distribution of coverage across the time and space.

Combined, the literature leads us to conclude that there are two questions that ought to be divided analytically. The former is media coverage of climate: the amount of attention paid to climate, and when. The second is narrative orientation: whether the articles focus on the immediate or on wider buildings. The two are tested in the present study and it is anticipated, based on the thesis framework, that Global North outlets will employ thematic framing more frequently and Global South outlets episodic framing more frequently.

Method

Creation, Newspapers and COP Windows

The research design was a retrospective longitudinal quantitative content-analytic design. The New York Times, The Guardian and The Sydney Morning Herald were used as Global North newspapers and Dawn, The Nation and The Times of India as Global South newspapers, produced the corpus. The focus was climate-change news published around COP26 (2021), COP27 (2022), COP28 (2023), COP29 (2024), and COP30 (2025).

The same 30-day analysis window (15 days prior and 15 days following the conference period) was applied to each of the conferences. Anticipatory reporting in the form of expectations of negotiation, national positions, scientific warnings, activism and policy disagreements were taken care of in the pre-conference part. The post-conference section recorded results, promises, evaluation, and reactions of the stakeholders. Since

the same window was used in all five conferences, none of the five conferences were compared in time with unequal sampling periods.

Articles were incorporated in instances where climate change was a significant part of the story, the article was within a specific COP window, it was a news story other than an editorial, opinion piece, advertisement or feature, and there was adequate content to be coded reliably. The unit of analysis was the article, and headline, lead, and body were taken into account. The last validated corpus had 4,755 articles: 2,515 articles of Global North newspapers and 2,240 articles of Global South newspapers.

Narrative Orientation and Reliability

Iyengar (1991), distinction was used to operationalize episodic and thematic orientation. Articles were coded as episodic when the article or news was organized around certain events, incidences, cases, disasters, personalities or current events. When they contextualized climate change in larger scientific, political, economic, historical, social or institutional frames they were coded thematic. Coders reviewed the article as a set and not base their orientation on discrete vocabulary.

A structured codebook and standardized decision rules were used in the coding process. Two trained coders were used to code about 20% of the corpus, and Cohen $r = 0.80$ was achieved. The coefficient provides a good amount of conformity of the categorical coding applied in the analysis (Cohen, 1960). Conflicts were checked and adjusted with the elements used in the operational definitions until the entire coding process was completed.

Analysis

Article totals, mapped by newspaper and by COP period, were plotted using descriptive statistics. A region $\times$ COP chi-square test was taken to see whether there was a difference in Global North and Global South coverage at the five conferences, Cramer V being used as an effect-size measure. The key experimental was a 2x2 comparison of area and narrative direction. The chi-square used by Pearson was to identify the association between episodic/thematic framing and region, and phi to determine the strength. In the article, only the filled out and validated tables included in the thesis data have been reported.

Results

Volume of Coverage in Newspapers and COPs

There was uneven distribution of the corpus of 4,755 articles across outlets. The Guardian generated 1,484 articles or 31.2% of the corpus. The Times of India ranked second with 1,011 articles (21.3%), followed by The Sydney Morning Herald with 734 (15.4%), Dawn with 651 (13.7%), The Nation with 578 (12.2%), and The New York Times with 297 (6.2%). These numbers suggest that the volume of the COP-related climate news produced by the six outlets is significantly different under the same general sampling structure.

There was also a decrease in coverage in the five standardized COP windows. COP30 accounted for 1,271 articles (26.7%), COP29 for 957 (20.1%), COP28 for 950 (20.0%), COP27 for 840 (17.7%), and COP26 for 737 (15.5%). COP30 thus had the highest volume and COP26 had the lowest one. There was a slight change between COP 27 and COP 28 however, in general order one would easily observe the marked decline in the cause following the initial conference in the series.

The trend is to be understood as the change in the production of event-focused news and not the ultimate gauge of durable social or newsroom anxiety. The totals indicate the amount of climate news created in a given window as the sample is fixed windows surrounding each conference. They fail to show interest in climate change decreased continuously throughout all the days between 2021 and 2025.

Table 1: *Climate-Change News Articles by COP Period*

COP	Year	N	%
COP26	2021	737	15.5
COP27	2022	840	17.7
COP28	2023	950	20.0
COP29	2024	957	20.1
COP30	2025	1271	26.7
Total	—	4,755	100.0

Note. Each COP was examined using the standardized event-centered sampling window defined in the thesis methodology.

Regional Distribution Between COP periods.

Global North newspapers provided 2,515 articles (52.9 of the corpus) versus 2,240 (47.1 of the corpus) of Global South newspapers. The total was thus comparatively balanced on a regional level although the totals per individual newspaper varied considerably.

This distribution was not equal among the COP periods. There were 717 articles published by Global North in relation to COP26, 561 in relation to COP27, 463 in relation to COP28, 404 in relation to COP29 and 370 in relation to COP30. The Global South outlets printed 554, 396, 487, 436 and 367 articles respectively. The Global North had more coverage around COP26 and COP27 when compared with the Global South and COP28 and COP29 as compared to C30; which has slightly more coverage. The region $\times$ COP association was statistically significant, $\chi^2(4, N = 4,755) = 35.40$, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .086$. The resultant small effect size suggests that there is a difference in temporal distribution across regions, but one so small in comparison with the size of the corpus.

Table 2: *Article Counts by Region and COP Period*

Region	COP26	COP27	COP28	COP29	COP30	Total
Global North	370	404	463	561	717	2,515
Global South	367	436	487	396	554	2,240
Total	737	840	950	957	1,271	4,755

Note. Region $\times$ COP: $\chi^2(4, N = 4,755) = 35.40$, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .086$.

Episodic and Thematic Framing.

The most significant regional disparity was related to narrative orientation. Of the 2,515 Global North articles, 1,584 (63.0%) were thematic and 931 (37.0%) were episodic. This was the opposite in the Global South. Of 2,240 articles, 1,723 (76.9%) were episodic and 517 (23.1%) were thematic. Within the entire corpus, there were 2,654 episodic and 2,101 thematic articles.

The association between region and episodic/thematic framing was highly significant,

$\chi^2(1, N = 4,755) = 763.26, p < .001, \phi = .401$. This was the biggest of the associations reported in the validated thesis findings. The substantive difference is not a slight change in emphasis: the Global North was overwhelmingly covered on a thematic basis whereas the Global South was covered overwhelmingly on episodic basis. The outcome confirms the hypothesis in the study that the differences between climate journalism presented in the two regional groups are significant in the extent of the state of structural contextualization.

Table 3 *Episodic and Thematic Framing by Region*

Orientation	Global North n	Global North %	Global South n	Global South %	Total
Episodic	931	37.0	1,723	76.9	2,654
Thematic	1,584	63.0	517	23.1	2,101
Total	2,515	100.0	2,240	100.0	4,755

Note. Region $\times$ narrative orientation: $\chi^2(1, N = 4,755) = 763.26, p < .001, \phi = .401$.

Discussion

There is Inequal attention and comparatively uniform volume of the regions.

The initial significant insight is that it is the volume of climate-news that fluctuates more significantly along a newspaper-by-newspaper axis, than between Global North and Global South totals might positively indicate. The Guardian is the leading contributor with almost a third of the corpus, with The New York Times being the next largest at slightly more than 6 percent. The second-largest source in the sample is The Times of India, which shows that all-volumetric climate reporting is not exclusive to the journalism of Global North. It aligns with the studies either climate change has become an influential news topic in the Indian media and Global South sources can work out extensive climate agendas (Billett, 2010; Gurwitt et al., 2017).

The outcome also demonstrates that a regional comparison cannot be narrowed into assumptions on the newsroom capacity. Though resource disparities alone could be the determinants of climate attention, one would predict Global North outlets to control overall volume. Rather, the regional proportions are fairly similar: 52.9% of articles are of Global North and 47.1% of them are of Global South. What is thus more consequential, but not whether the climate change is featured in the news is the manner in which it is framed.

COP26 as a Moment of High Salience

All articles created by COP26 were 26.7 percent and it was the most widely covered conference. The result aligns with the literature on event-driven climate attention in general. COP meetings bring together coordinated instances of world journalism as they bring political power, science, global bargaining, advocacy, and expectations under a single roof (Eide and Kunelius, 2018; Lück et al., 2016). The specifically large volume surrounding COP26 indicates that there are more agenda-setting moments some conferences than others.

The fall of subsequent windows needs to be regarded with caution. It could be in the form of differences in conference expectations, host settings, negotiating agendas, competing global events or editorial fatigue. The current set of data was not created to be able to weigh those explanations against one another. What it determines is that uniform standardized COP windows do not produce homogenous volumes of news. A

longitudinal design thus gives a more credible image of climate- news salience in comparison to a study that was carried out on a particular summit.

The region x COP correlation is statistically significant and small ($V = .086$). This is an important qualification. There are more attempts of coverage in Global North outlets within the previous COP26 and COP27 windows but slightly less on Global South outlets within the COP28 and COP 29 windows, yet overall the pattern remains fairly similar. The two regions are reactionary to identical global conferences and are both considerably responsive to COP30. This way, the global weather events generate a partially common transnational news beat.

Narrative Orientation as the focal point of division

The fundamental observation is the high level of regional distinction of episodic and thematic framing. Almost a third of articles published in Global North are thematic and over three quarters of articles published in Global South are episodic. The value of ϕ .401 is much greater than the effect size of regional differences in COP volume and is also greater than those of generic-frame which are carried in the rest of the thesis. It means that narrative structure is among the most significant aspects of difference in the dataset.

Thematic preeminence in the Global North can be construed in respect to institutional and journalistic assets. Climate change is built into thick constellations of scientific institutions, environmental regulatory bodies, policy formations, colleges, regulatory mechanisms, and expert advocacy groups. Newspapers that have frequent access to those networks can possibly be more capable of putting immediate developments into longer histories and larger policy frames. Continuity in stories can be provided in further to international desks and specialist environmental correspondents as opposed to viewing each occurrence as distinct. Boykoff (2011) focuses on the importance of journalistic practices and source structures in climate discourse formation, whereas Schaefer and Schlichting (2014) demonstrate that climate communication studies have tended to cluster around media systems with these institutional resources.

The Global South episodic high degree of framing might be attributed to another group of pressures. The visible effects of climate on South Asian countries generate apparent news stories: floods, heat waves, drought, displacement, crop losses, infrastructure damages, and the threat to health and lives. Such incidents make captivating narratives with familiar sites, casualties, authorities, and real-life outcomes. Event-driven stories may be the new norm in climate reporting in places where the newsroom has limited resources to report on the subject in the specialized science format. Nguyen and Tran (2019) explain that climate reporting in the developing world is influenced by the demands of professional conditions and the limitations of institutions, and South Asian scholars have made continued reference to the role of climate vulnerability and local influence in news (Nasir et al., 2018; Rahman, 2018).

This account is not to be confused as a deficit model of Global South journalism. Episodic coverage has vital functions. In the case of disasters, people need tangible data regarding the dangers, the communities impacted, the governmental actions, and the needs. Climate change can also be emotionally and socially legible through human-centered event reporting when abstract policy reporting fails to achieve such objectives. It is worrying when episodic tales gain too much ground such that the audiences get recurrently repeated explanations of outcomes without durable explanations of sources, patterns, organizations, and long-term solutions.

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The statistics thus indicate a need to integrate and not a dichotomy. Good climate journalism may and should initiate episodically and build thematically. A flood narrative can tell the number of people dead and displaced and the rescue efforts undertaken and also provide a description of the evolving rain-fall patterns, drainage, and land-use policies, gaps in adaptation, climate finance, and historical exposure. An account of crop failure can unite the experiences of farmers with the heat patterns, waterways, ag policy, and coverage. A fixed instance of a COP dispute can establish the conflict of immediate diplomacy and place it in the context of the history of climate finance and differentiated responsibility. This type of integration maintains accessibility of event-based reporting but enhances structural insight.

Consequences on Accountability and Social Awareness

The initial difference created by Iyengar is tightly related to the responsibility attribution by the audience. Episodic presentations may stimulate concern over individuals and direct actors whereas the systems based causes and institutional accountability is brought to the fore through thematic presentations. The current research fails to quantify the audience effects, thus failing to assert that the audience of Global South newspapers made more individualized attributions or Global North readers formed more structural beliefs. However, the contents surrounding are different in such ways that render such questions significant in the upcoming study.

This especially concerns climate change since the responsibility is spread at both scales and time. It is important that there are historical emissions, current national emissions, corporate actions, consumption, infrastructure, international finance, adaptation governance, and local planning. Structural relationships to climate news might receive a less routine treatment should climate news mainly be episodic. On the other hand, institutional targets that make a lot of coverage may misrepresent the on-the-ground reality of climate impacts. Probably the most powerful kind of public communication will link levels and not assign or direct to levels.

The discovery also implies climate justice. The Global South populations frequently experience an unsustainable, unequal share of climate consequences in comparison with their past share in greenhouse-gases emissions. It is politically and morally significant to expose those impacts through episodic reporting. And yet justice claims involve a contingency: in what ways is vulnerability more or less, how and on what basis historical responsibility is computed, what are the climate finance commitments, and who has control of the adaptation resources. In the absence of said background, recurring narratives of disaster may represent vulnerable groups as the constant victims of such disasters as opposed to a group of people who are residing in a certain political and economic order.

A transnational comparative approach thus alters the normative question. It is not merely about trying to make Global South journalism more like Global North journalism. The legitimate priorities are different in different areas. The aim is to make sure that the event-focused reporting comes with sufficient context to make audiences interpret patterns, causes and potential reaction. International North newsrooms can also take lessons with the immediacy and human significance commonly found in Global South coverage without adopting a technocratic atmosphere of climate.

Newsroom Implications

The results help to make multiple possible recommendations. Visitors should arrive at

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key climate events provided by news organizations first and then continue with explanatory reporting, as entry-points. The use of background modules, data displays, expert explainers and periodic, climate desk, and follow-up stories can help tie an event to the bigger trends without overwhelming a single breaking-news story. Second, editors ought to promote specialty environmental journalism and training, especially in newsrooms in the Global South that may have fewer resources. Professional insight would assist reporters in determining the difference between weather and climate, excessive attribution, and linking adaptation or mitigation policy to local experience. Third, COP reporting must be not only summit diplomacy. Conferences are important, but climate change continues between conferences. The very dynamic nature of the news cycle endangers turning the issue noticeable when leaders will have a meeting or major disasters will occur. The thematic focus can be supported by newsrooms by writing about national implementation, energy transition, adaptation projects, public health, food and water security, disaster preparedness, climate finance, and keeping track of commitments.

Fourth, cross-regional journalism cooperation may be able to pool strengths together. Alliances between Global North and Global South reporters may lead to the convergence of scientific and policy acumen, local fragility, economic facts, and local knowledge. Such cooperation can lessen the habit of international climate reporting being taken up with either high-level institutional tones, or decontextualized narratives of victimhood.

Restrictions and Future Study

There are various limitations to the study. It entails six newspapers in English language, and therefore could not be generalized to all media in the countries represented. The newspaper may not share those structures of narrative with local-language journalism, television, radio, social media, and online-only journals. There is a limited number to 30 days windows surrounding COPs, which means that periods of increased climate salience, but not the typical daily coverage, are captured. Another binary dominant orientation of an article used in the study is episodic or thematic. Practically, there are stories that will have both types, and future research may synthesize a scaled measure of contextual depth or investigate the theme of transitions within stories to episodic leads with thematic exposition.

The quantitative design is unable to identify the reasons why journalists chose a certain narrative form. Reporter interviews and editor interviews may challenge the assertion that the observed regional pattern can be explained by resource constraints, editorial practices, audience expectations, the availability of sources, or the subjective notion of newsworthiness. There is also a need to conduct audience research. The current results characterize content, not impacts; an experiment or a survey might determine whether episodic and thematic climate narratives change causal attribution, policy support, efficacy, or climate justice perceptions.

Lastly, the regional classifications are analytically sensible yet general. Further research must contrast national nations and outlets on a more direct basis as well as incorporate an aspect of the resources available to the newsroom and the media of local languages. Mixed method design might involve quantitative mapping of high-episodic and high-thematic outlets followed by close textual analysis of the context construction processes in particular stories.

Conclusion

Analysis indicates that climate-news attention and climate-news contextualization are different aspects. In five standardized COP windows, the total coverage generated differed significantly among the various newspapers and conferences with COP30 producing the most. Yet Global North and Global South partners provided more or less similar quantities of articles on average and their time variation across COPs was not big in the effect-size.

The dramatic action that split the region in question was that of narrative orientation. The theme of news dominated Global North newspapers but the episodic nature dominated Global South newspapers. It implies that it is not the extent to which climate change is discussed that the most significant difference between the North and the South in the checked data is but the frequency with which particular events are related to larger scientific, political, economic, and institutional frameworks.

In the case of climate journalism, it does not imply the need to do away with episodic reporting. Public communication cannot be complete without events, disasters, and personal experiences. This is done concerning a task to put them into context. In an era of the deepening climate crisis, also the journalism has to make people see both the event and the system: not only the loss itself but the tendency, not only the personal experience, but the duty of the institution the judgment in the summit and the historical process in which it is incorporated.

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