

# MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE – A CASE STUDY OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE COP28 CONFERENCE 2023

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to provide a current insight into how selected media outlets shape news on climate change, using the example of the 2023 COP28 conference and applying the method of content analysis across various media publications. The study analyses media coverage from eight global online news portals (BBC News, BBC News UK, The Washington Post, Al Jazeera, Deutsche Welle, France 24, South China Morning Post, and The Japan Times) and one Croatian portal – Večernji list. The monitoring period spanned from 20 November to 20 December 2023. The findings indicate the presence of all major media formats within the selected outlets. This research extends previous findings on climate change reporting, highlighting a lack of local stories, examples of good practice, and cause-effect contextualisation. It concludes that the topic of climate change should be localised in order to resonate more strongly with the public, evoking emotional engagement that could ultimately encourage more active civic involvement.

## KEY WORDS

climate change communication, COP28, online media, public, media reporting

## CLASSIFICATION

JEL: L86

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## INTRODUCTION

From 30 November to 12 December 2023, Dubai hosted COP28 – the latest United Nations Climate Change Conference – bringing together nearly 80,000 participants from around the world. The first COP conference was held back in 1995, and its most well-known outcome is the Kyoto Protocol from 1997. At that time, emission-reduction targets for greenhouse gases were set for developed countries for the period 2008-2012. The conference held in Copenhagen in 2009 did not result in a binding global agreement, but it was important because countries committed to the goal of limiting global warming to 2 degrees.

Probably the most famous document to come out of the COP conferences is the Paris Agreement, reached at the COP21 conference in 2015, which today represents a widely accepted global framework for addressing climate change. The agreement entered into force on November 4, 2016, and its main goal is to keep global warming below 2 °C, with efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1,5 °C. A significant agreement was also reached in Glasgow in 2021, establishing the obligation for countries to set and implement more ambitious CO<sub>2</sub>-emission reduction targets to achieve the goal of limiting global warming [1].

At COP28, for the first time in nearly three decades of negotiations, nearly 200 countries acknowledged the need to phase out fossil fuels. The final declaration calls for net-zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2050, significant reductions by 2030, a tripling of renewable energy capacity, and a doubling of energy efficiency efforts. Yet, like previous conferences, the outcomes remain largely non-binding, raising concerns about the enforceability and real-world implementation of these goals. Despite these limitations, COP28 reaffirmed its central role in global climate governance and attracted wide media coverage, with over 4,000 journalists present. Media attention to COP events reflects broader public interest in climate change, positioning journalism as a key intermediary in shaping public understanding of both the political process and the underlying environmental issues.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The media play a key role in shaping public understanding of climate change. According to the literature [2] the media are not mere channels of information but active co-constructors of social, political, and environmental realities. This view aligns with broader insights from media studies, which emphasise the autonomous logic of media institutions. In this sense, media no longer function only as intermediaries between social actors, but operate [3] as distinct institutions governed by their own professional routines and interests, to which other social systems increasingly adapt. The media actively construct social, political, economic, and cultural realities rather than merely transmitting information [4]. Their role extends to the selection of frames, language, tone, and narrative strategies that determine how environmental issues are understood. Narrative theory distinguishes between the story (the sequence of events) and the discourse (the way the story is presented). This distinction highlights how the same facts can be communicated in dramatically different ways. Environmental reporting is thus never neutral: it is shaped by editorial choices, formats, and framing. Environmental documentation such as data collection, analysis, and public presentation, often intersects with political communication and public deliberation. Environmental communication serves both pragmatic and constitutive functions [5]. The former aims to solve environmental problems, while the latter contributes to shaping cultural values and collective norms. Media not only inform but define the frameworks through which environmental challenges are perceived. Climate journalism has undergone structural changes, including the decline of specialized reporters and the rise of digital-native and niche climate platforms [6]. These changes have broadened the

range of sources used in reporting, from scientists to civil society actors, public relations experts, and political stakeholders. Communication breakdowns often stem not just from content but from the form and style of media messages [7]. Portraying climate change purely as an environmental problem diminishes its legal, social, and economic dimensions [8]. High public awareness does not automatically lead to changes in behavior [9]. The 2024 Eurobarometer survey [10] confirms this gap: while 93% of Europeans perceive climate change as a serious threat, many remain unwilling to make significant lifestyle adjustments. Previous research shows major differences in tone, framing, and localization of climate communication in Croatian and Slovenian online media [11]. Building on these findings, this study broadens the scope to include eight global media outlets (BBC News, BBC News UK, The Washington Post, Al Jazeera, Deutsche Welle, France 24, South China Morning Post, and The Japan Times) and one Croatian outlet, Večernji list.

These media were selected for their international relevance and geographic diversity. Most are designed for global audiences and operate in politically or economically influential contexts. An exception is The Washington Post, which, though primarily U.S.-oriented, holds global sway due to its reputation and English-language output. Večernji list was included as a leading Croatian daily with strong environmental editorial focus. Its “Earth Resolution” initiative is among the most visible ecological media campaigns in Croatia. Finally, this article is grounded in Moscovici’s theory of social representations, which explains how unfamiliar phenomena are anchored in familiar cultural frames (anchoring) and made concrete through symbols and narratives (objectification). According to this model, climate change enters public consciousness not as abstract data, but through emotionally charged representations. Political framing theory adds that media frames vary across societies depending on democratic culture, values, and perceived security threats [12]. For example, Western countries focus more on national energy security, while others prioritize food and water availability. Broader interdisciplinary models, such as the STEMPLE+ framework [13], further emphasize how climate scenarios are shaped by social, technological, economic, military, political, legal, and environmental dimensions. Only the combination of informed media practice and coherent political initiatives can drive meaningful public engagement with climate issues [14]. This study explores how fossil fuel phaseout and the energy transition were represented in COP28 media coverage, with the aim of identifying broader patterns in climate reporting and their implications for public understanding.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The main objective of this study is to gain insight into the ways in which the media reported on the COP28 conference in Dubai and, accordingly, to identify the key patterns through which the media shape news related to climate change. Based on this overarching aim, the following specific research objectives were defined:

1. To determine the frequency of media coverage of the COP28 conference in Dubai.
2. To identify dominant media patterns used in reporting on climate change, including types of media formats, use of visual elements, tone of coverage, presence of interpretative journalism, inclusion of background context, and sources of information.
3. To analyse the most common thematic patterns, present in media reporting on climate change.
4. To examine the presence or absence of populist content in media coverage of climate-related issues.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employed the method of content analysis. Media articles were collected via a media monitoring agency using keywords related to climate change and the COP28 conference in

Dubai. The analysis covered nine online news outlets: BBC News, BBC News UK, The Washington Post, Al Jazeera, Deutsche Welle, France 24, South China Morning Post, The Japan Times, and Večernji list.

The time frame spanned from 20 November to 20 December 2023, capturing the period before, during, and after the COP28 summit (held from 30 November to 13 December). The analytical matrix developed for this study included 13 variables and basic identification data (media outlet, title, date). A pilot study was conducted beforehand to test the reliability and clarity of the coding scheme. The unit of analysis was a single article mentioning COP28, including its title, subtitle, and main body text. Comments, videos, and embedded links were excluded. A total of 798 articles were identified across all platforms. For practical and methodological reasons, a stratified random sample of 151 articles (19%) was selected for in-depth analysis. To ensure reliability, 10% of the sample (78 articles) was double-coded. Inter-coder reliability was assessed using Cohen's kappa. The lowest agreement was observed in the category "Thematic presence" ( $\kappa = 0,69$ ), while the highest was for "Presence of visual materials" ( $\kappa = 1,0$ ). The median value across all categories was  $\kappa = 0,9$ , indicating high reliability. Once consistency was confirmed, the coders proceeded with independent analysis. The sampling followed a stratified random design, with proportional allocation by outlet and systematic selection within each stratum. Every  $n$ -th article was selected, starting from a randomly chosen point. The final sample ensured both representation and analytical depth while remaining feasible in terms of time and resources.

## RESULTS

Among the analysed media outlets, *The Washington Post* (<https://www.washingtonpost.com>) published the largest number of articles related to COP28, with 182 pieces, accounting for 22,78% of the total sample. It was followed by *France 24* (<https://www.france24.com/en>) with 153 articles (19,15%), and both *BBC News* (<https://www.bbc.com>) and *Deutsche Welle* (<https://www.dw.com/en>) with 124 articles each (15,52%).

*South China Morning Post* (<https://www.scmp.com>) contributed 98 articles (12,27%), *Al Jazeera* (<https://www.aljazeera.com>) published 53 articles (6,63%), and *The Japan Times* (<https://www.japantimes.co.jp>) had 40 articles (5,01%). The Croatian outlet *Večernji list* (<https://www.vecernji.hr>) had 16 articles (2%), while *BBC News UK* (<https://bbc.co.uk>) contributed the smallest share, with 8 articles (1%).

Across the nine online media outlets analyzed, a total of 798 articles addressed the topic of climate change and the COP28 conference. From this population, 151 articles were selected and analysed, representing 19% of the total sample, Table 1. The third category in the analytical matrix focused on the type of media content, distinguishing between news reports, feature stories, live coverage, editorials/columns/comments, profiles, and interviews, Table 2. News articles

**Table 1.** Number of media reports on the analyzed online news portals.

Online news	<i>f</i>	%
<a href="https://washingtonpost.com">https://washingtonpost.com</a>	34	23
<a href="https://www.france24.com/en">https://www.france24.com/en</a>	29	19
<a href="https://www.dw.com/en">https://www.dw.com/en</a>	23	15
<a href="https://www.bbc.com">https://www.bbc.com</a>	22	15
<a href="https://www.scmp.com">https://www.scmp.com</a>	19	13
<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com">https://www.aljazeera.com</a>	10	7
<a href="https://www.japantimes.co.jp">https://www.japantimes.co.jp</a>	9	6
<a href="https://www.vecernji.hr">https://www.vecernji.hr</a>	3	2
<a href="https://bbc.co.uk">https://bbc.co.uk</a>	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100</b>

were the most dominant format across platforms, while profiles and interviews were the least used. Only *France 24* and *BBC News UK* included interviews, and just three outlets (*Deutsche Welle*, *Al Jazeera*, and *The Japan Times*) featured profile-style articles. Live coverage appeared across all platforms, though in varying frequency: *The Washington Post* published 7 live articles, *France 24* published 2, *Deutsche Welle* 5, *BBC.com* 3, *SCMP* 5, *Al Jazeera* 4, and *The Japan Times*, *Večernji list*, and *BBC UK* one each. Feature stories were published by five outlets: *The Washington Post* (9), *France 24* (15), *Deutsche Welle* (6), *BBC.com* (9), *SCMP* (4), *Al Jazeera* (2), and *The Japan Times* (3). Editorials/columns/comments also appeared in five outlets: *The Washington Post* (4), *France 24* (2), *Deutsche Welle* (2), *BBC.com* (2), *SCMP* (3), *Al Jazeera* (1), and *The Japan Time* (2). All outlets except *BBC News UK* included standard news articles related to climate change and COP28. Notably, *The Washington Post* published 14, *France 24* and *Deutsche Welle* each had 9, *BBC.com* had 8, *SCMP* had 7, while *Al Jazeera*, *The Japan Times*, and *Večernji list* published 2 each.

**Table 2.** Format of the media report.

Type of Content	f	%
News	53	35
Reportage	48	32
Event Coverage	29	19
Editorial / Column / Commentary	16	11
Profile of a Person or Event	3	2
Interview	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100</b>

The fourth category examined the thematic framing of the articles, Table 3. A global context appeared across all outlets, while climate status, political framing, examples of best practice, and local problem-based stories varied by outlet:

- The Washington Post addressed global issues in 13 articles, political context in 12, climate status in 7, and featured one article each on best practices and local stories.
- France 24 included 14 global context articles, 4 on climate status, 4 on political framing, 2 showcasing best practices, and 5 local issue stories.
- Deutsche Welle published 8 global context articles, 7 political articles, 4 on climate status, and 2 each on best practices and local challenges.
- BBC News (bbc.com) addressed the global frame in 10 articles, 3 on climate status, 2 political, 3 best practices, and 4 local issue stories.
- South China Morning Post had 8 global, 4 political, 4 climate status, 2 best practice, and 1 local story.
- Al Jazeera contributed 2 global context articles, 3 political, 1 climate-related, and 1 each on best practices and local challenges.
- The Japan Times focused on global framing in 3 articles, political in 1, and had 3 best practice and 2 local issue pieces.
- Večernji list included 1 article with global framing and 2 political.
- BBC News UK featured one article in a global context and one highlighting best practice.

**Table 3.** Representation of topics in the analyzed reports.

Topic of the Article	f	%
Global Context	60	40
Political Context of the Event	35	23
Report on the Current State of the Climate	23	15
Problem-Oriented Local Story	17	11
Example of Good Practice	16	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>100</b>

The fifth category of the analysis focused on the presence or absence of visual content, Table 4. Findings indicate that visual elements were generally scarce across the analysed articles. On *The Washington Post*, visuals appeared in only 9% of the articles, while *France 24* included them in 17%. A higher frequency was noted on *Deutsche Welle* and *Al Jazeera*, where 30% of the articles contained visual materials. On *BBC.com*, 23% of articles featured visuals, compared to 16% on *South China Morning Post* and 11% on *The Japan Times*. *Večernji list* showed visuals in 33% of its analysed articles, while *BBC News UK* had the highest proportion, with 50% of its content accompanied by visual elements. Despite the strong potential of visual communication in environmental journalism, the use of images, charts, or infographics remained relatively limited across the media sample.

**Table 4.** The presence of visual representation in analysed media content. Columns: 1 – washingtonpost.com, 2 – france24.com, 3 – dw.com, 4 – bbc.com, 5 – scmp.com, 6 –aljazeera.com, 7 – japantimes.co.jp, 8 – vecernji.hr, 9 – bbc.co.uk.

Issues / Topic of the Article		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Global Context	<i>f</i>	13	14	8	10	8	2	3	1	1
	%	38	48	35	45	42	20	33	33	50
Report on the Current State of the Climate	<i>f</i>	7	4	4	3	4	1	0	0	0
	%	21	14	17	14	21	10	0	0	0
Political Context of the Event	<i>f</i>	12	4	7	2	4	3	1	2	0
	%	35	14	30	9	21	30	11	67	0
Example of Good Practice	<i>f</i>	1	2	2	3	2	2	3	0	1
	%	3	7	9	14	11	20	33	0	50
Problem-Oriented Local Story	<i>f</i>	1	5	2	4	1	2	2	0	0
	%	3	17	9	18	5	20	22	0	0

The sixth analytical category explored the presence or absence of direct statements and quotations in the articles, Table 5. The analysis showed that such elements were present in most of the texts, though with notable variation across media outlets. On *The Washington Post*, 76% of articles included statements or quotations, while *France 24* had a slightly higher share at 79%. *Deutsche Welle* recorded the highest proportion, with 83% of its articles featuring quoted material. On *BBC.com*, 73% of articles included statements or quotes, compared to 70% on *Al Jazeera*, 58% on *South China Morning Post*, and 78% on *The Japan Times*. In contrast, *Večernji list* showed significantly lower inclusion, with only 33% of its articles containing quotations. Notably, *BBC News UK* had no statements or quotations in any of the analysed articles.

**Table 5.** Presence of statements or quotes in the media report. Columns: 1 – washingtonpost.com, 2 – france24.com, 3 – dw.com, 4 – bbc.com, 5 – scmp.com, 6 –aljazeera.com, 7 – japantimes.co.jp, 8 – vecernji.hr, 9 – bbc.co.uk.

Statements or Quotes		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Statements and Quotes Present	<i>f</i>	26	23	19	16	11	7	7	1	0
	%	76	79	83	73	58	70	78	33	0
Not Present	<i>f</i>	8	6	4	6	8	3	2	2	2
	%	24	21	17	27	42	30	22	67	100

The seventh category focused on identifying the main sources of information cited in the analysed articles, Table 6. The coding scheme included several types of sources: the United Nations Development Programme, global political figures, experts (such as energy and climate specialists), other media outlets (journalists or agencies), members of the public/civil society/activists, factual reports or events (e.g., on-the-ground journalism), and a general “other” category. On *The Washington Post*, global political leaders were the most frequently cited, appearing in 32% of the articles. In contrast, *France 24* most often relied on expert

sources, which appeared in 41% of its articles. Political figures were also the dominant sources in articles published by *Deutsche Welle*, *BBC.com*, and *The Japan Times*. *South China Morning Post* primarily drew on factual events as sources (26%), a pattern also seen in *Al Jazeera*, where 40% of articles cited events or observable phenomena. On *BBC News UK*, half of the sources were experts, while the other half came from other media outlets.

**Table 6.** Sources of information in the analyzed media reports. Columns: 1 – washingtonpost.com, 2 – france24.com, 3 – dw.com, 4 – bbc.com, 5 – scmp.com, 6 – aljazeera.com, 7 – japantimes.co.jp, 8 – vecernji.hr, 9 – bbc.co.uk.

Source of Information		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
World Politicians	<i>f</i>	11	8	14	8	3	2	6	2	0
	%	32	28	61	36	16	20	67	67	0
Experts*	<i>f</i>	8	12	4	5	4	2	1	0	1
	%	24	41	17	23	21	20	11	0	50
Facts / Events / Phenomena**	<i>f</i>	4	3	2	1	5	4	1	0	0
	%	12	10	9	5	26	40	11	0	0
Ordinary Citizens / Civil Society / Activists	<i>f</i>	2	2	0	0	3	1	0	0	0
	%	6	7	0	0	16	10	0	0	0
UNDP	<i>f</i>	2	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
	%	6	3	4	9	0	0	0	0	0
Other Media***	<i>f</i>	5	1	2	2	0	0	0	1	1
	%	15	3	9	9	0	0	0	33	50
Other	<i>f</i>	2	2		4	4	1	1	0	0
	%	6	7		18	21	10	11	0	0

The eighth category addressed the presence of specific features in the media discourse on climate change, focusing on populist framing, Table 7. Populist discourse is typically marked by strong identification with “the people” and opposition to political elites, often expressed through simplified language, sensationalism, emotional appeals, and the framing of elites as corrupt or disconnected. The analysis showed that populist discourse was largely absent in most articles. In most media outlets, 60-70% of the analysed content did not exhibit populist features. When present, this type of discourse was manifested in tabloid-style reporting, oversimplification of environmental issues, and polarizing narratives that reinforce political tribalism and hinder civic dialogue and compromise [13]. The ninth category explored news personalization, assessing whether a given article included a human example to illustrate the issue, problem, or event. Articles were coded using binary values (0 – no, 1 – yes). The findings revealed that personalization was mostly absent across outlets. Specifically, 88% of *The Washington Post* articles lacked personalization, as did 76% of *France 24*, 48% of *Deutsche Welle*, and 50% of *BBC.com*. Similar trends were found on *South China Morning Post* (58%), *Al Jazeera* (80%), and *The Japan Times* and *Večernji list*, both at 67%. *BBC News UK* showed a balance, with personalization absent in 50% of its articles.

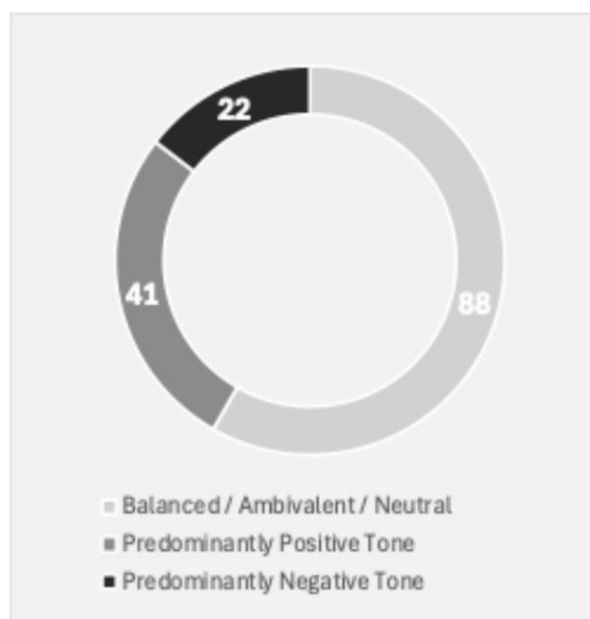
The tenth category assessed the tone of media coverage regarding climate change, Figure 1. Articles were classified on a three-point scale: 1 – predominantly negative, 2 – balanced/neutral/ambivalent, and 3 – predominantly positive.

The findings show that *BBC News UK* exhibited a consistently positive tone, with 100% of its analysed articles falling into the “positive” category. *The Washington Post* showed a predominantly neutral tone in 56% of articles, with 32% coded as positive and 12% as negative. *France 24* had 72% of its articles coded as neutral, 17% as positive, and 10% as negative. Similarly, *Deutsche Welle* displayed a largely neutral tone (70%), with 17% positive and 10% negative. *BBC.com* followed a similar pattern, with 55% neutral, 32% positive, and 14% negative content. *South China Morning Post* reported 58% of articles with a neutral tone, 26%

**Table 7.** Representation of populist content topics in the media. Columns: 1 – washingtonpost.com, 2 – france24.com, 3 – dw.com, 4 – bbc.com, 5 – scmp.com, 6 – aljazeera.com, 7 – japantimes.co.jp, 8 – vecernji.hr, 9 – bbc.co.uk.

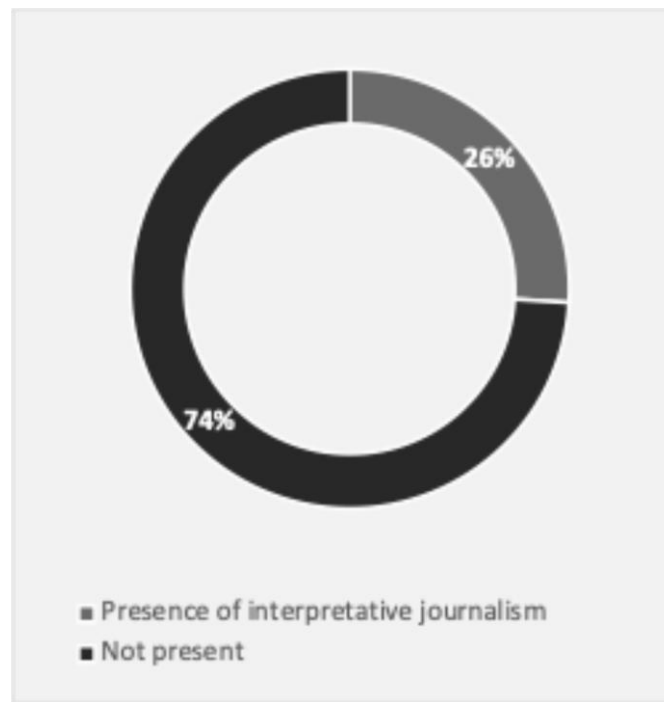
Other Specific Characteristics of Populist Discourse		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not Present	<i>f</i>	27	21	16	16	12	6	7	2	2
	%	79	72	70	73	63	60	78	67	100
Amplification of Fear of Climate Threats	<i>f</i>	4	5	5	4	2	1	1	1	0
	%	12	17	22	18	11	10	11	33	0
Emotional Framing*	<i>f</i>	2	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0
	%	6	0	0	0	11	30	0	0	0
Blame Shifting – Scapegoating	<i>f</i>	1	1	1		3	0	0	0	0
	%	3	3	4	0	16	0	0	0	0
Use of Sensationalist Language**	<i>f</i>	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
	%	0	3		5	0	0	11	0	0
Amplification of Fear of Climate Threats	<i>f</i>	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%		3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oversimplification of the Topic	<i>f</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0

positive, and 16% negative. *Al Jazeera* stood out with an even distribution: 40% neutral, 40% negative, and 20% positive, indicating a more critical stance. *The Japan Times* leaned toward a positive tone, with 56% of articles coded as positive, 33% as neutral, and only 11% as negative. *Večernji list*, the Croatian outlet, presented no neutral-toned articles; instead, 67% were classified as positive and 33% as negative.



**Figure 1.** Tone of the media report.

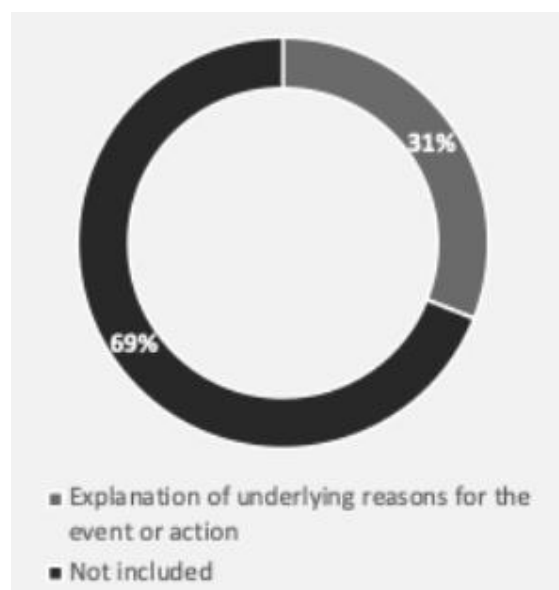
The eleventh category focused on the presence or absence of interpretative journalism, defined as reporting that goes beyond factual narration to provide analysis, explanation, or contextual interpretation, Figure 2. The analysis revealed that interpretative journalism was mostly absent in the articles across all observed media. It was missing in 79% of articles published by *The Washington Post*, 67% of *France 24* articles, and 61% of those on *Deutsche Welle*. On *BBC.com*, 73% of articles lacked interpretative elements, as did 68% of *South China Morning Post* content and 80% of *Al Jazeera*'s coverage. Similarly, *The Japan Times* omitted



**Figure 2.** Presence of interpretative journalism.

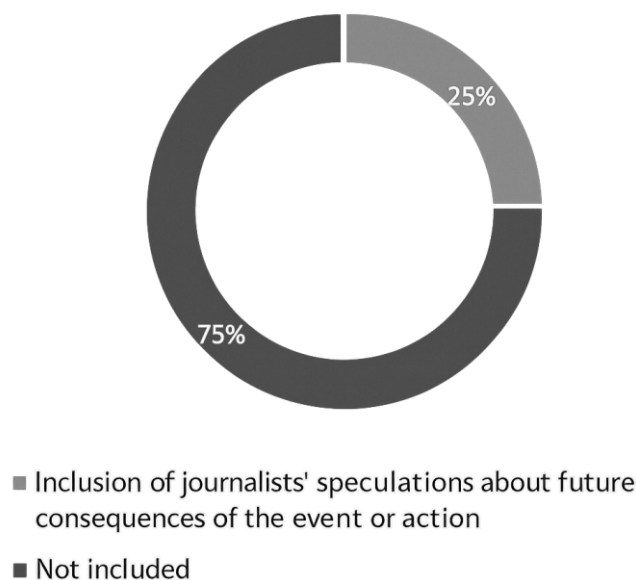
interpretative reporting in 78% of its articles, while *Večernji list* did so in 67% of its coverage. Notably, *BBC News UK* stood out with interpretative journalism present in 50% of its analysed content, indicating a more analytical approach compared to most other outlets.

The twelfth category assessed whether the article included journalistic explanations or interpretations of the background causes of the reported event, Figure 3. The analysis showed that such background context was generally absent in most of the media coverage. Specifically, 76% of articles from *The Washington Post* lacked explanations of underlying causes, followed by 72% on *France 24*, 70% on *Deutsche Welle*, and 68% on *BBC.com*. *South China Morning Post* omitted background context in 63% of its articles, while *Al Jazeera* showed a relatively better ratio, with only 50% of articles lacking such content. Similarly, 67% of articles on both *The Japan Times* and *Večernji list* did not include background explanations, and *BBC News UK* also had a 50% omission rate.



**Figure 3.** Presence of underlying reasons for the event or action.

The final, thirteenth category examined whether the article included journalistic speculation about the future consequences of the reported events. Speculative elements were largely absent across the media sample. Such content was missing in 82% of articles on *The Washington Post* and *BBC.com*, 79% on *France 24*, 74% on *Deutsche Welle*, and 70% on *Al Jazeera*. *South China Morning Post* omitted speculation in 63% of its articles, *The Japan Times* in 56%, and *Večernji list* in 67%. Notably, *BBC News UK* did not include any speculation in 100% of its analysed articles.



**Figure 4.** Presence of future consequences of the event.

## DISCUSSION

The quantitative and qualitative content analysis of 151 media articles covering COP28 across nine online news portals revealed a variety of journalistic formats and approaches. News reports, features, editorials, and interviews together provided diverse entry points into the topic of climate change, supporting the processes of anchoring and objectification that help audiences understand unfamiliar issues through familiar narrative forms. News articles were the most frequent format (35%), followed by features (32%), event reporting (19%), opinion pieces (11%), with portraits (2%) and interviews (1%) being the least used. Most outlets reported using a mix of formats, with interviews appearing only on *France24.com* and *BBC.co.uk*. Notably, visual materials were underused, though they are known to aid comprehension, while direct quotes and statements were widely present. All outlets addressed the global dimension of climate change, reaffirming the political framing discussed in the theoretical framework. However, stories of local relevance and human-centered narratives were notably scarce, which may limit the emotional engagement of readers and reduce the perceived urgency of the issue. This reflects a lack of emotional anchoring in climate coverage [15]. The sources used by journalists were diverse – ranging from world leaders and experts to civil society actors and other media – contributing to a more balanced presentation of the issue. Differences were also observed in tone: some portals (e.g. *Washington Post*) varied between neutral, positive, and negative framing, while others like *France 24* and *DW* maintained a neutral tone, suggesting a fact-based approach. Encouragingly, populist discourse was largely absent across the sample, and speculative commentary about future consequences was limited. While this reflects caution and journalistic responsibility, it might also reduce

awareness of the long-term risks and hinder the development of public and political urgency. Interpretative journalism and background explanations were also relatively rare, which may leave readers without a deeper understanding of the causes and implications of the issues discussed. This lack of context could hinder the public's ability to grasp the full scope and urgency of climate change. Overall, the findings highlight the need for more holistic, responsible, and context-rich climate journalism. Engaging the public meaningfully requires not only accurate and balanced reporting but also localized storytelling and clear causal narratives. Integrating scientific analysis with effective media coverage is key to building an informed and engaged society ready to act on climate change [14].

## CONCLUSION

Based on a detailed analysis of media coverage surrounding the COP28 conference during November and December 2023, this study provides valuable insights into how major news outlets reported on this global event. The research focused on both quantitative and qualitative aspects, examining article types, thematic focus, visual elements, tone, use of quotations, and the presence of journalistic interpretation or speculation. The Washington Post emerged as the most active source, publishing the highest number of articles. News reports were the most common format, though some outlets also used features and live reporting. However, personalized storytelling – reporting based on individual experiences – was rarely employed. Most articles maintained a neutral or balanced tone, while strongly positive or negative framings were less frequent. Quotations and expert statements were widely used, underscoring the role of authoritative sources in shaping public discourse. Populist discourse was largely absent, and interpretative journalism as well as future-oriented speculation were limited, suggesting a preference for fact-based and cautious reporting. Overall, media coverage of COP28 was informative and politically contextualized, with consistent emphasis on the current state of the climate. However, the analysis also revealed notable gaps – particularly the lack of localized stories, emotional engagement, and causal explanations that could strengthen public awareness and urgency. These findings highlight the importance of a more comprehensive and diversified approach to climate communication. Localizing climate narratives and emphasizing real-world consequences could foster stronger emotional connections and drive public engagement. Highlighting causal links – whether in terms of national, energy, or human security – can deepen understanding of the issue's complexity. Ultimately, coordinated efforts between journalists, policymakers, and civil society are essential to building a more informed and resilient public response to the growing climate crisis.

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