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**FRAMING CLIMATE POLITICS**

A Comparative Study of The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and Helsingin Sanomat

University of Tampere  
International School of Social Sciences  
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication  
Journalism and Mass Communication  
Master's Thesis  
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The central research questions of this thesis are how is climate politics framed and how is its coverage affected by journalistic norms and codes of conduct. It consists of a review of previous literature on the notions of journalistic objectivity, the theory of framing and environmental communication, and an empirical study of the climate politics coverage of three prestige newspapers: *The New York Times* (USA), *The Wall Street Journal* (USA) and *Helsingin Sanomat* (Finland). The thesis also includes a brief introduction to the history of climate politics.

The coverage of the three newspapers was sampled in eight two week periods between the years 2003 and 2008. The time frame of this purposive sample was selected according to certain significant events in the field of climate politics. These events include the heatwave of summer 2003; the Kyoto treaty taking affect and the Hurricane Katrina aftermath in the year 2005; the release of the Stern report and the film *An Unconvinient Truth* in the year 2006; the release of an IPCC report and the United Nations Climate Conference in Bali in the year 2007 ; and the United Nations Climate Conference in Poland in the year 2008. The eight samples were analysed with both quantitative and qualitative content analysis methods.

As a result of the content analysis seven frames for climate politics were identified. These frames include the thematic and/or episodic frames of "Era of Climate Change", "Planetary Crises" and "Unsureness"; the issue specific frames of "Technology as a solution" and "Environment versus Economic Wealth"; and the generic frames of "Political/partisan Competition" and "Competition of Countries". There were also several stories that merely mention climat change as a serious political problem comparable to poverty or hunger.

The most common frame of all seven was the "Era of Climate Change", in which the accomodation to climate change and communal responsibility was emphasized as a central element of climate politics. The "Political/partisan Competition" frame, on the otherhand, was found only in the two American newspapers. This would implicate that the consensus of Finnish climate politics is also reflected in news coverage. Contrary to the American newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* gave special emphasis on national unity, whereas *The New York Times* seemed to rebel against the climate policies of the George W. Bush government. The most critical and even sceptical coverage was found in *The Wall Street Journal*.

Overall, the coverage on climate politics increased significantly from one sample period to another. There was a slight decrease in the amount of coverage between years 2007 and 2008: this might indicate that the economic crises took away some intrest from environmental questions.

## **Tampereen yliopisto**

International School of Social Sciences

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MARJA HONKONEN: Ilmastopolitiikan kehystäminen. Vertaileva tutkimus New York Timesin, Wall Street Journalin ja Helsingin Sanomien ilmastonmuutosuutisoinnista.

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Tämän pro gradu -tutkielman keskeinen tutkimuskysymys on, kuinka ilmastopolitiikkaa kehystetään sanomalehdissä ja kuinka journalistiset arvot ja käytännöt vaikuttavat siihen. Tutkielma koostuu teoreettisesta osuudesta, jossa käydään läpi aikaisempaa kirjallisuutta journalismin objektiivisuudesta, kehystämisen teoriasta ja ympäristöviestinnästä, sekä kolmen sanomalehden ilmastopolitiikkaa käsittelevien juttujen empiirisestä analyysistä. Sanomalehdet ovat *The New York Times* (Yhdysvallat), *The Wall Street Journal* (Yhdysvallat) ja *Helsingin Sanomat* (Suomi). Tutkielmassa on myös lyhyt johdanto ilmastopolitiikan historiaan.

Aineistoksi kolmen sanomalehden ilmastouutisista otettiin kahdeksan kahden viikon otantaa vuosien 2003 ja 2008 väliltä. Otokset valittiin keskeisten ilmastopoliittisten tapahtumien mukaan. Näiden joukossa ovat kesän 2003 helleaalto; Kioton sopimuksen voimaantulo ja hurrikaani Katrinan jälkilöylyt vuonna 2005; Sternin raportin ja *Epämiellyttävä totuus* -elokuvan julkaisu vuonna 2006; IPCC:n raportin julkaisu ja Yhdistyneiden kansakuntien ilmastokokous Balilla vuonna 2007; sekä Yhdistyneiden kansakuntien ilmastokokous Puolassa vuonna 2008. Kaikki kahdeksan otantaa analysoitiin sekä kvantitatiivisen että kvalitatiivisen sisällönanalyysin keinoin.

Tuloksista tunnistettiin seitsemään tapaa kehystää ilmastopolitiikkaa. Näiden kehyksien joukossa ovat teema- ja/tai tapahtumasidonnaiset kehykset ”Ilmastonmuutoksen aikakausi”, ”Planeetan kriisi” ja ”Epävarmuus”; asiasidonnaiset kehykset ”Teknologia ratkaisuna” ja ”Ympäristö vastaan Talouskasvu”; ja geneeriset kehykset ”Puoluepoliittinen kilpailu” ja ”Kansakuntien kilpailu”. Otannoissa oli myös lukuisia juttuja, jotka ainoastaan mainitsivat ilmastonmuutoksen vakavana poliittisena ongelmana, joka on verrannollinen nälänhätään tai köyhyyteen.

Seitsemästä kehyksestä yleisin oli ”Ilmastonmuutoksen aikakausi”, joka korosti ilmastonmuutokseen sopeutumista ja yhteisöllistä vastuuta ilmastopolitiikan keskeisinä elementteinä. Sen sijaan puoluepoliittista kilpailua korostava kehys löytyi vain yhdysvaltalaisista sanomalehdistä. Tämä kertonee jotain suomalaisesta konsensusilmaapiiristä. Toisin kuin yhdysvaltalaiset lehdet, *Helsingin Sanomat* korosti kansallista yhtenäisyyttä, kun taas *The New York Times* näytti kapinoivan hallituksen ilmastopolitiikkaa vastaan. Kriittisimmät ja skeptisimmät jutut olivat *The Wall Street Journalissa*.

Kaikkiaan ilmastouutisten määrä lisääntyi otantojen aikana. Kahden viimeisen otannan eli vuosien 2007 ja 2008 välillä uutisten määrä kuitenkin väheni kertoen kenties talouskriisin vaikutuksista ilmastopolitiikkaan.

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## **FOREWORD**

This Thesis, born after a series of birthing pains, will be finished and evaluated just before a historical climate conference in Copenhagen, Denmark (6.–12. December 2009). Although its aim is to merely prove my worthiness to a Master's Degree, I hope will contribute to the discussion on how actors in climate politics and the media interact, and thus provide insight how the issue could be better communicated. Although there might be still some debate over whether climate change is real, I personally feel the outcome of the Copenhagen summit will prove to be determining in future of humanity.

The topic of this Master's Thesis was chosen far earlier, though. It was during my exchange year 2005–2006 in Pittsburg State University, Kansas, when I first got interested in the way climate change was portrayed in the U.S. media. For this I owe thanks to two professors, Dr. Mark Peterson and Dr. Michael Kelley, the former a government critical Democrat and the latter a climate sceptic Republican. I personally feel my studies in the field of political science have helped me understand both the American political system, but also the cultural ways Americans perceive environmental problems. I also received several book recommendations and help with starting my work process with this thesis from the two professors.

In Finland I have been dearly advised by my thesis supervisor, professor Kaarle Nordenstreng, who helped me to finish this work even after he himself had already formally retired. I also value the input of my seminar group, the journalism and speech communication majors of the Master's Programme on Political Communication '07 at the University of Tampere International School of Social Sciences, as well as many fellow journalists who gladly reviewed some of my ideas. Finally, I owe thanks to the American Resource Center in Helsinki, which kindly provided me with my empirical data from *The Wall Street Journal* for free. Without these contributions this thesis would look very different.

*Jyväskylä, 13. November 2009, on the eve of the Copenhagen Climate Conference*

*Marja Honkonen*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

When one types “global warming” to the search field of Google, the most popular search engine in the world, the results include 58 000 000 hits<sup>1</sup> ranging from a Wikipedia article to a music video on YouTube. Although it is only a tenth of what come out when googling “sex” or half of when googling “Britney Spears”, it still sends out a powerful message: global warming or climate change – which ever term you wish to use – is a phenomena that is not only changing our environment physically, but also mentally. Whether they are moved by worry, demand for action or scepticism, global warming is on everybody’s lips – and not the least on the media’s.

Already therefore it is valuable to see, what comes out of those lips: how climate politics are portrayed or framed in the media. And that is what this Master's Thesis is quite simply about. In the forthcoming pages, I will discuss in more detail why we as scholars of journalism and mass communication should be interested in news coverage on climate politics. After this, I will explain in more detail, what and how I personally have studied to further our knowledge of the issue.

### 1.1. Join the bandwagon

In March 2007 something very uncommon took place. *Sports Illustrated*, a sports magazine most known for its swimsuit issues featuring young women in skimpy outfits, published a special issue on an even hotter topic: climate change. Author Alexander Wolff began the article as follows:

*The next time a ballgame gets rained out during the September stretch run, you can curse the momentary worthlessness of those tickets in your pocket. Or you can wonder why it got rained out -- and ask yourself why practice had to be called off last summer on a day when there wasn't a cloud in the sky; and why that Gulf Coast wharf where you used to reel in mackerel and flounder no longer exists; and why it's been more than one winter since you pulled those titanium skis out of the garage. Global warming is not coming; it is here. (Wolff 2007)*

The story made it to the cover of the magazine and featured several tips on how to be a more environmentally responsible sports fan – it even discussed how to make the infamous NASCAR-contests more ecofriendly; a paradoxical concept to say the least. More importantly, however, the article showed that the concept of climate change had become something we all could agree about. When even one of the most masculine, beer-driven, non-hippie publications takes up a cause as controversial as global warming, it was a clear indication that the days of debate were over: “Global warming is not coming; it is here”.

*Sports Illustrated* was not in the forefront of the climate awakening. Already earlier the same year bizarre things started to take place in the public debate over the issue: big corporations and their leaders started to

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<sup>1</sup> As tested on 22th of February 2009, with searchword in quotation marks to find exact phrase.

demand more action to combat climate change. In Finland, the former CEO of telecommunications company Nokia and then the leader of the executive board of the oil company Shell – Jorma Ollila – gave a long interview for *Helsingin Sanomat* discussing the need to limit CO<sup>2</sup>-emissions in the world. Ollila cites also other multinationals to be interested in cutting emissions:

*“Europe’s large energy and oil companies have thought already for a while that climate change is caused by humans”, Ollila says. “And the central question are the CO<sup>2</sup>-emissions. The awareness of this is much larger than I thought. Attitudes have changed in the last five years, and one of the places they have changed the fastest are the corporations on the field.” The only exception, of course, is the American oil corporation Exxon-Mobil, which denied global warming until the last few weeks. Other than that all the international corporations have, according to Ollila, been far ahead of politicians.<sup>2</sup> (Nousiainen 2007, D1–D2)*

In the article, Ollila notes that the initiative for change was the so-called Stern Report published the prior year. The report showed there was a clear cost to climate change and it was not going to be pennies, dimes or cents, but expensive – at least unless we act now. The article also notes that it seemed clear why the businesses had started to get interested in preserving nature: emissions trading and gaps had started to make it profitable to be pro-environment.

It was not only the big companies, however, who started to be more and more concerned about global warming. A study<sup>3</sup> conducted in 2006 and published in 2007 proclaimed that 37 percent of Finns deemed the phenomenon to be “absolutely real” and 53 percent “apparently real”. Altogether 85 percent perceived it as a threat for humanity and 65 percent found it to be “the most serious threat” to humanity. It was thus clear that at least in Finland people started to be very worried about the consequences of global warming. (Ekholm et al. 2007, 11–15)

In the same time the Finnish people were not satisfied with the way their decision-makers were dealing with the problem. The study by Ekholm et al. (2007, 23–24) noted that as a movement, the demand for action against climate change did not obey party lines, but brought together followers from different parties. Common to all these people was the feeling that global warming was not considered enough in political debates. About 58 percent took this stance and women more than men: 64 percent of female respondents wished to see more talk about climate change in politics, where as the same number with male respondents was only 50 percent. At the same time, there were hardly any differences depending on the level of education

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<sup>2</sup> Translated from Finnish, originally: ”Euroopan suuret energia- ja öljy-yhtiöt ovat olleet pitkään sitä mieltä, että ilmastonmuutos on ihmisen aiheuttama”, Ollila sanoo. ”Keskeinen kysymys ovat hiilidioksidipäästöt. Tietoisuus tästä asiasta oli monta kertaa suurempi kuin oletin. Asenteet ovat muuttuneet runsaan viiden viime vuoden aikana, ja yksi paikka, jossa ne ovat muuttuneet nopeimmin, ovat alan yhtiöt.” Poikkeus on tietysti amerikkalainen öljy-yhtiö Exxon-Mobil, joka viime viikkoihin saakka kielsi koko ilmastonmuutoksen. Mutta muuten kansainvälinen yritysmaailma on Ollilan mielestä kaukana poliitikkojen edellä.

<sup>3</sup> The Ekholm et al. (2007) study had altogether 1 112 respondents. Originally the questionnaire was sent to 2 500 people in Finland (excluding the isle of Åland) aged 18–70. The error margin was 1–3 percent.

of respondent – perhaps to show how much concern global warming caused in citizens. The study concludes that in 2006 there seemed to be a “consensus of worry” concerning climate change.

For the purposes of a Master’s Thesis written in the field of study of journalism and mass communication, what was particularly interesting in the study was where people get their knowledge over climate change: the media. According to the study, nine out of ten respondents found that news programmes in television were “important” or “somewhat important” in transmitting information over climate change. Almost as important were science and nature documents in television. Roughly 81 percent found that also print news were “important” or “somewhat important”. The study notes, though, that it was more the better educated than the less educated who found newspapers to be the most important source of information over climate change: this group of people included those of academic education, but also university or higher education students or people in managerial positions. There was also some difference depending on the home town of the respondents: people from Southern Finland found newspapers more important sources of information over global warming than people from the Northern parts. For teenagers and young adults, the internet was emphasized in importance of gaining information: about half of under 35-year-olds considered the internet to be a somewhat important or very important source of information when it comes to climate change. (Ekholm et al. 2007, 25–35)

What came to which sources were trusted, there was already a lot more variation depending on the background of each respondent. Overall people seemed to trust government officials such as the Ministry of Environment (82 percent) more than for example the United Nations (66 percent), environmental organizations (68 percent) or the European Union (55 percent). The most trusted sources of information were, however, such scientific organizations as the Finnish Meteorological Institute (Ilmatieteenlaitos), which 93 percent of the respondents found to be very or mostly reliable. The least trusted sources of information were deemed to be energy corporations, especially the larger ones involved in the oil business. Interestingly enough, politicians and political parties competed in trustworthiness mostly with the forest industry and the aforementioned energy corporations. The Finnish government was still more trusted than “politicians” as a group. At the same time, the United States’ government was even less trusted than the oil businesses. This, though, depended a lot on the background of the respondent: women expressed trust towards environmental organizations more than men, the unemployed trusted the UN less than the ones working, for example. (Ekholm et al 2007, 39–50)

When asked who is responsible to act, most Finns considered the United States, international treaties and industrialized countries in general to be of the greatest importance. Also, large international corporations were considered to be responsible – respondents of leftist background emphasized the importance of Finnish businesses also. Most people admitted their own need to act: almost 90 percent found it important to drive less, buy environment friendly products and recycle. The respondents held almost equally important,



however, to talk about climate change in schools and homes. At the same time, about 53 percent were sceptical over the chances that others might also make compromises in their lives to preserve nature. Still or perhaps thus, altogether 38 percent of the respondents thought that it requires both political decisions and market initiative to solve the problems of global warming. (Ekholm et al. 2007, 54–74)

A Eurobarometer study conducted a bit over a year later in the level of the whole EU by the European Union shows fairly similar results. According to the study global warming had become a major concern for citizens – ranking second behind “poverty, the lack of food and drinking water” in the list of the most serious problems in the world. In this respect Finland ranked above the European average just behind Greece, Cyprus, Slovenia and Sweden. While in the whole of EU 62 percent of people found climate change to be one of the most serious problems in the world, about 73 percent of Finns thought so – a bit less compared to the Ekholm et al. (2007) study. It should be noted though, that the two studies have employed a different set of questionnaires and are thus not entirely comparable. (European Attitudes Towards Climate Change 2008, 4–9)

Interestingly enough, citizens of Nordic countries and the Netherlands felt that they are the most informed about climate change: whereas the European average of climate change awareness was 56 percent when it came to causes and consequences of global warming and 52 percent when it came to fighting against the phenomena, in Finland, Sweden and Denmark at least three quarters of respondents felt that they are adequately informed. Large industrialized countries like France, Germany and the UK were above the average, UK scoring 73 percent right after Finland’s 75 percent and France and Germany with 64 and 60 percent. The lowest citizens’ self-perception of information was in Bulgaria, Romania, Portugal, Czech Republic and Turkey. What comes to whose responsibility it is to start combating climate change, Europeans felt that corporations were not doing enough to combat climate change – even though, in the Eurobarometer study Finland is only of the few countries where a 24 percent of people feel that corporations are doing enough. The Finns seem to be also more satisfied than other in what their government is doing to fight climate change – at least compared to such nations as the UK, where citizens think that their government is doing too much. (European Attitudes Towards Climate Change 2008, 18–41)

In the United States, people have been slowly awaking to the realities of the global climate changing. The percentiles of those, who consider themselves to be worried about the issue, however, have been far smaller than in Europe or in Finland in particular. In 2007 the majority of the population (59 percent) was convinced that global warming was real and had to be dealt with – this is however a lot less than in the Finnish study conducted the same year. It was also a major increase from what people thought before: in 2003 only 11 percent of Americans thought that climate change might be one of the biggest threats for humanity. Also hopes for government action have increased remarkably. Overall, there has been a change in discourse over global warming in the USA during the last six years. The way the public perceives climate change in the U.S.

has been affected by several aspects: these include the fact that the congress seems to have started to hold more hearings over the issue and an increase on legislation related to climate change; the increase of efforts of the scientific community to effect public opinion; personal experiences of people such as increased number of storms and forest fires; climate change being subject of films such as the *Inconvenient Truth* and the broad coalition of action and political support. (Staudt 2008, 976–983)

There can be several reasons to why the U.S. has awakened to the problems of global warming and has started to demand political action later than Europe or Finland, in particular. Some reasons could be found in culture: whereas in Finland people still at least consider themselves to be more in touch with nature, urban Americans with their car-loving culture, might be more prone to want to ignore environmental problems. It might be about politics: in the American two-party political system the Greens have stayed in the margins for a long time, but in Finland the party has been included in the government. As a student of political communication and a practising journalist I am, however, prone to think that also media plays a major part in the issue.

Curran et al. (2009) show in their recent study that the media system of a country plays a role when it comes to the level of awareness citizens have on an issue. In their wide comparative research effort, Curran et al. compared both broadcast and newspaper contents in the United States, the United Kingdom, Denmark and Finland to the results of a wide survey done among citizens. Among the newspapers that were looked at in the study were the American *New York Times* and the Finnish *Helsingin Sanomat*. The survey questionnaire included questions over both soft and hard news, including simple “Do you recognize the person in this picture?”-questions. The Curran-study notes that in general, European news outlets pay more attention to over-seas issues than the American ones. Finland, being the country in which there was the most international news coverage (27 percent), topped the U.S. on international coverage by 50 percent. This was due especially because the U.S. commercial broadcasting system was clearly more soft-news-oriented than the Finnish public service one. However, when it came to newspapers, it became evident that the lack of a tabloid culture made the U.S. newspapers actually to be more focused on hard news and the European ones. In Europe, the most hard news oriented press was to be found yet again in Finland.

What then came to public knowledge, the study noted that Americans were especially uninformed about international issues. Americans did worse in response to seven of the eight common international hard news questions. For example: only 37 percent of Americans could identify the Kyoto treaty, whereas in Finland 84 percent of people were familiar with the term. The study also concludes a strong correlation between media content and public awareness even when looking at visibility of an issue during a longer range of time. Thus, Curran et al (2009) argue, that there is a clear connection between how and if media discusses an issue and what ordinary people know about it. Although they note that there are differences on how much news for example Americans and Finns consume, they found especially alarming, how in the United States also social

status effects public knowledge about hard news issues, whereas in Europe such knowledge-gaps do not exist.

## 1.2. Research questions

For the reasons and background described in the previous part of this chapter, I have found it interesting to look at three newspapers, two from the U.S. and one from Finland, and to analyse how they write about climate politics: who is interviewed for the articles, who are the actors in each story and from what angle climate change is looked at. The newspapers I have chosen are *Helsingin Sanomat* from Finland and *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times* from the United States. All three are considered to be “prestige press” – and therefore the most committed to the noblest norms of journalism: objectivity. This is important, because I am interested in particular in the way certain conventions of journalism are affecting coverage over climate politics: these include not only such less praised qualities as the emphasis on conflict and competition, but also avoiding bias. A central idea is the balance of opinions – a journalistic norm so closely related to objectivity it could be considered to be an interpretation of it. At the same time these norms could twist the coverage of climate politics just as they often do to coverage of other political issues.

When it comes to news reporting especially in print media, the actual writing of a story is merely one part of a long process. The core of journalism is seeking information and deciding what is important enough to print and what is not. Thus, journalists serve the public by acting as “gatekeepers” of publicity – as many media scholars have already previously proved (e.g. White, 1961). The decision making journalists conduct is motivated by certain normative orders, which Bennett (1996) suggests to be divided into three groups; political norms, economic norms and journalistic norms. The journalistic norms include objectivity, fairness, accuracy and balance. However, as pure objectivity can be deemed as somewhat impossible demand to be fulfilled, it often tends to lead to journalistic practices that favour official sources of authority and presenting “both sides”. According to Entman (1989) the journalistic practices already in themselves produce an informational bias. Journalism tends to lean into the beliefs and values its elite sources have adopted. These kind of tendencies are crucial to be understood when it comes to an issue as controversial a global warming. At the same time, climate change and the need to act against it seem to have become an issue of general consensus. Thus, I am also interested to see whether this has made journalism loose some of its most strict criticism.

As my theoretical background I have chosen to use the concepts of framing, which can be understood according to Entman (2005, viii) in its simplest form as how the media selects and highlights some facts of events and issues and makes connections so that it favours some world views or interpretations over others. Entman claims that to report news is to frame: when journalists make decisions over what to report and what

not, they influence people's perceptions over political matters, which ultimately gives media its power. Major events, such as Hurricane Katrina, for example, therefore influence the political agenda and public thinking.

Framing, in my opinion, plays to the way journalistic norms and decision affect the coverage. To give an example, we could look at how a certain newspaper reports a climate conference. Firstly a reporter writing the story must make decisions over who to interview: will it be the officials organizing the conference, the politicians taking part or the activists demonstrating outside. Already this decision is prone to affect what kind of frame the story will promote: each actor, of course, will want to promote their own views, their own way to frame the situation. Furthermore, a journalist must choose their own point of view, since it is not possible to discuss all the aspects of one convention. They might decide to take a closer look at economic aspects of the story, focus on politics or then make a feature story over the demonstrations outside. Although none of the stories is less objective than the other, the outcome of each one might be very different giving the readers a very different perspective on the issue. Thus, if wanting to simplify my research question to one sentence, I am interested on how climate politics are framed in newspapers.

This thesis – the outcome of the literature I have reviewed for my study and the empirical research I have conducted to answer my research question – is outlined as follows: I will start chapter two by a short review on my theoretical background, focused on framing but not excluding some other studies and thoughts over how journalistic norms might affect news coverage. In chapter three I will go through the political developments involving climate change and climate policy and in chapter four previous studies over environmental journalism in general and ones more related to my own topic in particular. Chapter five is dedicated to explain how I conducted the empirical part of this thesis: which methods I used, how I developed my coding tool and why I chose the papers I have chosen. This chapter will be followed with two chapters explaining analysis and the findings of my study, first the more quantitative and then the more qualitative findings.

The thesis will be concluded in chapter eight, in which I will relate my finding to a broader perspective over covering politics, but also evaluate how I was able to answer the questions that I set out in this introduction. I will also discuss some pitfalls of my research methods in general. However, some aspects of this should be discussed already at this part of the thesis, namely my own personal bias what comes to journalism and its study in general. Although my best intention is to study my subject objectively, as I will point out, objectivity per se is impossible. Thus, my own personal biases, such as my own adaptation to certain journalistic ideals due to working in the field for five years now, might play an unintended role in the way I read articles in each of the newspapers. I, of course, will do my best to avoid these blind spots.

## 2. CHOOSING NEWS AND HOW TO REPORT THEM

One of the most highly valued, but also the most disputed norms of journalism is the quest for impartial, unbiased, even objective reporting. It was not until the commercialization of news reporting and the press in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that objectivity became the primary ethical concern of a reporter (e.g. Kunelius 1999, 60). The idea was to cater to the widest possible variety of tastes – instead of appealing to smaller crowd of like-minded readers, the news were seen as a product that should lure everyone and hence, bring the best possible profit to the producers.

Later on the norm of objectivity been separated from the idea of commercialism. Impartiality has – quite interestingly – become a reason to object to such phenomena as infotainment or tabloidization usually affiliated with market concerns.

The ethical norm of objectivity and others related to it, such as accuracy, impartiality and sincerity are passed on through training, membership of professional organizations, commonly agreed codes of conduct and via established editorial hierarchies (Davis 2007, 37). Although they reviewed and even criticized by both journalists themselves and other actors in the public sphere, they are nevertheless values acting behind the actual work-process.

Objectivity, however, is a difficult art. It is reasonable to claim that it actually is an impossible norm for a journalist to fill: in one of his famous quotes the gonzo-journalist Hunter S. Thompson (2005, 44) notes, that the only thing he has seen ever come close to “Objective Journalism was a closed-circuit TV setup that watched the shoplifters in the General Store at Woody Creek, Colorado”. Thompson continues to depicting the problem of the concept in the following way:

*I always admired that machine, but I noticed that nobody paid much attention to it until one of those known, heavy, out-front shoplifters came into the place... but when that happened, everybody got so excited that the thief had to do something quick, like buy a green popsicle or a can of Coors and get out of the place immediately. So much for objective journalism. Don't bother to look for it here – not under any by-line of mine; nor anyone else I can think of. With the possible exception of things like box scores, race results and stock market tabulations, there is no such thing as Objective Journalism. The phrase itself is a pompous contradiction of terms. (Thompson 2005, 44)*

No journalist is a closed-circuit camera – the process of making news is, in itself, a process of making a news choice; an evaluation of what is important enough to be published and what is not. In this chapter I review some decisions and value judgements behind the process of news selection. I also plan to discuss how these judgements impact the influence of news bringing us to the theory of framing.

## 2.1. Objectivity and other journalistic norms

As a norm, objectivity, or at least the quest for it, is set to stone in the professional guidelines of the so-called journalistic standards. In Finland the National Union of Journalists and the Council for Mass Media (Julkisen sanan neuvosto) formed a new set of rules for good journalistic conduct in 2005. In the United States same sort of ethical guidance is provided by the Society of Professional Journalists. None of these organizations can act as legislators per se, but their legitimacy as organizations of self-regulation gives them strength to affect the way reporters and editors perceive good journalism. Abiding the codes of conduct is also valuable in the sense of making profit – most news organizations pride themselves for providing their viewers the least biased reporting. It is no wonder that for example many news corporations therefore wish to use such slogans as “Fair and balanced” (Fox News, news network, United States), “It is. Are you?” (*The Independent*, newspaper, United Kingdom) and “The most trusted name on the news” (CNN, news network, United States). Interestingly enough, for example the fair and balanced Fox News continues to attract a lot of criticism precisely due to the lack of it. What should be noted already at this point of this thesis is that such allegations always imply that objectivity is possible – and idea quite contrary to the notions of a socially constructed reality and the theory of framing which I will discuss later on.

Lichtenstein (2000, 239–251) reminds us though, that at the same time insisting that journalism cannot be objective may lead to a notion that such aiming to such objectivity is undesirable or even dangerous. According to Lichtenstein this might be do to the belief that objectivity is inherently conservative: reporters almost never make claims based on their own observation, but tend to attribute them to sources. These sources then, furthermore, need to be credible enough to perform their role, even though they too are hardly motivated by only the love of truth. Therefore each journalist must make decisions of which source to trust, and stay cautious of not becoming only a mouthpiece of politicians, business elites or any other source. Often, Lichtenstein claims, journalists tend to lean to balancing the exposure of the different sources – especially when it comes to controversial issues.

Objectivity brings a journalist only so far, though. Because print space or airtime are naturally limited, journalism requires both rapid individual and organisational decisions on what matters and why. Each news organization has a set of new criteria to guide the judgements. There are several common denominators between different news organizations what these criteria are and they have been heavily studied – among the most famous studies is the article by Galtung and Ruge (1965), where the Norwegian scholars find that e.g. closeness, conflict, frequency and negativity of an issue influence the amount of coverage it receives. They are certainly less noble than the values of fairness and accuracy, but can be considered to be norms none the less.

Intertwined to the ideas of Galtung and Ruge and perhaps even less idealistically, Bennett (1996) claims that the things that affect journalistic coverage can be divided into three normative orders. These are political norms, economic norms and journalistic norms, which all affect the coverage in more subtle ways than routine decisions. Bennett points out that at times these normative orders may clash – not only in the obvious case of democratic accountability and corporate interest colliding, but also because journalists may persist in unpopular representations of politics due to a professional pressure for political balance. What becomes the determining norm affecting the coverage, shifts depending on the situation at hand. Bennett notes that in “defining moments of history” journalists are more prone to “speak with less passive and more direct voices”. According to Bennett, however, this does not mean that reporters would start to write their own personal scripts for news. Even in situations where journalists seem to be liberated from the usual constraints of representing official views, a significant standardization of content emerges introducing familiar cultural themes to the coverage.

Some reasons for the significant standardization can be found from the realm of the sociology of news, namely the way news production can be organized into three perspectives commonly employed to the making of news. According to Schudson (2000, 177), these three include the political economy approach, social organization and occupations approach and the cultural approach. Interestingly enough, the political economy approach is quite close to the idea of Bennett’s political and economical normative orders. Bennett’s journalistic norms furthermore would fit nicely into the social organization and cultural approaches to news production. For the purposes of this thesis, this is also the most interesting approach.

Schudson (2000, 183–188) notes that journalism, on a day-to-day basis, is interaction between journalists and government officials. Journalists rely on their sources, without which there would be no news. Official sources seem to dominate the news, which for one disputes the ability of journalism to fully mirror reality. Official sources are not only used to provide citizens valuable information but also to legitimate news – make it more real, so to speak. Furthermore, Schudson claims that news production is heavily affected by the way journalists are socialized to their work places and the way professional culture is passed on not only from newsroom to newsroom, but also internationally. Journalists still seem to reflect commonly accepted cultural stereotypes and ways of perceiving an issue.

Schudson (2000, 183–188) then goes on to referring to the classic study by Daniel C. Hallin (1984), which claims that reporters that may otherwise be tough and critical, will not blink to report gushingly about a topic on which there is a broad national consensus. In his study, Hallin calls the area in which this sort of topics lie, the sphere of consensus. This sphere, can be described as the realm of “apple pie and motherhood”, as Hallin (1984, 20) himself puts it: in its bounds lie those issues that journalists do not feel compelled to regard as controversial. Often they might even promote the values in this realm, acting as advocates or protectors of a common good.

In contrast, the issues that lie in the so-called sphere of deviance are quickly judged against breaching the ideas of unbiased reporting: the opinions in this realm might be unworthy to even be heard. Thus, unbiased or at least appropriately critical journalism seems to be written on the topics that are located within what Hallin calls the sphere of legitimate controversy. There, Hallin claims objective journalism reigns supreme. The status of each issue is not set in stone – perhaps due to gaining more scientific insight or other changes in the society, an issue of general consensus can lose its place and become disputed or vice versa. (Hallin 1984, 21–22)

Hallin (1984, 13–20) reminds that even though journalism has a strong ideological emphasis on objectivity, this is not to say that journalism would be objective: news content is shaped by several factors which can create for example a political slant “irrespective of journalists' commitment to objectivity”. At the same time, Hallin notes that the commitment does have certain implications to the process of making news itself: as discussed already earlier in this chapter, the news gathering routines tend to rely heavily on official sources, thus bringing up dissenting opinions about a the story under consideration only if official opinions differed from one another. According to Hallin, this also further boosts their legitimacy, affirming that e.g. government sources have deeper knowledge on the issue at hand. Still, journalists do find this to be a paradox: at the same time the official sources are often the ones they should be questioning. This controversy partly relates to the so-called strategic ritual of objectivity, which will be discussed later in the second part of this chapter.

One should note, of course, that the notions of “what effects journalistic coverage” have been studied also by several other scholars. Very close to Hallin's ideas lies the so-called hierarchy of influences model developed by Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen Reese (1996). Shoemaker and Reese argue that five different factors affect media content. These include the individual journalists, the journalistic routines, the media organization, the influence of outside actors and the predominant ideology in the society. Hallin's theory of the sphere would thus, in my opinion, discuss the last one of these “levels”. In fact, Shoemaker and Reese (ibid., 227–228) cite Hallin's study in their own work and later on point out that:

*Journalists will not use objective routines, such as balance, when subjects are outside the area of legitimate controversy and in the areas of consensus and deviance. (Shoemaker and Reese 1996, 270)*

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) also touch on several other points already discussed here: these include the effects of established codes of ethic (ibid.,92–102), news values (ibid.,110–112) and using official sources (ibid., 128–134). They also refer to the ritual of objectivity (ibid., 130 ), which I will discuss later.



All in all, it can be easily deduced that so-called objective journalism is heavily influenced through its routines, its formal norm and naturally the culture in which it operates. There are, however, even more subtle ways, yet intertwined with the ways discussed previously, in which journalism differs from its ideals of objectivity. I now go on to discuss the ways the form and concept of news affects the coverage.

## **2.2. News as a frame**

Sometimes the only thing that differentiates an art installation from garbage is a small sign on the side. In the same way, labelling something as news and communicating it in the form of news affects the way in which it is interpreted. I will now discuss the concept of news, which in itself is already an act of framing, then going into more detail to theory quite vastly used in the field of social science.

### ***2.2.1. What are frames and how are they formed?***

In her book *Making News* (1978, 2–3) Gaye Tuchman looks at news as a frame – concentrating on the processes in which news are socially constructed via professionalism and news organizations. The formal barriers between different sections of the paper, the differentiation of different types of stories and even labelling a story e.g. news analysis affect the way the stories are perceived by both the reader and the writer. The choice on how an issue is reported, however, is often claimed to one of intuition. Tuchman notes that e.g. in the case of labelling a story “news analysis”, reporters of then have trouble explaining the distinction between facts and value judgements. She thus claims that understandings between these two concepts presuppose the legitimacy of existing institutions and news networks. Therefore, news do not merely mirror events, but frame them. The famous “inverted pyramid” form of a news story gives a fair leverage to choice of what actually are the central facts of news stories. (ibid., 97–100)

For Tuchman, the news frame is like a window through which we interpret the world. It is used to make sense of the otherwise arbitrary strips of reality, organizing occurrences into meaningful events. She claims that at times reporter may even seek frames that would enable them to state certain opinions. This is particularly easily observed in television news, but can be seen also in newspaper stories. (Tuchman 1978, 189–193)

However, more commonly than from personal or editorial interest journalists adopt a news frame from the stakeholders in a certain issue. Because one of the news criteria is unexpectedness, generally the first journalists to cover a certain issue have only a little time to get acquainted on the topic itself. Thus, they often are reliant on their sources to provide an initial set of expectations and background briefings. Then, as journalists as humans tend to see what they expect, they are prone to view certain events from the frame originally set by the stakeholders. Tuchman (1976) notes that in this context, objectivity functions as a

“strategic ritual” designed to achieve self-serving goals for journalists. As they attribute the facts to sources, they can accept conceptual frames without violating the canon of objectivity. Where as objectivity requires reporters to report facts, but it does say which facts they should report. (Miller & Riechert 2000, 50)

Framing has been, of course, widely studied also by many others than Tuchman. Its origins lie in the idea that reality is in fact socially constructed and thus affected by the way it is communicated to others. Johnson-Carter (2005, 4) notes that in the realm of communication research this idea goes back as far as the thoughts of Harold Lasswell in the 1930's, who then pointed out that the public turns to mass media for guidance on how to live in the society. Tannen (1993), furthermore, has noted that the study of human frames has produced interesting findings in multiple academic disciplines ranging from sociology, psychiatry and ethnography to linguistics and epistemology. Tannen herself views frames as “structures of expectations”, a set of vital connections, which give us a perception of the world around us.

In communication research framing connects itself fundamentally to the such widely noted theories of media effects as cultivation theory. Closest to framing are the ideas of priming and agenda-setting carved already before the theory of framing. They should not be, however, confused to framing itself. Although there are several consistencies between second-level agenda-setting, framing research's primary goal is to show how news content influences and affects news consumers. Agenda-setting and priming are more focused more on how news may promote and issue prioritization or increase issue accessibility. Framing proves that journalism or mass media as a whole does more than just primes certain issues or values. According to Johnson-Carter, it is grounded within the narrative paradigm as well as the construction of social reality theory providing a researcher the way to account how political communicators utilize and construct political meaning in our society. (Johnson-Carter 2005, 24–27)

At this point, of course, it is valuable to note that journalist themselves are, in fact, political actors, albeit unwilling ones. Although journalists clearly see themselves as prominent actors in the society performing a role crucial to the fulfilment of democracy, they are not eager to admit they in fact affect the process and “twist” reality in a way that could be seen to contradict the ideas of objective journalism. This, as discussed already previously in this chapter, may lead to interesting “strategic rituals”. In this respect, it is important to see that news venues are not merely channels through which news are transmitted, but also forums of discussion in which political elites and actors wish to affect public opinion and thus promote their own frames. Journalists, in this respect, are different from these actors only by the fact they are not aiming to promote their opinion, but the one they see to be the objective one (Carpini 2005, 23). In order to do so, they seek evidence from both oral and written sources, evaluating the status quo situation and trying to see the hidden motives of other actors (Johnson-Carter 2005, 162).

However, as Entman (1989, 30–31) has noted, choosing how to put together the facts effects the outcome – numbers and figures cannot speak for themselves, but they have to be interpreted either by the journalists themselves or by sources. This then, leaves a journalist seeking objectivity in the mercy of their sources: objectivity requires both depersonalization and balance. In essence, to report news is to frame: framing can be seen as the process in which a journalist selects and highlights some facts or events, makes connections between them so that a particular interpretation, evaluation or solution is promoted (Entman 2005, viii). Journalistic frames, in particular, root from normative, political, institutional and professional practices and constraints (Carpini 2005, 26–31). This, of course, reflects to the earlier notions of objectivity discussed in this chapter.

It should be noted that the word “frame” itself suggests an active process and result: thus emphasising the political role of the press, presenting framing as an exercise of power (Reese 2001, 8–10). It is, however, according to Tankard (2001, 96–99), a more sophisticated term than bias: it recognizes the ability of texts to define situations or issues and sets the terms of debate rather than imposes a mere pro-con-setting. Tankard sees frames as the perfect tools to reflect the richness of media discourse and the subtle differences in text. Thus, it offers an alternative to the old objectivity–bias-paradigm of research.

### ***2.2.2. What kind of frames are there and where to look for them?***

What kind of frames are there then? Callaghan & Schnell (2005) divide the frames into three groups. These include issue specific frames, thematic and episodic frames, and generic frames. The issue specific frames can be studied by examining the impact of alternative descriptions of policy issues. Thematic and episodic frames first place the issue or event in content and then focuses on a certain event or a person. These frames can e.g. alter who is seen responsible for, say, an environmental catastrophe. The third group, generic frames, usually refer to narrative device journalists use to convey political information, such as the widely popular “horse race–election”-comparison in political journalism. The generic frames can also act as broader frames of specific political issues. In a pluralistic society, the competing frames – whether produced by journalists or public officials, compete with each other, thus insuring all groups should have their say. Especially in American politics so-called counter-themes play a significant role in public discussion. (Callaghan & Schnell 2005, 4–6)

In order to pull out the frames in question Tankard (2001, 101) suggests to look at eleven footprints to identify frames. These include the headlines and “kickers” of a story, subheads, photographs, photo captions, leads, selection of sources or affiliations, selections of quotes, pull quotes, logos, statistics and graphs and finally, concluding paragraphs. For the purposes of this thesis, my interest lies primarily on the textual aspects of framing. According to Hertog and McLeod (2001, 148) the first indicators of a frame will be the choice of actors presenting information, ideas and positions within the text: the sources chosen structure the

discussion. After this, the researchers claim, one should seek a master narrative. They personally connect this idea of myths, which thus bring the cultural dimension to interpreting news texts. Thirdly, one should look at frame vocabulary: it is for example very different to talk about “a baby” rather than “a fetus”. As Tankard (2001, 104–105) warns, however, it is hard to form testable conclusions through coding and qualitative interpretations of texts. One might also note, that the idea of being able to codify social meanings in itself, is positivist: by evaluating whether a journalist as succeeded in framing a story, suggests there is a right way to frame the story (Durham 2001, 129). Still, as Hertog and McLeod (2001, 152–153) remind, a mere quantitative analysis might miss several powerful concepts just because they are not repeated often.

Therefore, the qualitative analysis allows to catch new insight, especially when used alongside with content analysis. How I have used these two methods in this thesis will be explained in further detail in chapter five. Before that, however, I will first discuss some recent events in climate politics and then relate those to the contents of this chapter through my review of previous studies in chapter four.

### **3. CLIMATE CHANGE AND POLITICS**

Because the global degradation of environment is a global issue both ecologically, politically and economically, it is most commonly viewed that such problems also require global solutions (Elliot 2004, 7). Together with such phenomena as the pollution of oceans or acid rain, global warming is an environmental issue that does not respect borders or national politics. Therefore, it is useful to briefly discuss the raise of environmental questions to the international agenda and both in Finland and the United States.

#### **3.1. Greening of the global political agenda**

Together with the drastic emergence of environmental news coverage, environmental politics were brought to the global agenda during the 1960's. It was perhaps Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* (1962), which brought human impact on environment to the forefront of the discussion. As many have noted, biologist Carson's book on the impact of the use of pesticides on bird life was seminal to the intellectual developments in the field of ecology. These concerns lead ultimately to the first milestone of global environmental politics: the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden. (Elliot 2004, 7–9)

The aim of the UN's Stockholm conference was to provide a framework for comprehensive considerations of the problems of the human environment. As was to be anticipated by the political situation of the time, the conference was contentious from the start – the Communist bloc countries withdrew from the negotiations on ideological and political concerns, confident that environmental degradation was merely a capitalist problem. At the same time, developing countries were wary that “Northern” eagerness for nature conservation would take precedence over poverty and underdevelopment. It was no wonder that the final product, the Stockholm Declaration, was only a non-binding declaration of just 26 countries: a compromise, which accommodated among other things the competing interests of developed and developing countries. For example, it asserted a state's sovereign rights over its resources and its responsibility for environmental damage beyond its borders, but gave no guidance as to how these two potentially competing purposes might be reconciled. The most important outcome of the conference thus came to be paving the way establishment of several international institutions, such as the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). It was also during the time of the Stockholm conference that general climate issues were addressed at a series of scientific conferences. This discussion lead later on to the Toronto conference and the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988 discussed later on. (Elliot 2004, 10–12 and 81)

#### **3.2. Attention to the degradation of the global atmosphere**

After Stockholm, during the late 1970's, environmental discussion and coverage slowly fell outside the most hardcore media agenda. Although scientific knowledge was more widely attained, the expertise of environmental NGOs increased and also social, economic and political causes were taken into more

consideration, there seemed to be a lot of activity but not much real action (Elliot 2004, 12). Hannigan (1995, 63) notes that during this time environmental coverage became more event and problem-centred – a view shared by Elliot (2004, 13), who notes that in the west public concern of environmental issues was heightened by a series of catastrophes such as the 1976 dioxin leak in Seveso, Italy or the 1979 partial meltdown at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania, USA. However, it wasn't until mid-1980's, when the 1986 explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant carved environmental concerns deep at least to European minds.

The late 1980's were marked by a more active public debate and multilateral attention on environmental issues, but also the degradation of the global atmosphere in particular. The first major agreement on the issue was formed in the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer adopted in 1985. Two years later in 1987, 24 countries and the European Community adopted the so-called Montreal Protocol the aim of which was to control the consumption of two groups of ozone-depleting substances. Although the protocol itself was considered to be a successful piece of environmental diplomacy and important step in securing the ozone layer, it contained several loopholes that made it inadequate to serve its cause. Already at this point the developing and the developed countries had a hard time agreeing who should reduce emissions the most. In January 1988 scientists, policy-makers and representatives of non-governmental organizations met in again in Canada, but now in Toronto for the Changing Atmosphere: Implications for Global Security conference to forge voluntary targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In the same year World Meteorological Organization and UNEP established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which would play a central role in the discussion on global warming until the foreseeable future and would in its part, be the most important factor to produce a global consensus on the science of climate change. These developments, leading to the second milestone of global environmental politics, the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, produced also several other resolutions discussing the environment (Elliot 2004, 13–15 and 74–76).

IPCC was established to be an organization that would not take part in the research itself but provide a platform for scientists in different fields to discuss the issue and to synthesize the available peer-reviewed scientific data. The panel released its first report in 1990 emphasizing that combating climate change would be a long-term issue, and gave grave warning the governments could not simply ignore (First ten years 2004, 13–16). This report, according to the organization itself (Sixteen Years of Scientific Assessment in Support of the Climate Convention 2004), played a crucial role in the fact that the Rio Earth Summit would be organized two years after.

### **3.3. Rio – some success, much failure**

The 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio was expected to elaborate strategies and methods to halt and reverse environmental degradation in the context of increased national and

international effort to promote sustainable and environmentally sound development in all countries. The preparations for the summit were to be open and also NGOs were invited to contribute, but already from the starts they were concerned by the lack of transparency. At the actual summit 178 national delegations and 1 400 officially accredited NGOs were present together with a strong media presence. Although the main committee ran out of time disputing among other things on atmospheric issues, the conference produced three agreements: the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and the Statement of Forest Principles. The agreements were formally adopted in the final two days of the summit and two separately negotiated conventions – the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity – were opened for signature. The conference, as a whole, was pictured to be a mixture of “some success and much failure”, and for years to come governments would be criticized for failing to meet Rio’s twin goals of establishing a firm basis for sustainable development and halting global environmental degradation. (Elliot 2004, 15–21)

It is no wonder that the UNFCCC is a fairly short document: the committee, which was given 18 months to produce the convention in time for Rio, was torn by mixed political and economic interests from the beginning on. Strategies for addressing green house emissions reach to the very core of a country’s politics and developed industrialized countries were reluctant to take a larger burden to act. Especially the United States still argues that their reductions on emissions would be redundant if developing countries, which are quickly becoming the biggest polluters, do not do the same. Together with the European Community and Japan, the United States was reluctant and cautious to sign any agreement, which would affect their trade relations or harm their competitiveness in the world markets. Developing countries, on their side, viewed this as environmental colonialism and an effort to restrain economic development. They wanted treaty with specific commitments and implementations, but were still wary of placing restrictions on energy use or agricultural practice that might hinder their further development. Also, much dispute arose from how to factor scientific uncertainty of global warming in to the agreement. Thus, the final convention contained no authoritative targets or deadlines – largely because the opposition of the U.S. and oil-exporting countries. Still, recognizing “the common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities” of the rich North and the poor South, it showed a powerful change in the relations of the two. 154 countries and the European Community signed the Convention, and it entered into force in 1994. (Elliot 2004, 82–87)

Currently the UNFCCC has a decision making process that divides the countries taking part in the convention into certain groups according to their level of development. There are altogether 189 parties in the Convention, each of which have different commitments. This is reflected in their listings in the Convention’s annexes, which are: Annex I, Annex II, Countries with economies in transition (EITs) and Non-Annex I Parties. The first group includes 41 most developed countries, including the European Community which is a party in its own right. This group agreed to reduce emissions to the 1990’s levels by 2000 and also has to submit regular reports on their success. Annex II includes only the 24 most highly developed countries

of Annex I and they are, aside from the Annex I responsibilities, also to promote sustainable development in the developing countries. The third group includes 14 countries mostly part of the former Soviet Union some of which are also included in Annex I due to their membership in the EU. The rest of the parties are included in the Non-Annex I Parties -group and are mostly developing countries that have fewer obligations than others. There are also several other parties in the Convention that make it fairly difficult to comprehend the decision making process of the organization. These include negotiation between the different parties; parties reviewing the information provided by the different scientific and implementing bodies of the convention, which themselves can have discussions and later on, parties reviewing the implementation of policies and issues. The UNFCCC also gathers information from varied other UN sources making it almost as huge and varied body of information – scientific, social, economic and political – as the climate change itself. (First ten years 2004, 16–18)

### **3.4. Kyoto – a remarkable yet troublesome treaty**

After the establishment of the UNFCCC, the next major step in global climate politics was the Kyoto treaty formed after heated and fractious negotiations in 1997. As a major shift in its policy, the United States committed to the need for legally binding targets. Compared to the European Union, though, it failed to get the moral upper hand – the U.S. favoured setting targets to take account of different capabilities, where as the European Union had committed to an ambitious 15 percent reduction in emissions by 2010. After a 36-hour non-stop final session parties reached a conclusion that included reductions on emission, provided incentives for developed and developing countries to do so (e.g. emission trading permits according to the International Emissions Trading scheme) and established the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). Although the protocol was considered to be a remarkable achievement, it ran into trouble almost immediately after the conference. In order for the protocol to work, the Kyoto mechanism was seen to require a complex institutional structure, the lack of which made many countries reluctant to ratify the treaty. Disagreements between a loosely tied coalition known as the Umbrella Group (USA, Japan, Canada, Australia, Norway and New Zealand) and the European Union lead into the U.S. announcing in 2001 that it would no longer support the Kyoto Protocol on the grounds that it was “fundamentally flawed”. In 2002, however, the U.S. President George W. Bush announced a domestic programme for greenhouse reductions, based on voluntary targets that some considered to leaving open the option for U.S. rejoining the Kyoto process at some stage. Business interests in the U.S. were torn between the value of the agreement and the fear of not gaining profit from the IET. Still, at the same time the lack of global consensus seemed to hinder all international negotiations after Kyoto, making it possible that emissions would be increasing instead of reducing. (Elliot 2004, 87–90)

The United States was not the only country to be hesitant about the Kyoto treaty. Most developing countries refused to sign it, because they – again – viewed the problem to be caused by the developing countries. It was not in their economic interests to sign the treaty either, though, because their industries are not as



developed and often compete with lower prices thus being unable to acquire the technology that might be required to meet the Kyoto goals. This point made the especially the United States jolt already because of the simple fact that if the emissions of the poor South would not be regulated at this point, they would surpass the collective emissions of the North by 2010. (Lairson & Skidmore 2003, 440–442)

### **3.5. Bali – paving the way for a new treaty**

In past years, however, a common will to combat climate change has strengthened in many countries. This has been due, perhaps, to an increasing scientific consensus on an anthropogenic origin of global warming and wider public knowledge. Also the possible costs of climate change became made visible partly in the Stern report published in 2006, which declared that climate change might not come as costly if humanity acted now. According to the report, about two percent of the gross domestic product of the world would need to be used to cover the costs of a changing climate. This would amount to a total of over a trillion dollars. (Engelman 2009, 201)

Although United States' lack of interest in working towards a common goal was a setback to a global environmental policy, several industrial nations have committed to make cuts in their emissions. The European Union even proposed to make 30 percent cuts from the 1990 level of emissions, if other industrialized nations would be willing to do the same. The IPCC report of 2007, which emphasized the cost of climate change, was taken as a serious warning against not doing anything. (Flavin & Engelman 2009, 29–31)

At the same time an *Economist* article titled “The Greening of America” (2007) pointed out that the democrat majority U.S. congress and even some of the formerly fairly global warming sceptical republicans started taking more interest in environmental issues. Consequently also the business elites had suddenly started to contribute in solving the issue: Exxon-Mobil, the until then a “fierce sceptic of global warming” had now conceded that there is a problem and that its products were contributing to it – and that it would be willing to think about regulation. The interest of the firms was perhaps due to their want to influence the future regulations. This, though, did not take away the fact that the awakening of companies could reflect to the way the media was now picturing the problem, which as a whole then easily played a part in how the politicians conceive the issue. Multinational companies affect global politics not only through lobby-groups that are in the plenty for example in the European Parliament, but also through the media and the forming of the public opinion. By 2009, 27 large corporations, such as Dow Chemical, General Motors and Xerox had announced that they supported emission caps of greenhouse gasses (Flavin & Engelman 2009, 31).

And where as the U.S. Federal government failed to act, local governments have started to take action. Until the end of year 2008 about 27 states have formed their own climate policies, and southern and northern states

have agreed on emissions trading (Flavin& Engelman 2009, 31). This might be prove to be a positive indicator to the upcoming negotiations in Copenhagen. Taking part in the most important climate talks since the Kyoto treaty countries must decide in November 2009 how they will balance the demands of a slumping economy and a changing environment.

Preceded by the so-called roadmap formed in the negotiations in Bali in 2007, the Copenhagen negotiations do not start of scratch. However, already the Bali-negotiations proved that full consensus on climate action is still far away: the poorest and the least industrialized countries found it hard to commit to the goals of the rich North. Also the U.S. Delegation refused to agree on emission gaps for the industrialized countries. This initiated the need to several meeting during year 2008 – in Bangkok, Bonn, Accra and Poznan – in which the base for a new environmental treaty was formed. Still, the Bali-roadmap made clear to both states and multinational corporations, that the basic ideas of Kyoto would be taken forward in the future in a much stricter paste. (Engelman 2009, 207–209)

In general the Copenhagen negotiations are expected to be difficult. The chief negotiator of Finland, Sirkka Haunia told roughly a month before the convention in *Helsingin Sanomat* that the world should not wait a complete treaty from Copenhagen: this is because the United States cannot sign a treaty yet since their legislation on the issue is still not done. Still, some result have to be achieved: Haunia hopes that the countries will settle to the target of not letting earth's temperature to rise more than two degrees. (Mannila 2009, B4)

### **3.6. Climate politics in the United States**

At the time of writing of this thesis the U.S. Federal government officially has a wide array of co-operation programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, most of which are commissioned through the Environmental Protection Agency EPA. The programs also focus on changing agricultural practices and implementing technologies that would help reduce emissions. The government is also involved in supporting scientific research on the effects of climate change and the possibility of predicting its outcomes. There have also been tax incentives to promote e.g. cleaner production of energy, hybrid-cars and resident solar heating systems. A variety of consumer products have been imposed with new energy efficiency standards. (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2009)

Although the United States have criticised for their stance in the international negotiations, a new president Barack Obama has lighted the hopes of many already before he was elected. Previously, the U.S. government was seen by many as a puppet of big-oil corporations. Now, the Obama–Biden-campaign took announced as one of the central themes opting for investment in clean renewable energy and fighting climate change (Democratic National Committee 2008). Also the Republican Party in its 2008 platform announced that

climate change should be addressed – though responsibly. According to the Republican National Committee (2008) the solutions should be sought from technology and the markets, not governmental action. U.S. as a whole should not have to carry the global burden, either, though the party also sees a lot of good in global co-operation. Thus, needless to say, the differences between the two major parties, will probably keep U.S. climate politics vivid with debate in the near future too. It should be still noted that president Obama has expressed clear hope that Copenhagen will produce a great treaty: even if it would not solve all the problems, it will serve as a major step for future actions.

### **3.7. Climate politics in Finland**

Contrary to the United States, Finland has both signed and ratified the Kyoto treaty together with other European Union member states. Thus, in international climate negotiations Finland acts as a part of the European Union and acts out commonly agreed principles on greenhouse gas reductions, for example. Altogether the Union has agreed on 20-percent cuts compared to the year 1990 levels by year 2020. The so-called sector of emissions trading, the EU has promised to cut 21 percent compared to the 2005-levels. In Finland, the non-emission trading sectors, such as agriculture and traffic, aim at 16 percent cuts compared to year 2005. Also, the government hopes that in the future about 38 percent of energy used would come from renewable sources of energy. (Ministry of the Environment 2009)

The current centre-right-green administration has agreed on supporting a “cross-border environmental strategies” sustainable growth and e.g. supports the European emissions trading system (Valtioneuvosto 2007). The existing institutions still have their problems, as the recent EU-agreement on climate change policy proved. Although the European Union leaders finally agreed to adopt a binding target on the use of renewable energy, the 27 states had to negotiate for a long time before reaching any agreement. The fact that the Union decided to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 20 percent from the 1990 levels by 2020 was a compromise and even still, criticized by many, along with them Finland. (BBC News 9. March, 2007.)

Late during the autumn of the year 2009 the Finnish government decided to cut emissions so that they will decrease compared to 1990 80 percent by the year 2050. This decision rose also some differences in the otherwise very consensus oriented Finnish political culture: for example, Prime minister Matti Vanhanen expressed that all possible actions to combat climate change would have now been done, where as the climate expert of the parliament, Oras Tynkkynen wanted to note that there would be still a lot to be done. Among other things, the parliament had a long discussion over whether ordinary people should start compromising their lifestyles in order to better preserve the environment. (Vuoristo 2009, A8)

#### **4. ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS IN THE NEWS**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, environmental issues rose to the political agenda during the 1960's together with the emergence of press coverage over nature and pollution. The study of environmental communication was thus a natural continuation path for many scholars who had previously looked into news coverage with tools of rhetorical criticism. Since its origins in the 1980's, its aim has been not only to provide law firms government agencies, businesses, public relations firms and non-profit environmental groups tools to better communicate their goals, but also contribute to the theories of human communication itself. It also reminds us of the very material consequences of our communication choices: how journalists choose to write about e.g. new clean air acts directly influences the decisions of citizens and politicians. It is thus important to go through previous studies in the field of environment and journalism, and then, more precisely, climate change and journalism. (Cox 2006, 5)

##### **4.1. Journalism and environmental issues**

The study of environmental communication can be divided into seven different fields, which include the studies of environmental rhetoric and discourse; public participation in environmental decision making; advocacy campaigns; environmental collaboration and conflict resolution; risk communication; the representations of nature in popular culture and green marketing; and media and environmental journalism. Although all seven fields are intertwined, especially the last one of these has become its own sub field. Not only do the scholars of media and environment look at the way environmental issues are portrayed in the news, the internet, advertising, commercial programs and alternative media outlets. They also look at how these messages effect the public perception of the issues at hand. The most common subjects include the agenda-setting role of the media and media framing of environmental stories. (Cox 2006, 7–11)

What also makes the study of media and the environment especially important, is the fact how great of an importance it holds over the public knowledge of environmental issues. Cox (2006,164–171) points out that from asbestos to lead poisoning, the news media have historically been the single most important outlet of information. It is, thus, no wonder that especially the effects of environmental news coverage have been widely studied: these studies have often pondered with the ideas of the so-called direct transmission model, agenda-setting and narrative framing.

At the same time, the portrayal of nature in mainstream media is hardly uniform: it varies from tornadoes on nightly news to climbing a peaceful mountain ridge at the Himalayas. Especially environmental journalists nowadays face a dilemma of reduced print-space combined to more complex stories to tell. According to Cox (2006, 164–171) this often tends to lead to the need to dramatize issues or leave them totally unreported. He claims that the unobtrusiveness of many environmental concerns makes them hard for mainstream media to cover. This applies especially to such cumulative threats as pollution. One might note, still, that such a

phenomenon applies not only to environmental coverage, but also to any other type of complex issues, especially politics.

First introduced by Anthony Downs (1972), the so-called issue cycle theory has been widely used in the study of journalism and environmental issues.<sup>4</sup> What many have found interesting, though, is also looking at beyond the mere frequency of environmental themes – to put the focus on the content of environmental news and especially to news production. Some studies revolve around the political economy of news: with an increasing consolidation of media ownership, some editors might feel pressured to avoid stories that would act against the concerns of businesses (McNair 1994, 42). Also, for example, the income structure or political orientation of the community of a certain news outlet might effect how that medium covers environmental issues (Cox 2006, 173). Dunwoody and Griffin (1993, 28) note that newspapers in more pluralistic communities cover environmental issues more extensively, are likely to reflect conflicting views and do more enterprise reporting than the ones in homogeneous communities. According to them, this might be due also to the fact that community leaders in more pluralistic communities are more likely to perceive local press as taking initiative to reporting conflict.

The evaluations of what is news and what is not relates to the theories of gatekeeping<sup>5</sup> in relation to the so-called environmental beat. Journalists might find it difficult to deal with environmental issues, because not only they are unobtrusive, but also often their coverage would require scientific insight. Thus, the “gatekeepers” will not eagerly touch environmental issues. (Cox 2009, 173–175)

In relation to this, a many studies have also been done in relation to the idea of “newsworthiness” of environmental issues. In her book *Media, culture and the environment* (1997, 117–130), Alison Anderson claims that environmental coverage often is event-centred, preferably characterized by strong visual elements and closely tied to the 24-hour news cycle. On the other hand, Friedman claims (2004, 192) that this pattern might have changed: the most obvious stories have started to give way to complex ones, including climate change.

As in this thesis, many scholars have also related their studies over environmental coverage to the idea of framing: journalists simplify, frame or make maps or the “surrounding world” to communicate their story. For example Miller & Riechert (2000, 51–52) have found out that compared to issues of other nature the official sources have an especially strong effect to the ways an environmental risks and catastrophes are framed. This is because environmental risk often enters news via disaster or protest. The events that initiate environmental news often occur in specific locations where local journalists provide the initial coverage. These reporters lean local government and corporations sources with whom they are used to interacting with

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<sup>4</sup> Downs's ideas will be discussed in more detail on page 27

<sup>5</sup> The gatekeeping function of media was first introduced in 1950 in the classic study “The Gatekeeper: a case-study in the selection of news” by David M. White, published in the *Journalism Quarterly*, vol.27 no. 4, 383–390.

rather than contacting e.g. environmentalist groups. Thus, the initial frame is likely to remain the persistent one, especially as other journalists tend to refer to the coverage of others in their later reports on the same occurrence. In the case of competing interests and thus, competing frames, journalists are furthermore likely to be attracted to the ones that are promoted by the recognized source with authority. Miller and Riechert also note that in this case the classic model of the three spheres of political discourse by Daniel Hallin (1984) can be applied to the representation of environmental issues, although it has not been often used to explain them.

Gamson and Modigliani (1989), on the other hand, have found five framing devices journalists use in framing news stories. These include metaphors, exemplars (previous incidents), catchphrases, depictions and visual images. It should be noted that especially the catchphrases and metaphors chose lie in the highly political domain of defining a problem and how to address it. Gamson and Modigliani claim that these devices are used to give meaning to a particular issue: they are a set of interpretive packages. Although Gamson and Modigliani's study discussed the discourses of nuclear power in particular, one could view them as applicable to also other environmental issues.

In relations to Gamson and Modigliani's ideas, environmental coverage can also be looked through the ideas of "narrative framing". The concept refers to the way media organizes bits and pieces of the issue in question through stories to aid the reader's understanding of the issue. This organization has then the potential to affect the reader's relationships to the issue being represented. Although discourse does not "cause" public opinion, it is part of the process by which individuals construct meaning. (Cox 2006, 186).

In their study over environmental media coverage James Shanahan and Katrine McComas (1999, 34–35) observe that it is hardly ever the simple communication of fact: journalists use narrative structures to make their stories more interesting, and often, namely more "story-like" than just a list of facts. The packages then seem to be structuring our understanding of environmental issues to some paths more than others. Thus, one could argue media frames sustain dominant discourses about nature. This applies most often to the way radical environmentalist groups are portrayed: for example Pirita Juppi showed in her 2004 study that the Finnish animal rights movement was marginalized in most of the Finnish prestige press. Although several different participants have been a part in defining the animal rights movement and their legitimacy, it is often the journalists, who have a very significant role in defining and representing the movement – and not only in editorials, but also news texts (Juppi 2004, 185–188). This, of course, brings us back to the notions of objective journalism discussed in chapter two.

In the study of environmental issues in the media, the notions of objective journalism have been studied fairly widely. According to Miller and Riechert (2000, 51) several case studies have proved that journalists tend to rely official sources when it come to reporting environmental risk. They claim that this is due to the fact that governmental sources are readily available and because the usage of these sources is build into news

gathering routines. In many cases, they note, these sources are also somewhat accountable for a certain type of environmental risks e.g. nuclear disasters or toxic spills. Cox (2006, 181) notes that the twin values of objectivity and balance run into difficulty especially when it comes to environmental journalism: for example, the specific facts of deforestation may be accurate, but a kind of bias has already taken place in the selection of the forest story compared to others. Also, the choices of its framing and who to interview impose a value-judgement to the story.

However, many critics claim, bias might not be all bad for environmental journalists in particular. In his book *The Green Ink* (1998), journalist Michael Frome defends the idea of advocacy journalism as something for the common good. According to Frome, the role of environmental journalism should be to help the public see a better society, help them make informed decisions and thus, promote the birth of a better democracy. This also applies to his definition of environmental journalism:

*I define environmental journalism as writing with a purpose, designed to present the public with sound, accurate data as the basis of informed participation in the process of decision making on environmental issues. (...) It requires more than learning 'how to write', but learning the power of emotion and imagery, to think not simply 'Who, What, When, and Why' – but to think Whole, with breadth and perspective. (Frome 1998, ix–x)*

This view, needless to say, differs much from the basic ideas of objective and balanced journalism. In the same fashion, many have argued that what is considered to be “objective” is merely prevailing consensus about what is real in a given time and society (Cox 2006, 181). This idea relates to Hallin's (1984) idea of sphere of consensus and certain commonly accepted values, already discussed in chapter two.

Because objectivity is impossible to achieve over complex environmental issues in particular, we come again to the idea of balance. Cox (2006, 181) takes an example from a *New York Times* story from 2004, in which the paper cited a Brazilian minister of the environment over the destruction of rainforests. The minister claimed that the rate of destruction had been kept in control, although the paper also had found an official saying that the rainforests were disappearing on a rate never before seen. According to statistics, on the other hand, deforestation remained, even though the level was still below the worst years. Cox thus notes, that some might see the pessimistic official to be misleading in the story. He also notes that the debate of “misleading balance” is especially important to be noticed in relation to global warming coverage. Widely studies, this aspect will be discussed in more detail in the next part of this chapter.

## **4.2. Climate change, politics and journalism**

By its nature, climate change somewhat differs from the many of the other environmental risks or phenomena discussed before. It cannot be seen to manifest in an individual catastrophe as clearly as e.g. an

oil spill, though for example in the Hurricane Katrina aftermath of late fall 2005 global warming was brought into public discussion as an explanation to the storm. Still, climate change is a long-term phenomenon more difficult to fully grasp and report. Sometimes something as mundane as the current weather affects coverage: Ungar (1992) found that during the late 1980's scientists' claims of global warming failed to attract much attention until the summer of 1988 was very hot and dry in North America. According to Ungar, scientific theories got political currency only after they were backed up by real world events.

Quite interestingly, at least in the late 1980's and early 1990's scientists were not the ones, who got to frame global warming. Trumbo (1996) observed that although scientists were usually the ones bringing the problem to general attention, they were soon enthroned by politicians and other interested parties taking the the discussion more to political solutions rather than scientific debate.

Since the 1980's media coverage of climate change has increased substantially. Boykoff (2008a) notes that such disasters as the Hurricane season 2005 in the United States, the droughts in Australia and the 2007 floods in India and U.K. have provided an easy reason to tackle climate change stories. Furthermore, events like Al Gore's movie *An Inconvenient Truth* and the 2007 United Nations Climate Conference in Bali have added to the increasing number and multiplicity of reports on climate politics.

Apart from scientific complexity Wilson (2000, 208) notes that climate change is a story reporting of which requires not only journalistic skill and scientific literacy but also an understanding of political dynamics. Global warming has been and will continue to be a very controversial issue, which is why framing and the problems of objective reporting become even more crucial question when looking at the media coverage especially climate politics receive in the media. According to a study by Ekholm, Jutila & Kiljunen (2007, 30–31) conducted in Finland, nine out of ten Finns received the most of the relevant information they get from climate change from television news. Among the other important channels of information there were television documentaries (88% of respondents), news stories in newspapers (81%) and expert articles in newspapers (73%). Also Suhonen (1994, 18) notes that mass communication has a large responsibility of communicating environmental issues and policies to the public. In this context, it is no wonder that the media representations of climate change as scientific question have been fairly widely studied.

In order to explain the nature of coverage climate change has received in the public sphere, many scholars have sought to apply the issue-attention cycle theory of Anthony Downs (1972) to global warming. In short, Downs has claimed that attention to issues passes through five stages: the pre-problem stage, the period of alarmed discovery, the period of the public realizing the costs of fixing the problem, the gradual decline of attention and finally, the post-problem phase. Downs himself has argued that the media coverage environmental issues receive emphasizes the cyclical nature of the attention given to them.



Although Downs' theory has been criticised to be too e.g. linear to explain the actual process of attention-cycles, Katrine McComas and James Shanahan (1999, 34–35) note in their own study *Telling stories about climate change*, which uses the theory of Downs, that the narrative perspective they have personally adopted might reply to some of the earlier criticism aimed at the issue-attention cycle theory. Still, they do criticise the theory of Downs to be too restrictive in its assumption of environmental issues being inherently exciting – McComas and Shanahan argue that even though environmental issues might have some inherent qualities that determine how they are covered, they are objected to narrative choice, which are due to social and cultural factors. Media does not only cover exciting issues, but it also seeks to portray things as exciting, dramatic and even somewhat commercial.

In their own study McComas and Shanahan (1999) analysed news stories published in *The New York Times* and in *Washington Post* during the years 1980–1995 in order to further examine the narrative structure of the cycle of national news paper coverage about climate change. In their study they present 3 hypothesis; “stories appearing during the upsurge of media coverage will focus greater attention on consequences and implied danger of global climate change than stories in the down side coverage”, “an implied danger becomes a less important theme in the maintenance phase of media coverage, controversy among scientists will gain more prominence because controversy serves the narrative function of showing conflict between various forces seeking resolution to the problem” and “economic will attain greater attention in the storyline on the downside of the cycle, corresponding to the period of decreasing media attention”.

To prove their hypotheses and to find the right narratives in their qualitative analysis McComas and Shanahan used a previously developed coding instrument to label different themes presented in the news stories. The data supported fully the first two hypothesis and the third one partly; coverage of economics was the highest during the “maintenance phase of the attention cycle”, not on the period of decreasing media attention. For the purposes of this essay, it is interesting that McComas and Shanahan also found out that dramatic considerations also played a role in the attention the climate change got in the media. This would give some ground to the assumption that journalistic norms and news valuations affect the coverage.

Also Suhonen (1994) has used the attention-cycle theory in his studies over presentation of environmental issues in Finland. However, he also notes that other theories of communication such as the agenda-setting theory are very applicable to environmental issues. In particular Suhonen focuses on the representation of environmental issues in *Helsingin Sanomat*, which, he notes, “does not represent the Finnish newspaper as a whole, but is interesting due to its special status in the country”. In his analysis of headlines, Suhonen has noted that environmental issues are presented primary from four different viewpoints: the viewpoint of problems, the viewpoint of reasons, the viewpoint of means and the viewpoint of environmental politics. In Finland, he argues, the viewpoint of reasons is the least visible, although in the end of 1980's coverage of environmental issues increased in *Helsingin Sanomat*.

In a later, yet unpublished paper, Suhonen (s.a.) applies the attention-cycle theory to environmental politics and discusses especially the problemacy of climate change as “unperceptible for human senses or so slow processes that they are difficult to perceive”. He notes that not only science, but also journalism produces new information over global warming and other environmental issues and this information plays a part in the political decision making process. Suhonen also argues that one of the problems why environmental politics are so hard to cover is the fact that they belong to the responsibility of several different government organizations. In the same time, he notes, “the ample use of the concepts both ecology and environment has worn them out”. Where as at times these concepts still had symbolic power with which to gather political momentum to advocate the issue in the public arena, according to Suhonen they now become more commonplace and even a stable part of the obvious reality:

*“The media participate in creating an image of the social reality, in which the environmental problem belongs as ordinarily as poverty, sickness or violence”.*

Agreeing on the fact media plays a vital role in creating perception by creating meanings and perspectives to climate change Carvalho and Burgess (2005) argue based on their empirical study over broadsheet newspapers in the United Kingdom that there are three distinct cultural circuits each depicting a different frame for the risk relates to the phenomenon. These circuits range from 1985–1990, when “silence” changes to the political construction of risk; 1991–1996, when the coverage declines sharply due possible “editorial fatigue”, though then again increasing towards the year 1995; and 1997–2003 when “danger comes close to home”. Carvalho and Burgess point out that at the last cultural circuit the coverage over climate change gets a new sense of urgency which is further provoked by natural disasters. All in all, Carvalho and Burgess note that their discourse analysis of their date points out clearly how the media are responsive to the change of political agenda – or even reflects the political agenda of each time. They also mention, although briefly, that the media seems to be exaggerating the scientific dispute and builds thus an image of climate change as an uncertain phenomenon.

The last three articles discussed here revolve around exactly that topic. Antilla (2005) furthers the idea of a false presentation of the scientific dispute in her article *Climate of Scepticism*. For her study Antilla chose as data the newspaper coverage of climate change in 251 U.S. newspapers which she narrowed down to only climate science articles. She came across 4 different frames of reporting science; valid science, ambiguous cause or effects, uncertain science and controversial science. Whereas most articles constructed the valid-science frame, the uncertain science frame appeared in one third of the articles.

The study of Antilla thus is an interesting comparison to the article of Boykoff and Boykoff (2004) published a year before. Their study, titled *Balance as a bias* notes that the U.S. prestige press coverage ranging from

1988 to 2000, argues that the media have failed to discursively translate science into popular journalism. Compared to the findings of Antilla, the Boykoff and Boykoff study is much bleaker: they claim that the failure is due to tactical media responses and practices guided by widely accepted journalistic norms. The study of *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* shows, according to Boykoff and Boykoff, that the prestige press' adherence to balance actually lead to biased coverage of not only the science of climate change, but also the "reluctant action".

With the term bias Boykoff and Boykoff (2004) refer to an informational bias that is a product of the ever-emergent social relations between the journalists, the scientists and the political elites. Boykoff and Boykoff claim that bias is the "divergence of prestige-press global warming coverage from the general consensus in the scientific community". Through extensive analysis of their data, Boykof and Boykoff found that in the majority of coverage in the U.S. press the opposing views of human action having contributed to global warming and the climate change being due to the natural fluctuation of temperatures received "roughly equal attention". Coverage emphasizing the first view but also presenting the second got a little over third of the coverage – this coverage, Boykoff and Boykoff note, is very close to the scientific discourse, almost mirroring it. The two extremes of coverage got 6,8 percent for the "sceptics" side and 5,9 percent for the "believers". More importantly, the study argues that the difference between scientific discourse and journalistic coverage has been significantly great during the year 1999 to 2000, which could be explained by the novelty of the topic wearing out and, as mentioned earlier in this essay, thus a journalistic need to find excitement to the story by emphasizing conflict. Boykoff & Boykoff find this extremely troubling especially because it seems to be reflecting to the politics of climate change. They claim that the emphasis on uncertainty has "paved the way" for government officials to adopt the mantra "more research" implying that what the scientific community sees as mandatory, immediate action, such as more strict pollution regulations have been postponed. In the end of their article they note that further research is yet needed to explain why journalists continue to adhere to the norm of balanced reporting on the issue of global warming at a certain time but not on others. They also plead for international comparison to better understand the complex causal features to adherence to this journalistic norm.

In their study *Media's social construction of environmental issues* Dispensa and Brulle (2003) do exactly that. Whereas they find the U.S. press creating controversy were it is not really found as Boykoff and Boykoff (2004) do, they also apply their study to two other countries, namely Finland and New Zealand. As data Dispensa and Brulle use *The New Zealand Herald*, *Helsingin Sanomat*, *The New York Times* and *Washington Post*, the four of which they compare to two scientific journals. In their comparison of the papers they divided the articles to three different categories; the ones "supporting" climate change as an anthropogenic phenomenon, the ones "against" it and the articles that seem to be representing both views equally. As a result they state, that whereas the U.S. media claim that climate change is controversial and a somewhat theoretical problem, yet the other two countries seem to be portraying the story that is commonly

found in the international scientific journals. Interestingly for the case of *Helsingin Sanomat*, Dispensa and Brulle seem to find only 9 percent of the stories to have controversy about global warming as an anthropogenic problem, where as in the cases of *The New York Times* and Washington Post 57 percent and 58 percent of the articles find controversy in the science. In the same neither of the scientific journals expressed doubt after year 2000. The remarkable variances are explained in the study mainly due to corporate ownership and ties – the only clear difference Dispensa and Brulle seem to be finding between Finland and the United States in difference in oil producing and minor details. Dispensa and Brulle also note their worry for “an ecologic democracy” turning into oligarchy and hope for more future study on the ties ownership affecting the media.

Also a previous study by Brossard et al. (2000) found that the journalistic traditions and scientific cultures of each country somewhat affect news coverage over climate change. By analysing stories from *The New York Times* (USA) and *Le Monde*, Brossard et al. presume that American and French coverage differ from each other significantly: while the American coverage followed the issue-attention cycle of Downs (1972), the French coverage seemed to be following the beat of the international news. Also, the contents differ from each other. While *The New York Times* gave more emphasis to the theme “consequences of global warming”, *Le Monde* would put more focus on political issues. Both papers, still, used conflict as a narrative device. However, where as *The New York Times* focused on the conflict between scientists, *Le Monde* focused on the conflict between the United States and the European community.

In a later study, Maxwell T. Boykoff proclaims that the same sort of bias of balance can be observed not only in prestige press, but also in American television news coverage. In his study, *Lost in Translation* (2008b), Boykoff examined through a quantitative content analysis three network news shows: ABC World News Tonight, CBS Evening News and NBC Nightly News. He also looked at CNN World View, CNN Wolf Blitzer Reports and CNN News Night as examples of cable news coverage. The sample was collected with a key word search using the terms “global warming”, “climate change” and “global climate change” from the Vanderbilt University Television News Archive. Boykoff analysed altogether 213 news segments that were broadcasted during the years 1995 to 2004. What Boykoff found was that 69 percent in average of the clips portrayed the so-called balanced view of the science of climate change, giving equally as much time to talk to both the sceptics and the believers. The percentage was the highest in year 1998, when about 83 percent of coverage represented the balanced view. In 2002 it was still 80 percent from where it first lowered to 60 percent in 2003 and then rose a bit, to 66 percent in 2004. These numbers were then compared to the examined level of consensus in scientific texts: Boykoff found that in all years but 1996 there was a statistically significant difference of actual scientific consensus and news coverage of the issue.

Contrary to Boykoff's finding Meisner (2000) claimed already in year 2000 that global warming was largely accepted in the media. He notes, however, that it is framed very restrictively offering only a limited selection

of ways to address global warming, define problems or act. Meisner argues that as also environmental problems are socially constructed, the way interpret the causes of some “symptoms” is crucial. For example, if we determine a symptom as pollution to be caused by capitalism, we might take very different action than if we define the cause to be technological shortcomings.

Quite like in the previous studies, Meisner conducted a general search in the Lexis-Nexis archive for the keywords “global warming”, “climate change” and “greenhouse gasses”. The media outlets sampled were the news magazines *Maclean's* (Canada) and *Time* (USA) and the newspapers *The Globe* and *Mail* (Canada), *The National Post* (Canada) and *The New York Times* (USA). The research was guided by four meta-analytical questions: how is global warming typified, how humanity's and nature's relationship is being represented, what types of responses to global warming are proposed and who is responsible for acting against global warming. In general, the texts acknowledged global warming as something that was actually happening: only a few authors denied its scientific basis. Thus, Meisner claims that for the most part it seemed the press was moving past the debate of whether global warming actually exists.

As mentioned before, however, the typifications were very narrow: for example the solutions for global warming were found predominantly reducing emissions in so far it would not hurt the economy, the Kyoto treaty, politicians providing more leadership and developing new technologies. Non-human nature was seen to be mostly irrelevant. Overall, global warming was constructed to be primarily an economic and technological problem, rather than a political or cultural one: most political solutions seemed vague and the question, whether the whole industrialized culture is ethical was mostly ignored. Individual and collective democratic agency was not seen as a solution: the issue was of the worry of businesses and politicians, not the public. (Meisner 2000)

For these reasons, I find it valuable to look at the press coverage over global warming from the perspective of political communication. As this review of previous studies show, most interest has been shown to the acceptance of a scientific consensus and the representation of the phenomenon itself – not so much the political aspect of a changing climate.

## 5. DATA AND METHOD

As mentioned already in my preface, I hold a special interest to both Finland and the United States. The first one is my native land and also the place I have been working as a journalist for several years now. Already due to my work I have been following Finnish politics for a while, and have found interesting how environmental issues are discussed in the political agenda. The U.S. on the other hand, became familiar to me during my exchange year in the heart of Mid-West, Kansas, where environmentalists were still more sniggered at than actually taken seriously. When I first went there in fall 2005 it seemed global warming was still an issues heavily doubted, but when I went back again in spring 2008 the climate seemed to have been changed. Even in Kansas, which is widely known for its unpredictable weather of one day having snow and the next day having t-shirt-weather, people were starting to observe their environment with intrigue. At the same time, there seemed to have been changes in the way politicians were talking about climate change and the way the media were reporting it. There was a lot less doubt in the air and global warming was now, in its crudest form, visible even at the mega-store Walmart: even the five-dollar-shirts declared that “Green is the new black”.

It is however, not only my own interests and experiences that lead me to look at both Finland and the United States for my thesis. Dispensa and Brulle (2003) used in their study of measuring the impact of narratives on issues cycles over climate change Finland and New Zealand as countries of comparison for the United State. Among other things Dispensa and Brulle found the comparison to be interesting particularly because the countries appear to have very different kinds of political systems: quite cynically they find the United States politicians seem to be more on a leach of the big business than in Finland, for example. Although I do not completely agree with this statement, I also do find its idea to be interesting when keeping in mind many find the Finnish political sphere coming closer to the American one with more advertising, more “populism” and the change of its public image – perhaps better know as the “Americanisation” or “tabloidization” of the media.

At the same time, the two countries are very different in respect to their political situation and decisions already made concerning global warming. The United States and Finland have very different places in the international organizations, also, and thus would be inclined to make very different kind of decision. My interest lies whether this affects media coverage over climate politics or vice-versa.

In this chapter I am going to go through in detail how and why I have chosen my data. I will start with the time-frame of my study, then present the papers I have chosen to look at and finally discuss my method, content analysis in detail. I will also discuss what are the good and the bad sides of the method I have chosen giving basis to my interpretations in chapters six and seven.

## 5.1. Choosing the range of time of the data

Because my aim is to observe how news coverage and newspaper stories over climate politics have changed together with the changing political mood, it is valuable to look at a larger time-frame from 2003 to 2008, altogether six years. However, as I also want to look at different kinds of newspaper in two different countries, I had to limit my observation period in order to keep the data set in reasonable quantities. A basic search with the key word “global warming” in *The New York Times* archive alone during the six years in question produces over 4 000 articles – a data set far too big for a Master’s Thesis. For these reasons I have chosen to look at a number of weeks during those six years, altogether 16 weeks. These two-week periods have been chosen according to key events that seem to have affected climate politics or at least aroused discussion of it – some of them are around central climate conventions, others during other politically interesting or demanding events involving discussion over climate change.

From the year 2003 I chose to look at stories published between 21<sup>st</sup> of July to 3<sup>rd</sup> of August: this period during the height of summer when a heat wave struck Europe causing thousands of deaths. Although high temperatures and forest fires have since become something to get used to during the European summers, the summer of 2003 was one of the first when people started to doubt, whether the extreme weather could be due to climate change arousing such headlines as “It’s already tropical” [“Sehän on jo ihan trooppista” ] HS 3. August 2003.

Skipping year 2004 altogether my next sample period is in year 2005 between 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of February. This range was selected according to the Kyoto treaty going into effect on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February (“Mixed Feelings as Treaty on Greenhouse Gasses Takes Effect” NYT 16. February 2005). I also chose to look at the dates 5<sup>th</sup> of September to the 19<sup>th</sup> of September the same year: this period locates itself to a week after Hurricane Katrina struck the coast of New Orleans on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August, 2005. Together with such opinions as “the storm was a punishment from God”, questions of whether the US should be more prepared to face extreme weather due to climate change were also discussed. (“At Times of Epic Storms, Oil Industry Thinks Anew” NYT 15. September 2005)

From year 2006 I have again chosen to look at two time periods. The first, from the 11<sup>th</sup> of September to the 24<sup>th</sup> of September is located around the première of democratic ex-presidential candidate Al Gore's documentary on climate change, *An Inconvenient Truth*. The later period starts on the publication day of the Stern Review – a British high-ranking official's calculation on how much global warming will cost the humanity of nothing is done. Both events produced several headlines, such as “Britain Warns of High Costs of global warming” (NYT 31. October 2006) and “Climate change threatens to cut a fifth of world's production” [“Ilmastomuutos uhkaa leikata jopa viidenneksen maailman tuotannosta”] (HS 31. October 2006)

The year 2007 was the year of the IPCC and its latest report, giving me two periods to look at. The first one is in the beginning of the year, when the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change published its Working Group Summary for Policy Makers, from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> of February. The second period is then, in the end of the year 2<sup>nd</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> of December coinciding with the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali, Indonesia December 3<sup>rd</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>. (“Global Warming Smear“ WSJ 9. February 2007, “The Bali Climate Conference sought concord until the wee hours” [“Balin ilmastokokous hieroi sopua aamuyöhön”] HS 15. December 2007, “Climate Treaty Deal Seems Close, But is Elusive” NYT 15. December 2007)

My data set was concluded with a sample from the end of the year 2008, when there was another United Nations Climate Change Conference in Poznan, Poland. The sample starts from the 30<sup>th</sup> of November and ends at the 12<sup>th</sup> of December covering the time of the conference, which took place from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> of December. (“USA Presence at Conference on Climate Raises Hopes” NYT 12. December 2008)

The kind of non-probability, purposive sampling described here has been previously used to study for example party bias in newspaper editorials – it is reasonable to presume that such bias would be the most visible during e.g. elections rather than on a random range of time (Bertrand and Hughes 2005, 198). Thus, if wanting pay special attention to the way newspapers write about climate policy, it is of course valid to choose a time frame, when climate policy is brought to the most current agenda due to a climate policy meeting, for example. Also Krippendorf (2004, 119) notes that this sort of relevance sampling aims at selecting all textual units so that contribute to answering the research question. Bertrand and Hughes (2005, 198) also point out that purposive sampling suits best the purposes of qualitative research, when the findings are not intended to be fully generalized – contrary to the finding from a probability sample taken chosen by either simple or systematic random sample or a cluster sample taken around an unrelated event or date each year. Such sampling is recommended when handling large amounts of data, but in my case – in order to get the best analysis of each story – it is best to keep the data set fairly manageable.

## **5.2. Choosing the newspapers**

After having decided what sort of timespan I would be interested examining, I needed to decide what sort of media outlets I would want to examine. Although one might argue that television news are more active in the process of producing frames on climate politics because the public considers them to be the most important source of information over climate change (Ekholm et al. 2007, 25–35), I decided to look newspapers. This is, for one, due to the fact that newspapers are a “easy-access” data: the archives are nowadays easily retrievable and analysis can be done in the comfort of one's home. At the same time, though, newspapers are considered to be the second most important source of climate change information (ibid.) and they are often read by political leaders: especially when it comes to prestige press. For these reasons I chose three



newspapers that are considered to belong in to the so-called “prestige press” and have wide circulation: *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *Helsingin Sanomat* are all newspapers with a long history and much appreciation from both the general public, but also the business elites. All three also promote a very traditional understanding of good and unbiased journalism. It should thus be noted that if having chosen to look at, say, “yellow press” news outlets, the frames found might be very different.

### ***5.2.1. The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal***

United States with its vast and multicultural population is almost unquestionable the world leader in media production. Whether you look just into such traditional media as television, print or radio or more widely towards internet-based solutions such as Google, YouTube or Facebook, the U.S. media companies dominate the world market. Even in news production such U.S. satellite networks as CNN hold a key role on determining the global news agenda and encountering genuine rivalry only from such giant news corporations as the British Broadcasting Company BBC. At the same time, though, the U.S. media markets have been characterised by regionalism – already during the 1820’s there were 25 dailies and over 400 weeklies published. Still, currently the media market is dominated by huge conglomerates known as the Big Five. These companies include Time Warner (e.g. CNN, TBS), General Electric (e.g. MSNBC), The Walt Disney Company (e.g. ABC Television network), News Corporation (Fox, the New York Post), CBS Corporation and Viacom (Aslama et al. 2007, 13–25).

*The New York Times* published daily in New York. It is among the most respected newspapers having won 98 Pulitzer Prizes – most of any papers – and it’s circulation currently is about 1,0 million readers daily. First published in 1851 *The New York Times* is still owned by The New York Times Company, which also publishes 18 other newspapers such as the Boston Globe and International Herald Tribune. As a newspaper *The New York Times* has a reputation of in-depth investigative reporting, breaking major stories and reprinting transcripts of influential documents and speeches. It has been often also criticised of being both too conservative and too liberal, but perhaps more often the latter. ( Schaefer & Birkland 2007, 189)

*The Wall Street Journal*, the second one of the two newspapers I have chosen to use as data, belongs to one of the huge conglomerates – at least in the end of my observation period. In August 2007, despite wide criticism, the News Corporation merged Wall Street Journal’s publisher, the Dow Jones into itself. For many, this threatened the journalistic integrity of an 1889-founded newspaper, whose aim had always been to produce objective reporting of financial issues – making the staff openly vow to preserve editorial independence (Crovitch 2007). It is hard to tell, of course, whether the paper has been able to hold that in the hands of one of the biggest media companies in the world.

Currently, *The Wall Street Journal* is published daily in New York City. With 3 regional editions (USA, Europe, and Asia), a weekend-edition and an online edition in four languages (English, Chinese, Spanish and Portuguese) or to be tailored to specific interests (e.g. class room, small businesses) it is considered to be the most influential business newspaper in the world with a total circulation of over 2.7 million readers. Although *The Wall Street Journal* has won altogether 33 Pulitzer prizes – some even for its editorial pages in particular – its op-ed columns and editorials are widely noted to be promoting free market capitalism and the business interest, and even seen to support the so-called neo-conservative political ideas often attached to the George W. Bush administration. Still, *The Wall Street Journal's* editorial page is also considered to offer a breadth of well-informed opinions. (Schaefer & Birkland 2007, 295)

For my study, I have chosen to look at the U.S. editions of the newspapers, giving emphasis but not limiting my study to the news section of each paper. Both *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* divide their contents to different sections: In *The New York Times* there are three sections – News (including International, National, Washington, Business, Technology, Science, Health, Sports, The Metro Section, Education, Weather and Obituaries); Features (including Arts, Movies, Theatre, Travel, NYC Guide, Dining & Wine, Home & Garden, Fashion & Style, Crossword, The New York Times Book Review, The News York Times Magazine and Week in Review); and Opinions (including Editorials, Op-Eds and Letters to the Editor). *The Wall Street Journal's* sections are divided a bit differently – the paper consists of Section One (corporate news, political and economic reporting, opinions), Marketplace (health, media, technology, marketing industries), Money and Investing, Personal Journal (careers, cultural pursuits, personal investments), Pursuits (lifestyles, food, drink, cooking and so on) and Weekend Journal (real estate, travel, sports). All the sections are scheduled to be published regularly each week, but not daily.

Both newspapers have digital archives, which were used to collect data for this thesis. *The New York Times* archive is free for registered users, but full-text of *The Wall Street Journal* stories is only accessible through such costly search engines as Factiva or Lexis-Nexis. Therefore, as all other data in this thesis has been collected by my personal searches of archives with the words “global warming” and “climate”, the searches from *The Wall Street Journal* archive via the Factiva database were performed by the staff at the American Resource Center in Helsinki – one of the only places in Finland to have credentials to use these databases.

### **5.2.2. Helsingin Sanomat**

Compared to the United States Finland is smaller or “lesser” in population, diversity and media markets. As a younger nation than the United States, media have played a major role in shaping the national identity, even the language. At the same time, because Finnish as the main language of use, Finnish media companies have a clear disadvantage of broadening the business abroad. Also, especially the newspaper have stayed fairly regionally oriented – although the tendency of centralization of ownership can be seen also in the way certain

larger publishing houses acquire newspapers and other media, there are still several regional publishers. The biggest players in the field are Sanoma and Alma Media, both of which own newspapers, magazines and internet sites. Sanoma has a TV-channel, Nelonen, which also produces news – as does the TV-channel MTV3, which used to belong to Alma Media. Alma, however, sold MTV3 to the Nordic media company Bonnier. Compared to the United States, the Finnish media market is also different due to a strong government-owned public broadcasting company Yleisradio.

According to Jyrkiäinen and Savisaari (2001, 62) the Finnish newspaper industry is very dependent on the overall economic situation, because advertising plays a major role in publishing. This tendency might become visible during the economic slump the country is experiencing at the moment I am writing this – several media houses have announced lay-off before and after new year of 2009. Jyrkiäinen and Savisaari (ibid, 56) noted however already in 2001, that the circulations of newspapers were going down – a phenomenon that has been hardly going to a different direction since then.

*Helsingin Sanomat*, the crown jewel of the Sanoma-company has been holding up its place in the media market through good times and bad. It is the biggest newspaper in Finland, read by “800 000 readers before 9 am. every morning” – at least if you believe the company website. The overall number of readers is close to a million and its total circulation is 419 791 copies Monday through Saturday and 474 726 on the Sunday-issues. According to a corporate study, *Helsingin Sanomat* is also the most read newspaper among the political and economical elites: 261 000 readers take part in decision making in companies, communities and politics. The paper itself is divided into six sections, the first four of which are published every day: Section A including Domestic News, Editorial, Helsinki metropolitan area news; Section B including Foreign news, Economics and Sports; Section C including Culture, Opinions and Family news and Obituaries; and Section D including Special Features (health, consumer issues, science), Radio & TV announcements and Comics. On Saturdays an additional section E is published involving Cars. On Sundays section E is dedicated to Economics and section F is for apartments. Also on Sundays, section D is entirely dedicated for the Sunday-pages, which usually include longer feature stories. (Helsingin Sanomat 2009)

*Helsingin Sanomat* has a digital archive that is available for subscribers. Material gathered from *Helsingin Sanomat* for the purposes of this thesis, was retrieved using the key words “ilmastonmuutos” (climate change), “ilmasto” (climate) and “kasvihuoneilmiö” (global warming) with a simple AND/OR -search.

### **5.3. Developing the method**

The data for this study was gathered with basic key word searches in the digital databases of each newspaper. My first intention was to analyse the articles with the methods of basic content analysis understood in its most narrow sense: a method used to study media content within the social science framework.

### *5.3.1. Content analysis as a method*

Content analysis was developed by early quantitative newspaper analysis in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and its aim was to give basis to journalistic arguments. It was, however, mostly focused on looking at the volumes of coverage – column inches to be crude. In the 1930's the increase of social and behavioural science research increased, the use of the method also increased. The more qualitative aspect came in to the picture in order to compensate some of the shallowness of the quantitative research: these perspectives include such methods as discourse analysis, ethnographic content analysis and conversational analysis, which all are bound together by their interpretive nature. This brought content analysis closer to its current form, a research technique for making “replicable and valid inferences from text to the context of their use”. (Krippendorff 2004, 5–18)

According to Bertrand and Hughes (2005, 177–197) content analysis has been often used to detect accuracy or bias or objectivity of news in previous studies, but the methods brings in serious problems too. Researchers, Bertrand and Hughes claim, might have the tendency to find unwarranted intentions and take the discussion further than the data actually allows. In fact, it might not be possible to prove intentions made in the basis of content analysis only. Although content analysis is unobtrusive, easy and inexpensive to do and excellent for managing large amounts of data, it is hard to tell that a certain sample truly is representative enough, especially in cases when the total extent of a phenomenon is not known. Also the category definitions are never water-tight arousing problems of measurement units, and most importantly, content analysis never tells what the texts actually mean, how they became that way and what they mean to the audiences.

Also Krippendorff (2004) and Silverman (2006) share the worries of Bertrand and Hughes (2005) of whether content analysis fully can answer the questions of a news study concerned with objectivity and bias. Krippendorff (2004, 55–77) for one, notes that even though evaluative have largely focused on two kinds of bias, the bias of accuracy and the bias of favouring one side over the other, they have not sufficiently solved the problem of having no unquestionable criteria when it comes to coding the material in question. Thus, Krippendorff claims that content analysis is the most fruitful, when it focused on facts that are constituted by language. A researcher should therefore look at attributions, social relationships, public behaviour and institutional realities appearing in the texts. Also Silverman (2006, 164) reminds of the importance of taking into account these structures, which he chooses to call as narrative: a researcher should ask what is the context of a story, who are the principle agents, how is the story told, what is the function of the story and does the story follow a genre of some kind (column, news story, feature story, and so on).

For these reasons I took up the interest to look at my data also from the viewpoint of narratology, an analysis method used mostly to study literature in the humanistic tradition, but also widely to study news texts. Narratives can be understood as stories, tales, descriptions, portrayals or accounts, through which humans have passed on cultural histories, values and norms through ages. Narratives are used by the society to govern itself and provide its member moral reasoning. In this respect, it is hardly a coincidence that journalists often refer to their work as “writing news stories” – even if they would certainly feel uncomfortable to compare their work to telling fairy tales. Still, news can be seen to be accounts of historic events authored by someone and written to someone and as in fairy tales, the facts or occurrences themselves do not make much sense if they are not “put in to context” and combined in a certain way. There are also several different narrative frames certain the facts can be put in – the meaning of a news text and the way it is told changes when a story is located in a different section of a paper. The title “column” arouses an expectancy to the way the text will be written and how it will be interpreted. News writing is a process of producing narratives, but also frames, making such analysis method valuable when wanting to look at news framing of a certain issue. (Johnson-Carter 2005, 147–163)

Narratology has been used previously on environmental issues for example in the McComas and Shanahan (1999) study over for narratives have affected the issue cycles of the topic climate change. In their article, discussed already before in this thesis, McComan and Shanahan note that in environmental issues, humans dress such things as climate change with meaning through the stories they tell. They then dissect their data set by examining each article to find themes and consequences in order to measure certain narrative variables. Interestingly enough, McComas and Shanahan warn not to confuse narratives with frames: although they share certain attributes, the key difference is that narratives use temporal orders to create meaning. In my opinion, however, examining the narratives of each text might be valuable in order to reveal what kinds of frames each of the news stories aim to provide the reader.

At the same time, using the concepts of narratology when doing journalism research is a much debated method. During the 1990's in Finnish mass communication research, for example, some some scholars started to adopt methods related to the linguistic side of narratology raising the question, whether a news article can be read as a story. For example Veikko Pietilä took up the idea of news narratology, whereas Pertti Julkunen considered that narrative tool to be inept for researching journalism, because the texts cannot be considered to be tales or stories. At the same time, however, it could be seen that bringing in narratological methods implied a “cultural turn” in the study of journalism putting more focus in the way journalists' ideologies and professional codes of conduct might effect coverage. Each scholar would borrow some forms of analysis to suit their object of study, putting focus on say, genre or the narrator of a news story, (Lassila-Merisalo 2009, 54–63)

Because the methods of narrative research would not entirely suffice for the purposes of this thesis, I did not abandon content analysis. In my final analysis method there are hints of these two methods discussed in this chapter. It could be argued that there is no need to build dichotomies between qualitative and quantitative research. Each one has elements from the other – qualitative research always involves some sort of counting and differentiating into categories, and in quantitative research categories used to make calculation always involve interpretation. Thus, it could be said that this thesis uses both quantitative and qualitative methods.

### ***5.3.2. Performing the analysis***

In his book *Interpreting Qualitative data* (2006, 159) David Silverman sets out a simple model for content analysis that I have also followed in analysing my own material. As explained before, I have chosen particular texts that are relevant for my research question and sampled the texts, because there would be too many to manage. How and why the sample was made, is described already previously in this chapter.

After this I constituted a coding frame, which I found to be suitable for both the theoretical considerations but also the material in question. My initial coding frame included 14 different attributes for each story, which included the date of the story, the length of the story (long, medium, short), the section the story was published in, the writer, the type of story (news, feature, column, editorial, letter to editor etc.), the headline, primary actors, secondary actors, attributes given to climate change and/or climate policy, attributes given to climate policy actors and at last, whether there was an element of conflict in the story and if so, what it was. The last section was reserved to naming a frame that would fit the story – this section I analysed only after analysing all the other sections in the total sample. It should be noted that that the writer-section in the coding frame is only applicable for the opinion pieces (Editorial, Staff-writer, Op-ed, Letter to the Editor). The latter one of the sub-classes is only applicable one the opinion pieces, since only *Helsingin Sanomat* clearly differentiates between staff writers and freelance writers when it comes to news and features with bylines. Although the differentiation could be made by comparing lists of employees and bylines, I did not find it relevant to my research when it comes to the news and feature articles. In the opinion materials, however, the writer clearly plays a more important role.

After constituting the initial coding frame, I piloted it on ten randomly selected articles from my data set, which lead to some corrections: e.g. in addition to the coding section “What section the story was in?” I added the “What's the topic of the story?” -section. Although one might expect all three newspapers to put all business stories in the business section and all art stories in the cultural section, this proved to be a false belief. Thus, it was important to name both the section the story was published in and the topic of the story. Only after this, I actually coded and analysed my data, which was then brought into a chart to perform some simple statistical analysis. What I learned from all this, can be read from the next chapter, which discusses some of my findings.

## 6. QUANTITATIVE FEATURES OF THE SAMPLES: INCREASING AMOUNT OF STORIES

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of July, 2008 *The New York Times'* environmental correspondent Andrew Revkin wrote a news analysis about how too much coverage might not work in the benefit of those who think combat against climate change is necessary.

*When the work touches on issues that worry the public, affect the economy or polarize politics, the news media and advocates of all stripes dive in. Under non-stop scrutiny, conflicting findings can make news coverage veer from one extreme to another, resulting in a kind of journalistic whiplash for the public. This has been true for decades in health coverage. But lately the phenomenon has been glaringly apparent on the global warming beat. (Revkin 2008a)*

Truly, it is no wonder that the public might get overwhelmed with the amount of material alone. The keyword searches I performed in three newspapers' databases in the eight two-week periods between years 2003–2008 produced altogether 629 articles. This totals a weekly average of 39,3 articles and a daily average of five articles mentioning climate change. One should note that many of the articles only mentioned climate change as a topic of “politics as usual”, which in itself already is a tell-tale sign of climate and environmental politics becoming something very mundane. There were, however, significant differences between newspapers. In this chapter I will discuss and present some findings in general through rough statistical analysis. After this I will take a closer look on changes in coverage over time and according to paper.

### 6.1. General remarks on the total sample

As mentioned before my keyword searches of “climate”, “global warming” in *The New York Times* database and *The Wall Street Journal* database and the keyword searches “ilmasto” and “kasvihuoneilmiö” in the *Helsingin Sanomat* database produced altogether 629 articles. The total number of articles produced by the keywords was much larger of course: the results included duplicates as well as articles that used the word climate, for example, in reference of the economic or political “climate” of a country.

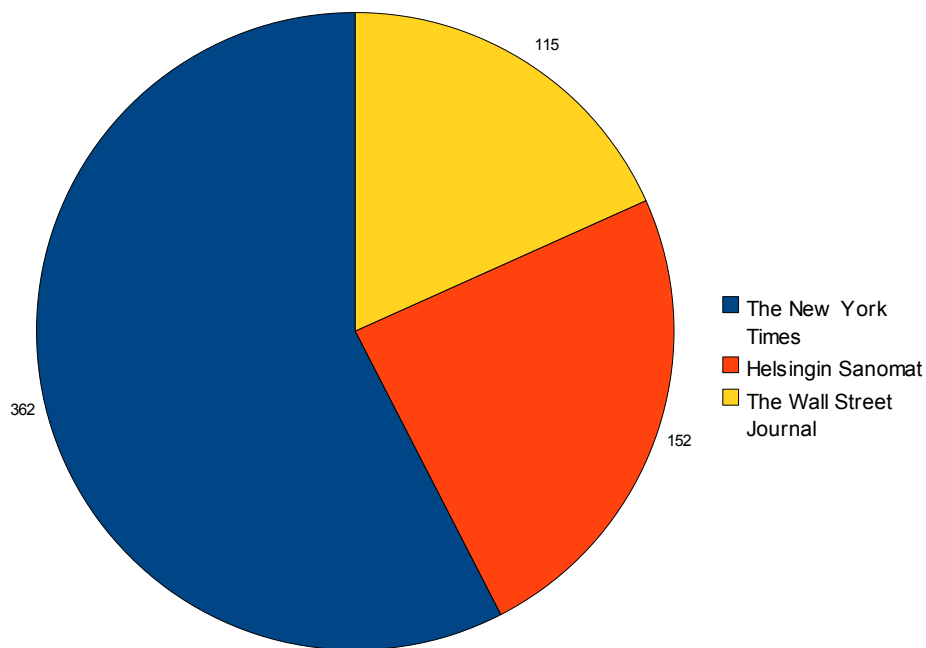
As mentioned earlier, the sample periods are as follows: 2003 (21. Jul.–3. Aug.2003), 2005a (14.–28. Feb. 2005), 2005b (5.–19. Sept. 2005), 2006a (11.–24. Sept. 2006), 2006b (30.Oct.–12.Nov. 2006), 2007a (1.–14. Feb. 2007), 2007b (2.–16. Dec. 2007) and 2008 (30.Nov.–12.Dec. 2008).

As shown in FIGURE 1 the majority of the articles came from *The New York Times*, which wrote altogether 362 articles mentioning climate change during the observation period. The difference to the other two newspapers is surprising and significant: *Helsingin Sanomat* came in second with only 152 articles and *The Wall Street Journal* totalled only 115 articles. Thus, *The New York Times* wrote over twice as many articles

than *Helsingin Sanomat* and over three times as many articles than *The Wall Street Journal*. The difference is explainable only partly by the size of each newspaper: *The New York Times* is considered to be the largest newspaper in the United States and tops the others in thickness too, but all the papers are published seven days a week.

**FIGURE 1**

1 – Total number of published stories (n=629)



Most of the stories, as shown in FIGURE 2, that mention climate change were published in the Opinion section – a total number of 118 stories amounts to 19 percent of the total number of articles. The second frequent section to mention climate change was Domestic News, in which there were 106 stories (17 percent). Altogether 99 stories (16 percent) were published in the Foreign or World News section, 80 (13 percent) in the Economics and Business section and 50 (8 percent) in the Local News section.

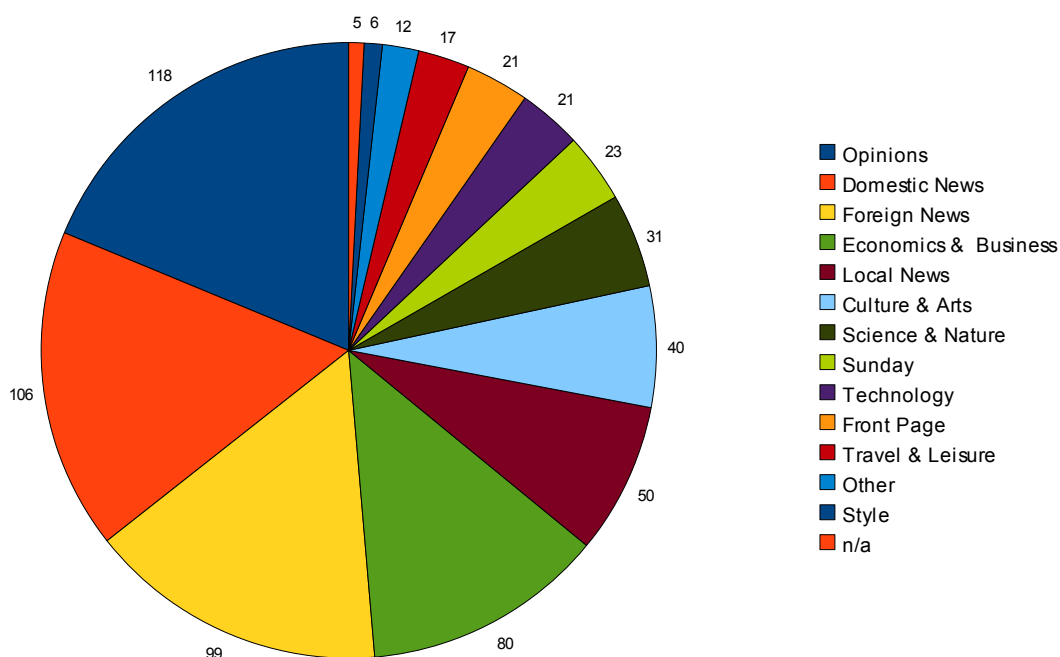
Quite interestingly, also the Section of Culture and Arts had 40 stories (6 percent) published in it: this was more than stories published in the sections for Science and Nature and Technology. The former one totalled only 31 stories (5 percent) and the the latter 21 stories (3 percent) – two less than in the Sunday Section. The small amount of stories published in the Technology and Science and Nature section resulted mostly from the fact that big scientific news were also reported in the news sections. However, it could be also viewed as a weak signal of climate change being viewed as more of a political and economical problem than a scientific question. Although most of the stories in the section of Culture and Arts merely mention global warming, they often incorporate it in a story as a certain fact, thus giving it legitimate cultural stance.



Travel and Leisure section totalled 17 published stories and Style six. The rest of the stories were published in a variety of sections including Health, Housing, Family News and Obituaries, Sports, Education, Online and Magazine. With five stories, the databases did not mention the original section. Notably, during the period of observation 21 stories (3 percent) made it to the front page. Although the percentage seems fairly small compared to the amount of stories published in the opinion section, one must take into consideration the extra prestige making it to the front page gives an issue. In this respect, making it to the front page 2.6 times per a two-week observation period at average could be seen as remarkable.

**FIGURE 2**

Stories per section (n=629)



Although stories mentioning climate change appeared most often in the Opinions-section, the vast majority of the stories were written by staff writers or freelance journalists. The stories written by the staff writers wrote 517 stories, which makes up 82 percent of the whole data set. Outside writers were responsible of 95 stories, making up 15 percent of the data set. The rest of the stories, 17 stories and 3 percent of the data set were written by news agencies.

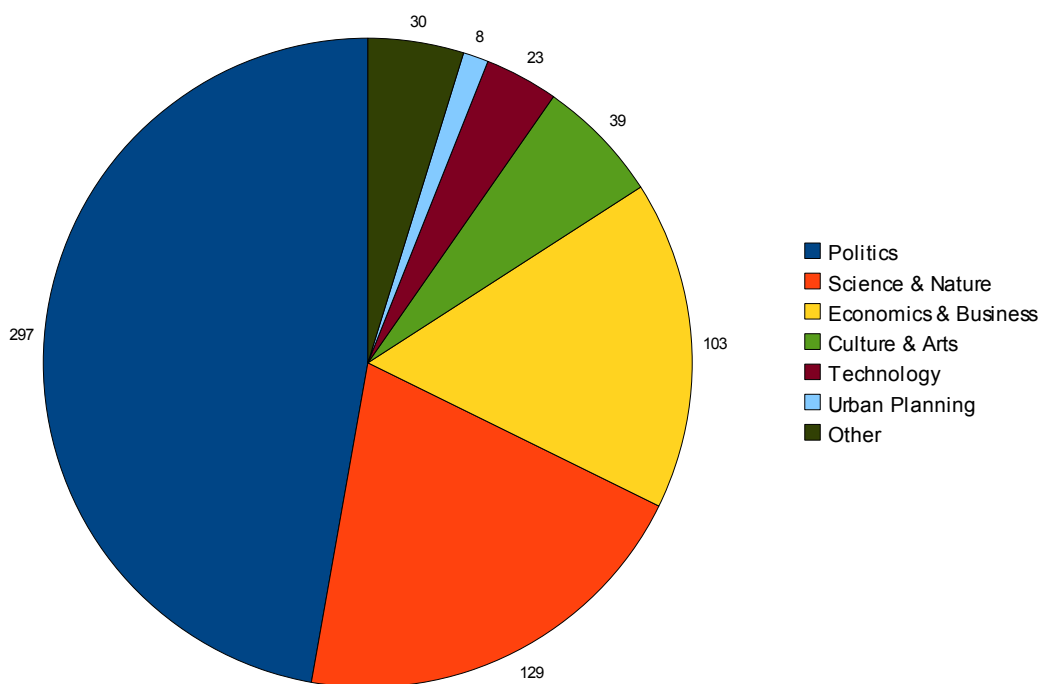
About 48 percent of the stories mentioning climate change could be considered long or at least major stories on the page they were printed on. “Medium length” stories were the second most common with 34 percent and very short, wire-like stories the least common with 18 percent. This is of course somewhat due to the nature of a newspaper: where as broadcast and even online news focus on giving the public the facts in a compact package, newspapers aim to also give background to the issues in question.

As for the genre of the stories, traditional news stories appeared to be the most common type of story in my total data set. News stories composed 41 percent of the total data set, altogether 260 stories. The second most common type of story were the feature stories, 145 stories and 23 percent of the data set. About 10 percent of the stories were letters to the editor (62 articles), 6 percent editorials (37 articles), 5 percent columns (34 articles), 5 percent so-called op-editorials (33 articles) and 3 percent reviews (22 articles). Thus, in fact, 188 stories had a distinct opinion expressed in them while 405 stories thrived to fill the notions of traditional objective journalism. In addition 35 stories were categorized to the class “other” which ranged from fact boxes, gallups and corrections to obituaries and essays.

Although the Science and Technology sections did not represent a great majority in the coverage, stories featured in other section discussed climate change from a scientific perspective more often. In fact, as seen in FIGURE 3, when dividing the stories into seven categories, stories about science is the second biggest group with a total of 129 stories, 21 percent of the total number of stories. The biggest group, however, was more than twice as big with 297 stories, 47 percent of the total number of stories in my dataset. In this group the stories discussed climate change primarily from a political perspective. Altogether 103 stories presented or mentioned climate change in an economical context, 39 from a cultural perspective and 23 from the perspective of technology. Eight stories focused on urban planning and 30 belonged to the category of “other stories” ranging from media, agriculture, sports and leisure to health, education, fashion and crime.

**FIGURE 3**

Total number of stories according to topic (n=629)

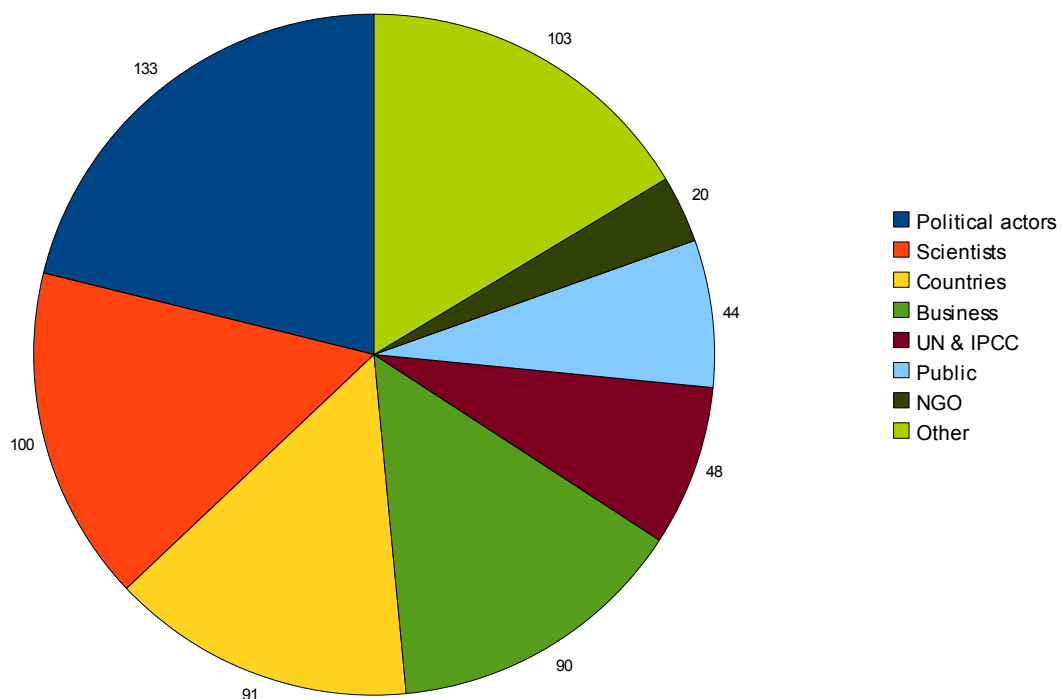


The primary actors of stories about climate change were mostly “official actors”: people or institutions of authority, as shown in FIGURE 4: 21 percent stories present political actors, such as government officials, politicians, political entities or political parties as the primary actors of each story. The second most common primary actor in each story were scientist, who got to determine the story in 16 percent of cases. The third most common primary actor of each story were “countries” and and business, both gaining 14 percent shares. Countries in general were given their own class, because especially stories concerning e.g. UN conferences, countries were not discussed through their leader or individual politicians, but as entities, interestingly enough gaining some human attributes: journalists write rather about “USA being stubborn” than “U.S. politicians being stubborn”.

After these four major categories of primary actors, the UN and its scientist panel IPCC comes in fifth with 7 percent of stories. The public, citizens or more vague “we” is the primary actor in roughly the same amount of stories, altogether 7 percent of the total amount. NGOs, activists or environmentalists are the primary actors in only 3 percent of the stories: however, it should be noted, that they often were featured in stories as a secondary actor. Altogether 16 percent of primary actors fall to the category of “other” including actors from artists to mountain climbers, but also politicians as individual actors outside their profession.

**GRAPH 4**

Primary actors in stories (n=629)



Finally, 278 stories, making up 44 percent of stories present no conflict between the different actors mentioned in stories. Thus, in 351 stories, which makes up 56 percent of the whole data, there is an element of conflict. Mostly commonly conflict is built between environmental concerns and business interest – 96 stories discuss this conflict of interest. About 54 stories present conflict between political actors. Scientific conflict, most notably the question about whether climate change is “real” or not is present in 37 stories and 31 stories discuss conflict between countries or their interests. Other conflicts written into texts vary from conflicts between NGOs and the government, NGOs and businesses all the way to conflict between the media representation of things compared to the ideas of the reader.

## **6.2. Quantitative Changes in the coverage 2003–2008**

There were also significant differences between the papers when looking at each period of time in particular. During the first observation period 21. July 2003–3. August 2003 (observation period 2003) *The New York Times* wrote 14 articles discussing climate change, *The Wall Street Journal* eight and *Helsingin Sanomat* only five. One should note, though, that there were altogether 17 stories that discussed the abnormally warm weather in Finland during the summer ranging from tram drivers passing out in the carts to a post office being closed due to summer heat. However, only the mentioned 5 articles made reference to climate change and thus made it to my analysis. The total number of stories during the first observation period thus totalled 27 stories. As mentioned earlier, this observation period coincided with the heatwave in Europe – therefore it is interesting that both of the American newspapers would top the only European one in the amount of coverage.

The second observation period, 14.–28. February 2005 (observation period 2005a) showed a more subtle difference in the amount of coverage climate change received. During the time of of the Kyoto treaty taking into effect, *The New York Times* totalled 22 stories, *The Wall Street Journal* 12 and *Helsingin Sanomat* 15 stories. With a total of 49 stories the difference to the year 2003 is clear. One explanation to this might be that where as the heat wave was not connectible easily nor with scientific certainly to the phenomenon of climate change, it is only natural that the Kyoto treaty would be. This would also support the notion that journalists prefer to address topics when they are connected to a special event.

Later the same year, between 5. and 19. September 2005 (observation period 2005b) global warming was brought to the agenda again by Hurricane Katrina, which according to some, was evidence of storms intensifying. Interestingly enough, this connection was mostly notably made in the pages of *The New York Times*, which published a huge number of 32 articles. *Helsingin Sanomat* and *The Wall Street Journal* were left far behind: both published only five articles leaving the total number of articles, altogether 42, a bit behind the previous sample period.

Approximately a year later, from 11. to 24. September 2006 (observation period 2006a) the première of the film *An Inconvenient Truth* inspired altogether 65 stories that discussed or mentioned climate change. Of these, 34 stories were published in the *The New York Times*, 12 in *The Wall Street Journal* and 19 in *Helsingin Sanomat*. A few months later, between 30.October and 12.November 2006 (observation period 2006b), the total number of stories rose to 70 stories, of which 15 were from *Helsingin Sanomat*, 44 from *The New York Times* and 11 from *The Wall Street Journal*. This period of time was chosen to the data set due to the publication of the Stern Report.

The steady rise of stories discussing or mentioning climate change exploded during the year 2007. During that time the two observation periods of the year produced the highest numbers of stories. After the IPCC-assessment report was published, between 1. to 14. February 2007 (observation period 2007a) *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times* and *Helsingin Sanomat* wrote a startling number of 115 stories, which averages 2.7 stories per day per paper. The most frequent writer, again, was *The New York Times*, which published altogether 64 stories during the two-week period, with a 4.5 stories per day average. *The Wall Street Journal* and *Helsingin Sanomat*, again, were left behind with a significant difference: *The Wall Street Journal* published one story less than *Helsingin Sanomat*, which totalled a number of 26 stories – less than half of what *The New York Times* published.

Later on the same year, the Bali Climate Summit exploded the amount of coverage at least in *The New York Times*: the paper published altogether 102 stories between 2. and 16. December 2007, (sample period 2007b) averaging 7.2 stories per day. Also the amount of coverage compared to the other observation periods rose significantly in *Helsingin Sanomat*. The paper published 37 stories, totalling an average of 2.6 stories per day. Interestingly enough, the amount of coverage in *The Wall Street Journal*, however, did not rise very much compared to the previous observation period. The paper published 26 stories, four times less than *The New York Times*. Altogether the papers published 165 stories.

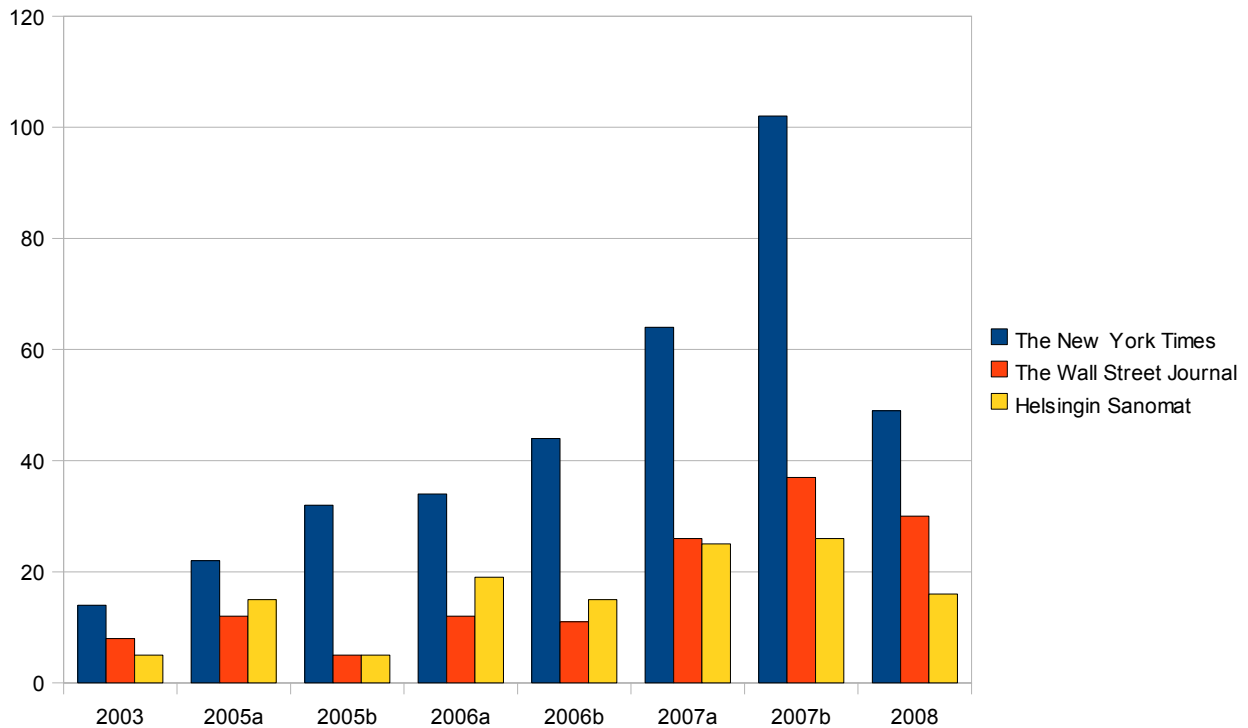
The last of the sample periods (2008), 30. November–12. December 2008 coincided again with an UN summit, this time in Poznan, Poland. The amount of coverage, however, decreased significantly. The total number of stories was 95, having dropped almost to half from a year before. Of those, *The New York Times* published roughly half, altogether 49 stories, *Helsingin Sanomat* roughly a third, 30 stories and *The Wall Street Journal* only 16 stories.

Altogether, as can be observed in the following FIGURE 5 there has been as steady increase of coverage over climate change in general, but it can be mostly observed in *The New York Times*. In *Helsingin Sanomat* the amount of coverage does not seem to follow a consistent pattern, where as in *The Wall Street Journal* the numbers seem to be following *The New York Times*' path at least somewhat. However, as mentioned earlier, there is a massive change between the two last sample periods showing a decline in climate change coverage.

Because the two sample periods happen to be located around very similar events, the difference of the two will be further examined later on in this thesis.

**FIGURE 5**

Number of stories published according to period of observation by paper



When looking at which topics were covered, the first observation period 2003 shows that science and politics of climate change received almost as much coverage both – the balance could be seen to lean towards the science side of things. This might be due to the fact that a heatwave in Europe is more likely to arouse scientific questions, because the event itself is related to nature. Hence, 12 stories portrayed climate change from a scientific and nature perspective, 10 revolved around politics, four discussed economical questions and one discussed technological aspects. There were also some difference between the three papers: where as the majority of *The Wall Street Journal* articles discussed political matters, science and nature stories and political stories seemed to be in more balance in *The New York Times*. In *Helsingin Sanomat* four stories out of five discussed climate change from a scientific perspective.

During the next observation period 2005a, which took place while the Kyoto treaty took into effect, politically oriented stories mentioning climate change took a natural lead in coverage with 28 stories. Science came in second with 13 stories, economics took six stories and culture and arts four stories. Technological and urban planning issues were discussed in one story each. As for differences between papers, *The New York Times* shifted the balance between science and politics towards politics, which was the

topic of majority of the stories. *Helsingin Sanomat* and *The Wall Street Journal* published equally as many stories on politics than on science the latter giving a bit more emphasis on economics.

Later on the same year, during observation period 2005b, which was chosen to be located close to Hurricane Katrina, political stories remained to be the most common type of story in the data. With 17 stories, articles with political emphasis triumphed scientific stories of which the observation period included ten stories. There were also more economics oriented stories than before, altogether seven stories. Five stories mentioned climate change in a cultural context and categories urban planning, technology and other took one story per each. Paperwise *The New York Times* took again a lean towards political stories, whereas *Helsingin Sanomat* and *The Wall Street Journal* published only a few stories with a variety of topics.

A year later, during observation period 2006a the number of political stories remained roughly the same, with 26 stories and 40 percent of the stories of the observation period as a whole. The number of scientific stories increased to 14, but their percentage of all the stories in the observation period decreased yet again. On the other hand, both the number and the percentage of Economics and business stories rose to 18 percent (12 stories). In *Helsingin Sanomat*, there was a significant increase on political stories, whereas *The New York Times* found was more balanced with political, economic and science and nature stories.

The second observation period same year, 2006b, shows a slight increase in the amount of scientific stories, the number of which rose to 17. There was a slight decline in the percentage-amount of political and economic stories mentioning climate change, but on the other hand, there were also more stories in the categories of technology and “other stories”, including media and agriculture. However, in *The New York Times* there was a sharp increase of the percentage of politically oriented stories as well as a decline in scientific stories.

Coinciding with the release of the IPCC-report in early 2007, observation period 2007a shows an overall increase in scientific stories rising its percentage of total number of stories to 29 percent. There are, again, however, differences between papers. Where as *Helsingin Sanomat* seems to be emphasizing scientific aspects both in observation period 2006b and 2007a significantly, the American papers tend to report more political stories than scientific stories. It is not until the two last observation periods that also *Helsingin Sanomat* starts to publish more political stories.

What is interesting to note is that where as the balance between different topics remains fairly stable during all of the observation periods in both of the American newspapers, in *Helsingin Sanomat* there is a considerable increase in the share of political stories towards the last observation period. One might note, this is partly a result of the method of purposive sampling: whereas the events in the first few observation periods could be seen as more “scientifically oriented” the last two are political events, namely United

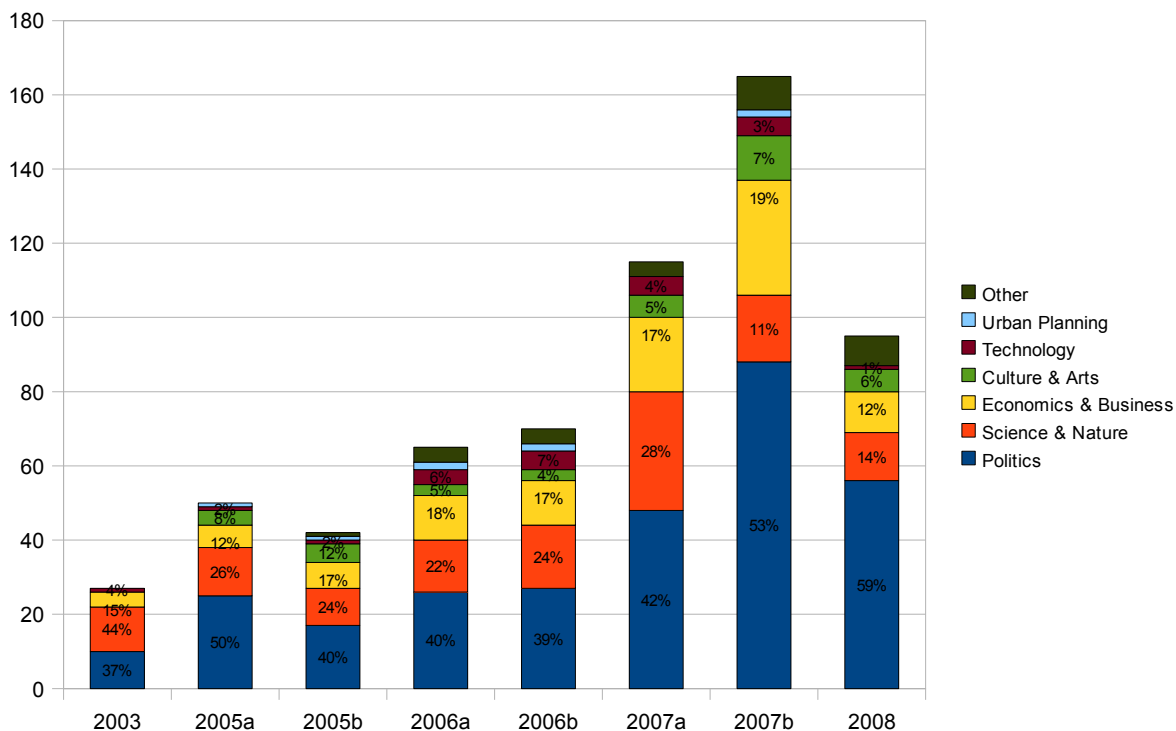
Nation conferences. This, however, does not explain, why both *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* have given a larger share to the different aspects of climate change already in the first few periods of observation. Thus, the results suggest, the American papers might be slightly more inclined to report on the topic of climate change from a political perspective, whereas the Finnish one has awakened to the politics of the issue later on. The differences between the papers can be viewed more precisely in the following Tables and Figures 6.1.–6.4.

### TABLES AND FIGURES 6.1.– 6.4.

Changes in topics 2003– 2008 according to paper

Table 6.1. Changes in topics in all three papers

Topic of story	2003	2005a	2005b	2006a	2006b	2007a	2007b	2008	All stories
Politics	10	25	17	26	27	48	88	56	297
Science & Nature	12	13	10	14	17	32	18	13	129
Economics & Business	4	6	7	12	12	20	31	11	103
Culture & Arts	0	4	5	3	3	6	12	6	39
Technology	1	1	1	4	5	5	5	1	23
Urban planning	0	1	1	2	1	0	2	0	8
Other	0	0	1	4	4	4	9	8	30
<b>All</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>629</b>

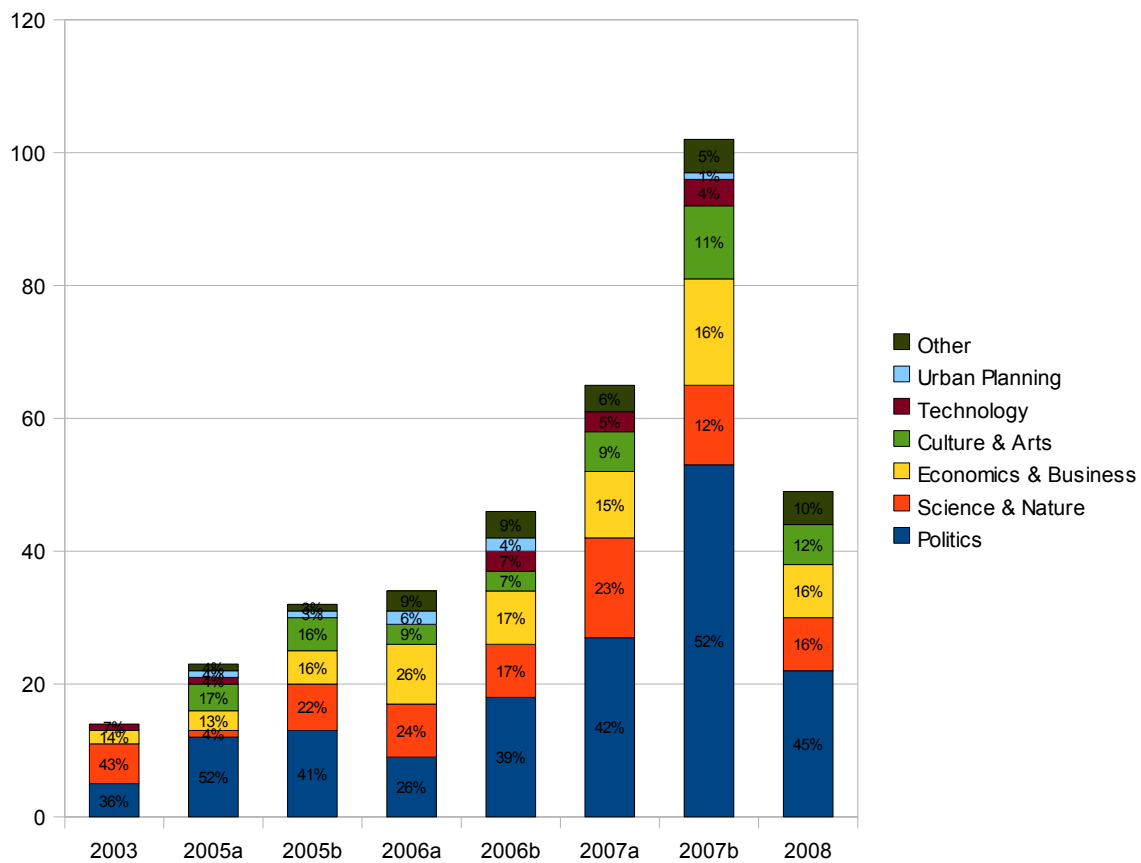


Stories according to topic in all three newspapers



Table 6.2. Stories according to topic in The New York Times

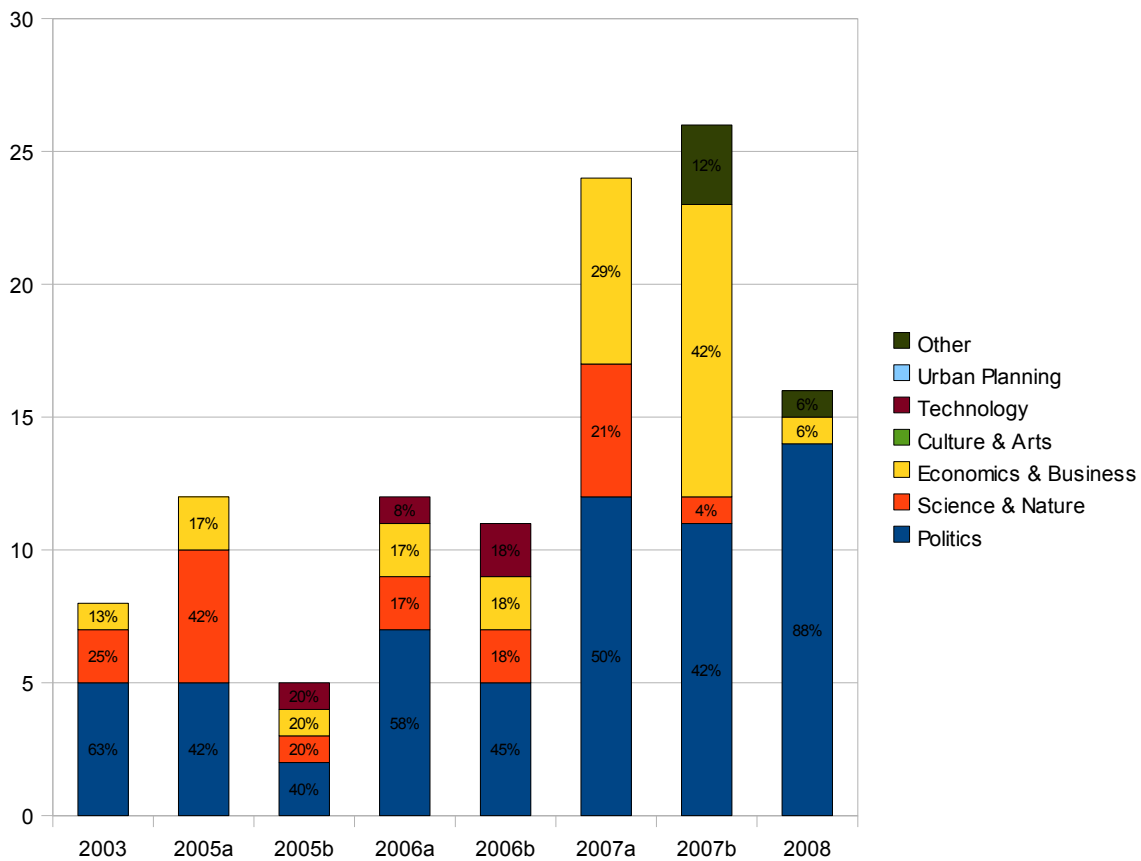
Topic of story	2003	2005a	2005b	2006a	2006b	2007a	2007b	2008	All NYT stories
Politics	5	12	13	9	18	27	53	22	159
Science & Nature	6	1	7	8	8	15	12	8	65
Economics & Business	2	3	5	9	8	10	16	8	60
Culture & Arts	0	4	5	3	2	6	11	6	37
Technology	1	1	0	0	3	3	4	0	12
Urban Planning	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	7
Other	0	1	1	3	4	4	5	5	22
<b>ALL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>362</b>



Stories according to topic in The New York Times

Table 6.3. Stories according to topic in Wall Street Journal

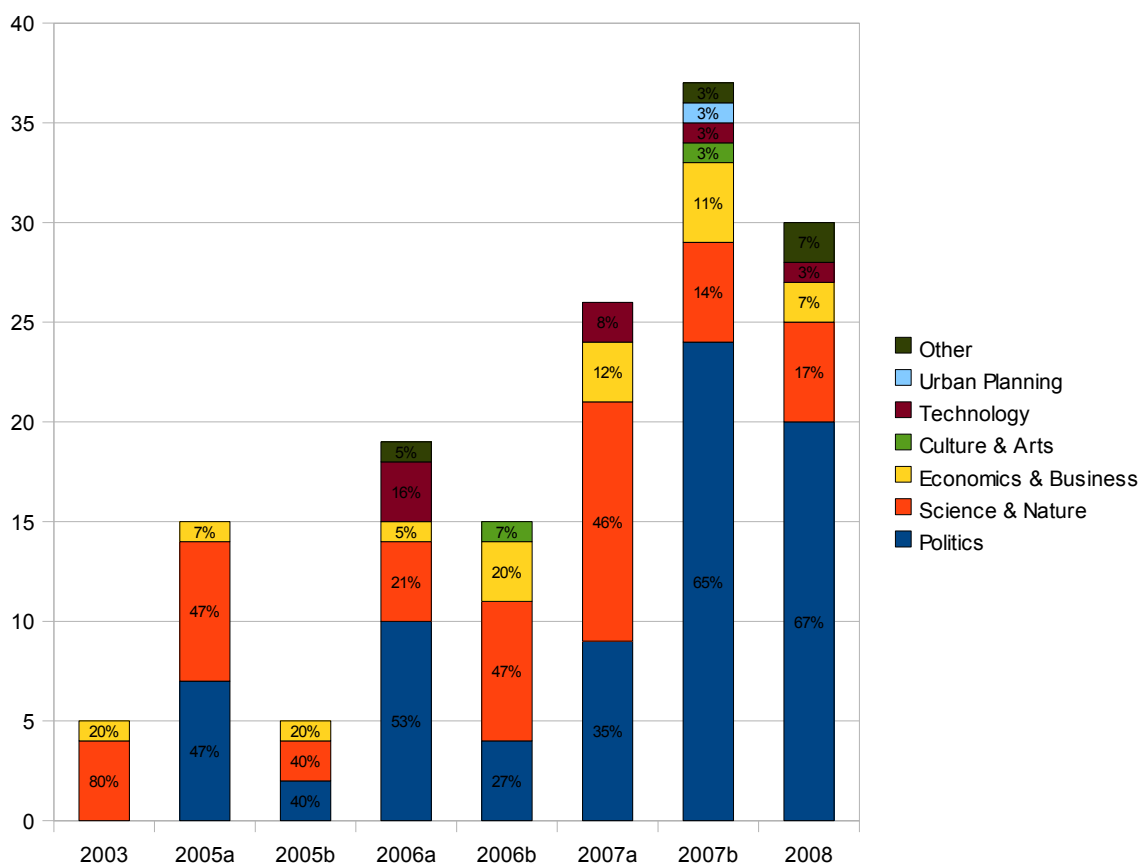
Topic of story	2003	2005a	2005b	2006a	2006b	2007a	2007b	2008	All WSJ stories
Politics	5	5	2	7	5	13	11	14	62
Science & Nature	2	5	1	2	2	5	1	0	18
Economics & Business	1	2	1	2	2	7	11	1	27
Culture & Arts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Technology	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	4
Urban Planning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>115</b>



Stories according to topic in The Wall Street Journal

Table 6.4 Stories according to topic in Helsingin Sanomat

Topic of Story	2003	2005a	2005b	2006a	2006b	2007a	2007b	2008	All HS stories
Politics	0	7	2	10	4	9	24	20	76
Science & Nature	4	7	2	4	7	12	5	5	46
Economics & Business	1	1	1	1	3	3	4	2	16
Culture & Arts	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Technology	0	0	0	3	0	2	1	1	7
Urban Planning	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Other	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	4
<b>ALL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>152</b>



*Stories according to topic in Helsingin Sanomat*

It is also valuable to note, that the observations made from the data in question are in compliance with earlier studies: as Boykoff (2008a) notes, there has been a steady increase in the number of stories discussing climate change until year 2007. The decline observed in all three newspapers between the sample periods 2007b and 2008, however, is interesting considering the fact that both observations periods are fairly similar. Thus, it will be discussed in detail later on in this thesis.

There are also changes on the primary actors of the stories during the years. For example, the importance of political actors has varied fairly much in the different observation periods: In the first two periods, political actors were the primary ones in 33 percent (2003) and 28 percent (2005a) of stories. The first period is particularly interesting: although it was chosen to this thesis due to a physical event, a heatwave, the news material gathered from the period seems to be politically oriented both by topic and by primary actor. In observation period 2005a the political orientation seems quite natural – the Kyoto treaty taking effect is fundamentally a political event.

However, the next four sample periods the importance of political events seems to be losing meaning and giving ground to more versatile primary actors. This might also be due to the fact that a greater number of stories provides greater possibility to interview more people. It should be noted, however, that some groups remain fairly unnoticed throughout all the observation periods: for example, NGOs get to be the primary source in roughly around 5 percent of stories each observation periods, supporting Hallin's (1984) notions of different value sources. It should also be said, that even though the importance of political sources seems to grow less when the total amount of stories grows greater, the observation period 2007b still gives fairly much say to politicians as primary actors. This is, of course, due to the fact that at the time in question, most newspapers filled their pages with material from the Bali summit. Still, it is notable, that although the Bali summit could be considered to be primarily a political event, also the primary sources from the world of business received much coverage during that period. The increase of UN entities at the same period is natural, and if one would calculate political actors, the UN organization and countries and states to the mix as all profoundly political actors, it could be noted that a UN conference is largely determined in the media through the eyes of traditional political actors, not so much NGOs, businesses nor the public.

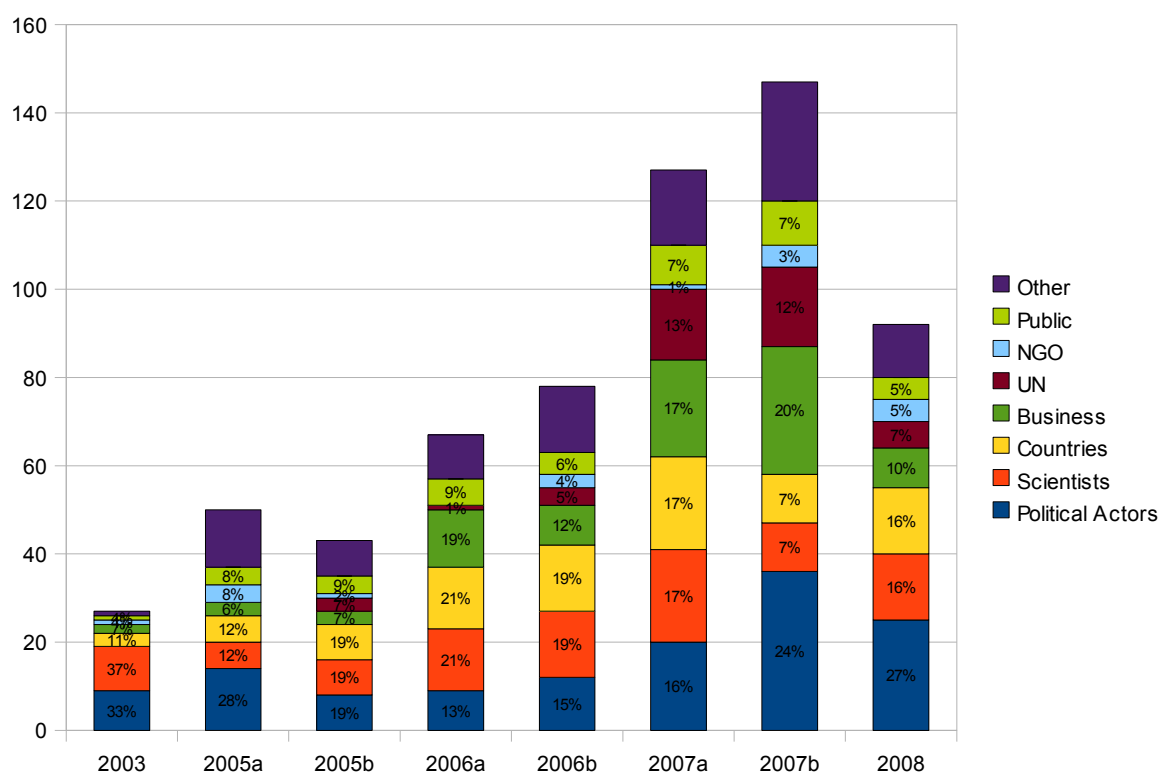
As shown in the Tables and Figures 7.1.–7.4., when looking at the individual papers, *Helsingin Sanomat* shows the most variation in who gets to determine the stories. Differing from the two other papers, *Helsingin Sanomat* seems to prefer discussing climate change from the perspective of countries, giving political actors, such as political parties or politicians less say in the matter. This tendency is especially visible in the last two sample periods. In the same two periods, both discussing a UN conference, *Helsingin Sanomat* seems to be more keen to view the matter from the perspective of countries: 27 percent (2007b) and 33 percent (2008) stories have countries or geographical entities as their primary actor and possible conflicts are built between these actors. *The New York Times*, however, tends to view the matter in the same two observation periods mainly from the perspective of political actors. This might implicate, that instead of building a sense of national consensus, as the Finnish newspaper does, *The New York Times* wishes to point out the differences between general opinion and political actions taken in the U.S. – a notion further discussed in the qualitative analysis of the material. *The Wall Street Journal*, on the other hand, seems to be focusing on business perspective, which could be viewed quite natural to a business-oriented newspaper.

**TABLES AND FIGURES 7.1. – 7.4.**

Changes in primary sources or actors 2003–2008 according to paper

Table 7.1 Changes in primary actors in all three papers

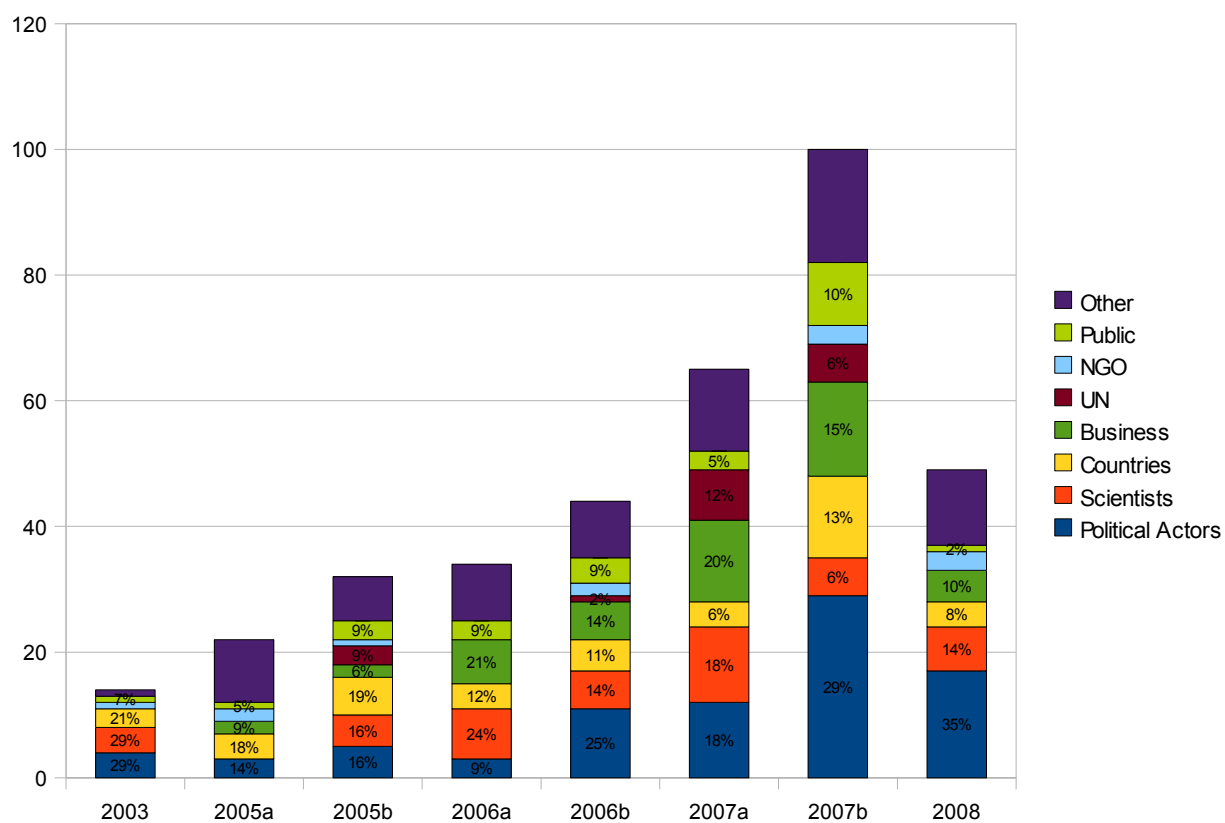
Primary actors	2003	2005a	2005b	2006a	2006b	2007a	2007b	2008	All stories
Political actors	9	14	8	9	12	20	36	25	133
Scientists	10	6	8	14	15	21	11	15	100
Countries and states	3	6	7	12	8	10	27	18	91
Businesses	2	3	3	13	9	22	29	9	90
UN Organizations	0	0	3	1	4	16	18	6	48
NGOs	1	4	1	0	3	1	5	5	20
Public	1	4	4	6	5	9	10	5	44
Other	1	13	8	10	15	17	27	12	103
<b>All</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>629</b>



*Primary actors in all three newspapers*

Table 7.2. Changes in primary actors in The New York Times

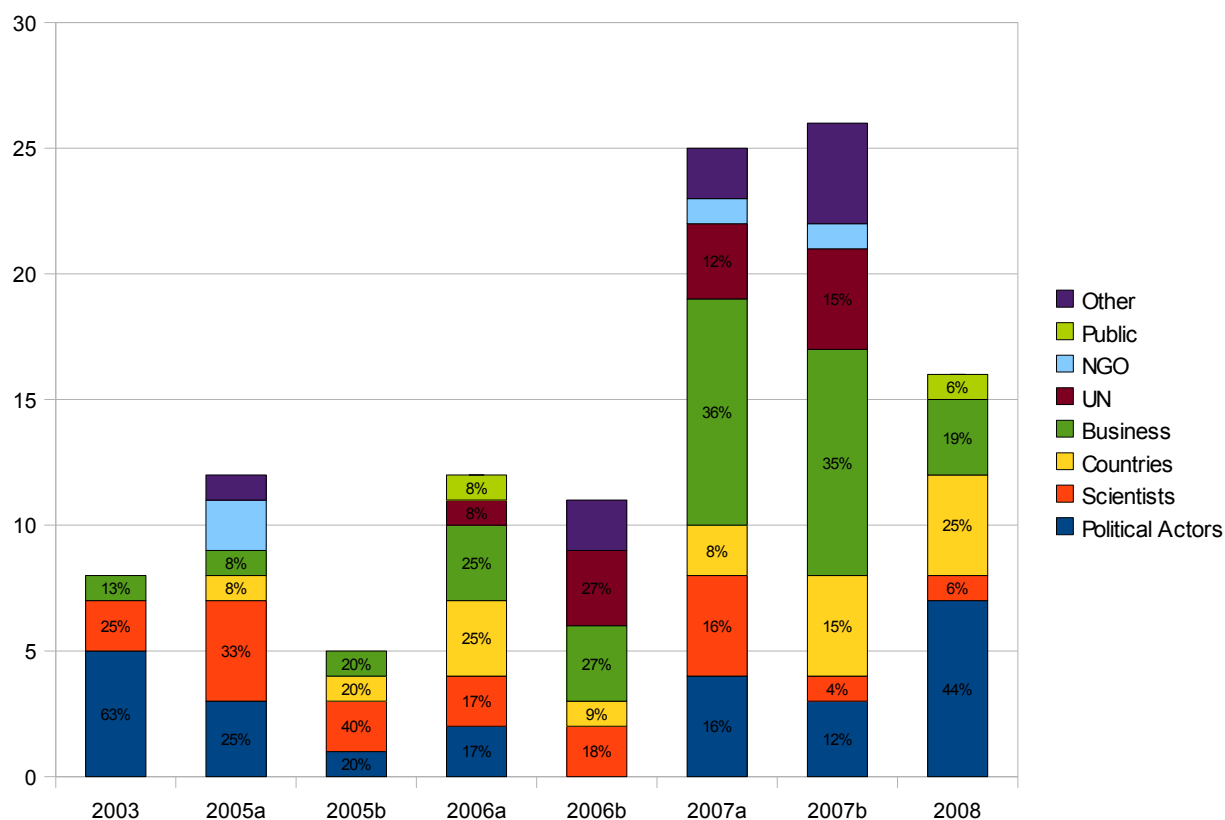
Primary actors	2003	2005a	2005b	2006a	2006b	2007a	2007b	2008	All NYT stories
Political actors	4	3	5	3	11	12	29	17	84
Scientists	4	0	5	8	6	12	6	7	48
Countries and states	3	4	6	4	5	4	13	4	43
Businesses	0	2	2	7	6	13	15	5	50
UN Organizations	0	0	3	0	1	8	6	0	18
NGOs	1	2	1	0	2	0	3	3	12
Public	1	1	3	3	4	3	10	1	26
Other	1	10	7	9	9	13	18	12	79
<b>All</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>362</b>



Primary actors in The New York Times

Table 7.3. Changes in primary actors in The Wall Street Journal

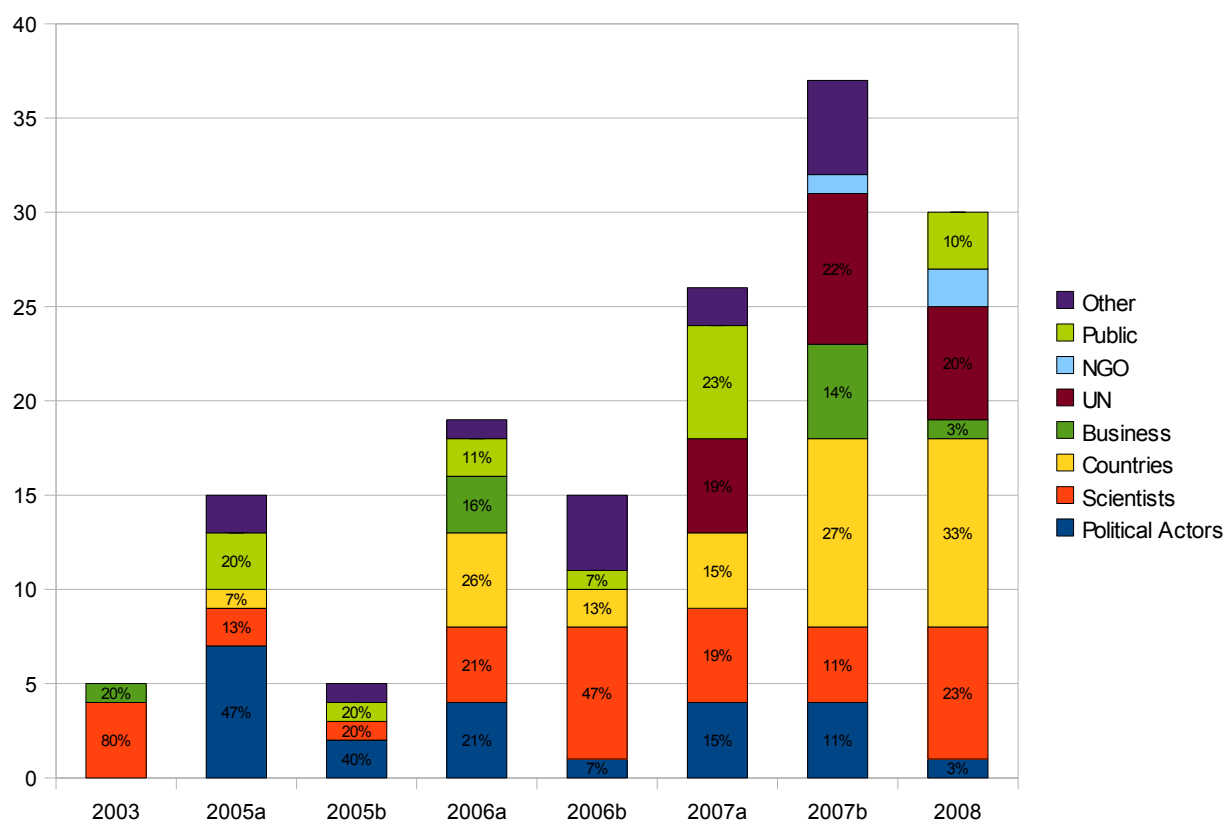
Primary actors	2003	2005a	2005b	2006a	2006b	2007a	2007b	2008	All WSJ stories
Political actors	5	3	1	2	0	4	3	7	25
Scientists	2	4	2	2	2	4	1	1	18
Countries and states	0	1	1	3	1	2	4	4	16
Businesses	1	1	1	3	3	9	9	3	30
UN Organizations	0	0	0	1	3	3	4	0	11
NGOs	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	4
Public	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Other	0	1	0	0	2	2	4	0	9
<b>All</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>115</b>



*Primary Actors in The Wall Street Journal*

Table 7.4. Changes in primary actors in Helsingin Sanomat

Primary actors	2003	2005a	2005b	2006a	2006b	2007a	2007b	2008	All HS stories
Political actors	0	7	2	4	1	4	4	1	23
Scientists	4	2	1	4	7	5	4	7	34
Countries and states	0	1	0	5	2	4	10	10	32
Businesses	1	0	0	3	0	0	5	1	10
UN Organizations	0	0	0	0	0	5	8	6	19
NGOs	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
Public	0	3	1	2	1	6	0	3	16
Other	0	2	1	1	4	2	5	0	15
<b>All</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>152</b>



*Primary actors in Helsingin Sanomat*

There are also some changes in the way conflict is presented in the stories. During the first sample period 2003 a significant majority of stories present conflict: 67 percent of stories present a conflict between the actors in the story. Still, although later on in the data, the most common conflict seems to be environmental concerns versus business interest, the first sample period shows a fairly wide variety of conflicts ranging from purely political conflicts between parties. Also a portrayal of USA versus rest of the world or just Europe more precisely remains common. As for differences between papers, all stories in *The Wall Street Journal* presented some kind of a conflict, the most common of which were political conflicts. In *Helsingin*



*Sanomat* three out of five stories had an element of conflict. In *The New York Times*, half of the stories presented conflict most commonly between environmental concerns and business interest or conflict between political actors.

The next sample period 2005a shows an even more clear lean towards presenting conflict in the stories: altogether 78 percent of stories stage the relationships of the actors so that there is clear competition or conflict of interest between them. Interestingly enough, at this point, the most common conflict of all, with 22 percent of stories in sample period 2005, is the conflict between USA and the rest of the world. There are also more stories on conflicts between scientists than stories discussing the conflict between environmental concerns and business interest. Also political conflicts are present: these include conflicts between parties, but also conflicts between state and national government, for example. In *Helsingin Sanomat* 60 percent of stories presented a conflict most commonly political ones. In *The New York Times*, the presence of conflict was even more clear: altogether 86 percent of stories presented a conflict. There was, again a significant number of stories that discussed the conflict between the United States and the rest of the world, but also a significant number of stories that featured conflict between environmental concerns and business interest.

The sample period 2005b, however, shows a clear decrease of conflict compared to the previous sample period: at this point "only" 55 percent of stories show present conflict the most common of which, again, is the conflict between business interest and environmental concerns. Conflict between the United States and the rest of the world is less visible. In *Helsingin Sanomat*, again three out of five stories feature conflict. In *The Wall Street Journal* the sides are turned, three out five stories do not feature conflict. *The New York Times* differs from the two other papers only by a bit: from its stories, 18 out of 32 feature conflict, most commonly that between environment and business.

At the point of the sample period 2006a, the stories featuring conflict have already fallen to the side of minority: only 46 stories present a conflict of a kind. Again, the most commonly featured conflict is that of nature vs. business interest. Political conflicts have decreased in coverage and even the USA versus rest of the World dichotomy has ceased to be viewed as important. Both in *Helsingin Sanomat* and *The New York Times* conflict can be found in the clear minority of stories. *The Wall Street Journal*, however, presents conflict in more stories than ever before: 67 percent of the stories in sample period 2006b discuss conflict primarily between political actors or between countries.

Later on the same year, during sample period 2006b, stories featuring conflict rise again to the side of majority: about 60 percent of stories portray some kind of conflict most notable between environmental and business interest. In *Helsingin Sanomat* stories featuring conflict are in the minority, however, and focused mostly around conflicts between scientists. In *The New York Times*, where 63 stories present conflict, most conflicts discuss, again, the conflict between nature and business. In *The Wall Street Journal*, stories with

conflict are in the majority with the nature versus business conflict. The observation period 2007a shows similar tendencies: 63 percent of stories feature conflict with environmental concerns vs. Business interest being the most common one. However, perhaps because of the release of the IPCC report, conflict between scientists is more present in the stories than ever before. Also political conflict is discussed in several stories. All three papers also have more stories with conflict than those without conflict, but *Helsingin Sanomat* seems to be the one most scientifically oriented and thus featuring the most stories with conflict between scientists. This is interesting especially in the respect that the IPCC report was for many, genuine proof that scientific debate over climate change would be over.

The two last sample periods make an interesting comparison to each other also when looking at the presence of conflict. Sample period 2007b, being the most rich sample period of all eight two-week periods, has only 48 percent of stories featuring conflict. From these, almost half of the stories discuss conflict between countries or conflict between the USA and the rest of the world. The conflict between business interest and environmental concerns seems to have decreased greatly. Especially *Helsingin Sanomat* emphasized the conflict between countries, whereas *The New York Times* was more focused on the conflicts between politicians or the conflict between business and nature. This can be viewed as natural: overall in the eight sample periods, *Helsingin Sanomat* can be viewed more focused on actors in the level of nation states, whereas *The New York Times* seems to be oriented in portraying politicians and political entities. At least in sample period 2007b *The Wall Street Journal* seems to fall between the two featuring both conflict between nation states but also conflict between political organizations.

A bit unexpectedly, in the last sample period 2008 stories with conflict and stories without conflict are almost in balance. Stories featuring conflict make-up 52 percent of stories in the sample period: the most common of these is now the conflict between environmental concerns and business interest – even though also sample period 2008 was chosen coinciding with an UN conference. *The New York Times* differs from the two other newspapers in this sample period greatly: only about 30 percent of its stories feature conflict whereas all stories in *The Wall Street Journal* feature some kind of a conflict, almost all of the featuring precisely conflict between environment and business interest. Also in *Helsingin Sanomat* 60 percent of stories feature conflict, most of which are focused in the conflict between nation states.

In conclusion, the quantitative analyses discussed in this part of the chapter has mostly shown clear indications climate change is mostly portrayed as a political story even though there are differences between the three paper. Whereas *The New York Times* seems to be viewing it as a political story with political primary actors and placing importance to political conflicts, *Helsingin Sanomat* is mostly oriented towards discussing the issue from the perspective of a nation state. Also, *Helsingin Sanomat* – at least in the respect of quantities – was the last paper to abandon building conflict between scientists. *The Wall Street Journal*, quite naturally as a business oriented paper seems to be placing special interest in business actors and the

environment versus business -aspect of the "story of climate change". These notes could indicate that the three papers build very different perspectives for the readers on the same events and issues. How this relates to previous discussions of objectivity and the framing function of media, however, requires more detailed, qualitative analysis of the data, which I will go to next.

## 7. QUALITATIVE CHANGES IN THE COVERAGE: TOWARDS CONSENSUS OR NOT?

The quantitative analysis in the previous chapter already gives some perspective on how climate politics are framed and which actors play a determining role in the framing process. However, to gain a better understanding on how the press portrays climate politics, it is necessary to analyze the aforementioned texts also through qualitative analysis. Thus, next I will go through the frames that can be observed from the sample. As already mentioned before, frames are indicated by the choice of actors that present information, the "master narrative" and frame vocabulary (Hertog & McLeod 2001, 148). Often the frame is already set in the very first passages of a story (Tankard 2001, 101) – thus, I have paid special attention to the headlines of stories. Other significant features were the attributes given to global warming itself and, even more importantly, the attributes given to the primary or secondary actors in the text. In addition to a general overview of the frames found in the sample, I will also discuss my findings on each paper in general.

Furthermore, in the end of this chapter more detailed analysis is provided on the two last sample periods, which proved to make the most interesting comparison in the data I selected for this thesis. In this analysis I have taken a closer look on how journalistic credibility and the sense of objectivity is built in the texts.

### 7.1. Seven frames for climate politics

As already discussed in chapter two, Callaghan and Schnell (2005) argue that frames can be divided into three groups. These groups include issue specific frames, thematic and episodic frames and generic frames. The frames I found in my sample of newspaper articles from *Helsingin Sanomat*, *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* include seven different frames, two of which are issues specific, three thematic or episodic and two generic. An additional "frame" mentioned here is, perhaps, not a frame at all: I have decided to categorize the text that only mention climate change or climate politics in passing in their own box. This was done, because I considered it to be important to note, which kind of stories consider climate change to be important enough to be mentioned.

The thematic or episodic frames include the frames of "Era of climate change", "Planetary Crises" and "Unsireness". The first of the three, The Era of Climate Change, was the most common frame in the sample. It could be observed in 20 percent of stories. In this frame, climate change is a given fact and its scientific basis is rarely even mentioned – in fact, quite contrary, if a story in this frame set should discuss the scientific basis, it would declare that the "age of doubt is over". The Era of Climate Change serves as a master narrative and the actions and inactions of politicians are mirrored primarily with this aspect: it is common to talk about whether its too late to act, for example. However, climate change can also be viewed as a possibility. Especially later on in the sample several stories discussing the new green economy appear. These stories discuss how businesses have found ways to profit from the interest of ecological issues.

Custom-made "eco-honeymoons" and ski-resorts learning to cope without snow are pictured as phenomena of a new age. Rather than building controversy between economic growth and environmental values, in this frame capitalistic tools can be seen to help the environment. Although many of the stories in the Era of Climate Change frame do not question "being green", criticism can be found in surprising places: for example, it is seen relevant to talk about the environmental implications of a new statue in Central Park.

It should be noted that the frame of Era of Climate Change includes aspects that make it either thematic or episodic depending on the story in question. Although many stories focus on the episodic aspect – a good example would be a story on how climate change is effecting competitive cross-country skiing – many of the stories also focus on a wider, more thematic aspect. For example, it is common for the Letter's to the editor to be focused in a more wider aspect of climate politics rather than just one example. In fact, the Era of Climate Change frame was the most common frame in Letter's to the editor. Especially in these stories, the writers emphasize the importance of "everyone working for the same goal" – a tendency most commonly observed in the stories of *Helsingin Sanomat*, the writers of which often referred to the concept of a bee ("talkoot"). This concept, however, did not appear in the two American newspapers. One can also observe that the stories in the Era of Climate Change frame pay less significance of political actors and more significance on the "need to act" per se: often especially the Letter's to editor express a deep dissatisfaction towards what governments have done. Still, the majority of the stories in the frame express no conflict at all.

The second most common frame is the Competition of Countries frame, which makes up about 19 percent of stories in the total sample. This frame is most commonly found in news stories and is generic by nature. It juxtaposes the interests of each nation and describes climate politics as a competition between nation states or large geopolitical actors such as the European Union, for example. Almost all the stories that fit to this frame emphasize conflict between nations. The most common of the conflicts is that between United States and "the rest of the world" or Europe more precisely. However, later on in the sample more juxtaposition appears between the "rich nations" and the "poor" or "developing" nations. Also, China and India receive importance as climate political actors. It is important to note that in this frame, the unity of nation states is not questioned: rather than bringing up domestic dissent, countries are pictured as unified actors, which promote a common ambition and will, rather than talking about who won in a pluralistic combat of opinions.

Climate politics actors in the Competition of Countries frame seek to gain the greatest possible amount of power and wealth. This is done through negotiations and bargaining, which are often described with very colourful expressions: nation states "midwife", "threaten with boycott", "press commitments" on treaties or they "crash on reality", "deadlock" or "get crippled" by the negotiations. War metaphors can be common, and the process of the negotiations is described to be even emotional: e.g. *Helsingin Sanomat* describes how some climate negotiators burst into tears once the Bali conference was over. However, seeking power and wealth should not be understood merely as unwillingness of some countries to commit to e.g. emissions caps.

A central feature of the Competition of Countries frame is the emphasis of importance of example and leadership. Especially in *Helsingin Sanomat*, many stories focus on how the European Union should lead the way in the "climate challenge". Thus, countries are not only concerned about their fiscal interests, but also their image in the world.

Far behind the two dominant frames is the third most common frame, the Environment versus Economic Wealth frame. This frame is apparent in 11 percent of stories. Its central, master narrative is to build juxtaposition between the interests of companies or other entities seeking economic growth and the common interest of preserving nature. In some cases, the latter is seen to be the interest of so-called environmentalists; a term only used in the American context. Political actors – especially politicians – are portrayed being "torn between competing interests". It should be noted that the "economic interest" is not only that of large companies, but also developing nations. In this case, the tables are turned in the scale of good and evil: for example larger, developed countries can be seen to be making unfair demands to the developing nations. Thus, it can be well argued that fundamentally, the Environment versus Economic Wealth frames an issue specific frame, which can be examined by looking at the impact of alternative descriptions of policy issues. In fact, in some cases climate politics can be portrayed as a new way to imperialize developing nation. One should note, that if the sample would have included say, an Indian or Chinese paper, this frame would prove to be particularly interesting.

The Environment versus Economic Wealth frame is the most common in feature texts and opinion texts such as op-editorials, columns or editorials. Its primary actors are quite naturally business entities, however, quite interestingly the few stories that have citizens or NGOs as their primary actors are also often those that juxtapose money and preserving the nature. Almost all the stories in this frame also present conflict of a kind. Although for example Halling (1986) argues that the media often sides with the business elites reflecting their opinions, surprisingly many stories also criticise the actions of large corporations: e.g. Exxon meddling with scientific research was viewed primarily through extensive critique, although *The Wall Street Journal* might have found some sympathy for the devil.

Contrary to what one might expect considering general critique of the media, the Planetary Crises frame is only the fourth most common frame in the sample taken for this thesis. Although even I personally assumed to find more stories that would paint murky visions of the future to come, surprisingly many stories rather described the issues in a mellow tone. However, especially Al Gore's documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, aroused many passionate writings both criticizing the claims and warning about the sky falling. Because both types of stories – those who are "alarmist" and those who criticize the alarmists – use very similar, almost religious vocabulary, I decided to include both in the same frame. In fact, most of the stories in this frame follow similar paths of thinking and usually even appeal to the same reasonings. Most commonly the alarmist stories have scientists as their primary actors, and either do or do not have an element of conflict in

them depending on whether they are written from only one point of view or two: there are almost no stories in this frame that would include "a middle opinion".

By nature, the Planetary Crises frame belongs to the category of thematic and episodic frames. Like the Era of Climate Change it is a frame that determines the fundamentals of a story and thus leads the interpretation of the reader towards either thinking that the problems are highly exaggerated or highly underrated. It also takes up individual happenings and puts them into context: a great example of these are the stories over the island of Tuvalu possible being flooded and drowned in the sea as the polar ice melt. Interestingly enough, political actors do not play a major role in this frame. Quite contrary; like in the Era of Climate Change frame, the inactions of politicians are seen as unavoidable and a sense of common responsibility is assumed. However, whereas the Era of Climate Change frame enabled the reader to feel they can do something about climate change or at least adapt to it, the Planetary Crises frame usually gives only nearly apocalyptic descriptions of the future. Perhaps thus it is no wonder that this frame would use religious vocabulary both when criticising the "global warming evangelists" or talking about "us destroying the earth we were supposed to leave our children".

The fifth most common frame in the total sample is the frame of Political/partisan Competition. Notably, this frame is primarily an American one: there were no stories in Helsingin Sanomat that would fit the frame primarily because the parties seemed to be pleased with the current consensus. However, in the United States, global warming politics seem to be at the heart of not only international politics, but the heart of the bipartisan system. In fact, different stances on global warming seemed to be central debate in the United States during all samples. Furthermore, as the stories in this frame were mostly focused in the political process and often clean air legislation, the frame emphasizes competition and conflicting interests of politicians. Thus, it is predominantly a generic frame that uses certain narrative structures to convey political information. As often observed and criticised in political journalism on other topics, only a minority of the stories in this frame focus on how a certain piece of legislation would effect or combat climate change. It is rather central to point out, which opinion is the leading or dominant one. There is also an emphasis on leadership: just like in the Competition of Countries frame, many politicians are portrayed to seek to be a role-model through climate politics. However, unlike in the Competition of Countries frame, hardly any unity is found in the nation states and also the interests of big corporations play a central role via lobbyists. Needless to note, almost all stories in this frame have an element of conflict or juxtaposition in them.

The two least common frames in the sample are the frames of Unsureness and Technology as a Solution which both make up about roughly eight percent of the coverage each. The former one of the frames is a traditional one discussed in many previous studies and often also criticised: according to Boykoff and Boykoff (2004) for example, the prestige press in the U.S. have too long promoted critical questions about the scientific basis of climate change, although a scientific consensus has been long found. The frame of

Unsureness is fundamentally a thematic and/or episodic frame, although it does have several features of an issue specific frame. For example, it values or disvalues the action of politicians or countries through scientific aspect and is often brought up when new scientific findings are made. Thus, it serves as a tool for evaluating political decisions: "can we cut our emissions, if we are not sure that they contribute to global warming". The technology as a solution, on the contrary, is clearly an issue specific frame. Its fundamental assumption, a master narrative, is that technology will ultimately save ourselves from ourselves, if political actors will only let it – or at least sufficiently subsidise it. Whereas the Unsureness frame tends to at least demine political power, the Technology as a Solution frame gives it emphasis. Still, both frames set scientists as central actors rather than politicians. It should be noted though, that the technology frame also gives special importance to business actors, and includes the same belief of capitalist tools working towards the good of nature as the Era of Climate Change frame.

Last but not least 17 percent of the total sample fell into the category that only mentions climate change. Personally, I found this category to be interesting, because although it does not provide any additional attributes to actors in climate policy, nor does it give much insight on how climate politics are framed, it does prove that climate politics lie in the mainstream of modern politics. Some of the stories in this truly just mention climate change. In fact, some of them were not stories at all, but merely lists of bestsellers or upcoming international meetings. However, as mentioned in the very beginning of this essay, a journalist's job is fundamentally to choose what is worth to print. Thus, it is valuable to see, which things are considered so worthwhile that they should be mentioned in a story or a list, even by passing. In fact, some might argue that the presence of climate politics in these lists tells a very fundamental message about its importance. When climate change is mentioned as a problem comparable to starvation or wars, it has truly made it a major league of political problems.

Although all three papers followed the general features of the frames mentioned here, there were some differences on which frames were the most common in each paper. Next, I will take a closer look at each paper on what things were emphasized.

### ***7.1.1. The New York Times focuses on political conflict***

The coverage of climate politics in *The New York Times* is different in one significant aspect from the other papers: a proportion of the stories frames climate policy as political combat either between the two major parties or even "president Bush versus the democrats" and as a struggle between the federal government and the states. In this respect, the coverage of *The New York Times* is "more political" than in the other newspapers.



The frame of Partisan politics appears straight away in the first sample period 2003 of *The New York Times*. Two stories discuss the issues of states and federal government, but also political discussion in the senate. The majority of the stories in the first sample period, however, discuss the conflicting interests of preserving the environment and economic growth: for example, the growing popularity of SUV's has made the environmentalists worried. It should be noted that these two frames – as all the other frames also – do not rule each other out: many of the stories note that the conflict between politicians might be due to their sympathies for big oil companies, for example.

Sample period 2005a shows this tendency: four stories focus on the Environment versus Economic Wealth frame and four stories discuss the issue predominantly through a political competition frame. Four stories discuss the issue from a more country oriented frame, which in this sample period is due to the trip President Bush made to Europe. This trip also produced many stories, which only mentioned climate change as something making transatlantic diplomatic relations more complicated than before. The central conflict in these stories is the competition between Europe and the United States. Notably enough, only two stories discuss scientific debate over climate change: the other one of these two is also clearly focused on urban planning in Venice and the threats of a rising sea level. Although it does discuss the "realness" of climate changes, it is clearly tilting to the side that it is real.

The later sample period 2005b in *The New York Times* shows a small increase of stories discussing the economic well-being – preserving nature -dichotomy: these story portray climate policy as a combat between business interests and the need to react to the issue. The Era of Climate Change frame is also emphasize especially due to the connections made to the extreme weather conditions and a changing environment. Five stories centered around political competition discussed – in addition of international actors such as UN diplomats – again on the actions of U.S. politicians such as Bill Clinton. This is a special feature in the coverage of *The New York Times*. The three stories that discuss scientific debate over the science of climate change discuss it from a predominantly non-sceptical view – the interviewees bringing up the more sceptical perspectives are clearly in a less authoritative stance. The exaggerative frame of Planetary Crises can be found in no more than three stories. Finally, as before most of the stories in frame centered on countries and nation states, builds contradiction namely between the United States and European countries.

The sample period 2006a shows an increasing number of stories in *The New York Times* that present climate policy in the context of an Era of Climate Change: one of the stories even mentions "the time before climate change". Aiding the climate fight is seen as something that is also good for business. Thus, the stories that would put nature values and economic interests in contraposition also grow fewer. A significant increase of Planetary Crises of writing can also be observed: the stories talk about "run-away global heating" and "the problems of an unborn generation". The same "doomsday fear" are repeated in some stories discussing the Stern report during sample period 2006b. However, the Era of Climate Change frame also grows more

persistent, as does also the amount of stories that find solution in technology. Also, more stories just mention climate politics as "politics as usual". Less stories seem to put focus to political competition, and the stories that do not exaggerate conflict.

Later on next year, during sample period 2007a there is a clear change in framing of climate change in *The New York Times*. Unlike before, the majority of articles fall into the category of Era of Climate Change. This is perhaps due to the fact that the U.N. mandated IPCC takes a harder stance of the issue – doubt is no longer casted on the issue itself. This leads to more and more stories that take the phenomenon for granted and thus focus on aspects of how it might effect our lives in the future. Interestingly enough though, there is not much increase in the somewhat related frame – Technology as a Solution, although the the frame Era of Climate Change does often include the notion that climate change could be turned profitable. However, quite naturally, stories that predict apocalypse and worry are more common. Also stories that merely mention climate change become more frequent.

The peak sample period when looking at the number of stories in *The New York Times* is 2007b. This sample periods shows a major increase in two frames, the Era of Climate Change and Competition of Countries. That the latter one would be significant in *The New York Times*, is no wonder of course – as already observed from the same sample period in *Helsingin Sanomat*, the climate conference in Bali is predominantly published as a competition of countries. *The New York Times* sample is different though in the respect that the Era of Climate Change frame is even more significant than the countries frame. *The New York Times* also gives more column inches to the perspective of political competition. Also, contrary to *Helsingin Sanomat*, the era of climate change frame remains persistent even in the next sample period 2008. This periods shows also some, yet moderate increases in finding answers from technology. What is notable though, is that less stories actually talk about climate change: the majority of stories just mention the issues as "politics as usual".

In fact, when looking at the all eight sample periods in *The New York Times*, stories that just mention climate change are the most common type of story in the whole sample. They cover 22 percent of the stories, which would indicate that climate change is becoming an issue that is mostly taken for granted. The second most common frame, closely related to the previously mentioned is the Era of Climate Change frame, is found in 22 percent of stories. Like in the "just mentioned"-category of stories, climate change and climate politics are "politics as usual". The stories focus more on adaptation than combat and tend to view eco-friendly policies as profitable. The country-oriented frame and the politicians-oriented frame hold a close tie in *The New York Times*: both can be found in about 12 percent of stories. What is of course interesting about this, is that the political competition frame is not found in the *Helsingin Sanomat* sample at all. The *Helsingin Sanomat* stories do indicate that there are opposite opinions in climate politics, but they rarely come up in

stories. *The New York Times* however, often describes climate politics as namely a bipartisan issues, which might reflect the papers own somewhat anti-Bush stance.

The Planetary Crises frame is also quite prominent in *The New York Times*: about 11 percent of stories fall into this category. In fact, it is as common as the frame that contradicts environmental concerns and economic growth which can also be found in 11 percent of stories. The Technology as a Solution frame is behind the two with seven percent of stories – a number that will fall short compared two the amount of stories in the same frame in *The Wall Street Journal*. The least common frame in *The New York Times* is the frame of scientific debate, which can be found in only four percent of stories. This would indicate at least that the Boykoff and Boykoff (2004) are not applicable to the more recent coverage.

### ***7.1.2. The Wall Street Journal remains sceptical***

*The Wall Street Journal* is very different from the two other newspapers sampled for this thesis in the respect that it is a paper focused for a comparatively separated audience. This, of course, is prone to effect the paper's coverage of climate politics. *The Wall Street Journal* is also often considered to be more conservative compared to *The New York Times*, which would indicate that also the frames found in *The Wall Street Journal* would have a different variation.

At least the first sample period in *The Wall Street Journal* shows an inclination to take the sceptic point of view into account far more than in the two other papers. As *The New York Times*, also *The Wall Street Journal* is interested in the political competition aspect of climate politics naming it a bipartisan issue. Contrary to what one might expect, only two stories talk about the conflicting interests of environment and economics and technology as a solution for global warming. Two years later, during sample period 2005a, the scientific debate frame remains prominent: over half of the stories in this sample indicate that climate change and there for actions that seek to contain it should not be taken as absolute truths. Interestingly enough this perspective is also – if not even predominantly found – in the editorials and letters to editor – a tendency not common in the other two newspapers. However, the next sample period, 2005b, shows some decrease in the amount of stories in the scientific debate frame. It should be pointed out, however, that this sample consists of only 5 stories, so its results are not really comparable to the other samples in *The Wall Street Journal*.

Later on the next year, perhaps again due to the small amount of stories, observation period 2006a shows a versatile group of frames. Almost all frames appear in this sample: even the frame of Unsureness reappears in the sample even though the Al Gore movie released in the during the period also increased the number of stories that would fit the Planetary Crises frame. A more interesting period to look at is the next sample period, 2006b, during which most stories in *The Wall Street Journal* that discuss the Stern report are very

critical of its insight – this is a perspective that does not appear in the two other papers at all. At the same time, three out of eleven stories discuss technological options of combatting climate change, which is already a good indication of how the coverage in *The Wall Street Journal* is going to evolve in the upcoming sample periods.

The Technology as a Solution frame is in fact one of the prominent ones in the next sample period 2007a. However, yet again totally unlike in the other newspapers, *The Wall Street Journal* writes very critically over the IPCC report that was released during the sample period. Whereas *The New York Times* and *Helsingin Sanomat* find points of criticism mostly from the process of forming the report, *The Wall Street Journal* seems to be criticizing the contents of the report itself. Altogether seven out of 25 stories include debate on the scientific basis of climate change. Also, there is an increase in the number of stories that discuss the conflict between the economically interested and preserving nature. Three stories also fall to the category of the crises-frame, but in this case the crises seem to be viewed as overrated and overreacted, thus for example criticizing the IPCC report to be too of a doomsday tendency.

Compared to the two other papers there was little increase in the number of stories in *The Wall Street Journal* during observation period 2007b. However, during period 2007b there are hardly any stories that would express criticism of the scientific notions of global warming anymore. As in the two other papers, the Era of Climate Change frame gains prominence, as does the Competition of Countries perspective, which as mentioned with the two other papers, is only natural due to the Bali-conference. Also, more stories just mention climate change as politics or business as usual. However, almost exactly a year later, during observation period 2008, this tendency changes towards a more critical stance. The debate-frame reappears again and even more articles than before focus on clashing economic interests and preserving nature.

Altogether in *The Wall Street Journal* sample, quite like *Helsingin Sanomat*, most stories fit the frame of Competition of Countries. About 20 percent of all stories fit to this frame-set. However, unlike in *Helsingin Sanomat* or *The New York Times*, 18 percent of stories fall to the category of scientific debate. When you take into account that most stories fitting to the *Planetary Crises* frame – about 10 percent of stories in the sample – also observe climate politics very sceptically, *The Wall Street Journal* seems to be the most critical paper in the total sample.

Quite naturally for a business-oriented newspaper, *The Wall Street Journal* gives special attention to the problems of conserving nature while taking care of economic growth. Altogether 15 percent of stories fall to this category. Nine percent of stories portray conflict between politicians. Quite interestingly and contrary to original expectations, only ten percent of stories fit to the Technology as a Solution frame, although one might expect it to be more prominent namely in *The Wall Street Journal*. About 12 percent of stories just mention climate change. Fairly interesting is also the fact that the least common frame in *The Wall Street*

*Journal* is the Era of Climate Change frame, which is quite common in *The New York Times* and *Helsingin Sanomat*. This is perhaps due to the fact that since *The Wall Street Journal* appears to be more critical of climate change than the other two papers, it is natural for its coverage to have less stories that take climate change "for granted".

### **7.1.3. Helsingin Sanomat emphasizes the role of nation states**

During observation period 2003 the stories in *Helsingin Sanomat* can be viewed as dominantly scientifically oriented. Two stories of a total of five discuss and present that there is still debate on the issue of antropomorphic climate change. In these stories the scientists are the most prominent actors, whereas – quite interestingly citizens often are presented as an important secondary actor. Present, however only in two stories, are the ideas of natures interest being against business interest and the notions of climate change being the new "apocalypse". Not surprisingly, the former type of story presents business as the primary actors and frames climate change as a phenomenon influenced by flying and driving. The latter type of story describes climate change as something comparable to a weapon of mass destruction. All stories seem to be depicting political actors as either indecisive or oblivious to the dangers of climate change: "the playing goes on, although Rome is burning"<sup>6</sup>, claims one article.

Two years later, during observation period 2005a the *Helsingin Sanomat* articles present much larger set of perspectives to stories. Five out of fifteen stories published during the sample period present politics from a frame of Era of Climate Change: these stories seem to have a variable group of primary actors, yet the common feature of presenting climate change as something to be taken as an eminent fact to which nations should react. Another common frame at the same time is looking at climate change from the perspective of countries: *Helsingin Sanomat* for example discusses whether countries will be able to fulfil their Kyoto targets. In these stories, conflict is clearly present: the European Union is staged against the United States, for example. Countries act as the predominant actors who midwife ("kättilöi"), pressure ("painostaa") or are ready to make treaties. In two cases, the countries-perspective is combined to a more apocalyptic type of discussing the issues: in both stories, climate change is described with almost biblical terms like the "world is on a path with no return" ("tiellä, jolta ei ole paluuta") or "we are doomed" ("olemme tuhoon tuomittuja"). Only one story presents scientific debate.

Later on the same year, during sample period 2005b, the number of stories declines naturally furthermore versitaling the number of different perspectives or "frames" in the sample. Two stories just mention climate change as one notion that is taken into consideration when forming government policy over the issue. Thus, these stories do not give any additional attributes to climate policy actors. The same tendency can be noticed during sample period 2006a, during which Finland hosted an Asem meeting in Helsinki: although the

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<sup>6</sup> Sentence originally in Finnish: "Soitto jatkuu, vaikka Rooma palaa". *Helsingin Sanomat* 31.7.2003

conference made a declaration over how to act against climate change, many stories put more emphasis on climate change being "politics as usual". However, also other prominent frames appear: the least of which is not the emphasis of Technology as a Solution. Also more stories discuss the sometimes crossing interests of business and nature. Because Asem is predominantly a convention of countries, it is hardly surprising many stories discuss climate change from the perspective of the different interests of countries.

The latter sample period the same year, 2006b, the Era of Climate Change frame is further emphasized: since the sample period coincides with the release of the Stern report, many stories put emphasis on the fact climate change needs to be addressed through political means or it will become expensive. The number of "doubters" is said to decline and the need to act is brought to the center of many stories. At the same time, the number of stories that portray dissent among scientists is also increased: although the Stern report itself takes climate change as a fact, it seems to have aroused many stories discussing it from a scientific perspective and thus, including a critical perspective. This, of course, could be viewed as a healthy tendency in journalism, the aim of which should be to bring out various kinds of perspectives to one issue.

After the release of the IPCC report in the beginning of year 2007, which claimed that there are not many questions to the certainty of climate change anymore, the Era of Climate Change frame is already predominant in *Helsingin Sanomat*. As before, the importance of action is emphasized and politicians, rather than scientists are risen to a central role in stories. In general, the stories in *Helsingin Sanomat*, start to portray national unity on how to act and what is necessary – this tendency is not so much visible in the two American newspapers. There are few stories, however, that question the validity of climate change: these stories either contradict business interest to environmental concerns or bring up questions whether the "climate mania" has already gone too far.

During the Bali climate conference in 2007 most stories in *Helsingin Sanomat* emphasized the importance of countries as political actors: especially the role of the European Union was viewed as important and even the Nordic Countries were given a status of "opinion leaders". However, at the same time, focus on the obvious conflict of interest between the industrialized countries and the developing countries grew: where as previously there was a more clear emphasis on differences between the United States and Europe, now India and China received more importance. Compared to previous years, the frames of Era of Climate Change and the conflict between preserving nature and business interest, were less visible. More focus was put on how technology could give a solution to the problems of global warming: *Helsingin Sanomat* in fact, did a whole story on how climate change has become a "trillion-dollar-business".

Almost exactly a year later, during the last observation period 2008, the role of countries was still emphasized in *Helsingin Sanomat* – however, the nearing financial crises, perhaps, increased the number of stories that discussed the competing interests of financial growth and environmental values. For example,

minister Mauri Pekkarinen's demand not to abandon the forest industry in the climate negotiations received great attention, whereas in the previous years, the forest industry was demanded to develop new technology in order to combat climate change. Perhaps the most interesting finding is that none of the stories in *Helsingin Sanomat* during sample period 2008 observe climate policy through the Technology as a Solution frame.

Overall, the emphasis on nation states seems to be a determining feature of the climate policy coverage in *Helsingin Sanomat*: the biggest percentage, 34 percent of stories discussed the issue as a something countries compete over, thrive to gain leadership and hope to preserve power. The second most common frame in *Helsingin Sanomat* was the Era of Climate Change frame which was featured in 24 percent of coverage. In this frame, citizens and other non-governmental actors were seen as more prominent and more apt to combat climate change. A special importance was given to the concept of bees ("talkoot") – when climate policy was seen to fail, everybody would need to "pitch in" or "do their share". In comparison, the importance of technology was a central topic in only seven percent of stories.

During the observation periods, only ten percent of stories featured debate on the anthropomorphic nature of climate change. This result is well in-line with the previous findings of Dispensa and Brulle (2003), who found that *Helsingin Sanomat* portrayed debate of the scientific basis of climate change in nine percent of stories published during year 2000. It is interesting, however, that although scientific certainty of the causes of climate change was increased since for example in the official statements of the IPCC, there seems to have been little change in the amount of coverage in the so-called Unsureness frame in *Helsingin Sanomat*.

With nine percent of coverage featuring question of the competing interests of business and preserving nature, *Helsingin Sanomat* does not put much emphasis on the question. Also, stories that would paint visions of apocalyptic changes or that would criticize people painting visions of apocalyptic changes are not very common – only 6 percent of stories in the paper would fit this description. Finally, 11 percent of stories in the *Helsingin Sanomat* sample only mention climate change without giving the climate policy actors attributes. These stories, however, do legitimize the phenomenon itself as something that is important and an established part of political debate.

## **7.2. Comparing sample periods 2007 and 2008 – "Not quite apple pie yet"**

Among all eight sample periods, the two last periods make the most interesting comparison. This is because they both include a major UN Summit and are located roughly around the same time of year. The latter aspect is significant: news selection is not only a question of what is considered to be important, but also what "fits" to be printed. The beginning of December seems to have been fairly similar both during years

2007 and 2008, although in between, during the summer of 2008 the economic crises had exploded in the United States. In fact, this seems have made difference in the coverage.

As mentioned before, during sample period 2007b the amount of stories peaked in all three newspapers. *Helsingin Sanomat* published 37 stories, *The Wall Street Journal* 26 and *The New York Times* 102 stories. It is perhaps not a surprise that the most prominent frame this year is the Competition of Countries frame, which puts emphasis on political competition and seeking leadership: the United Nations Climate conference in Bali gives good incentive to focus on the competition aspect of politics, and thus it could be argued that it is very natural to look at the happenings at hand through this kind of a looking lense. Also the Era of Climate Change frame is significant. It should be noted that there are no stories that would discuss the scientific certainty of climate change, also. In comparison to the rest of the data for this thesis, it could be argued that there is less criticism in the stories in the 2007b-sample than in the the other sample periods – at least if you look at merely at whether the scientific basis of climate change is questioned.

But are the stories in sample period 2007b then less "objective" in general than the other stories and if so, why? When looking at the stories in *Helsingin Sanomat* one notices that both climate politics and the political actors receive a large number of both positive and negative attributes in the 2007b-sample, often so that the negative attributes are in the majority. This is of course interesting in respect to a common criticisms about the media having taken up the "climate evangelist" perspective and joined the bandwagon of climate craziness. In fact, at least when it comes to the Bali negotiations, the coverage of *Helsingin Sanomat* appears to be hugely critical: there is emphasis on political competition, uncertainty, difficulties, arguments and even "blood, sweat and tears". Thus, if not actually criticizing climate change, *Helsingin Sanomat* find criticism in the process of forming climate policy. It should be noted, however, that there is a peculiar thing about how *Helsingin Sanomat* builds the conflict in the stories: interestingly enough and as earlier mentioned, *Helsingin Sanomat* tends to emphasize the importance of leadership of the European Union. In the 2007b sample this turns into the United States receiving most of the negative attributes of all the political actors in the sample. Apart from the European Union, sympathies also go to the developing countries. Quite naturally, most the most stories have UN as the primary actor, but also the European Union gets to "determine" the stories very often. NGOs and the public are most commonly secondary actors or non-actors: they are shown as reactionaries or objects, not active subjects.

And if *Helsingin Sanomat* found criticism in the political process, also *The Wall Street Journal* still found a lot to criticise in the actions of politicians. This is a clear difference between these two papers in this sample period: whereas *Helsingin Sanomat* find criticism in the political process, *The Wall Street Journal* often thinks that politicians are plain wrong: for example the paper criticises highly the trade-off between intellectual rights and climate protection. There is perhaps even more emphasis on political competition and disagreement and contrary to *Helsingin Sanomat*, also the European Union receives its wide share of



criticism. Whereas *Helsingin Sanomat* might criticise the political process of EU being too rigid or the member countries being too stubborn, *The Wall Street Journal* tends to view the Union as an entity seeking to profit and safe-guard its own interests. Also, *The Wall Street Journal* gives the United Nations far more negative attributes than *Helsingin Sanomat* tends to do.

At the same time, though, *The Wall Street Journal* does seem to write about eco-friendly industry more than *Helsingin Sanomat*. This is clearly due to the fact that the paper is predominantly business oriented and thus also primarily gives the place of the primary actor most commonly to a business actor. Interestingly enough, when it comes to secondary actors, *The Wall Street Journal* hardly ever talks about "citizens" or "the public", but usually about "consumers", clearly stating how an ordinary person can and should try to effect climate policy or help promote climate-friendly technology. Also, often in the stories governments are secondary actors, whose role is to give the businesses the best possible environment to exercise their trade.

Also *The New York Times* tends to focus more on individual politicians than the political process at large. Compared to *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times* seems to be far more critical considering U.S. participation in the Bali negotiations. In fact, it also seems to try to differentiate the country from its government: *The New York Times* tends to talk more about president Bush rather than the United States when it comes to climate negotiations. A clear majority of attributes given to both political actors and climate politics as a whole are negative – quite like in *Helsingin Sanomat* *The New York Times* also emphasises the difficulties in the negotiations, but also tends to dramatize the possible consequences of failure to act. In this sense, it is no wonder that *The New York Times* might be viewed as more "climate evangelist" than for example *Helsingin Sanomat*.

As for the actors that get to frame stories, *The New York Times* is the paper that gives citizens the place of the primary actor in this sample periods the most. However, the most prominent actors are political actors, that often define the stories in a partisan way: as already mentioned, the U.S. bipartisan system is clearly reflected in the stories of both American newspapers, but especially *The New York Times*. *The New York Times* talks both about "citizens" and "consumers" depending on the topic of story: often the latter noun comes up in stories that are primarily focused in business. NGOs are mostly secondary actors – as is the UN, which is quite contrary to the way *Helsingin Sanomat* writes about the Bali conference.

The clearest difference between sample periods 2007b and 2008 is that the number of stories decreases significantly: *Helsingin Sanomat* publishes only 30 stories, *The Wall Street Journal* 13 and *The New York Times* only 49 although there is a UN conference during the same period also. This might indicate that climate politics is shifting to a downward spiral in the issue-attention cycle, but also gives indication that the looming economical crises takes up more space to unrelated stories: there can only be one crises at a time in

the media. Frame-wise, the Competition of Countries frame is still the most notable, but the frame that juxtaposes economic growth and preserving nature becomes more significant than before.

However, there are also other differences in the coverage. For example *Helsingin Sanomat* seems to have started to emphasize the scientific uncertainty of antropomorphic climate change again: this is not only visible in stories that clearly attribute uncertainty to the phenomenon, but also through the evermore negative attributes political actors in climate politics receive: there is even more emphasis on debate and even some criticisms over the fact some politicians seem to be using climate change as a reason to push through irrelevant policies – the Finnish newspaper uses the term ”keppihevonen” here (roughly translated as ”hobby horse”). Furthermore, already formed policies gain more criticism: there is more discussion over the somewhat immoral pollution bargaining between EU memberstates. Still, *Helsingin Sanomat* does emphasise the importance of EU leadership, which is a feature that does not change between these two sample periods. Also the primary actors and roles of secondary actors remain roughly the same.

Interestingly enough, although *Helsingin Sanomat* which is seemingly a more climate-friendly newspaper than the business-backed *Wall Street Journal*, moved to a more critical direction between years 2007 and 2008, the latter papers stories in the 2008-sample are not necessarily more anti-climate policy than one might expect. Sure, some stories in the sample use quite wild attributes or examples about climate politics actors, such as ”global-warming fantasies widespread among children and politicians” or by using the term ”green pork”. It is noticeable, though, that the bulk of the sample remains quite as critical as before. It could be thus argued that although *The Wall Street Journal* might have taken a more critical stance than the other papers in the prior sample period, now *Helsingin Sanomat* is now trying to ”catch up” with being more critical.

This does not apply to *The New York Times*, though. Its 2008-sample remains very, very pro climate politics, although as mentioned before, criticism is found in the actions of the government and individual politicians. Whereas *The Wall Street Journal* might criticise the climate fanatics, *The New York Times* is clearly lifting climate change to the throne of ”the most significant problems of nowadays”. There is a clear emphasis on even nostalgia of the ”days before climate change” and although also *The New York Times* acknowledge the problems a financial crises may or may not give to preserving the environment, it stresses the fact that ”we need to act now”.

The two last sample periods show that there are clear differences between the three papers over how the value climate politics as news, which actors do they view as relevant and which aspects do they cover about them. However, even though one paper gives more column inches to politicians, one to countries and one to business interests, there are certain aspects about all three papers that relate to my previous discussions about objective journalism. The most important of these is perhaps the fact that all three papers tend to use sources that are in significant power positions in the society. In the 2007b and 2008 -samples most interviewees

belong either to the business elites or political elites. As very common in all journalistic coverage, reporters have tended to use official sources to fill the "strategic ritual of objectivity", which was discussed in chapter two. Furthermore, both samples present clearly that the societal values reflect to media coverage: as the economical worry of the elites and the public grows through the financial crises, also the coverage becomes more critical of climate politics. This tendency follows the notions of the three spheres of public debate (Hallin 1984) discussed also in chapter two. In this case, the need of urgent climate political actions was already moving to the sphere of consensus, but because it then due to the financial crises collided with the basic want of good economic stance and a good living, the again drifted to the area of legitimate controversy. Thus, although "antropomorphic climate change is dangerous to the humanity" might already be as accepted as truth as "motherhood and apple pie are good things", climate politics per se remain a topic that journalists are willing to discuss very critically.

The same tendencies can of course be seen it the total sample – at least keeping some restrictions in mind. There are certain explanations to why coverage that is not necessarily "climate evangelist" may seem that way. Next I will go to the concluding chapter of this thesis, where these notions will be discussed in detail.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

On November 19<sup>th</sup> of 2008 the environmental correspondent of *The New York Times* Andrew Revkin spoke to Columbia University Journalism students about where the news coverage of global warming would be going. Revkin noted that climate change is no longer the "beef", but as noticed also in my sample of articles it is becoming a topic of politics as usual or something that need to be taken into account in every political decision:

*Climate change is not the story of our time. Climate change is a subset of the story of our time, which is that we are coming of age on a finite planet and only just now recognizing that it is finite. So how we mesh infinite aspirations of a species that's been on this explosive trajectory — not just of population growth but of consumptive appetite — how can we make a transition to a sort of stabilized and still prosperous relationship with the Earth and each other is the story of our time. (Revkin, 2008b)*

In the same speech Revkin notes something also very relevant to this thesis – climate change, even though more widely accepted than before is still a story about conflict:

*It's a story about the fact that there are a billion teenagers on planet earth right now. A hundred thirty years ago there were only a billion people altogether — grandparents, kids. Now there are a billion teenagers and they could just as easily become child soldiers and drug dealers as innovators and the owners of small companies in favelas in Brazil. And little tweaks in their prospects, a little bit of education, a little bit of opportunity, a micro loan or something, something that gets girls into schools, those things — that's the story of our time. And climate change is like a symptom of the story of our time, meaning our energy choices right now come with a lot of emissions of greenhouse gases and if we don't have a lot of new [choices] we're going to have a lot of warming. (ibid.)*

These are the two central themes in this thesis. My analysis of the samples between years 2003 and 2008 has first and foremost revealed that news coverage over climate change and climate politics is no longer focused merely on whether climate change is true or not and how it should be acted upon, but more on the fact climate change and politics seem to be effecting everything: other areas of politics, economical growth and even everyday lives. This, however, has not meant that journalism would have lost its critical edge nor that the journalistic norm of emphasizing conflict: especially political conflict has become evermore visible in the stories even if the debate of the scientific basis of climate change would already be over. Climate politics are often framed as something countries or politicians argue over. It is also a realm of conflicting interests of preserving nature and seeking economic growth.

In the introductory chapter of this thesis I set out to find how journalistic conventions and norms affect the coverage of climate politics. In this task I have both succeeded and failed: from the sample I have gathered it is clear that official sources reign supreme in the coverage of climate policy quite like they do in stories

concerning other political issues. This finding is well in correlation to previous studies that have noted the same: Schudson (2000), Hallin (1984) and Shoemaker and Reese (1996) and Tuchman (1976) note that journalists tend to rely on official sources in order to preserve at least the appearance of objectivity. In my sample it is clear that journalists do exactly that: the most prominent primary actors are most commonly those of political elites, business elites or for example widely accepted scientists. The only notable specialty of climate politics has been that also scientific actors are viewed as predominantly political – although they may themselves lack willingness to take a political stance to the issue, it should be pointed out that especially the IPCC is viewed as a political entity in most stories and thus, also criticised over it. However, also other scientific actors comments are put into a political perspective whether they want it or not. Overall, the emphasis on elite actors is very common in all stories concerning politics and therefore very naturally found also in stories concerning climate politics.

The emphasis of the politics of science can be both necessary and dangerous: it should be noted that scientific research does have implications to policy and should not be, thus, done faint-heartedly. At the same time, for example the University of Helsinki's Professor of Environmental Change, Atte Korhola recently criticised the way many scientists get overly excited about such UN Conventions as the one in Copenhagen: Korhola claims many of his colleagues might compromise their scientific way of thinking, because they feel a strong urge to pressure politicians to combat climate change (Backman 2009). It should be noted, though, that Korhola made this remark in a TV-document authored by a very climate sceptical journalists, who he himself criticises heavily such political organizations as the IPCC. The critique is valuable still; science may be inherently political, but politicizing science can lead to terrible consequences.

It has also been clear that the greater institutional value an event has, the more coverage it receives: the UN conference in Bali in 2007 received far more coverage than the conference next year in Poland. This, of course, should not be viewed as a flaw since the prior conference had more expectations and was larger than the latter one. Still, this proves that journalistic coverage does seem to follow prearranged events rather than trying to bring up stories that do not come in such pretty packages. As McComas and Shanahan (1999) argued, environmental issues have some inherent qualities that determine how they are covered and the media seeks to portray them as more exciting and dramatical. In this respect is quite natural that the UN conventions are mostly covered through the Competition of Countries -frame.

It should be also noted that the more drama or internal conflict issues have, the more eagerly they are reported: a troublesome meeting at Bali might have aroused more stories than the meeting in Poznan, because the latter one was less pressured and thus, less prone to disagreements and drama. At the same time, the three papers seemed to seek and built contradiction between the different actors in climate politics; the two American papers perhaps even more so than the Finnish one.

It was, however, not possible to show from the data I gathered, whether the coverage of climate change politics is actually biased: for this I would have needed a comparative sample of political documents or at least a political study. Another interesting data source would also have been interviews with journalists that actually write the stories concerning climate change and climate politics: as Schudson (2000) notes, news production is heavily influenced also by professional culture and journalistic socialization. Thus, a study that would have given insight to how journalists view climate change, would have given some comparison to my current data set. It is clear that the coverage has several elements that can easily make it biased. Yet, to actually show that there is bias, one would need to have access to the "truth", which – as already mentioned several times in this thesis – may be inaccessible for humans.

The comparison between the three newspapers still gives some insight how the same topics are covered and especially framed in two very different countries. Especially the way *Helsingin Sanomat* is covering climate politics seems to either have been effected by the Finnish consensus climate or vice-versa. As noted in the Ekholm et al. (2007) study, in Finland worry of climate change "does not obey party lines". This tendency is also visible in the data: where as the American papers both give much emphasis on competition between politicians, in the coverage of *Helsingin Sanomat* the frame of Political Competition is missing at large. It also seems that there is more criticism of companies and other countries rather than say, criticising the European Union. As Ekholm et al. (ibid.) note, Finnish people tend to trust their officials. A common political discourse of Finland needing to be in the forefront of development is found in the stories' emphasis of either Nordic or European leadership in climate politics. On the other hand, Finland is also a far smaller country than the United States, and still a very tightly-knit nation. Thus, it can be seen that it is more important for Finnish newspaper to build national consensus about difficult issues than in the United States. *Helsingin Sanomat* truly needs to cater to the widest possible variety of tastes, because as the only truly national prestige newspaper in Finland it has both very conservative and very liberal readers. Still, it is only fair to point out that there is no total consensus neither in Finnish climate politics nor politics in general. Here, again, the purposive sample might twist the outcome a bit: in the U.S. papers there were several stories over Senate or House passing climate legislation, but in Finland, no such legislation was in process during the sample. Thus, perhaps with another set of sample, also *Helsingin Sanomat* might have presented some stories in the Political/Partisan Competition frame.

In the United States both newspapers selected for this thesis view climate politics a far more partisan issue than in Finland. In fact, there seemed to be a tendency for *The Wall Street Journal* to publish mostly climate sceptical letter to the editor and the *The New York Times* to publish mostly alarmist letters to the editor. This would be well in line with the criticism both papers receive: *The Wall Street Journal* is consider to be mostly conservative and thus pro-republican and *The New York Times* more pro-liberal and thus pro-democrat. As mentioned before, it is very natural for a business paper like *The Wall Street Journal* to look at environmental issues from the business perspective, as made clear by this study. In *Helsingin Sanomat*, however, the letters

to the editor were both critical and alarmist, although in general the tones in the stories were less extreme. Even in general, *Helsingin Sanomat* uses far more toned-down language over climate politics: Finnish coverage does not seem have a equivalent of the term “alarmist” that is very commonly used in American coverage. As also mentioned already earlier on, the Finnish papers rarely even use the concept of an “environmentalists”. The closest equivalent in the Finnish language “luonnonsuojelija” [“Earth-protector”] was not used as a general concept as “environmentalist” in the U.S. newspapers.

It also seems that *The New York Times* would have chosen not distress national unity even less than *The Wall Street Journal*, because as a liberal paper it mostly disagreed with the policies of president George W. Bush. Thus, although news articles do not explicitly say that the policies of the government are bad, they implicitly separate the nation from its politicians making it more easy for the writer to criticise the government policies. Therefore, it could be viewed in general, that all three papers share a different understanding on where in Hallin's (1984) three spheres climate change and climate politics lie: in *Helsingin Sanomat* both climate change and the climate politics the government exercises are close to the sphere of consensus if not there. In *The New York Times*, the scientific basis of climate change is widely accepted, but the politics are in the sphere of legitimate controversy. In *The Wall Street Journal*, then, both aspects studied in this thesis would still remain in the sphere of legitimate controversy. It should be noted, though, that in all three papers both climate politics and climate change itself have shifted towards the centre of the spheres, the realm of “apple pie and motherhood”. This was visible e.g. by papers writing about climate change being real with very colourful and even religiously advocating expressions. This give basis to claim that for example the Boykoff and Boykoff study from the year 2004 that criticised the media of being biased because of balanced reporting between the sceptics and believers is no longer valid. This finding is in line with the study of Meisner (2000) who claimed already before the Boykoffs that global warming was largely accepted in the media.

Meisner (ibid.) seems to be correct also in the fact when he notes that climate change is framed very restrictively offering only a limited selection of way to address global warming. In the data of this thesis I found altogether seven frames (“Era of climate change”, “Planetary Crises”, “Unsuresness”, “Competition of Countries”, “Environment versus Wealth”, “Technology as solution”, “Political/partisan competition”) and one non-frame (“Just mentioned”) from which only two provide clear solutions to climate change, such as technology and “capitalist tools”. The frames provide a very narrow perspective to climate politics especially considering they are mostly formed by elite sources interviewed for the newspaper stories. Still, for example the Era of Climate Change frame seems to be reflecting a common way of viewing climate change something irreversible. Without a different data set to compare these frames with, it is however hard to say whether they make the coverage biased in some way.

Thus, perhaps instead of talking about objectivity and bias, it would be more fruitful to talk about the need of multivoiced coverage. In all three newspapers climate politics are portrayed often as a battle between two

competing interests or actors – whether it would be nature and business or European Union and the United States. Voices of citizens and NGOs, but also companies and for example third world countries do not make it to the coverage perhaps as often as they should. Especially because such up-coming nations as China and India will play a major role in the future of climate politics, it would be valuable to bring these players in to the stories as actors. This observation gives some insight to what might be studies after this thesis: as all the papers in my current sample were western, an Indian or Chinese newspaper would have given an interesting comparison to the coverage.

Coincidentally, the University of Tampere in a multinational project concerning climate change and “Blame, Domestication and Elite Perspectives in Global Media Climate”, which aims to find some common features in coverage from different countries. The project will look at two different conferences – the one in Bali, as I did in this thesis and the one in Copenhagen – and their coverage in 12 countries. These countries include among others Indonesia, China, Russia and Bangladesh, which will probably give some insight to how the press in developing or the so-called BRIC-countries (fast-growing developing economies) frames an issues as controversial as climate politics. (Eide et al. 2009)

The preliminary findings of the aforementioned project gives also some insight to how I have done in my own research: the coding instrument the research team has already used on the Bali-conference is somewhat similar to my own and so are the results. Eide et al. (2009) have recognized certain preliminary tendencies in the coverage that are comparable to my findings: they for example recognize the tendency of the newspapers to emphasize leadership of countries in their “heroic frame”. Also, the blame-frames are recognizable in my materials as well, even though I personally fitted them to the Competition of Countries frame, which included building conflict between the developing and developed world or Europe and the United States.

At the same time with a far larger data-set and far more complicated analysis Eide et al. (2009) go further and deeper in the way climate politics were and might be covered during the UN Conferences. Whereas my humble aim was to describe and find some common tendencies in coverage over climate politics, Eide et al. seek to find something that might be named transnational professionalism. In this thesis, I have assumed the journalistic cultures of both the United States and Finland to be so similar, that the frames would be comparable with each other and thus perhaps found in all papers regardless of the country of origin. It should be noted, however, that there are significant differences in the journalistic cultures of the United States and Finland, some of which may have surfaced in this thesis.

Still, I do not fully support the claims Dispensa and Brulle (2003) have made about the U.S. press being more tied to corporate ownership and thus more prone to reflect elite, or rather business opinions. In my findings especially *The New York Times* was more prone to talk openly and even with a bit of an “environmentalist tone” over climate politics. Quite contrary, the lack of political disputes understood in the



partisan sense in *Helsingin Sanomat* seemed quite peculiar compared to the American newspapers. In this respect it is also almost peculiar that namely in Finland the amount of climate change coverage was less than in the United States. As we learned in the beginning of this thesis, Finns in general viewed themselves to be more informed about climate change than Americans viewed themselves. One could think this would indicate that there would be more press coverage in Finland concerning climate change. Of course, a much larger and versatile sample would be required to discuss this issue in more detail.

This is not to say, though, that the coverage of these three papers would be complete. Even the current data set gives basis to further analysis. It should be noted that the purposive sampling method used in this thesis might have also twisted especially the quantitative results a bit – it is only natural that when political events occurs, most stories would look at the political aspects of the story. However, it would have been both too much work for a Master's Thesis to look at all articles published in the three papers during 2003–2008 and foolish to miss major debates by a very strict random sample.

Another interesting aspect or perspective for this thesis would have been the effects of the financial crises of 2008–2009 on the debate on climate politics. The effects were already somewhat visible in the last sample period, during which protecting the climate got juxtaposed with the need to preserve economic well-being. When governments started to run out of money, climate politics were questioned more than the year before. It would be therefore valuable to later look at how framing of climate politics change as the depression deepens. Although I contemplated whether I should include a ninth sample period to my thesis in order to discuss also this aspect, I decided to leave it out due to time constraints. It should be mentioned, however, that as I am writing this the amount of environmental coverage has exploded in the media – quite contrary to what one might expect.

At the time of writing of these conclusions the world leaders are preparing for the Copenhagen UN summit, the aim of which is to find a treaty to follow Kyoto. At least in *Helsingin Sanomat* this has again meant an increase of stories over climate change and politics many of which seem to fall to the frames presented in this thesis. If you believe the alarmists, the convention will be determining for the future of the planet. Perhaps journalists should thus evaluate their conventions with more thought than ever before: objectivity should not be taken out of the book of rules, but certain tendencies it produces should be critically evaluated. Especially the economical aspects should be viewed with great criticism: types of journalism often seen as very impartial, may look very partial when you look at them from a different perspective. An environmental correspondent himself, Pasi Toiviainen writes in his book *Ilmastomuutos. Nyt* [Climate change. Now.] about objectivity and environmental issues as follows:

*In my experience, journalistic objectivity is a myth. It is possible to seem objective, as long as you can make your point without irritating the recipient too much, and in this it helps if your*

*view is in accordance with the views of the majority in the society. The phenomenon is visible in even journalism that is held the most objective and perhaps most clearly in economic correspondence. (...) An environmental journalist could see these things very different, but because their view does not represent the consensus, he may be accused of being biased and advocacy journalism – lacking objectivity.*<sup>7</sup>(Toiviainen 2007, 9–10)

No one, and the least not journalists are close-circuit cameras, that would report everything without their personal biases coming into way. The most fruitful way to write about climate politics can be only found keeping this in mind.

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<sup>7</sup> Translated from introduction in Finnish, originally: ”Oman kokemukseni mukaan paljon puhuttu journalistinen objektiivisuus on myytti. Objektiiviselta vaikuttaminen on kuitenkin mahdollista, kunhan osaa esittää asiansa vastaanottajaa liiaksi ärsyttämättä, ja tässä on vauksi, jos viestijän näkemys käsiteltävästä aiheesta on yhteiskunnan enemmistön käsityksen mukainen. Ilmiö näkyy jopa kaikkein objektiivisimpänä pidetyssä uutis- ja ajankohtaisjournalismissa, ja kenties selkeimmin talousuutisoinnissa.(...) Ympäristöjournalisti sen sijaan voisi nähdä asiat kovin toisin, mutta koska hänen maailmankuvansa ei usienkaan edusta enemmistön näkemystä, häntä saatetaan syyttää puolueellisuudesta ja niin sanotusta asianajojournalismista – objektiivisuuden puutteesta.”

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