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Framing the Green New Deal and Climate Change: A Content Analysis of the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*

Danielle Elizabeth Duffy
Portland State University

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Framing the Green New Deal and Climate Change:
A Content Analysis of the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*

by

Danielle Elizabeth Duffy

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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in
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Thesis Committee:
Cynthia-Lou Coleman, Chair
Lee Shaker
Brianne Suldovsky

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Abstract

The importance of climate change recognition and need for action cannot be overstated. Climate change has historically been a partisan issue with an almost hyper focus on the (un)certainly of science, the need for action within a particular timeframe, and the cost of tackling the issue. With the contemporary relevance and salience of climate change, this content analysis explores emerging framing patterns in coverage of the Green New Deal and subsequent climate change references within news articles from the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* in 2019. Frame typology from O'Neill et al. (2015) is used to explore the framing patterns and inform the coding process. I applied a framing analysis via a directed content analysis and a close reading of collected articles to uncover frames at the article level (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). 54 articles were analyzed: 46 from the *New York Times* and 8 from the *Wall Street Journal*.

Results indicate that the economy, political and ideological divides (both across and within the parties), and settled nature of climate science are at the forefront of coverage and concern. My findings follow previous studies' results but highlight the growing divide within the parties on how to address and tackle climate change and climate policies.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Global warming and climate change¹ have become leading issues across the United States and the international community. Extreme weather systems and record-breaking temperatures have marked recent years, which culminated in a worldwide effort to reduce global greenhouse emissions through the Paris Climate Accords². After then-president Donald Trump promised to remove the U.S. from the Paris Climate Accords (and did so in November 2019), newly elected Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) and junior Senator Edward Markey (D-MA) released their Green New Deal³ proposal to Congress to address the U.S.'s role in climate change and mitigate damage already done to the environment.

Although a leading issue now, for the better part of the last two decades climate change has been debated and brushed off in both public discourse and political circles. For example, former President Donald Trump has called climate change a “hoax” and the Republican Party made an extra effort to avoid discussing climate change in press conferences (Green & Marsh, 2017). Despite the current uptake in discussions about climate change, it remains a partisan issue. A Gallup poll in 2019 found that 44% of Americans worry a great deal about climate change (Saad, 2019). Among Democrats,

¹ Though there is distinction between the two terms, for the sake of brevity and clarity, climate change will be used in reference to both climate change and global warming for the remainder of the paper except when discussing search parameters.

² The Paris Accords is an international treaty on climate change first adopted in 2015. At the time of writing, 192 parties have ratified the agreement (United Nations Treaty Collection, 2021).

³ The Green New Deal, also known as H. Res.109 and S. Res.59, is a 14-page congressional resolution released on February 7, 2019 by Ocasio-Cortez and Markey. The resolution aims to “mobilize every aspect of American society to 100% clean and renewable energy, guarantee living-wage jobs for anyone who needs one, and a just transition for both workers and frontline communities—all in the next 10 years” (The Sunrise Movement). The proposal advocates transitioning to 100% renewable energy sources and reducing carbon emissions while also tackling social conditions such as healthcare and poverty.

77% considered themselves concerned believers in climate change and the effects of climate change while only 16% of Republicans had the same view (Saad, 2019). These numbers beg the question of how much and in what way climate change concern is disseminated to and amongst the citizenry by politicians and mainstream news media⁴. As the news media is often where most people learn about climate change and its consequences, a study that analyzes the way in which the media covers and discusses climate change is an important addition to the literature (Schäfer & Schlichting, 2014).

The 2000s have seen more concern and pressure in regards to climate change and what needs to be done to reduce and reverse the effects already present. Al Gore released his documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, about climate change in 2006. In 2009-2010 “cap and trade legislation was being debated, Climategate made news, and the 2009 Copenhagen meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP 15) occurred” while 2015 saw a global effort at the Paris Conference of Parties (COP21) to address climate change effects with the Paris Accords (Bolsen and Shapiro, 2018, p. 153). Additionally, coverage of Greta Thunberg’s Friday protests⁵ and her climate change activism, as well as Democrats Ocasio-Cortez and Markey’s Green New Deal climate change proposal, have propelled climate change into the public arena in recent years. Although climate change appears to be a partisan issue, an examination of media coverage is useful to see the issue as a whole. Doing so can inform how climate change may be framed so as to motivate or

⁴ In line with Boykoff and Roberts (2007), news media refer to “the publisher, editors, journalists and others who constitute the communications industry and profession, and who disseminate information, largely through newspapers, magazines, television, radio and the Internet” (p. 3). Within the context of this paper, only newspapers are used for analysis.

⁵ In 2018, 15-year-old Greta Thunberg began a student strike for Swedish policy changes regarding climate change. Instead of attending school on Fridays, she would sit outside Swedish Parliament to demand action.

discourage audiences to believe in and work to solve climate change (particularly through such policies and resolutions as the Green New Deal).

Such an analysis is further salient and timely if Ocasio-Cortez's potential influence on media coverage is considered with her as a frame sponsor. Ocasio-Cortez is a young (29 years old at the start of her term) Latina woman who ran a grassroots campaign to oust her district's longtime incumbent, and she is perhaps most known for the Green New Deal. She is as nearly provocative with the Left as she is with the Right⁶ and considered too progressive for the moderate Democrats who worry she will become the policy face of the party and shift the party further left. This context, while not directly related to my analysis, is important and puts an added layer to the media's potential framing of the issue. Although this analysis will not closely examine Ocasio-Cortez's direct effect on news media's framing of the Green New Deal, I would be remiss to not include an explanation of her role in the resolution and the way public perception of her could influence newspapers' framing decisions when covering the Green New Deal, even when that coverage is independent of Ocasio-Cortez.

Considering the urgency of climate change action, the partisanship of climate change policies, and the influence on public opinion and outcomes as a result of the way an issue is covered, a qualitative content analysis to identify frames within the *New York*

⁶ Social media and news activity about Ocasio-Cortez is such that it provides an awareness for how she is regarded by both parties and their constituents. Her 2021 Met Gala dress, for example, garnered lots of attention online—some corners praised her, some spoke to her own economic status in conjunction with her ability to afford the Gala's \$35,000 ticket and her tax plans, some focused on the dress designer's own tax issues, while others questioned why she was in attendance instead of working (Friedman, 2021). The prominence the Green New Deal gave her has also concerned moderate Democrats who fear she will move the party too far to the left while right-wing Republicans “obsess over her left-wing politics and celebrity” (Remnick, 2022).

Times and the *Wall Street Journal*'s coverage of the Green New Deal and subsequent mentions of climate change in 2019 is salient (Iyengar, 1991). I will do so following Saffron O'Neill and colleagues' (2015) content analysis study on dominant frames in coverage of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report. I will address the following research questions:

RQ1 – What patterns emerge in the *New York Time*'s coverage of the Green New Deal from the O'Neill et al. (2015) frame typology?

RQ2 – What patterns emerge in the *Wall Street Journal*'s coverage of the Green New Deal from the O'Neill et al. (2015) frame typology?

Chapter II: Literature Review

Framing is demonstrably the overarching research used in this analysis so lengthier attention is given to it as a result. Framing alone, while a key aspect for my case study, would not be possible to fully understand and use if due consideration was not given to the journalistic norms that form the environment and context for frames within my articles. Similarly, the roles power and ideology have in shaping and circulating perspectives, from the initial frame building and sponsoring, the journalist's piece, and the public consuming the article, are important: Herman and Chomsky (1988) suggest the news media's presentation of the world is such that those with stakes in an issue's outcome maintain their position. Additionally, proper regard for the Green New Deal as an environmental resolution is given via appropriate consideration to environmental and climate change communication.

Framing

Framing research, although a primarily communication theoretical stance currently, is rooted in sociology through William A. Gamson (1992), Erving Goffman (1974), and Todd Gitlin (1980). Although there are many delineations of framing to choose from, where each is slightly different with minute although no less important deviations that affect meaning, this paper will use Entman's (1993) definition. He considers framing as "[selecting] some aspects of perceived reality and mak[ing] them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular definition of a problem, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (p. 52). More succinctly, framing is the way in which we can

understand items within our reality that have been promoted for a particular, important purpose.

Gamson and Modigliani (1989) add to the theory's minute distinctions by introducing interpretive packages to the literature. To them, meanings arise out of the issue (which constitutes an issue culture once the issue has been dispensed and discussed in social discourse within the public sphere), and the meanings within the issue culture create interpretive packages, which are "a central organizing idea, or frame, for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue" (p. 3). Gamson and Modigliani's 1989 publication on public opinion regarding nuclear power through a framing analysis is a landmark addition to news coverage and the literature, and its use of interpretive packages alongside frames has left the two terms conflated in meaning within most contemporary discussions.

While the two are nearly identical, Gamson and Modigliani put more intentional emphasis on identifying the issue culture and its role in the meaning making process within interpretive packages. However, this emphasis has also evolved to encompass frames as well, such that framing scholars look for the role of meanings within the issue. Although the conceptualization of framing is such that different scholars and schools of thought might have more or less emphasis on the meaning making aspect of an issue (specifically, the issue culture a frame incorporates), the identification of the frame's meaning is still an important aspect of the theory as the meaning often ties into the organization of reality into a communicable text.

This organization, in particular, is echoed across multiple scholars when defining framing. Entman (1993) has already been introduced, and Gitlin (1980), mentioned earlier, also asserts that frames “organize the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports” and are “principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of tacit little theories of what exists” (p. 6-7). Tuchman (1978) tells us, “The news frame organizes everyday reality and the news frame is part and parcel of everyday reality...[it] is an essential feature of news” (p. 193). According to Friedland and Zhong (1996), framing is “the bridge between...larger social and cultural realms and everyday understandings of social interaction” (p. 13), and this is further fleshed out by Van Gorp (2007) who says that framing is the “interplay that occurs between the textual level (frames applied in the media), the cognitive level (schemata among the audience and media makers), the extramedial level (the discourse of frame sponsors), and...the stock of frames that is available in a given culture” (p. 64).

Van Gorp’s (2007) notion of frames bridging culture and cognition is imperative to the success of frame sponsorship⁷ and to understanding the interaction between frame sponsors and “key events, media content, schemata, and the stock of frames” (p. 60). Framing comprises taking a piece of information, an idea, or a side of an issue and presenting it to the public in such a way that the choice of perspectives is narrowed. For example, in a battle between scientists and Native American tribes over the repatriation of the Kennewick Man’s remains (a Native American from 9,000 years ago), science was framed as being good and progressive—science could illuminate and give oodles of new

⁷ An individual or group that promotes a frame. A frame sponsor is often the media but can be a social or political actor, too.

information about human history and our understanding of evolution. The framing of the issue took one side (the scientists' view that the skeleton should be studied rather than repatriated and buried) and presented it as the better, more beneficial narrative to the public (Coleman, 2020). Van Gorp's framing model in particular is especially beneficial for a more thorough comprehension of the interactional relationship between frame message, frame sponsors, the media, the public, and the event that inspired the frame.

Frame Sponsors

Both the news media and social and political actors have a role in the dissemination of information and framing of the Green New Deal, which relates back to Van Gorp (2007) and his understanding of culture within framing. This is particularly useful as he refers to culture as “an organized set of beliefs, codes, myths, stereotypes, values, norms, frames, and so forth that are shared in the collective memory of a group or society” (p. 62). He is able to break down, firstly, the production and elucidation of the news, and, secondly, links the news to the frame. Van Gorp then is able to describe how the news production is linked to the culture through the news consumption. All of this works together to illustrate the properties of frame sponsorship within a cultured context that allows for greater understanding of the process of frame building to frame circulation as a result of that culture. Thus, framing is a bridge for the islands of cognition and culture that can explain how frames go from an aspect of the culture to an immersion within the society as a result of the frame sponsor and the media's message. The prevalence of the Green New Deal and the resulting discussions about climate policy and

action within our society illustrate this point and reinforces the idea that Ocasio-Cortez is an indirect frame sponsor as a result of her co-sponsorship of the resolution.

Scheufele (1999) reminds us that framing's definition and conceptualization within political communication in particular are based on social constructivism, and he places particular focus on the type of frame examined and the way the frame is operationalized. Although Van Gorp is a constructivist and much of frame sponsorship is centered within the constructivist approach (as it is this approach that builds up what encompasses a frame and how frames are created), it would be neglectful to not consider the cognitive approach when discussing frame sponsors insofar as it is concerned with the content of frames and whether there is or is not a variety of framing as well as the power involved within the frames—that is, the cognitive approach may focus on how power is constructed within the frames and how power affects the frames (D'Angelo, 2002).

Environmental Communication

Key literature within environmental communication emphasizes the role of news framing. While not environmentally focused, Cacciatore et al. (2016) argue that framing should act as a bridge “between paradigms as we shift from an era of mass communication to one of echo chambers, tailored information, and microtargeting” (p.7). This is an important argument to consider for climate change study, especially within news media that often caters towards the ideological basis of its readership and ownership. For example, Schäfer and Schlichting (2014) note that most people learn about climate change and its implications from the news media, which is increasingly partisan. Within this emphasis on how the news conveys information is the role of the

deficit model, which “aims to remedy the fractured relationship between science and society” and is a one-way communication model for transmitting scientific information to the public (Suldovsky, 2016, p. 416; Nisbet & Scheufele, 2009).

News media is one avenue for such information to flow from experts to the public within the model but it relies on public understanding of science. While we know that news coverage has a limited impact on “moving the needle” of an individual’s previously held belief in climate change, the news as the first source of information regarding climate change makes coverage important nonetheless. For those individuals whose exposure to climate change coverage will shape their attitude toward (dis)belief and (un)acceptance of climate science, the media (and studying the frames they disseminate) is important and shows the power the media has “as a productive network which runs through the whole social body” (Foucault, 1980, p. 119).

Science, like climate change itself, is often made partisan by those social and political actors who find it inconvenient, important, or inaccurate depending on the issue the science impacts and have the power to dictate how it can be spun for their own benefit. Climate science follows the same “rules” and lives in society through dictated perspectives on its accuracy, fault, or need (e.g., the benefit of vaccines, anti-vaxxers and autism, or anti-vaxxers and belief in the quick turnaround for the Covid-19 vaccine). The media communicates scientific information to the public, but, as Suldovsky (2017) notes, there are several disadvantages with the media’s communication about climate change, such as a perceived greater division amongst the scientific community than actually exists and low levels of trust for the media’s coverage of climate change. The role of science in

society is influenced by the media who are influenced by political actors and political ideologies. The media runs, as Foucault (1980) says power does, through the whole social body—utilizing this role of the news media, and their power to agenda set and frame, “giv[es] them a lot of control over the way (and how often) the public thinks about climate change” (Suldovsky, 2017, p. 7).

O’Neill and colleagues (2013) continued this idea of power with their observation that “Media representations are therefore powerful and important links between people's daily realities and experiences, and the ways in which these are discussed at a distance between science, policy and public actors” (p. 413). Importantly, mass media are crucial for identifying and interpreting environmental issues (Schoenfeld et al., 1979; Spector & Kitsuse, 1977). That is, the media is the link betwixt the science and the public. Consequently, they are marked with power in their framing decisions about the climate and environmental issues: what the media choose to publish informs the public, but this imparted information is often laced with inaccurate or understated scientific information and conforms, as journalistic norms tell us, to a combination of readership and ownership beliefs, politics, or ideology.

With climate change, Carvalho (2010) notes that media are “important arenas and important agents in the production, reproduction, and transformation of the meaning” while Boykoff (2011) refers to this production and consumption process of climate change media as a “cultural politics of climate change” (p. 172; p. 3). O’Neill et al. (2015) reinforce the importance of media representations to bind (constrict or widen) debates around climate change in their study on US and UK print and television news and

Twitter reportage: they “shap[e] the nature of peoples’ engagement with the issue, and inhibit or support science-society interactions around climate change” (p. 380). Within this study, which my analysis is based upon, the authors investigated media representations of the IPCC 5th Report through the media’s framing decisions. They developed their frame schema qualitatively and inductively by examining their data and after consulting previous framing studies’ typologies to build on: Antilla (2005), Doulton and Brown (2009), Olausson (2009), Nisbet (2009), Shetata and Hopmann (2012), Painter (2013), and O’Neill (2013). Consulting prior research’s climate change schema to developing a frame typology shows the continuous way in which the media, and framing in particular, shape coverage, engagement, and interactions of climate change through the production and consumption process, especially as information evolves over time.

Bolsen and Shapiro (2018) reiterate that the framing process, as a production of news media, involves both the language decisions of how to communicate information about an issue in addition to the effect those choices have on the public, which is particularly noteworthy for framing climate change. In a similar vein, Boykoff and Boykoff (2007) remind us that scientists have a particular lexicon around caution and probability that does not easily translate into the press’s preferred “crisp, unequivocal commentary” (p. 1192).

Simply, chief challenges to climate change communication and conversation in the public sphere are the nuanced differences between scientific jargon and the media’s interpretation in addition to the citizenry’s previously held beliefs about the scientific information. Druckman (2015) explains this further: “the central point is that relaying

even ostensibly credible scientific information faces a serious hurdle if individuals reject any evidence that seems to contradict their prior opinions” (p. 60). This also follows Lakoff’s (2010) considerations of progressive and conservative moral systems, wherein he describes the progressive system akin to altruism with an emphasis on empathy, responsibility, and excellence as an ethic. For the conservative system, however, he lists the various economic bases for attitudes and decisions that govern the conservative populists in addition to the “idea that man is above nature in a moral hierarchy, that nature is there (put there by God) purely for human use and exploitation” (p. 74).

In outlining strategies for a public support of climate change shift, Bolsen and Shapiro (2018) reference Druckman (2015) and Lupia (2013) to expand on a point about credibility amongst conservatives and climate change: conservatives “are more likely to be persuaded by information provided by credible leaders who they trust (i.e. fellow partisans and ideologies)” when the listener perceives a shared interest and expertise (p. 159). This is demonstrated in environmental communication literature through journalistic practices and norms during the framing process that often, although not necessarily, reflect the ideological bases of a news publication’s readers, owners, and journalists. Nisbet (2009) summarizes this difference between climate change reality and the partisan divide in America through the social and political ideological differences between the parties and within the news media: “trusted sources have framed the nature and implications of climate change for Republicans and Democrats in very different ways” (p. 18).

Journalistic Norms

W. Lance Bennet (1996) identified three normative orders of journalism that influence news coverage and are succinctly summarized as political norms, business norms, and professional norms. He defines each respectively: “norms about the proper role of the press in politics” (and society); “the normative constraints of the business side of news organizations”; and “norms about the journalism profession” such as accuracy, objectivity, balance (p. 375). Journalists are expected to cover government officials’ actions while conforming to the business side of their organization via the contacts and beats given to the news organization. Covering government officials creates a natural imbalance of objectivity as “officials may be anything but impartial or neutral” (Tuchman, 1978). Political partisanship also adds to this imbalance and “makes the norm of objectivity all but impossible to obtain” (Bennett, 1996, p. 375).

Edelman (1987) also notes that journalists adhere to the business norms more when news is noteworthy and enticing, such as a scandal or political clash. Although Internet clicks would not have been nearly as prevalent in the 1980s or 1990s as they are today, the point remains that journalists are tied to the money and capitalization of news production: the more an author can achieve clicks, shares, and comments, the more profitable the organization. This business norm, while perhaps not as inherent as a journalist’s role in politics or their objectivity and accuracy in their coverage, is no less important when evaluating journalistic norms and their impacts on news coverage.

Boykoff and Boykoff (2007) explained how media coverage of anthropogenic climate change has been shaped by journalistic norms. They start with Bennett’s (1996)

normative orders and focus on the professional (called journalistic by the authors) norm, where they note that, “By operating in accordance with widely accepted journalistic norms, influential mass-media newspaper and television sources in the United States have misrepresented the top climate scientific perspective, and thus have perpetrated an informational bias regarding anthropogenic climate change” (p. 1191). This informational bias, they assert, comes from the personalization, dramatization, novelty, authority-order, and balance with the professional norms and maintains Suldovsky’s (2017) point about the biased coverage of climate change leading the public to think there is greater division within the scientific community, the lack of trust Americans have in the media alongside the polarization of the media, and the way audiences understand climate change through the media’s framing choices.

Harcup and O’Neill (2017) conclude their study on news values with a list of criteria that can shape articles:

The availability of resources and time, and subjective, often unconscious, influences, such as a mix of the social, educational, ideological and cultural influences on journalists, as well as the environment in which they work, their position in the workplace hierarchy and the type of audience for whom journalists are producing news. (p. 1482-1483)

They also include the influence of news selection and treatment in online news for journalists, which most legacy newspapers use, such as the quantifiability of likes, comments, clicks, and overall engagement to judge the success and monetary value of articles (Thurman & Myllylahti 2009; Phillips 2012; Bell 2015).

Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) noted that journalists can only be situated within the margins of their social or workplace environment (which promotes the idea that journalists write and publish what they know and believe, especially on an ideological level⁸) and that they typically work at an organization whose ideology is similar to theirs. That is, a conservative journalist is unlikely to work for a liberal newspaper because their coverage runs counter to their social environment, and their workplace would propagate messaging that is in opposition to their ideological anchor. This is an important element to consider when analyzing frames across typically conservative (the *Wall Street Journal*) and liberal (the *New York Times*) newspapers.

Power and Ideology

Concerning power, Foucault (1980) says, “It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body;” which is to say that power weighs upon the citizenry for compliance or “repression” but also produces such things as knowledge, pleasure, and discourses (p. 119). While Foucault was not focused on the media specifically here, his conceptualization of power falls in line with the role of the news media in society: it is a productive network that runs through our public sphere (“social body”), can act as the arm of the elites for public compliance or persuasion, and produces knowledge and discourses. Within this scope of the media, frame sponsors walk the delicate balance of the promotion (of their perspective) and prevention (of an oppositional perspective) of an issue. Foucault (1980) asserts that (political) power is re-

⁸ Hackett (1984) argues that it is the journalistic norms and the organization that influence what journalists write and publish, rather than just ideology. However, he also posits that the idea of journalistic bias should be replaced with ideology.

inscribed in social institutions (such as the media), unequal economic opportunities, language (the syntactical choices made to convey a frame), and within the social body as a whole (p. 90). A Foucauldian understanding also offers a more nuanced understanding of Entman's (1993) definition of framing whereby reality is understood and organized through the promotion of a particular frame regarding an issue or problem such that the power to advance a perspective is a consequence of power re-inscribed within the public sphere and social discourses (p. 52).

Frame sponsors' power culminates in their creation of information that displays a particular perspective in order to persuade the social body to listen or adhere to the sponsors' views on an issue that will impact the public in some way—socially, economically, politically. If Ocasio-Cortez is considered a frame sponsor, the Green New Deal acts as the power culmination: the resolution contains information that is disseminated to the public in order to persuade them to take climate change seriously and begin the process of mitigating and stopping climate change. The concept ties into Gramsci's (1971) definition of hegemony through which ruling elites produce and diffuse meanings and values. Although Hackett (1984) is primarily focused on the media's dissemination of information, his thesis also speaks to the broader effects of frame sponsorships, especially as they relate to the powerful elite creating interpretive packages that the media then circulate—usually with their own (either the journalist's or the organization's) bias apparent—by way of the ideologies at play. To Hackett, ideology is a greater force than bias simply because ideology has an innate “role in the mass media as

an institution which could purvey ideas, influence wants, and help to define social reality” (p. 246).

Furthermore, Carragee and Roefs (2004) acknowledge the impact framing theory has had on hegemony scholarship by providing an avenue to investigate news media’s construction of ideological meanings that tend to be consistent with the powerful elite. They contend that frames themselves are “imprints of power...central to the production of hegemonic meanings” (Carragee & Roefs, 2004, p. 222). If frames are marked with power, their sponsors are the markers of power and key to hegemonic meanings. Frames are both inherently powerful as a means of providing perspective-specific information and as the method of disseminating power by journalists and/or the elite who create the perspective-specific information within interpretive packages. Journalistic norms dictate the ways in which journalists create and distribute content, and those ways fall in line with this idea of power through audience reliance on the media (particularly their chosen liberal-conservative outlet or the medium of news) and the profitization of that reliance, the media’s ability to choose how an issue is framed, the media’s broad audience bases and availability, and the balance and accuracy given to an issue.

Turning back to the subject at hand—the Green New Deal—I argue that Ocasio-Cortez acts as a frame sponsor, as indirect and unorthodox as it may be, following this framework. Her frame sponsorship, then, is more obvious when grounded as such: a powerful elite (Ocasio-Cortez) disseminating information (the Green New Deal resolution) with a particular perspective (the need for bold climate change action) that impacts the public and is circulated by the media.

Chapter III: Methodology

I examined coverage in the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, borrowing from Matthes and Kohring's (2008) study of the coverage of biotechnology in the *New York Times*. I chose my time period of analysis so as to include the most salient year of news articles relating to the Green New Deal and climate change. The timeframe parameters were set to January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019 so that the entire year of the Green New Deal's release is covered (the resolution was released on February 7, 2019). The articles were in turn obtained, as Matthes and Kohring (2008) did, through the U.S. Major Dailies database via the Portland State University Library. As a secondary confirmation that the articles produced through this search were the full list of articles written by the publications for 2019, I also used the search parameters in each publication's own database via the Portland State University Library. The same articles were returned for each newspaper through both database searches.

The articles for analysis were selected from the following search terms: "Green New Deal" AND "climate change" OR "global warming." Searching "Green New Deal" AND "climate change OR global warming" produced 117 results. The databases' search parameters were also set so that only news articles from newspapers should be returned. Although I had chosen the "news" category when searching each database, the results still contained opinion and podcast pieces which I removed. Editorials, commentary, and duplicates were also omitted. Some articles were considered duplicates despite having different headlines because the article content was the exact same. This produced a total

sample of 54 articles; 46 (85%) from the *New York Times* and 8 (15%) from the *Wall Street Journal*. As this is a manageable size, all 54 articles were used for analysis.

Bantimaroudis and Ban (2001) and Dickerson (2001) use descriptive methods when examining key words and phrases, which will be applied here. Per Hsieh and Shannon (2005), I used a directed content analysis for examination. This allowed me to build from previous research and use codes already created. O’Neill et al. (2015) created a frame typology with descriptions for “legacy” media coverage of an environmental policy. I used their typology and codebook for analysis, which included ten frame topics. The following are their ten deductive frames: Settled Science, Political or Ideological Struggle, Role of Science, Uncertain Science, Disaster, Security, Morality and Ethics, Opportunity, Economic, and Health. O’Neill et al. defined the frames after examining their data set “for frames’ constituent elements” and considering all culturally available frames (p. 380). An article is my unit of analysis.

Of the frames listed, I searched the news texts for each frame and noted the number of occurrences for each frame per article. Following O’Neill et al.’s (2015) example, the codebook was used to document the relevant terms and phrases for each deductive frame. I coded at the article level but allowed for more than one frame per article. As an example, such phrases would include “cost” or “market” for the Economic frame. Additionally, metaphor usage was also considered within the relevant terms and phrases (i.e., “bear market” for the Economic frame). This allowed for a “contextualist approach with a reflexive vision” and followed Culler (1997) via a “close reading” of the news articles that meet criteria (Coleman, 2020, p. 24). After initially coding based on

O'Neill et al. (2015b) and my own additions, I read each article closely via frame analysis to identify frames that were not found during the preliminary search. The O'Neill et al. (2015a) description of each frame was used for decision making. Hertog and McLeod's (2001) approach to framing analysis was especially salient and was used to develop a codebook, specify frame boundaries, and check my insights against a standard.

Codebook

My codebook was taken almost entirely from the O'Neill et al. (2015) study. They include their codebook in a supplemental document, hereafter referred to as O'Neill et al. (2015b). The supplementary information was found via a link in the main article under "Additional information" and is only available in the online version of the paper directly on the journal's website. I used two sections in their codebook for instructions on how to code each frame: A Description category that describes and defines each frame and a Language and Phrases category that listed relevant search terms and expressions they found that might link to a frame. The codebook was then updated post-analysis to better reflect the language and phrases that identified frames within the articles. The full codebook can be found in Appendix B.

The Political or Ideological Struggle frame, for example, includes the following description taken verbatim from O'Neill et al.: "A conflict over the way the world should work; over solutions or strategy to address climate change (above disagreements over science). A battle for power (for example, between nations or personalities)." However, I included my own insights, paired with O'Neill et al.'s when appropriate, for the

Language and Phrases category. I added my own if I found the category limited: some of the terms and expressions they list were irrelevant or insufficient to my data set. This included additions such as “party unity or division” and “partisan” for the Political or Ideological Struggle frame. This culminated in the following admixture for the Language and Phrases category for the Political or Ideological Struggle frame:

reference to ‘scientific truths’ (implying, how can the other side ignore these and not act?); partisan views, debate on how to address climate change, internal struggle within a political party; party unity or division (e.g. how left-center-right the party should be; invokes an ‘us versus them’ mentality’ (Appendix B.)

Next, I searched the 54 articles for frame mentions using the codebook as a guide for examination. I used the qualitative content analysis software Atlas.ti to search for keywords and code for frames. The program finds and highlights search terms and allows chosen quotations to be marked as a particular code (frame)—each frame was color coded for clarity. If a passage contained more than one frame, the software showed them in line with one another and in the selected frame’s color.

Once identified, I read and re-read the terms and phrases found using Atlas.ti to ascertain the presence of each frame. Some clearly revealed a frame, such as the following Political or Ideological Struggle frame in a *Wall Street Journal* piece: “The partisan debate over the Green New Deal has elevated the profile of combatting climate change on Capitol Hill” (Duehren, 2019c). After exhausting the terms and phrases I began with, I closely read each of the 54 articles to reveal frames not identified by the keyword searches. I made decisions about a frame’s presence by closely adhering to the

description O’Neill et al. gave in their codebook. I then also made sure to weigh if the potential presence of a frame was related to the Green New Deal or discussion/reaction to the Green New Deal. If the discourse matched a frame’s description but was not mentioned in relation to the Green New Deal, climate change related to the Green New Deal, or reaction to the Green New Deal I did not code the text for a frame. This happened in articles that talked about Democratic presidential candidates’ climate proposals and the costs associated with those proposals or in articles that talked about partisan issues that were not climate change related.

Reliability was established through intercoder agreement. A fellow graduate student was given 10 randomly selected articles from the sample (approximately 20%). The selection was done via a random number generator after assigning each article a number from 1-54. As the *Wall Street Journal* sample is much smaller—and the articles themselves are shorter than nearly all *New York Times* ones—I wanted to ensure the *Wall Street Journal* was represented in the intercoder process. Two *Wall Street Journal* articles were randomly selected and eight articles from the *New York Times* were randomly chosen. The coder was given the ten articles, the codebook, and a spreadsheet that asked to mark if a frame was present or not in the article. For example, for Article A, the coder would check “yes” or “no” if they coded Settled Science for the article. This was repeated for each frame within the article with the whole process repeated for each of the remaining nine articles. With 10 articles and 10 frames, there were 100 opportunities for agreement—we reached 76 initially. The coder and I achieved an over-all agreement (76%) and discussed our individual coding decisions so as to further support the

agreement. Our disagreements primarily occurred because my initial instructions were too broad: the second coder coded for anything that matched the frame descriptions rather than texts that exclusively referred to the Green New Deal or Green New Deal reactions. After my phrasing was adjusted and the coder better understood my intentions, we reached further support for agreement.

Chapter IV: Findings

General Overview

My research questions aimed to uncover frame patterns that emerged in the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. Across the 54 articles within this sample, 30 articles contained at least one frame, with 16 (30%) of those containing more than one. This discrepancy between 54 total articles and 30 with a frame is a result of the search parameters: any article containing “Green New Deal” was returned. This included a number of articles that mentioned the resolution in passing or as background information for a separate issue. Consequently, 24 articles in this sample had no frame according to my description because the Green New Deal or reactions to it were not the primary focus. For example, a *New York Times* article about former New York City mayor and eventual 2020 Democratic Presidential candidate Michael Bloomberg was returned in my search. The Green New Deal is mentioned as a pivot point for Bloomberg’s stance on climate change and his own “achievable” version of the resolution but does not directly speak to the Green New Deal or have a reaction to it; the article contains no frames as a result and represents similar uses of “Green New Deal” for other articles in the sample.

As the article is my unit of analysis, more than one frame could be coded within an article and resulted in articles with several frames. The results for the totals and publications are compiled in four figures below. The frames are listed in order of frequency rather than alphabetically or in O’Neill et al.’s (2015) order.

While there was a multitude of climate change mentions within the total sample, many were unrelated to the Green New Deal (such as with articles primarily covering Democratic presidential candidates or fracking⁹ and sustainability). Including the Green New Deal in my database search meant any mention of the resolution in an article, even when mentioned in passing, was added it to the sample. This study specifically aimed to analyze patterns that emerged in coverage of the Green New Deal, so mentions of climate change not directly associated with the Green New Deal were not included in the analysis. Mentions that were considered related to the Green New Deal included any that directly related to the resolution, a discussion of climate change in reaction to the resolution, or politicians' reactions to the Green New Deal.

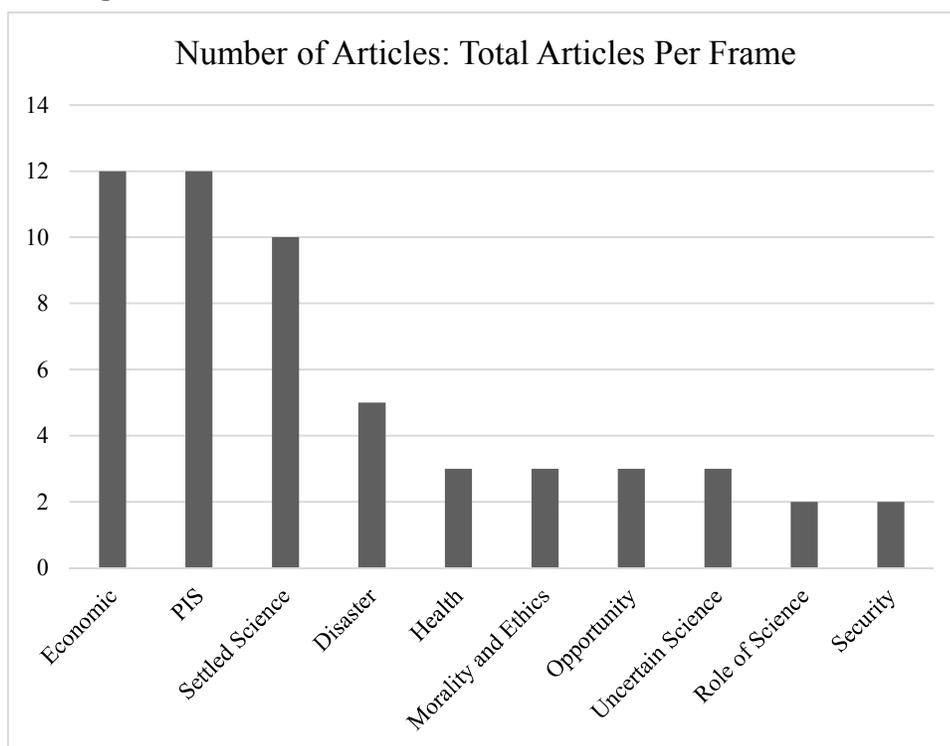


Figure 1: Total Number of Articles Per Frame (N=54)

⁹ Hydraulic fracking; A process used to force cracks into rocks deep underground to allow more gas and oil to flow by injecting pressurized liquids into the ground.

With these stipulations on what was considered for analysis, the results show articles per frame ranging from zero to twelve. In total, the Economic frame and the Political or Ideological Struggle frame were most often with 12 (22%) articles each. Settled Science was present for 10 (18.5%) articles, and the frequency of the remaining

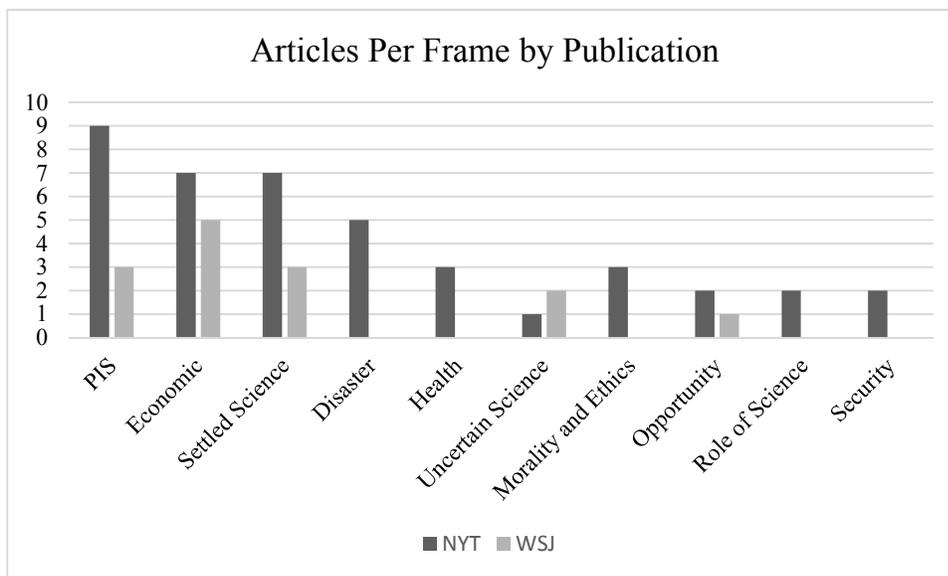


Figure 2: Total Number of Articles Per Frame Distributed by Publication

frames dropped to five total or fewer. All 10 frames were present across the sample—Role of Science and Security each had two (3.7%) articles and were the least used. Figure 1 shows the distribution of articles per frame across the entire sample of articles. Figure 2 shows side-by-side differences between the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* for each frame—bars on the figure that show only the *New York Times* reflect the lack of articles found with the frame for the *Wall Street Journal*. In order to keep the figures a reasonable size and to display a full name for the Political or Ideological frame, it was shorted to PIS for each figure.

The Economic and Political or Ideological Struggle (PIS) frames often complemented each other and were found together in several articles. Although I

specified news in my database search, many articles focused on political news, such as the campaigning build-up to the 2020 election, and climate news often incorporated politics as well. This overlap meant, as the data show, that climate change policies were discussed in relation to the political climate and the willingness (or lack, as the case may be) of politicians to take action to mitigate current and future climate change events.

On the political front, there was much debate around what kind of action should be taken and how costly climate change could be for the economy—although there were also considerations for the economic benefits of climate change action, such as green jobs, green technology, and improved infrastructure. Articles that covered these political aspects typically included arguments, either from the author or a quoted individual, that climate change is a real threat that must be taken seriously, which accounts for Settled Science occurring nearly as much as Economic and Political or Ideological Struggle. For example, in a *New York Times* article that touts the Green New Deal as technologically feasible but politically unlikely, authors Friedman and Gabriel (2019) quote and summarize various economic experts who lament the costs of reaching the Green New Deal's 10-year plan for tackling climate change while they simultaneously quote Carol Browner, a climate advisor to Barack Obama and chief of the Environmental Protection Administration during the Bill Clinton administration, on the clarity of science on climate change and lack of time to act before irreversible damage is done to the planet.

Also noteworthy is the division of struggle within Political or Ideological Struggle. O'Neill et al.'s (2015) description of the frame does not specify only a partisan conflict over solutions but also does not contain specifics on how media organizations

used it. My findings showed partisanship over climate change action and solutions, which was expected¹⁰. However, many of the articles coded as PIS contained internal party struggle as well. A *Wall Street Journal Article* summarized a quote from Representative Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ) regarding party differences on how quickly to act and whether to pursue a carbon emissions tax, noting that “the [Democratic] party is still split” (Duehren, 2019d). Similarly, a *New York Times* article on a climate policy clash between Ocasio-Cortez and former Vice President and 2020 presidential candidate Joe Biden called the dispute “a striking display of the divisions between the center and the left of the Democratic Party” (Glueck, 2019b).

The Democratic Party was the most divided on climate change resolution—the number of presidential candidates the party had in 2019 speaks to the large spectrum of placement within the Left’s¹¹ political ideology and the number of perspectives on tackling climate change. This was a surprising discovery at first, but further reading and re-situating myself within the mindset of the 2020 election illuminated the push-and-pull of the Democratic Party—for both voters and officials, the tug-of-war over how moderate or progressive the party should be (especially in reaction to Trump and the desire to vote him out) ran rampant. The *Congressional Quarterly Researcher* climate change report in October of 2021 (two years after the articles in my sample described the divisions between the progressive and centrist camps) notes the “split within Biden’s own

¹⁰ A *Congressional Quarterly Researcher* climate change report references a Pew Research poll in which 10% of Republicans surveyed were concerned about climate change—a number that has increased only minutely—while 49% of Democrats were (Ellicott, 2021).

¹¹ Left and Right refer to the liberal and conservative factions, respectively, of the U.S. Left and Right are also interchangeable with the Democratic and Republican parties. The Republican Party is also called the GOP Party, and Republicans are referred to collectively as the GOP.

party...on his climate agenda in Congress” (Ellicott, 2021). While the number of PIS frames coded within an internal struggle for the Democratic Party was surprising at first, the lack of unity reflects the social and political climate of the Left and is thus not as much of a surprise but is no less salient.

The true surprise was the—albeit small—number of mentions of a GOP divide in my sample. A *Wall Street Journal* reporter spoke to Republicans’ “own divisions on the issue [climate change]” while a *New York Times* article quoted a recent former Republican Congressman from Florida who noted that some “Republicans who used to deny climate change as a real problem just to avoid the issue are now confronting it” (Duehren, 2019d; Friedman, 2019d). Although the GOP’s internal divide was not as prominent as the Democrats’, finding even a small collection of conflicts about climate change solutions within a party that has historically denied climate change’s existence and/or the anthropogenic cause of climate change (as Trump was renowned for during his presidency¹²) is noteworthy.

The frames with the fewest showing followed expectations—O’Neill et al.’s (2015) study involved international news and a larger sample so a frame such as Security, which focused on the border security of migration and refugees as a result of climate change as well as food or water security, and Role of Science, which explored the role science plays within society, have less relevance. The former is not as relevant to domestic issues since America has not seen the influx of immigration other countries, as

¹² During his presidency, Trump promised to remove the United States from the 2015 Paris climate agreement (and formally withdrew in 2020) and publicly rejected scientists’ warnings about climate change. He also made deregulatory moves from the Obama administration’s rules aimed at mitigating climate change effects (Lyons, 2018).

detailed in the O’Neill et al. (2015a) study. Of the two articles, one describes Manhattan’s role in the national and global economy and the human security threat destruction of the economic center could entail; the other is a lone focus on food security as a result of climate change and sustainable action. For the latter, more attention is given to whether the science is real and accurate or not rather than the role it might play in our social existence.

The *New York Times*

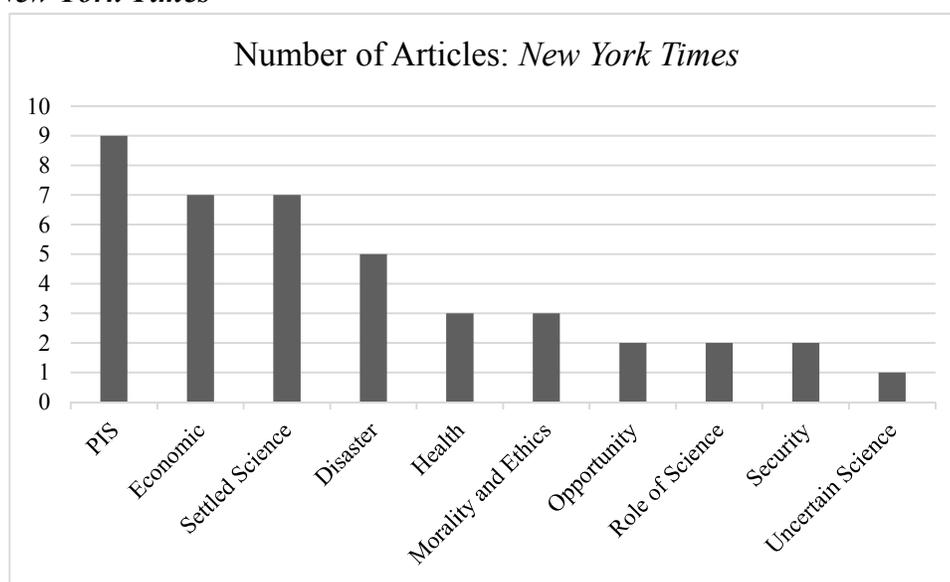


Figure 3: Number of Articles Per Frame in the *New York Times*

The *New York Times* had more articles for analysis (almost six times more) so it is unsurprising that the total number of articles per frame is primarily comprised of *New York Times* articles; indeed, for half of the frames, the *New York Times* comprised all of the occurrences. Following the previously outlined journalistic norms, however, this is not particularly surprising: the *New York Times* is a historically Left-based newspaper while the *Wall Street Journal* is more conservative—journalists at each organization will more naturally follow the company’s social and political attitude and likely chose their

organization because it aligns more closely with their own personal attitudes or beliefs (Feldman et al., 2017). This means that *New York Times* journalists will feel the pressure to act within the business norm—to produce writing that will generate clicks and revenue—and the professional norm—to write within the balance and objectivity the publication’s readers would expect for a Left-based newspaper.

The high number of PIS (9) and Settled Science (7) for the *New York Times*’s articles would suggest that these norms were followed. The Left, while debating the solution to climate change, have consistently called climate change a real, true phenomenon. There was no division amongst Democrats on whether climate change is a real threat that needs to be tackled—all news stories unequivocally agreed that action is needed (according to Democrats). Instead, the debate consisted of party solutions for action along the left-center political spectrum within the Democratic Party. The moderate and centrist factions worried over whether Ocasio-Cortez and her Green New Deal’s popularity among voters would make her the face of the party’s policy or move the party towards its progressive bloc. This was evident in Fadulu’s (2019) *New York Times* piece about Ocasio-Cortez where she noted establishment Democrats are worried that Ocasio-Cortez moved the health care, jobs, social equity, and climate change conversations (all pieces discussed within the Green New Deal) “too far to the left too fast.” Indeed, House Democrats offered a Green New Deal alternative that summer “as an effort by centrist Democrats to reclaim the climate agenda” (Friedman, 2019f).

Settled Science emphasizes climate change scientists and the expertise of their consensus within larger bodies (such as United Nations or United States climate panels)

while also showing the evidence for necessary action with clear significance that the science has spoken, is fact, and action must be taken. Many articles contained phrasing similar or exact to O'Neill et al.'s (2015) frame descriptions, such as a Kamala Harris (D-CA) quote about Big Oil and climate change, expressing the reality of climate change destruction and needed action: "They have refused to act on climate change. So it's on us to speak the truth, rooted in science fact, not science fiction" (Friedman and Thrush, 2019). Harris's use of both "truth" and "fact" follows the frame's description categorically and the implication that the science is settled so action must follow. Such a statement is fairly ordinary for people on the Left, and its inclusion in the article further reflects the journalistic norms within the *New York Times* organization.

Most interesting, but perhaps not surprising, is the low number of Morality and Ethics frames within the sample (and that the *New York Times* articles were the only ones to include the frame). Climate change action has been considered a moral imperative¹³ by activists, politicians, scientists, and religious leaders, but its relevance and weight in a discussion teemed with ideological struggle and debates over costs has moved it wayside. That the *New York Times* contains the frame, limited as it is, falls in line with Lakoff's (2010) notion of the progressive moral system and the professional journalistic norms that would follow that. The small percentage of the Morality and Ethics articles also

¹³ President Joe Biden called climate change action a moral imperative at the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference; Pope Francis gave a TED video speech in which he asserts the clarity of science, the need for action, and a call for ethical action and intention as the moral imperative for climate change; A UN News article called climate change "a moral, ethical, and economic imperative" (Hernandez, 2021; Pope Francis, 2020; UN News, 2019).

correspond to Feldman et al.'s (2017) findings that morality frames appeared sporadically in news stories.

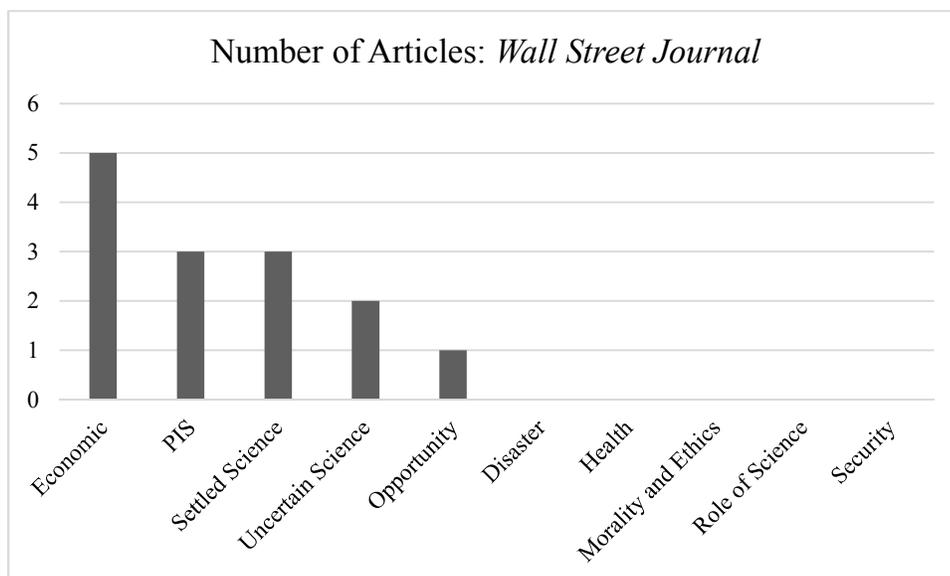


Figure 4: Number of Articles Per Frame in the *Wall Street Journal*

The *Wall Street Journal*

Considering the nature of the *Wall Street Journal* as a business-focused publication, it is understandable that Economic is the frame used most often for the newspaper with nearly half (5) of the total (12) present. Furthermore, that the newspaper focused more on the costs of acting rather than the costs of not acting or the economic benefits of transitioning to green jobs and infrastructure is unsurprising. Coverage focused heavily on Trump's climate change beliefs, with the newspaper noting in various articles that he believes the Paris Accords and Obama-era environmental rules unfairly hurt the economy as would a policy (like the Green New Deal proposes) for fossil-fuel production limitation and termination. Ken Thomas (2019b) included Trump's view on climate change and noted his frequent tweets on the subject in an article about Washington Governor and 2020 Democratic candidate Jay Inslee's climate proposal and

its alignment with the Green New Deal. In tandem with journalistic norms, the *Wall Street Journal* notes that scientists and Democrats claim that the economy could lose billions of dollars as a result of climate change. These instances are disproportionately outweighed by claims of economic harm if climate change action is undertaken.

As the figure below shows, the *Wall Street Journal* lacked several frames—indeed, only half of the frames are present. Of the ten a priori frames, only Uncertain Science is greater in the *Wall Street Journal* than in the *New York Times*. Following the previous discussion of the Economic frame and the prevalence of climate change doubt as a motivator for not spending money on action, it is logical that the frame focused on the uncertainty and doubt of climate change, the anthropogenic nature of climate change, and the need for action would appear more in the *Wall Street Journal* than in the *New York Times*. Coding for Uncertain Science primarily followed Trump’s climate change views and quotes, such as the president calling global warming a hoax and “cast[ing] doubt on the human role in climate change” (Thomas, 2019b; Duehren, 2019a). Trump was referenced even in articles not focused on him—such as previously mentioned Thomas article. Even in an article related to Trump, emphasis was placed on his view and intended action, even when it comes in the face of scientists within his own administration who note the need for action (Duehren, 2019a; Duehren, 2019b¹⁴).

¹⁴ Duehren (2019b) clarifies that the scientists Trump doubts in Duehren (2019a) were within his own administration.

Chapter V: Discussion

This thesis sought to understand emerging news reporting patterns about the Green New Deal in the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* through the frame typology O’Neill et al. (2015) established. The patterns that emerged for each publication follow previous trends and maintain expected levels of partisanship and journalistic norms. The results highlight the need for a united plan (that is, a plan that all sides can agree to act upon) to address climate change while also underscoring the polarization the issue has even amongst politicians of the same party. Overall, this study’s analysis of news coverage confirms that there is a general consensus on the reality of climate change and the need for action but that the solutions to mitigating climate change events and saving the planet are exceedingly divided. While this consensus is not exhaustive across the board, especially amongst the conservative populations covered in my article sample, media coverage that continues to disavow our climate change reality and bemoan costs of fixing a problem we created seem to increasingly be the exception: at least for the newspapers examined.

The most unanticipated result of this analysis was the internal political or ideological divide amongst within the two parties circulated by the media. That the two parties clash over climate change is not novel, but each party having its own internal conflict on appropriate action for tackling climate change propagated across national newspapers speaks to the increased call for action—citizens have made their desire for climate action known (such that nearly all Democratic presidential candidates in 2019 had their own version of the Green New Deal) and politicians have either taken it up to

appease constituents or because of their own beliefs about climate change (Pew Research Center, 2022).

Coverage of pro-climate action adheres to the journalistic norms such that readers would expect to see articles about climate change and politicians' views on the issue and journalists' coverage if it is necessitated by the business and professional norms (the revenue and accuracy). The noteworthiness of an internal party divide maintains Edelman's (1987) assertion that the business norm follows noteworthy and enticing news. Suldovsky's (2017) list of disadvantages for communicating about climate change through the media is also upheld, especially that media outlets are increasingly polarized just as climate change is and that a lack of public trust for the media "may be amplified in areas where popular media outlets do not operate independent of other entities" (p. 8). The *New York Times* is owned by the New York Times Company, which is publicly traded, while the *Wall Street Journal* is owned by conservative Rupert Murdoch who has expressed criticism of liberal media (McKnight, 2010). Both publications operate for profit and are beholden to the board of directors and their chairman, as well as the chairman's preferred public image (i.e. liberal vs conservative). The political norm is necessarily used in coverage of politics and is thus represented here as well.

The New York Times

If Lakoff's (2010) conception of frames and the progressive moral system is applied, then both the presence of Political or Ideological Struggle—including the internal divide amongst the Democratic Party in addition to the partisan one—and Morality and Ethics align with his understanding. He delineates the progressive moral

system as empathetic, which would explain why the *New York Times* contained the Morality and Ethics frame while the *Wall Street Journal* did not, implying that consideration for care and other people is a greater priority for the liberal media. Similarly, a debate about solutions, while also containing a debate over costs, involves the livelihoods of thousands of Americans and the impacts to even more people.

That the *New York Times* articles in my sample significantly conveyed a scientific consensus (the Settled Science frame) also trends with prior research (Nisbet, 2011). Previous examinations have shown that the political and ideological slant of the *New York Times*'s news coverage is liberal and that the political slant of newspapers is related to the ideological composition of readership (Gentzkow & Shapiro, 2011; Gentzkow & Shapiro, 2010). This furthers the professional and business journalistic norms (Bennett, 1996; Boykoff & Boykoff, 2007) previously mentioned and also maintains the framework and moral system Lakoff (2011) discusses. That is, journalists give balance and objectivity as expected by readers who choose what publications to read based on their own views (their moral system)—this creates clicks and engagement which leads to profit.

The Wall Street Journal

The newspaper's conservative leaning and pro-business focus brought forth frames that echo these ideological facets. In comparison to the *New York Times*'s articles, the paper's coverage echoes previous research findings of more negative economic consequences as a result of climate change action. The *Wall Street Journal* produced nearly as many articles per the Economic frame as the *New York Times* but they primarily

focused on the costs for the U.S. economy if climate change action is taken. This follows Feldman et al.'s (2017) content analysis findings and suggests that the conservative aspect of the publication and its subsequent journalistic norms were maintained (Suldovsky, 2017). While some articles did lend an eye to a more liberal viewpoint (insomuch as they noted the reality of climate change and possible economic benefits for taking action), the journalists' conservative slants were more obvious in the discussion of climate change science and economic consequences.

Regarding these discussions on science and economic consequences, and the attention given to Trump regarding his uncertainty of climate science and concern for the economy, it is noteworthy that the *Wall Street Journal* is owned by Rupert Murdoch, who also owns Fox News—the TV channel enjoyed a close relationship Trump for the majority of his candidacy and subsequent presidency¹⁵. Following his loss in the 2020 election, the *Wall Street Journal* ran a Letter to the Editor by Trump in which he continued his claims that the election results were false and he was duly elected¹⁶. Such a relationship between the newspaper and Trump could explain the Uncertain Science frame coding: according to the journalistic norms, the *Wall Street Journal* would follow the business, professional, and political norms wherein writing more generously with regard to the president achieves more clicks, attention, and thus revenue for the organization, it gives the balance, accuracy, and objectivity more conservative readers might want or expect, and covering a government official gives the relationship more

¹⁵ Trump's "Fake News" branding included most major news programs except Fox News or other conservative outlets. "Trump's Fox News fixation was a major theme of his presidency. He hired people from Fox, fired people because of Fox, and gave most of his national TV interviews to Fox" (Stelter, 2020).

¹⁶ Listed in the references as Trump (2021).

stability while also appeasing the business and reader sides. As previously expressed by Edelman (1987), journalists adhere to the business norms more when news is noteworthy—the president calling climate change a hoax and action taken to mitigate climate change a punishment to the economy is certainly noteworthy.

The five frames identified within the articles (Uncertain Science, Political or Ideological Struggle, Settled Science, Opportunity, and Economic) are also more fact- or numbers-based than the human-interest aspect of the other five. Outside of the individual frames themselves, this emergent pattern suggests Lakoff's (2010) outline of a conservative moral system is apt for understanding the *Wall Street Journal's* more clinical approach to covering the Green New Deal. Lakoff's conservative moral system highlights the economic model conservatives tend to use when weighing and making decisions. Noteworthy for my findings is Lakoff's assertion that conservatives' negative viewing of liberalism "tends to make conservative populists doubt and reject the science behind reports that establish the existence of and impact of global warming" which would explain why the *Wall Street Journal* used the Uncertain Science frame when the *New York Times* did not (Lakoff, 2010, p. 76).

Implications

These findings add to the scholarship by affirming previous research in framing and environmental communication (Feldman et al., 2017; Lakoff, 2010; Nisbet, 2009; O'Neill et al., 2015). The results demonstrate that the ideology considered by Hackett (1984) or Gramsci (1971) are intertwined with journalistic norms broadly and within environmental communication more specifically (Bennett, 1996; Bourdieu & Wacquant,

1992; Boykoff & Boykoff, 2007; Schoenfeld et al., 1979; Spector & Kitsuse, 1977). The framing analysis also shows that journalistic norms are grounded, often at least, by an ideology or “moral system” that informs the publication (the liberal and conservative nature of the newspapers in question); additionally, ideology (typically) informs the journalists individually and through the ideology of the organization they write for and represent (Lakoff, 2010; Bennett, 1996; Harcup and O’Neill, 2017).

This use of ideology (the set of ideas we have about how to view the world)—the way it informs journalistic norms and those normative orders’ impact on environmental news coverage—further an application of frame sponsorship with an understanding of Hackett (1984) and Gramsci (1971). Although considering Ocasio-Cortez a frame sponsor because she co-sponsored the Green New Deal is an unorthodox application, this study shows her ability to do so via the prominence of frames and discussions related to the resolution, even as she is hands-off for the majority of the articles in my sample. This echoes Gramsci (1971) inasmuch as she is a hegemonic elite who has produced and diffused a meaning and value through the Green New Deal. It also conforms to Hackett’s (1984) ideation that frame sponsors create powerful interpretive packages (the value of saving the planet and its people through climate change action, outlined, in part, in the Green New Deal) that the media circulate with their own ideologies present—the difference in coverage between a liberal and conservative newspaper (as is expected vis-à-vis journalistic norms and environmental communication (Bennett, 1996; Boykoff & Boykoff, 2007; Lakoff, 2010)). That ideology plays a “role in the mass media as an institution which could purvey ideas, influence wants, and help to define social reality” is

apparent in the coverage's slants and framing choices (Hackett, 1984, p. 246). If the Green New Deal is viewed as Ocasio-Cortez's dissemination of information regarding climate change, that the resolution's emphasis on action involves a frame typology, and that the media circulates that information and framing, then Ocasio-Cortez fits the criteria for a frame sponsor.

Limitations

A key limitation of this analysis lies in the narrowed focus and small sample. 2019 was an important year to the discussion of climate change, but reviewing articles only from that year alone and within just two newspapers created a small data pool. The data was small enough that a similar study could be reasonably conducted using 2019-2022 as a timeframe or by increasing the time period in different ways (such as coverage following IPCC Reports or United Nations Climate Change Conferences). The *Wall Street Journal* had expressively fewer articles so an analysis on conservative news is limited as a result. Supplementing the *Wall Street Journal* with another similar conservative newspaper in order to have a more even distribution between liberal and conservative news would be beneficial. Including a more centrist or neutral newspaper such as the *AP* would also be valuable. Further research should include a wider array of years and/or news media. The Green New Deal jumpstarted a political conversation around climate change and sparked new policy plans and debate. Further study on how political events (such as the Green New Deal or climate activists' policy protests like Greta Thunberg's) bring attention to the issue is important for understanding how to create action for undertaking climate change.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

This study attempted to ascertain framing patterns in the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*. It draws on concepts and scholarship from framing, journalistic norms, and environmental communication to inform our understanding of news media's coverage of the Green New Deal and climate change. The 2019 coverage by the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* follows previous research in valuing economic perspectives for climate change that correspond to the political or ideological placement of political actors on the political spectrum—both across party lines and within parties. This study demonstrated a division of unity for both the Democrats and Republicans, although greater attention was given to the Democratic disagreements than to Republican ones, over solutions. Both newspapers adhere to the conventions of their publications—the *New York Times* more liberal and *Wall Street Journal* more conservative—in their reporting and quoting decisions about the reality and existence of climate change.

The findings suggest journalistic norms are retained and are explained through Lakoff's (2010) notion of moral systems wherein “progressives” are governed by empathy and responsibility while conservatives are motivated, primarily, by the economy and capitalism such that an issue like the Green New Deal that incorporates economic changes to combat climate change is negatively viewed. It also shows how Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez, unorthodoxly, acts as a frame sponsor with the Green New Deal—the resolution created an influx of attention to the climate and pushed politicians' platforms to include a greater focus on climate change action. Exploring frame patterns related to the Green New Deal within the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* stimulates the

climate change conversation and brings attention to the established idea (with exceptions still standing within factions of the Right) that action must be taken immediately.

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Appendix B. Codebook

Frame	Description (O'Neill et al., 2015a)	Language and Phrases (Partially drawn from O'Neill et al.'s (2015b) Supplemental Info TS2)
Settled Science	Emphasis on the science of climate change and the broad expert consensus. Considerable evidence of the need for action. Science has spoken, others must act. Uncertainty or skepticism quashed.	Scien*; an awareness of evidence regarding climate change; instills expertise, refers to expert people or bodies; science as obvious; science as truth or fact; acceptance of climate change as real, needs to be addressed; avoid consequences
Political or Ideological Struggle	A conflict over the way the world should work; over solutions or strategy to address climate change (above disagreements over science). A battle for power (for example, between nations or personalities).	reference to 'scientific truths' (implying, how can the other side ignore these and not act?); partisan views, debate on how to address climate change, internal struggle within a political party; party unity or division (e.g. how left-center-right the party should be; invokes an 'us versus them' mentality'
Role of Science	Explores the role science plays in society. May debate transparency, funding or public awareness; especially in relation to institutions.	Climate change science as a societal influence i.e. effects on voting, lifestyle, political issues
Uncertain Science	Focus on uncertainty—in climate science, impacts or solutions. May question anthropogenic nature of climate change, or discuss natural variability. We cannot act, should not act, or will struggle to act.	Expresses doubt, disbelief in climate change; references to climate change as hoax, not real. No action should be taken because it isn't real.
Disaster	Predicted impacts are dire. Impacts are numerous, discussed in detail, and threaten all aspects of life. Impacts will get worse, we are not well prepared.	'Disaster'; 'damage'; damage or destruction of infrastructure, property as a result of climate change events i.e. storms, wildfires, floods, etc.; impact on life, socially and politically: impacts are a result of

		climate change events; death, possibility of death as a result
Security	A threat to human security. Could be energy, water or food security, or a threat to the nation state (for example, migration).	climate change events as a ‘threat multiplier’ i.e. to infrastructure, economy, health, life;
Morality and Ethics	An explicit and urgent moral, religious, or ethical call. Morality and Ethics 1: for action. Strong mitigation, and protection of the most vulnerable. Morality and Ethics 2: for no action. Likely to discuss scientific uncertainty.	the threat to life as a result of climate change requires fixing, saving; ‘right’; appeal to future generations’ welfare, health i.e. taking action for grandchildren; acknowledging value system of wealthy over non-wealthy people as the ones to save, care about as bad
Opportunity	Climate change poses opportunities. Either Opportunity 1: as a way to re-imagine how we live; for example, to further human development, to invest in co-benefits. Opportunity 2: there will be beneficial impacts so no intervention is needed. Likely to mention uncertainty.	‘opportunity’; ‘improve’ i.e. improvements as a result of climate change events or anticipating climate change events; ‘time for ‘innovation or ‘creativity’; redesigning, improving infrastructure; ‘transform trade’
Economic	Discusses growth, prosperity, investments, markets. Provides economic costs. Economics implies either Economic 1: acting now. Details potential economic actions. Economic 2: action is hugely expensive (or too costly in context of other priorities). Likely to mention uncertainty.	econom*; harm to the economy; beneficial to the economy; market, economic costs; recession; investment; job loss; job creation; expensive; growth; economic or market development;
Health	Climate change poses a danger to human health, for example, malnutrition, air quality. Urgent action required	‘health’; wellbeing; livelihoods and survival are compromised’ i.e. air, water pollution as a result of fossil fuels or climate change events;

		ignoring climate change effects harms or ignores large populations
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