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## Framing, Emotion, and Contradiction in the *Tampa Bay Times*' Climate Change Coverage

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Framing, Emotion, and Contradiction in the *Tampa Bay Times* ' Climate Change Coverage

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
Department of Sociology  
College of Arts and Sciences  
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## ABSTRACT

How the media covers climate change is a crucial issue because it can impact public opinion and influence policy, and local newspapers are an understudied yet essential source of media. Previous media research has utilized framing approaches, considered ideology and hegemony, and begun to seriously examine emotion. The purpose of this research project is to synthesize these approaches to examine how the *Tampa Bay Times* covers climate change. Using research questions that focus on how the coverage is framed and how emotion is used, I collected two samples of articles from different newspaper sections and conducted textual analysis. I identify four themes that reflect how articles framed climate change coverage: climate change is real, the Anthropocene vs. its alternatives, small picture vs. big picture, and business as usual vs. calls for action. I also describe how emotion is used or not used: emotion is evoked when covering activists and describing disasters, emotion is utilized in contradictory ways among and within articles, and emotion is frequently absent from articles. In the discussion, I argue that the results reflect a “smorgasbord coverage” approach – perhaps a consequence of the *Tampa Bay Times*’ need to appeal to a wide audience – and discuss the implications of this approach. I also demonstrate how the results connect to and extend previous literature and offer directions for future research.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Climate change is one of the most pressing social problems of our time, and media coverage of climate change continues to rise in recent years (IPCC 2022; Jacobson et al. 2019; Lyytimäki et al. 2020). How the media covers climate change is a crucial issue because of its potential to impact public opinion and influence climate policy (Anderson 2009; Brevini 2016; Tindall, Stoddart, and Callison 2018). Local newspapers are an understudied yet essential source of media; they deliver locally relevant and responsive coverage and provide agenda-setting for their communities, which in turn impacts readers' political participation (Ardia et al. 2020). Multiple areas of research consider the question of climate change media coverage from different angles. Many media analyses utilize a framing approach to understand how climate change is covered. Other studies focus on how ideology is portrayed in journalism and how this upholds or subverts hegemonic structures. Another strand of research focuses on the often-neglected role of emotion in media coverage. This project integrates all three approaches into an analysis of climate change coverage in the *Tampa Bay Times*, a local newspaper for an area already vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Local newspapers are in decline across the United States, and over 25% have folded since 2004. With recent decreases during the early waves of the Covid-19 pandemic, 50% of counties in the U.S. have only one local newspaper (Ardia et al. 2020). The local newspapers that have survived often pivot to increased online content, yet still face economic challenges as they “cannot offer the same level of targeting [as large corporations] and have been unable to attract the advertising revenue necessary to remain financially sustainable” (Ardia et al. 2020:2).

However, in the midst of these trends, the *Tampa Bay Times* has remained successful. With the largest readership in Florida, the newspaper also has national reach, with 20% of its subscribers outside of Florida (Tampa Bay Times 2021; Tampa Bay Times 2022). The *Tampa Bay Times* has won 14 Pulitzer Prizes for its reporting and is owned by the Poynter Institute, a nonprofit journalism organization of national renown (Tampa Bay Times). Thus, this project seeks to examine how a respected, successful, and influential local newspaper covers climate change.

The following literature review will first discuss the theoretical framing of this project and then highlight some of the empirical findings of previous media research.

### **Climate Change Coverage and Framing**

First utilized in analyzing social movements, the concept of framing has since been applied to various topics (Benford and Snow 2000). In particular, media coverage is often analyzed using framing approaches. Framing utilizes an interpretive/constructionist theoretical grounding because it assumes that events, ideas, and phenomena will be perceived differently by various groups and that framing is a form of understanding reality (Schäfer and O’Neill 2017). Similarly, Anderson (2009:174) describes the culturalism approach as “concerned with how cultural norms or ‘givens’ are embedded within media coverage”; this approach often uses the concept of framing to portray how these ideas are organized and presented. Furthermore, Schäfer and O’Neill (2017:3) explain that one “basic assumption [of framing approaches] is that media—due to their limited carrying capacity, their working routines, and their ideological positions—must always select aspects of reality for coverage; that, accordingly, they frame many issues in certain (fairly static) ways; and that therefore media framing holds particular power at the societal level.”

Analyses of climate change coverage often utilize framing theories. Schäfer and O'Neill (2017) note that although framing approaches have become prevalent in climate change media studies, no one approach or paradigm is agreed upon. Previous research of framing in climate change coverage has identified a broad and contradictory array of frames (Anderson 2009). Some of the different types of frames used in analysis include formal-stylistic frames that consider the structure of coverage, generic frames that are "content-related but not issue-specific," and topical frames that are both content-related and issue-specific; more research has focused on topical frames than generic frames (Schäfer and O'Neill 2017:6). Research design may include both inductive and deductive coding for frames used. I will discuss research on climate change framing in more detail in later sections.

### **Media Coverage and Emotion**

A majority of emotion research has focused on the individual level, rather than a larger social context (Kusenbach and Loseke 2013). Kusenbach and Loseke (2013:22) advocate for "re-centering attention from the individual to the social and cultural." Similarly, Illouz, Gilon, and Shachak (2014:221) broadly note that, "culture provides the framework for the labeling, classification, categorization and interpretation of emotions, and social norms regulate and form their expression and even their experience." Kusenbach and Loseke (2013:22) offer the concept of "cultural meaning systems[:] more-or-less widely shared systems of ideas composed of symbolic and emotion codes [which are understandings of how emotions should be experienced and expressed]," as a way to explore how emotions can be broadly experienced. They also note that authors and audiences both play a role in shaping and interpreting narratives.

In journalism, emotion has gradually become an acceptable and desirable part of storytelling, in contrast to earlier practices of “objectivity” (Schmidt 2021). Although emotion has always been present in reporting, journalism and communication studies have recently shown increased interest in explicitly considering emotion (Wahl-Jorgensen 2020; Wahl-Jorgensen and Pantti 2021). This shift is also seen within research on climate change reporting specifically (Chapman, Lickel, and Markowitz 2017). Wahl-Jorgensen and Pantti (2021:1148) further note that, “the historical scarcity of research on emotion in journalism studies can, in large part, be attributed to journalism’s allegiance to the model of liberal democracy, and the associated ideal of objectivity and focus on rational communication. Emotional journalism has been seen as a threat to the standards and normative ideals of journalism...This binary opposition between rationality and emotionality has obscured the fact that journalism has always been emotional, given its central goals of capturing attention, connecting with the audience and creating engaging experiences.” Chapman et al. (2017:850) argue that, “rather than treat emotion as a lever or switch to be directly calibrated and pulled for a desired effect, the climate change communication community should adopt a more nuanced, evidence-based understanding of the multiple and sometimes counterintuitive ways that emotion, communication and issue engagement are intertwined.” They also point out the difference between immediate versus long-term emotional responses to reporting and how audience reactions can shift over time.

### **Ideology, Hegemony, Critical Discourse, and Audiences**

Ideological hegemony refers to how hegemonic power is upheld through “common sense” ideologies presented by the media (Maesele and Pepermans 2017). Cassar (2013:333) argues that it is “important to look at which specific ideologies are chosen and whose interest

these ideologies promote...access to the means by which ideas are disseminated is the result of power structures and therefore some groups are in a better position to disseminate their ideological beliefs.” Similarly, Ewick and Silbey (1995:212) explain that, “the structure, the content, and the performance of stories as they are defined and regulated within social settings often articulate and reproduce existing ideologies and hegemonic relations of power and inequality.” Related to this, critical discourse analysis examines the relationship between discourse and power, as well as the ways in which discourse impacts ideology (Mumby 2004). For example, political context is an element of power that shapes media ideology. Maesele and Pepermans (2017:5) observe that “a variety of studies have shown that news coverage tends to follow and reflect the political agenda on climate change rather than the other way around.”

The possibility of effecting social change is another key point of ideology, hegemony, and critical discourse literature (Mumby 2004). For example, Illouz et al. (2014:227) explains the relationship between emotion and power structures, noting, “as [emotion] is understood in the context of power relations, it enables [us] to form new ways of resistance to hegemony or emergence and acceptance of new ideologies...on the one hand, emotions are a result of the whole of social order and symbolic structure, but on the other hand, as they are a reflexive account for these circumstances themselves, emotions encapsulate a possibility for social and cultural changes” (Illouz et al. 2014:227). Ewick and Silbey (1995) similarly argue that narratives have the potential to be not only hegemonic but also subversive.

Finally, the relationship between discourse and audience is another key element. For example, Maesele and Pepermans (2017) refer to this as “citizen decoding,” or how the audience interprets media coverage, such as by forming conceptions that reinforce their existing ideological standpoint and group membership. Some research characterizes audience

interpretation as being a combination of influence from the media's ideology and personal autonomy in making sense of the coverage (Cassar 2013). Adding to this, Anderson (2015:380) argues that the "information deficit" model, or the idea that "simply providing more and better information will fix the problem," is an inadequate understanding of the relationship between coverage and audiences.

### **The Anthropocene**

Another strand of research relevant to climate change and critical discourse is the concept of the Anthropocene and its criticisms. The Anthropocene is a term used to highlight the human-caused nature of climate change and to emphasize how our current era is a time of unprecedented damage caused by human activity (Schlosberg 2019; Sommer and Hargrove 2020). This framing is useful in underscoring how climate change is not a naturally-occurring phenomenon but rather is humanmade, as well as how environmental destruction is at a high point in human history. However, some scholars offer serious criticisms of the term. Because the Anthropocene provides no nuance as to *which* humans' activity causes climate change, it implies equal responsibility for and impact from climate change across different populations and countries (Schlosberg 2019; Sommer and Hargrove 2020). Sommer and Hargrove (2020:264) point out that "the way the Anthropocene is framed, with humanity's actions as the cause, erases inequality, which is convenient for the hegemonic powers and ideologies that are responsible for the majority of the environmental damage." Similarly, Schlosberg (2019) notes that discussions of the Anthropocene largely ignore issues of environmental justice. In light of these limitations, a number of alternative terms have been proposed, such as the Capitalocene, which highlights the relationship between environmental destruction, inequalities, and capitalism (Moore 2016:6;

Sommer and Hargrove 2020). As Moore (2016:6) puts it, the Capitalocene “signifies capitalism as a way of organizing nature—as a multispecies, situated, capitalist world-ecology.”

## **Media Coverage**

Having discussed the theoretical literature underpinning my study, I will next describe empirical media research. Previous research has explored media coverage of climate change in a variety of ways, including the content itself, the impact of the structure of the media organization, and the influence coverage can have on policy. For example, the political economy approach to media analysis focuses on who owns and funds the media and how this impacts coverage, in ways that include direct interference and self-censorship by journalists (Anderson 2009). As another example, Bowden, Nyberg, and Wright (2021) examined both the content of a newspaper and how the local community interacted with the paper, including how the coverage influenced local policy decisions. The following review will highlight several key themes relevant to the present study.

## **Common Themes in Climate Change Coverage**

Previous research has identified a wide variety of themes in climate change media coverage. Houston, Pfefferbaum, and Rosenholtz (2012) found that the most common frames in natural disaster reporting included destruction, human interest, politics, and economics. They also found that most stories focused on the state or regional level. Pinto, Myrick, and Xie (2020) compared national and local reporting of a hurricane and found that both used government and individual responsibility frames; national news also included economic impact frames, while local news used health risk frames. In their study of sea level rise coverage, Bowden et al. (2021)

found that the key issue the newspaper covered was the impact sea level rise would have on properties and their owners, and this was covered in sensationalistic ways. In their study of a Miami newspaper, Jacobson et al. (2019) found that coverage was driven by events and was most often local in scope; when commenting on national events, coverage often added a local angle or related it back to Miami.

## **Time**

Previous research has also considered the factor of time, such as how climate change coverage fluctuates over a period of time and how it has generally increased over time. Jacobson et al. (2019) found that climate change coverage in Miami has increased in recent years and peaks during the annual high tide season. Lyytimäki et al. (2020:9) similarly found that Finnish news coverage increased over time, with peaks around the global events of Conference of the Parties climate change meetings, and they note that “much of the fluctuation in our sample was related to so-called calendar journalism, i.e., news topics that are regularly occurring.” Current events can also impact coverage. Lyytimäki et al. (2020) found that when the climate strike movement led by Greta Thunberg gained attention, coverage became more moral in content, in contrast to earlier coverage that was technocratic, science-based, and economic. Houston et al. (2012) found that natural disasters were covered for an average of one year, which is shorter than the time period for other non-disaster events. In addition, the majority of coverage occurred in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, and the type of frames used changed over time. For example, in coverage published longer after the disaster occurred, political and human-interest frames were most common (Houston et al. 2012).

## **Newspaper Section**

Another factor included in media analyses is newspaper section. For example, Lyytimäki et al. (2020) discovered that climate change was covered not only in environmental reporting but also in other sections of the newspaper. Lyytimäki et al. (2020:9) explain, “sections focusing on lifestyle issues mentioned climate change typically as a side topic of consumer choices. This involved an underlying tension between environmental effects and consumer behavior.” Jacobson et al. (2019:65) found that coverage of climate change occurred more frequently in opinion and editorial pieces, and they raise an important point about the ramifications of this, noting “coverage that predominantly paints climate change impacts as an opinion, rather than hard news fact, may unintentionally buttress the false claims of climate science deniers... At the same time, it represents a strong institutional endorsement of the issue as significant and impactful for local communities, and a platform for the news organization’s call to action for elected officials to take action to ameliorate the impacts for local communities.”

## **Journalistic Practices**

Finally, journalistic practices are another key factor that influences how climate change is covered. For example, these practices include focusing on dramatic, time-sensitive events. Related to this is the concept of the “tyranny of the news peg,” or how news stories must report something new to justify coverage; this makes it difficult to cover a slow, ongoing process like climate change (Jacobson et al. 2019:58). Other practices include covering “both sides” and relying on information from authoritative, institutional sources (Anderson 2009; Maesele and Pepermans 2017). Newspapers also have ideological cultures, meaning that “media organizations and their audiences could be characterized as ‘communities of ideas, values and preferences.’

This refers to how the latter are broadly shared among the leading journalists of a news organization and their audiences, although without suggesting that these are internalized in any fixed or uniform way” (Maesele and Pepermans 2017:6). Maesele and Pepermans (2017:4) also note that, “the inclination of journalists to personalize climate stories as driven by individuals rather than group dynamics or social processes has also been criticized for de-emphasizing issues of power, context, and process and for reducing fundamental ideological disagreements to pitched battles between personalities.” Finally, Wahl-Jorgensen (2013) notes that journalism often outsources emotion work and limits emotion expression to the anecdotes and personal story-telling that sources provide.

### **Purpose of the Project**

As the above literature review demonstrates, media and communications research often utilizes framing approaches, considers ideology and hegemony, and is beginning to seriously examine emotion. Although each of these elements is key to understanding media coverage, research rarely addresses all of them together. Thus, this project seeks to draw from and synthesize these approaches in analyzing newspaper coverage of climate change. Specifically, this project examines the *Tampa Bay Times*, a well-respected, successful local newspaper for an area already vulnerable to the effects of climate change. This project also addresses several gaps in the literature, including the tendency for research to focus on national-level media and to neglect analyses of emotion in journalism. The research questions that guide this project are outlined in the next section.

## CHAPTER TWO: METHODS

### Research Questions

This project seeks to answer the following research questions: What types of frames are used in climate change coverage in the *Tampa Bay Times*? What types of appeals to and uses of emotion are most common and which are absent? Do the frames and emotion use differ by newspaper section, and if so, how?

To answer these research questions, I conducted textual analysis of articles from the *Tampa Bay Times*. Specifically, I took samples from two sections of the newspaper – the specialized Florida in Focus: Climate Change section and the general Environment section – and analyzed each sample individually. Then, I compared the two samples to explore whether and how the content and frames of each differ.

### Sample

I took two samples of articles from the *Tampa Bay Times* website, [tampabay.com](http://tampabay.com), which has a weekly readership of 666,700 (Tampa Bay Times 2021). First, I gathered all 29 articles in a special section that ran from 2019 through early 2021, titled Florida in Focus: Climate Change. The homepage for this section describes the project, stating “a network of newsrooms across the state, including the *Tampa Bay Times*, have banded together to track the impacts of climate change.” To compare with this climate change-specific section, I took a second sample of 29 articles from the broader Environment section of the paper. I only selected articles that explicitly

refer to climate change: if an article did not mention climate change or global warming, or if it referred to these terms only once or in passing, the article was not included in my sample.

Regarding time period, I sought to capture at least one calendar year, to account for annual cycles in reporting due to hurricane season and other major events. I let the time span of the Climate Change section guide my selection of the Environment section sample. The Climate Change section was published between July 2019 and February 2021, a span of 19 months. This time period allowed me to see whether and how coverage changed once the Covid-19 pandemic began. By taking the Environment section sample from the same period of time, I held the broader context of the pandemic and other major events constant between the two samples. Each month, the Environment section featured five to ten articles that referenced climate change, or about 28% of the total articles in the section. Thus, there were approximately 150 relevant articles in the Environment section during this time period. I selected roughly every fifth article to create a sample of 29 articles. Almost all of the Climate Change section articles were also included in the Environment section, so when my sampling landed on an overlapping article, I skipped to the next article to create an Environment sample of 29 unique articles.

## **Research Technique**

I conducted textual analysis of the articles, completing two rounds of coding. In the first round, I read all the articles and identified key themes that emerged. In the second round, I reread approximately half of the articles that I found to be most representative of those themes and created additional notes to inform a deeper analysis. I conducted both deductive coding (using a predetermined list of themes and categories) and inductive coding (allowing other themes to emerge).

**Ethics**

My research utilizes existing, publicly available data and does not include human subjects or confidential information.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

In my findings, I describe how frames are used in climate change coverage in the *Tampa Bay Times*. Specifically, I identify four frames or sets of frames: climate change is real, the Anthropocene vs. its alternatives, small picture vs. big picture, and business as usual vs. calls for action. In addition, I illustrate how emotion is evoked in that coverage. Throughout this chapter, I also explain the contradictions present within my results. In Chapter 4, the discussion section, I will explain how these findings, and the contradictions within them, may be understood through recognizing that the *Tampa Bay Times* is operating within a business model that seeks to appeal to a wide audience.

### **Climate Change is Real**

The first frame I identify is “climate change is real.” The articles in my samples consistently report on climate change and its impacts as a fact. For example, an Environment section article states with unequivocal language that “the overall trend of glacier retreat around the world is due to both warming air and warming oceans” (Florida Climate Reporting Network 2019; E7/30/19). Another Environment section article explains that “the [farming] industry is already feeling the effects of climate change, in fluctuating rainfall, higher temperatures and stronger storms” (Harris 2019; E8/20/19). Both of these quotes present the effects of climate change as established fact. Article titles also often include the phrase “climate change,” which suggests that reporting is confident discussing this issue with clear terminology. In addition, the articles frame climate change as not only real but also a serious issue. For instance, a Climate

Change section article underscores the seriousness of the problem, noting that “climate change has abruptly shifted in the public consciousness from a future threat to **a present danger**” (Kusnetz 2019; CC10/18/19). Another Climate Change section article emphasizes the damaging impact of climate change: “images of **devastating** storm damage and droughts around the world this year have been drawing attention to the **risks** of global warming” (Kusnetz 2019; CC9/10/19).

I also find that some articles not only acknowledge climate change as a scientific fact but also include brief explanations of the mechanics of climate change and its causes; however, this occurs much less frequently. For example, an Environment section article explains that “sea level rise will be caused by climate change...greenhouse gas emissions from the burning of fossil fuels trap heat in the atmosphere, gradually warming the globe. That warming causes water particles themselves to expand, and polar land ice to melt. Both phenomena lead to sea level rise” (Wilson 2019; E10/24/19). Overall, the frame of “climate change as real and serious” was presented consistently throughout my samples, in contrast to the contradictions I identify in the rest of my results.

### **The Anthropocene vs. its Alternatives**

The second framing I find is the use of an Anthropocene frame versus a critical or justice-focused frame. By Anthropocene, I refer to the perspective that claims climate change is human-caused but offers no further nuance. This suggests equal responsibility for and impact from climate change across different populations and countries. I find this framing in my samples, with some articles using a general “we” when discussing climate change. One Environment section article explains climate change using this language: “consider the world’s environment

like an engine: ‘We have injected more energy into the system because we have trapped more heat into the atmosphere’” (Borenstein 2020; E9/10/20). Similarly, another Environment section article quotes President Biden, who says “‘we can’t wait any longer’ to address the climate crisis” (Associated Press 2021; E1/27/21). And a Climate Change section article also uses the general “we” frequently, such as in the statements, “we can no longer afford to cast nature to the side” and “never have the consequences of our misuse and abuse of the natural world been more clear’ (Larson and Borenstein 2020; CC9/15/20). In each case, the language of “our” and “we” obscures responsibility and frames climate change as a problem which “humans” in general have caused. This language of diffused responsibility may also discourage readers from taking action.

I also find some cases of mixed responsibility framing. For example, an Environment section article about farming and climate change quotes an agricultural leader as saying, “‘we [the agriculture industry] acknowledge we may be part of the problem — we’re not all of the problem — but we can be part of the solution’” (Harris 2019; E8/20/19). In addition, the article notes, “a newly released report from the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change revealed that agriculture, food production and deforestation produce about 23 percent of all human-induced greenhouse gas emissions. Beef, in particular, was singled out for its outsized carbon footprint compared to other livestock and agriculture. **‘It’s kind of a Catch-22. You have to feed people, but you’re causing problems’**” (Harris 2019; E8/20/19). This article both covers the environmental impact of agriculture and takes pains to present the farmers’ perspective, leading to a mixed portrayal of responsibility for the audience. As another example, an Environment section article covers the U.S. exiting the Paris Agreement, explaining that it “further isolates the United States in the world **but has no immediate impact on international efforts to curb global warming**” (Jordans 2020; E11/4/20). Later it adds, “The United States is

the world's second biggest emitter after China of heat-trapping gases such as carbon dioxide and **its contribution to cutting emissions is seen as important, but it is not alone in the effort.**"

Yet the article ends by noting, "With the United States outside the pact, **it will be harder for the rest of the world to reach the agreed goals.**" This varied framing of the relative importance of the United States' efforts, and how much responsibility it should bear on a global level, has a confusing effect. The audience may come to differing conclusions about how important global accountability is.

Next, I find that some articles made brief mentions of critical or justice-focused approaches to climate change. For example, a Climate Change section article that discusses many examples and ideas for adaptation funding notes that, "one of the **most controversial ideas, which will surely be met with pushback** from politicians and industry, comes from activists, including the Miami Climate Alliance, who have been pushing for energy companies to foot the bill in a campaign called Pay Up Climate Polluters. Advocates say the oil and gas companies continue to pump out emissions they know cause climate change, and that the companies should pay for the cost of adapting to a warming world" (Harris 2019; CC7/11/19). Later this article also explains that a group "is advocating for a Florida Future Fund that would do just that, with a funding emphasis on low-income areas and communities of color. **So far, the effort hasn't gotten much traction.**" While the article features justice-based ideas, it also uses qualifying language in describing them, suggesting that they may not be feasible or worth serious consideration. As another example of a brief mention, a Climate Change section article about a UN report on biodiversity notes, "'the biodiversity hotspots tend to be in poorer countries,' and wealthy countries need to be willing to provide financial or practical support to help other nations" (Larson and Borenstein 2020; CC9/15/20). Again, while this is a mention of justice and

unequal resources, the article devotes only one sentence to the topic, which may not capture the audiences' attention.

I also find examples of articles that use a critical or justice-focus framing consistently and substantially. For example, a Climate Change section article discussing climate adaptation opens by saying, “images of devastating storm damage and droughts around the world this year have been drawing attention to the risks of global warming, particularly to the world’s poorest people” (Kusnetz 2019; CC9/10/19). Later, this article adds, “the report warns of a ‘climate apartheid,’ in which wealthy people can pay to protect themselves from rising seas and food shocks while the rest of the world suffers.” This coverage explicitly highlights the unequal impacts of climate change. Another example is an Environment section article that covers youth climate activists, explaining that “the movement [is] taking aim at the fossil fuel industry” (Associated Press 2020; E4/20/20). It also notes that “[Ecuador’s indigenous people’s] fight has been against a government that they believe has given their land too freely to mining and oil companies” and quotes a youth activist who says, “it’s too late for incremental change.” This article includes a range of critical opinions about the fossil fuel industry, highlighting the voices of activists to do so. As a final example, one Climate Change section article discusses hurricanes and poverty in the Bahamas, noting that Hurricane Dorian’s “devastation in the Bahamas highlights a risk public health experts have long warned about: **climate change will hit the most vulnerable populations hardest**, particularly the poor, but also the elderly and women, who often are responsible for caring for others” (McKenna 2019; CC9/12/19). It also points out that “small island nations in the region are becoming increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change that they did little to cause...’this is a huge issue of **climate justice**.’” Again, this article consistently portrays this story with a justice-focused lens.

Finally, I note some examples of a critical or justice frame being both used and undermined. For example, an Environment section article discussing 2020 Democratic presidential candidates' climate change policies noted the justice elements of some plans. Sanders' plan involved "integrating social justice issues into the fight against climate change," Warren's proposal included "mak[ing] renewable energy more accessible to tribal communities," and Klobuchar's proposal included a "carbon pricing system that isn't regressive, meaning it won't disproportionately impact Americans with lower incomes" (Austin 2020; E1/16/20). However, because each candidate's plan was covered without comment, justice-focused and justice-absent plans were portrayed as equally valid. Another example is in an Environment section article that covered Extinction Rebellion protests. The article quoted activists, who made statements such as "we all stand against a system that's destroying the planet and mankind and we're looking to change that because we can't just have little changes, we want a real big change... **we don't want reforms in fact, we want a revolution,**" and "the fossil fuel industry is directly connected to the financial interests of Wall Street. **'A lot of blood has been spilled by the decisions of the powerful** and the status quo and the toxic system that we live in'" (Associated Press 2019; E10/7/19). The article devotes significant space to highlighting the highly critical perspectives of the activists and describing their protests. However, in the closing lines, the article quotes Merkel's chief of staff: "'we all share an interest in climate protection, and the Paris climate targets are our standard in this... If you demonstrate against or for that, that is OK. But if you announce **dangerous interventions** in road traffic or things like this, **of course that is just not on.**' He **dismissed the idea of declaring a 'climate emergency,**' saying that the German constitution doesn't provide for such a thing and it doesn't translate into 'concrete

action.”” The article undermines the efficacy of its critical framing by leaving the reader with a negative perspective on the protests.

### **Small Picture vs. Big Picture**

The third framing I will discuss is small-picture/short-term thinking versus big-picture/long-term thinking. I find many instances of each frame, which again leads to contradictory messaging overall. First, some articles framed climate change and its effects as an individual or small-picture issue. For example, one Climate Change section article discusses the impacts of sea level rise on property value; with the title, “**your** Florida coastal home could lose 15% of its value by 2030 due to sea rise,” it primes the reader to consider how this issue will impact them personally (Harris 2020; CC1/17/20). Another Environment section article mentions, “recognizing how younger voters such as these Hillsborough [high school] seniors view the issue, Republican leaders are beginning to develop initiatives aimed at addressing climate change. They include planting trees, reducing plastic and encouraging clean energy” (Joyce 2020; E5/20/20). These initiatives, presented without comment, reflect small-scale and perhaps individualized solutions. This article also ends with the closing quote, “if all of us just took certain measures, surely we could make a difference for everyone,” emphasizing an “individual action” approach to climate change.

In addition, some articles present both small- and big-picture approaches, often framing them as equally valid options. For example, one Climate Change section article discusses funding for climate adaptation, highlighting the importance of “not just planning for a large investment [but also] the small investments we make every day” (Harris 2019; CC7/11/19). Another Climate Change section article introduces its human-interest story with the subheading,

“climate-action heroes from around the state who are doing their part — **large or small** — to take action” (Spear 2019; CC9/23/19 #1). This introduction also upholds an individualized response to climate change. An Environment section article covered the 2020 Democratic presidential candidates’ climate policies. For example, it noted that, “among his plan’s ambitious targets, Sanders wants the nation to power its electricity and transportation sectors by 100% renewable energy by 2030 and decarbonize the economy by 2050” (Austin 2020; E1/16/20). Most, but not all, of the candidates included specific timelines for their goals, with some more ambitious than others, and the article covers the policies of each equally and neutrally. This leaves it up to the audience to judge to what degree planning should be long-term. Another Climate Change section article explains how Tampa is being proactive in planning for flooding: “the good news is that we’re talking about it, it’s ahead, we have some time to plan for it. And it looks like between the state and the federal government and the city, that the resources are being allocated to include these impacts and our future projects” (Frago 2020; CC3/16/20). Yet this article also includes contradiction: it begins by noting that “Tampa has been plagued by flooding for decades,” then later states that the city “has three decades to find a fix.” This introduces confusion into the time-scale of the issue. Finally, one Climate Change section article portrays a small town’s long-term, “**comprehensive plan to address all aspects of climate change**, from emissions to building codes to infrastructure” (Harris 2019; CC12/27/19). The article also approvingly notes that, “Surfside’s **forward-thinking** in setting up a way to help future residents long before the money is actually needed.” However, Surfside is described as a very small, wealthy town, which may lead the audience to interpret its approach as not applicable or feasible for other settings.

Finally, some articles highlight the limitations of small-scale solutions and favorably present big-picture thinking. For example, one Climate Change section article notes that “the problem with locally generated money...is ‘it’ll be gone before we know it.’ That’s why elected officials in South Florida are eager to tap federal funds” (Harris 2019; CC7/11/19). Here, the article draws attention to the limits of local solutions. Another Climate Change section article devotes much space to highlighting long-term thinking. For example, it quotes a UN commission member who notes, “‘either we delay and pay or we plan and prosper,’” as well as a policy analyst who says, “‘we tend not to invest in resilience and climate adaptation efforts until after a disaster has happened, until a lot of the damage has been done,’ ...despite the well-documented fact that it is far cheaper to protect against a disaster than it is to rebuild after it occurs” (Kusnetz 2019; CC9/10/19). These quotes highlight the importance of long-term planning.

### **Business as Usual vs. Calls for Action**

The fourth framing I identify is a business-as-usual frame vs a calls-for-action (and creative ideas) frame. Again, the use of multiple frames among and within the articles in my samples creates a contradictory message for the audience. First, I find a framing that promotes a business-as-usual perspective on climate change. For example, a Climate Change section article describes how “the Department of Environmental Protection is crafting a rule that will lay out a standard for considering sea level rise before starting construction on **some** publicly funded projects along the coast,” and it stresses that “**the rule will not force** agencies, cities or counties to pursue whatever is deemed the safest route” (Sampson 2021; CC2/18/21). Here, although some adaptation measures are occurring, their impact is limited and they do not present a significant challenge to doing business as usual. An Environment section article that covers

building codes for sea level rise is more critical of the business-as-usual approach, noting that “as of 2019, Florida’s massive, nationally renowned statewide building code **still doesn’t have much to say** about how to build with climate change in mind” (Harris 2019; E11/12/19). It also points out that “when you give a developer a minimum, **typically they go with the minimum.**” However, the article undercuts this critical perspective somewhat by also including an alternate perspective: “homebuilders across the country have fought local governments trying to add more freeboard, saying **it will drive up prices** and exacerbate affordable housing issues... higher freeboard upsets the profit margins for homebuilders, who are in the **business of transactions, not long-term risk.**” By also presenting a profit-driven perspective on sea level rise measures, the article suggests that the business-as-usual approach also has merit. Another example of legitimizing the business-as-usual perspective occurs in a Climate Change section article which lists 14 examples of “climate action heroes” that reflect a variety of positions and approaches. One of these examples is a businessman who “is a self-taught warrior in climate adaptation. That term, for fighting the impacts of global warming, is not one the politically conservative businessman ever mentions. **He is simply determined to save his business and employees' livelihoods from flooding**” (Spear 2019; CC9/23/19 #1). Here, a climate hero can be someone who does not acknowledge the reality of climate change but simply does whatever adaptive work is required to maintain his business.

Closely related to the theme of business as usual, many articles also utilize a cost-benefit-analysis frame, which posits that climate change action must meet a threshold of financial gain or necessity before being considered. For example, one Climate Change section article details the benefits of adaptation, noting, “investing in adaptation measures, such as early warning systems and resilient infrastructure, would not only avoid tremendous human suffering and economic

losses, **it would bring benefits that would outweigh the costs nearly 4 to 1,**” and “investments [in adaptation] can lead to **economic growth** by fostering innovation and providing greater security” (Kusnetz 2019; CC9/10/19). This framing centers economic savings as an appealing and key reason to support climate change action. Another Climate Change section article explains that, “if you think [adaptation] sounds **really expensive**, you’re probably right. Creating a resilient city from scratch isn’t easy. But the silver lining is that **it will save money for residents down the road**” (Frago 2020; CC3/16/20). Again, this article makes the case for climate action based on the savings it will provide, which neglects other benefits to building resilient cities. Finally, another Climate Change section article points out that, “repairing nature is **expensive** and convincing policy-makers can be complicated... To help win support, [a coastal program manager] has adopted a **business approach** and is drafting a **cost-benefit analysis**” (Staletovich 2020: CC1/20/20). Here, the cost-benefit approach is framed as a practical way to win support for a policy, which points to the pervasiveness of this perspective.

In contrast to the frame of business as usual, or only acting when it is economically beneficial to do so, I also identify examples of a call-for-action frame. For example, a Climate Change section article about sea level rise adaptation quotes an urban planning commissioner who says, “I think we have got to take the first step of trying to identify it **rather than sitting back, and saying, ‘well, we’ll worry about it later.’** Let’s take it head on and take a look...**what can we do to actually start moving forward?**” (Frago 2020; CC3/16/20). This quote highlights the importance of proactive action beyond the minimum for maintaining business as usual. Another Climate Change section article discusses the adaptive actions of a small town. In highlighting the experiences of one resident, the article explains that the town’s “staff told her that even if she raised her sea wall 2 extra feet, she would only buy herself around

seven years before the floodwaters started licking at her door” (Harris 2019; CC12/27/19). This resident’s story emphasizes that even moderate adaptation measures will not be enough. The article also highlights the comprehensive nature of the town’s planning: “despite its tiny footprint, the town has begun to address the looming impact of climate change by encouraging solar, requiring higher floor elevations in new buildings and committing to low emission buses. This month, Surfside’s commission unanimously approved a **climate crisis action plan. It calls for a laundry list of climate measures**, like taking an inventory of the city’s emissions, updating a stormwater master plan and developing a retreat strategy.” The article also quotes a resilience specialist who notes that the town’s approach seems to be unique, which suggests that this proactive approach and the call for action that this town is heeding is far outside the norm of climate change responses. An Environment section article covers youth climate activists’ calls for action: “these activists are planning livestreams and webinars to **keep the issue of climate front and center** on the world stage and in the U.S. presidential race” and are creating “a public demonstration sufficiently robust to **shake the political establishment out of their lethargy**” (Associated Press 2020; E4/20/20). This article positively frames these calls for action as reflecting the determination of young activists.

Finally, I also find examples of creative ideas for action, but they are often framed ambiguously or with qualifying language. One Climate Change section article presents a creative idea positively, explaining, “most experts agree the region will have to get more creative. That could include a concept like insuring coral reefs that help protect the coastline from storm surge and **generate tourism money**” (Harris 2019; CC7/11/19). However, perhaps this coverage is positive because it also appeals to an economic benefit framing. Indeed, in the same article, another creative idea is presented much more dubiously: “one of the **most controversial ideas**,

which will **surely be met with pushback** from politicians and industry, comes from activists, including the Miami Climate Alliance, who have been pushing for energy companies to foot the bill in a campaign called Pay Up Climate Polluters.” Another Climate Change section article covers a Miami Beach proposal for adaptation, explaining that “a recent proposal by a city-paid consultant offered a **bold new idea** in the war against climate change, one that would **test the limits of just how much residents are willing to give up to adapt**: turn the popular city-owned golf course into a wetland “eco-district” (Harris 2019; CC9/23/19 #2). The article continues, “it’s a **radical idea that would face clear hurdles** with the dominant tourism and real estate industries, but also presents an opportunity for the city to take a groundbreaking step toward the ‘living with water’ strategy officials have been talking about for years.” This is an example of an entire article devoted to covering a creative idea, yet it is framed with qualifying language that draws attention to residential sacrifice and the difficulties of its implementation. Perhaps this reflects the *Tampa Bay Times* “testing out” this frame on their readers.

### **Use of Emotion**

Finally, I will describe how emotion is utilized in the *Tampa Bay Times*’ climate change coverage. First, some articles include emotional language and content because they cover activists’ perspectives and quotes. For example, an Environment section article explains, “the demonstrations were sparked by Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg, with **many participants echoing the anger she expressed to world leaders... fears about the impact of global warming on younger generations** drew fresh protests” (Associated Press 2019; E9/27/19). Another Environment section article describes how a Ugandan youth activist “is among those **who were first inspired by local issues,**” such as when he “met with **families who had lost**

**their homes** in mudslides caused by torrential rainfall”; it also quotes an indigenous Ecuadorian activist, who says, “the energy I remember from my elders growing up...was that **my community was always very worried**” (Associated Press 2020; E4/20/20). In both cases, while the reporting is neutral in tone, it devotes space to covering the activists’ emotions and motivations. A final example is a Climate Change section article that describes a series of melting wax sculptures intended to educate about climate change. The article quotes the artist who notes, “I like creating things that people can be a part of and **form this visceral link**...You can see stats (about climate change) all day long, **but this grabs you. It’s powerful**” (Duffy and Sampson 2020; CC9/18/20). This quote highlights the importance of emotion in climate change communication. Interestingly, the article also reassures the audience that, “if distorted images come to mind when thinking about the melting sculptures, **don’t worry: They won’t melt in a grotesque way**. There are internal structures made of a composite material that will remain.” By clarifying that a climate art piece will not become unpleasant, the article suggests there may be limits to the type or intensity of emotion that is allowed in such communications.

Second, I find that emotion is sometimes evoked when describing natural disasters and the impacts of climate change. For example, a Climate Change section article uses the word “devastation” multiple times, along with “dire” and “catastrophe,” in order to describe the destruction Hurricane Dorian caused in the Bahamas (McKenna 2019; CC9/12/19). The article also highlights human suffering, such as by quoting a local professor who notes, “we have heard stories of a number of **young children who have basically been ripped from the arms of their mothers** through storm surges or trying to evacuate and have died.” As another example, one Climate Change section article relies heavily on emotion in portraying a human-interest story about a resident of Surfside, a small town, relocating due to sea level rise. The article quotes the

resident, who says “I don’t look out the windows anymore because **I’m afraid I’ll see flooding**” (Harris 2019; CC12/27/19). The article explains, “her only choice, she said, is to sell the home she’s lived in for 53 years, **the one she had planned to die in...**’I’m really being squeezed out of my little nest,’ she said. **‘I would give anything to stay.’**” In these two examples, the language and descriptions may evoke emotions of sympathy in the reader.

Third, I also find many examples of contradictory uses of emotion. For example, the “climate heroes” article evokes a range of emotions. The article highlights a geology professor whose “message has been unwavering. He has addressed every government leader, group and reporter possible with **an unflinching demeanor and chilling outlook...**enormously costly efforts to elevate sea walls, streets and stormwater systems are distracting people from the reality that significant portions of coastal Florida inexorably will be swallowed by rising seas...[he] knows **his outlook is dark and even terrifying**. But communities need to know they have critical choices, he said” (Spear 2019; CC9/23/19 #1). This message relies on negative emotions that are intended to evoke the grim reality of climate change. The next example in the article quotes Miami’s sustainability director: “**‘We’re trying to change the conversation from ‘we’re all doomed, we’re sinking, we’re not going to be here in 20 years’ to ‘OK, there are a lot of people who are working on this.’**” This example shifts to a more positive framing, seeking to avoid negative emotions and evoke hope. Paired back to back, these two examples create a muddled emotional message overall, which may lead the audience to either experience emotional whiplash or choose the message they prefer and ignore the other. Another example of this is in a Climate Change section article which begins, “Tampa has been **plagued by flooding** for decades...Enter climate change. Rising seas **threaten** to turn a chronic nuisance into a **nightmare** for many areas of the city. **A worst-case scenario?** Conjure up a stormy day and

throw in an additional 1 1/2 feet of water. For **bonus scare-points**, add a King Tide into the city's stormwater system" (Frago 2020; CC3/16/20). These opening lines are filled with emotional language that may induce fear. However, the article then adds, "But **it's not all doom and gloom**. The city has three decades to find a fix." After the effective use of emotion in the introduction, the article then assures the reader that they do not need to focus on negative emotions after all, a claim that may ring hollow. A final example of contradictory emotional messaging occurs in an Environment section article that details the numerous natural disasters of 2020, such as how "a record amount of California is **burning**, spurred by a nearly 20-year mega-drought...the Atlantic's 16th and 17th named tropical storms are **swirling**, a record number for this time of year. Powerful Typhoon Haishen **lashed** Japan and the Korean Peninsula this week...Colorado went through a **weather whiplash** of 90-degree heat to snow this week" (Borenstein 2020; E9/10/20). This evocative language that highlights the frightening destruction and power of natural disasters is followed by quotes from climate scientists. For example, one says, "It's going to get **A LOT worse**'...I say that with emphasis because it does challenge the imagination. And that's **the scary thing to know** as a climate scientist in 2020...The outlook **could not be any more grim. It's just a horrifying prospect.**" The audience is bombarded with negative emotional descriptions of the impacts of climate change. The article shifts tactics for its ending: "even though the climate will likely get worse, [another climate scientist] is **also optimistic** about what future generations will think when they look back at the wild and dangerous weather of 2020. 'I think we'll look back and we'll see a whole bunch of increasingly crazy years... **I hope we look back and say it got crazy enough that it motivated us to act on** climate change in the United States.'" Although the article ends on a positive note, the majority of its coverage evokes grim emotions.

Finally, I was struck by the frequent lack of emotion in the articles of my samples. For example, the human-interest story about the Surfside resident relocating that I described above is an exception, not the norm, in terms of how often articles use and evoke emotion to cover climate change. Many of the descriptions of climate science, policy, adaptation, and more – as evidenced by the examples I analyzed in the previous sections – are devoid of emotional language. Rather, they use technical, economic, fact-based framings and language to convey their subject matter. Indeed, some of this coverage may be interpreted as an intentional sanitization or absence of emotion.

### **Comparing the Two Samples**

As demonstrated by the examples I cite throughout my findings, I did not note significant differences in framing or emotion use between the Climate Change section sample and the Environment section sample. This is surprising, as I expected to find differences in coverage between a range-of-topics section versus a subject-specific section.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

In my findings, I identify key frames that the articles employ to cover climate change, and I describe how emotion is utilized and evoked in that coverage. Next, I will discuss how these findings may be understood through the interpretive frame of the *Tampa Bay Times* operating within a business model. In addition, I will demonstrate how my findings support and are supported by previous literature.

As mentioned in the introduction, many local newspapers are struggling to survive. The *Tampa Bay Times* has remained successful thus far, but it must work to maintain its subscriptions and readership. In addition, the *Tampa Bay Times* must cater to an audience that likely became more diverse politically after its merger with the conservative-leaning *Tampa Tribune* in 2012; in addition, 20% of the readership live outside Florida (Tampa Bay Times 2022). Indeed, browsing through the *Tampa Bay Times*' Letters to the Editor reveals left-leaning, centrist, and right-leaning perspectives from readers. Thus, one way to remain in business is to appeal to as wide an audience as possible.

My findings reflect the implications of this choice. I argue that appealing to a broad audience leads to a "smorgasbord" approach to climate coverage, in which various and contradictory perspectives and framings are offered as a way to capture the interest of a range of readers. As my findings demonstrate, some articles frame climate change with the concept of the Anthropocene, while others offer more nuanced framings of responsibility. Some articles present big-picture solutions and others cover small-scale action. Some coverage advocates for business

as usual, while other articles frame climate change around calls for action. In each case, this variety among articles offers framings that may appeal to various groups of readers.

Occasionally, articles even offer a smorgasbord of perspectives within one piece, such as the “climate action heroes” article that lists 14 examples of varying attitudes and actions towards climate change. Within these stories, every reader can find something that appeals to them.

Additionally, the fact that both the Climate Change and Environment sections utilize the same smorgasbord-coverage approach suggests that even in the explicitly climate change-focused section, the *Tampa Bay Times* may be attempting to appeal to as wide an audience as possible.

This approach to maintaining a broad readership makes business sense and may be necessary for an age of dwindling local news. However, it is important to also consider the larger implications that smorgasbord coverage presents. When a range of contradictory perspectives on climate change is presented, it may imply that all are equally valid approaches and actions. For example, an urgent, justice-focused approach to climate change is simply one perspective among many in a relativistic sea of coverage. One way to characterize this approach, in connection to previous literature, is that hegemonic and subversive framings are being presented alongside each other and treated equally (Cassar 2013; Ewick and Silbey 1995; Maesele and Pepermans 2017; Mumby 2004). Dominant ideas about climate change and the appropriate ways to respond to it are sometimes upheld and sometimes challenged. In addition, subversive perspectives are often framed ambiguously, as demonstrated by my findings of how activism and creative adaptation ideas are covered. This contradictory coverage may lead readers to pay attention to the framings they prefer and tune out the rest.

Furthermore, this business-model interpretation of my findings complements previous literature about journalistic practices. As other sources have demonstrated, journalistic practices

include favoring current events rather than long-term processes, de-emphasizing issues of power, covering both sides of a topic, and including qualified uses of emotion (Anderson 2009; Jacobson et al. 2019; Maesele and Pepermans 2017; Wahl-Jorgensen 2013). These practices in turn affect which issues are covered and how. Based on my findings, we could expand this list by adding the business-minded practice of “presenting smorgasbord coverage to maintain audiences.”

On another note, in relation to the “both sides” practice, the *Tampa Bay Times*’ consistent use of the “climate change is real” frame is an encouraging finding. It also makes sense in context: although the *Tampa Bay Times*’ audience is wide, it is also largely educated, with 68% having at least some college education (Tampa Bay Times 2021). Thus, it is a sensible choice for their coverage to at a minimum reflect an educated, scientific perspective of climate change and not promote denial. This choice reflects a move away from the “both sides” fallacy that climate change coverage has long included and thus a rejection of an uncritical application of this journalistic practice.

In addition, my findings reflect the trends in journalistic emotion use that previous literature identifies, such as that emotion is beginning to be explicitly embraced in journalism and that emotion works in complex ways with news coverage’s communication and audience engagement (Chapman et al. 2017; Schmidt 2021; Wahl-Jorgensen 2020; Wahl-Jorgensen and Pantti 2021). I identify similar findings in the *Tampa Bay Times* articles studied. Articles evoked emotion in descriptions of natural disasters and through activist quotes but also often undermined an emotional setup or avoided emotional language and descriptions altogether. Overall, the findings suggest that the *Tampa Bay Times* is still finding its footing in how to utilize emotion in its reporting. The articles’ wary use of negative emotions also suggests that the *Tampa Bay*

*Times* may be aware of the power that emotional reporting holds for the reactions it can produce in its readers. Furthermore, the frequent sterilized absence of emotion indicates that emotion is still often viewed as inappropriate for or unrelated to topics of science, business, and “rationality.”

Finally, my findings also hold significance in terms of the impact on the audience and the possibility of social change. As I suggested in the introduction, how the media covers climate change is critical because it affects public opinion and policy (Anderson 2009; Brevini 2016; Tindall et al. 2018). The *Tampa Bay Times* is the largest newspaper in Florida, with reach outside of the state as well, so it is crucial to consider the influence it has on its wide audience when speculating about the future of climate change public opinion. During the time period I studied, the narrative seems to be that the *Tampa Bay Times* presents climate change as a fact and then leaves questions of urgency, responsibility, and timescale up to the reader by presenting an array of perspectives. Perhaps this may be seen as an update to the information deficit model (Anderson 2015). If the original model operated on the assumption that all that readers needed to take climate change seriously was more information, then this new approach suggests that all readers need is a plethora of perspectives on climate change. Yet this smorgasbord approach does not seem likely to encourage action; instead, all it may do is create an information overload in which readers can tune out any and all perspectives that make them uncomfortable.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION**

### **Limitations**

This project has limitations which are important to acknowledge. First, this analysis includes only one local newspaper over one limited time period, so my findings cannot be generalized to local newspapers in general or be used to support broad claims about trends in climate change coverage. Second, the time period of my samples is from 2019 through early 2021, so my findings do not reflect more recent changes or themes in climate coverage. And third, my findings cannot speak to the intentions of the reporters or the interpretations of readers.

### **Directions for Future Research**

My findings indicate several potential directions for future research. First, it would be useful to carry out similar studies focusing on local newspapers around the country, in order to generalize about trends in local climate coverage. Second, I recognize a need to conduct surveys or interviews with reporters and editors to understand their perspectives and intentions regarding framing choices and uses of emotion. Similarly, future research should also examine readers' interpretations of media coverage, with an explicit focus on asking them how they see the coverage being framed, how they interpret emotion, and what emotional responses the coverage invokes in them. Together, these types of studies would help to round out our understanding of the impact of various decisions in media coverage by combining analyses of the texts themselves with the perspectives of authors and audiences.

My work also raises broader questions about the role of media in an era of climate change. What is or should be the relationship between a newspaper and its community? As local media struggles to survive, smorgasbord coverage may be a necessity, but what impacts will this have on readers' political beliefs and participation? This also raises questions about whether it is the media's responsibility to encourage mobilization or action in its audience. Finally, questions of the strengths and limitations of journalistic practices remain. For example, how should media cover urgent problems like climate change while maintaining journalistic standards of "fairness" and "neutrality"? If journalism is capable of rejecting the practice of covering "both sides" of climate change, perhaps this suggests that other journalistic norms can be challenged and improved upon as well. If hegemonic and subversive framings can be presented alongside each other, perhaps further challenges to hegemonic understandings of climate change are possible too.

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## APPENDIX: LIST OF *TAMPA BAY TIMES* ARTICLES CITED IN RESULTS

Note:

CC = Climate Change section

E = Environment section

Article abbreviation	Article title	Article link
CC 7/11/19	Climate Change is Going to Cost Florida a Lot of Money	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/florida-politics/buzz/2019/07/11/climate-change-is-going-to-cost-florida-a-lot-of-money/">https://www.tampabay.com/florida-politics/buzz/2019/07/11/climate-change-is-going-to-cost-florida-a-lot-of-money/</a>
CC 9/10/19	Benefits of Investing in Climate Adaptation Far Outweigh Costs   Global Commission	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2019/09/10/benefits-of-investing-in-climate-adaptation-far-outweigh-costs-global-commission/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2019/09/10/benefits-of-investing-in-climate-adaptation-far-outweigh-costs-global-commission/</a>
CC 9/12/19	What the Hurricane Dorian-Ravaged Bahamas Tells us About Climate Change, Poverty	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2019/09/12/what-the-hurricane-dorian-ravaged-bahamas-tells-us-about-climate-change-poverty/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2019/09/12/what-the-hurricane-dorian-ravaged-bahamas-tells-us-about-climate-change-poverty/</a>
CC 9/23/19 #1	Florida's Climate-Action Heroes: These Men and Women are Doing Their Part	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2019/09/23/floridas-climate-action-heroes-these-men-and-women-are-doing-their-part/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2019/09/23/floridas-climate-action-heroes-these-men-and-women-are-doing-their-part/</a>

CC 9/23/19 #2	Miami Beach has a Bold Idea to Fight Sea Rise: Turn a Golf Course into Wetlands	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2019/09/23/miami-beach-has-a-bold-idea-to-fight-sea-rise-turn-a-golf-course-into-wetlands/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2019/09/23/miami-beach-has-a-bold-idea-to-fight-sea-rise-turn-a-golf-course-into-wetlands/</a>
CC 10/18/19	Exxon Goes on Trial in New York Climate Fraud Case	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2019/10/18/exxon-goes-on-trial-in-new-york-climate-fraud-case/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2019/10/18/exxon-goes-on-trial-in-new-york-climate-fraud-case/</a>
CC 12/27/19	A South Florida Town's Pioneering Plan to Fund Retreat from Sea Rise	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2019/12/27/a-south-florida-towns-pioneering-plan-to-fund-retreat-from-sea-rise/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2019/12/27/a-south-florida-towns-pioneering-plan-to-fund-retreat-from-sea-rise/</a>
CC 1/17/20	Your Florida Coastal Home Could Lose 15% of its Value by 2030 Due to Sea Rise	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/real-estate/2020/01/17/your-florida-coastal-home-could-lose-15-of-its-value-by-2030-due-to-sea-rise/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/real-estate/2020/01/17/your-florida-coastal-home-could-lose-15-of-its-value-by-2030-due-to-sea-rise/</a>
CC 1/20/20	As Seas Rise, a Florida Keys 'Ghost Forest' Makes a Last Stand	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2020/01/20/as-seas-rise-a-florida-keys-ghost-forest-makes-a-last-stand/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2020/01/20/as-seas-rise-a-florida-keys-ghost-forest-makes-a-last-stand/</a>
CC 3/16/20	Tampa Studies how to Make its Stormwater System Handle Rising Seas	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/tampa/2020/03/16/tampa-studies-how-to-make-its-stormwater-system-handle-rising-seas/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/tampa/2020/03/16/tampa-studies-how-to-make-its-stormwater-system-handle-rising-seas/</a>
CC 9/15/20	World not Meeting Biodiversity Goals, UN Report Finds	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2020/09/15/world-not-meeting-biodiversity-goals-un-report-finds/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2020/09/15/world-not-meeting-biodiversity-goals-un-report-finds/</a>
CC 9/18/20	A Melting Sculpture at ZooTampa Spreads Message About	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/life-culture/2020/09/18/a-melting-sculpture-at-zootampa-spreads-message-about-climate-change/">https://www.tampabay.com/life-culture/2020/09/18/a-melting-sculpture-at-zootampa-spreads-message-about-climate-change/</a>

	Climate Change	
CC 2/18/21	Florida Celebrates Sea Level Rise Planning Tool After Years 'Behind the Curve'	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2021/02/18/florida-celebrates-sea-level-rise-planning-tool-after-years-behind-the-curve/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2021/02/18/florida-celebrates-sea-level-rise-planning-tool-after-years-behind-the-curve/</a>
E 7/30/19	Study Finds Oceans are Melting Glaciers from Below Much Faster Than Predicted	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/environment/oceans-are-melting-glaciers-from-below-much-faster-than-predicted-study-finds-20190730/">https://www.tampabay.com/environment/oceans-are-melting-glaciers-from-below-much-faster-than-predicted-study-finds-20190730/</a>
E 8/20/19	As Climate Change Hits Florida Agriculture, Could the Future be 'Carbon Farming'?	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2019/08/20/as-climate-change-hits-florida-agriculture-could-the-future-be-carbon-farming/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2019/08/20/as-climate-change-hits-florida-agriculture-could-the-future-be-carbon-farming/</a>
E 9/27/19	Students Keep up the Heat with Worldwide Climate Protests	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2019/09/27/students-keep-up-the-heat-with-worldwide-climate-protests/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2019/09/27/students-keep-up-the-heat-with-worldwide-climate-protests/</a>
E 10/7/19	Climate Protesters Douse Famous Wall Street Bull	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2019/10/07/climate-protesters-douse-famous-wall-street-bull/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2019/10/07/climate-protesters-douse-famous-wall-street-bull/</a>
E 10/24/19	Oldsmar Wants to Spend \$125,000 on a Climate Assessment. Here's What That Means	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/pinellas/2019/10/24/oldsmar-wants-to-spend-125000-on-a-climate-assessment-heres-what-that-means/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/pinellas/2019/10/24/oldsmar-wants-to-spend-125000-on-a-climate-assessment-heres-what-that-means/</a>

E 11/12/19	Florida's Building Code Doesn't Take Sea Rise into Account. That Could Change This Year	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/florida/2019/11/12/floridas-building-code-doesnt-take-sea-rise-into-account-that-could-change-this-year/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/florida/2019/11/12/floridas-building-code-doesnt-take-sea-rise-into-account-that-could-change-this-year/</a>
E 1/16/20	PolitiFact: The Leading 2020 Democrats' Climate Change Plans, Explained	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/florida-politics/buzz/2020/01/16/politifact-the-leading-2020-democrats-climate-change-plans-explained/">https://www.tampabay.com/florida-politics/buzz/2020/01/16/politifact-the-leading-2020-democrats-climate-change-plans-explained/</a>
E 4/20/20	Young Climate Activists Slowed by Pandemic, but not Defeated	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2020/04/20/young-climate-activists-slowed-by-pandemic-but-not-defeated/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2020/04/20/young-climate-activists-slowed-by-pandemic-but-not-defeated/</a>
E 5/20/20	Class of 2020 Writes Essays of Hope: 'Our Coastlines do not Have to Disappear	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2020/05/20/class-of-2020-writes-essays-of-hope-our-coastlines-do-not-have-to-disappear/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2020/05/20/class-of-2020-writes-essays-of-hope-our-coastlines-do-not-have-to-disappear/</a>
E 9/10/20	Think 2020's Disasters are Wild? Experts see Worse in Future	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2020/09/10/think-2020s-disasters-are-wild-experts-see-worse-in-future/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2020/09/10/think-2020s-disasters-are-wild-experts-see-worse-in-future/</a>
E 11/4/20	U.S. Formally Exits Paris Agreement Aiming to Curb Climate Change	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/nation-world/2020/11/04/us-formally-exits-paris-agreement-aiming-to-curb-climate-change/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/nation-world/2020/11/04/us-formally-exits-paris-agreement-aiming-to-curb-climate-change/</a>

E 1/27/21	Biden: 'We Can't Wait Any Longer' to Address Climate Crisis	<a href="https://www.tampabay.com/news/2021/01/27/biden-we-cant-wait-any-longer-to-address-climate-crisis/">https://www.tampabay.com/news/2021/01/27/biden-we-cant-wait-any-longer-to-address-climate-crisis/</a>
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