



# The climate change debate: fossil fuel lobbyist and climate change sceptics at the United Nations Conferences of Parties

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## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Literature analysis</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Keywords</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Analysis</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Theoretical Framework: Agenda-Setting theory</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<i>Problem stream</i> .....	7
<i>Policy stream</i> .....	7
<i>Political stream and policy windows</i> .....	8
<b>To discover</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Method</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Quantitative Content Analysis</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Corpus</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Sampling</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Coding</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Prominent climate change deniers</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Climate change sceptic think tanks.</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Survey: Eurobarometer</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Results</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Results and Agenda Setting Theory</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Conclusion and Discussion</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Reference list</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Codeboek</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Appendix 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, Excel Database</b> .....	<b>26</b>
Appendix 2.1 Data collection number of articles mentioning climate change in newspapers .....	27
Appendix 2.2 Data collection number of articles mentioning UN COP21; UN COP26; UN COP27 in newspapers.....	27
Appendix 2.3 Data collection number of articles mentioning fossil fuel in newspapers.....	27
Appendix 3.1 Articles that mention fossil fuel and generic climate change sceptics .....	27
Appendix 3.2 Articles that mention fossil fuel and generic climate change sceptics .....	27
Appendix 3.3 Articles that mention fossil fuel and generic climate change sceptics .....	27
Appendix 4.1 Articles that mention prominent climate change sceptics and think tanks.....	27
Appendix 4.2 Articles that mention prominent climate change sceptics and think tanks.....	27
Appendix 4.3 Articles that mention prominent climate change sceptics and think tanks.....	27
Appendix 5.1 Climate change and COP21 .....	27
Appendix 5.2 Fossil fuel and generic climate sceptics COP21 .....	27
Appendix 5.3 COP21 Which prominent climate change sceptics are mentioned?.....	27
Appendix 5.4 COP21 Which prominent climate change sceptic think tanks are mentioned?.....	27
Appendix 7.1 Climate change and COP27 .....	27
Appendix 7.2 Fossil fuel and generic climate change sceptics.....	27

Appendix 7.3 COP 27 Which prominent climate change sceptics are mentioned? .....	27
Appendix 7.4 Which prominent climate change sceptic think tanks are mentioned? .....	27
Appendix 8. Number of articles written on climate change, fossil fuels and generic climate change sceptics.....	27

## Introduction

This research paper looks at three different United Nations Conferences of Parties (UN COP). The UN COP is responsible for the monitoring and implementation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (Fourment, n.d.). This Framework was signed by 197 countries during the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The goal was to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to prevent further climate change damage (United Nations, 1992). There are hundreds of delegations joining the conferences with each their own agendas. Additionally, to the 192 member states there are non-governmental organizations, climate activists and lobbyists involved. COP21 in Paris, 2015 is seen as one of the milestones in the climate change debate at which the first legally binding international climate agreement was signed, known as the Paris Agreement (Fourment, n.d.). The goal of the Paris Agreement was to limit the global temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius (United Nations, n.d.-b). In contrast to COP21, the most recent UN COPs have been heavily criticized. Research platforms *Global Witness*, *Corporate Europe Observatory* and *Glasgow Calls Out Polluters* discovered that the number of lobbyists from the fossil fuel industry together would form a bigger delegation than any national delegation present. Critics accuse fossil fuel lobbyists of slowing the process of battling climate change. The fossil fuel lobby has been often related to climate change sceptics and climate change sceptic think tanks. Among journalists it is debated if climate change sceptics should enjoy media attention. This debate goes from the thought that the media has influence on the public opinion and therefore the political agenda, also known as the agenda setting theory. The relation between fossil fuel delegates and climate change denialists in the climate change debate at UN COPs is therefore important to remember for journalists who want to cover on climate change.

The question is, however, is if the coverage on climate change sceptics increases when de delegation of the fossil fuel industry is higher and what this does to the public opinion on climate change. According to the UNHCR (2023) around 22.5 million people have been displaced by climate or weather-related events since 2008. To figure out if the presence of fossil fuel lobbyist at UN COP climate talks have influence on the climate debate, I will conduct a quantitative content analysis and look at the surveys of the European commission and the European Investment Bank on Europeans citizens opinion on climate change. These results will be analyzed in the agenda-setting theory. My research question sub-questions go as follows:

*RQ: Do climate change denialists get more attention in newspapers in Europe when there is a bigger delegation of the fossil fuel industry during UN Conferences of Parties and does this influence the European citizens opinion on climate change?*

- How often were fossil fuels and climate change denialists mentioned during the time period of COP21, COP26, and COP27 in newspapers?

- How often were prominent climate change denialists and climate change sceptic think tanks mentioned during the time period of COP21, COP26, and COP27 in newspapers?
- What was the public opinion of European citizens on climate change and the fossil fuel industry over the time periods of UN COP21, UN COP26, and UN COP27?

The first two sub questions will be answered through empirical research. The last sub question will be answered by three different surveys that were conducted by the European Commission and the European Investment bank. The first two questions will show if the numbers of articles on climate change denialists and fossil fuels increase when the delegation of fossil fuel lobbyists is bigger during UN COPs. The last sub question will show what the public opinion was during these time periods, which is interesting to hold against the results of the first two questions.

## Literature analysis

### *Keywords*

### *Keywords*

Before analyzing the literature that has already been written on the topic. I will first discuss the definitions of the keywords used for this research paper: **Keywords:** *Climate change deniers – agenda setting – newspapers – UN COP*

For this research paper I will use the definition of the Cambridge Dictionary (2023) for the keyword *climate change denier*, which goes as follows: ‘*A climate change denier is a person who does not accept that climate change is happening or does not accept that it is caused by human activity such as burning fossil fuels.*’

The theoretical framework for this research paper is the agenda-setting theory which is the next keyword used in this research paper. The institution for media-studies (2022) gives the following definition for the agenda-setting theory: ‘The agenda-setting theory suggests media institutions shape the political debate by choosing which topics and issues should feature in the news broadcasts. If a story is on the front-page ... the audience will assume it is an important issue that needs serious attention.’ I will further explain the theory and its importance for this research paper later in the literature review.

The next keyword explained is *newspaper*, which speaks for itself. But for the clarity of this research paper will be defined by the Cambridge Dictionary (2023b) as follows: ‘a regularly printed document ... or a website, containing news reports ... [and]... articles.’ For this research report I will solely focus on news reports and articles which are printed or published online.

The last keyword explained is the *UN COP: United Nations Conference of Parties*. Therefore, I will use the definition published by United Nations (n.d.-a): ‘The UN COP is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention.’ It is responsible for the monitoring and reviewing of the implementation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was signed by

197 nations and territories (Fourment, n.d.). The UN COP is held annually with COP21 in Paris, 2015 as one of the milestones at which the first binding international climate agreement was signed, known as the Paris Agreement (Fourment, n.d.). The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change and was entered into force on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016 (United Nations, n.d.-b). The goal was to limit the global temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius (United Nations, n.d.-b). Since COP21 is one of the milestones in COPs history I will include this time period as well in my research paper.

Now that the keywords are defined, we will continue to the existing literature written on the topic.

### *Analysis*

There has been extensive research on climate change coverage in the printed media in relation to the yearly UN Conferences of Parties (COPs). Not in all scientific research papers did climate skeptics play a big role, but one: *Poles Apart: The international reporting of climate scepticism* (Painter, 2011).

In his research Painter's (2011) main aim is to see if there is any increase in the amount of space given in newspapers to climate sceptic voices over two different time periods of three months. The time periods chosen are based on important events within the climate debate, with first the publication of two reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the second period with the 'Climategate' event. Climategate was a controversy at which thousands of emails between climate scientists from the University of East Anglia's Climate Research Unit (CRU) were stolen in the UK in 2009. The discussion between the scientists were interpreted by critics as a proof of manipulation of scientific climate data (International Environmental Technology, 2023). Painter (2011) also wants to see if there are any differences between countries. Therefore, he conducted a wide-ranging comparative study on the dominance of climate sceptic voices in the print media in six countries: Brazil, China, France, India, the UK, and the US.

Painter (2011) emphasizes the agenda-setting role of the print media in his research. And argues that the print media has a strong influence on policy makers and other elites. He mentions the example of the increase of coverage on climate sceptics in Norwegian newspapers after Climategate. Painter (2011): 'The amount of coverage increased after the start of Climategate which gave climate change sceptics in Norway fresh ammunition to challenge the urgency and gravity of climate change'. For his content analysis Painter (2011) asks the following questions: 1) *Has there been an increase in the amount of space given to sceptics in the print media between the two research periods 2007 and 2009/10?* 2) *Are there any important differences between the left-leaning and right-leaning newspapers in the prevalence of sceptical voices?* 3) *In which part of a newspaper are sceptical voices most likely to be found?* 4) *In broad terms, which types of sceptical voices are most included?* 5) *What is the professional background of the sceptics quoted?*

The method he used for his research was a content analysis of one left leaning newspaper and one right leaning newspaper per country. Where possible he used the search engine Lexis-Nexis

or Factiva search facilities. Only print articles were analyzed: news reports, features, opinion, comment pieces, editorials, and television and book reviews (Painter, 2011). To start the content analysis Painter (2011) first measured the number of articles that mentioned 'climate change' or 'global warming', afterwards, the number of sceptical voices present in those articles. The sceptical voices were divided in different categories: generic quoting 'sceptics say' versus names of individual climate sceptics mentioned. The last category was divided by sceptical voices that got mentioned directly, or indirectly, or were the authors of sceptical opinion pieces or invited columnists (Painter 2011). The names of this section were once again divided in different types of sceptics, alongside three categories: 1) there is no global warming, 2) global warming is not a problem, 3) acknowledge global warming but question the need to act. Painter (2011) final's classification of climate sceptics names is as follows: university scientist, academic tied to a university (not a scientist), think tank or lobby group, 'amateur' scientist, newspaper columnist or media personality, politician, or diplomat (Painter, 2011).

The main findings Painter's (2011) research show that coverage on climate skeptics has increased over the second period and is mostly written in opinion pieces and editorials and in right-leaning newspapers. The left-leaning newspapers cover climate skeptics predominantly to counter their arguments, while right-leaning newspapers cover climate skeptics without (or with less) critics on climate skeptic statements. Of all the skeptics represented, politicians' amount for one-third of the climate skeptics mentioned. In the case of the US, Painter (2011) argues that climate scepticism has flourished partly because of funding by American politicians that deny climate change, by industry groups and the pervasive practice and power of lobbying. Climate skeptical individuals and groups have been successful in getting coverage in the mainstream press due to them being better funded and organized through think tanks, and oil, gas, and mining companies. The research also shows that the questioning of mainstream science, such as global warming, has more space in in Anglo-Saxon countries than in the Global South (Painter, 2011).

The most recent research was done by Wang and Downey (2023) with *Becoming Cosmopolitan? Comparing Climate Coverage in Newspapers Across Countries*. Wang and Downey (2023) researched to what extent news media contributed to the domestication of climate change during COPs. Wang and Downey (2023) describe the media as one of the central actors in tackling climate change since they can translate scientific explanation of climate change to the public. Domesticating or nationalizing climate change in the media makes it look like climate change is not a global problem. Wang and Downey (2023) argue that climate change is a global problem where countries have different perceptions of their own interests and priorities due to different degrees of impacts posed by climate change. For their research they conducted a content analysis of twelve newspapers in six different countries and searched for articles covering three different UN COPs in Lexis-Nexis. For their research Wang and Downey (2023) used the eight key-steps for content analysis of Hansen (1998). They chose countries based on diverse development status, different risks of loss and damage (Climate Risk Index Rank) and different economic carbon intensities (World Bank Open Data Statistics on CO2 emissions per capita). The newspapers chosen were selected on news quality and ideological diversity. Wang and Downey (2023) differentiate seven categories of individual actors who are mentioned in newspaper articles on climate change. One of the actors are *climate change deniers*. From their content analysis they see that climate change deniers are merely represented and only in the western

media from Anglo-Saxon countries from the newspapers studied, in contrast to the Global South whereas there have been no signs of climate change deniers in the newspapers. In the Canadian media they are mentioned in 1.4% of the articles on climate change, in the Australian media 0.6% and in the US media 0.4%. They also mention that climate change deniers have gained less attention over the past years. Interesting is the distinction made between climate change deniers and politicians, while Painter (2011) describes climate change deniers *with* a political background.

The conclusion of Wang and Downey's (2023) research is that mainstream media tend to domesticate climate change coverage during the COPs time periods researched, but that there are some trends of cosmopolitanism climate change coverage in left-leaning newspapers.

Before we move on to the next part, I shortly explain the agenda setting role of news media to understand the relevance of this theoretical framework for this research paper. The agenda setting role of the news media is explained by Valenzuela & McCombs (2019). They argue distinct consequences of the agenda setting effect of the media: forming opinions, priming opinions through an emphasis on particular issues, and shaping an opinion through emphasis on particular attributes (Valenzuela & McCombs, 2019).

The first consequence, forming opinions, this means that when the media focus their attention on a certain topic like climate change or climate change denials, more people will be forming an opinion about it. When asked for their opinions individuals will heavily rely upon the salience the media gave to a topic but also the information they gave about a topic (Valenzuela & McCombs, 2019). Therefore, the forming of public opinions is heavily influenced by the media attention given to a topic.

The second consequence of agenda setting, priming opinions through an emphasis on ways, goes as follows: when the media presents a topic like global warming often with a sceptic tone, the audience can form an opinion that is pessimistic on the existence of global warming. Valenzuela & McCombs (2019) also state that these first two consequences can predict future behavior. An example they give is the decrease in flight ticket sales when the media focused its attention on airplane crashes (Valenzuela & McCombs, 2019). In the next part I will explain the agenda-setting theory in relation to climate change denials via two more research papers of Pralle (2009) and Hofer (2022).

### *Theoretical Framework: Agenda-Setting theory*

To understand more about agenda-setting and how to apply it to the climate change debate I review the following research papers: *Agenda-setting and climate change* of Pralle (2009), and *The Multiple Streams Framework: Understanding and Applying the Problems, Policies, and Politics Approach* of Hofer (2022). These two different papers are used since Pralle (2009) uses Kingdon's *Multiple Streams Framework* (MSF) from 1995 in relation to climate change, while Hofer (2022) explains the climate change debate through the updated version of Kingdon's MSF from 2010.

*Agenda-setting and climate change* by Pralle (2009) uses Kingdon's MSF (1995) to understand climate policy politics, with the aim to explore strategies for keeping climate change on the

forefront of government decision agendas. To solve the climate crisis, it must stay a priority and should not be replaced by economic downturns and political, economic, and social developments (Pralle, 2009). In her research she starts from the assumption that climate change is always on the government agenda of democratic countries but they're not acting on it, because they're afraid of political damage (Pralle, 2009). Kingdon (1995, as cited in Pralle, 2009) defines three broad agendas in democratic political systems: 1) *the public agenda*: issues salient for citizens and voters, 2) *the governmental agenda*: issues for discussion within institutions, and 3) *the decision agenda*: issues that are ready to be decided upon by government officials. Non-governmental institutions, such as media and other organizations, have their own agendas and can affect the public and governmental agenda (Hilgartner and Bosk, 1988, Kingdon, 1995, as cited in Pralle, 2009). Hilgartner and Bosk (1988, as cited in Pralle 2009) argue that each agenda can only handle a few issues at the same time. The more salient issues are, the higher the chance they will end up on government and decision agendas. However, it is not guaranteed there will always be a policy change once on the agenda (Cobb and Elder, 1983, Kingdon, 1995, as cited in Pralle, 2009). By using Kingdon's (1995) MSF she explains the process of how problems get noticed and move up to the decision agenda and Rochefort and Cobb's *problem definition framework* to show how problems get strategically framed to increase their salience (Pralle, 1995).

To start, Kingdon (1995, as mentioned in Pralle, 2009) argues that there are three streams: problems, policies, and politics. These streams operate independently but when a window of opportunity opens, policy entrepreneurs seize the opportunity to push for government action.

#### *Problem stream*

*Problems* come to the attention of policymakers via *indicators, focusing events and feedback*. Indicators arise through both routine monitoring and special studies, such as the IPCC reports (Kingdon, 1995, as cited in Pralle, 2009). *Focusing events* are sudden events that the public and policymakers learn about simultaneously and are harmful and revealing, such as natural disasters such as hurricanes and floodings (Birkland, 1998, as cited in Pralle, 2009). *Feedback* is typically negative feedback on existing policy programs given via an evaluation from studies, target groups, bureaucrats, or policymaker, for example, feedback on climate policies (Pralle, 2009). Political actors have major influence on the salience of an issue by framing the severity of a problem and therefore the chance for it to reach the government and decision agenda. Kingdon's updated version of the MSF states that a problem is a situation that has been defined as a problem by one or several actors. However, a situation can be defined as a problem in many ways by different actors (Kingdon, 2010, as cited in Hoefler, 2022). Problem stream debates take place within policy communities like interest groups and the academic community. Problem entrepreneurs, the 'champions' of each view of the debate want to get their problem on the government agenda for action, but often without a clear solution in mind (Kingdon, 2010, as cited in Hoefler, 2022).

#### *Policy stream*

The policy stream can be seen as the debate over solutions by experts, academia and think tanks within policy communities (Pralle 2009; Hoefler, 2022). These solutions can be attached to problems. For solutions to be seen as possibilities they need to pass certain criteria of achievability like budget and technical abilities (Kingdon, 1995, as cited in Pralle, 2009). Those who passed the criteria for feasible solutions are called the policy entrepreneurs. Important to



note is that policy entrepreneurs are often ideologically focused and therefore do not need to rely on research or pilot tests (Kingdon, 2010, as cited in Hoefler, 2022). Pralle (2009) continues to explain that problems without solutions will be less likely to reach the government and decision agenda, and the public is less likely to worry about issues when they feel there is no fit solution to solve it.

#### *Political stream and policy windows*

In the political stream the national mood, the elected decision-making officials, and active interest groups influence the agendas (Hoefler, 2022). Activities within the political stream can cause a window of opportunity or 'policy window' (Pralle, 2009). Hoefler (2022) explains this by stating that when a problem exists with an acceptable solution, the political will to act increases. Therefore, policy entrepreneurs will try to push their policy or solution with the decision-making officials for support to get their policy on the decision-agenda. If they succeed new laws will be enacted (Hoefler, 2022). However, a window of opportunity often closes without any decision being taken (Hoefler, 2022). Important to note is that policy making is a process that depends on skilled framing and coupling of problems and solutions to get the votes of the majority of decision-makers, during the window of opportunity or policy window (Hoefler, 2022).

Pralle (2009) concludes that climate change is a long-term problem which needs to compete with other societal problems. She argues that the climate change advocacy community and journalists need to keep global warming on the agenda by regularly reporting on the topic.

#### *To discover*

From the literature analyzed we know that the media can have significant agenda setting effects for the forming of public opinion on a topic, and sometimes can predict future behavior of the public (Valenzuela, 2019). Pralle (2009) concludes in her research that climate change needs to compete on the political agenda with other societal issues. She therefore says that climate advocacies and journalists need to keep climate change high on the political agenda by regularly reporting on the topic. The existing literature also shows us that the amount of space given to climate sceptics in newspapers can grow when there is an important event happening in the climate debate such as 'Climategate', but mostly in right-leaning newspapers (Painter, 2011). Wang and Downey (2013) concluded in their research that mainstream media tend to domesticate climate change during UN COPs. Which makes climate change look like a national problem, not like a global problem. Yet to discover is the amount of space given to climate change sceptics between specific UN COP periods where there is a high number of attendees from the fossil fuel industry in English written European newspapers.

## Method

For this research paper I conduct a quantitative content analysis of newspaper articles over three separate time periods of three months. Content analysis in journalism studies goes from the assumption that media content is a mirror of society and gives us an insight of how the society looks at societal issues. This is because most information we receive is by the media, and the media has more influence on us then we think (Koetsenruijter & Van Hout, 2018). I will conduct a quantitative content analysis, since this is useful to answer questions on how often specific media content is mentioned within a specific time frame and to identify differences of

quantitation over time (Koetsenruijter & Van Hout, 2018). Content analysis can be applied to all kinds of content: written text, pictures, video, film, or other visual media (Rose et al., 2015). One of the biggest critics on content analysis of newspaper articles is that internet, television, and radio are much more influential in society. However, Koetsenruijter and van Hout (2018) counterargue this with the concept of intermediality, which says that the topics dealt with in newspapers are broadly similar to the ones on the internet, television, and radio.

To start the analysis, I first started with identifying the research question, which goes as follows: *RQ: Do climate change denialists get more attention in newspapers in Europe when there is a bigger delegation of the fossil fuel industry during UN Conferences of Parties and does this influence the European citizens opinion on climate change?*

The research question is divided by three sub questions:

- How often were fossil fuels and climate change denialists mentioned during the time period of COP21, COP26, and COP27 in newspapers?
- How often were prominent climate change denialists and climate change sceptic think tanks mentioned during the time period of COP21, COP26, and COP27 in newspapers?
- What was the public opinion of European citizens on climate change and the fossil fuel industry over the time periods of UN COP21, UN COP26, and UNCOP27?

The first two sub questions will be answered by the quantitative content analysis, the fourth question will be answered through secondary data from a survey by the European Commission. We will now continue with the method for the content analysis.

### *Corpus*

The corpus for this research paper is formed by the following newspapers: *The Guardian (London)*, *The Times (London)*, *The Sunday Times (London)*, *The Telegraph (London)*, *The Sunday Telegraph (London)*. All newspapers are English written European newspapers and were selected from the Media and Climate Change Observatory (MeCCO), which monitors climate change coverage in newspapers worldwide. For my analysis I selected English written European newspapers that published most on climate change or global warming from 2003 – 2023 (MeCCO, 2023). The selection of newspapers is therefore solely based on their climate change coverage and not on ideology as we can see in other research papers. The choice for English is to have a consistency in search terms.

The coding will be deductive, which means, there is no room for flexibility to add new categories through the coding process. I stick with a predefined set of categories, which allows me to stay focused on the selected coding words (*Content Analysis*, 2023). The concepts of my analysis that will be coded are climate change, fossil fuel, and climate change denial. For the last concept I will use both the generic category of climate denialists and sceptics in which they're generally mentioned, and the names of prominent climate change denialists and climate change sceptic

think tanks that have been proven to actively (try) to influence the climate change debate (at UN COPs). The coding will be done manually for more preciseness (*Content Analysis*, 2023).

### *Sampling*

Before moving on to the coding process I first explain the sampling process of my research. As mentioned before the corpus of my research exists of the newspapers that covered climate change the most, based on MeCCO (2023). Within these newspapers I selected the articles that cover 'climate change' and 'fossil fuel'. These articles form the two sample categories for my research. Sample category 1) Climate change, sample category 2) Fossil fuel. I collected the samples from the Lexis Nexis database and for all searches I turned on the filter 'merge double documents' for a precise outcome. The search terms I used to collect the first sample category 'climate change' are: 'climate' AND 'change' AND NOT 'global' AND 'warming'. For the second sampling category I searched: 'Fossil AND fuel'. For the integrality I also searched how often COP21 was mentioned during the first sampling period, COP26 during the second sampling period, and COP27 during the third sampling period. Search terms: 'COP21', 'COP26', 'COP27' in Lexis Nexis database. I will now further explain the sampling periods chosen.

The sample periods I used are three distinct periods of three months. The sample periods cover UN COP21, COP26, and COP27, from one month before the start till one month after it finished. The first sample period is from 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2015 – 30<sup>th</sup> January 2016, which covers UN COP21 in Paris. COP21 took place from 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015 – 11<sup>th</sup> December 2015 (United Nations, n.d.-b). The second sample period is from 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021, which covers UN COP26 in Glasgow. COP26 in Glasgow took place from 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021 – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2021 (United Nations, n.d.-c). The third sample period is from 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022 – 06<sup>th</sup> January 2023, which covers UN COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh. COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh took place from 6<sup>th</sup> November 2022 – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2022 (United Nations, n.d.-d). Now that I have explained the sampling for my research, I will now continue to the coding strategies.

### *Coding*

The samples used for the research are coded as follows: The Guardian 1; The Times 2; The Sunday Times 3; The Daily Telegraph 4; The Sunday Telegraph 5. The coding of the sampled articles exists of two different coding categories. The first category 'fossil and generic climate change denials' is coded in the sample 'fossil fuel'. For this coding category there are three different variables. VAR1=sceptics, VAR2 = denialists, VAR3 = deniers. I used three different variables to cover a broad spectrum of climate change deniers in the climate change debate. The search terms used for VAR1 are: 'fossil fuel' AND 'sceptic' OR 'sceptics' OR 'skeptical' OR 'skeptics'. The search terms used for VAR2 are: 'fossil fuel' AND 'denial' OR 'denialist' OR 'denialists'. The search terms used for VAR3 are: 'fossil fuel' AND 'denier' OR 'deniers' OR 'denying' OR 'denied' OR 'deny'. I manually selected the articles from this Lexis Nexis search to prevent to count articles that are not related to the climate change debate.

The second coding category exists of two different parts. The first part is the mentioning of the names of prominent climate change deniers. The second part is the mentioning of the names of climate change sceptic think tanks that are connected to these climate change deniers. The second coding category was coded within the three distinct sample periods, explained earlier (COP21, COP26, COP27). The search term used for the prominent climate change deniers was: '[First + last name]' OR '[Last name]'. The search term used for the climate change sceptic think tanks was [name think tank] OR [abbreviation think tank]. Through the whole coding process, I used Yes 1; No 0. For a clearer overview there is a codebook

in Appendix 1. Codebook. Underneath the codebook I explain the background information of the selected climate change deniers and climate change sceptic think tanks.

### *Prominent climate change deniers*

For this research paper I coded the presence of seven prominent climate change deniers who have attended the UN COPs or tried to influence UN COPs in newspapers. The climate change deniers chosen are based on the definition of climate change denier used before and researched and listed by DeMelle (n.d.). The list of climate change deniers by DeMelle (n.d.) actively mislead the public and delay policy action to address climate change. To explain why these climate change denialists were chosen I will provide their background information in relation to the climate change debate underneath.

The first prominent climate change denier is Former US Senator James Inhofe (1994-2023). Inhofe wrote the book *The Greatest Hoax: 'How the Global Warming Conspiracy Threatens Your Future'*.

He also attended two different COPs during his career (DeSmog, 2023c). The first COP he attended was COP15 in Copenhagen in 2009 at which he wanted to spread two different messages: global warming is a hoax, and the Senate will never pass a cap-and-trade bill (Roug, 2009). Inhofe also involved himself in COP21 in Paris via a video message. Inhofe recorded a video message to address *The Heartland Institute* in which he promises that an international agreement for the reduction of greenhouse emissions at COP21 would fail (The Heartland Institute, 2015). Inhofe also received more than two million dollars in donations from the Fossil Fuel industry during his career, with his biggest donors Koch industries and Murray Energy (Bort, 2020).

The second man on the list is Marc Morano. A former advisor to Inhofe and executive director and chief correspondent of *ClimateDepot.com*, an anti-science think tank that has received funding from ExxonMobil and Chevron (DeMelle, n.d.). He attended five UN COPs during his career: COP19, COP21, COP23, COP25, and COP26 (DeSmog, 2023c). The first COP he attended was COP19 in Warsaw, November 2013 alongside Craig Rucker, executive director of *Committee for A Constructive Tomorrow* (CFACT). During the COP meeting he stated: 'Coal is the moral choice, particularly for the developing world' and 'climate change ... is in fact ... code words for governmental control of energy consumption and consequently our standard of living.' (Readfearn, 2013). During COP21 in Paris in November 2015, Morano said during an interview: 'People are very annoyed that we're even here ... They see us as the turd in the punch bowl. That's the bottom line.' (Stefanini & Restuccia, 2015). At COP23 in Bonn in November 2017 Morano represented CFACT and said during a debate: '... Now they're claiming SUVs and our coal plants are changing the weather.' (Jervey, 2017). At COP25 in Madrid in December 2019 Morano wrote a pamphlet for CFACT to distribute during the conference held by Greta Thunberg in which he wrote the following: '... the arguments put forth by global warming advocates grossly distort the true facts on a host of issues, ranging from rising sea levels and record temperatures to melting polar caps and polar bears, among others. In short, there is no 'climate crisis' or a 'climate emergency.' (DeSmog, 2023c). At the COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021 he attended together with other CFACT activists who handed out copies of Morano's *Climate Hustle 2* film (DeSmog, 2023c).

The third climate change denier is Myron Ebell, director of energy and global warming policy at the *Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI)* and director of Freedom Action, a web-based grassroots activist organization, and Chair of the Cooler Heads Coalition (Competitive Enterprise Institute, 2021 and DeMelle, n.d.). CEI (2021): ‘CEI and the Cooler Heads Coalition led the successful decade-long fight to defeat cap-and-trade legislation and more recently led the effort to convince President Trump to Withdraw from the Paris climate treaty.’ Ebell was present at two UN COPs (DeSmog, 2021). Ebell was first asked as a speaker for a conference of The Heartland Institute and CFACT, which coincided with COP21 (DeSmog, 2021). But the first real COP he attended was COP23 in Bonn where he was interviewed by the BBC to talk about his views on climate change. In this interview he stated: ‘The predictions made at the beginning of the era of global warming alarm have so far proven to be wildly inaccurate and they’ve all been much higher than predicted.’ (DeSmog, 2021). This interview has been criticized by the Graham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment. In his opinion piece for the Grantham Institute, Ward (2017) wrote: ‘The ‘Today’ programme on BBC Radio 4 has again demonstrated that its editor and producers are too easily fooled by the inaccurate and misleading claims of climate change deniers.’ The second COP Ebell attended was COP26 in Glasgow as a representative for CEI as the director of Center for Energy and Environment (DeSmog, 2021).

The fourth climate denier is Bjørn Lomborg. He did not attend any COP meeting but has been critically following the meetings and writing about it in the media. Lomborg is a political scientist, economist, and founder and president of the Copenhagen Consensus Center (CCC). Lomborg acknowledges climate change but downplays the consequences (DeMelle, n.d.). Besides several television appearances on Fox News, Lomborg has involved himself in writing articles during and in the aftermath of UN COP conferences. During COP21 Paris, he wrote a blog during the meetings and wrote an article after COP24, in which he wrote: ‘Activist and climate scientist Michael Mann told CNN the assessment’s predictions were reflected in “unprecedented weather extremes” of droughts and floods. Actually, the assessment – and science – tell a different story: “Drought statistics over the entire contiguous US have declined ...’ (Lomborg, 2018). He also wrote an article for *The Australian* following COP26 and published on his website how the world was falsely portrayed as bad and getting worse (Lomborg 2021, as cited in DeSmog, 2023d).

The fifth climate denier I will discuss is Matthew White Ridley, British science writer, zoologist, journalist, and author. He had a seat at the House of Lords in 2013 and used his position for the climate change debate and the Brexit Campaign (DeSmog, 2023a). He has not physically attended any COP summits, but as Lomborg, dedicated articles on COP21 in Paris (DeSmog, 2023a). Before COP21 he wrote *Your Complete Guide to the Climate Debate* together with Benny Peiser for the Wallstreet Journal. In this article they claim: ‘On a global scale, as scientists keep confirming, there has been no increase in frequency or intensity of storms, floods, or droughts, while deaths attributed to such natural disasters have never been fewer, thanks to modern technology and infrastructure (Ridley & Peiser, 2015). Ridley has also ridiculed the Paris Agreement in his column for The Times in 2017. In this column he quotes Lomborg and writes: ‘Thus Paris embodies precisely what the green movement worried about after Copenhagen: that a weak and non-binding agreement would be worse than futile.’ (Ridley, 2017).

The sixth climate denier is Christopher Monckton, who attended COP21 in Paris. Monckton has a degree in Journalism and is a former British politician, affiliated with the UK Independence Party (DeSmog, 2022). He attended COP21 Paris, together with the *Heartland Institute*, *CFACT*, and *CEI* to hold a counter conference on climate change (DeSmog, 2022) (Monckton & The Heartland Institute, 2015).

The seventh climate denier is Siegfried Frederick Singer, former space scientist and government scientific administrator. Singer passed away in 2020. He was the founder of Science & Environmental Policy Project (SEPP), a group which focuses on global warming denial (DeSmog, 2022a). Singer attended COP21 Paris was like Monckton part of the counter conference with *The Heartland Institute*, *CFACT*, and *CEI* (Monckton & The Heartland Institute, 2015). He also co-authored the book *Why Scientists Disagree about Global Warming: The NIPCC Report on Consensus*, which was published on the first day of COP21. In 2016 Singer also attended the 34<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of Doctors for Disaster Preparedness to speak about COP21 Paris (Doctors for Disaster Preparedness, 2016). The Doctors for Disaster Preparedness also repost statements of *The Heartland Institute* saying that Global Warming is Not a crisis (Doctors for Disaster Preparedness & The Heartland Institute, 2013).

The remaining variables are the climate change sceptic think tanks which are already mentioned above. I will shortly discuss them underneath.

#### *Climate change sceptic think tanks.*

The first climate sceptic think tank is *The Heartland Institute*. They call themselves one of the world's leading free markets think tank. On their website they state to have 27 staff members and around 2.000 donors, and 500 academics and professional economists that serve as Policy Advisors (The Heartland Institute, n.d.). The Heartland Institute has received at least 676.500 dollar of funding from ExxonMobil since 1998 of which nearly 40% was specifically designated for climate change project (The Union of Concerned Scientist, 2007, as mentioned in DeSmog, 2023a). De Smog (2023a) describes the Heartland Institute as being at the forefront of the climate change sceptic debate.

The second climate sceptic think tank is *Climatedepot.com*, which is a project of CFACT. Marc Morano was hired to run the website to offer research and environmental news that questions the theory of man-made global warming (DeSmog, 2023a).

The third climate sceptic think tank is *Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow (CFACT)* which is the organization running ClimateDepot.com. CFACT (2023) exists since 1985 and was founded to 'promote a much-needed, positive alternative voice on issues of environment and development', according to its website. They argue to be a respected Washington D.C.-based organization whose voice can be heard relentlessly infusing the public-interest debate with a balanced perspective on environmental stewardship... (CFACT, 2023). De Smog (2023a) writes how CFACT was published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science 2015 by Yale University's professor Dr. Justin Farrell as one of the 164 organizations that take part of the climate counter movement. Like The Heartland Institute they've also received funding from ExxonMobil, around 582.000 dollars (De Smog, 2023a).

The fourth climate sceptic think tank is the *Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI)*. They call themselves one of the most effective think tanks in American History, since their beginning in 1984 (Competitive Enterprise Institute, 2022). CEI receives, like the previous think tanks, money from the fossil fuel industry. They received 200.000 dollars from Murray Energy, which is owned by climate change denier Robert Murray. They also hold annual dinners at which fossil fuel companies like Marathon Petroleum, Koch Industries, American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity, and American Fuel are listed as donors (DeSmog, 2023b).

The fifth climate sceptic think tank is the Copenhagen Consensus Center, run by Bjorn Lomborg. They call themselves a think tank that researches the smartest solutions for the world's biggest problems (Copenhagen Consensus Center, n.d.). They state to be working with governments, NGOs, and multilateral organizations around the world. The Copenhagen Consensus does not deny the existence of human-made global warming, but its founder emphasizes that the way to climate neutral is too expensive and will cause sharp economic downturns (DeSmog, 2021a).

The sixth climate change sceptic think tank is the *Science & Environmental Policy Project (SEPP)*. They have set up their own non-governmental International Panel on Climate Change (NIPCC) 'to respond to the false claims of the UN-IPCC and its followers, who claim without hard evidence that the use of fossil fuels, and consequent CO2 emissions, will lead to climate disasters' (SEPP, n.d.). It's founder Siegfried Singer, who passed away, acknowledged that the organization had received funding from Exxon, Shell, Unocal, and Arco (DeSmog, 2021b).

The seventh climate change sceptic think tanks is *Doctors for Disaster Preparedness (DDP)*. They have their own website but no clear description of themselves. They also have a Facebook page on which they repost climate change denying posts from The Heartland Institute (The Heartland Institute & Doctors for Disaster Preparedness, 2013). DDP also has ties to the conservative advocacy group American Association of Physicians and Surgeons and lists climate change as an environmental scare (DeSmog, 2023e).

#### *Survey: Eurobarometer*

To answer the third sub question: 'What was the public opinion on climate change in the European Union over the time periods of UN COP21, UN COP26, and UN COP27?', I look at both the Eurobarometer and climate surveys from the European Investment Bank. The Eurobarometer is a polling instruments used by the European Commission, the European Parliament and other EU institutions to monitor the public opinion on societal issues (*Eurobarometer*, n.d.). The European Commission published seven reports on the public opinion of Europeans on climate change. For my research I will use the Eurobarometer to answer what the question what was the public opinion of European citizens towards climate change and the role of the fossil fuel industry during the time period of COP21?

#### *COP21 – Eurobarometer*

For the survey TNS political & social network & European Commission (2017) conducted 27.901 interviews with European Citizens in the 28 Member States in the aftermath of COP21 in March 2017. The interviews were held face-to-face in the homes of the people in their national language. The survey shows that climate change is viewed as the third most serious global problem, after poverty, hunger and lack of drinking water and international terrorism (TNS political & social network & European Commission, 2017). The survey also shows that around 74% of the respondents consider climate change to be a very serious problem, 18% think it's a fairly serious problem, and 6% thinks it's not a serious problem and 2 percent does not have an opinion on climate change. The amount of people that see climate change as a very serious problem has risen by 5% since the last survey in 2015 (TNS political & social network & European Commission, 2017). Around 38% of the respondent's state that business and industry are responsible for tackling climate change, while others think that national governments (43%)

or the EU (39%) are responsible (TNS political & social network & European Commission, 2017). The results also show that 51% of the respondents find it very important that their national government increases the amount of renewable energy, such as wind and solar power, 38% finds it fairly important, 5 % not very important, 2% not at all important, and 4% answered they don't know. Remarkable is that the support slightly declined compared to the survey in 2015 (TNS political & social network & European Commission, 2017, p. 64).

For COP26 and COP27 I will look at the surveys from the European Investment bank. They describe themselves as the lending arm of the European Union and one of the largest providers of climate finance (European Investment Bank, n.d.). Since 2018 they have been conducting yearly surveys on climate change together with YouGov. The first survey I will analyze is 2021-2022 EIB Climate Survey for polling information of the COP26 time period.

### *COP 26 – EIB Climate Survey*

The survey was conducted online in all 27 EU countries from August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021. The amount of respondents were 27662 people (European Investment Bank, 2022). The survey shows that 81% of respondents agree with climate change and its consequences being the biggest challenge for humanity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (European Investment Bank, 2022a, p.2). However, the first biggest challenge citizens are currently facing are: COVID-19 (57%), Climate Change (39%), Unemployment (33%) (European Investment Bank, 2022a, p. 4). The results also show that European citizens are the most sceptical, compared to China and the US, towards their national governments succeeding in reducing carbon emissions by 2050. Only 42% have faith in their national government's success (European Investment Bank, 2022a, p.11). And around 70% want the government to impose stricter rules on people's behavior to tackle climate change (European Investment Bank, 2022c). In the report we can also see that only 56% of the Europeans believe that climate policies are a source of economic growth and 25% fear losing their job because it will become incompatible with the need to mitigate climate change (European Investment Bank, 2022c). What is also interesting to see is that EU citizens (63%) are in favor of renewable energies, and that the support for natural gas (fossil fuel) as a transition is low with 6%, while nuclear energy is more popular with 16% of the polling votes (European Investment Bank, 2022c).

### *COP27 – EIB Climate Survey*

The survey was conducted online in all 27 EU countries in August 2022. The total sample size of European citizens consists of 23.000 respondents (European Investment Bank, 2023). The main concern are economic issues, such as increased living costs and economic issues instead of the COVID-pandemic compared to last year. In this report they don't use the statement of climate change being one of the biggest challenges, but they did measure that 84% of the respondents believe that if we don't drastically reduce our consumption of energy we will be heading for a global catastrophe (European Investment Bank, 2023a). And 66% of the people think that the war in Ukraine should accelerate the green transition. (European Investment Bank, 2023a). Around 47% of the respondents want their government to priorities the development of renewable energies (European Investment Bank, 2023a). Capping or regulating the price of gas



and oil is however less favored than in the rest of the world with only 28% of supporters. In their findings the European Investment Bank (2023a) show that 66% of Europeans are in favor of stricter government measures on people's behavior to tackle climate change, which is 3% less than the year before. However, 56% would be in favor of a carbon budget system that would give everyone a fixed number of yearly credits to spend on items with a big carbon footprint (European Investment Bank, 2023a).

## Results

1. *How often were fossil fuels and climate change denialists mentioned during the time period of COP21, COP26, and COP27 in newspapers?*

In *Figure 1*, we can see that the number of articles written on fossil fuel and climate denialists were the highest during COP26, followed by COP27, and then COP21. Figures 2, 3, 4 show the percentage of articles written on climate sceptics as part of the fossil fuel sample. However, when comparing *Figure 2, 3, and 4* we can see that the percentage of climate sceptics mentioned

in relation to fossil fuel is higher during COP21 with 8%, followed by COP26 and least COP27 with 4%.

Figure 1. Comparison climate change, fossil fuel, sceptics

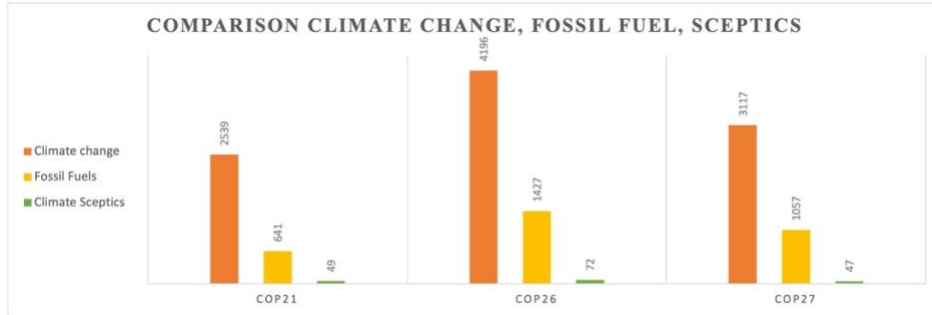


Figure 2. COP21 Fossil fuel and climate change sceptics

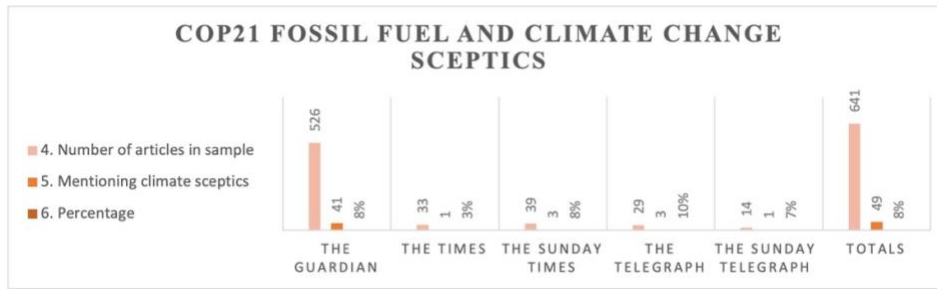


Figure 3. COP26 Fossil fuels and climate change sceptics.

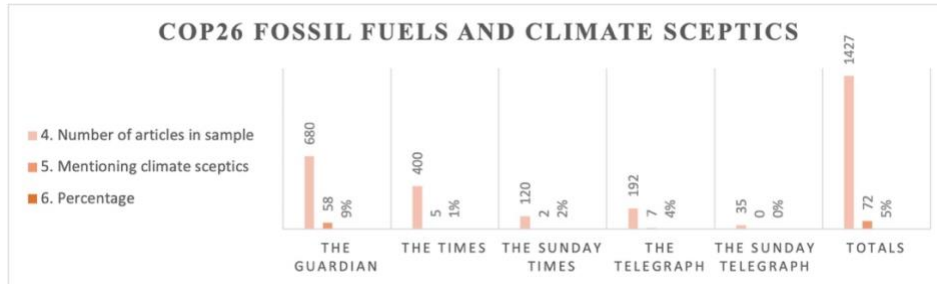
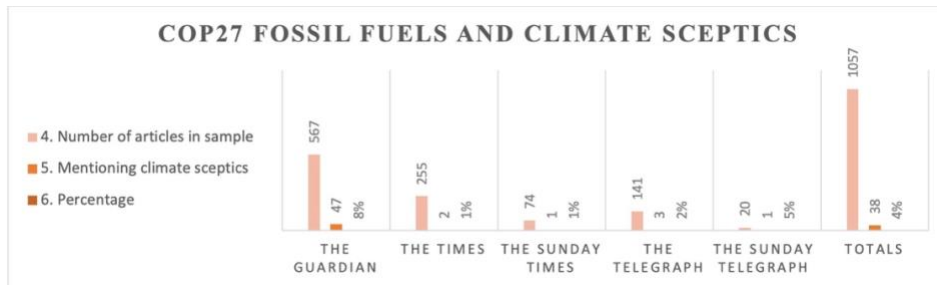


Figure 4. COP27 Fossil fuels and climate change sceptics.



2. How often were prominent climate change denialists and climate change sceptic think tanks mentioned during the time period of COP21, COP26, and COP27 in newspapers?

I expected to find a high number of articles mentioning the prominent climate change deniers and climate change sceptic think tanks. However, the number of articles were very little, as you can see in figure 5. The only climate change denialists that stood out over the years were Bjørn Lomborg and Matthew White Ridley. The fact that they are both authors in newspapers also gave them the opportunity of appearing in the press more often. The climate change sceptic think tanks did not enjoy much coverage in the sample periods, as you can see in figure 6.

Figure 5. Climate change deniers

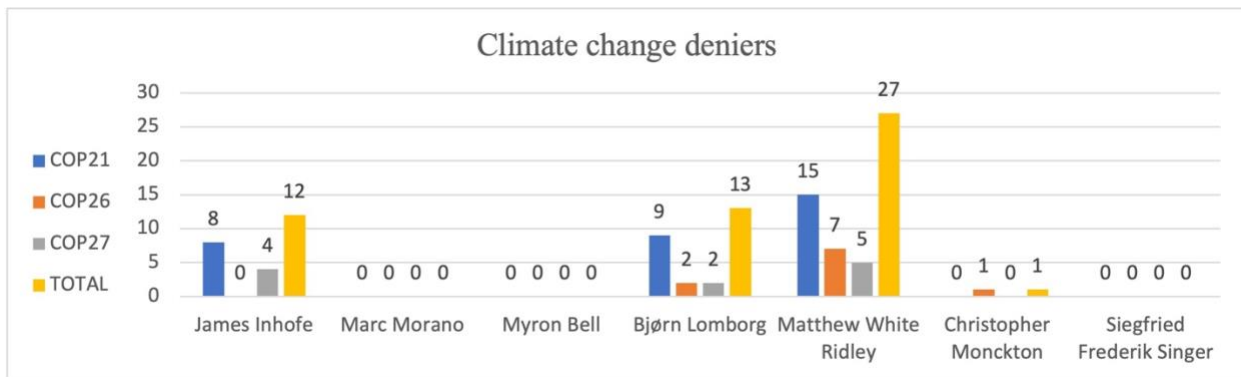
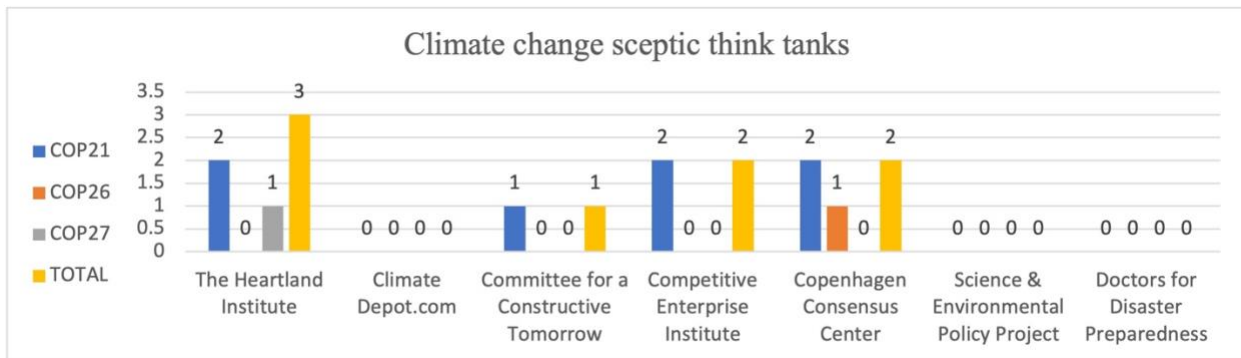


Figure 6. Climate change sceptic think tanks.



3. What was the public opinion of European citizens on climate change and the fossil fuel industry over the time periods of UN COP21, UN COP26, and UNCOP27?

For the third sub question I analyzed one survey from the Eurobarometer for the public opinion of European citizens towards climate change during COP 21. The results show that around 74% of the respondents consider climate change to be a very serious problem, 18% think it's a fairly serious problem and 6% think it's not a serious problem. For the time periods around COP26 and COP27 I looked at two different surveys from the European Investment Bank. The first survey for COP26 shows that 81% of respondents agree with climate change and its consequences being the biggest challenge for humanity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Which is 5% more than during COP21. The second survey, for the time period around COP27 shows that 84% of the respondents believe that if we don't drastically reduce our consumption of energy we will be heading for a global

catastrophe. This is 3% more than during COP26. Therefore, we can see that the concern for climate change has grown over the years, even if the number of fossil fuel delegates has grown as well. When looking at the public opinion towards the fossil fuel industry and climate change we can see that 51% of the respondents think that their national governments need to increase of renewable energies such as wind and solar power during the time period of COP21. When looking at the survey of the European Investment Bank we can see that 63% of the European citizens are in favor of renewable energies during the time period of COP26. The last polling survey shows that around 47% of the respondents want their government to priorities the development of renewable energies. This is perhaps not totally comparable to the data from COP26 but does show a decline of 16% of interest in renewable energies. This could perhaps be explained since the survey also shows that the main concerns at the time of the survey are economic issues such as economic problems and unemployment.

Coming back to the research question: *Do climate change denialists get more attention in newspapers in Europe when there is a bigger delegation of the fossil fuel industry during UN Conferences of Parties?*

We can see that the fossil fuel industry did in fact receive way more attention during COP26 and COP27. However, the most attention it received was during COP26, while the delegation during COP27 was higher. The percentage of climate sceptics mentioned with fossil fuel in the same article was the highest during COP21 (8%), followed by COP26 (5%), and then COP27 (4%). The public concern of European citizens on climate change has grown as well according to the polls of the European Commission and The European Investment Bank. However, the interest in renewable energies seem to have lowered after COP26.

### *Results and Agenda Setting Theory*

Returning to the agenda-setting theory we first go back to our definition of Agenda Setting: ‘The agenda-setting theory suggests media institutions shape the political debate by choosing which topics and issues should feature in the news broadcasts. If a story is on the front-page ... the audience will assume it is an important issue that needs serious attention’ (Institution for Media-studies, 2022). When looking at the results we have seen that the lobby of the fossil fuel delegation did not negatively influence the public concern for climate change for European citizens. On the other hand, the number of articles written on fossil fuel increased at COP26 and COP27, and the interest in renewable energies did seem to decline with 16%. Remarkable is the peak in coverage on climate change denialists during COP26, but this did not seem to have a negative effect on the attitude towards climate change.

## Conclusion

I started by writing this research paper because the last two UN Conferences of Parties have been heavily criticized for the number of fossil fuel delegates that attended the meetings. In this research paper I wanted to find out if these delegations indeed influence the climate change debate. I therefore conducted a quantitative content analysis to measure how often climate change denialists, fossil fuel and climate change were mentioned in newspapers during UN COP21, COP26, and COP27. I concluded that the number of articles written on climate change has increased since COP26, but also the number of articles written on fossil fuel, and that there

was a peak of coverage of articles mentioning climate change denialists during COP26. However, this peak also decreased during COP27. I also looked at the public opinion on climate change of European citizens through the surveys conducted by the European Commission and the European Investment Bank. From these surveys I concluded that the concern over climate change has grown increasingly when comparing COP21, COP26, and COP27. However, the support for renewable energies such as wind and solar power has decreased with 16%, if the survey results can be comparable, to which I will get back in the discussion. If this is true the agenda setting theory that suggest that media institutions help shape the (climate) debate and guides people's opinions to decide what is an important issue, we could consider that the increasing number of fossil fuel delegates at UN COPs can indeed be harmful to the climate debate.

## Discussion

There have been several challenges during this research. The prominent climate change denialists and climate change sceptic think tanks have been mentioned way fewer than expected in the texts. For the validity of future research, I would recommend to only measure prominent climate change denialists and think tanks with a European background, to see if there will be more mentions of them in English written European newspapers. Further research could also start from an inductive coding method, to be able to identify these climate change sceptics and climate change sceptic think tanks. The measuring method is reliable since there was only one person coding the samples. Therefore, there has been a consistency in coding, which you can find back in the codebook in Appendix 1. Codebook. The detailed data collection of this research can be found in Appendix 2 till Appendix 8 in the Excel workbook. There you will find all the articles that have been analyzed, tables and graphics.

The comparison of the three public opinion surveys is questionable. These surveys were the most reliable surveys available that measured the public opinion on climate change. However, for more valid research it would have been better if all surveys were conducted in exactly the same way with exactly the same questions over the three different time periods. However, the public opinion surveys on climate change of the European Commission do not cover COP26 and COP27. And the public opinion survey on climate change of the European Investment bank does not cover COP21. To reach as much consistency as possible I therefore chose to use the survey of the European commission for COP21 and the survey of the European Investment Bank for COP27. For further research it is recommended to use all surveys from the same source. Since the surveys by the European Investment Bank are conducted online, while the European Commission surveys are conducted face to face. However, using secondary data allowed me to be able to analyze the opinion of a bigger group of respondents that I would not have been able to question by myself.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1: Codebook

Newspapers	
1	The Guardian
2	The Times (London)
3	The Sunday Times (London)
4	The Daily Telegraph (London)
5	The Sunday Telegraph (London)

Category 1 – fossil fuel and generic climate change denialists		
VAR1	Fossil fuel AND sceptics	0 not mentioned; 1 mentioned
VAR2	Fossil fuel AND denialist	0 not mentioned; 1 mentioned
VAR3	Fossil fuel AND deniers	0 not mentioned; 1 mentioned

Category 2 – Prominent climate change sceptics		
VAR1	James Inhofe	0 not mentioned; 1 mentioned
VAR2	Marc Morano	0 not mentioned; 1 mentioned
VAR3	Myron Ebell	0 not mentioned; 1 mentioned
VAR4	Bjørn Lomborg	0 not mentioned; 1 mentioned
VAR5	Matthew White Ridley	0 not mentioned; 1 mentioned
VAR6	Christopher Monckton	0 not mentioned; 1 mentioned
VAR7	Siegfried Frederick Singer	0 not mentioned; 1 mentioned

Category 2b – Climate change sceptic think tanks		
VAR8	The Heartland Institute	0 not mentioned; 1 mentioned
VAR9	Climatedepot.com	0 not mentioned; 1 mentioned
VAR10	Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow	0 not mentioned; 1 mentioned
VAR11	Competitive Enterprise Institute	0 not mentioned; 1 mentioned
VAR12	Copenhagen Consensus Center	0 not mentioned; 1 mentioned
VAR13	Science & Environmental Policy Project	0 not mentioned; 1 mentioned
VAR14	Doctors for Disaster Preparedness	0 not mentioned; 1 mentioned

### Appendix 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, Excel Database

Appendix 2.1 Data collection number of articles mentioning climate change in newspapers  
Appendix 2.2 Data collection number of articles mentioning UN COP21; UN COP26; UN COP27 in newspapers  
Appendix 2.3 Data collection number of articles mentioning fossil fuel in newspapers  
Appendix 3.1 Articles that mention fossil fuel and generic climate change sceptics  
Appendix 3.2 Articles that mention fossil fuel and generic climate change sceptics  
Appendix 3.3 Articles that mention fossil fuel and generic climate change sceptics  
Appendix 4.1 Articles that mention prominent climate change sceptics and think tanks  
Appendix 4.2 Articles that mention prominent climate change sceptics and think tanks  
Appendix 4.3 Articles that mention prominent climate change sceptics and think tanks  
Appendix 5.1 Climate change and COP21  
Appendix 5.2 Fossil fuel and generic climate sceptics COP21  
Appendix. 5.3 COP21 Which prominent climate change sceptics are mentioned?  
Appendix 5.4 COP21 Which prominent climate change sceptic think tanks are mentioned?  
Appendix 7.1 Climate change and COP27  
Appendix 7.2 Fossil fuel and generic climate change sceptics  
Appendix 7.3 COP 27 Which prominent climate change sceptics are mentioned?  
Appendix 7.4 Which prominent climate change sceptic think tanks are mentioned?  
Appendix 8. Number of articles written on climate change, fossil fuels and generic climate change sceptics