Inspiration to act or just another scary vision? A study of images accompanying news coverage of the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report in Norway and the UK

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-Every bit of warming matters
-Every year matters
-Every choice matters
(IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C)[1]

1 Introduction

In most countries across the globe, climate change is rapidly moving up the list of vital issues that need to be managed. An obstacle to motivating people to act on the issue is that the changes in climate are not observable in the same direct way as other imminent dangers threatening people's lives and livelihoods. One practical consequence of this fact is that media's task in communicating the threats visually also becomes much more challenging. This in turn may influence the public's (re)actions or lack thereof. O'Neill et al. (2013), in a study of climate-related images published in mass media sources during 2010, found that pictures involving climate impacts were found to be personally important to the study participants (reflecting the 'salience' of the issue), but did not promote their sense of being able to act ('self-efficacy'). Images relating to energy futures and lifestyle choices, on the other hand, to a greater extent created feelings of empowerment. A study involving both text and image (Dahl and Fløttum 2017) relating to media coverage of the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) and carried out within the framework of discursive news values analysis (Bednarek and Caple 2012, 2017) found that the traditional news values of Negativity and Impact were the most prevalent in both text (headlines) and images, while e.g. the values of Personalisation and Proximity (see further below, section 3.2) − which might potentially have brought the issues emotionally and geographically closer to the readers − were much less in evidence.

In the time since AR5 was published, the global challenge that climate change represents has become even more pressing, and new voices, notably the young, are requiring to be heard in conversations on how to deal with it (see e.g. Fløttum, Dahl, and Scheurer forthcoming; Lee et al. 2022). This is something the IPCC recognise and explicitly address in the latest revision of their communication strategy (IPCC 2021; see also Lynn and Peeva 2021):

> Students and children, not listed as a secondary audience in the Communications Strategy, are increasingly identified by Bureau members as a key target, and there is

[1] https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/about/foreword/

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> wide agreement in the Bureau that the IPCC should develop a strategy for addressing this audience, working as appropriate with partners.

The raised awareness and seriousness of the climate issue in the last decade makes it worthwhile to undertake a study of the imagery accompanying news reports on the most recent state of our climate as outlined in the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (AR6). According to the authors behind AR6, there is still time to act on climate change, but time is running out. The present study wishes to focus on how this situation is mediated by the press in the photos selected to accompany the news stories published on the AR6 in two countries, Norway and the UK. Based on previous research involving images accompanying news stories − notably O'Neill et al. (2013) and O'Neill (2020), as well as Dahl (2017) and Dahl and Fløttum (2017) – I here intend to investigate whether there has been a change in the news values and topics reflected in the images in media reports on the AR6 and whether these images are of a kind that has the potential to inspire much needed action.

The paper continues as follows: Section 2 provides a brief overview of some relevant studies on visuals in climate news stories, while Section 3 introduces the material, method and research questions of the present study. Section 4 comprises my findings and a discussion of these, while Section 5 sums up the most important findings and offers some concluding remarks and suggestions for further research.

2 Climate news stories and visuals

An important driver for media attention to climate news is so-called 'focusing events', e.g. international climate summits and the publication of the IPCC's Assessment Reports (Schäfer, Ivanova, and Schmidt 2014; Hase et al. 2021). Another potential driver is dramatic weather-related incidents that may be linked to global warming, typically flooding and droughts. Even though extreme weather events are becoming steadily more frequent across the globe, this has not necessarily resulted in increased media attention. For instance, while Hase et al. (2021) do find an increase in the coverage of climate change news in the 10-year period 2008-2018 in a few countries like the UK and US, for most of the ten countries involved in their study, no such change in attention was identified. As regards themes covered in the climate news stories, the most prominent one in the UK media (which are of particular interest in the present context) was found to be 'Causes & Solutions to Climate Change' (Hase et al. 2021).

In contrast to studies involving language use in climate texts (see e.g. contributions in Fløttum 2017), visuals have been less focused on. Studies involving one researcher in particular stands out as exceptions in this sparsely populated landscape, namely Saffron O'Neill (see references throughout this paper). An important example in the current context is O'Neill et al. (2013), an investigation into what type of climate imagery has an impact on viewers' engagement in terms of salience ('the image makes the issue of climate change important to me') and self-efficacy ('the image makes me feel I can do something about it'). Based on their findings regarding these two issues, the authors then undertook a content-based classification of the images used in the reported experiment, resulting in a set of overarching themes (see 3.2 for further details). In the study of salience, a cracked ground would represent the theme of 'Climate impacts', with smokestacks representing 'Climate pollution', while pictures of politicians would be coded as 'People'. In the analysis of efficacy, a wind farm or an electric car represented the theme of 'Energy futures', while e.g. a climate protest image was categorised under 'Effective lifestyle choices'.

In a later study, O'Neill (2020) drew on the same coding scheme and analysed climate change images that appeared in UK and US newspapers over the period 2001-2009 in terms of, *inter alia*, denotative content. She found that identifiable people (mainly politicians) and

climate impacts and causes were the dominant ones, with drought or flooding as common impacts, notably in the first part of the period. Such images were also found to be common in Dahl and Fløttum's (2017) study involving climate images accompanying news items on the AR5 from two UK newspapers. Whether these themes are still predominant will be investigated in the present study.

3 Material, method and research questions

3.1 Material

The material for the current study consists of news items published on the same day as each of the three Working Group (WG) reports constituting AR6 (along with a Synthesis report) were presented.[2] WGI, on the physical science basis, was published on 9 August 2021, WGII, on impacts, adaptation and vulnerability, was published on 28 February 2022, and WGIII, on mitigation of climate change, was published on 4 April 2022. The media sources selected to be part of this study were as follows: Norwegian media: the 'broadsheets' *Aftenposten*, *Bergens Tidende* (commonly referred to as *BT*, a regional paper) and *Dagens Næringsliv* (commonly referred to as *DN*, Norway's major financial newspaper), the tabloid *VG* (which started out as *Verdens Gang*) and the website of the national broadcaster NRK; UK media: the broadsheets *Guardian*, *Times* and *Financial Times* (*FT*), the tabloid *Daily Mail* and the website of the national broadcaster BBC. In all cases, the news items were culled from the news source's online site. The items belong to various categories and sections within the website; the only factors employed in the text selection process were event (IPCC part-report published) and date (9 August 2021, 28 February 2022 and 4 April 2022, respectively). Comparing news sources from the two countries in question is not straightforward, as the media landscape looks different in the two media markets (see e.g. Reuters Institute 2021; for Norway, see also Hendrickx and Sjøvaag 2022). As a consequence, the sources do not necessarily overlap completely in terms of category, resources and audiences.[3] The selected media were however found to be the best possible match for present purposes and should provide a quite representative overview of coverage by what may be termed traditional media in the two countries. Table 1 provides an overview of the number of texts[4] and accompanying images from all sources for all three part-reports. The table reveals that each media source typically published one or two items related to the part-report in question, with the Norwegian sources publishing slightly more texts altogether (26) than the UK ones (21). The publication of WGII on 28 February coincided in time with heavy media coverage of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which may potentially have had an impact on the number of stories. However, the table shows that the numbers are fairly similar for all three WG reports in both countries.

Table 1. Number of news items and images, all part-reports and sources

Country	**Media source**	**WGI: no. of stories / pictures**	**WGII: no. of stories / pictures**	**WGIII: no. of stories / pictures**	**Total**
Norway	*Aftenposten*	2 / 2	2 / 2	3 / 3	
	BT	2 / 13	1 / 1	3 / 4	
	DN	2 / 4	1 / 1	1 / 1	

[2] https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/

[3] The *Guardian* in particular has in recent years earned a reputation globally for taking climate change very seriously, appointing dedicated journalists to cover the issue as well as allocating substantial space to it in the newspaper.

[4] No attempt has been made to classify the texts according to genre. Other words that will be used in the following to refer to them are (*news*) *stories* and *items*.

	VG	3 / 12	1 / 6	1 / 7	
	NRK	1 / 10	2 / 15	1 / 7	
Total		**10 / 41**	**7 / 25**	**9 / 22**	**26/88**
UK	*Guardian*	1 / 1	2 / 2	4 / 4	
	Times	1 / 5	1 / 1	1 / 4	
	FT	1 / 1	1 / 3	1 / 2	
	Daily Mail	2 / 15	1 / 5	1 / 5	
	BBC	1 / 4	1 / 5	2 / 8	
Total		**6 / 26**	**6 / 16**	**9 / 23**	**21/65**

3.2 Method

The study will combine an image content-based analysis inspired by those undertaken by Saffron O'Neill (see above, sections 1 and 2, O'Neill et al. 2013; O'Neill 2020) and a news values analysis as described in Bednarek and Caple (2017; see details below). To decide which images had the potential to engage, O'Neill and colleagues organised three Q-methodology workshops in three countries (Australia, UK, and USA) where participants were shown a concourse of images that were culled through a content analysis of climate-related articles (O'Neill et al. 2013, 414-416). The images had been thematically coded based on previous studies (Leiserowitz 2006; Smith and Joffe 2009). The content analysis of the images included in the current study will be presented as a list of fairly specific 'topics' emanating from the analysis rather than the broader themes established in O'Neill et al. (2013). This was done to distinguish clearly between e.g. images of fires and drought, both of which represent the broader theme 'Climate impacts' in O'Neill et al. (2013). A similar distinction has been made between images of politicians and young people, both of which are classified under the theme 'People' in O'Neill et al (2013). As regards the news values analysis, it is based on the set of eleven news values established in Bednarek and Caple (2017) for both text and image: Aesthetic Appeal (visuals only), Consonance (conforming to stereotypes), Eliteness, Impact, Negativity, Personalisation, Positivity, Proximity, Superlativeness, Timeliness and Unexpectedness. In order to decide which news value is realised, both the co(n)text and intended audience must be considered. One example of the latter is the flooded village image in Table 3 as representing the value of Proximity for a British audience, but not (necessarily) for a Norwegian one; another example is the image of an oil platform, which even within one country may represent Negativity to one audience, but Positivity to another (e.g. readers who are investors or employees in oil companies[5]). As indicated in the analysis of the fire image in Table 3 as representing only what is called 'weak' Personalisation, the news values are scalar in nature (Bednarek and Caple, 2017: 68). A person depicted close up and with a visible face would represent a much stronger version of this value (see section 4.5 for a description of such an image). Finally, as the examples in both Table 2 and Table 3 indicate, several news values may be represented in one text sequence (headline) or one image. In the present study, my focus is on visual communication; text, in the shape of headlines and image captions, will therefore only be commented on as support for the analysis and discussion of the images.

Table 2. Illustration of key news values displayed in headlines from the material

News value	*Verbal realisation*

[5] See Tvinnereim, Lægreid, and Fløttum (2020) for a study on Norway's energy transition, identifying attitude differences related to words and expressions like 'oil and gas'.

Eliteness	Window of opportunity to save the planet is 'rapidly closing': **UN** issues its gravest report yet on the impacts of climate change, warning that temperature rise is affecting ALL living things (*Daily Mail*, WGII)
Impact	Window of opportunity to save the planet is 'rapidly closing': UN issues its gravest report yet on **the impacts** of climate change, warning that **temperature rise** is affecting ALL living things
Negativity	Window of opportunity to save the planet is '**rapidly closing'**: UN issues its **gravest** report yet on the impacts of climate change, **warning** that temperature rise is affecting ALL living things
Personalisation	'**We** can't wait. The signs are unmistakable': Biden urges US action after doomsday UN report says… (*Daily Mail*, WGI) Klimarapporten roper varsko [sounds the alarm] for 1,5-gradersmålet. – **Vi** må endre livene **våre** [**We** must change **our** lives], sier klimaministeren (*Aftenposten*, WGIII)
Proximity	[NO EXAMPLES IN MATERIAL]
Superlativeness	Window of opportunity to save the planet is 'rapidly closing': UN issues its gravest report yet on the impacts of climate change, warning that temperature rise is **affecting ALL living things**
Timeliness	Climate change: IPCC scientists say it's' **now** or never' to limit warming (*BBC*, WGIII) FNs klimapanel: Klimautslippene kan halveres [Climate emissions may be halved] **innen 2030** (*DN*, WGIII)

Table 3. Illustration of key news values and content displayed in images[6]

News value and content description	*Visual realisation*
Negativity + **Personalisation** (weak) + **Superlativeness** Extensive forest/bush fire and anonymous firefighters	

[6] For copyright reasons, key news values in visuals are illustrated by means of pictures that may be rendered without violating such rights. The pictures are thematically similar to those found in the news text analysed as part of the study.

Impact + Negativity + Proximity (for UK audience) Flooded British village (geographically recognised in buildings and store name)	
Eliteness Politician (President Biden)	
Undecided news value (potentially neutral/positive/negative) Onshore wind turbines	
Undecided news value (potentially neutral/positive/negative) Offshore oil platform	

3.3 Research questions

As indicated in the Introduction, an important aspect of the present study is to consider whether the images in the material have the potential to engage readers (in terms of 'salience' and 'self-efficacy', O'Neill et al. 2013). In addition, the study will compare the images accompanying the news items related to the publishing of AR6 with those of AR5 (reported in Dahl and Fløttum 2017) in terms of exploitation of news values. Particular attention will be paid to the values of Personalisation and Proximity, as I consider these to have the potential to make the image particularly relevant and emotionally engaging to the news source's readership. Finally, as the current study of AR6-related images involves news outlets in two countries, it will also be possible and relevant to investigate similarities and differences between the two reporting contexts. Hence, the following three research questions (RQs) will be addressed:

(1) Are the images of a kind that make them personally important (salient) to the readers, and/or promote their sense of being able to act on climate change (self-efficacy)?
(2) Are the same news values reflected in the images accompanying AR6 news items as those accompanying AR5 news items (Dahl & Fløttum 2017)?
(3) Are there differences between the Norwegian and UK news sources regarding findings related to RQ (1) and (2)?

4 Findings and discussion

This section starts with an overview of the material as such (4.1), before I focus on the images and the topics they portray (4.2). Next follows an account of the news values identified in the images (4.3), before I briefly comment on differences between the visuals used for the three part-reports (4.4). Finally, I compare the Norwegian and UK material (4.5).

4.1 Reflections on the material as a whole

As shown in Table 1, most of the news sources in both countries published one or two texts on each of the three WG reports. The exceptions are the three on WGI by the Norwegian tabloid *VG*, the four on WGIII by the broadsheet the *Guardian*, and, as well as the three on the same part-report by the Norwegian broadsheets *Aftenposten* (national) and *BT (*regional). The latter finding may be interpreted as a (weak) sign that the topic of WGIII (Mitigation) is considered by the media to be of more interest to readers than the other two (Science and Impacts). However, an explanation may also be that the publishing of the first two part-reports (August 2021 and February 2022) had to fight for attention with an ongoing pandemic and the start of a new war in Europe, respectively.

As regards the number of pictures accompanying the texts, there is more variation. Many of the news items include just one or two pictures, but there are also items with many images. The Norwegian tabloid *VG* included more pictures per story for all three part-reports than the other sources in the Norwegian material. The same trend is seen in the UK material. In its reporting on WGI, the tabloid *Daily Mail* included 8 and 7 pictures respectively per story (see Dahl 2017 for a similar observation on that news source's AR5 items). Most of these *DM* visuals are typical of the material as a whole (see further below for content descriptions), but one image sticks out in this context: a polar bear on an ice floe, with the somewhat odd caption "Following devastating flash floods in Germany and wildfires in Greece, the United Nations report says that climate change is already affecting every region across the globe. Pictured: A polar bear on melting ice". The polar bear image was long an iconic climate change image, described by O'Neill (2020) as a visual synecdoche, or even a visual metonym (O'Neill 2022). In Dahl and Fløttum (2017), a polar bear image was assigned the news value of Consonance (see 3.2) rather than Impact (see also Smith and Joffe 2009; O'Neill et al. 2015). These days the image seems to be used less, perhaps having lost much of its former symbolic power due to overuse and a broader understanding in society of climate change impacts.

Two of the news items on WGI in the Norwegian material that have a very high number of pictures per story are published by *BT* and the NRK website. In the NRK case, all ten images are of persons, more specifically eight national politicians (representatives of government and opposition) and two NGO representatives (all images that may be assigned the news value of Eliteness). As for the two *BT* items, the first has a national angle, and the headline reads as follows (my translation, as will also be the case for later Norwegian examples, with explanatory comments in brackets): "Bastholm [leader of the green party] on the UN climate report: A reminder of how extremely dangerous ['livsfarlig'] Norwegian oil policy is". It is accompanied by seven images of people, mainly national politicians (Minister of Climate and Environment and leader of MDG [the green party], part of the opposition), but also representatives of the youth wing of the green party, 'Grønn Ungdom" [Green Youth]. An interesting issue in the assignment of news values here is whether Eliteness can be said to be a fully adequate label for the images of the young politicians. They are also part of the much larger 'community' of youth who protest against the status quo of climate policy but who are not necessarily members of organised bodies such as political parties and NGOs (see Fløttum et al. forthcoming; see also Lee et al. 2022). In that capacity, the news value of

Personalisation may be more pertinent. In Table 1, these images have nevertheless been included in the topic category of 'Politician' and in Table 6, in the news value category of Eliteness. The second *BT* item is more representative of the angle chosen by the other media sources for this part-report: "Climate scientists have never been more certain. It [the weather] becomes steadily more extreme". This item comprises six images, of which five depict climate impacts such as flooding, drought and ice melting (news values Impact and Negativity), while the last one is of participants at the climate summit in Paris in 2015 (representing the value of Eliteness). The local angle of *BT* is reflected in two of the flooding pictures, where the caption of the first reads as follows: "People from Bergen are used to handling large amounts of precipitation. The UN climate panel state that increased frequency of extreme weather is due to human-induced global warming".

4.2 Image topics

All the images were analysed for content, which resulted in the classification into a number of topics, listed alphabetically in Tables 4 (Norwegian sources) and 5 (UK sources). Some topics were co-represented in some pictures, e.g. a picture of drought, also featuring animals in the shape of a carcass and livestock. This implies that the total number of represented topics in the two tables is higher than the total number of pictures. As the numbers also reveal, some of the topics were found just once in one subcorpus, but several times in the other, e.g. 'Researcher', while others were found in one subcorpus only, e.g. 'Nature' and 'Politician' in the Norwegian material and 'Meat' and 'Carbon removal' in the UK material.

Examples from my material of imagery identified by O'Neill et al. (2013) as being personally relevant (representing their theme 'Impacts'; se Introduction) have been marked by one asterisk in the two tables, while those with the potential to promote action (depicting their themes 'Energy futures' and 'Effective lifestyle choices', see Introduction) have been marked by two asterisks.

Table 4. Norwegian news source images, all three reports

Topic	**WGI**	**WGII**	**WGIII**	**Total**
Animal	0	2	0	2
Bureaucrat	0	0	1	1
Carbon removal	0	0	0	0
*Drought	1	3	0	4
*Fire (forest/bush)	7	6	0	13
*Flooding	4	1	2	7
Globe	0	3	1	4
*Ice (melting)	2	1	0	3
IPCC / UN person	4	1	5	10
**Meat	0	0	0	0
*Migration	0	1	0	1
Nature	0	1	0	1
NGO person	2	1	0	3
Politician	19	4	4	27
**Protest	0	1	2	3
**Renewable energy	0	0	3	3
Researcher	4	0	1	5
Smokestack	0	2	3	5
Transport (negative)	0	0	0	0

**Transport (positive)	0	0	0	0
Unclear	0	0	0	0
Young people	2	1	1	4
Total				**96**

Table 5. UK news source images and topics, all three reports

Topic	**WGI**	**WGII**	**WGIII**	**Total**
Animal	1	2	0	3
Bureaucrat	0	0	0	0
Carbon removal	0	0	3	3
*Drought	2	2	1	5
*Fire (forest/bush)	11	5	0	16
*Flooding	7	4	1	12
Globe	0	0	0	0
*Ice (melting)	1	1	0	2
IPCC / UN person	1	1	4	6
**Meat	0	0	1	1
*Migration	0	0	0	0
Nature	0	0	0	0
NGO person	1	0	0	1
Politician	0	0	0	0
Protest	1	1	3	5
**Renewable energy	0	0	6	6
Researcher	1	0	0	1
Smokestack	0	0	4	4
Transport (negative)	0	0	1	1
**Transport (positive)	0	0	2	2
Unclear	0	2	0	2
Young people	1	0	1	2
Total				**72**

There are two prominent findings that may be gleaned from Tables 4 and 5. Firstly, in terms of climate change impact, 'Fire' is the topic that is most often resorted to. This is true for both subcorpora. 'Flooding' is the second most represented impact topic and found in news items on all three part-reports. Secondly, and most conspicuously, 'Politician' is by far the most represented topic in the Norwegian subcorpus. Interestingly, there are no instances of this topic in the UK material.

The AR6 represents the first time that demand, services and social aspects of mitigation are included in WGIII (Chapter 5).[7] This implies, *inter alia*, targeting uptake of technologies and people's consumption patterns. In terms of how this may be reflected in the images accompanying stories on this part-report, we see that in the UK material, there are six instances of the topic 'Renewable energy' (mainly wind turbines), three instances of 'Carbon removal' (a plant in Iceland and two forest images, with captions mentioning carbon removal), two of 'Transport (positive; bicycles and electric car) and one of 'Meat', a major source of harmful gases like methane and CO_2. The only topic also present in the Norwegian

[7] I am grateful to Professor Helge Drange, Geophysical Institute and Bjerknes Centre for Climate Research, University of Bergen, for pointing this out in his presentation on the WGIII report to the CLIMLIFE research group in June 2022.

stories is 'Renewable energy', with one image of solar panels in China and two of wind turbines in Norway. As Norway is the country with the highest proportion of electric vehicles in the world,[8] we might have expected to see images representing 'Transport (positive)' in the Norwegian material, but as Table 4 reveals, there are none.

In terms of how many pictures are likely to make the issue of climate change relevant to the readers (salience), it turns out that as many as 35 of 72 in the UK material represent an 'Impact' topic, i.e. nearly 50%. In the Norwegian material, 28 of the 96 images represent an Impact topic, i.e. around 30%. As for inspiration to take action (self-efficacy), 14 of the UK images, or about 20%, represent relevant topics, while for the Norwegian material, only 6 images, a mere 6% of the total, were of this kind.

4.3 News values represented in visual coverage of AR6

As already indicated (Introduction), Dahl and Fløttum (2017) found that the traditional news values Negativity and Impact were prevalent in their visual material from 2013-14 (AR5). In addition, the values of Proximity (geographical closeness) and/or Superlativeness (high degree of something) were drawn on in many pictures accompanying stories on the AR5 in the two UK news sources analysed. The potentially engaging value of Personalisation was also present, but to a lower degree. It should be noted that the texts included in the material for the AR5 report were culled from a wider time window than one specific day, as is the case for the present study. This would have given the news sources the opportunity to report on various angles of each part-report, potentially resulting in a broader representation of news values as well.

Table 6 provides an overview of the most prevalent news values realised in the news stories on AR6, listed alphabetically. The ones not listed either had just one or two instances (e.g. Aesthetic appeal, reflected in a picture of colourful tropical fish, Consonance in the shape of a polar bear, and Unexpectedness, noted for a picture of a flooded metro carriage full of people holding on to straps with water up to their shoulders), or no instances at all (Timeliness). The prominent use of images depicting fires and floods (Tables 4 and 5) implies that the news values of Impact and Negativity are extensively represented in the material as such, while the Norwegian material also draws heavily on the value of Eliteness, a reflection of the many images of politicians (Table 4).

Table 6. Most prevalent news values in material

News value	**Norwegian images**	**UK images**	**Total**
Eliteness	42	6	48
Impact	24	35	59
Negativity	26	39	65
Personalisation	24	26	50
Proximity	4	0	4
Superlativeness[9]	3	18	21
Undecided (examples: globe, oil platform, wind turbines)	14	14	28

[8] https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/electric-cars-take-two-thirds-norway-car-market-led-by-tesla-2022-01-03/ (Accessed 13 July 2022)

[9] Note that there is a certain element of subjectivity in the analysis of this news value.

4.4 Comparison of the visuals for the three WG reports

In their presentation of the three part-reports, the IPCC used different metaphors/catch phrases to communicate the seriousness of the issues focused on. The WGI report on the science was presented as 'code red' for humanity, WGII, on impacts, by the more positive 'window of opportunity' metaphor, while WGIII, on mitigation, by the temporal warning of 'now or never'. These specific expressions (or similar) were seen in the headlines of many of the news stories that are part of the current material. However, it also turned out that there is not necessarily a very clear distinction between the headlines the news source has created when writing about the three reports. For instance, the Norwegian tabloid *VG* used 'code red' about a text on WGI, while the regional broadsheet *BT* stated in a headline on WGIII that it is 'Still code red'. The most interesting set of headlines is found in the material from the *Guardian*: WGI: 'Starkest warning yet'; WGII: 'Bleakest warning yet' and WGIII: 'Final warning'.

As for any differences in image use for each part-report, just a few impressions stand out in Tables 4 and 5. The clearest is the high number of images representing politicians found in connection with news stories on WGI (Science) in the Norwegian material, perhaps an indication that they are seen as the ones responsible for honouring internationally agreed climate commitments intended to prevent warming above 1.5 degrees. Another feature is that the majority of the images of fires (and to a smaller degree flooding) for both subcorpora occur in connection with news items reporting on WGI, but with similar images also being used in connection with reports on WGII (Impact). As for the images accompanying stories on WGIII (Mitigation), it is difficult to see any clear trends in terms of topic. When we also consider news value (Table 6), we see that while we here too find images of flooding, drought and politicians, several of the images accompanying the WGIII report have been classified as Undecided. Examples are images showing the globe, wind turbines, solar panels, electric cars and meat.

4.5 Comparison of the Norwegian and UK material

A comparison of Tables 4 and 5 reveals that the Norwegian and UK material share a number of features. Extreme weather events such as drought, forest fire and flooding are frequently used to accompany the news stories in both countries, with fires as the most frequent in both subcorpora. Many of these images also include people, typically firefighters. One fire picture stands out, however, depicting an older woman dressed in black at a distance from a house about to be consumed by the flames coming from the forest in the background. She is pictured from the front and fairly close up. Her eyes are closed, her mouth open in what may be a scream or a struggle to breathe, her hand clasping her chest. It is easy to feel and share her despair. The gripping picture (accredited to Konstantinos Tsakalidis) appears in the *Financial Times* (for the WGI report) and the *Times* (for WGII). The caption for the *FT* item focuses on the scientific projections presented in the WGI report: "A wildfire in Greece on Sunday. Even with rapid emission cuts, temperatures would continue to rise until 'at least' 2050, scientists said, and lead to further extreme weather events". The *Times* item focuses on impacts on humans, the focus of WGII: "Wildfires ravaged the island of Evia in Greece, last August. The report says increased exposure to wildfire smoke is leading to heart and breathing conditions among the population". Such 'disaster' framings of the future are commonly seen in climate news (see e.g. Dahl 2017; Painter 2015). They were also prominent in news items on AR5, but then some of the captions accompanying the pictures situated the disaster in question at a time that was more distant ("A leaked UN report warns climate change will mean more devastating floods, as happened in Pakistan in 2010"; Dahl and Fløttum 2017: 130) than what is the case with the reports on AR6 ("on Sunday", "last August").

As already indicated (4.2), the most striking difference between the news reports on the AR6 in the two countries focused on here is the prevalence of images of politicians and other individuals embodying the news value of Eliteness in the Norwegian material. The focus on politicians is also reflected in the headline of four of the news items in the Norwegian material (but none in the UK material): WGI: 'Politicians frightened by new UN report: "This makes me extremely scared ['livredd']"; "Bastholm [leader of the green party] on the UN climate report: A reminder of how extremely dangerous ['livsfarlig'] Norwegian oil policy is" (also quoted in 4.1); "Strong reactions on the climate report: "This is very serious", says the climate minister'; WGIII: 'The climate report sounds a warning about [roper varsko for] the 1.5 degree target: "We must change our lives", says the climate minister'.

The very small number of images realising the news value of Eliteness in the UK material all refer to persons related to the IPCC/ UN, such as Secretary General Antonio Guterres, climate researchers and NGO members. Such individuals are also found in the Norwegian material, but the majority of 'elite' individuals here are national level politicians from various parties. Interestingly, there are also images of young people who are members of the youth wing of a political party or environmental organisation, a fact that supports the IPCC's decision to focus more on the young in their communication efforts (see Introduction). The prominent focus on politicians in the news coverage of the AR6 in Norway may perhaps be taken as a reflection of an understanding in this country that climate change is an issue that first and foremost is the responsibility of the politicians. A related reason is the complex link between managing Norway's extremely profitable oil and gas industry and the country's climate policy (see e.g. Dahl and Fløttum 2019; Fløttum and Espeland 2014; Ihlen 2009).

5 Summing up and concluding remarks

This study has sought to answer three research questions. The most important one concerned the ability the images might have in making the new climate knowledge presented by the IPCC engaging and relevant to the readers of the news items. As it turned out that impact topics were heavily drawn on in the material as a whole, we may conclude that the journalists (or image editors) have managed to make the climate situation personally important (salient) to the readers. Notably the many fire-related images, often including exhausted firefighters or scared homeowners (and thus adding the news value of Personalisation to Impact) seem moving in this context. However, there turned out to be few images inspiring action on climate change (self-efficacy). Even though there were instances of pictures showing new energy sources, climate friendly transportation and protest marches, some pictures also conveyed a potentially confusing message. One such example is a BBC text on WGIII (Mitigation), which shows four cows grazing in a field, with a runway behind them where four or five smaller jet planes are parked. The caption is needed to establish a relevant context for the image: "Mobility is one of the main sources of emissions for wealthier people."

Another issue addressed in this study was whether the news values reflected in images in news items on AR6 were the same ones as those found in a similar study connected to AR5 (Dahl & Fløttum 2017). The analysis of this issue showed that the traditional values of Negativity and Impact were still the most common in both subcorpora. More surprising was the finding that in the Norwegian material, Eliteness was frequently seen, notably in connection with news on WGI (Science) and primarily embodied in pictures of national politicians. The UK material in contrast had no such pictures, which represents a change from the AR5 study, where images of several national politicians were included.

All in all, this study has confirmed that climate news is challenging to mediate visually. The fact that climate change as such cannot be directly observed implies that the 'eyewitness' function press pictures typically serve must be replaced by an illustrating function (Bednarek and Caple 2017; Dahl and Fløttum 2017). And while verbal accounts may draw up quite detailed scenarios of the future, visual representations will be linked to the present ("A wildfire in Greece on Sunday"; from *FT*, present material) or even the past ("…will mean more devastating floods, as happened in Pakistan in 2010"; from *DM*, Dahl and Fløttum 2017). This also explains why many images related to mitigation are decontextualised generic images from image banks (see e.g. Machin 2004). The fact that some of the pictures in this category seem somewhat haphazard, such as the 'cows and jet planes' image described above, bears witness to the challenges facing the journalists producing the climate stories. New business models have been implemented in the media and the specialist climate reporters employed by news sources operating in large markets have become fewer in recent years (Schäfer and Painter 2021). This may also have had an impact on newsroom practices, including how much time and effort goes into selecting appropriate images for a climate story. In addition, the journalist must balance the need to inform and the need to entertain, or at least attract, the reader, an act that sometimes tips the scales in an unfortunate direction. Cases in point are heatwave images portraying "fun in the sun" (O'Neill et al. 2023).

The present study points to several avenues for further research. Firstly, it may be worthwhile to carry out experiments exposing participants to texts containing images that represent the self-efficacy topics 'Energy futures' and 'Effective lifestyle choices' seen in the material analysed here (decontextualised electric cars being charged or a person on a bike, seen from behind) and similar images that also include clearly visible individuals (reflecting the news value of [strong] Personalisation) in local settings ([strong] Proximity), in order to see if the latter kind are more likely to inspire action. Secondly, as the young now represent an increasingly important audience in climate communication, it might be interesting to study images included in texts directed specifically at them. Special attention may be given to texts issued by the IPCC, if their new communication strategy (see section 1) also results in publications dedicated to tomorrow's managers of climate change.

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