

The Untold Story: Climate change sinks below the headlines



Investing in rural people

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

February 2016 was the hottest month on record.¹ Two months earlier, world leaders gathered in Paris to hammer out a climate deal just as extreme weather events were causing droughts across southern Africa, leaving millions of people hungry. At the same time, record numbers of migrants continued to arrive in Europe. Climate change is among the greatest threats to face humanity and yet the issue, its tragic consequences and its solutions have been largely disregarded by some of the world's influential media outlets.

“The Untold Story: Climate change sinks below the headlines” is a research report prepared for presentation to international media attending the International Journalism Festival in Perugia, Italy in April 2016.

It will be released just days before world leaders gather at the United Nations in New York to sign the concluding document of the twenty-first session of the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP21), which took place in December 2015 in Paris. At the time, the Paris Agreement made headlines and led news bulletins across the globe. But leading up to COP21 and in the months following it, coverage on climate change significantly fell off the radar of major media outlets across Europe and the United States.

The report provides an analysis of the depth of media reporting around climate change in two distinct periods: two months before COP21 and two months after COP21. Specifically, it explores whether issues connecting climate change, food security, agriculture and migration made headlines, and if so, how much prominence these stories were given. The report asks what expert voices were heard throughout the stories and whether farmers or migrants themselves had a voice. And finally, the report looks at what newsreaders understand about food and climate-related migration and their impression of media coverage provided.

Among some of its key findings:

- Climate change stories were either completely absent or their numbers decreased in major media outlets in Europe and the United States before and after COP21 in Paris.
- Coverage on the consequences of climate change such as migration, fell by half in the months after COP21 and people directly impacted by climate change rarely had a voice in stories or were not mentioned at all.
- News consumers want climate change issues and solutions to be given more prominence in media outlets and, in particular, want more information on the connections between climate change, food insecurity, conflict and migration.

¹ <http://www.wunderground.com/blog/JeffMasters/february-smashes-earths-alltime-global-heat-record-by-a-jawdropping> (accessed 17th March 2016).

The report was commissioned by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), a specialized agency of the United Nations that invests in rural people, empowering them to reduce poverty, increase food security, improve nutrition and strengthen resilience. The research was carried out by lead researcher, Sam Dubberley, with the research assistance of Vincent Goubet and Haluk Mert Bal.

The research findings are drawn from an analysis of the content of news stories across influential and popular media outlets: **TF1** and **France 2** in France, **RAI** and **LA7** in Italy, **BBC** and **Channel 4** in the United Kingdom and **CBS** and **NBC** in the United States, as well as the front pages of print editions of **Le Monde** and **Libération** in France, **Corriere della Sera** and **La Repubblica** in Italy, **The Guardian** and **Daily Mail** in the United Kingdom and the **New York Times** and **USA Today** in the United States. Monitoring the main news bulletins and front pages of newspapers enabled the analysis of the reporting on climate change, agriculture and migration that appeared in the mainstream media and seen by all audience members, not just those searching specifically for stories on those thematic areas.

The news analysis is augmented by a study of focus groups comprised of news consumers in France and the United Kingdom.

The research was conducted over a two-week period in February 2016 and builds on initial research that was conducted on media in France and the United Kingdom in September 2015.

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

Key findings from the analysis were:

- **The number of stories on climate change covered by the British and French media that were monitored in this report fell from five to two between the September 2015 and February 2016 periods.** There were no stories published on climate change by the U.K. market in either coding period. The only French stories appeared on France 2's evening bulletin in February 2016. In September 2015, stories appeared on France 2 and TF1.
- **In the two-week February 2016 coding period, two months after the COP21 meeting, eight stories about the challenge of climate change appeared either in main television news bulletins or on the front pages of the newspapers coded.** The majority of these stories appeared in U.S. media (five), the French media published two stories and the Italian media one. No stories on climate change appeared on the front pages or main news bulletins of the British media covered by this research.
- **News outlets reporting on agriculture and challenges to agriculture saw this as a predominantly domestic issue.** In September 2015, three stories were covered by the French media concerning agriculture – but all of these were domestic. In February 2016, there was a stark increase in reporting about agriculture, but this was due, in the main, to French domestic stories (U.K. and U.S. news outlets also published domestic stories on agriculture).
- **European news outlets are explaining why migration is happening less frequently than in 2015.** In the stories on migration coded in September 2015, news organizations explained why migration (for reasons linked to the conflict in Syria, conflict in general or economic reasons) was happening in 66 per cent of stories. By February 2016, this had fallen to 33 per cent.
- **Reporting on climate change, migration and agriculture tend to link their reporting to institutions rather than reporting on the impact on individuals.** In all countries covered by this research and in both coding periods, there were more stories which focused on the response of institutions to climate change, agriculture and migration than focused on the response of individuals. News consumers in the focus groups did not believe that major media helped them understand climate change and, in particular, that a connection exists between climate change and issues such as agricultural failure, food insecurity, conflict and migration from developing countries.
- **While there are a rich variety of climate stories reported in diverse, specialist media, such stories are few and far between on the front pages or main television news bulletins analysed. When asked, news consumers say they do not know where else to go to find them.** In both periods covered by this research the numbers of climate

change stories are very low. There were 5 stories in period one – only in television bulletins. In period two, there was a wider spread of news outlets that did cover climate change, but this was still only 8 stories over 14 days. However, these stories did not report on agriculture-related impacts such as on small-scale farmers in developing countries – one of the biggest demographics hit by climate change. The audience noted this, saying: *“The broadsheets, you can get the articles there [on climate change] that go in depth – providing you can find them. They certainly won’t be front page.”*

- **Editorial decisions made by news organizations and editors have a direct impact on audience views and beliefs about climate change.** News consumers tend to repeat the mainstream news agenda when asked to produce their own news stories on climate change. For example, when asked to play the ‘news game’, a research tool that asks participants to recreate news stories as if they were journalists (see methodology section for more), focus group participants picked stories that repeated the editorial decisions of the news bulletins they referenced. When asked why, one participant noted that: *“I was thinking about what the media puts out, not what I thought was important to have in the news bulletin,”* stating that, *“it reflects back what we’ve seen previously, and then when you’re in the driving seat to do it, you do that.”* When pushed on failing to include stories about agriculture, migration and climate change in their own news bulletins, people noted that *“It isn’t a top news story.”*
- **News consumers believe climate change-related impacts need to be taken more seriously by news organizations and given higher prominence.** Although climate change coverage may have appeared in other newspaper sections, during the reporting period not one of the newspapers reviewed featured the issue on its front page. Throughout the focus group interviews, there was a near-universal demand that news organizations give climate-related issues higher prominence and offer solution-driven reporting which, they believed, is not available currently. They perceived reporting on climate change to be either over-dramatic or boring and not focused on helping the public contribute to solutions to problems. This was emphasized in one conversation in focus group 7 in France: (Julie) *“Reporting on climate change is frequently exaggerated, it panics people, instead of helping find solutions, even small solutions, which could change the daily behaviour of each of us.”* (Serge) *“It’s preferable to start with small solutions than starting by criticizing huge catastrophes. We can’t do anything about huge catastrophes.”*
- **Those on the front lines directly impacted by climate change rarely have a voice or are mentioned in stories.** In September 2015, not one news bulletins reporting on climate change focused on individuals impacted by climate change. Instead, reporting concentrated on institutions, interviewing academics and climate change specialists. In February 2016, of the eight stories on climate change, only three focused on individuals impacted by climate change. Focus group participants argued that news

organizations need to make the stories and the impact of climate change more about people and individuals, and not about institutions. This was emphasized by Roger from focus group 1 (U.K.): *"I think [news organizations] should have a position. I think there are a huge number of people out there who couldn't care less if there are polar bears or not. They are much more worried about if there's going to be a bit of food on the plate. I think the media should be more high-profile about climate change and a bit more honest about what's going on. I think an awful lot of it is not being talked about."*

FOOD, MIGRATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The report studies news reports on climate change, agriculture and migration in two 14-day periods before and after the COP21 climate talks, which took place from 30 November to 12 December 2015. The first period of research was carried out from 31 August to 13 September 2015 and studied media output from France and the U.K. The second period was from 15 to 28 February 2016. It covered the same countries and also added media from Italy and the U.S. (see Table 1).

Table 1
Periods, countries and media outlets studied

<i>Sept 2015 & Feb 2016</i> <i>France</i>	<i>Sept 2015 & Feb 2016</i> <i>U.K.</i>	<i>Feb 2016</i> <i>Italy</i>	<i>Feb 2016</i> <i>U.S.</i>
TF1 "Le 20 heures"	BBC News at Ten	Rai TG1	CBS
France 2 "Le JT de 20 heures"	Channel 4 News	LA7 TG	NBC
Le Monde	The Guardian	La Repubblica	New York Times
Libération	The Daily Mail	Corriere della Sera	USA Today

In both periods of media output there was very little reporting on climate change on the front pages or main bulletins of the news outlets selected for this research, regardless of country. Although researchers acknowledge that some media outlets did more in-depth reports on climate change in specialist sections,² the goal of the research was to look at front page or 'headline' stories that would have the most impact and visibility for lay audiences. This corroborates the findings of research published in March 2016 conducted by *Media Matters* on how U.S. broadcasters covered news on climate change in 2015. This research concluded that: "ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox collectively spent five per cent less time covering climate change in 2015, even though there were

² The Guardian newspaper in the U.K. ran special reports on climate change in the summer of 2015.

more newsworthy climate-related events than ever before.”³ Indeed, during the COP21 meeting itself, research by the Climate and Development Lab at Brown University noted that the four U.S. newspapers with the highest circulation published a total of 424 articles on climate change, but that these articles did not describe the key issues being discussed at the conference.⁴

The findings that climate change stories, as well as the causes and origins of extensive migration are not reported in mainstream, headline media, but mostly in specialist sections of websites or newspapers was iterated by Robert in focus group 3 in the U.K. Robert stated that: “*The broadsheets, you can get the articles there that go in depth – providing you can find them. They certainly won’t be front page.*”⁵

Europe’s ‘refugee and migration crisis’ – the large number of refugees and economic migrants from Afghanistan, Iraq, North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Syria entering or attempting to enter into the European Union over sea from Turkey and North Africa – has dominated the European media since the summer of 2015. This was reflected in the research.

The two-week period chosen for the content analysis in September 2015 coincided with the peak of this, which clearly had an impact on the number of stories on migration in this period – both in television and in newspaper coverage. As can be seen in Table 2, the number of stories about migration outstripped both stories on climate change and agriculture or smallholder farming in developing countries. The migrant crisis has continued into 2016 and has been mirrored by reporting in the European media analysed. There was a visible increase in reporting on agriculture over the two periods and a decrease in reporting on migration compared to the first period. The increase in agricultural stories (Table 2) was due to French media reporting on disputes between French farmers and the Government.

³ Media Matters for America, How Broadcast Networks Covered Climate Change In 2015 <http://mediamatters.org/research/2016/03/07/study-how-broadcast-networks-covered-climate-ch/208881> (accessed March 9th 2016).

⁴ The Paris climate talks according to U.S. print media: “Plenty of heat, but not so much light”.

⁵ Examples here include the initiative “Across Borders” by the media platform for the global development community Devex reporting on the causes of migration (see: <https://pages.devex.com/across-borders>), the Thomson Reuters Foundation’s reporting on climate change (see: <http://news.trust.org/climate/>).

Table 2
Number of stories (France and U.K.) by type

<i>Stories</i>	<i>Sept 2015 French & U.K. media</i>	<i>Feb 2016 French & U.K. media</i>	<i>Feb 2016 All media</i>
Climate change	5	2	8
General agriculture	3	31	32
Smallholder farming in developing countries	0	0	0
Migration	154	54	88

On newspaper front pages, climate change was not covered on either of the two French or two British newspapers analysed for this research. However, in the Italian and American press in February 2016, there were three stories on the front page of the New York Times and one on the front page of the Italian newspaper, La Repubblica (Table 3).

What is the potential impact of this? As Robert notes above, those who want to find the in-depth articles on climate change can find them. But news consumers who are not really interested, will not. In other words, a broader understanding of the issues among general audiences is unlikely. In French focus group 5, it was noted that, while there is specialist media available to those particularly interested in learning about climate change and its impacts, not everyone will find it. (Pierre) *"A person who hasn't studied much, or doesn't get out of home much, they are not going to make the link between these kinds of issues."* (Armelle) *"I know loads of people whose heads this just goes over."* Laura in group 2 (U.K.) noted that climate change was too often only reported around an event. *"It's hard to have a news story that's in the public eye 24 hours a day, seven days a week, a lot of things happen in the world. So, you can only have climate change in the news when something has happened. You only see it when there's loss of human life or when there's been a discovery."* The group went on to say that they would rather have stories on climate change that were not just focused on events or loss of life – rather looking at positive solutions to the issue of climate change.

Table 3
Number of stories reported by French, Italian, U.K. and U.S. media
 15-28 February 2016

<i>a) French media</i>				
	<i>TF1</i>	<i>FT2</i>	<i>LMD</i>	<i>LIB</i>
Story				
Climate change	0	2	0	0
Agriculture	7	18	1	1
Migration	7	10	4	1
Total	14	30	5	2
<i>b) Italian media</i>				
	<i>RAI</i>	<i>TG7</i>	<i>REP</i>	<i>CDS</i>
Story				
Climate change	0	0	1	0
Agriculture	0	0	0	0
Migration	12	7	3	2
Total	12	7	4	2
<i>c) U.K. media</i>				
	<i>BBC</i>	<i>C4N</i>	<i>GDN</i>	<i>DML</i>
Story				
Climate change	0	0	0	0
Agriculture	2	1	0	1
Migration	11	13	4	4
Total	13	14	4	5
<i>d) U.S. media</i>				
	<i>CBS</i>	<i>NBC</i>	<i>NYT</i>	<i>UST</i>
Story				
Climate change	1	1	3	0
Agriculture	1	0	0	0
Migration	2	5	3	0
Total	4	6	6	0

Focus group participants did not consider that mainstream media consumption helped them to understand the possible connection between climate change, agricultural failure and migration from rural areas in developing countries. Stories on climate change broadcast in the two periods researched did not report on such links or impacts on the general population, focusing predominantly on scientific institutions or governments when talking of climate change. This was reflected in the stories of the refugee crisis in the content sample. Of the stories about migration in the period covered that gave a reason for it, all reported the cause of migration as being the Syrian conflict or conflict in general. No other reason was offered. This was reflected in focus group comments. As Marc in focus group 7 (France) noted: *"They [the media] talk about migration, about immigration, but it's rarely got anything to do with famine. Years ago, when we spoke about Ethiopia, we weren't talking about Ethiopian migration. When we talk about migration, we talk about Africans arriving in France, but we never talk about why. Even if it has something to do with famine, the media will never represent it that way."* Joan in focus group 3 from the U.K. echoed the same, noting that: *"You have a huge coverage of the number of people in Kos, you get a massive coverage of that, but not a lot on what's the driving force. And when the driving force is mentioned, it's more about conflict."*

These observations were made by the focus groups even though studies have shown that one of the many catalysts for the conflict in Syria was climate change leading to food shortage. Gleick, for instance, states that, "The focus of the conflict is regime change, but the triggers include (...) challenges associated with climate variability and change and the availability and use of freshwater."⁶ This is backed up by Kelley et al. who argue that, "Before the Syrian uprising that began in 2011, the greater Fertile Crescent experienced the most severe drought in the instrumental record. For Syria, a country marked by poor governance and unsustainable agricultural and environmental policies, the drought had a catalytic effect, contributing to political unrest."⁷

As Hannah in focus group 1 (U.K.) noted: *"I hear climate change more portrayed about crop failure, but migration is all about war. It has been for some time. The media does nothing about portraying climate change as a very significant and very important part of that. There's also the potential of food insecurity and food poverty to cause conflict, they're not separate, but I definitely don't think you hear about that in the media."*

It is important to note the emphasis of stories that report on climate change and farming. Stories about climate change tend to focus on institutions. The views reported are those of scientists, academics or specialists who represent them, not the individuals who are affected. This is highlighted in Table 4, which shows

⁶ Peter H. Gleick. "Water, Drought, Climate Change, and Conflict in Syria". *Weather, Climate and Society*, 6, 2014, pp. 331-340. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1175/WCAS-D-13-00059.1>

⁷ Colin P. Kelley, et al. "Climate change in the Fertile Crescent and implications of the recent Syrian drought", *Proceedings of the National Academy of the United States*, vol. 112 no. 11, 2015, 3241-3246.

that the main voice heard in stories on climate change and farming was what Corner and Richardson call “expert” not “ordinary” advice. They state, “the coverage of many environmental topics requires the testimony of experts, the voice of science (and technology) to explain the complexity of cause-effect relationships.”⁸ It is difficult for the audience to understand what is really happening in the case of climate change if the voice of the individual who is affected is not heard. They continue, “The role of the ordinary person, particularly in programming dealing with the consequences of particular events is extremely important. Lay accounts can offer a density that scientific abstraction cannot match, as viewers hear about, and also see, the crops that failed, the animals that starved.”⁹

As we see from Table 4 news publishing tends to fall into just that trap. Of the media studied, published stories tend to focus on governments, agencies, NGOs and scientific institutions, rather than helping the audience understand the impact on the individual.

Table 4
News publishing focus
 15-28 February 2016

<i>Story</i>	<i>Focus on Individual</i>	<i>Focus on government, agency, NGO and scientific institution</i>
Climate change	3	5
Farming	14	18
Migration	40	48

During the interviews, focus groups also tended to echo the mainstream news agenda when asked to produce their own news stories on climate change. While playing the news game, they picked stories that repeated the editorial decisions of the news bulletins they referenced. This discussion between two members of focus group 2 in the U.K. illustrates this:

Laura: “*We found it hard to approach it without thinking about what will sell, not what we want to put in it.*”

Richard: “*That’s right, I was thinking about what the media puts out, not what I thought was important to have in the news bulletin.*”

Richard went on to explain further: “*We instinctively chose what we thought was going to be top billing, rather than what we thought should have the main focus on it – and I can see that we’ve done something very similar to the other*

⁸ John Corner, and K. Richardson. “Environmental Communication and the Contingency of Meaning: A Research Note” in *Media Texts and Representations* in Hansen (Ed), 1994, op cit. p. 160.

⁹ Ibid, p. 163.

groups. It reflects back what we've seen previously, and then when you're in the driving seat to do it, you do that, that's how it felt."

In another thread during the same focus group, Oliver explained his group's choice of images for a news story on climate change by noting that: *"It's common to see pictures of icebergs in the news, so we put it in."*

Comments like this reflect the power and influence that editorial choices and placement can have over readers, and the risk that complexities and opportunities for deeper understanding on issues may be lost. For example, when thinking about climate change and reporting and, by extension, thinking about how to cover climate change issues, the news-consuming audience tended to repeat what they had seen – choosing similar stories and replicating the content that the mainstream media publishes. And this happened despite the audience knowing or being aware that the same images and stories are being used again and again by the media. As Graham from focus group 1 (U.K.) said: *"I smiled when I saw the polar bear, as it was called the hackneyed picture of climate change the other day."* Despite the belief that the image of the polar bear was hackneyed, it was still chosen by the groups in the news game.

Across the news-consuming audience groups interviewed for this report there was a near-universal demand for reporting on solutions to climate change. They perceived reporting on climate change to be either over dramatic or boring, and not focused on helping the public contribute to solutions to problems.

Following the news game, the focus groups moved on to questions about how they felt news organizations should report on climate change. The belief was that the issue needed to be taken more seriously by news organizations and given a higher prominence. Furthermore, they argued that news organizations needed to make the stories and the impact of climate change more about people and individuals – not about institutions.

This was emphasized by Roger from focus group 1 (U.K.):

"I think [news organizations] should have a position. I think there are a huge number of people out there who couldn't care less if there are polar bears or not. They are much more worried about if there's going to be a bit of food on the plate. I think the media should be more high-profile about climate change and a bit more honest about what's going on. I think an awful lot of it is not being talked about."

The content analysis supports Roger's view. As already noted above, there were only eight stories about climate change in the period of analysis and only three focused on individuals; the rest focused on institutions, interviewing academics and climate change specialists. It is also noteworthy that of the eight stories in the period, two were overseas reports.

This was also a point made in a conversation in focus group 2 in the U.K.

Laura: *"There's not much about the individual in reporting on climate change. It'd be great if there were more personal stories, so you could understand how it impacts individuals."*

Richard: *"You're right, it's just numbers, it's just figures – it's not people with families and parents and the rest of it."*

The news-consumers participating in the focus groups clearly saw a need for the media to place stories about climate change more predominantly in their publishing and to make their reporting on climate change about individuals. While it is the case that many news organizations do in-depth reporting on climate change, a bigger issue was how easy this reporting was to find.

This was underlined by Robert in group 3 (U.K.). Robert noted that in *"the broadsheets [newspapers], you can get the articles that go in depth – providing you can find them. They certainly won't be front page."*

Another demand from the focus groups was for the media to make reporting on climate change more engaging. *"I guess I don't blame [the media],"* said Charlie in focus group 4 in the U.K. *"No breaking news happens in climate change, it's a very slow process, I suppose. Research comes out, and that's very boring."*

In group 5, in France, a discussion ensued about how the media should be positive and constructive in reporting on climate change and help the audience feel that they should do something.

Maximillian: *"They [the media] need to be more positive"*

Jean Philip: *"Yes, they need to give us some hope"*

Nathalie: *"Leave you thinking, when you switch off the television, not 'rubbish', but rather, tomorrow I'm going to try that"*

Thomas: *"Without forgetting what's happening"*

Jean Philip: *"To put new initiatives at the top"*

Nathalie: *"And to make things more positive."*

News organizations investing more time in what Ulrich Haagerup, the executive director of news at Danish Public Television calls 'constructive news' could be a solution. As Haagerup states: "Readers, listeners and viewers in the millions are turning their backs on traditional media, and I have found that one of the reasons for the fundamental crisis is that people are sick and tired of the negative picture of the world presented to them by the press. Most news stories in traditional media are angled on conflict, drama, crooks and victims."¹⁰ The focus group participants were certainly looking for more engaging, positive solutions.

By mixing the positive with the ongoing work on climate change, and solutions to food security and migration threats such as helping poor farmers mitigate the

¹⁰ Ulrik Haagerup. "Constructive News". (Cologne: InnoVatio Publishing AG, 2014).

impact of climate change or lobbying for better government policies, audiences could become more engaged with the issues at hand. This is certainly something audiences were calling for in the focus groups. As Thomas noted in group 5 (France). *"It's always the same thing. I understand that migration could be caused by climate change, by malnutrition. But what I want is for the media to tell me what I can do about it. What I can do about it as an individual."*

METHODOLOGY

Data collection for this research project was conducted in three ways over two periods.

In the first content analysis period from 31 August to 13 September 2015, eight influential news outlets with large audiences in France and the U.K. were researched. The goal was to look at when, how much, and within what parameters news organizations – both print and broadcast – reported on issues linking climate change to food security, agriculture and migration.

In France, the research analysed the content of the main evening news broadcasts of TF1 and France 2. These are broadcast daily at 8 p.m. local time. The front pages of the newspapers Le Monde and Libération were also coded in the same time period. In the U.K., the main evening news broadcast of the BBC – News at Ten – and the main evening news broadcast of Channel 4 were coded. The front pages of The Guardian and the Daily Mail were also coded.

In the second content analysis period, the same eight news outlets from France and the U.K. were recoded, along with a further eight news outlets from Italy and the U.S. In Italy, the main evening bulletin of RAI – TG1 and the main evening bulletin of LA7 – TG LA7 were added. The front pages of the national editions of the newspapers La Repubblica and Corriere della Sera were coded.

In the U.S., the New York Times and USA Today newspapers, and the main evening television news bulletins of the networks CBS and NBC were coded.

The 16 news outlets were selected because they are considered as amongst the most popular and influential both in terms of quality, reach and audience numbers.

The coding dates were chosen because there was no particular climate change 'news hook' which could have skewed the results to show a greater editorial interest in climate change stories than normal.

The first period was chosen because it was not in the summer season – often dubbed 'the silly season' in the news industry. There was an acceptable time distance from the COP21 meeting in Paris in order for previews not to skew the data. The first two weeks of September 2015 were at the end of the summer, and three months from the COP21 meeting.

The second period was chosen because it was at a similar distance from COP21 as the first period (around two months) to be able to draw comparison from the French and U.K. data.

The front pages of the newspapers were selected because these have the most impact. It is clear that more specialist, specific articles about the content could have been found, but the goal was to be generalist in approach and analyse the content that had the broadest impact.

Once collected, the content was coded using predefined characteristics that correlated with the objective of understanding how many stories covering climate change, migration and farming were reported, what power voices were heard, if general voices were heard or only those of power, and whether issues concerning climate change, migrants and food security were raised. The coding was conducted to draw a general picture of reporting on the issues targeted in the research.

Finally, along with the first content analysis phase, eight focus groups were conducted – four in France and four in the U.K.

The eight focus groups had a total of 37 participants, whose ages ranged from 21 to 72. They were conducted between July and November 2015. Twenty-one participants were men, 16 were women. This slight imbalance is due to non-shows to group meetings or difficulties in recruitment.

Participants were chosen on the basis of having an active interest in the news (the criterion for recruitment was that they engaged with at least one form of news publication every day, i.e. television, online, newspapers). In all cases, groups were designed to be broadly representative of the 'interpretive communities' in which people might typically discuss news stories (Kitzinger, 2014: 174).¹¹ In every instance, recruitment took place via an intermediary known to a member of the research team. Intermediaries were given details of the eligibility criterion.

The groups in the U.K. were moderated by Sam Dubberley and the groups in France were moderated by Vincent Goubet. The groups in the U.K. took place in English, those in France took place in French. All participants were asked to agree to be recorded and, where necessary, quoted in the final report (all names have been changed to ensure participants' anonymity). Focus group discussions were recorded with telephones and transcribed by Sam Dubberley (English groups) and Vincent Goubet (French groups). Translation from French to English was carried out by Sam Dubberley.

¹¹ Jenny Kitzinger. "Audiences and Readership Research Approaches: A Survey", in J. D. H. Downing, D. McQuail, P. Schlesinger, and E. Wartella (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Media Studies*. (Thousand Oaks, CA.: SAGE Publications, 2004), pp 167-81.

All focus groups lasted between 45 and 80 minutes. They followed the same structure and were divided into three sections. They began with a modified version of the 'news game', a focus group exercise devised by the Glasgow Media Group that asks participants to assume the role of a journalist and actively construct their own news bulletin (for a full discussion of the news game, see Kitzinger, 1990).¹² In this version of the news game participants were divided into small teams and given the following scenario:

"The G20 summit is taking place in Germany. The main topic of the conference is climate change. You are the main news producer of the channel's evening news bulletin. This bulletin is considered the most high-brow news bulletin of your channel. Your editor has asked you to prepare the lead story of the day concerning the G20 summit on climate change. You have three minutes to fill and a range of options to choose from. You have correspondents offering stories, you have interview possibilities."

Each team was given a folder containing information about the stories on offer. Each card contained fictional information about the specific story they could select for their bulletin, designed to stimulate discussion about the aspects reporting on climate change that were of interest and which related to the research questions. Participants were then tasked with deciding which stories they would use in their news bulletin. On completion of the news game, each team was asked to present their bulletin to the group and then talk through their rationale for including or excluding stories.

Using the news game as a springboard for broader discussion, the opinions of participants were then explored about the reporting on climate change, rural farming, food security and migration. The discussion then focused around five main areas:

1. What do you think about news reporting on climate change?
2. What do you think you learn from the media about climate change?
3. What do you expect from news organizations when they tell stories about climate change?
4. Do you think media organizations help you understand how and why migration is happening, why food security is a potential issue?
5. Does news reporting on climate change help you make a link between climate change, global food security and migration?

The goal of the focus groups was not to discover generalizations about the whole news-consuming population of either country. With four groups per country, such a goal was not possible. What was explored was attitudes to reporting on climate change, issues of rural farming and food security, and migration amongst those who consume the news. As groups quickly arrived at saturation – the point at which the research hears the same points raised – the objective was achieved.

¹² Jenny Kitzinger. "Audience Understandings of AIDS Media Messages: A Discussion of Methods", *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 1990, 12(3).

IFAD invests in rural people, empowering them to reduce poverty, increase food security, improve nutrition and strengthen resilience. Since 1978, we have provided US\$17.6 billion in grants and low-interest loans to projects that have reached about 459 million people. IFAD is an international financial institution and a specialized United Nations agency based in Rome – the UN’s food and agriculture hub.



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