

Evolution of Climate Change Coverage in Latin American Press

Rogelio Fernández-Reyes¹, Bruno Mendes da Silva², Ana Filipa C. Martins³

ABSTRACT

Climate change is recognized as a major challenge for humanity. In recent years, there has been an acceleration in rising temperatures, alongside numerous impacts occurring in all regions of the world. Latin America, with its diverse realities across its vast territory, is already experiencing its effects. The media play a social role in conveying information about this challenge and reflect the interest or disinterest of societies. This paper attempts to identify quantitative coverage in the Latin American press from January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2024. For this purpose, data from the Media Climate Change Observatory (University of Colorado) are used, which allows us to observe the evolution of Latin American media attention and compare it with international trend. Among the conclusions, it is noted that: the months with the highest coverage are concentrated in November, followed by December, which coincide with the UNFCCC Climate Summits; the last five-year period (2020–2024) shows by far the highest level of coverage; the media agenda on climate change in Latin America is strongly influenced by the international agenda; and the trend shows greater intensity in Latin American coverage compared to the international count in the last five years. Based on scientific literature, it is considered vital that climate change coverage in the Latin American press be consolidated in line with the risk perception highlighted by climate science and the effects in the region.

Keywords: climate change; communication; Latin America; media coverage; press.

¹ PhD in Journalism (University of Seville) and PhD in the Department of Geography, History, and Philosophy (Pablo de Olavide University). Professor of Journalism at the University of Seville. Orcid: 0000-0003-3955-3203. Email: rogelioreyes@us.es

² PhD in Literature and Film (University of Algarve). Professor of Audiovisual Communication at the University of The Algarve. Orcid: 0000-0003-3207-5667. Email: bsilva@ualg.pt

³ PhD in Comunicación (University of Huelva). Professor of Communication Sciences and Digital Media at the University of The Algarve. Orcid: 0000-0002-9732-5797. Email: fcerolm@ualg.pt

The challenge of climate change is recognized as a major issue across various domains: in the scientific sphere, as shown by the conclusions of the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report;⁴ in the political sphere, as highlighted by the Paris Agreement;⁵ in the social sphere, as reflected in global climate mobilizations; in the economic arena, as indicated by the perceived risks in the traditional World Economic Forum survey in Davos;⁶ in the health sector, as acknowledged by the World Health Organization;⁷ and in the ecological sphere, as reflected in the Montreal Biodiversity Agreement.⁸

The World Bank points to the figure of 8% of greenhouse gases from Latin America in the global count in the report *Hoja de ruta para la acción climática en América Latina y El Caribe 2021-2025*⁹. The agricultural sector, accompanied by changes in land use and deforestation, accounts for the largest percentage. It represents 47% of emissions in the region, a level well above the global average of 19%. However, the distribution of emissions by country varies depending on the level of development, size, or specific circumstances.

The region is particularly vulnerable and is already suffering numerous effects from climate change.¹⁰ As outlined in the aforementioned *Hoja de ruta*, hurricanes, droughts, wildfires, and floods are becoming increasingly frequent and intense, and they are expected to have negative impacts on productivity and crop yields in several countries in the region: "If appropriate measures are not taken, by 2030, up to 5.8 million people could fall into extreme poverty as a result of climate change, and by 2050, more than 17 million people could be forced to leave their homes to escape climate impacts." In this way, climate change adds to other existing vulnerabilities in the region, such as poverty, rural migration, and governance challenges.

⁴ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report* (2023) <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/>

⁵ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, *Acuerdo de París* (2015) <https://www.un.org/es/climatechange/paris-agreement>

⁶ World Economic Forum, *The Global Risks Report 2025* (2025) <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2025/>

⁷ The WHO's 14th global strategy placed the fight against climate change as one of its six key objectives, https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA77/A77_16-sp.pdf

⁸ GBF, *Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework* (2022) <https://www.cbd.int/gbf>

⁹ World Bank, *Hoja de Ruta para la Acción Climática en América Latina y el Caribe 2021-2025: Informe de Antecedentes Técnicos* (2022). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099720409072236507>

¹⁰ S.M. Hartinger, et al., "The 2022 South America Report of The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change: Trust the Science. Now That We Know, We Must Act", *The Lancet Regional Health–Americas* 20 (2023): 1–35 DOI: 10.1016/j.lana.2023.100470

The media play a crucial social role in the dissemination of scientific information. The press is an ideal medium for studying how this process unfolds, as it allows for in-depth analysis. The volume of press coverage is linked to the social experience of risk and its inclusion on the political agenda.^{11 12}

Climate change coverage in print newspapers is influenced by numerous factors, both internal and external. It is conditioned by the interrelationships between political, social, economic, environmental, scientific, and other contexts, as well as by institutional and professional dynamics.¹³ Among the internal factors are business-related issues and aspects of the journalistic profession. For example, the shift toward digital editions at the expense of print editions, as well as the emergence of blogs and specialized websites, were influential elements in the reduced presence of climate change in the most widely circulated newspapers during the 2010s. Another significant development was the rise of social media and smartphones, which changed information consumption habits. On the other hand, newspapers approach climate change differently, both quantitatively and qualitatively, depending on numerous specific factors.^{14 15}

External factors include the media agenda. Climate Summits, IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) reports¹⁶ or extreme weather events are particularly covered by the media. Similarly, the emergence of new challenges influences the focus on climate change, both on the political and media agendas.¹⁷ For example, issues such as the mortgage crisis, the COVID-19 crisis,¹⁸ the Russian invasion of Ukraine, geopolitical reality, or the victory of denialist political leaders influence the

¹¹ A. Carvalho, ed., *As alterações climáticas, os media e os cidadãos* (Coimbra: Grácio, 2011).

¹² O. Renn et al., "The social amplification of risk: theoretical Foundations and Empirical Applications", *Journal of Social Issues*, 48, 4 (1992): 137 - 160. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1992.tb01949.x>

¹³ M. Boykoff et al., "Commentary: The beat goes on? Print media coverage of anthropogenic climate change over the past three decades", *Global Environmental Change* 71 (2021): 102412. DOI:10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2021.102412

¹⁴ A. Carvalho and J. Burgess, "Cultural circuits of Climate Change in U. K. Broadsheet Newspaper, 1985-2003", *Risk Analysis* 25 (6) (2005): 1457-1469. DOI: 10.1111/j.1539-6924.2005.00692.x

¹⁵ R. Mancinas-Chávez, "El silencio mediático. Reflexión en torno a las razones de los medios de comunicación para no hablar del cambio climático", in R. Fernández-Reyes and R. Mancinas-Chávez, R., eds, *Medios de comunicación y cambio climático* (Sevilla: Fénix Editora, 2013): 233-248.

¹⁶ Fernández-Reyes, R., Piñuel-Raigada, J. L., Águila Coghlan, J. C.. "Contraste de la cobertura periodística del cambio climático y del calentamiento global en España y en el ámbito internacional: IV-V Informes del IPCC y Bali-Copenhague-París". *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 72, (2017): 1165-1185. <https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2017-1213>

¹⁷ Fernández-Reyes, R.. *Seis años de comunicación del cambio climático (2019-2024). Análisis de los diarios El País, El Mundo, La Vanguardia y Expansión*. (Fragua, 2025). <https://hdl.handle.net/11441/174759>

¹⁸ O. Pearman et al., "COVID-19 media coverage decreasing despite deepening crisis", *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 5(1) (2021): e6-e7. DOI: 10.1016/S2542-5196(20)30303-X

priority or displacement of climate change. On the other hand, despite the existence of a scientific consensus on the influence of humans on climate change,¹⁹ around 99 %, ²⁰ society's perception of this consensus varies across countries, and this influences coverage. In other cases, each country's priorities determine the importance of this challenge.

In Latin America, press coverage of climate change began to gain notice in 2007, showing a considerable increase starting in 2019. Although the media began to pay more attention to the reality of climate change at the global level in the early 2020s,²¹ a new phase of decline in media attention is observed starting in 2023.²² This path is also present in newspapers in the Latin American region, as will be seen later.²³ This is a winding path that has already been present on other occasions throughout this century.

Research into media coverage of climate change began in Western countries such as the United States,²⁴ ²⁵ ²⁶ United Kingdom²⁷ or Germany²⁸. Many other countries, with fewer resources, began research decades later. In Latin America, scientific production began later and is considered scarce.²⁹ ³⁰ Specifically, there is also scientific literature that has studied the coverage of climate change from a quantitative point of

¹⁹ J. Cook et al., "Consensus on consensus: a synthesis of consensus estimates on human-caused global warming", *Environmental Research Letters*, 11 (4) (2016): 048002. <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/11/4/048002/pdf>

²⁰ M. Lynas et al., "Greater than 99% consensus on human caused climate change in the peer-reviewed scientific literatura", *Environmental Research Letters*, 16, 11 (2021): 114005. DOI:10.1088/1748-9326/ac2966

²¹ M. Boykoff et al., *A review of media coverage of climate change and global warming in 2022*, Media and Climate Change Observatory, Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences, University of Colorado (2023). <https://doi.org/10.25810/vtaz-sn25>

²² M. Aoyagi et al., *World Newspaper Coverage of Climate Change or Global Warming, 2004-2025. Media and Climate Change Observatory Data Sets*, Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences, University of Colorado (2025). doi.org/10.25810/4c3b-b819

²³ M. Boykoff et al., *Latin American Newspaper Coverage of Climate Change or Global Warming, 2005-2025. Media and Climate Change Observatory Data Sets*, Universidad de Sevilla and Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences, University of Colorado (2025) doi.org/10.25810/5dxz-xm93.

²⁴ K. McComas and J. Shanahan, "Telling Stories about Global Climate Change. Measuring the Impact of Narratives on Issue Cycles", *Communication Research* 26 (1) (1999): 30-57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009365099026001003>

²⁵ C. Trumbo, "Longitudinal modeling of public issues with the agenda-setting process: The case of global warming", *Journalism and Mass Communication Monograph*, 152 (1995): 1-12.

²⁶ M. Boykoff and J.M. Boykoff, "Bias as balance: global warming and the US prestige press", *Global Environmental Change*, 14 (2004): 125-136.

²⁷ Carvalho and Burgess, "Cultural circuits of Climate Change in U. K. Broadsheet Newspaper, 1985-2003".

²⁸ P. Weingart et al., "Risks of communication: discourses on climate change in science, politics and the mass media", *Public Understanding of Science* 9 (3) (2000): 261-283. DOI:10.1088/0963-6625/9/3/304

²⁹ Loose, E.B., and Fernández-Reyes, R., "Periodismo y cambio climático en América Latina". *Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña (HALAC) Revista de la Solcha* 10.3 (2020): 150-172. <https://doi.org/10.32991/2237-2717.2020v10i3.p150-172>

³⁰ B. Takahashi, "Towards inclusive international environmental communication scholarship: The role of Latin America", *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 26.4 (2023): 372-391. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13678779221146302>

view, both international and national comparisons.^{31 32} It recognizes the need for transnational research with other languages and contexts of the Global South.^{33 34}

Some research focuses on climate change communication in the Latin American region.^{35 36 37 38 39 40 41} These studies reveal certain characteristics: a reliance on the international climate change agenda—both political (such as the annual Climate Summits) and scientific (such as IPCC reports)—as well as on official international sources, with limited references to local realities or alternative sources; a prevalence of catastrophic narratives; a lack of specialization among journalists and limited analysis of their perceptions; a focus on dominant newspapers, with few studies addressing social media, radio, or television; a predominance of research on journalistic content and a scarcity of studies analyzing production and reception processes; limited presence of skeptical or denialist voices; and a commitment to de-westernization of communication studies.

Brazil is the country with the highest number of investigations in the region.^{42 43}
⁴⁴ In national research, the regional conclusions are repeated: a considerable influence of the international agenda is perceived,^{45 46} as well as a predominance of the use of

³¹ R. Barkemeyer et al., "Media coverage of climate change: An international comparison". *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 35(6), (2017): 1029–1054. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263774x16680818>

³² Fernández-Reyes, R., Piñuel-Raigada, J. L., Águila Coghlan, J. C.. "Contraste de la cobertura periodística del cambio climático y del calentamiento global en España y en el ámbito internacional: IV-V Informes del IPCC y Bali-Copenhague-París". *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 72, (2017): 1165-1185. <https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2017-1213>

³³ Boykoff et al., "Commentary: The beat goes on? Print media coverage of anthropogenic climate change over the past three decades".

³⁴ L. McAllister et al., "Vulnerable voices: using topic modeling to analyze newspaper coverage of climate change in 26 non-Annex I countries" (2010–2020), *Environmental Research Letters*, 19(2) (2024): 024046.

³⁵ F. G. Freyle and J. C. Arroyave, "Cobertura del cambio climático en los medios digitales de América Latina", *Chasqui. Revista Latinoamericana de Comunicación*, 144 (2020): 67–88. <http://hdl.handle.net/10469/18344>

³⁶ P. Kitzberger and G. J. Pérez, "El tratamiento del cambio climático en la prensa latinoamericana", *Diálogo Político*, 3, (2009): p. 3–51.

³⁷ Loose, E.B.. and Fernández-Reyes, R. "Periodismo y cambio climático en América Latina". *Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña (HALAC) Revista de la Solcha* 10.3 (2020): 150-172. <https://doi.org/10.32991/2237-2717.2020v10i3.p150-172>

³⁸ Takahashi, "Towards inclusive international environmental communication scholarship".

³⁹ B. Takahashi et al., "Building Bridges: A Narrative Literature Review of Spanish and Portuguese-Language Climate Change Communication Scholarship from Latin America", *Environmental Communication*, 1–15(2025).

⁴⁰ F. Viteri and B. Takahashi, "Use of learning frames in climate change communication: A study of organizations in Latin America", *International Communication Gazette* 82.8 (2020): 726-748.

⁴¹ L. González Alcaraz, "La construcción periodística del cambio climático: Tendencias en América Latina". *Razón y Palabra* 91 (2015).

⁴² González Alcaraz, "La construcción periodística del cambio climático: Tendencias en América Latina".

⁴³ Loose, E.B.. and Fernández-Reyes, R. "Periodismo y cambio climático en América Latina". *Historia Ambiental Latinoamericana y Caribeña (HALAC) Revista de la Solcha* 10.3 (2020): 150-172. <https://doi.org/10.32991/2237-2717.2020v10i3.p150-172>

⁴⁴ Takahashi et al., "Building Bridges".

⁴⁵ B. Takahashi and M. Meisner, "Climate change in Peruvian newspapers: The role of foreign voices in a context of vulnerability", *Public Understanding of Science*, 22, 4 (2013): p.427–442.

⁴⁶ M. T. Mercado-Sáez and C. Galarza, "Climate Change Communication in Argentina", *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Climate Science* (2017).

agency sources, especially in the political sphere^{47 48 49 50} and a lack of connection with local sources, such as indigenous communities or small farmers,^{51 52 53 54 55 56 57} there is a perceived lack of proposed solutions,^{58 59 60 61 62 63} along with a predominance of the approach of the responsibility of developed countries, due to their historical debt.⁶⁴
^{65 66 67} On the other hand, the lack of specialization in professionals is also noted.⁶⁸

In light of this context, the present article examines the evolution of climate coverage in 15 Latin American newspapers using data published by the Media Climate Change Observatory, in order to learn about their trends, to determine whether a parallelism with international coverage exists and whether an intensification of this coverage can be observed in the region.

⁴⁷ I. M. T. Girardi et al., "Discursos e vozes na cobertura jornalística das COP 15 e 16", *Em Questão*, 19 (2013): 176-194. <https://lume.ufrgs.br/handle/10183/97211>

⁴⁸ C. A. Rodas and G. M. Di Giulio, "Mídia brasileira e mudanças climáticas: uma análise sobre tendências da cobertura jornalística, abordagens e critérios de noticiabilidade", *Revista Desenvolvimento e Meio Ambiente*, 40 (2017): p. 101-124. <https://doi.org/10.5380/dma.v40i0.49002>

⁴⁹ V. Vivarta ed, *Mudanças climáticas na imprensa brasileira: uma análise comparativa de 50 jornais nos períodos de julho de 2005 a junho de 2007-julho de 2007 a dezembro de 2008*, (Agência de Notícias dos Direitos da Infância, 2010).

⁵⁰ J. C. Gordon et al., "Global warming coverage in the media: Trends in a Mexico City newspaper". *Science Communication*, 32(2) (2010): 143-170. doi: 10.1177/1075547009340336

⁵¹ W. C. Bueno, "Imprensa e mudanças climáticas no Brasil: Fontes hegemônicas e pouca atenção aos conceitos", *Razón y Palabra*, 17(3_84), (2013): 48-64.

⁵² I. M. T. Girardi et al., "Mudança do clima e novas formas de atuação no jornalismo", *Razón y Palabra*, 19 (3_91) (2015): 98-118.

⁵³ E. B. Loose and I. M. T. Girardi, "O Jornalismo Ambiental sob a ótica dos riscos climáticos", *Interin*, 22(2) (2017): 154-172.

⁵⁴ E. B. Loose, *Riscos climáticos no circuito da notícia local: percepção, comunicação e governança*, (Tese de Doutorado. Programa de Pós-Graduação em Meio Ambiente e Desenvolvimento, Universidade Federal do Paraná, 2016)

⁵⁵ L. F. Vélez et al., "Climate Change Communication in Colombia", *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Climate Science*, (2017).

⁵⁶ B. Takahashi and A. Martínez, "Climate Change Communication in Peru", *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Climate Science* (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963662511431>

⁵⁷ M. S. López et al., "Climate change communication by the local digital press in northeastern Argentina: An ethical analysis", *Science of the Total Environment*, 707 (2020): 135737. DOI: 10.1016/j.scitotenv.2019.135737

⁵⁸ P. Kitzberger and G. J. Pérez, "El tratamiento del cambio climático en la prensa latinoamericana".

⁵⁹ F. V. Mancero et al., "Framing texts and images of Latin America's official, online climate change news' articles", *Razón y Palabra*, 21, 2 (2017): 728-745.

⁶⁰ C. Arcila-Calderón et al., "Media coverage of climate change in spanish-speaking online media", *Convergencia*, 68, (2015): 71-95. doi:10.29101/crcs.v0i68.2952

⁶¹ L. M. Mendoza Longoria and J. García González, "Análisis de la comunicación para la sustentabilidad de los procesos de cambio social: Caso cobertura periodística sobre el calentamiento global", *Cuadernos Artesanos de Comunicación*, 140 (2017): 1682-1704.

⁶² E. Bámaca-López, *Comunicación del cambio climático en Guatemala* (São Carlos: Pedro & João Editores, 2016)

⁶³ Takahashi and Martínez, "Climate Change Communication in Peru".

⁶⁴ González Alcaraz, "La construcción periodística del cambio climático: Tendencias en América Latina".

⁶⁵ R. Zamith et al., "Constructing climate change in the Americas: An analysis of news coverage in U.S. and South American newspapers", *Science Communication*, 35, 3 (2012): p.334-357. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1075547012457470>

⁶⁶ M. T. Mercado, "Media representations of climate change in the argentinean press", *Journalism Studies*, 13, 2, (2012): p.193-209. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2011.646397>

⁶⁷ Loose, *Riscos climáticos*.

⁶⁸ R. J. Gélvez-Rodríguez, *Cubrimiento periodístico del tema cambio climático en los noticieros televisivos de Colombia de la franja prime time, del 16 a 30 de octubre del año 2009*, (Trabajo de investigación. Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, 2012).

OBJETIVOS Y METODOLOGÍA

Based on symbolic interactionism, framing theory refers to shared meanings, symbolic structures, and cognitive schemas that organize perception and guide collective action.⁶⁹ The media become central elements of analysis, playing a prominent role in the interpretation of events, acting both as witnesses and as actors. Within this framework, agenda-setting theory⁷⁰ it is useful for understanding how the media influence the public agenda through the interest given to certain topics. The objectives set out in this research are:

- a) To analyze the evolution of climate change coverage in the Latin American press
- b) To compare this evolution with the international trend

As a methodology, a quantitative analysis is applied to the results from the Media Climate Change Observatory (MeCCO) at the University of Colorado. MeCCO monitors 131 sources (newspapers, radio, and television) in 59 countries across seven different regions, studying the number of articles containing the terms 'climate change' or 'global warming'. It collects data by accessing archives from databases such as Factiva, Infomedia, ProQuest, Nifty, NexisUni, and Retriever at various institutions. The main factors in selecting sources for MeCCO are: geographic diversity (favoring broader geographic coverage), circulation (favoring publications with wider reach), and reliable access to archives over time (favoring newspapers with more accessible archives for longer periods). In this way, the selected newspapers are sometimes not those with the highest circulation but those more accessible to search engines.

This paper analyzes the 15 Latin American newspapers studied in MeCCO, which were extracted through access to the Nexis Uni, ProQuest Central, and Factiva databases. These are *O'Globo* (Brazil), *Folha de Sao Paulo* (Brazil), *El Universal* (México), *Reforma* (Mexico), *El Tiempo* (Colombia), *El Espectador* (Colombia), *Clarín* (Argentina),

⁶⁹ D. A. Snow and R. D., Benford, "Ideology, frame resonance, and participant mobilization", *International social movement research*, 1(1) (1988): 197-217.

⁷⁰ M. McCombs and D.L. Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media", *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36 (2) (1972): 176-187. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2747787?seq=1>

La Nación (Argentina), *El Comercio* (Peru), *El Mercurio* (Chile), *El Comercio* (Ecuador), *La Razón* (Bolivia), *El País* (Uruguay), *La República* (Uruguay), *La Nación* (Costa Rica). Items in which the terms “cambio climático” OR “calentamiento global” appear are counted, except in Brazilian newspapers, where the terms “mudanças climáticas” OR “aquecimento global” are studied.

The newspapers analyzed come from Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Peru, Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Costa Rica. They represent half of the countries in the region. Therefore, the research constitutes a sample rather than a comprehensive analysis. Another limitation is that not all terms related to the climate issue are studied; for example, terms like “greenhouse gases”, “climate crisis”, or “climate emergency” are not included.⁷¹

MeCCO data, despite its limitations, allows for analyzing the evolution of climate change coverage in the press by differentiating stages and identifying the most significant milestones. This data also offers the opportunity to compare the reality of Latin America with the global evolution, studying similarities and differences. They are available on the Media and Climate Change Observatory website: <https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/datasets/m326m3601> and <https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/datasets/6d56zz59p>

RESULTS

EVOLUTION OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND GLOBAL WARMING COVERAGE IN THE LATIN AMERICAN PRESS, BY MONTH

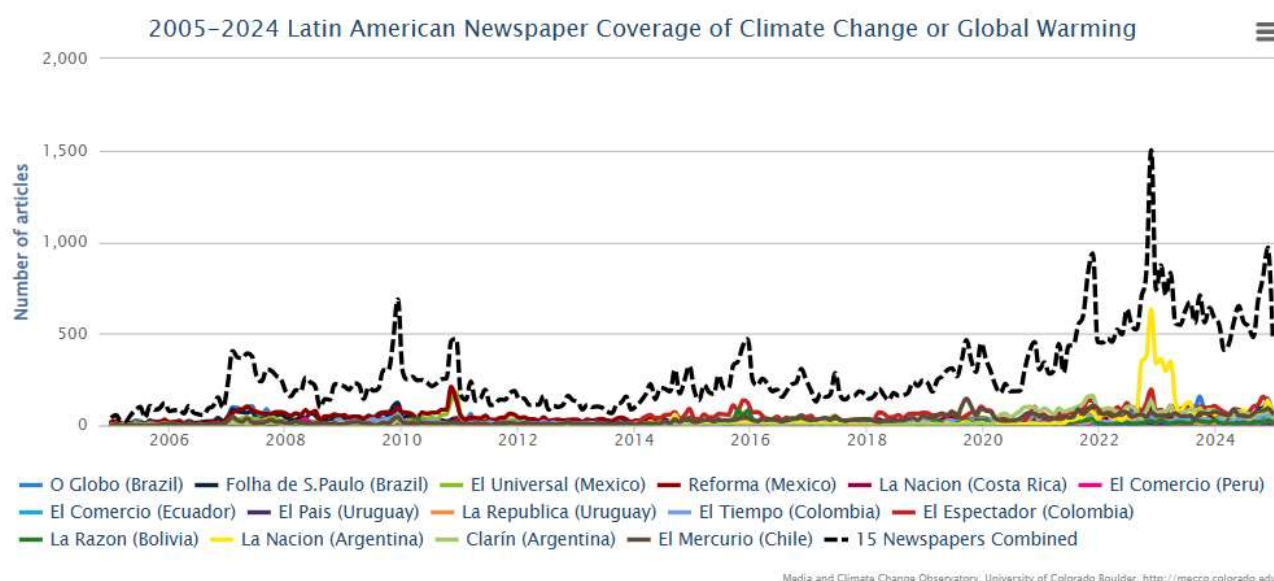
The analysis begins on January 1, 2005, and ends on December 31, 2024. This 20-year period allows us to observe, in perspective, the evolution of climate change and global warming coverage. These two decades represent the period with the greatest media presence of this challenge. However, there were also moments of particular significance in the previous period that were covered by the press. These include the Earth Summit with the Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992, the Second

⁷¹ M. C. Erviti-Illundáin, “Del “cambio climático” a la “emergencia climática”: Análisis de *El País* y *El Mundo*”, *Revista Prisma Social*, (31), 64–81.

IPCC Report in 1995, the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, and the Climate Summits in Buenos Aires in 1998 and 2004.

The period from 2005 to 2024, shown in Graph 1, displays monthly peaks and valleys in coverage evolution. These trends are similar across newspapers. The three newspapers analyzed with the greatest coverage in these two decades were *Reforma* (Mexico) with 9,098 articles, followed by *El Espectador* (Colombia) with 8,273 and *El Mercurio* (Chile) with 7,123, according to Factiva.

Graph 1. Monthly media coverage in Latin America of the terms "climate change" or "global warming" (2005-2024)



Source: Boykoff et al. 2025⁷²

The months with the highest coverage are November (with 8,325 articles during the analyzed period), followed by December (6,727 articles), which coincide with the months when the UNFCCC Climate Summits (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) are held. Thus, peaks are observed in 2007, 2009, 2010, 2014, 2015, 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2024, corresponding to the months in which the Bali, Copenhagen,

⁷² Boykoff et al., *Latin American Newspaper Coverage of Climate Change or Global Warming, 2005-2025*.

Cancun, Lima, Paris, Madrid, Glasgow, Sharm El-Sheikh, and Baku Climate Summits were held, respectively.

Four Climate Summits have been held in Latin America: Buenos Aires in 1998 and 2004, Cancun in 2010, and Lima in 2014. In 2019, the Climate Summit was supposed to take place in Brazil, but President Bolsonaro withdrew the offer to host the event. The venue was then moved to Santiago, Chile, but due to social unrest it was ultimately held in Madrid under Chile's presidency. The Cancun and Lima Summits show that national newspapers in the host country increase media coverage, as do newspapers from neighboring countries. Territorial proximity thus becomes an influential factor when addressing climate change in the press.

It is observed that the Summits generate increased coverage of climate change or global warming not only during the months they take place. This phenomenon also occurs in the month or months prior, when numerous reports from various fields warn about the seriousness of climate change or denialist discourses appear. These emerge just before international political meetings with the aim of influencing the outcomes or their interpretation.

Another source of media attention is the months in which IPCC reports are released, although these usually do not cause such pronounced peaks. Increased coverage is also noticeable around specific political events, such as Lula's victory in Brazil or Donald Trump's victory and inauguration as President of the United States. The press shows interest in their statements or positions regarding climate change.

Months with lower coverage usually occur without special events, rather due to a shift of interest toward other topics. Occasionally, a drop in coverage can be linked to specific factors, such as the COVID-19 crisis in March 2020. This decrease in coverage persisted until August of that year in Latin America.

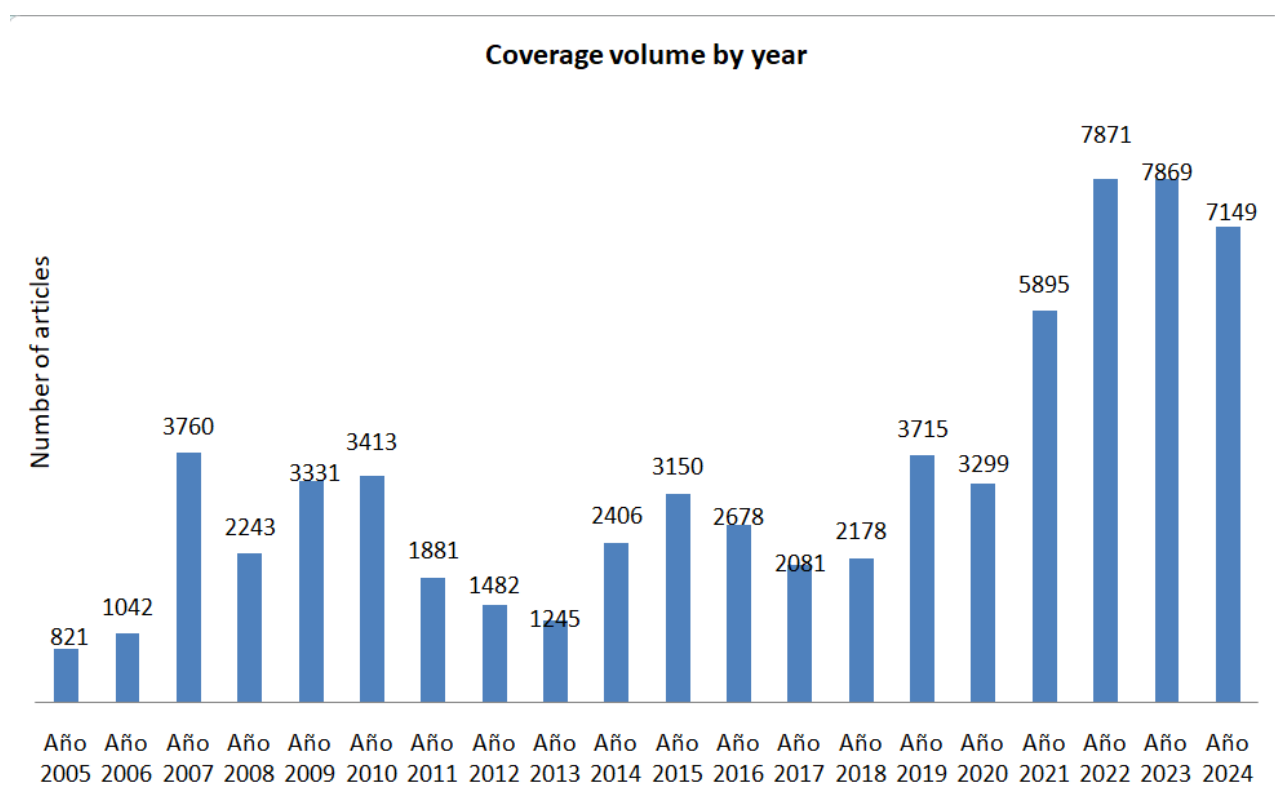
The three main peaks in Latin American press coverage during the two decades analyzed were November 2021, 2022, and 2024. In November 2021, the Glasgow Summit was held; in November 2022, the Sharm El Sheikh Summit took place, and Lula's victory in Brazil was addressed, with numerous references in the press to climate as a central element of his foreign policy; and in November 2024, the Baku Summit was held and

Donald Trump's victory was covered, with references to his denialist stance. As can be seen, the media agenda is predominantly driven by international, mostly political events. Notably, the Argentine newspaper *La Nación* contributed a significant volume of articles in November 2022, totaling 635 articles, extensively covering COP27 among other topics.

EVOLUTION OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND GLOBAL WARMING COVERAGE IN THE LATIN AMERICAN PRESS, BY YEAR, BY FIVE-YEAR PERIOD AND BY DECADE

Graph 2 shows the volume of coverage by year. We find that there was greater media attention to the climate challenge around the years 2007, 2009, and 2010. Later, peaks appear in 2015 and 2019. But above all, there is noticeably greater attention between 2021 and 2024.

Graph 2. Latin American press coverage of the terms “climate change” or “global warming” (2005-2024) by year



Source: Own elaboration based on Boykoff et al., 2025⁷³

⁷³ Boykoff et al., *Latin American Newspaper Coverage of Climate Change or Global Warming, 2005-2025*.

In 2007, the contributions from the different Working Groups to the Fourth IPCC Report were presented, the IPCC and Al Gore shared the Nobel Peace Prize, and the Bali Summit was held. In 2009, the Copenhagen Summit attracted very significant coverage due to the high expectations surrounding it. And in 2010, the Cancun Summit in Mexico may have been an important reason for increased media attention. However, the results show a rise in coverage over the last six years, starting from 2019. The COVID-19 health crisis slowed coverage in 2020 but it continued to grow in the following years. The years 2022 and 2023 stood out.

Several newspapers show notable growth in the last six years or in some of those years: *O’Globo*, *Folha de São Paulo*, *El Mercurio*, *Clarín*, *La Nación*, *El Comercio*, *El Espectador*, and *La República*. Other newspapers have shown a slower or partial growth during this period: *El Universal*, *Reforma*, *El Tiempo*, and *El País*. And a third group of newspapers have not shown significant growth in this period: *La Nación*, *El Comercio*, and *La Razón*. Therefore, most newspapers—but not all—have presented greater coverage in recent years.

Beyond the Climate Summits, there are significant elements that have been covered by the press in this latest stage⁷⁴. In the political framework, climate change was addressed, for example, due to the stance of ultra-conservative leaders such as Bolsonaro in Brazil and Milei in Argentina, who questioned climate policies. Donald Trump’s denialism has been an inspiration for these leaders. For instance, the press echoed the increase in Amazon deforestation during Bolsonaro’s administration and the withdrawal of Brazil’s offer to host the Climate Summit in 2019. The media also covered Milei’s denialism, who withdrew the Argentine delegation from the Baku Climate Summit. On the other hand, climate change was also linked to proactive initiatives, such as the Amazon Summit in Belém, where eight countries with territories in the Amazon sought to end deforestation. Additionally, there were national initiatives like the Ecuadorian referendum to protect the Yasuní Amazon reserve from oil exploitation. The Amazon, as a key region for the planet’s natural balance, frequently appears in the media in connection with climate change. Fires, deforestation, conflicts

⁷⁴ Fernández-Reyes, R.. *Seis años de comunicación del cambio climático (2019-2024). Análisis de los diarios El País, El Mundo, La Vanguardia y Expansión*. (Fragua, 2025). <https://hdl.handle.net/11441/174759>

over mining, oil extraction, or road paving are topics regularly covered by the press from an economic perspective, highlighting ongoing tensions between conservation and development. Furthermore, the press shows how the effects of climate change are already hindering Latin America's economy.

The meteorological framework has gained special prominence in the media. Extreme weather events or their consequences are often linked to climate change: for example, in 2022, drought and fires in Brazil, Bolivia, and Peru; in 2023, fires in Chile, heat waves, and drought in Brazil; and in 2024, unprecedented storms in Brazil, fires in the Pantanal, Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, Mexico, Ecuador, and Chile, droughts in Mexico, Venezuela, and Brazil, and heat waves in Mexico, Chile, and Argentina, among many other extreme events. Other climate-related impacts reported in the media include the rise of mosquito-borne diseases, such as the expansion of dengue in 2024.

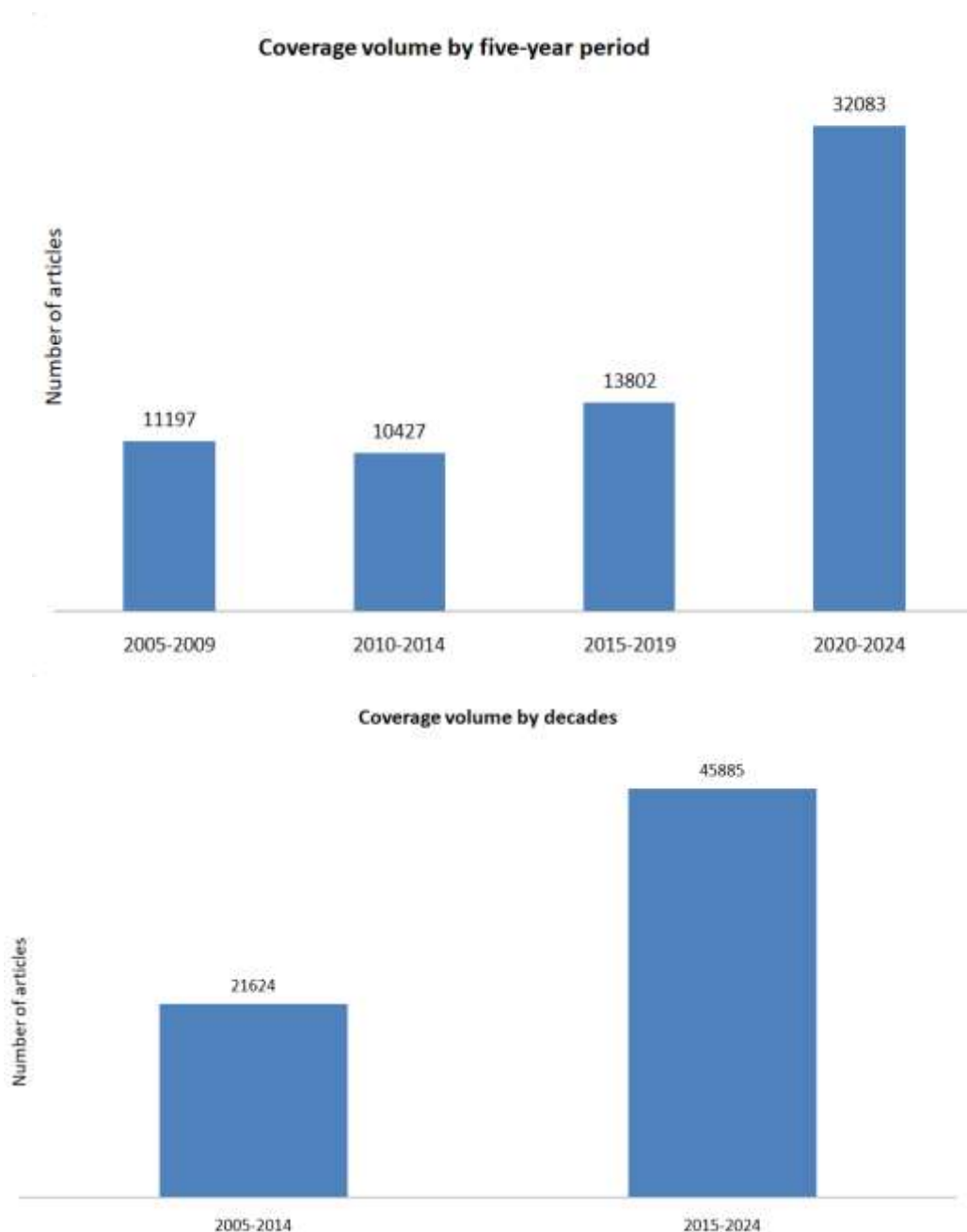
In the social realm, the press echoed climate-related migration, with references to the International Organization for Migration, the World Bank, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and the South American Conference on Migration (2021). Indigenous peoples are featured in numerous news stories for various reasons: recognition as forest guardians, deregulation of their rights, conflicts caused by extractive activities in their territories, or the impact of extreme events, among others. Another covered topic concerns the killings of activists, many of them indigenous, especially in Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico. Additionally, the media reported on youth climate mobilizations in the streets. It also covered protests by Ecuadorians against the liberalization of diesel and gasoline prices, and the Chilean uprising triggered by public transport fare increases. These latter protests call for a just transition in climate policies.

In the scientific framework, numerous articles report on scientific publications addressing the Amazon as a tipping point, its role as a carbon sink, or its exceptional biological richness.

The results by five-year period are even more illustrative (see Graph 3), as the last five years show a peak of double or triple the volume of previous periods. The results show that the 2020-2024 period stands out, followed by 2015-2019. This is

followed by the 2005-2009 period, and finally, the 2010-2014 period. The results by decade (see Graph 4) also show greater coverage in the second decade compared to the first.

Graphs 3 and 4. Latin American press coverage of the terms “climate change” or “global warming” (2005-2024) by five-year period and by decade



Source: Own elaboration based on Boykoff et al., 2025⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Boykoff et al., *Latin American Newspaper Coverage of Climate Change or Global Warming, 2005-2025*.

COMPARISON OF THE EVOLUTION OF COVERAGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND GLOBAL WARMING IN THE LATIN AMERICAN PRESS WITH THE EVOLUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS

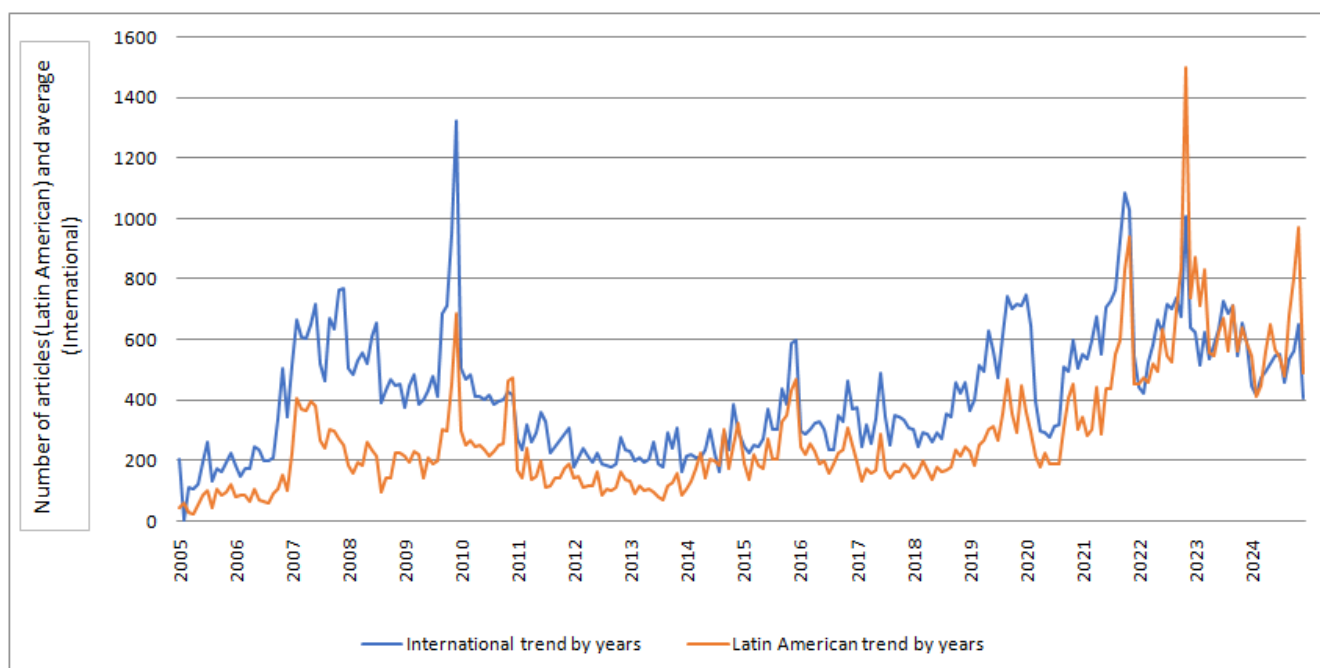
To compare trends in the evolution of coverage of climate change and global warming in the Latin American press and the world press, two exercises are carried out using MeCCO data. The comparison reveals different methodologies used by MeCCO. In the case of Latin America, the result is the sum of the analyzed newspapers; in the international accounting, the total number of articles each month in each region is divided by the number of newspapers. Therefore, the comparison is based on trends

As a result of the first exercise, a considerable parallelism is observed between the evolution of climate change coverage in the international press and in the Latin American press. Many peaks in climate change coverage worldwide are mirrored in Latin America. Therefore, it can be concluded that the media agenda on climate change in Latin America is strongly influenced by the international media agenda. However, some differences can be noted.

As mentioned, the three main peaks in coverage in Latin America have been identified in the months of November 2021, 2022, and 2024, when the Glasgow, Sharm El-Sheikh, and Baku Summits took place. However, in international coverage, the main milestones correspond to December 2009, October and November 2021, and November 2022. In December 2009, the Copenhagen Summit was held with great expectations worldwide; in October 2021, a G20 meeting took place with climate change as the central topic of debate and the Glasgow Summit began, which extended into November; and in November 2022, the Sharm El Sheikh Summit was held, while the press also covered other climate-related events such as a G20 meeting, Lula's victory in Brazil, Biden's victory in the Senate, and the meeting between Biden and Xi.

When comparing the trends, it is observed that there are peaks in the international count that are not present in Latin American coverage, and vice versa. For example, in the global press count, the coverage peaks in November and December 2007 stand out, months in which coverage in Latin America declines; the same occurred, for example, in July 2008, September 2017, January 2020, May 2022, and June and July 2024.

Graph 5. Trends in international and Latin American press coverage of the terms “climate change” or “global warming” (Jan 2005–Dec 2024)



Source: Own elaboration based on MeCCO data

On the other hand, in December 2010, the month of the Cancun Summit, the coverage peak is much more pronounced in the Latin American press than in the international press; greater coverage intensity in Latin America is also noticeable at the end of 2014. In 2014, contributions from Working Groups II and III and the Synthesis Report of the Fifth IPCC Assessment Report were presented, the World Climate Summit was held in New York along with the Global March Against Climate Change, the G20 met, and the U.S. and China announced an agreement to cut emissions. But above all, the Climate Summit in Lima took place in December 2014. This last event may have influenced greater attention to climate change in the region in the final months of the year.

From 2022 until the end of 2024, there is also a generally greater intensity of Latin American coverage compared to the international count, highlighting the peaks in November 2022 and November 2024 which, as specified, correspond to the months when the Sharm El Sheikh Summit took place and Lula’s victory in Brazil was addressed, and the Baku Summit and Donald Trump’s victory.

A second comparative exercise aims to study the position of each month relative to the same month in previous years (from 2005 to 2024) in Latin America compared to the international level over the past six years (2019-2024). This will allow us to observe the importance given to each month relative to the historical series. It also highlights the different methodologies: in the case of Latin America, the result is the sum of the newspapers analyzed; in international accounting, the total number of articles for each month in each region is divided by the number of newspapers.

Table 1 and 2. Montly position in the international press and in the Latin American press compared to the same months in previous years since 2005

Montly position in the international press compared to the same months in previous years

	ene	feb	mar	abr	may	jun	jul	ago	sep	oct	nov	dic	
2019	6	5	2	2	1	3	3	1	1	1	2	2	2,417
2020	1	2	6	7	9	12	8	7	4	4	4	5	5,75
2021	2	3	2	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	5	1,917
2022	5	7	4	3	1	3	2	2	3	4	2	4	3,333
2023	2	4	1	5	4	3	2	3	4	6	6	6	3,833
2024	7	9	9	7	7	7	5	6	7	6	7	12	7,417

Monthly position in the Latin American press compared to the same months in previous years

	ene	feb	mar	abr	may	jun	jul	ago	sep	oct	nov	dic	
2019	3	5	4	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	5	4	2,583
2020	1	2	8	9	5	11	8	6	3	1	2	6	5,167
2021	2	3	2	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1,75
2022	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1,083
2023	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	3	3	2
2024	3	3	3	1	1	3	3	4	3	3	2	4	3

Source: Own elaboration based on MeCCO data

To investigate the ranking, the position of each month within the studied series (from 2005 to 2024) is analyzed. It is observed that from 2019 to 2024, the international press broke its record for best position 13 times, while the Latin American press did so 34 times. Internationally, there were six record months in 2021, four in 2019, and one each in 2020, 2022, and 2023. In Latin America, records were broken in eleven months in 2022, eight in 2023, seven in 2021, four in 2019, two in 2024, and two in 2020.

When averaging all the months of each year, it is seen that the international press had its best annual position in 2021, followed by 2019, 2022, 2023, 2020, and 2024.

Meanwhile, the Latin American press showed different results. Its best annual position was in 2022, followed by 2021, 2023, 2019, 2024, and 2020.

From these results, it can be observed that the international press reached its peak coverage in terms of historical positioning in 2021. From then on, it progressively declined in the following years, losing positions considerably. In 2024, the international press no longer set any records for coverage in any given month, and the average position across all months was 7.3 for that year. The Latin American press reached its peak in 2022, but maintained a high level of positioning in 2023. In 2024, the average historical position of the Latin American press across all months was 3 for the year. Therefore, it can be observed that the Latin American press has experienced a growth trend in recent years that is greater than the global trend.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Climate change is a key issue in the current historical moment. Although Latin America's contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions is low, the region is particularly vulnerable to its effects. The agricultural sector, land use, and deforestation account for the largest share of its emissions, although the distribution of emissions varies by country according to different realities. The effects of climate change include increasingly frequent and intense hurricanes, droughts, heatwaves, fires, and floods, which add to or influence other vulnerabilities in the region.

The study analyzes the quantitative evolution of climate change coverage in 15 print newspapers from Latin America monitored by the Media Climate Change Observatory (MeCCO) at the University of Colorado. Among the limitations are that only newspapers from half of the countries in the region are analyzed, only the terms "climate change" or "global warming" are studied, and different search engines are used. Nevertheless, MeCCO's data allow for analyzing the evolution of climate change coverage in the press by differentiating stages and identifying the most notable milestones. It also enables comparison of trends with global evolution.

The main conclusions are as follows:

1. A temporal concentration of climate coverage is observed, particularly in the months of November and December, coinciding with the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) Climate Summits, which constitute the primary events covered by the Latin American press. The Cancún and Lima summits demonstrate that geographical proximity acts as an additional influential factor in shaping media attention to climate change. These summits generate increased coverage not only during the months in which they are held, but also in the preceding months, when numerous reports are released and denialist discourses emerge with the aim of influencing outcomes.

2. A significant recent increase in press coverage of the climate challenge is identified, with the years from 2021 to 2024 showing the highest levels across the entire period analyzed. From 2019 onward, an upward trend is evident, interrupted by the COVID-19 health crisis in 2020. Coverage subsequently rebounded strongly, particularly in 2022 and 2023. Five-year period analyses are especially illustrative, as the most recent five-year span (2020–2024) doubles or even triples the volume observed in earlier periods.

3. A strong international influence on the Latin American media agenda is evident, particularly through the political framework. The most significant milestones correspond to Climate Summits and broader international political developments. Thus, peaks are observed in 2007, 2009, 2010, 2014, 2015, 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2024, corresponding to the months in which the Bali, Copenhagen, Cancun, Lima, Paris, Madrid, Glasgow, Sharm El-Sheikh, and Baku Climate Summits were held, respectively.

4. A parallelism exists between Latin American and international coverage, albeit with some specific differences. Numerous global peaks in climate change coverage are also reflected in the Latin American press, indicating a degree of alignment with Western media coverage patterns.

5. A trend of faster growth in Latin American coverage compared to global coverage is observed in recent years, especially from 2022 to the end of 2024. Over the last six years (2019–2024), the international press reached record monthly coverage positioning in 13 months, whereas the Latin American press did so on 34 occasions.

International media coverage reached its peak positioning in 2021, after which it declined progressively in subsequent years, losing prominence considerably. In contrast, the Latin American press peaked in 2022 but has maintained relatively high positioning levels in subsequent years.

As a point of discussion, and based on the scientific literature, it is considered essential to consolidate climate change coverage in the Latin American press in parallel with the risk perception reflected in climate science and the impacts observed in the region. Current evidence suggests that media coverage of climate change depends excessively on political factors and international events, resulting in irregular attention shaped by the global agenda. There is a need to strengthen locally grounded approaches that reflect regional realities, as well as to promote complementary frameworks that operate independently from dominant global narratives.

Furthermore, there is a clear need to expand research on climate change communication in Latin America, particularly studies produced within the region that examine the evolution of media coverage at the country level. Future research would benefit from increasing the number of newspapers and countries analyzed. It would also be essential to incorporate other media platforms and social networks into studies of climate change coverage in order to develop a more comprehensive analysis.

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Evolución de la Cobertura del Cambio Climático en Prensa de América Latina

RESUMEN

El cambio climático está reconocido como un desafío primordial para la humanidad. En los últimos años se ha registrado una aceleración del aumento de temperatura, a la par que se han producido numerosos impactos en todas las regiones del mundo. América Latina, con diferentes realidades a través de su amplio territorio, ya está sufriendo sus efectos. Los medios de comunicación cumplen una función social en la transmisión de información sobre este reto y son un reflejo del interés/desinterés de las sociedades. El presente trabajo trata de identificar cómo ha sido la cobertura cuantitativa en la prensa de América Latina desde el 1 de enero de 2005 al 31 de diciembre de 2024. Para ello se usan los datos del Media Climate Change Observatory (Universidad de Colorado), que permiten observar la evolución de la atención mediática latinoamericana y compararla con la evolución internacional. Entre las conclusiones se observa que: los meses de mayor cobertura se concentran en noviembre, seguido de diciembre, meses en los que se celebran las Cumbres del Clima del CMNUCC; el último lustro (2020-2024) es el de mayor cobertura con diferencia; la agenda mediática sobre cambio climático en América Latina está fuertemente influenciada por la agenda internacional; la tendencia muestra una mayor intensidad de la cobertura latinoamericana con respecto al recuento internacional en el último lustro. A partir de la literatura científica, se considera vital que se consolide la cobertura del cambio climático en la prensa latinoamericana de manera paralela a la percepción del riesgo que muestra la ciencia del clima y a los efectos en la región.

Palabras clave: cambio climático; comunicación; América Latina; cobertura mediática; prensa.

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