

R&D-Report

Understanding the Narrative of “Bodø 2024”

An AI-assisted analysis of the discourse
in Norwegian Media (2023-2025)

Oliver Henk
Anastasiya Henk
Alena Nelaeva

Nord University
R&D-Report no. 124
Bodø 2025

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**Monitor 2024:
Effects of Bodø as European Capital of Culture 2024**

**UNDERSTANDING THE
NARRATIVE OF "BODØ2024":
AN AI-ASSISTED ANALYSIS
OF THE DISCOURSE IN
NORWEGIAN MEDIA
(2023–2025)**

Nord University Business School

- May 2025 -

Oliver Henk, Anastasiya Henk, Alena Nelaeva

**With contribution of Anatoli Bourmistrov,
Veronika Vakulenko, Bjørn Willy Åmo, Lars
Kolvereid, and Evguenii Vinogradov**

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Executive Summary

As the first city north of the Arctic Circle to be given the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) title, Bodø2024 generated widespread and sustained media interest across Norway. This media attention has played an important role in shaping how both the public and key stakeholders perceive the cultural year—not only in terms of its events and outcomes but also in how the region presents itself culturally and socially. Understanding this coverage helps identify the broader and less tangible effects of the program. These soft impacts, such as changes in regional awareness, civic pride, and public image, are often overlooked in evaluations that focus mainly on visitor numbers or economic outcomes (Garcia, 2005). The aim of this report is to bring those dimensions into focus by addressing the following objectives:

- Measuring the total volume of media coverage referencing Bodø2024 across Norwegian media outlets over the entire ECoC period (January 2023 to February 2025). The analysis identified 5,280 articles, with clear peaks around the opening ceremony and key summer festivals.
- Evaluating the overall sentiment conveyed by the media and distinguishing among positive, neutral, mixed, and negative coverage. While media sentiment across Nordland County, especially in Helgeland, was predominantly positive—emphasizing community pride and active local engagement—Bodø outlets exhibited a more critical tone. Coverage within Bodø balanced local enthusiasm with scrutiny, particularly regarding funding priorities, event logistics, and concerns about cultural representation.
- Examining dominant topics within the coverage to identify aspects of Bodø2024 that resonated most strongly. Key themes included extensive community engagement, youth involvement, and regional cultural pride. Simultaneously, controversies emerged around funding decisions, Sámi cultural representation, and the balancing of high-profile events with essential public services.
- Analyzing the geographical distribution of coverage to assess how far narratives that emerged in Bodø extended beyond local contexts. Although larger cities like Oslo had greater media capacity, their engagement remained relatively modest and neutral. Conversely, regions geographically closer and more culturally similar to Bodø, notably Helgeland, experienced strong and sustained media interest despite fewer media outlets, highlighting the central role of locally relevant topics in shaping the narrative.
- Providing practical insights for stakeholders on enhancing future cultural programming. The findings highlight the importance of balancing large-scale events that generate visibility with sustained, community-focused initiatives

that foster long-term cultural engagement. In order to ensure relevance and impact beyond the title year, promoters and city officials must engage in transparent and inclusive decision-making, support grassroots cultural activity, and authentically represent diverse cultural identities. These conclusions align closely with the White Paper 40 Recommendations from 40 Years of ECoC: Insights for the Capitals from 2034 Onwards (developed by Chemnitz and Nova Gorica as 2025 European Capitals of Culture), in which the authors recommend the prioritization of long-term cultural strategies over a short-term spectacle, supporting existing grassroots initiatives through a bottom-up approach, and explicitly protecting artistic freedom, cultural rights, and civic engagement. Examples of helpful activities include using the bidbook process to address core societal questions and calls for sustained support for cultural professionals beyond the title year to ensure enduring impact (Chemnitz & Nova_Gorica, 2025).

Introduction

European Capitals of Culture (ECoCs) aim to broaden cultural participation, elevate city profiles, and stimulate economic growth through increased tourism (European Commission, 2025). Central to achieving these goals is media coverage, as it significantly shapes public perceptions, influences both cultural engagement and the long-term legacy of ECoC events, and contributes to improved image, which is considered a key impact indicator (Garcia & Cox, 2013). Media analysis is thus critical for assessing how effectively an ECoC meets its cultural and symbolic objectives (Garcia, 2017). Yet, few ECoCs present a detailed media analysis. Indeed, in the corpus of existing published reports by previous ECoCs, only Liverpool2008 and Aarhus2017 include media analyses that span several years before and after their title year. Other cities have either published key numbers related to media coverage and main themes (e.g., Ruhr2010 and Valletta2018) or have failed to look at these numbers at all. The main reason why few ECoCs have engaged deeply in media analyses might be that it is a highly resource-consuming process. Some may also consider it a “soft indicator” that contributes mainly to image-building effects (Garcia, 2005; Richards & Wilson, 2004). It can take months to find, collect, analyze, discuss, and present narratives and numbers from all articles in related media outlets.

However, with the introduction and widespread use of AI-driven tools for data analysis, this task can be done much faster and more efficiently. We believe that the importance of analyzing media discourse should not be underestimated, mainly because the media, especially at the regional level, is a major identity-forming tool for local communities (Ewart, 2000). Examining media messaging and reporting shows stakeholders’ perspectives, revealing the themes that citizens and broader communities are concerned with and discussing the associated sentiments. Therefore, by developing a structured methodology to collect and interpret newspaper articles, Monitor2024 presents findings on how local, regional, and national media shaped the Bodø2024 discourse.

A major step at the beginning of the analysis is to understand the content and methodologies of previous ECoCs’ media reports. By examining how previous ECoCs have been represented in media coverage, we gain insights into recurring themes, patterns of public engagement, and the mechanisms through which media influences these outcomes, which serves as a starting point for designing our evaluation. Therefore, in this report, we present the media impact assessment of Bodø2024, guided by findings and best practices from the Liverpool2008 and Aarhus2017 reports. To contextualize our approach and underline its importance, we first summarize relevant experiences and lessons from past assessments.

Insights from Previous ECoC Media Assessments¹

Previous evaluations consistently demonstrate that media narratives influence not only immediate cultural engagement but also longer-term city image, public attitudes, and economic outcomes, which is also supported by academic literature (e.g., Ewart, 2000). Primarily, media coverage extensively highlights cultural and artistic events, such as large-scale public performances, exhibitions, and ceremonies, typically generating positive attention and peaks in public interest. For instance, Liverpool's notable events, including "La Princesse" and the "Superlambanana" parade, received considerable media coverage, significantly boosting local pride and international visibility. Furthermore, the media frequently portrays ECoCs as catalysts for urban regeneration and cultural revitalization, which helps establish a positive city image and broader international recognition. Examples include Liverpool's transformation into a vibrant cultural city and Ruhr2010's shift from industrial heritage toward cultural renewal. Discussions on economic and tourism impacts tend to emphasize anticipated benefits rather than detailed economic analyses yet consistently demonstrate how positive portrayals strengthen cities' attractiveness to tourists and investors.

Social issues such as education, social inclusion, well-being, and crime also constitute an important media narrative. While these issues often receive negative coverage before the ECoC year, the discussion is reframed positively during the event, which highlights the importance of proactive initiatives by the cities. For example, Liverpool2008 saw local media increasingly identify community cohesion and public health as integral components of the city's cultural renewal. Additionally, management and leadership issues—including transparency, budgeting, and stakeholder inclusion—regularly appeared as critical themes. There can also be straightforward criticism by the media, such as the accusation of insufficient transparency before the title year of Aarhus2017.

In addition, as shown by the Liverpool2008 and Aarhus2017 reports, narratives can vary locally, nationally, and internationally, meaning they can have different major themes and sentiments. Understanding narrative differences shows what is important for stakeholders on those different levels.

Finally, regarding methodological approaches to media analysis, existing reports used content and sentiment analysis and searched for relevant keywords to find the related articles. Yet even though such an approach allows for the quantification of trends and attitudes in a systematic and replicable way by counting how many times certain concepts appear in the sample, the major challenge here is ensuring consistency and comparability across different types of articles and "counting text rather than analysing content" (Garcia et al., 2010: 10). Relevant discussions are expected to span

[1] Based mostly on available reports from Liverpool2008 and Aarhus2017: Impacts08. Creating an Impact: Liverpool's Experience as European Capital of Culture, Media Impact Assessment (part 1)(2006), and Media Impact Assessment (part 2)(2010); Aarhus2017 i Medierne: Evaluering af Europæisk Kulturhovedstads Aarhus 2017, Temarapport nr. 5.

several years before the title year, the title year itself, and some period after the title year. Thus, a before-during-after comparison allows researchers to attribute changes in media portrayal specifically to the ECoC intervention.

Media influence and public engagement

Media analysis from earlier ECoCs highlights that media coverage does not just reflect public impressions of events. Instead, it actively shapes public perception and engagement. Aarhus2017's analysis found strong initial correlations between positive media coverage, elevated local pride, and public enthusiasm. Although these links are not conclusively causal, they illustrate how media sets the public agenda and influences community attitudes.

Furthermore, media coverage directly impacts public awareness and participation. For example, Ruhr2010 documented that most residents obtained their information from traditional media (newspapers, TV, and radio), which shows the role of the media in mobilizing cultural participation. Similarly, Aarhus2017 emphasized how widespread media attention helped create a shared narrative and strengthened community identity, reinforcing civic pride and collective engagement.

Additionally, positive media portrayals contribute significantly to indirect economic impacts. Favorable media exposure—such as Ruhr2010's €90 million worth of media coverage—reinforces a city's attractiveness to tourists and investors. Also, Liverpool's rebranding from a declining port city to a vibrant cultural capital shows the role of the media in reshaping urban reputations with lasting economic benefits.

Given the insights from previous ECoC assessments, it is clear that analyzing media coverage provides valuable knowledge about immediate public engagement, as well as the longer-term impact on city identity, regional image, and broader national perceptions.

The Monitor2024 approach to media analysis

As relevant media reports show, content and sentiment analysis can quantify trends and attitudes. However, this approach requires a robust methodology to ensure consistency and comparability (Garcia et al., 2010). Thus, to contribute to existing findings and extend methodologies of media analysis, Monitor2024 uses AI-driven tools for data analysis and develops a robust methodology that can be used not only by future ECoCs but also in broader data analysis research.

AI tools were introduced to the general public only a couple of years ago and have,

therefore, not been used by previous ECoCs for media analysis. Such tools allow for the faster analysis of large amounts of data that can reveal the most discussed and controversial issues among stakeholders, which allows for efficient mitigation strategies when necessary. In this report, we present our methodology and examine whether and how the media analysis of Bodø2024 will be similar to previous reports and if this methodology allows for extended and more in-depth analysis.

We have been inspired by the analysis of different geographical levels (local, regional, and national) following Aarhus2017, and we believe that this is relevant for the assessment of Bodø2024, as media narratives may differ considerably between Bodø, the wider Nordland region, and the rest of Norway. A detailed assessment of sentiments, emerging trends, and challenging issues within these geographic contexts can reveal important variations in public perceptions, helping stakeholders understand the successes and challenges associated with Bodø's role as the European Capital of Culture.

Given the significant geographical distances between Norwegian municipalities, regional variations in media coverage, and the high volume of newspaper articles across diverse local contexts, it was necessary to develop innovative methods to robustly and efficiently analyze media trends related to Bodø2024. To effectively address these challenges, Monitor2024 has designed a structured methodology specifically tailored to interpret newspaper coverage across three distinct geographical contexts: Bodø proper, the county of Nordland excluding Bodø, and the broader Norwegian national context (effectively all other Norwegian counties but Nordland). The following sections detail our step-by-step methodology, from sourcing the original newspaper articles to working with artificial intelligence to construct a comprehensive database that we could use for analysis in this and other future reports while ensuring analytical transparency and methodological rigor throughout the assessment process.

Our contributions are as follows. We show how geographic and cultural proximity influenced media coverage, as well as differences in themes and the moods it conveyed. In addition, we present stakeholders' perspectives with in-depth findings on the main critical discourse themes around Bodø2024. Finally, we believe that our detailed presentation of the methodology will serve as a starting point to allow further ECoCs to conduct media analyses.

Methodology

The methodology applied in the analysis comprises a structured and detailed process designed to systematically capture, analyze, and interpret newspaper coverage related to Bodø2024. The approach integrates automated text analysis using artificial intelligence (AI), semantic clustering techniques from natural language processing (NLP), and robust database management—understood here as the structured design, validation, and querying of a relational database to improve data integrity and efficient handling of complex and interconnected analytical outputs (Özsu & Valduriez, 2020). To ensure methodological rigor and analytical transparency, each phase of the process was carefully documented.

Downloading articles from Reteriever

The initial phase involved systematically downloading articles from the Retriever media database, a widely recognized service providing comprehensive coverage of Norwegian news outlets (Retriever Norge AS, 2024). To ensure the inclusion of articles related to the coverage of Bodø2024, a clearly defined and pre-tested search query was applied:

"Bodø2024" OR "Bodø 2024" OR ("Europeisk kulturhovedstad" AND "Bodø") OR "UNG2024" OR "UNG24" OR ("Hjertebank" AND "Festivalen" AND ("Bodø" OR "Nordland")) OR "Samisk kulturuke" OR "ARCTICULATION" OR "Voicing dialogues 2024" OR "Via querinissima" OR ("Internasjonale dansedager" AND ("Bodø" OR "Nordland")) OR "Feeding Europe" OR "Connecting Waste" OR "The Extra Mile" OR "NOUA" OR "NM for Gatelag" OR "Polarhav" OR "Outsider Art" OR "Messy Corners" OR "Art Trail" OR ("Kunstkannten" AND ("Bodø" OR "Nordland")) OR "Det nye nord" OR "LIAF" OR "Blikk Nord" OR "Fargespill" OR "Deconfining" OR ("Avslutningsfest" AND "Bodø") OR "Arcticulatons of Faith" OR "Prosjekt67" OR "Candoco" OR "Skulpturtriennalen" OR "Kjelvikspillet" OR "Det Vilde Ord" OR "Here Comes the Sun" OR "Spring Optimism" OR "Midsummer Madness" OR "Autumn Storm" OR "Artic Light" OR "Drømmer i Salten" OR ("24-timersløp" AND ("Bodø" OR "Nordland")) OR "Kunstklakk".

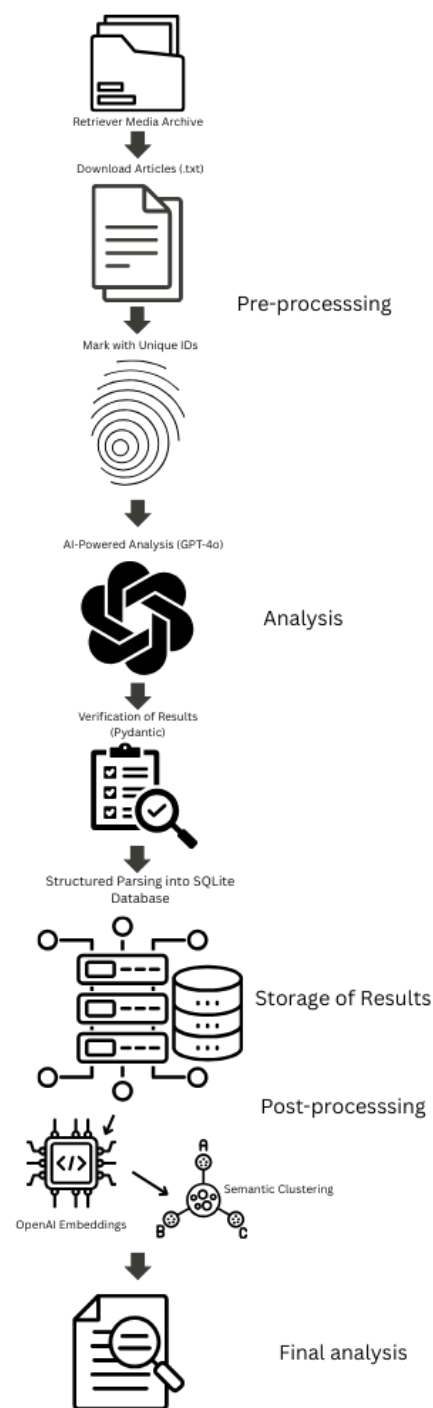


Figure 1. Research Process Flow: Media Analysis Pipeline

This query was designed to identify all explicit references to Bodø2024, the city's designation as a European Capital of Culture, and mentions of associated cultural events and activities. The search period spanned January 2023 to early 2025 to incorporate media coverage from the year of the event as well as the preparatory and post-title year phases. The temporal scope enabled the compilation of a dataset that reflects a broad range of perspectives across diverse media outlets. In total, the search resulted in 5,283 articles published between January 1, 2023 and February 15, 2025. These were published predominantly in Norwegian, though several articles in English and Sámi were also identified and processed using AI-based language analysis tools.

Pre-processing articles

All articles were downloaded from the Retriever database in plain text format, which enabled more efficient processing compared to alternative formats such as PDFs. Upon downloading, each file contained multiple articles (up to 500 articles per file), presented as a single continuous text block. Therefore, a reliable method for



Figure 2. Splitting the aggregated aggregated articles

The figure illustrates how large text files containing many articles are divided into individual articles. A clear marker found in the text is used to separate them, so each article can be examined on its own.

segmenting such aggregated articles was necessary. After the careful inspection of the downloaded data, a consistent delimiter was identified: a sequence of 78 equal signs (=), which reliably marked the boundaries between individual articles. Using this pattern, the files were programmatically split into discrete article units, eliminating the need for manual separation. To avoid processing duplicates, each article was assigned a unique identifier using the SHA-256 hashing algorithm based on the article title and name of the newspaper (Eastlake 3rd, 2011). This approach ensured that identical articles appearing in the same outlet were processed only once. However, if an article with the same title appeared in a different publication outlet, it was retained as a separate entry, enabling tracking across outlets and over time. Publication dates extracted from each article also allowed for chronological ordering, thereby facilitating temporal analyses in later stages of the study.

Analysis with OpenAI

Following the preprocessing step, the analysis proceeded with the core analytical stage, leveraging artificial intelligence through the OpenAI API, specifically by employing the most recent GPT-4o model available at the time of analysis, gpt-4o-2024-11-20 (OpenAI, 2025). For this purpose, a custom Python script was developed to submit each article to the AI model, accompanied by a prompt that was deliberately formulated to reflect the analytical requirements of the study. The prompt was explicitly tailored to minimize the common issue of overly verbose or “chatty” responses often encountered when interacting with large language models. The following example illustrates the type of output the prompt was intended to prevent:



*Figure 3. Chatty Response
Example 1*

OR



*Figure 4. Chatty Response
Example 2*

By including clear definitions, specific examples, and explicit instructions on the desired output format, the prompt was configured to elicit concise and structured responses tailored to the analytical objectives of the study (Zamfirescu-Pereira et al., 2023). Alignment between AI's interpretation of the task and the research team's understanding of key terms and definitions was achieved through a prolonged recursive training and refinement process. During this process, recurring misinterpretations were identified and addressed, and the prompt was continuously adjusted until the AI and a group of researchers produced comparable outputs from the same input.

The AI was instructed to perform a series of tasks systematically, including the following:

1. Metadata extraction: the AI was instructed to extract detailed metadata for each article, including the title, author, publication date and time, and the name of the newspaper.
2. Content analysis: the AI was tasked with performing content analysis, which is defined as a systematic method for interpreting textual material by identifying the presence, meanings, and relationships of words, themes, and concepts (Neuendorf, 2017). Assigned tasks included the identification and summarization of key themes, extraction of positive and negative words in context, and recognition of explicitly mentioned named entities such as individuals, organizations, and locations.
3. Sentiment analysis: the AI was also instructed to carry out sentiment analysis, a computational method for detecting and classifying affective states expressed in text (Lei & Liu, 2021). The assigned task consisted of determining whether each article conveyed a predominantly positive, negative, mixed, or neutral tone, accompanied by a brief justification for the classification.
4. Event relevance and media framing: the AI was instructed to determine each article's relevance to Bodø2024, identify unusual or non-traditional event locations mentioned in the text, detect explicitly stated controversial issues, and evaluate the coverage according to clearly defined media impact indicators such as city image, economics, physical environment, cultural and artistic impacts, social issues, and management policy decisions.
5. Anticipated outcomes: the AI was prompted to identify explicit mentions of anticipated outcomes related to artistic and cultural activities, quality, collaboration, demand, and general livability in Bodø.

Integrating results into the database

Once the structured analysis from the OpenAI API was retrieved, it was processed and systematically integrated into a relational SQLite database. The database was designed to accommodate the complexity and interconnectedness of the data, ensuring efficient storage, retrieval, and further analysis. Central tables were constructed to hold basic article metadata, while multiple supplementary tables contained detailed outputs, including sentiments, themes, entities, terminology, contextual relevance to Bodø2024, unusual event locations, controversial issues, media impact indicators, and anticipated outcomes. Prior to insertion into the database, each AI-generated response was rigorously validated against predefined data models using Pydantic schemas—a Python-based framework that ensures data



Figure 5. Storing the AI Output in a database

Each article's information—such as themes, tone, and mentions of places or people—is saved in a structured way so it can be easily reviewed and compared.

The process started with text normalization, which involved converting all extracted terms to lowercase text, removing punctuation, and excluding common stop words to prepare the data for semantic analysis (Manning et al., 2008). The normalized terms were then transformed into numeric embeddings using OpenAI's advanced embedding model (text-embedding-3-large). This model was chosen explicitly for the ability to cluster extracted themes, controversial issues, unusual event locations, and individual positive and negative words due to its extensive semantic resolution that effectively captures nuances at both lexical and short-phrase levels. Conversely, Hugging Face's SentenceTransformer model (all-MiniLM-L6-v2) was utilized exclusively during post-processing for the semantic network analysis of complete article texts. This model was particularly useful for encoding contextual and structural semantics for longer sentences and documents to make meaningful network analyses possible.

consistency by enforcing type definitions and structure—thereby safeguarding data integrity throughout the process (Narayanan, 2024). An overview of the database tables used to store the outputs is provided in Appendix 1.

Post-processing data

Further, a multi-step post-processing procedure was implemented. Despite careful prompt engineering, the AI-generated outputs frequently presented challenges related to inconsistent descriptions of themes and controversial issues. For instance, the concept of community engagement appeared in numerous different formulations across articles and thereby posed a substantial analytical barrier. Advanced semantic clustering methods derived from natural language processing research were applied to address such inconsistencies (Reimers & Gurevych, 2019).

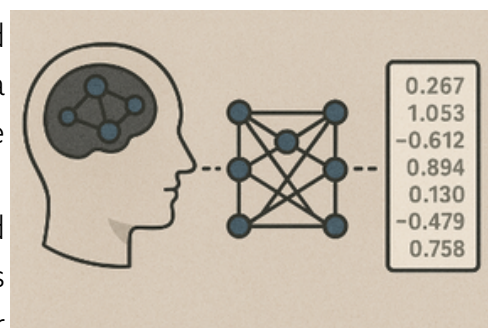


Figure 6. Concept of transforming text (semantics) into numeric embeddings.

The illustration shows how the meaning of words and sentences is turned into numbers by the computer. These numbers help the system understand similarities and differences among articles.

This embedding process was then executed through a Python script that connected to OpenAI via their API client. The embeddings were stored locally in Parquet format to optimize computational efficiency and reduce redundant API calls. Using agglomerative clustering, a hierarchical clustering algorithm, embeddings were grouped based on cosine similarity, adopting a conservative threshold (0.55) to ensure semantically coherent clusters. Each cluster was assigned a representative term that was selected based on frequency and semantic centrality, thereby generating unified categories for positive expressions (Reimers & Gurevych, 2019).

The clustering procedure significantly enhanced data coherence by condensing numerous closely related expressions into semantically meaningful and analytically tractable categories. Following such refinement, the number of unique themes identified by AI was reduced from 10,397 to 803 clusters. Similarly, the number of clusters of

controversial issues identified was reduced from 1,228 to 245; the positive words clusters decreased from 2,922 to 580; negative word clusters lowered from 1,654 to 657; and unusual event location clusters dropped from 706 to 252.

The consolidation of semantically aligned expressions facilitated more targeted querying of the database. It enabled, for example, the examination of relationships between sentiment and specific thematic clusters, the tracking of temporal patterns in media coverage, and comparative analysis across media outlets. The following sections present the findings derived from this analytical process.



Figure 7: Grouping embeddings into clusters with semantic similarities.

This figure shows how articles or phrases with similar meaning are grouped together. This helps make sense of large amounts of text by sorting them into clear categories based on what they are about.

Coverage Volume Over Time

Overall volume

A total of 5,280 articles focusing on Bodø2024 were published during the monitored period (January 2023 to February 2025). This figure shows a significant level of media attention generated by the role of Bodø and the region of Nordland as a European Capital of Culture. While there is, unfortunately, no direct comparison to prior years, the volume and distribution of articles suggest a strong and sustained presence of Bodø2024 in the national media landscape throughout the title year and its surrounding phases of 2023 and 2025.

Trends over time

The following illustration shows the fluctuations in coverage across the monitored period, with pronounced spikes aligning with key Bodø2024 milestones, particularly around the opening ceremony at the beginning of the year 2024 (Figure 8).

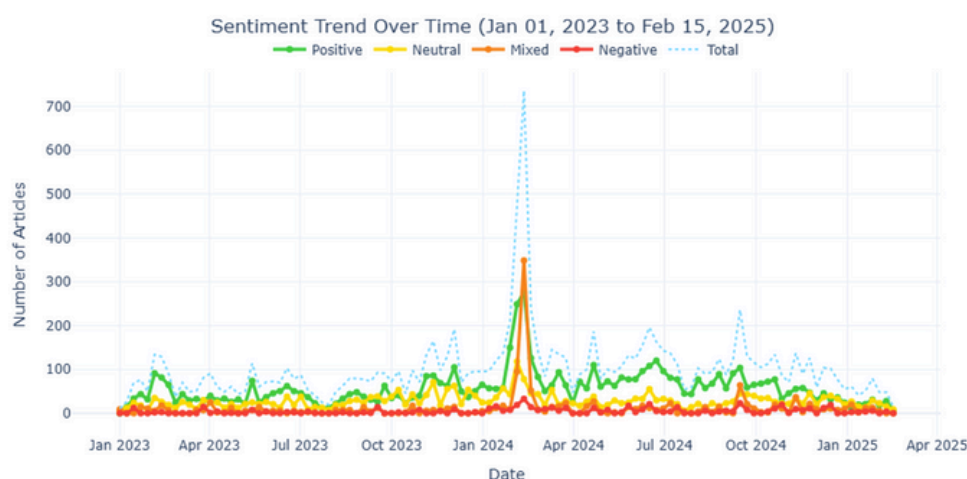


Figure 8: Sentiment trend over time (January 1, 2023 – February 15, 2025)

Opening phase (late January – February 2024)

Media interest peaked during late January and February 2024, aligning with the official launch of the Bodø2024 program and associated inaugural events. Newspapers across the country reported extensively on the opening ceremony, local celebrations, and early cultural exhibitions.

Summer 2024 (June – August 2024)

A second, smaller peak in media coverage was observed during the summer months of 2024, corresponding with a concentration of major festivals, concerts, and cultural

activities under the Bodø2024 umbrella. Coverage during this period emphasized event programming, tourism interest—particularly during the peak travel season, and local participation. Such emphasis resulted in a moderate increase in article volume. The observed temporal patterns suggest a strong correlation between media coverage volume and key Bodø2024 milestones. Peaks in coverage corresponded with major program events, implying that the timing and visibility of these activities contributed significantly to increased media attention.

Geographic Distribution of Coverage

Beyond the total volume, examining the geographic origin of media coverage reveals how Bodø2024's media coverage varied across Norway. The distribution of articles indicates how local relevance and media infrastructure shaped the intensity and nature of coverage.

Media landscape vs. coverage origins

The Norwegian media infrastructure is highly concentrated in the southern part of the country, particularly in and around the capital. As illustrated in Figure 9, counties like Oslo and Viken host the highest number of media outlets, with up to 180 registered in these areas. Such centralization means that national news production is primarily situated in the capital region (Medietilsynet, 2021; Nordicom, 2020). In contrast, the northernmost counties, including Nordland, Troms, and Finnmark, have significantly fewer media outlets. Although local newspapers operate across all regions, media outlets in the north are more sparsely distributed. Despite this structural imbalance, local and regional media remain active nationwide, ensuring even smaller communities have some level of media voice.

Coverage by location

The geographic distribution of Bodø2024 coverage did not mirror the concentration of Norway's media infrastructure, as the analysis of article origins by municipality demonstrates a clear northern focus:

- Bodø produced the highest number of Bodø2024-related articles, with more than 1,500 (28.4%) originating from the city, which is visually presented in Figure 10 by a prominent marker over Bodø, reflecting the city's intensive local media engagement.
- Other municipalities in Northern Norway² also generated substantial coverage. Cities such as Tromsø, Mo i Rana, and Narvik published noticeable volumes of content, suggesting that northern newsrooms, despite smaller reach, demonstrated strong engagement due to regional proximity and cultural relevance.

[2] In this report, we define the area "Northern Norway" as the combined area of Nordland, Troms, and Finnmark.

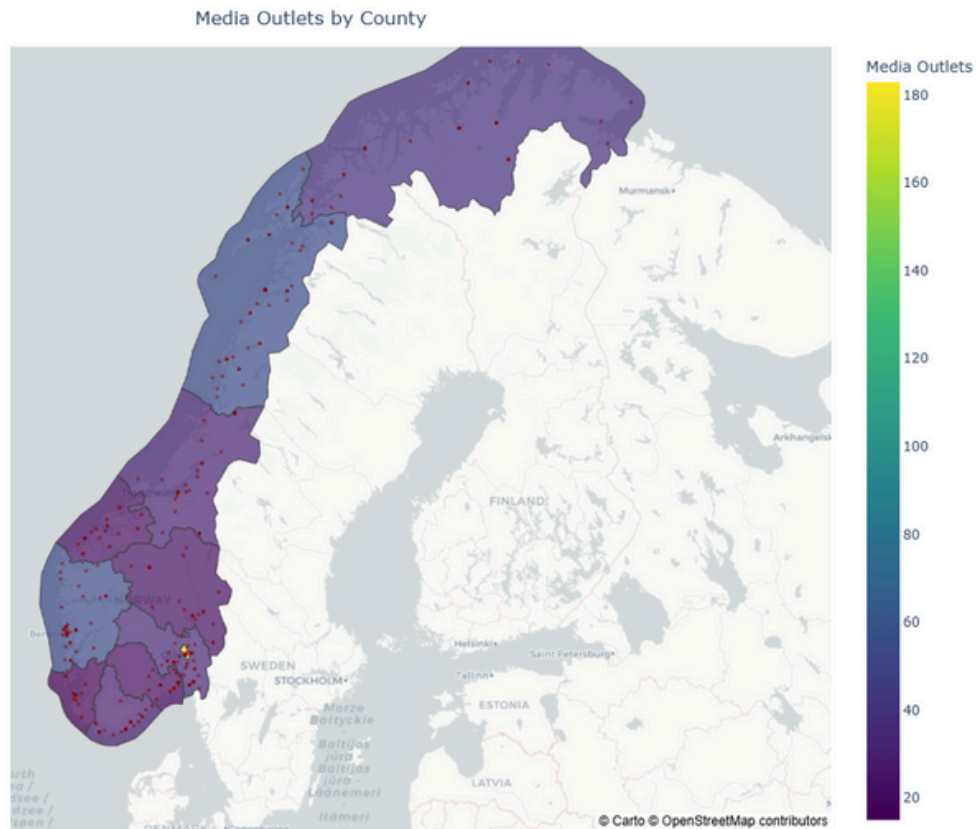


Figure 9. Distribution of Media Outlets in Norway that Have Published Articles Referencing Bodø2024

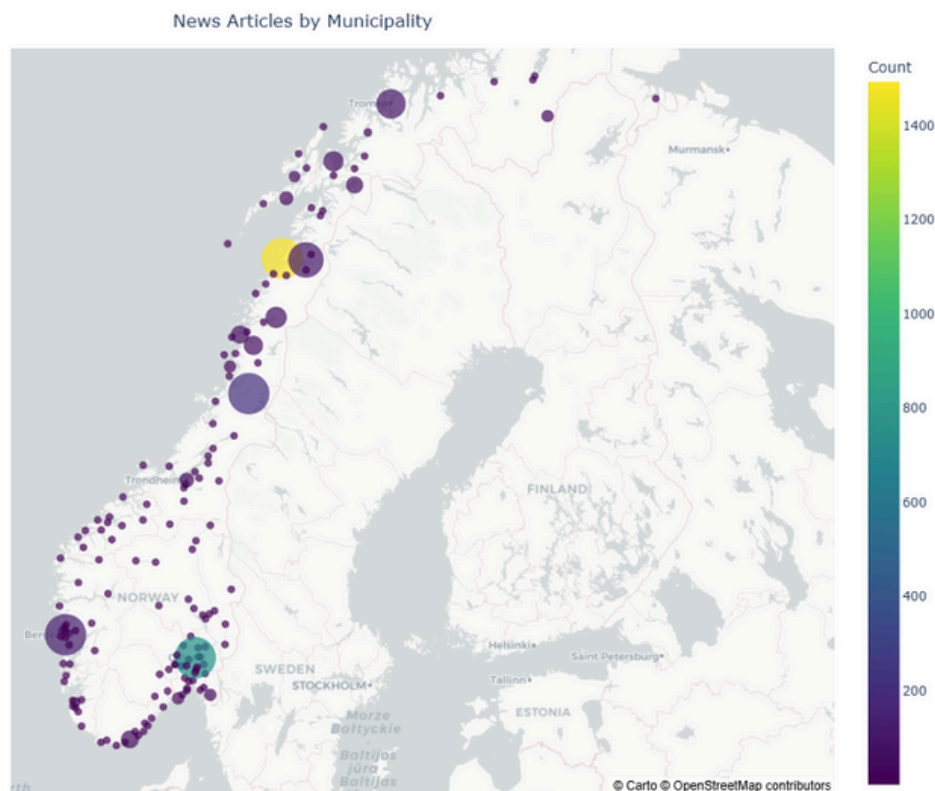


Figure 10. Number of Articles Published by News Outlets Referencing Bodø2024, by Municipality

- Larger cities from other parts of the country, including Oslo and Bergen, contributed a moderate number of articles. Based on the high density of media outlets in these regions, our analysis expected a higher volume of coverage. However, the actual output was comparatively lower. For instance, Oslo-based coverage was moderate when compared to Bodø despite Oslo's significantly more expansive media infrastructure.

Such divergence reveals a spatial discrepancy: areas with the densest media infrastructure did not produce the highest volume of Bodø2024-related content. Rather, geographic and cultural proximity to the event emerged as stronger drivers of sustained media attention. This pattern is also visible in Figure 11, which compares each municipality's potential publishing capacity with its actual output. Expected coverage was calculated by multiplying the number of local media outlets by the national average number of articles per outlet, derived from the total article volume divided by the total number of outlets. Municipalities around Bodø and in the Helgeland region published more articles than expected based on this measure, while cities with greater media infrastructure—such as Oslo—produced comparatively fewer articles than anticipated.

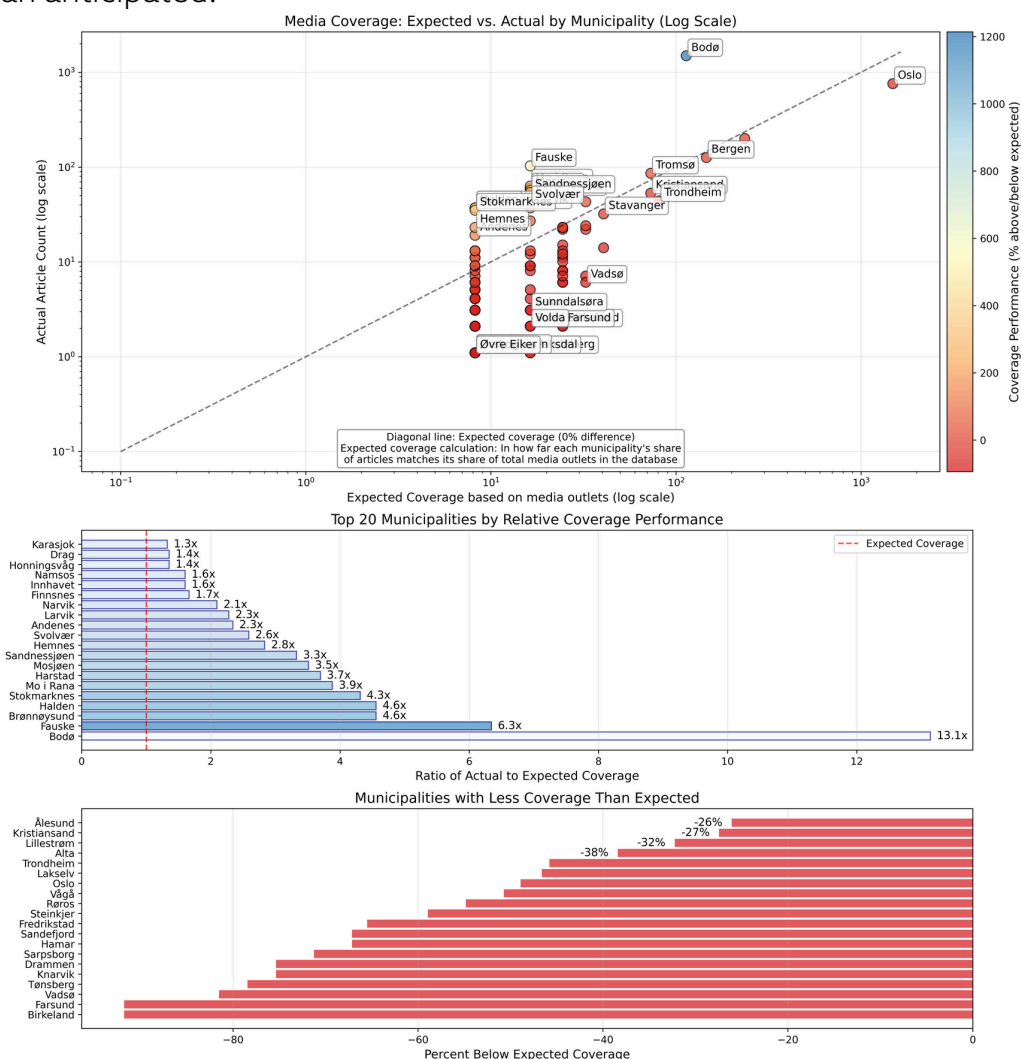


Figure 11: Coverage Performance in Different Municipalities Based on Their Local Media Infrastructure

Sentiment and Thematic Analysis

Analyzing the tone and thematic content of coverage is as important as quantifying the volume of produced coverage. The content of the articles indicates which narratives framed the public discourse about Bodø2024 and whether the tone was predominantly positive, neutral, or negative. The analysis revealed an overall positive sentiment, with a strong emphasis on community and culture, alongside occasional critical discussions on issues such as funding and inclusivity.

Overall sentiment trends

Across Norway, the majority of articles covering Bodø2024 adopted either a positive or neutral tone, with relatively few exhibiting clearly negative attitudes. This pattern suggests that the media generally presented Bodø2024 in a favorable light, celebrating its events and objectives while maintaining a neutral, reportorial stance in many cases.

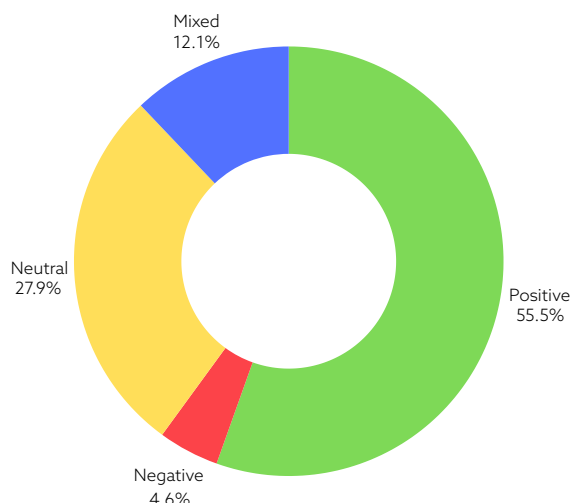


Figure 12. Sentiment distribution
(January, 1st, 2023 - February 15th, 2025)

Variance in sentiment across municipalities was also observed.

As shown in Figure 13, sentiment scores varied geographically, with more overtly positive coverage in some regions than in others, particularly in the regions around Bodø and Helgeland.

Municipalities in Nordland County exhibited the highest levels of positive sentiment. In Bodø, the host city, more than 52% of the published articles were classified as positive. Smaller towns displayed even stronger positivity: Mosjøen recorded 89% positive coverage, Fauske approximately 69%, and Mo i Rana around 75%. These figures indicate strong local enthusiasm and pride in areas most closely connected to the arrangements that were part of Bodø2024.

Neutral reporting was common but especially prevalent in national and metropolitan outlets. In Oslo, for instance, approximately 71% of articles were neutral, and only 21% were positive. Bergen exhibited a similar trend, with around 60% neutral coverage. Such distribution reflects a more objective reporting style, in which articles describe events and relay official statements without overt evaluative language.

Articles with negative sentiment comprised a small proportion of the overall dataset. The most critical tone was observed in Tromsø, where approximately 8% of the articles were negative and 14% mixed. In Bodø, around 6% of coverage was negative, and other municipalities recorded only 1–3% in this category. The low percentage of negative sentiment in the coverage demonstrates that critical perspectives were present but not dominant. An overview of the sentiment in the top 10 municipalities where articles were published is depicted in Figure 14.

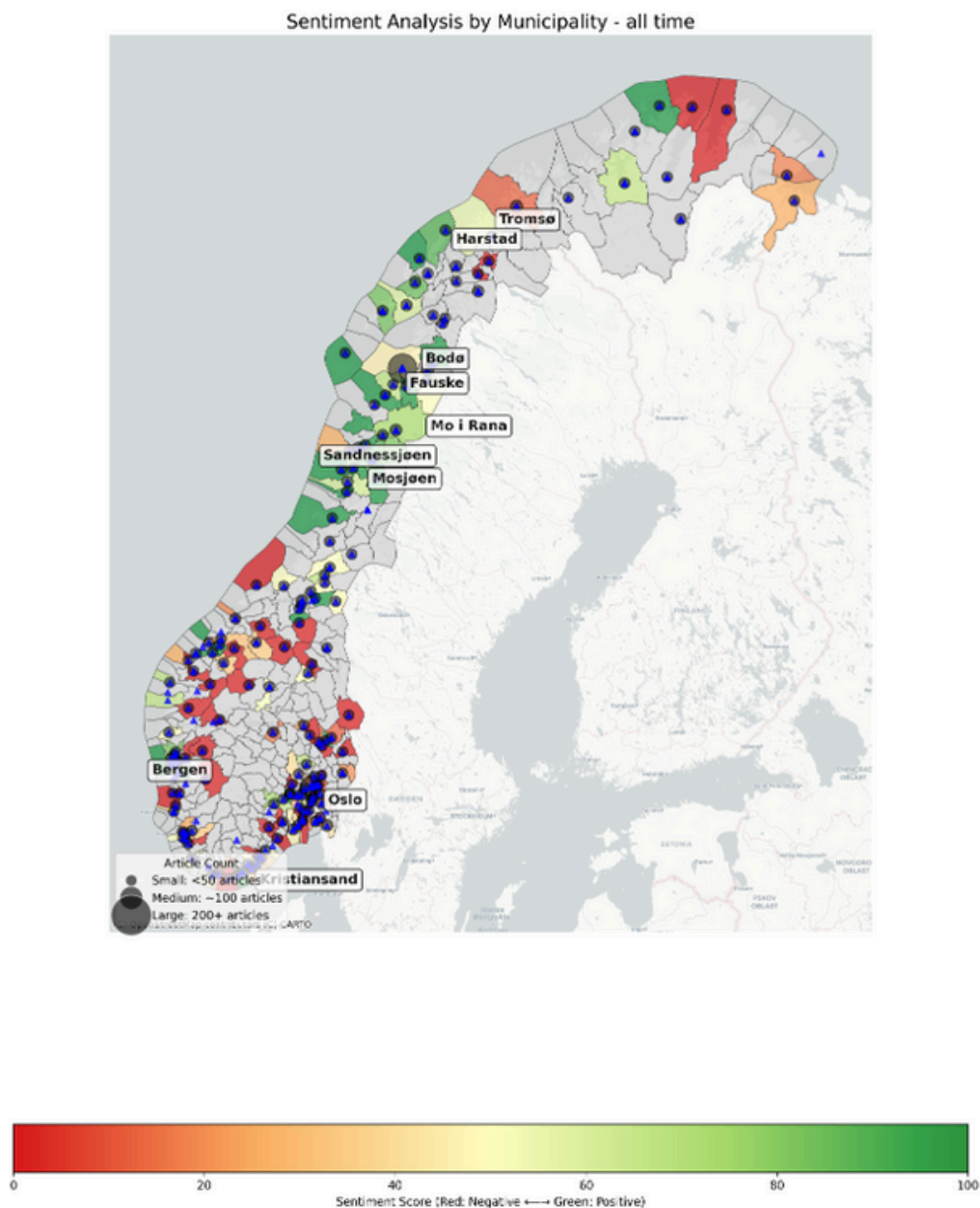


Figure 13: Sentiment Score Distribution Across Municipalities

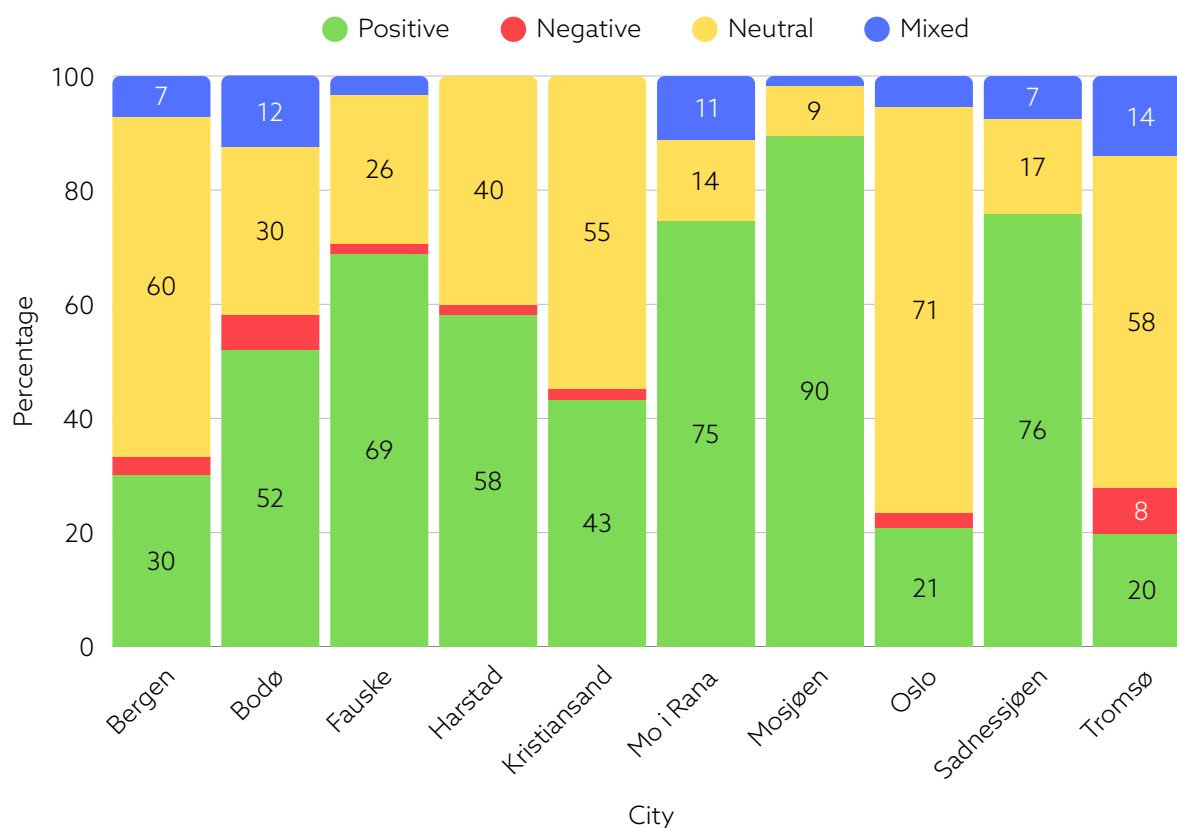


Figure 14: Comparative Sentiment Analysis in the Top 10 Municipalities Where Articles Referencing Bodø2024 Were Published

Notably, articles without a clear geographical origin (around 200 articles from national news wires or unspecified sources) followed a similar trend: they typically adopted a positive or neutral tone, often highlighting the inclusivity and accessibility of cultural programming, with minimal critical commentary apart from occasional logistical or financial considerations.

Geographical Coverage Overview

Variations in the media coverage of Bodø2024 across regions reflect differences in geographic proximity, editorial focus, and local engagement. This section analyzes three territorial groupings: Bodø as the host city, the rest of Nordland County, and Norwegian municipalities outside Nordland. For each area, the analysis considers article volume, sentiment distribution, and recurrent thematic focus, including the most controversial themes discussed.

Bodø: The Heart of the Story

The highest volume of Bodø2024-related coverage originated from media outlets located in Bodø, the official host municipality, with a total of approximately 1,962 articles between 2023 and 2024. Multiple Bodø-based media outlets published

coverage related to Bodø2024, with the local daily Avis Nordland (AN) emerging as the leading contributor. An overview of the outlets, including article counts and available readership figures, is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Top Bodø-based Media Outlets Covering Bodø2024

Media outlet	Number of articles	2024 readership	2023 readership
Avisa Nordland	1,522	22,154	22,069
Bodø Nu	228	3,315	3,753
NRK Nordland	60	n/a	n/a
Bodøposten	34	n/a	n/a
High North News	28	n/a	n/a
Bodø Kommune	15	n/a	n/a
Nordland Fylkeskommune	9	n/a	n/a

Source: Medietall (2025)

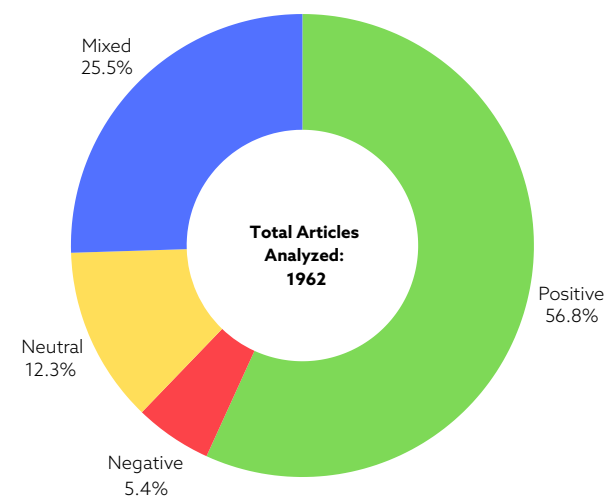


Figure 12. Sentiment distribution in Bodø

Coverage originating from Bodø was not only extensive in quantity but also predominantly positive in tone. As illustrated in Figure 16, over half of the articles (56%) were positive, emphasizing civic pride, local enthusiasm, and the cultural significance of the year. Thematic patterns frequently highlighted community engagement, including stories on volunteers, grassroots initiatives, and local participation.

While the overall tone of coverage in Bodø was predominantly positive, a noticeable share of the articles exhibited either neutral or negative sentiment. Approximately 12% of articles were classified as mixed in tone, and around 5% were explicitly negative.

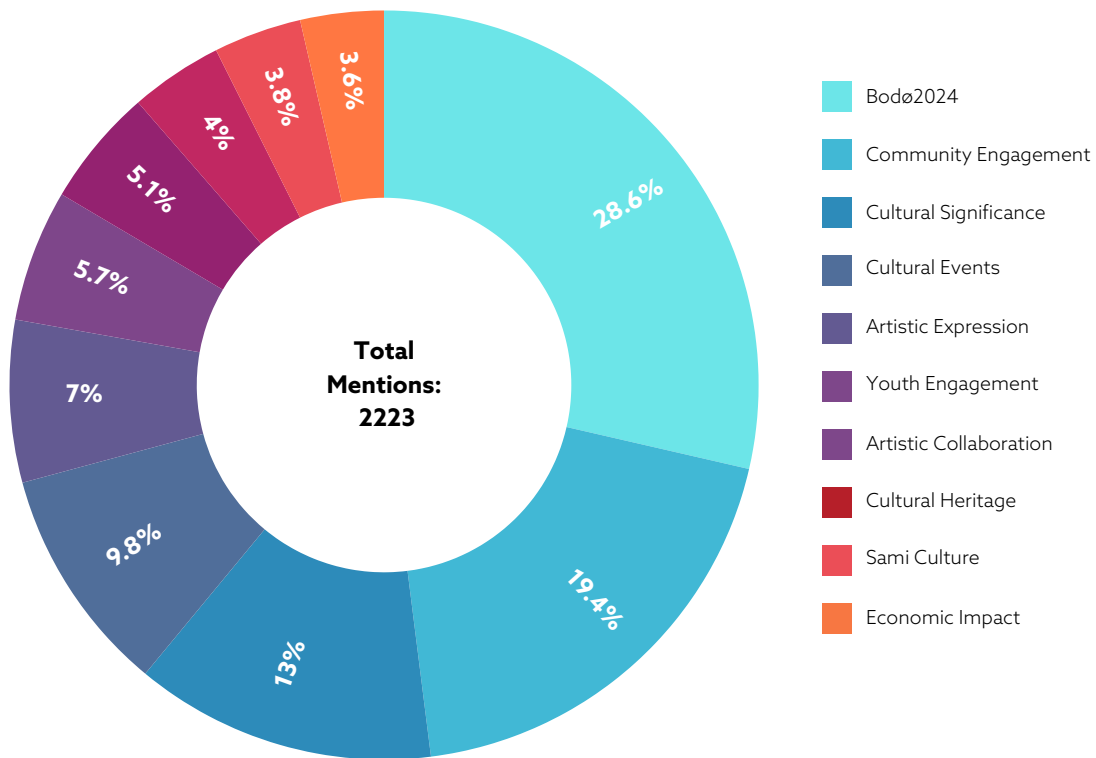


Figure 16. Top Themes in Bodø

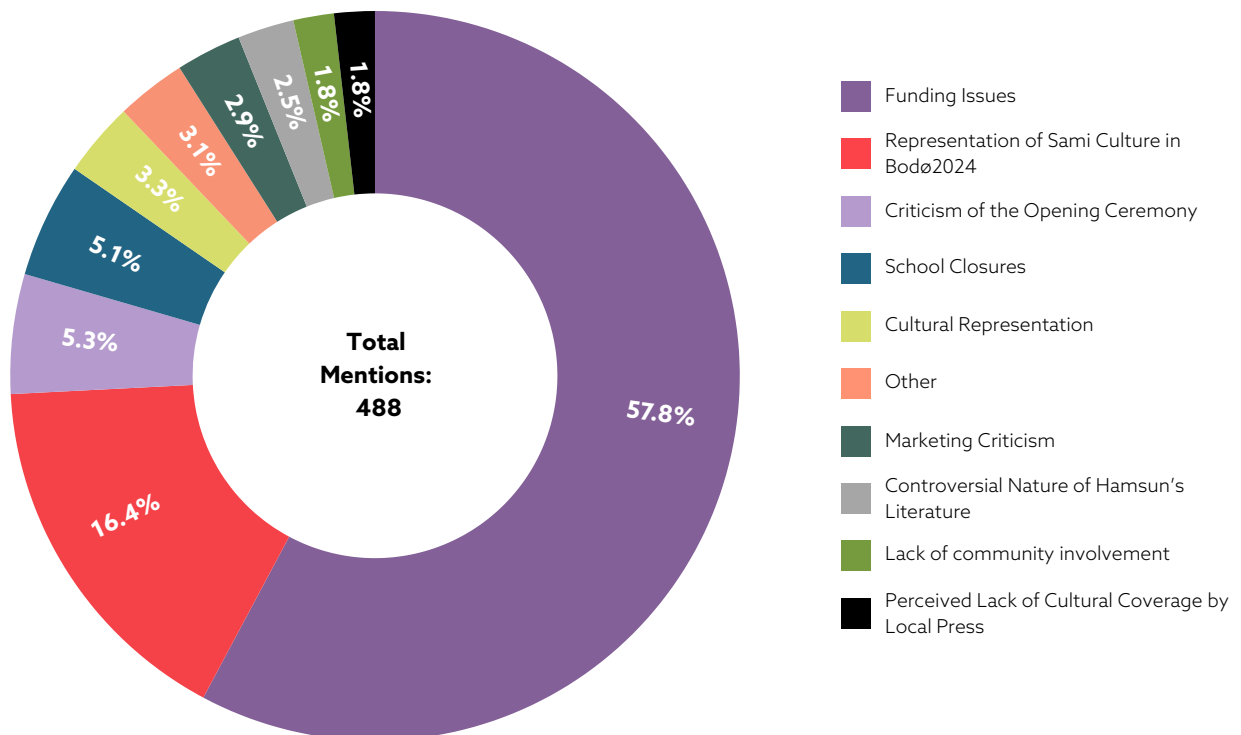


Figure 17. Top Controversial Issues in Bodø

Nordland (Excluding Bodø): Local Pride and Regional Support

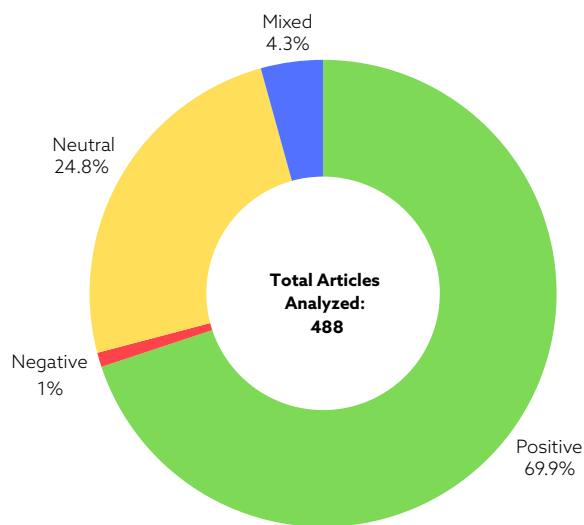


Figure 18. Sentiment distribution in Nordland (excl. Bodø)

Media coverage in Nordland beyond the host city Bodø comprised a total of 795 articles referencing Bodø2024, highlighting strong regional engagement. In contrast to the high scrutiny observed within Bodø itself, the overall sentiment across the broader Nordland region was notably positive. Approximately 70% of all analyzed articles (556 articles) expressed clearly positive views, reflecting widespread regional enthusiasm, appreciation for community participation, and support for cultural initiatives associated with Bodø2024.

Neutral articles, accounting for roughly 25% (197 articles), suggest significant factual reporting with minimal critical coverage: only 1% (8 articles) were explicitly negative, and another 4% (34 articles) presented mixed sentiments.

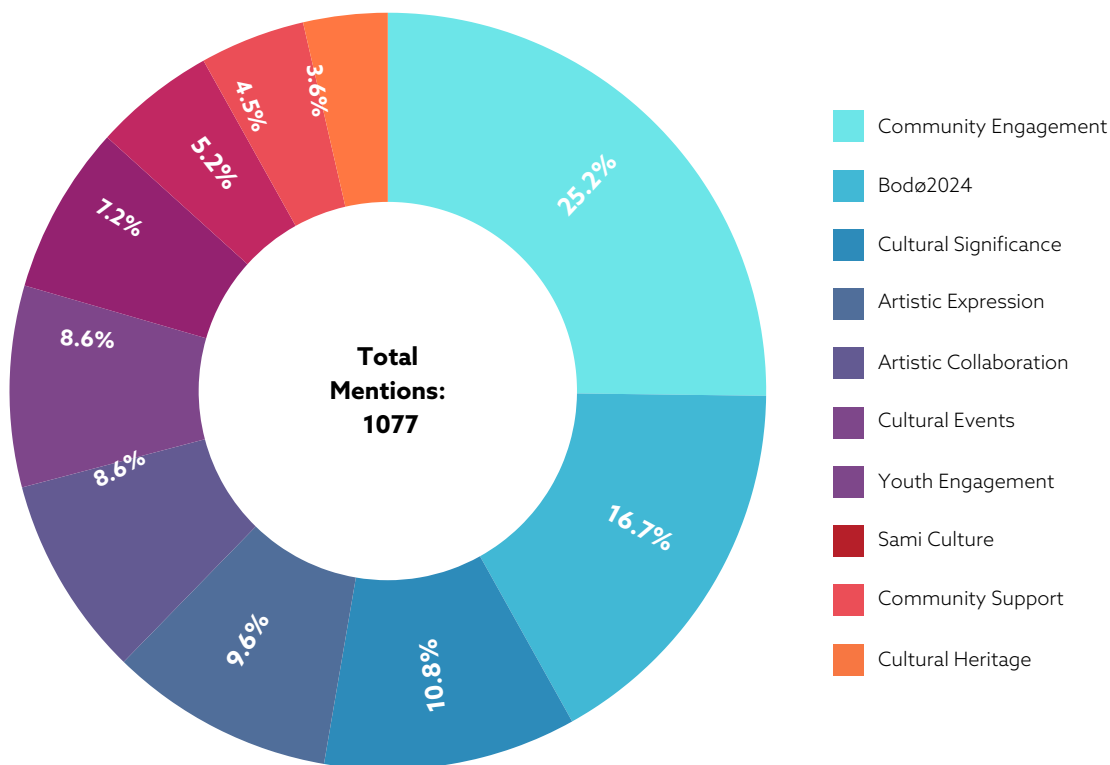


Figure 19. Top Themes in Nordland (excl. Bodø)

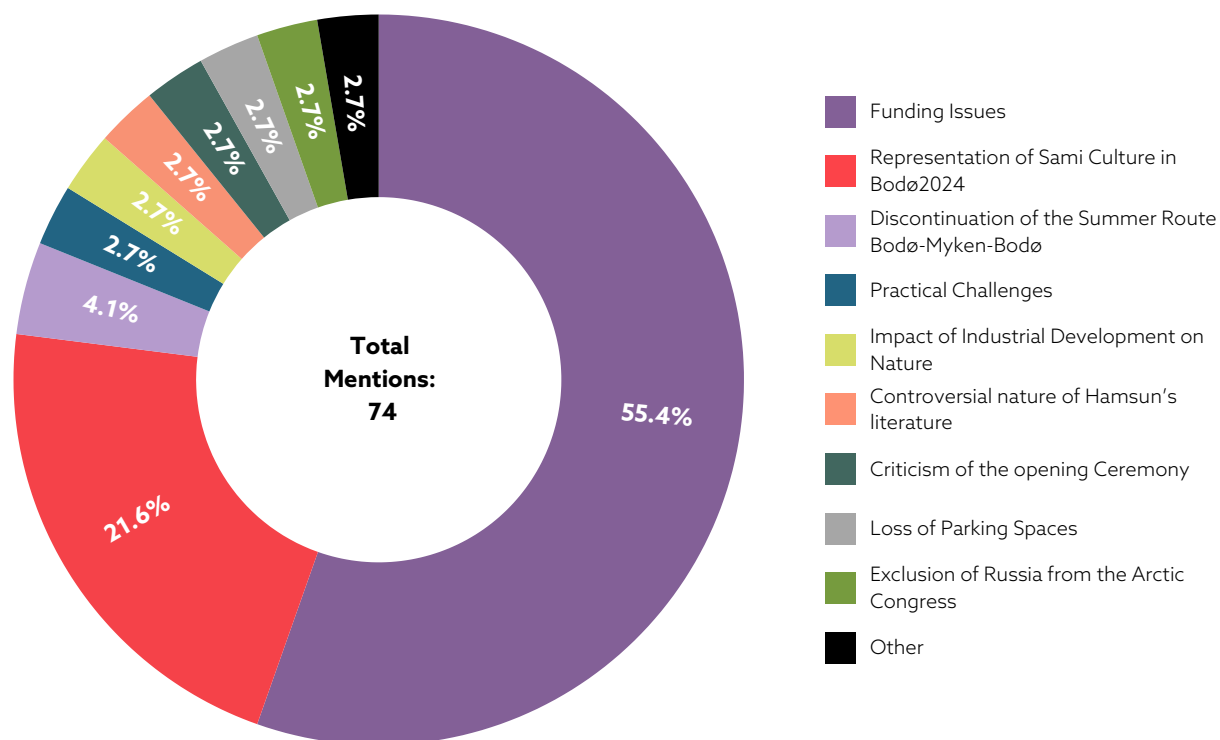


Figure 17. Top Controversial Issues in Nordland (excl. Bodø)

Table 2: Top Nordland-based Media Outlets Covering Bodø2024

Media outlet	Number of articles	2024 readership	2023 readership
Helgelendingen	139	6,266	6,497
Saltenposten	131	3,220	3,080
Rana Blad	82	8,447	8,726
Lofotposten	67	6,555	6,748
Fremover	66	7,208	7,299
Brønnøysunds Avis	64	4,573	4,408
Vesterålens Avis	61	1,305	1,323
Helgelands Blad	49	3,976	4,219
Våganavisa	24	1,946	1,753
Avisa Hemnes	23	1,479	1,488
Andøyposten	19	1,660	1,693

Source: Medietall (2025)

Norway Beyond Nordland: Balanced Interest and National Recognition

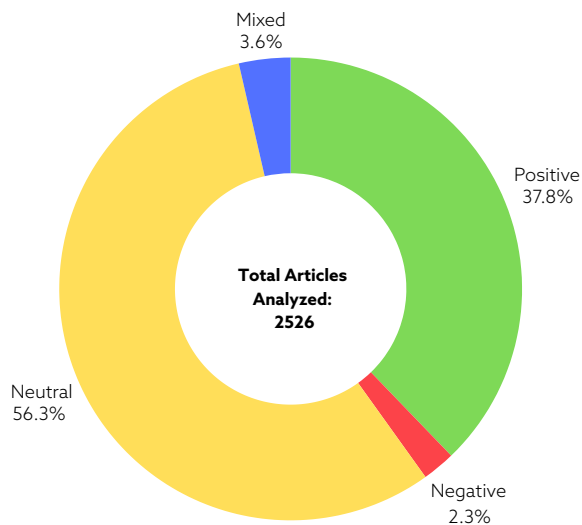


Figure 21. Sentiment distribution in Norway (excl. Nordland)

Media coverage across Norway beyond Nordland comprised a substantial volume of 2,526 articles referencing Bodø2024. In contrast to the highly positive tone observed in Nordland, coverage in the rest of the country was predominantly neutral, representing roughly 56% (1,477 articles) of the total analyzed. Positive sentiment closely followed, accounting for approximately 38% (956 articles), reflecting substantial national interest, appreciation for Bodø2024's cultural initiatives, and recognition of its significance as a national cultural event.

Critical or negative sentiment was notably limited, with explicitly negative coverage making up only 2.2% (55 articles) and mixed sentiment 3.6% (92 articles). Thus, coverage in the rest of Norway was characterized primarily by balanced, factual reporting, coupled with notable, though slightly less pronounced, enthusiasm and a positive reception compared to Nordland itself.

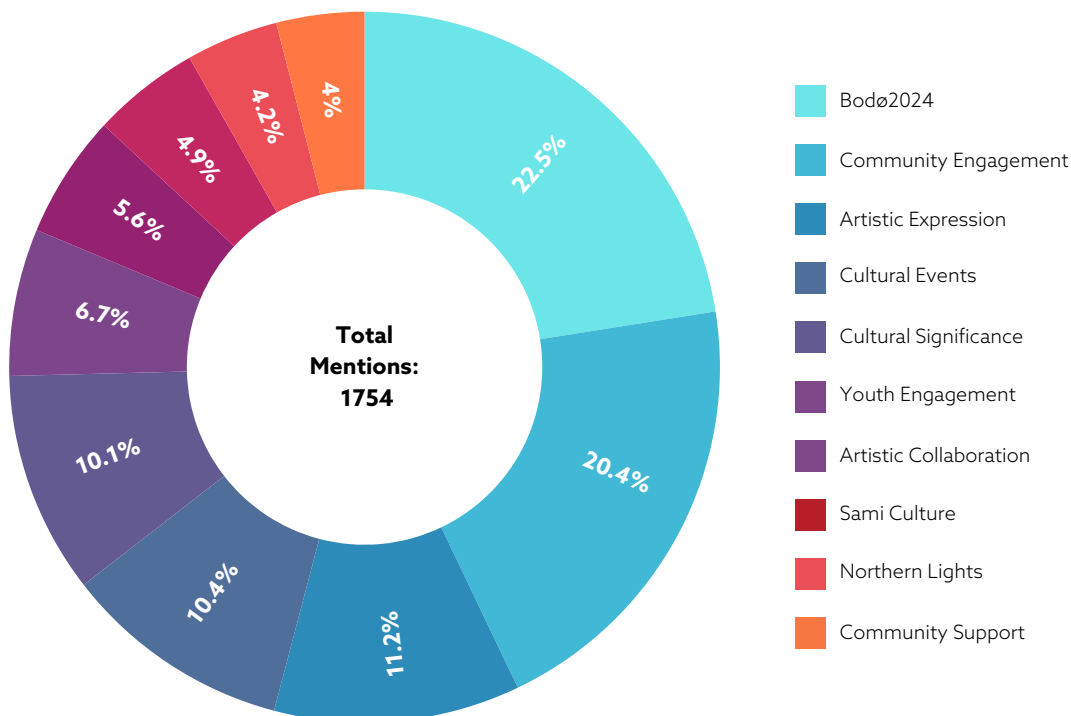


Figure 22. Top Themes in Norway (excl. Nordland)

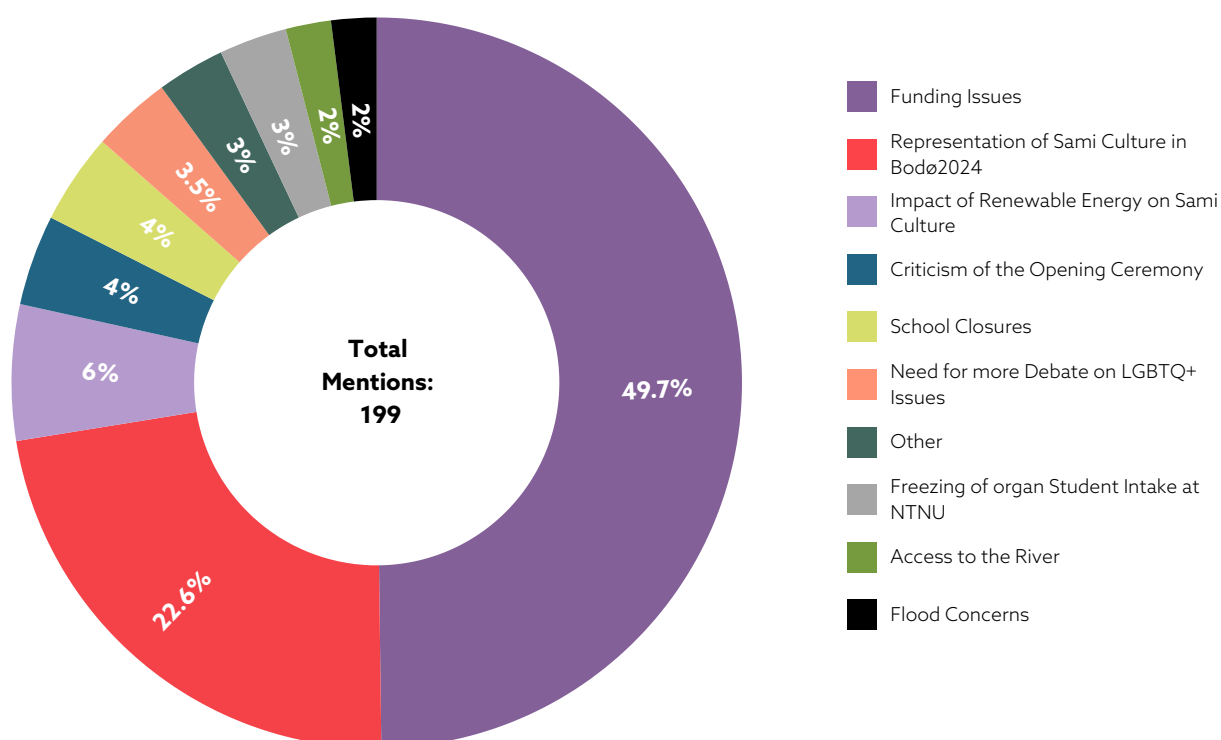


Figure 23. Top Controversial Issues in Norway (excl. Nordland)

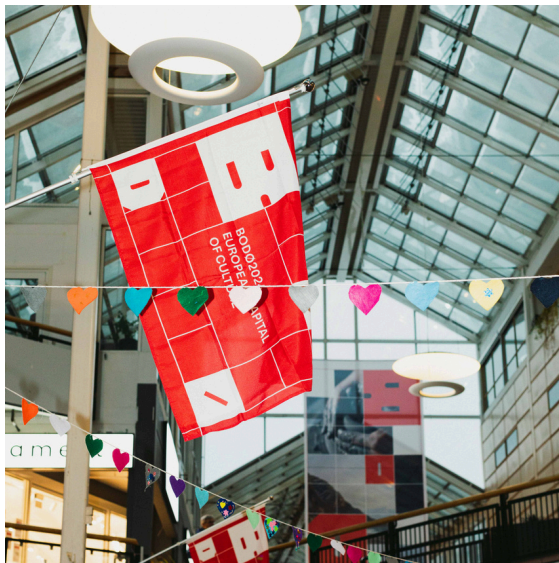
Table 3: Top Norway Media Outlets Covering Bodø2024 (excl. Nordland)

Media outlet	Number of articles	2024 readership	2023 readership
Harstad Tidende	72	9,383	9,341
Klassekampen	49	34,911	34,008
Bergens Tidende	49	88,253	89,158
Fædrelandsvennen	39	42,085	41,365
Nordlys	39	24,960	25,433
Bergensavisen	37	27,199	26,667
Halden Arbeiderblad	37	8,213	8,248
Aftenposten	37	243,921	248,595
Dagsavisen	33	15,084	17,117
Østlands-Posten	33	11,705	11,790
Folkebladet	27	6,638	6,397
Nettavisen	26	20,222	18,052
Adresseavisen	25	80,068	79,084
NRK Sapmi	23	n/a	n/a

Source: Medietall (2025)

Frequently Discussed Themes

Bodø2024 as a central reference point



Bodø2024 / Kasper Holgersen

Coverage categorized under "Bodø2024" (see, e.g., Figure 16: Top Themes in Bodø) represented the most expansive and thematically varied cluster in the Bodø-based media discourse. Articles associated with this grouping addressed Bodø2024 at a general level, often using the event as a reference point for wider discussions about identity, development, and cultural ambition.

Bodø-based coverage reflected both celebratory and critical viewpoints. On the one hand, articles highlighted Bodø2024 as a cultural milestone and emphasized its symbolic significance for the city and its potential to generate long-term value. Themes such as visibility on the European stage, collaboration with local and national institutions, and volunteer engagement were frequently emphasized. Several pieces referred to Bodø2024 as a "unique opportunity," a "catalyst," and a "historic cultural event," which underscored the significance attributed to the designation. At the same time, the dataset included articles that questioned various aspects of the program and ranged from commentary on project management and communication to concerns about financial priorities and cultural inclusivity. The opening ceremony, in particular, attracted both praise and criticism, with coverage noting the high public expectations placed on it as a symbolic entry point to the year.

In Nordland media outside Bodø, the theme maintained prominence but was framed more broadly and focused on the initiative's regional implications and wider cultural effects. Coverage often referenced regional development, inclusivity, tourism, and institutional collaboration. While sharing an interest in program milestones and events, Nordland outlets presented Bodø2024 primarily in terms of its potential to benefit and integrate surrounding communities.

National media coverage similarly acknowledged the initiative's symbolic and institutional significance but placed greater emphasis on evaluating strategic outcomes, infrastructure developments, and policy impacts at the national level. Reporting was frequently evaluative and raised questions about financial

transparency, management effectiveness, and whether the ambitious objectives of Bodø2024 had been adequately met. National narratives approached Bodø2024 as an important case study for assessing broader cultural policies and state-supported cultural initiatives rather than solely celebrating local achievements.

Community engagement

Community engagement emerged as the next most prominent and recurrent theme in the coverage. Articles associated with this category examined the extent to which the local population was involved in, affected by, or represented within the cultural year. The topic was addressed from multiple angles, reflecting broad interpretations of participation, inclusion, and social relevance.

In Bodø specifically, numerous articles highlighted cultural engagement in the context of everyday life, with a strong emphasis on grassroots initiatives and citizen-driven projects. Local media frequently reported on artistic communities, neighborhood events, and volunteer programs, portraying Bodø2024 as both a cultural initiative and a civic process that brought residents together. In addition to local and artistic engagement, the coverage also included discussions of political participation, public dialogue, and social media involvement.



Bodø2024 / David Engmo

Some pieces addressed the role of municipal authorities and institutions in facilitating access and inclusion, while others explored how different demographic groups, such as youth, older adults, or historically under-represented communities, participated in the year's programming. The theme of engagement often intersected with education, intergenerational dialogue, and heritage. References to cultural education, historical engagement, and community development appeared frequently, suggesting that Bodø2024 was perceived as an opportunity to reinforce collective identity and strengthen civic cohesion. While the tone of coverage within this cluster at the city level was overwhelmingly positive, some articles raised questions about the depth and reach of engagement efforts, including concerns about the distribution of opportunities and whether certain groups remained under-represented despite the program's inclusive aims.

Coverage in Nordland similarly prioritized community engagement, yet outlets across Nordland framed the theme through a broader and more varied lens. In addition to references to artistic and cultural involvement, coverage included concepts such as family engagement, cultural education, and spiritual or natural dimensions of participation. The inclusion of subtopics such as cultural engagement in nature and the community and artistic engagement reflects a slightly more holistic framing compared to the more city-centered narratives observed in Bodø.

National media, by contrast, tended to approach community engagement from a strategic and institutional perspective. Coverage emphasized overarching policy initiatives, structured participation models, and symbolic representation rather than the emotional, everyday experiences highlighted in local and regional reporting.

Although the specific approaches differed across geographic levels, media outlets consistently identified core values of inclusion and participation as central to Bodø2024's success. Local and regional coverage, however, uniquely emphasized the personal and social dimensions of community engagement, whereas national reporting focused primarily on broader strategic outcomes and policy objectives.

Cultural significance



Bodø2024 / Arina Karbovskaya

Another central theme in Bodø-based coverage (Figure 16: Top Themes in Bodø) was cultural significance. Articles in this category addressed the broader meaning, value, and long-term implications of the cultural year for the city and region. Relevant topics included strategic discussions about cultural investment, future planning, and institutional contributions, as well as more symbolic reflections on identity, diplomacy, and visibility. Media narratives frequently emphasized the role of Bodø2024 in enhancing the city's cultural infrastructure and

positioning Bodø within national and international cultural frameworks.

Coverage also included commentary on cultural development trajectories. Journalists discussed how Bodø2024 impacted local artistic growth, creative industries, and cultural policy ambitions. Several articles raised questions about sustainability and long-term planning, including concerns about how cultural investments made during the program might shape post-2024 development. In addition, the theme

encompassed perspectives on cultural value and livability. Local media explored the relationship between cultural vitality and urban quality of life, often linking cultural access to broader notions of inclusion, education, and civic well-being. Some articles addressed the city's ability to act as a cultural ambassador and highlighted cultural exchange, export, and international partnerships as key outcomes of the year.



Bodø2024 / Arina Karbovskaya

Nordland-based coverage similarly identified cultural significance as a major theme but approached it from a more evaluative and regionally oriented perspective. Articles addressed concepts such as cultural exchange, awareness, and reflection alongside more strategic concerns like the future of cultural elements and the impact of Bodø2024 as a Cultural Capital. Notably, Nordland sources introduced a degree of critical distance through topics such as skepticism toward cultural investments and cultural outreach, pointing to ongoing debates about long-term value and inclusivity. So, while both settings acknowledged the program's cultural relevance, Nordland-based reporting tended to position it within broader conversations about regional development, sustainability, and cultural responsibility beyond the host city.

National media outlets, in contrast, emphasized structural and policy-oriented perspectives, framing Bodø2024 within Norway's broader cultural strategies and national ambitions. Their coverage tended to focus less on localized community experiences and more on the program's contributions to national cultural infrastructure, policy objectives, and institutional investments.

The varying perspectives reveal how coverage at different geographic levels highlighted distinct but complementary aspects of Bodø2024's cultural significance, ranging from local symbolic impacts to broader national policy implications.

Cultural events

The articles within the "cultural events" theme focused on the program's scope, diversity, and artistic quality, with consistent references to the scale and ambition of the cultural calendar. Local outlets documented the breadth of the cultural calendar and highlighted both large-scale festivals and smaller community events. The coverage emphasized the inclusion of exhibitions, concerts, theatre productions, outdoor performances, and cultural initiatives hosted in natural settings. Numerous



Bodø2024 / Airida Bekeryte

reports referred to events as “unique,” “high-profile,” or “artistically significant” and described them as central components of the official program.

In addition to describing prominent events, many articles evaluated the structure and accessibility of the overall program. Journalists compared different time periods, such as the opening phase, summer festivals, and late-year activities, and considered how well the events addressed various audience groups.

The press focused on issues of inclusion, artistic range, and geographic balance, often referencing the presence of artists from diverse communities or remote areas. Media narratives also described cultural events as concrete expressions of Bodø’s creative identity and as evidence of the city’s cultural capacity. Although the general tone remained favorable, a few articles noted concerns related to program coherence, the visibility of lesser-known contributors, and organizational complexity.

Much like in Bodø, the Nordland-based discourse emphasized thematic diversity, artistic ambition, and the symbolic role of events in demonstrating regional cultural identity. However, while Bodø-based outlets often framed the events within the city’s cultural strategy and institutional profile, Nordland reporting placed stronger emphasis on seasonal, family-friendly, and community-accessible formats. Several articles in Nordland highlighted the inclusivity of cultural offerings across age groups and localities, with a specific focus on unusual cultural events and performances hosted in rural or natural settings. The theme of diversity in cultural events appeared more prominently in Nordland than in Bodø.

In contrast, Bodø coverage devoted more space to questions of program coherence, organizational complexity, and the balance between major and minor contributors—concerns that received comparatively less emphasis in Nordland outlets.

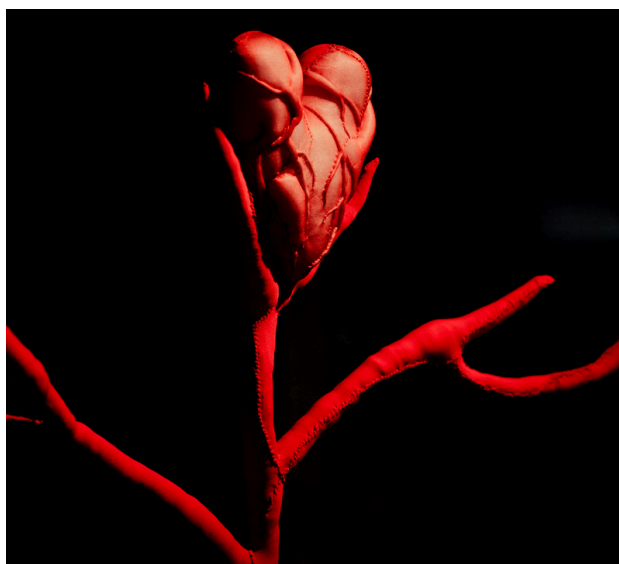


Bodø2024 / David Engmo

National media predominantly portrayed cultural events in celebratory and symbolic terms and emphasized their visibility and public engagement at a national scale. Rather than exploring local organizational challenges or community relevance, national outlets highlighted the festive atmosphere and shared experiences created by high-profile events.

Artistic expression

The theme of artistic expression focused on the creative dimension of the program, including its artistic diversity, innovation, and quality. Local media in Bodø reflected both the visibility of local artists and the broader ambition to position Bodø as a city of cultural production and artistic experimentation. A significant portion of the coverage addressed the variety and originality of the artistic output. Numerous events and projects were described as artistically ambitious, with references to excellence, uniqueness, and creative risk-taking. Several articles addressed the importance of maintaining artistic freedom and highlighted the space that Bodø2024 created for unconventional, experimental, or cross-disciplinary work. In addition, media reports explored how artistic expression contributed to urban identity, cultural accessibility, and public debate. The role of art in public space, education, and social inclusion appeared frequently, often connected to questions of cultural value and collective experience.



Bodø2024 / Arina Karbovskaya

Artistic legacy was another recurring topic. Articles assessed whether the program succeeded in elevating the profile of local artists, expanding cultural infrastructure, and supporting long-term artistic development. Coverage also noted the presence of new artistic voices, increased opportunities for creative collaboration, and the visibility of under-represented artistic practices. Although the tone was largely positive, some critical pieces questioned the consistency of artistic standards, the distribution of funding

between established and emerging artists, and the balance between professional and amateur contributions.

In Nordland, media coverage similarly emphasized the importance of artistic diversity and innovation but placed greater focus on professional development across the region. The two contexts shared an emphasis on artistic diversity, innovation, and quality, and both framed the arts as a central component of Bodø2024's cultural

ambition. However, while Bodø media frequently highlighted the city's identity as a platform for experimental and cross-disciplinary work, Nordland outlets tended to place greater weight on the role of artistic achievement and professional development across the wider region. Topics such as artistic excellence, artistic career, and artistic and cultural development appeared with notable frequency, indicating a strong interest in the structural and long-term dimensions of artistic practice beyond the host city.



Bodø2024 / David Engmo

Coverage in Nordland also reflected a broad interpretation of the art world, incorporating references to cultural expression, artistic creation, and creative activities across different disciplines. The scope included individual artistic progression and institutional contributions, with media reports noting efforts to strengthen regional artistic networks and promote collaborative artistic projects. The importance of artistic freedom received comparable attention to that in Bodø, though Nordland sources discussed it primarily in relation to the autonomy of cultural institutions rather than in terms of public debate or provocation. Unlike Bodø, where several articles explored the intersection of art with public space, education, and social inclusion, the Nordland coverage was more focused on artistic output as a measure of cultural capacity and excellence. While the tone remained largely favorable, some reports raised questions about the accessibility of funding and the visibility of emerging artists across rural parts of the county.

Finally, national coverage treated artistic expression as a reflection of Norway's cultural ambitions, linking Bodø2024 to national identity, innovation, and international visibility. The focus was less on individual projects and more on the symbolic and professional impact of the program. Discussions included themes like artistic storytelling, legacy, and interdisciplinarity, with occasional references to more provocative or politically charged works that were less visible in local and regional reporting.

Youth engagement

The theme of youth engagement focused on the role of children and young people as both participants and stakeholders in Bodø2024. Local Bodø-based outlets addressed a wide range of youth-related topics, from education and talent development to empowerment and creative leadership. Key topics such as youth empowerment, access to cultural services, and opportunities for leadership were frequently discussed, often positioned as strategic, long-term investments in the city's cultural and social infrastructure.



Bodø 2024 / Bjørn Nikolas Rognså

Local media outlets underscored the importance of accessible programs and emphasized the need for ongoing support mechanisms to facilitate meaningful youth participation. Several articles referenced institutional partnerships and municipal initiatives designed to ensure young people were actively involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation phases of the program. Although the majority of coverage was positive, a smaller number of articles raised critical questions regarding the visibility and effectiveness of certain youth-focused components. Such concerns included issues related to resource allocation, outreach, and the inclusion of marginalized youth groups.



Bodø2024 / Arina Karbovskaya

In Nordland, youth engagement was also a recurring topic, though presented with a narrower thematic focus. The reporting often referenced young people in general terms without consistently developing subtopics such as leadership, empowerment, or institutional participation. This more diffuse framing suggests that youth were viewed primarily as participants in cultural events rather than as strategic actors within the program's planning or legacy.

While topics such as inclusion, involvement, and cultural participation surfaced across various articles, they lacked the structured narrative observed in Bodø, where youth-related initiatives were more clearly linked to educational and developmental objectives. Mentions of youth retention and support appeared sporadically but did not form a sustained discourse. The emphasis tended to fall on symbolic engagement, particularly in relation to festivals or community outreach, rather than on systemic inclusion or long-term investment in youth-led initiatives.

National media similarly referenced youth within broader narratives of inclusion and public participation but rarely focused on their role in a sustained or strategic way. References to young people were often embedded in discussions of events or creative projects without overt attention to their agency within the program's structure. As in Nordland, the emphasis tended to remain symbolic, with limited exploration of youth as drivers of cultural or institutional change.

Sámi culture

Media coverage related to Sámi culture explored the presence, recognition, and integration of Sámi perspectives in cultural programming. The discourse reflected both a recognition of inclusion efforts and an ongoing dialogue about cultural visibility, identity, and institutional responsibility. A significant portion of the coverage focused on the symbolic and political importance of Sámi representation. Media narratives highlighted issues related to language, heritage, and historical experience, often contextualized within broader discussions about the role of Indigenous cultures in shaping national cultural narratives. Initiatives such as Samisk Kulturuke, Sámi National Day, and the inclusion of Sámi language in programming received repeated attention, particularly in relation to public events and official communications.



Bodø 2024 / Arina Karbovskaya

*Bodø2024 / Arina Karbovskaya*

However, critical questions were also raised regarding the depth and consistency of Sámi inclusion. Several articles expressed concerns about under-representation, the limited scope of dedicated programming, and the risk of symbolic gestures without substantive integration. Commentary often focused on whether Bodø2024 meaningfully reflected Sámi contributions to the cultural landscape of Northern Norway or primarily offered surface-level recognition.

While the overall tone of coverage remained measured, this theme featured a more visible presence of critique and disagreement than others. The discussion surrounding Sámi culture revealed not only cultural ambitions but also underlying structural challenges, positioning it as a central area of both cultural significance and public accountability within the Bodø2024 media narrative. This theme will be discussed in greater depth in the section on controversial issues.

In Nordland, Sámi culture also held a prominent place in the media, though the framing was more celebratory and less overtly critical. Coverage emphasized cultural appreciation, focusing on visible expressions of Sámi identity through landscapes, language, and archaeological heritage. While the theme of inclusion was present, it appeared more in the context of cultural recognition than institutional scrutiny. The emphasis lay on highlighting events and affirming traditions rather than interrogating underlying challenges related to marginalization or systemic support.

National outlets addressed Sámi culture as a topic of cultural and political relevance, often connecting it to broader issues such as activism, environmental concerns, and identity politics. However, this coverage tended to lack depth in its institutional critique. Sámi representation was acknowledged as nationally important, yet the discussions remained relatively general and less engaged with the structural dimensions of inclusion.

Artistic collaboration

Artistic collaboration appeared as a recurring and significant theme in the media coverage of Bodø2024.

As a cornerstone of the program's cultural framework, collaboration among artists, institutions, and communities was often portrayed as a deliberate approach to fostering innovation, transnational exchange, and inclusive cultural development.

The media documented a wide spectrum of collaborative configurations, ranging from bilateral partnerships between local and international artists to complex, interdisciplinary projects situated at the intersection of visual art, performance, music, and new media. Such collaborations often took place within institutional settings, including museums, schools, and cultural centers, and were supported by public funding mechanisms or municipal initiatives.

Beyond their creative outcomes, the collaborations were framed as mechanisms for cultural dialogue and capacity-building. Several articles emphasized the role of joint artistic initiatives in advancing cultural pluralism, supporting the representation of marginalized voices, and contributing to a more participatory cultural ecosystem. In addition, the media also addressed the structural and administrative conditions underpinning artistic collaboration.



Bodø2024 / David Engmo



Bodø2024 / Airida Bekeryte



Bodø2024 / David Engmo

Articles pointed to the role of institutional partnerships and funding allocations in shaping both the scope and sustainability of collaborative efforts. While some accounts acknowledged tensions related to unequal power dynamics, resource disparities, and coordination challenges, the overall portrayal remained positive.



Bodø2024 / David Engmo

In Nordland, collaboration received similarly prominent attention but was framed through more locally rooted and community-oriented practices. Rather than focusing on institutional or transnational arrangements, the coverage emphasized grassroots cooperation, often involving schools, amateur ensembles, or local music groups. The discourse frequently referred to regional collaboration, community, and cultural collaboration, as well as cooperation between school bands or local musical

groups, thus suggesting a greater emphasis on grassroots engagement and cultural decentralization.

The coverage in Nordland included a range of collaborative formats, particularly within music, where terms such as classical music, orchestral collaboration, and unique musical collaboration featured prominently. Several articles also addressed cooperation between cultural and non-cultural actors, including collaboration between cultural and outdoor organizations. Compared to Bodø, where structural conditions and institutional coordination received greater attention, Nordland media placed less focus on administrative complexity and more on the participatory and integrative aspects of collaboration. Interestingly, while Bodø reporting included critiques related to funding asymmetries and power dynamics within institutional partnerships, such concerns were less visible in Nordland sources. Instead, the tone remained largely pragmatic, with collaboration framed as a tool for regional cohesion, the inclusion of amateur and professional contributors, and the strengthening of local cultural ecosystems.

National coverage portrayed collaboration as a driver of cultural innovation, often emphasizing cross-sector partnerships that extended into education, science, and politics. The articles positioned collaboration as both a creative process and a strategic instrument for broad cultural impact and international recognition, with less focus on operational or local implementation details.

Cultural heritage

The theme of cultural heritage addressed both the material and immaterial aspects of heritage, including the preservation of traditions, historical narratives, and cultural sites, as well as efforts to reinterpret or renew inherited practices in contemporary contexts. Local media identified cultural preservation as a core objective of several Bodø2024 projects. Numerous articles described initiatives designed to document regional customs, restore heritage sites, or highlight local history and included both institutional efforts and community-led activities aimed at safeguarding knowledge, language, and intangible cultural expressions. At the same time, the press also explored more dynamic understandings of heritage. Coverage included reflections on cultural renewal, reinterpretation, and transformation, particularly in relation to intergenerational dialogue and evolving regional identities. The dual emphasis on conservation and reinvention suggested that Bodø2024 served as a platform for both protecting and rethinking the cultural past. Heritage was also framed as a point of connection between tradition and future-oriented development. Some articles addressed how historical narratives informed cultural planning, artistic expression, and urban identity. The term "legacy" appeared frequently, not only in reference to historical inheritance but also in discussions of what cultural values and structures Bodø2024 would leave behind.

The overall tone in this thematic cluster was reflective and forward-looking. While the need for preservation was clearly articulated, there was also a recognition of the value of adaptation and reinterpretation. The discourse presented cultural heritage as a living resource rather than a static archive capable of informing both the present and future dimensions of local cultural life.



Bodø2024 / Arina Karbovskaya

Similarly to the observed patterns in Bodø, the cultural heritage theme received strong attention in Nordland-based media. However, Nordland outlets emphasized preservation more prominently, with most references centering on safeguarding historical knowledge and protecting tangible and intangible heritage assets. Topics such as cultural and linguistic preservation, cultural history, and heritage revival are featured as discrete concerns, often framed within a narrative of continuity and responsibility. Articles highlighted both institutional and community-led efforts to protect regional identity, including language, rituals, and historically significant sites.

The discourse projected cultural heritage as a stabilizing force and an essential reference point for collective identity. Although notions of cultural renewal and transformation were present, they played a less central role than in Bodø.

National coverage closely mirrored the tone seen in Nordland. Articles centered on safeguarding traditions and restoring cultural sites, often in response to environmental change or shifting societal conditions. The emphasis was on maintaining cultural stability and preventing loss, with less attention given to adaptive or experimental approaches.

Economic impact

The “economic impact” theme was prominent in the media discourse in Bodø, but it appeared more subtly in regional and national outlets. The discourse within the theme reflected the public interest in the material consequences of the cultural year. Articles in this cluster addressed direct and indirect economic effects, ranging from funding levels and spending decisions to broader implications for tourism, urban development, and long-term regional growth.

Several articles focused on financial input and resource allocation. Media reports presented figures related to public investment, municipal budgets, and state funding, often accompanied by commentary on efficiency and projected returns. The funding issues will be further discussed in greater detail in the Controversial Issues section. In addition to budgetary concerns, several articles explored the economic benefits associated with increased cultural activity. Tourism received particular attention, especially in the context of seasonal peaks and large-scale events. Local businesses, hospitality providers, and service sectors were often cited as stakeholders expected to gain from the increased visibility and visitor numbers generated by Bodø2024.

The tone across this theme was generally pragmatic. While local media acknowledged the potential economic benefits of Bodø2024, they also reflected ongoing scrutiny regarding cost, accountability, and distribution of gains. The discourse surrounding economic impact thus revealed a tension between cultural aspiration and fiscal responsibility.

Community support

Unlike in Bodø, where community support did not emerge as a primary media focus, coverage in both Nordland and national outlets placed stronger emphasis on this theme. In these contexts, community support was portrayed less as a product of formal institutions or organized events and more as a foundation of everyday social life shaped by trust, care, and shared identity.



Bodø2024 / Jamal Khawaja

In Nordland, reporting highlighted neighborhood initiatives, volunteer networks, and intergenerational exchange as key to sustaining cultural participation. Media narratives frequently used terms such as community spirit, local togetherness, and support for vulnerable groups, presenting cultural infrastructure as something embedded in the routines and relationships of daily life. Support was framed not as a policy mechanism but as a social fabric enabling inclusion and resilience.



Bodø2024 / David Engmo

National media mirrored this perspective, framing community support as both a value and a condition for cultural engagement. Articles emphasized accessibility, belonging, and integration, often linking these ideas to broader discussions of cultural diversity and social cohesion. Although often presented in affirmative terms, the coverage implicitly acknowledged the social foundations required to make cultural initiatives meaningful and sustainable.



Bodø2024 / Kasper Holgersen



Bodø2024 / David Engmo

Most Controversial Issues

Funding and financial controversies



Bodø2024 / Arina Karbovskaya

Funding emerged as the most prominent and contentious topic in the local media discourse related to Bodø2024. Local outlets reported extensively on a wide array of funding-related issues, including budget allocations, perceived spending imbalances, and competition between cultural programming and essential public services.

Numerous articles focused on budget cuts affecting cultural institutions such as Stormen konserthus and the Arctic

Philharmonic. Critics also questioned the allocation of municipal and state resources to Bodø2024 when other sectors, such as healthcare, education, and youth services, faced simultaneous reductions. When considered alongside increased support for Bodø2024, the timing of these cuts triggered widespread debate over whether the city had sacrificed essential public services for symbolic cultural investments.

Media reports also looked into transparency and accountability in funding decisions and raised concerns about financial oversight, administrative efficiency, and the long-term sustainability of investments tied to Bodø2024. Several pieces discussed the perceived lack of communication regarding budget priorities and the rationale behind key allocations, which in turn led to speculation about political motives and institutional bias. Recurring criticism targeted what some commentators described as an imbalance in resource distribution, both between cultural and non-cultural sectors and within each cultural field. Specific attention was given to disparities in support for major institutions versus smaller initiatives or volunteer-driven efforts. Issues of visibility, access to funding, and representational equity were frequently noted in connection with these concerns.

Beyond such immediate concerns, the funding controversy extended into longer-term reflections on economic sustainability. Debates focused on whether the investments made under Bodø2024 would generate lasting value or primarily serve short-term visibility. Some described the program as ambitious but fiscally fragile; others questioned whether any measurable economic benefits would materialize at all.

Reports portrayed Bodø2024 as a high-profile initiative burdened with expectations that were not always matched by outcomes. Perceptions of elitism, unmet promises, and administrative opacity deepened the controversy and contributed to a more critical narrative in the local press.

In Nordland, funding was also a key theme, though framed differently. Coverage centered less on public service trade-offs and more on regional disparities and the distribution of cultural resources. Commentary often addressed perceived funding disparities between cultural institutions, regional imbalances in state support, and the adequacy of financial resources allocated to local initiatives beyond Bodø. Notably, several articles raised questions about the relative visibility and recognition of Nordland-based cultural organizations in the broader Bodø2024 framework. Concerns were also raised about specific funding decisions made by Nordland County administrators and state authorities, particularly with regard to rejected applications and a perceived lack of support for regionally significant events or venues.

Although references to spending on health and education were present in Nordland as well, the tone differed somewhat from Bodø's more confrontational framing. Instead of depicting Bodø2024 as an explicit threat to essential services, the coverage leaned toward highlighting opportunity costs and unmet funding expectations. The discourse focused on competition for limited resources between municipalities, sectors, and cultural actors and often framed such tensions within broader questions of equity, accountability, and cultural value. Unlike Bodø, where narratives of fiscal opacity and political mistrust featured prominently, Nordland coverage was less preoccupied with administrative controversy and more oriented toward distributional fairness and structural access. The emphasis lay not on institutional failure but on geographic imbalances and the symbolic weight of perceived under-recognition.



Bodø2024 / David Engmo

National media echoed many of the concerns raised locally and regionally but situated them within a wider policy context. Reporting addressed program costs, cuts to cultural institutions, and dissatisfaction over public spending while also examining larger questions of economic sustainability, regional inequality, and the viability of the European Capital of Culture model itself. Rather than centering on specific decisions by municipal or county authorities, national outlets highlighted systemic pressures such as inflation, structural funding models, and national cultural policy priorities as key factors shaping the financial landscape of Bodø2024.

Representation of Sámi culture in Bodø2024

The representation of Sámi culture in Bodø2024 emerged as one of the most visible and divisive topics in local media coverage. While many articles acknowledged the cultural and historical importance of Sámi inclusion, others framed it as excessive or politically charged, particularly in connection with the opening ceremony and other symbolic events. Much of the controversy focused on the perceived prominence of Sámi culture during the program's early stages.



Bodø2024 / Arina Karbovskaya

The opening ceremony attracted significant attention, with headlines debating whether Sámi elements had overshadowed broader regional or national narratives. References to the phrase “This is Sámi land” and to Sámi-led performances triggered polarized responses, ranging from praise for Indigenous visibility to accusations of cultural overrepresentation and activism on the stage. Criticism extended beyond symbolic gestures. Several articles questioned the balance between inclusion and dominance, often citing a lack of representation of other cultural communities or voices. Others argued that the visibility of Sámi culture did not reflect meaningful engagement but rather fulfilled a superficial inclusion criterion. Hostility also surfaced in more extreme forms. Local outlets reported instances of online hate speech, vandalism of Sámi language signage, and social media harassment targeting Sámi individuals and institutions.

Nonetheless, some articles sought to contextualize the discourse within a broader historical and political framework. References to historical injustice, land recognition, and the cultural status of Bodø as a Sámi area appeared alongside more celebratory

coverage of Sámi contributions to the arts, heritage, and public dialogue. Ultimately, Sámi representation became a focal point for broader discussions about cultural power, visibility, and identity politics. The controversy revealed divergent opinions about the role of Indigenous culture in national celebrations, as well as deeper unresolved tensions around inclusion, reconciliation, and symbolic authority within the national public discourse.

Media coverage in Nordland reflected similar tensions, though with a more limited thematic scope. Articles focused mainly on the symbolic content of the opening ceremony, which many viewed as too heavily marked by Sámi references. Expressions like “too Sámi” appeared in critiques of the event’s cultural framing. Unlike Bodø-based media, which often linked representation to broader themes such as reconciliation and institutional responsibility, Nordland coverage concentrated on the perceived imbalance between Sámi visibility and other regional identities.

In contrast to Bodø, where critical and supportive perspectives appeared in parallel, Nordland’s coverage leaned more heavily toward skepticism. There was less engagement with the historical or political rationale for Sámi prominence and more focus on perceived imbalances. Topics such as the use of Sámi place names and language appeared as points of contention, framed less as cultural enrichment and more as contested markers of symbolic territory. The overall tone in Nordland was more restrained in scope but sharper in focus. While Bodø media explored Sámi representation as a multifaceted theme tied to broader identity politics and Indigenous visibility, coverage in Nordland highlighted discomfort with what was perceived as cultural dominance in official programming.

At the national level, Sámi representation was also a prominent topic, with the opening ceremony acting as a central point of discussion. Although the theme overlapped with local and regional concerns, national media adopted a more politicized tone and expanded the scope of the debate. Coverage often linked Sámi representation to national issues such as Indigenous rights, government accountability, and structural inequality. Reports highlighted tensions between the state and the Sámi Parliament and included references to hate speech, public backlash, and vandalism as indicators of deeper societal divides.

Criticism of the Opening Ceremony

The planning, content, and public reception of the opening ceremony emerged as another key point of contention in the media coverage of Bodø2024. Local outlets reported extensively on the event’s symbolic choices, artistic merit, cost, and overall execution. Rather than functioning as a unifying celebration, the ceremony generated



Bodø2024 / David Engmo



Bodø2024 / Marthe Mølster



Bodø2024 / Bjørn Nikolas Rognså

myriad reactions that quickly positioned it at the center of public debate.

A significant portion of the criticism focused on the ceremony's artistic direction and perceived lack of cohesion. Articles questioned the overall structure and visual language of the performance, with several pointing to inconsistency in tone and thematic clarity. Some reports labeled the production underwhelming or overly abstract, while others described it as insufficiently grounded in local identity or regional history.

Cost and budget allocation also received considerable attention. Media outlets highlighted the high costs associated with the event, especially in light of concurrent municipal budget cuts. The concerns were often linked to broader questions of fiscal responsibility and the justification of symbolic spectacle in a time of economic pressure. The political dimension of the ceremony drew equally strong reactions. Some articles noted the inclusion of political statements and the invitation of high-profile activists to the event. Critics argued that such emphasis on political messaging risked alienating some audience members and blurred the line between a cultural celebration and ideological positioning.

Media commentary also reflected on the reception of the ceremony in national outlets, including NRK. Differences in tone between local and national coverage highlighted underlying tensions over whose perspectives and expectations the

event ultimately served. Such divergence reinforced the perception that the ceremony failed to strike a tone that resonated equally across diverse audiences.

National coverage reflected several of these concerns, although with a narrower and more results-oriented perspective. Media reports tended to focus on the ceremony's high cost and public reception, often portraying it as disappointing or failing to meet the standards expected of a nationally significant cultural production. Compared to local coverage, national commentary paid less attention to questions of identity and symbolism, instead prioritizing value-for-money arguments and how the ceremony was perceived externally.

By contrast, Nordland-based outlets offered a relatively limited reflection on the event. Coverage from the region generally avoided in-depth critique, opting instead for straightforward reporting or bypassing analytical discussion altogether. Such a subdued response stood in sharp contrast to the more vocal and critical debate found in both Bodø and the national press.

Public concerns over cuts to education and youth-focused infrastructure

Beyond high-level debates about funding priorities, media coverage in Bodø also captured growing concern over the closure of schools, kindergartens, and low-threshold public services aimed at children and young people. The discussions revealed broader anxieties about how cultural investments under Bodø2024 may have intersected with reductions in basic community infrastructure for youth. Reports detailed several proposed and actual closures, including the Alstad and Østbyen schools, as well as multiple kindergartens. In some cases, articles explicitly linked these measures to shifting municipal budget priorities. The appearance of



Bodø2024 / David Engmo

simultaneous announcements, on the one hand, celebrating cultural expansion and, on the other, proposing the reduction of educational and social facilities provoked a strong public reaction.

Particular attention was given to services such as Bodø Frivillighetssentral and Villa Vekst, which provide inclusive, low-barrier spaces for youth engagement and social support. The potential closure of such venues, especially when framed against symbolic spending on high-profile events, was viewed by some as reflecting a misalignment between public investment and community needs.

Articles covering the closures often positioned them within a wider narrative of structural inequality, where vulnerable groups were disproportionately affected by broader budget realignments. Some reports questioned whether the cultural year had diverted attention and funding from long-standing community needs, particularly those involving young families. While municipal leaders cited financial pressures and demographic shifts as contributing factors, public discourse frequently returned to the juxtaposition between investment in culture and the loss of everyday educational infrastructure. Such dissonance amplified criticism of Bodø2024 as a project perceived by some to prioritize symbolic capital over social cohesion.

Limited community involvement and grassroots support

Another critical theme in local media coverage concerned the perceived gaps in community inclusion and grassroots engagement within Bodø2024.

Articles across several outlets raised questions about the extent to which residents, cultural organizers, and sports associations were meaningfully involved in the planning, funding, and implementation of the program. Specifically, criticism focused in part on the allocation of resources. Reports described a

concentration of funding among centralized institutions, while smaller-scale initiatives and volunteer-led activities struggled to secure support. Cultural and sports associations expressed concern over a lack of access to grants, insufficient consultation, and what some described as a top-down approach to programming.



Bodø2024 / David Engmo

Several commentaries questioned the visibility of local voices in the broader narrative of Bodø2024. Media sources described a disconnect between the program's symbolic messaging and the everyday realities of grassroots organizers, particularly those operating in neighborhood-based or youth-oriented settings. For some organizations, the issue involved more than missed opportunities; it reflected more of a sense of exclusion from a process intended to represent the wider community. Representatives from sports clubs, cultural associations, and civic groups pointed to limited dialogue with public authorities and limited recognition of their long-standing contributions to local cultural life.

Impact on artists

Media discourse around Bodø2024 also engaged with the implications of the program for artists in terms of visibility, workspace availability, project selection, and the boundaries of artistic expression. A number of articles highlighted concerns from the artistic community about working conditions, choices regarding artistic content, and the broader role of art within the cultural year.

One frequently raised issue involved access to production spaces. Local media reported that some artists experienced disruptions to their established work environments due to venue reassignments or temporary closures linked to Bodø2024 events. Concerns emerged about whether the program adequately safeguarded creative infrastructure while simultaneously staging large-scale exhibitions and performances.



Bodø2024 / Sebastien VanMalleghem

In addition to logistical matters, the selection and content of commissioned artworks generated significant public debate. Several commentaries questioned the artistic choices made by organizers, with a particular focus on installations perceived as overly conceptual, provocative, or politically charged. Articles discussed the inclusion of controversial themes, such as nationalism, identity politics, or environmental critique. Tensions also surfaced around the role of morality and provocation in public art.

Some media reports described a polarized atmosphere in which artistic freedom clashed with public expectations, especially when works addressed sensitive cultural or ethical themes. A number of pieces pointed to the need for clearer frameworks regarding public art in publicly funded programs.

Perceived gaps in local cultural coverage and engagement

A number of articles and commentaries reflected dissatisfaction with the perceived lack of cultural visibility in local press coverage and political discourse surrounding Bodø2024. The criticism targeted media institutions and political actors, suggesting that key stakeholders did not fully recognize or prioritize local cultural life.

Local press, particularly Avisa Nordland, received direct criticism for what some viewed as uneven or selective reporting. Certain cultural events, especially smaller exhibitions, heritage programs, and grassroots initiatives, reportedly received minimal attention, while large-scale or politically symbolic events dominated headlines. According to some observers, media narratives failed to reflect the full diversity of cultural activity taking place during the year. In parallel, several articles pointed to a lack of cultural interest among political representatives, especially in relation to heritage-based activities.

Traditional crafts such as boat-building, local history preservation, and minority cultural expressions were mentioned as areas that received limited public recognition. Commentators questioned whether cultural policy during Bodø2024 reflected a genuine appreciation of local traditions or merely fulfilled institutional expectations tied to the European Capital of Culture designation.



Bodø2024 / David Engmo

Context-specific controversies in Nordland

Several Nordland-based controversies, while rooted in broader societal concerns, were nevertheless discussed in connection with Bodø2024. The legacy of Knut Hamsun, for instance, resurfaced in critical commentary on the cultural values foregrounded by the program, particularly in relation to literature and historical figures. Media outlets questioned the symbolic choices made in the framing of regional identity, drawing attention to Hamsun's political past and the implications of his continued cultural prominence. Similar concerns about representation emerged around decision-making structures, where limited local influence on project boards was framed as misaligned with the program's stated ambitions for inclusivity and regional empowerment.

Other controversies emerged at the intersection of cultural planning, infrastructure, and accessibility. The discontinuation of the Bodø–Myken summer ferry route, though primarily a transportation issue, was widely criticized for its impact on cultural accessibility, tourism, and equitable participation in Bodø2024 events. Likewise, frustrations over delays in the E6 and Sørfold tunnel projects appeared in articles assessing the cultural year's relevance for rural and coastal communities. Environmental concerns added further complexity, with coverage addressing the destructive impact of industrial development on cultural landscapes.

Context-specific in Norway (excl. Nordland)

Renewable energy and Sámi culture

A distinct theme that appeared in national media coverage but received little attention in Bodø or Nordland reporting concerned the impact of renewable energy development on Sámi culture and territorial rights. Coverage centered on the intersection between green infrastructure projects and Indigenous land use, particularly the consequences of wind power expansion for reindeer herding, access to traditional territories, and the preservation of cultural practices.



Bodø2024 / Arina Karbovskaya

Several articles raised concerns that national climate policies have not adequately incorporated Sámi consultation, consent, or cultural sustainability. Media outlets presented the green transition as a policy shift that, despite aiming to meet environmental goals, risked reinforcing structural marginalization. Specific cases, such as the windmill project in Hattfjelldal, were used to illustrate broader tensions between environmental policy and the protection of minority rights.

At the local and regional levels, these concerns were not widely addressed. Neither Bodø-based nor Nordland-based outlets engaged systematically with this aspect of the Sámi experience. The absence of coverage may suggest that such issues were viewed as unrelated to the core activities of Bodø2024 or that they were overshadowed by more immediate controversies, including debates over cultural representation and program governance.

Conclusion

The AI-assisted media analysis of Bodø2024 provides an in-depth understanding of how the European Capital of Culture year unfolded within Norwegian media, highlighting increased regional visibility, active public engagement, and significant thematic controversies. Between January 2023 and February 2025, Norwegian newspapers published 5,280 articles referencing Bodø2024, demonstrating a substantial increase in attention compared to previous years. The coverage was notably concentrated around the official opening ceremony in early 2024 and experienced another smaller peak during major summer festivals, after which media interest declined considerably.

One key finding is that geographical and cultural proximity, rather than existing media infrastructure, was the primary driver of media coverage. Despite Northern Norway's comparatively limited media presence, municipalities closer to Bodø, particularly in the Helgeland region, generated substantial media engagement marked by overwhelmingly positive sentiment. Helgeland's coverage emphasized strong community participation, grassroots involvement, and local pride. In contrast, larger urban centers with extensive media capacity, such as Oslo, contributed fewer and predominantly neutral articles, underlining the central role of regional relevance in shaping media narratives.

The analysis also revealed that critical discourse primarily occurred locally within Bodø. While local media coverage showcased considerable civic pride and enthusiasm, it simultaneously provided the strongest scrutiny. Funding decisions emerged prominently, with significant debate around perceived imbalances between cultural investments and essential community services, particularly affecting education and youth infrastructure. Likewise, the opening ceremony itself sparked controversy regarding its artistic choices, high costs, and debates about whether it appropriately represented Bodø's broader cultural identity.

Representation of Sámi culture became another prominent and contentious theme, particularly during high-visibility events. While many praised the enhanced visibility and inclusion of Indigenous perspectives, critics expressed concerns over politicization and representation balance. Tromsø's media outlets were particularly active in these discussions, reflecting both pride in Indigenous heritage and debates around the authenticity and depth of cultural representation.

Despite these debates, the overall sentiment of media coverage remained positive or neutral across Bodø, Helgeland, and other parts of Nordland County. Articles

consistently highlighted community engagement, youth involvement, and collective cultural pride, identifying Bodø2024 as a unique catalyst for regional unity and increased national and European recognition. This dynamic illustrates the complexity of managing large cultural initiatives: the same heightened visibility and local engagement that generated pride also naturally intensified scrutiny around financial decisions and equitable representation.

The findings from this media analysis show that Bodø2024 successfully leveraged the title year as the European Capital of Culture to significantly stimulate public participation and ignite meaningful public discourse. The insights derived from this analysis underscore the importance of effectively balancing high-profile events with sustained community-focused initiatives, ensuring transparent governance, and fostering authentic representation of diverse cultural identities. Such lessons offer valuable guidance for future cultural initiatives aiming to achieve lasting, positive impact beyond momentary peaks of media attention.

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Notes

Appendix 1

Database Structure Report

articles

<i>cid</i>	<i>Column Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Not Null</i>	<i>Default</i>	<i>PK</i>
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1	title	TEXT	0		0
2	author	TEXT	0		0
3	date	TEXT	0		0
4	time	TEXT	0		0
5	newspaper	TEXT	0		0
6	text	TEXT	0		0
7	unique_id	TEXT	0		0
8	status	TEXT	0	'pending'	0

sqlite_sequence

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0	name		0		1
1	seq		0		0

sentiments

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0	id	INTEGER	0		1
1	article_id	INTEGER	0		0
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themes

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negative_words

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entities

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3	entity_type	TEXT	0		0
4	context	TEXT	0		0

bodo2024_context

<i>cid</i>	<i>Column Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Not Null</i>	<i>Default</i>	<i>PK</i>
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3	presentation	TEXT	0		0

media_impact_indicators

<i>cid</i>	<i>Column Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Not Null</i>	<i>Default</i>	<i>PK</i>
0	id	INTEGER	0		1
1	sentiment_id	INTEGER	0		0
2	city_image	TEXT	0		0
3	economics	TEXT	0		0
4	physical_environment	TEXT	0		0
5	culture_arts	TEXT	0		0
6	social_issues	TEXT	0		0
7	management_policy	TEXT	0		0
8	volume_source	TEXT	0		0
9	changing_narratives	TEXT	0		0

bodo2024_expected_outcomes

<i>cid</i>	<i>Column Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Not Null</i>	<i>Default</i>	<i>PK</i>
0	id	INTEGER	0		1
1	sentiment_id	INTEGER	0		0
2	art_activity	TEXT	0		0
3	culture_activity	TEXT	0		0
4	artistic_quality	TEXT	0		0
5	cultural_quality	TEXT	0		0
6	artistic_collaboration	TEXT	0		0
7	art_demand	TEXT	0		0
8	culture_demand	TEXT	0		0
9	art_livability	TEXT	0		0
10	culture_livability	TEXT	0		0
11	overall_livability	TEXT	0		0