

## The semiotics of sustainability in the Greek media

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### ABSTRACT

The concept of sustainability has been recognized as a landmark of modern societies and remains the only internationally and consensually recognized global development concept (Jacobsson, 2019). It is based upon the need for a "change of course" in the social, economic, cultural and environmental policies, to bring about the necessary transformation of the existing system (Raco, 2014). At the same time, however, it is presented as an abstract concept that, instead of mapping an agenda and signalling any commitment for a structural transformation of liberal consumer capitalism, seems to be an artistic extension of its life expectancy (Swyngedouw, 2010).

According to Fuchs (2017), questions about capitalism and class are largely neglected when actions are promoted that support increased sustainability in neoliberal society. Starting from this paradox, our main research question is to capture how the term "sustainability" is presented in relation to the existing neoliberal system, as well as which ideologies are expressed as neutral in the context of public information.

The aim of this research is to determine the role of the Greek media in shaping the semantics of sustainable development. Specifically, after clarifying the terms and conditions through domestic and international literature, the framing analysis of four online media relevant publications is applied as a method of examination. The study aims to identify which discourses are constructed, how many and which publications refer to sustainability in relation to the frames of 'sustainable development' and 'degrowth' and which of these are presented as neutral ideological frames. The analysis reveals an interesting paradox, pointing to contradictory perceptions of problems, responsibilities and solutions in relation to sustainable development, depending on whether it relates to the private or public sector.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, degrowth, ideology, neoliberalism, communication

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The continued rapid growth of the communicative invocation of sustainability in political agendas, in the media and in international discourses has sharpened the debate, both on the actual practices of sustainability and on its definition (Biermann et al., 2012). Climate change (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] 2007), rapid biodiversity loss (Wolinsky, 2011; Sala et al., 2000), and exponential increases in per capita consumption of 'green' resources (Myers, 1997) combine to drive the possibility of rapid, non-linear, social and ecological regime changes (Barnosky et al., 2012).

Following the Brundtland Report in 1980 (WCED, 1987), which inaugurated a revised status of the concepts of sustainability and sustainable development, a new rhetorical approach to these concepts came to the fore, presenting the 'economy' and 'global development' as the main narrative (WCED, 1987). According to Bradley and Frank (2009), this new rhetorical approach is part of the neoliberal system, presenting sustainability in an economy-centred, growth-driven rather than environmentally-socially driven way, where it would bring about a radical change. In particular, the Brundtland Commission argued that modern societies could, through modernisation, overcome the social and ecological problems caused by the traditional modernisation paradigm (Mol & Sonnenfeld, 2000). According to Ulrich Beck's theory of a second or postmodernity, the Brundtland Report, a new neoliberalized ecological modernity is created by presenting it as a saving force in the traditional frames (Beck, 1992, 1997). As Giddings et al. (2002) claimed, this transformation of sustainable conceptualisation reinforced the complexity of the concept itself by simplifying it through economic terms (Swyngedouw, 2010), i.e. through an economically-centred system. Hence, although the debate on sustainable policies has been sharpened to an extreme degree, at present, there seems to be, for the moment, no common understanding on the essence of sustainable development, the means of achieving it or its semantics, compared to other social goals (see Davidson, 2000; Harrison, 2000; Bebbington, 2001; Carvalho, 2001) According to Swyngedouw (2010), the terms sustainability and sustainable development on the political and media scene are ubiquitous, but are, more than ever, vague concepts which, rather than signalling any commitment to a structural transformation of neoliberal consumer capitalism, seem to be tools for its long-term persistence. Therefore, a study, with a central analysis of the dominant narratives of sustainability/sustainability in the media, is inevitable, as the communicative frames that construct the concept in question create the very construction of social semiotics. As Fuchs (2017) states, public discourse on sustainability and sustainability can be a beacon in decision-making and a nucleus for forming opinions on what actions are reasonable and right, supported by its 'objective necessity' (Ranciere; 1999: 13).

The present study stems from the tradition of framing analysis, which enables the researcher identify the selected forms of certain aspects of a perceived reality and their emergence as prominent parts of a communicative content, in such a way as to promote a particular definition of the problem, causal interpretations, ethical evaluations and/or recommendations for its management (Entman, 1993). Specifically, by conducting a framing analysis of sustainability publications in the Greek digital media, we aim to understand which frames enclose the term "sustainability" and

which ideological approaches are constructed and promoted in its name. The research contributes to knowledge about the reproduction and negotiation of this concept and indicates how parts of it are projected as a certain semiotics of a social event, while other alternative views and interpretations are downplayed or concealed (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

The following subsection introduces and clarifies the different interpretations of sustainable development through relevant studies, and then delves into the semantics of the term. This is followed by a section presenting the presentation of sustainability in the neoliberal system and how it is constructed through specific ideologies as a tool of governance. The paper then continues with the specific case study, methods and materials used. Finally, a final discussion is provided where the main results are highlighted, as well as the conclusions drawn.

### 1.1 The Semiotics and Social Construction of "Sustainability"

The semiotics and conceptualization of sustainability has been analysed and discussed through different contexts since the concept was re-conceptualized and incorporated into the political and social agenda of the Brundtland Commission (Collins & Butler, 2003). Consequently, it is a concept that governments, the media, entrepreneurs and environmentalists are nowadays praising, while at the same time, as Bauman (2005) states, they themselves, through the achievement of hegemonic discourse, create the ambiguity of sustainability (Nurmela et al., 2002).

It is evident that industrialized countries have made a huge leap towards a more "sustainable society" from the state of general ignorance about sustainable policies (Kallio, 2007). As Hoffman (2001) states, expressing in an allegorical way the institutionalization and legitimization of this new narrative, "what was once a heresy has now become a dogma", yet the oversimplification and incorporation of sustainability into the dominant systemic discourse weakens the concept, creating a "neutral" veil around its meaning.

As a result, the 'neutrality' of sustainability appears as a bridge between traditional political differences, erasing any form of conflict between rival social classes (Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014, Raco, 2014; Raco, Imrie & Lin, 2012). Hence, the common assumption that everyone united, regardless of social class, employment and income, should ensure that we deliver a sustainable planet to future generations, creates an ambiguity about who is responsible and what solutions should be provided (Beaten, 2000). The result is that sustainability ultimately reinforces the already existing political system, rather than being used as a tool to pressure it for an imminent radical rescue change (Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014).

According to Fuch (2017), the neutrality of sustainability comes from the neoliberalization<sup>4</sup> of the term that appears in the meta-nomination of the Brundtland report. This is shown through the term development itself next to the concept of sustainability. Specifically, in the neoliberal system, sustainability can be allied with growth through the development of technology as a tool. In the now

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<sup>4</sup> **Neoliberalism:** Neoliberalism, by definition, invokes the legacy of the early modern principles of liberalism, defined by the primacy of private property, 'free/independent choice' in consumption, while at the same time it assumes a night guard role for the state and notions of state action as an intrusion into the formally free/ independent choices of the members of society. (Jessop, 2002:108).

neoliberalized term the environment is only temporarily important because it embraces economic growth as the golden key of the age, while in reality it plays a central role in preventing environmental degradation (Foster, 2002). This model is embedded in the capitalist system, aiming at economic growth and the strengthening of consumerism in order to make the market sustainable (Blühdorn, 2017; Krueger, 2007). Observing the way businesses operate, it is obvious that they find it easier and cheaper to reconstruct both themselves and their products as green, than to make costly investments in equipment and more generally in processes that will enhance the reduction of environmental impact (Amable, 2010; Ziegler, 2015).

According to Brenner and Theodore (2002:2), the neoliberalism advocates the practices of open, competitive and unselected markets, free from all forms of state intervention, which represent the optimal mechanism for economic growth". The normative writing of the neoliberal narrative focuses primarily on the supply side of the economy and the use of regulation to create new ways of doing business to overcome declining profitability rates.

The claim that sustainable development is neoliberalized in its various manifestations can therefore be judged rational as the hegemonic rhetoric of the free market as a "lifeboat of resources" and the simultaneous adoption of this sustainable development rhetoric by big business and governments presents a powerful justification over its re-appropriation by the neoliberal regulatory logic.

According to Jacobsson (2019), the typical narrative construct of sustainability is presented as a new form of 'alternative' economic development. However, the framing of the term is done purely in economic and business terms rather than in social, class, ecological terms. Therefore, he considers that the problem of applying the concept is based on the narrative frames constructed after the Brundtland report and not on sustainability per se (2019). The fact that it is presented by the media as a neutral information (Collins & Butler, 2003), but for which political responsibility is not presented, leads to the depoliticization of citizens, since, as Redclift et.al, (2013). This depoliticized politicization is related to the more general construction of the concept, which is carried out by groups representing completely opposite political interests (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2001; Harvey, 2005, 2010; Hay, 2007; Lazzarato, 2009; Amable, 2010; Giroux, 2015).

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

The aim of this study is to record the public discourse of sustainable development, as it is shaped and defined by the Greek media. In order to extract in-depth results, the research documents the different constructions of the term, which other terms frame sustainability. Specifically, a thorough literature review of international studies was conducted (as no domestic studies were identified so far) in order to provide a holistic understanding of the issue and the subsequent methodologies. The research followed a qualitative and quantitative methodological approach with a method of analysis, frame analysis. The purpose of the chosen methodological framework was to explore existing frames related to sustainable development in order to then be used in the case study field.

Previous research on sustainability and climate change coverage suggests that in Britain and the USA neoliberalism is the post-frames through which environmental problems and possible solutions are understood. For example, Lewis (2000) found that in the US the media does not accommodate conflicting frames for sustainable development, but consistently promotes three

dominant development frames: that of the equation between economic growth and development; the second is of technology that can provide solutions to all problems; and the third is about presenting industrialized countries as more successful in terms of development.

The interpretative packages-frames that have been documented by relevant studies and used are 'sustainable development' in the light of 'economic growth', as reflected in the Brundtland report, and 'de-growth', which is an interpretative frame for a new social movement that tries to put the desired socio-environmental futures at the centre of the debate through the voluntary restriction of consumption aimed at social and ecological sustainability. This interpretative frame has its origins in the Club of Rome's international report entitled 'Limits to Growth'.

The sub-frames identified during the literature review are 5 and were used in the data analysis presented in the next section:

1. Applied Technology
2. Green lifestyle
3. Corporate social responsibility
4. Green growth
5. Circular economy

This research shows which ideological frameworks are presented as neutral information. The analysis and conclusions reveal an interesting paradox by pointing to contradictory perceptions of problems, responsibilities and solutions in relation to sustainable development, depending on whether it concerns the private or public sector. The research aims to stimulate reflection on the role of the media in shaping and understanding the concept of sustainable development as it is currently presented

The methodology used is the theory of frame analysis, which was conducted through descriptive statistical analysis using the statistical tool SPSS. The data analysis was inspired by Robert Entman's (1993) technique, "framing theory", which made it one of the most important methodological tools in qualitative research, especially in media analysis. Specifically, after categorizing and classifying the broad frames in a database according to the frames and subframes recorded from related studies, they were analyzed with the descriptive statistics model using frequency estimation, a model that allows the researcher to understand how often each frame appears with its subframe. In this study, the appearance of the article, its length, the photographic material (particularly in the print press) it contained, the position it occupied in the print or online medium, the keywords that framed the concept of sustainability, the column in which the article was located, the focus of the text, whether it was critical of the term sustainable development or whether it was an encouraging text, and finally the type of article were also taken into account.

The SPSS statistical model was chosen because it can handle a wide range of statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics, statistical inference and complex models. In addition, it is suitable for converting qualitative data into quantitative data as well as supporting large data sets, making it suitable for multi-data research projects (Ong et.,al, 2007).

This methodological tool was chosen because the analysis of frames serves four main objectives in the context of research: defining the problem, diagnosing its evolution/progress, formulating value judgments and proposing solutions (Entman, 1993: 52). Moreover, it is a semantic mechanism and a mechanism for analysing indirect persuasion, which contributes to the coding of reality, and the direct influence of the receiver. It is used as a method of analyzing the discourse of political and social subjects and as a method of analyzing the ways of coding problems from the audience's point of view (Entman, 1993: 52). Through such an initial study, it will be possible to understand how the media in Greece promote/construct the term sustainability and what interpretation, each time, they give to it. Moreover, besides the documentation and analysis of the already existing frameworks and sub-frameworks, an attempt was made to produce new ones.

The articles under study, which are related to sustainable development, were published in 2 traditional newspapers with high readership in Greece in September 2022 and in 2 self-funded news websites during the same period. Specifically, 48 daily newspapers were studied, 24 articles from the "Journal of Journalists", 24 from "Kathimerini", 45 from "The Press Project" (TPP) and 48 from "Rosa". These media were selected on the basis of their highest readership.

The selection of these news media was based on their independence in the economic and political fields, as well as on their print (newspapers) and online formats. Two daily newspapers were selected, whose revenues are derived from a percentage of public and private funding, a percentage from the advertisements they host and a percentage from the sale of the printed editions. These are called traditional media (Chan et al., 2007). The online media whose revenues are generated by the free contribution of readers' money were chosen as modern digital media. This type of news media has all their content public to the public and give the reader the choice to decide whether to contribute a certain amount and at what price.

The differentiation is necessary for the analysis and the conduct of the present research, since as ES Herman (2007) states, when a media outlet is independent of state and private funding; it is more likely to be objective, multi-faceted and multi-factorial in its framing of a news story. Conversely, when a media outlet has an enhanced financial dependence, then it is likely to fall into the so-called "Conventional Journalism" and as a result, the issues it presents will fall into ideologies and political preferences more easily and consciously.

### 3 RESULTS

The analysis reveals an interesting paradox, indicating contradictory perceptions of problems, responsibilities and solutions to sustainability promotion. More specifically, a total of 48 articles were studied, 24 from the "Newspaper" and 24 from the "Kathimerini" while from the websites studied 45 from TPP and 8 from Roza. Of these, 55 articles were recorded from the "Newspaper", which had reference to sustainability; while only 35 were recorded from the "Daily" editions (see Table 1). In addition, only 8 articles were recorded from the 45 articles of the "TPP" website during the September period, which have at least 1 reference to some derivative of Sustainability, while the "Roza" website, only 11 were recorded from the 48 in total. It is obvious that both the Newspaper of



the Editors and the Roza website are superior in terms of articles compared to Kathimerini and TPP. However, it became evident from the media under study that there is no plethora of articles that include the concept of sustainability in their daily agenda.

The columns that were identified to include the concept of sustainability more frequently in the traditional media are the financial journalism column with 21 articles and the society column with 22. In contrast, the politics column contained only 10 articles with reference to the term. Regarding the digital media, the most articles were found in the politics column with a value of 6 and the economy column with a value of 4. This was followed by the reporting column with a value of 4.

The descriptive results present an overall picture of the media under study both in terms of the frequency of their publications on sustainability issues and the framing they carry out in their articles. As a result, in the traditional media there is a strong tendency for articles to be classified in the "economy" and "society" categories, while in the digital media they are placed in the "economy" and "politics" column. The framing of their daily anchors reveals a large part of the topics touched by the media. It is approved that the environment column is underperformed by all 4 media under study, creating a paradox in terms of the semantics of sustainability.

Table 1: Media analysis descriptive data: Newspaper

Newspaper					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Efsyn	46	55.4%	56.8	56.8
	Kathimerini	35	42.2%	43.2	100.0
	Total	81	97.6%	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.4		
Total		83	100.0		

Table 2: Media analysis descriptive data: Press Column Newspaper

<b>Press Column Newspaper</b>					
		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Valid	<b>Analysis</b>	7	8.4%	8.6	8.6
	<b>Economy</b>	21	25.3%	25.9	34.6
	<b>Society</b>	22	26.5%	27.2	61.7
	<b>News International</b>	3	3.6%	3.7	65.4
	<b>Politics</b>	10	12.0%	12.3	77.8
	<b>Businesses</b>	6	7.2%	7.4	85.2
	<b>Purchases/Investments</b>	9	10.8%	11.1	96.3
	<b>Art</b>	2	2.4%	2.5	98.8
	<b>Reportage</b>	1	1.2%	1.2	100.0
	Total	81	97.6%	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.4		
Total		83	100.0		



Table 3: Media analysis descriptive data: Websites and Press Column Websites

<b>Websites</b>					
		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Valid	<b>TPP</b>	<i>8</i>	<i>10.4%</i>	<i>42.1</i>	<i>42.1</i>
	<b>Roza</b>	<i>11</i>	<i>14.3%</i>	<i>57.9</i>	<i>100.0</i>
	<b>Total</b>	<i>19</i>	<i>24.7%</i>	<i>100.0</i>	
Missing	System	58	75.3		
Total		77	100.0		
<b>Press Column Websites</b>					
		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Valid	<b>Reportage</b>	<i>4</i>	<i>5.2%</i>	<i>21.1</i>	<i>21.1</i>
	<b>Analysis</b>	<i>1</i>	<i>1.3%</i>	<i>5.3</i>	<i>26.3</i>
	<b>Politics</b>	<i>6</i>	<i>7.8%</i>	<i>31.6</i>	<i>57.9</i>
	<b>Economy</b>	<i>4</i>	<i>5.2%</i>	<i>21.1</i>	<i>78.9</i>
	<b>Society</b>	<i>3</i>	<i>3.9%</i>	<i>15.8</i>	<i>94.7</i>
	<b>Tourism</b>	<i>1</i>	<i>1.3%</i>	<i>5.3</i>	<i>100.0</i>
	<b>Total</b>	<i>19</i>	<i>24.7%</i>	<i>100.0</i>	
Missing	System	58	75.3		
Total		77	100.0		

After all the articles collected were recorded and classified, an attempt was made to categorise them according to their content and the meaning given to each article. Then all the subframes identified in each article were recorded in order to enable classification into the main frames. As mentioned above, through the identification of sub-frames, an attempt was made to create new sub-frames according to the frequency of their occurrence in the texts.

Therefore, starting the analysis from the subframes identified (see figure 1) around the sustainability discourse in traditional media, the ones that are mainly presented are those related to "economy" and "development". In particular, seven sub-frames were recorded, of which five can be analysed in economic terms, and only two are on a social spectrum. As can be understood from Table 2, "Green Growth" and "Corporate Social Responsibility" have the highest percentage, with 34.57% and 22.22% respectively. Therefore, the meaning of the publications is constructed in mainly economic terms, rather than social terms. The term sustainability is being reduced to a modern alternative economic model, with a complete conceptual ambiguity in everyday discourse (Nurmela et.al, 2002), and so it cannot be understood by the reader. This demonstrates Fuchs' (2005) theorem on the one-dimensional interpretation of the concept.

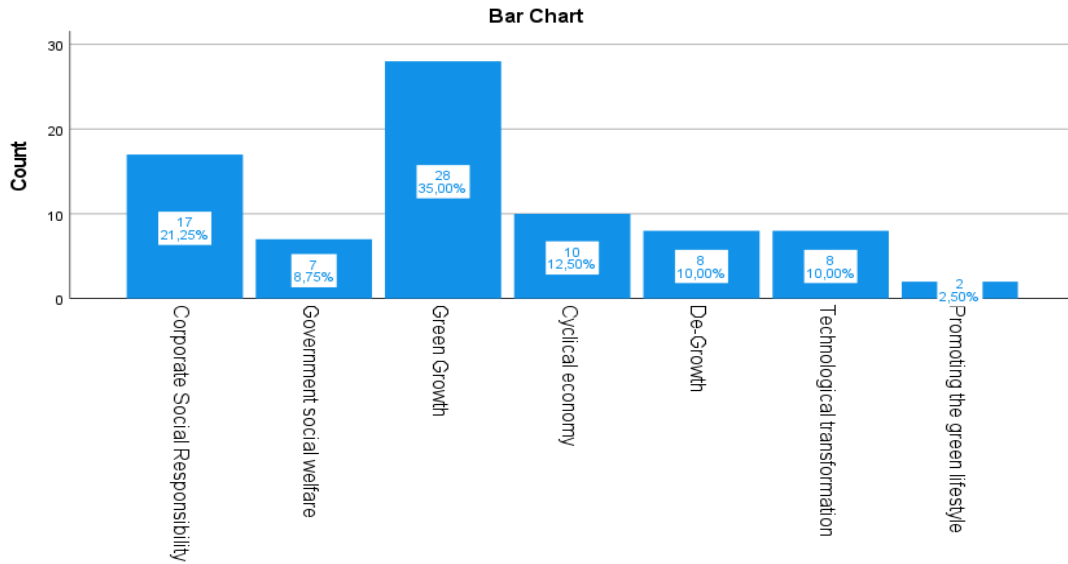


Figure 1: Subframes of Sustainability by Greek Newspapers

Regarding the sub-frames identified in the digital media, it is observed that the sub-frames of "economy" with 42%, the sub-frames of "green growth" with 15.79% and finally the sub-frames of "Government social welfare" with 42.11% prevail to a large extent compared to the other sub-frames that were not identified at all.

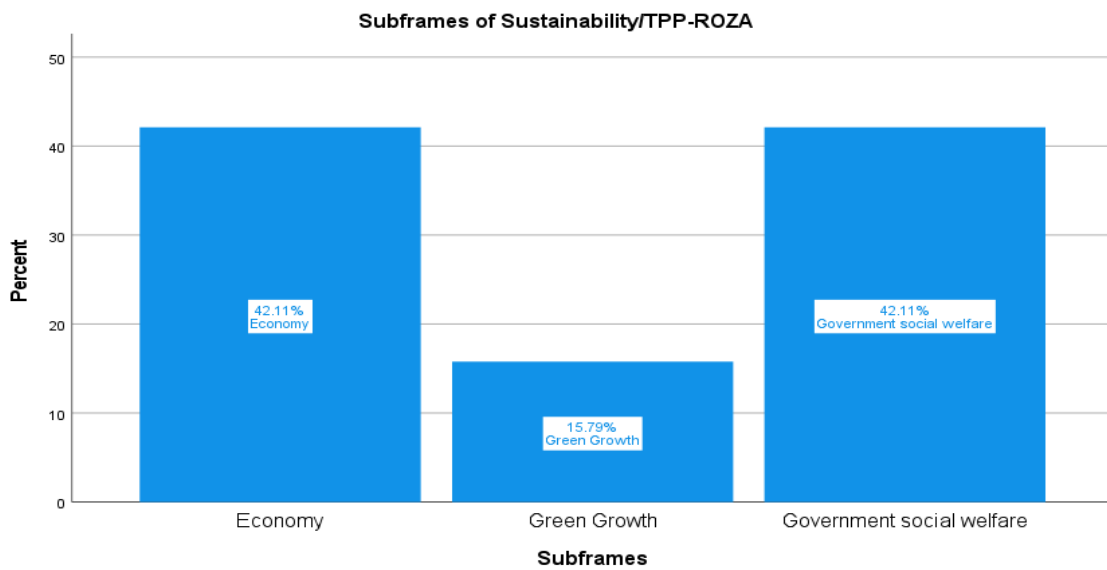


Figure 2: Subframes of Sustainability by Greek Website

It is obvious that the meaning of the publications is constructed mainly in economic terms, and not in social terms. The term sustainability is being reduced to a modern alternative economic model, with a complete conceptual ambiguity in everyday discourse (Nurmela et.al 2002), and cannot be understood by the reader. This demonstrates Fuchs' (2005) theorem on the one-dimensional interpretation of the concept. Both the sub-frames of 'economy' and the frames of 'green growth' establish sustainability as an economic concept where its interpretation is based on symbolism. The sub-frames were defined by the words/concepts that frame the concept of sustainability. The words "growth", "Business balance", "market" and "debt" are those that were identified most frequently in the articles of the media under study. Characteristically, these concepts were found both in the sub-frame of 'economy', 'green growth' and 'state social responsibility' (see figure 3).

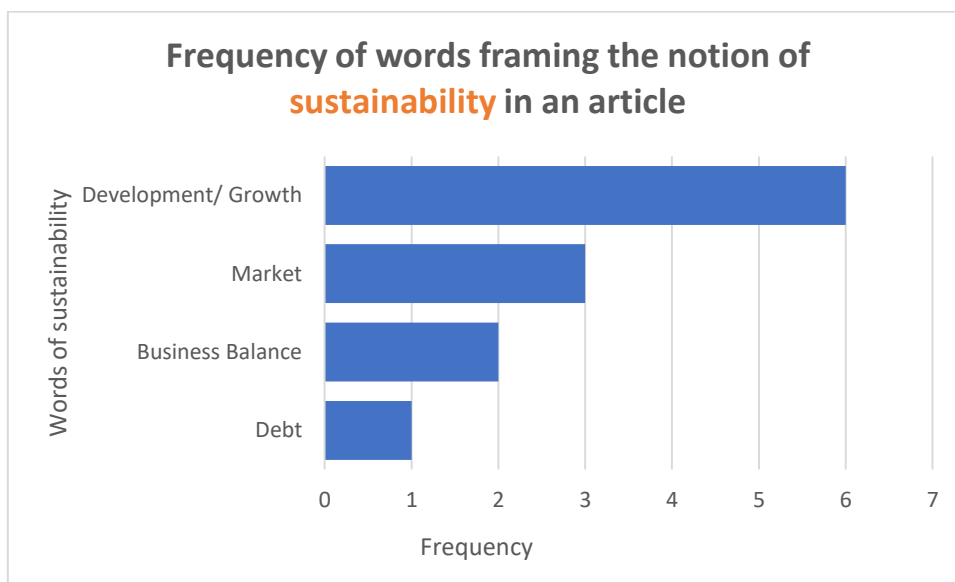


Figure 3: Words of Sustainability and Subframes

Through the framing analysis, after highlighting, categorizing and expanding the existing sub-frames, the main frames of the term sustainability were identified. In the Greek articles under study from the printed newspaper, one frame dominates, that of "economic development". As shown in the diagram below, all the values in the sample are placed in these frames and therefore it is obvious that sustainability is reproduced and projected in economic terms. Indeed, as can be seen in the table above, most of the concepts that are incubated in the concept of sustainability are related to the "sustainable economy". Placing the concepts, in terms of their frequency, in a descending order, it is approved that the concept with the highest frequency is 'economy', then 'growth', then 'equilibrium', 'green growth', 'market', 'debt'.

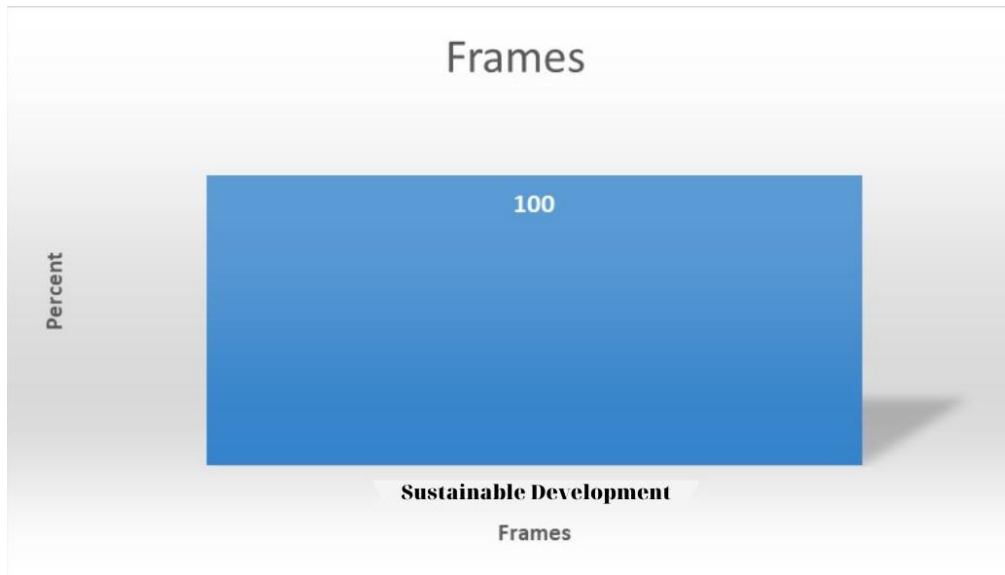


Figure 4: Economic Development/Growth

In addition to the one-dimensional interpretation, the one-dimensional critical focus of the publications was also identified. Specifically, in the traditional media, few articles were recorded that contained any of the following subframes and enjoyed a negative connotation or critical attitude. The focus on publications is of paramount importance for the reader's understanding of a concept. Social reality is built through discourse (Machin & Mayr, 2012). However, constructed discourses do not all have the same effect on social reality (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Therefore, when presenting articles on sustainability, they should be presented from different perspectives of meaning making. Nevertheless, in the Greek newspapers under study, as shown in Table 2, there is a strong supportive attitude towards the term. Specifically, the highest rates of support are recorded in the articles where the sub-frame of "Green Development" appears, with a rate of 71.4%, "Circular Economy", with a rate of 70%, and then those framed by concepts of "Corporate Social Responsibility". The highest percentage of critical focus appears in the articles framed by concepts meaning "Government Social Responsibility".

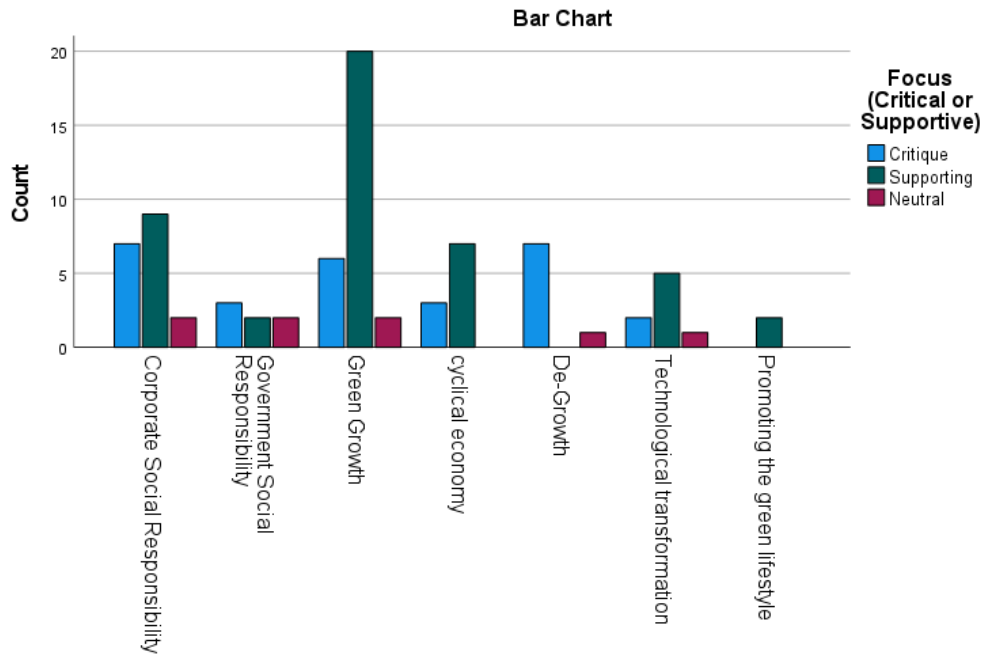


Figure 5: Focus (Critical or Supportive)

#### 4 CONCLUSIONS

Until this day, the critical analysis of the sustainable development communication by the media has not been sufficiently explored by the international scientific community and there is a complete lack of the specific research field on the framing of sustainable development in the Greek media in both international and domestic literature. Therefore, such a study opens a new research field in the scientific community and can be considered a first step to produce new research results on this field.

The current concept of sustainable development, promoted both by sustainability 'experts' and by 'journalists' and 'politicians', fails in its essence (Luke, 2005) as they have failed to make it clearly understood by the general public. The construction of the term as simply an alternative economic model that leads to sustainability being accepted as the prevailing form of mass consumerism, simply dubbed as 'green growth' (Luke, 2005). Consequently, the social parameters inherent in sustainable development are not understood both at the level of political action and at the level of meaning-making. As a result, the modern way of life in organized societies with its golden key 'commodity' and 'global information networks' projects sustainable development as a social movement with a basic demand for greater green commercialization (Agger, 1989), disentangling the social dimension that it should contain.

The characteristic of the instrumental use of sustainability in the neoliberal system, according to Jacobsson (2019), is that it is presented as a new form of alternative consumption and therefore, he considers that the problem of applying the concept is based on the narrative rather than on sustainability itself (2019). The fact that it is presented by the media as neutral information (Collins & Butler 2003), for which no one takes political responsibility, leads to depoliticization of citizens. This depoliticized politicization is related to the general construction of the concept, which is

carried out by groups representing completely opposite political interests (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2001; Harvey, 2005, 2010; Hay, 2007; Lazzarato, 2009; Amable, 2010; Giroux, 2015).

As it is evident from the results produced by the Greek newspaper and digital media, the main frame of sustainable development is encompassed by the sub-frames of economic development. The above evidence proves Jacobsson's (2019) theorem of projecting the concept as an alternative economic model whose surrounding ambiguity ends up, instead of appearing as a salutary solution for indigenous environments, remaining nevertheless as a helper of a commercial regime (Bauman, 2005). Conventional discourse perpetuates this theory by using the economic terminology of 'natural capital' or ecosystem services (Escobar, 1995: p. 10). Thus, while ostensibly global governance is sounding the alarm for greater use of sustainable models, at the same time it is using it for its own self-destruction (Connor, 1998: pp. 158-177).

Moreover, the existing sub-frames identified in the Greek media which are "Applied Technology", "Green lifestyle", "Corporate social responsibility", "Green growth", "Circular economy", lead to the conclusion that so far, the concept is not presented in different terms and definitions. Both self-financed and financed media present sustainable analysis with a common semantics and with the same ideological approach - that of the neoliberal system. Additionally, through the above analysis carried out, two new sub-frames were produced from the existing ones.

The sub-frames presented in this study are that of the «alternative economic model». This sub-frame was constructed as a necessary conceptual model to understand the basic frames of the concept, because in most of the articles studied; there was no lack of reference or rhetoric that sustainability is an «alternative economic model» of development as a life-saving policy in contemporary crises». The next sub-frame identified as of utmost importance to be included in the list of sub-frames is the sub-frame of «Government social responsibility» which is influenced by the sub-frame of «corporate social responsibility». This sub-frame was created because the government now takes a position on sustainability with long reports which present their sustainable policies as an example of good sustainable policies, without necessarily these policies being relevant to the real social problems at local, regional and national level. Therefore, as a company tries at a communicative level to become green, the government tries to become sustainable at a communicative level.

Consequently, the media, which is instrumentalised in this process, shapes new views and attitudes, contributing to a general creation of a new identity that is "plural, mutable, fragmented and transformative" (Jaccobs, 2019). They promote "sustainable consumption" through corporations, development models and economic terms, marginalizing the basic concepts of environment, culture, class and equality (Raco, Imrie & Lin, 2012). Through the narrative of image and written discourse, a new order emerges from sustainability theories as they interplay between the normalizing discourses of corporations, states and the media (Urry, 2005). This is the reason an attempt is made in this study to explore the connection between the above field using critical theory in communication and the public discourse of sustainability (Hilding-Rydevik et al., 2011; Bradley, 2009; Raco, 2014; Redclift & Woodgate, 2013; Raco, Imrie & Lin 2012; Vallance et al. 2011; Redclift, 2005; Loucas, 2005).

The "Supportive/Critical Focus" distinction, positioned as a study factor, showed that most of the articles recorded, regardless of the type of media outlet, communicated the concept of "sustainability" in supportive terms and with a positive connotation. In particular, traditional media show a supportive focus both when the concept of sustainability is found in an article presenting a major private investment and when it is mentioned in the existing government discourse. In contrast, the self-financed media present a critical focus in articles that refer to the existing government discourse. Nevertheless, this leads to the conclusion that professional journalists do not touch the concept of 'sustainability' outside of the main narrative or lack the knowledge to touch it, and this therefore means that they only present its neo-philanthropic rhetoric to their potential audience. Hence, the potential ignorance of communication professionals assists the depoliticization and vagueness of the concept.

It might be better if the concept of sustainable development was redefined as sustainable growth. This is clarified through the instrumental use of the term as an alternative economic model rather than a different political-social component of livelihood. By redefining the term to sustainable growth, its policies will be clarified, and this may lead to the need for real sustainable policies inspired by the social aspects and not by the idea of green speculation. Indeed, the ambiguity of the concept comes from the concept itself, as the term "sustainable growth", with "development" as a second meaning, highlights the social aspects of this policy, while only the growth aspect, i.e., economic growth, is presented and this makes it unclear, which this as Bauman (2005) mentions leads to the depoliticization of the concept.



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