

Sustainability-related Media Coverage in 41 Countries:

Regional Patterns or a North/South Divide?

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- Introduction -

- Trends in Sustainability-
- Methodology -
- Some Findings -
- Conclusion -

- What this presentation is about
 - Trends and patterns in sustainability-related media coverage in 41 countries
 - Impact of country-level and regional-level factors on coverage levels on range of sustainability-related issues
- Structure
 - Trends in Sustainability
 - Methodology
 - Some Findings
 - Discussion/ Conclusion

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■ Trends in Sustainability

- We are measuring and comparing levels of public attention to sustainability-related issues in different countries through a content analysis of leading national newspapers
- The analysis covers up to 115 leading national newspapers from 41 countries
- Jan 1990 - May 2010, covering 550,000 newspaper issues & 30,000,000 articles
- Mainly national “*broadsheets*”
- 76 OECD-based/ 39 non-OECD
- Rationale of Economist’s ‘*R-word Index*’
- Excel routine based on LexisNexis database
- In essence, we are counting (a lot of) newspaper articles

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20 Sustainability-related Issues

Acid rain/ acidification	Cleaner technologies	Human rights	Maternal mortality
Air pollution	Climate change	Human rights violations	Ozone
Biodiversity	Corruption	Labour rights/ Working conditions	Poverty
Child labour	Discrimination	Malaria	Precautionary principle
Child mortality	HIV/AIDS	Malnutrition	Soil erosion

- Selection based on desk review of key international documents in the field
 - e.g. Agenda 21, UN Global Compact principles, UN MDGs, UN Millennium ecosystem assessment, OECD Guidelines

<u>Nb</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Publication Name</u>	<u>Date as of included into Database</u>	<u>Nb</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Publication Name</u>	<u>Date as of included into Database</u>	<u>Nb</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Publication Name</u>	<u>Date as of included into Database</u>
1	(IN)	Hindustan Times	Oct-2003	40	(FR)	Le Parisien	Dec-2006	79	(CL)	El Mercurio (Chile)	Feb-2005
2	(IN)	MINT (India)	Aug-2007	41	(FR)	L'Humanité	Jan-2002	80	(CO)	Portafolio (Colombia)	Feb-2005
3	(JP)	The Daily Yomiuri (Tokyo)	Jan-1990	42	(FR)	Libération	Jan-2000	81	(EC)	El Comercio (Ecuador)	Feb-2005
4	(JP)	Mainichi Daily News	May-1993	43	(FR)	Ouest-France	Jan-2006	82	(PE)	El Comercio (Peru)	Feb-2005
5	(JP)	The Japan Times	Jan-1998	44	(FR)	Sud Ouest	May-1994	83	(UY)	El País (Uruguay)	Feb-2005
6	(KG)	The Times of Central Asia	Mar-2005	45	(DE)	Frankfurter Rundschau	Jan-2003	84	(VE)	El Nacional (Venezuela)	Feb-2005
7	(NP)	Nepali Times	Dec-2006	46	(DE)	Hamburger Abendblatt	Jan-2000	85	(CN)	South China Morning Post	Jul-1992
8	(PK)	The Nation (Pakistan)	Oct-2004	47	(DE)	Berliner Zeitung	Jan-2000	86	(KR)	Korea Times	Jun-1998
9	(CZ)	The Prague Post (Czech)	Jan-1994	48	(DE)	Stuttgarter Zeitung	Jan-2003	87	(KR)	Korea Herald	Aug-1998
10	(IL)	The Jerusalem Post (Israel)	Jan-1990	49	(DE)	Sueddeutsche	Jan-1994	88	(MY)	New Straits Times (MY)	Jan-1995
11	(RU)	Moscow News	Jan-1992	50	(DE)	die tageszeitung	Mar-1999	89	(PH)	Manila Times	May-2006
12	(RU)	The Moscow Times	Dec-1993	51	(DE)	Die Welt	Apr-2004	90	(SG)	The Business Times SG	May-1992
13	(ZA)	Business Day (South Africa)	Jan-1997	52	(AT)	Die Presse (Austria)	Jan-1996	91	(SG)	The Straits Times (SG)	May-1992
14	(ZA)	The Star (South Africa)	Jul-2006	53	(AT)	Wirtschaftsblatt (Austria)	Jan-1997	92	(TH)	The Nation (Thailand)	Jul-1997
15	(ZA)	Cape Argus (South Africa)	Jul-2006	54	(CH)	Tages-Anzeiger	Jan-1990	93	(UK)	Daily Telegraph	Oct-2000
16	(ZA)	Cape Times (South Africa)	Jul-2006	55	(CA)	The Globe and Mail (CAN)	Jan-1990	94	(UK)	Guardian	Jan-1990
17	(ZA)	Daily News (South Africa)	Jul-2006	56	(CA)	National Post	Jan-1990	95	(UK)	Independent	Jan-1990
18	(ZA)	The Mercury (South Africa)	Jul-2006	57	(CA)	The Toronto Star	Jan-1991	96	(UK)	The Herald	Jan-1992
19	(ZA)	Pretoria News (South Africa)	Jul-2006	58	(CA)	The Vancouver Sun	Jan-1994	97	(UK)	The Observer	Oct-1990
20	(ZA)	Financial Mail (South Africa)	Aug-1997	59	(CA)	Toronto Sun	Jan-1990	98	(UK)	Financial Times	Jan-1990
21	(CR)	Al Día (Costa Rica)	Feb-2005	60	(US)	Washington Post	Jun-1980	99	(UK)	Times	Jan-1990
22	(CR)	La Nación (Costa Rica)	Feb-2005	61	(US)	New York Times	Jan-1985	100	(UK)	Belfast Telegraph	Jan-1996
23	(ES)	El Mundo (Spain)	Jan-1994	62	(US)	Los Angeles Times	Sep-1988	101	(IE)	Irish Examiner	Aug-2007
24	(ES)	El Pais (Spain)	Apr-1996	63	(US)	The Boston Globe	Jan-1989	102	(IE)	Irish Independent	Jul-2006
25	(ES)	ABC (Spain)	Jan-2007	64	(US)	USA Today	Jan-1994	103	(UK)	Irish News	Jul-2001
26	(ES)	El Correo (Spain)	Jan-2007	65	(US)	The Philadelphia Inquirer	Mar-1995	104	(IE)	The Irish Times	Jun-1992
27	(ES)	Diario Montañés (Spain)	Jan-2007	66	(US)	The Daily News	Sep-1986	105	(BE)	De Tijd (Belgium)	Feb-1998
28	(ES)	La Verdad	Sep-2006	67	(AU)	The Sydney Morning Herald	Jan-1991	106	(DK)	Borsen	Jan-1996
29	(ES)	Diario Vasco	Sep-2006	68	(AU)	The Age	May-1995	107	(DK)	Politiken (Denmark)	Jan-1997
30	(GT)	Siglo Veintiuno (Guatemala)	Feb-2005	69	(AU)	The Australian	Jan-1990	108	(IT)	La Stampa (Italy)	Jan-1992
31	(MX)	Reforma (Mexico)	Jan-2004	70	(AU)	The Courier Mail	Jun-1995	109	(NL)	NRC Handelsblad	Jan-1990
32	(MX)	El Universal (Mexico)	Feb-2005	71	(AU)	Daily Telegraph	Jul-1997	110	(NL)	Trouw	Jan-1992
33	(US)	El Nuevo Día (Puerto Rico)	Feb-2005	72	(AU)	The Canberra Times	Jan-1990	111	(NL)	Het Financieele Dagblad	Apr-1994
34	(CH)	Le Matin	Jan-2006	73	(AU)	Herald Sun & Sunday Herald :	Jan-1996	112	(NL)	De Volkskrant	Jan-1995
35	(CH)	Le Temps	Jan-1998	74	(NZ)	The Press (Christchurch)	Jul-2002	113	(NL)	De Telegraaf	Jan-1999
36	(CH)	La Tribune de Genève	Jan-2006	75	(NZ)	The Dominion Post (NZ)	Nov-1998	114	(NL)	AD/Haagsche Courant	Jan-2005
37	(FR)	La Tribune	Nov-1996	76	(NZ)	The New Zealand Herald	Nov-1998	115	(NL)	Dagblad De Limburger	Jun-2007
38	(FR)	Le Figaro	Jan-1997	77	(AR)	La Nación (Argentina)	Feb-2005				
39	(FR)	Le Monde	Aug-2007	78	(BR)	O Globo (Brazil)	Feb-2005				

The Link between Media Coverage and Public Opinion

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- Agenda-setting research: research into the role of the media in shaping the public agenda & policy agenda
- Media *“may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but [they are] stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about”* (Cohen, 1963: 13)
- *“Agendas”* as rankings of relative *“salience”* of *“issues”*
- Typology of Issues (Neuman, 1990)
 - **Crises** (e.g. Vietnam war, energy crisis) – high correlation
 - **Symbolic crises** (e.g. poverty, pollution) – medium to high correlation
 - **Problems** (e.g. inflation, unemployment) – low to medium correlation
 - **Non-Problems** (e.g. crime) – no correlation
- *“Obtrusiveness”* of issues (Zucker, 1978)
- Hierarchy of issues (Atwater et al, 1985)

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- **Media Coverage as *“Indicator for Social Change”***
 - Long-term relationship between media agenda & public agenda
 - Various large-scale attempts at measuring perceived media salience as indicator for social change
 - *“Survey of World Attention”* (Laswell, 1935)
 - *“Greenfield Index”* (Greenfield, 1961)
 - *“Trend Report”* (Naisbitt, 1976)
 - Measuring media salience/ public attention by volume of media coverage as fairly frequent method in agenda-setting research
 - *“The limited success of these attempts [...] on a continuing basis is due more to the formidable cost of the collection efforts than to any shortcoming of the underlying idea”* (Beniger, 1978)
 - This problem has obviously been solved in the meantime

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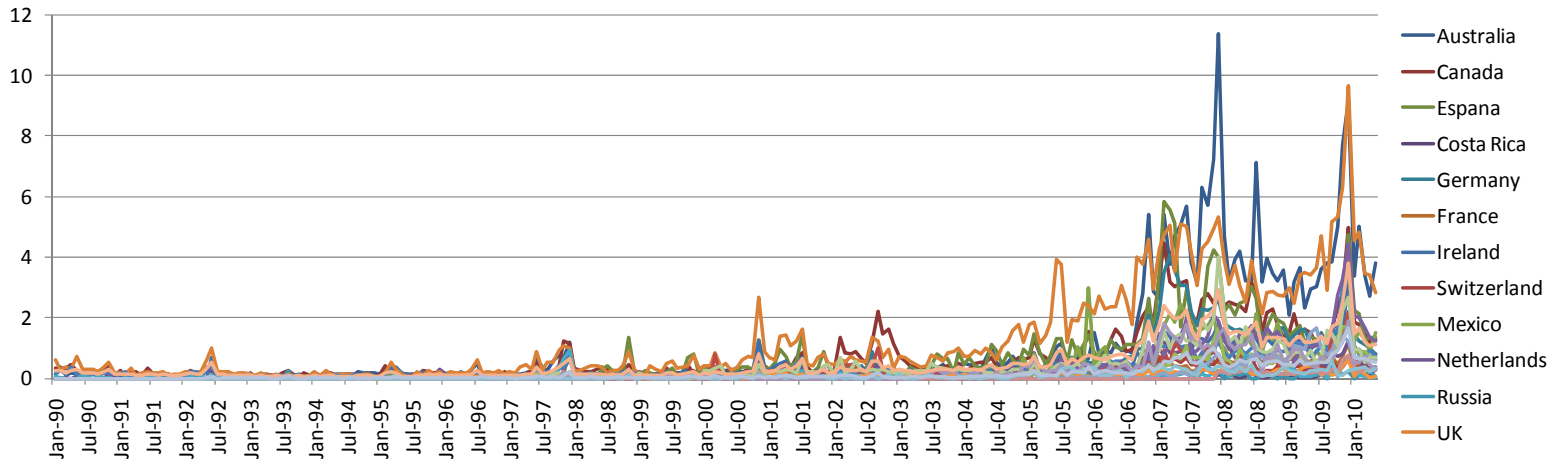
- Methodology -

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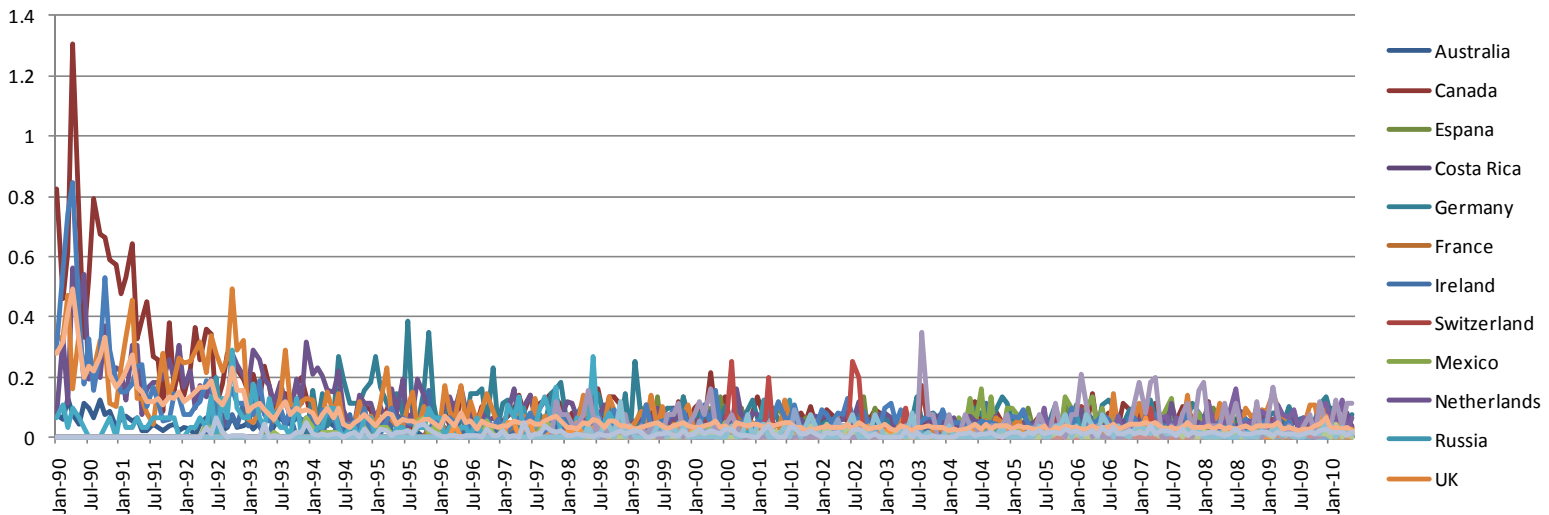
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Trends in Sustainability: Two (more or less) random Examples

Climate Change



Acid Rain/ Acidification



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Sustainability-related Media Coverage in 2008 (Selected Countries)

	AUSTRALIA	FRANCE	SPAIN	S. AFRICA	UK	USA	
(1)	Climate change	Human rights	Human rights	Corruption	Human rights	Poverty	(1)
(2)	Human rights	Labour rights	Corruption	Poverty	Poverty	Corruption	(2)
(3)	Corruption	Corruption	Climate change	HIV/AIDS	Climate change	Human rights	(3)
(4)	Poverty	Poverty	Discrimination	Human rights	Corruption	HIV/AIDS	(4)
(5)	Discrimination	Discrimination	Poverty	Climate change	Discrimination	Climate change	(5)
(6)	HIV/AIDS	HIV/AIDS	Labour rights	Discrimination	HIV/AIDS	Discrimination	(6)
(7)	Labour rights	Climate change	HIV/AIDS	Labour rights	Biodiversity	Ozone	(7)

- We can identify different sustainability-related agendas in different countries
- Tentative findings from descriptive stats: dividing line between OECD & Non-OECD in terms of prioritization of environmental and social issues

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Perceived Media Salience 2008: Correlation GDP/HDI North & South

Ozone	HDI/GDP	LARGE
Climate change	HDI/GDP	MEDIUM
Labour rights/Working conditions	HDI/GDP	MEDIUM
Air pollution	HDI/GDP	MEDIUM
Cleantech/Env friendly technologies	HDI/GDP	MEDIUM
Precautionary principle	HDI/GDP	MEDIUM
Malnutrition	HDI/GDP	MEDIUM
Acid rain/Acidification	HDI/GDP	MEDIUM
Malaria	GDP	SMALL
Discrimination	HDI	SMALL
Child labour	GDP	SMALL

- **RELATIVE** coverage
- Spearman's rho
- 17/20 relationships significant

NORTH

- No significant correlation:
 - HIV/AIDS
 - Human rights
 - Soil erosion

SOUTH

Corruption	HDI/GDP	LARGE
Poverty	HDI/GDP	MEDIUM
Human rights violations	HDI/GDP	MEDIUM
Child mortality	HDI/GDP	MEDIUM
Maternal mortality	HDI/GDP	MEDIUM
Biodiversity	GDP	SMALL

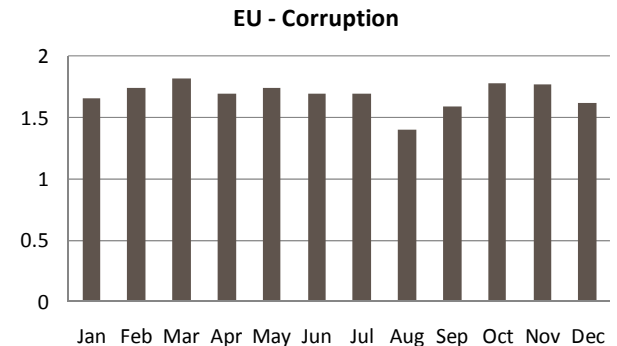
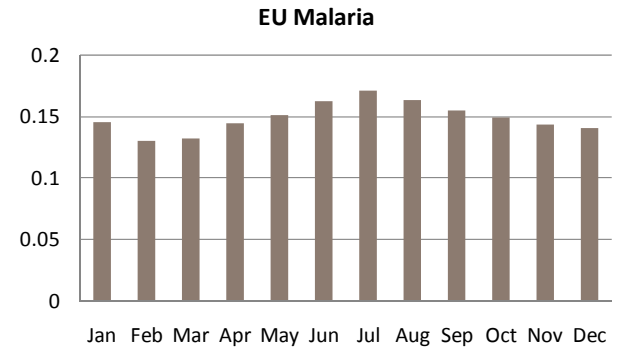
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- Questions then:
 - *Is sustainability-related media agenda shaped by country-level factors or can we identify regional (or even North/South) patterns?*
 - *In terms of public attention, can specific issues be identified that appear to be global/local in scope?*
- Link to global (environmental) governance
 - Perceived Northern bias of global governance (cf. Draude, 2007; Risse & Lehmkuhl, 2006)
 - Institutionalization of Northern values and interests?
 - First step: to identify respective agendas
- Focus in this paper on mere frequencies = attention
 - Attention ⇔ prominence ⇔ valence (Kiousis, 2004)
 - Frequencies ⇔ normalized data

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- Multivariate Regression (OLS)
- 10 sustainability-related issues
- GDP per capita, HDI scores, OECD ↔ Non-OECD, Region
- 112 newspapers from 41 countries
 - January – December 2008
 - (→ seasonal cycles)

+++ WORK IN PROGRESS +++



- Some practical advice: if you ever happen to be involved in a corruption scandal, try to think about timing

Air pollution	Climate change
Biodiversity	Corruption
Child labour	HIV/AIDS
Child mortality	Human rights
Cleaner technologies	Poverty

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- North/South patterns emerging in the case of
 - **Air pollution**
 - Higher coverage in Non-OECD countries
 - **Biodiversity**
 - Positive correlation with HDI scores
 - **Child mortality**
 - Positive correlation with HDI scores
- Regional-level patterns
 - **Clean tech**
 - US & Canadian newspapers
 - On other issues, sharp divide between US & CAN
 - **Climate change**
 - Australia & New Zealand!
 - **HIV/AIDS**
 - South African & Southeast Asian newspapers!

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- No significant patterns emerging in the case of
 - Child labour
 - Human rights
 - Poverty
 - Corruption
 - *(this may well change when correcting for length of newspapers!)*
- With regard to most issues, tentatively contradictory (albeit not significant) impact of GDP/capita and HDI scores
 - HDI scores generating clearer results
 - Role of emerging economies
- Europe & North as control groups
 - Needs to be taken into account – all results **relative** to European/Northern newspapers

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Some Findings: Summary

- Analysis useful to identify national/regional-level sustainability-related media agendas
 - Very few results counter-intuitive
 - Issue-specific patterns
- Need to refine regression setup
 - Absolute ↔ relative data (length of newspapers?)
 - Political alignment of newspapers
 - Refinement of regional clusters (USA ↔ CAN, Northern ↔ Southern EU)
 - Role of specialist business publications
 - Language (e.g. Swiss, Belgian newspapers)
 - Possible other indicators:
 - Freedom House Index? Population density? Landlocked states? Political alignment of government?
 - **Anything you can think of?**

TRENDS IN SUSTAINABILITY

METHODOLOGY

ONLINE ANALYSIS TOOL

TIS NETWORK

CONTACTS

PUBLICATIONS

LINKS

Home Page

HOME PAGE

METHODOLOGY

ONLINE ANALYSIS TOOL

TIS NETWORK

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TIS

Is sustainability making the news where you live?

There is general consensus that a concerted effort by all individuals, governments, businesses and sectors is required if the goal of sustainable development is to be achieved. Increasing awareness and understanding of sustainable development and the associated challenges and opportunities, has therefore been a fundamental goal of policy makers and interested parties across the globe.

This in turn raises an interesting question, i.e., to what extent has sustainable development permeated and entered the general public domain?

This is a challenging question, primarily because sustainable development is a broad and multi-faceted concept, that is known by many names depending on the context (e.g., sustainability, corporate social responsibility, etc.) and which incorporates a vast number of economic, social and environmental issues.

This website has been developed by the Sustainability & Management Group based in Queen's University Management School to address some of these challenges. It provides an online user-friendly tool to help interested policy-makers and researchers track and understand the extent to which 'sustainable development' is reflected in people's daily lives globally. Amongst other things, the tool will enable users to track and understand the extent to which 'sustainable development' is reflected in people's daily lives globally.



This project has received financial support from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research under **grant number 01UT1005**.

***Thanks for listening -
Looking forward to your questions!***