

This is the **Accepted version** of the academic journal *Journalism Practice*

The **Final Published PDF/EPUB Version** can be found here:

Karyotakis, M.-A. (2021). Covering the Wildfire of Mati in Greece: Undermining the Systemic Human Impact on the Environment. *Journalism Practice*, 16(2–3), 425–442. Copyright © 2021 (Routledge & Taylor & Francis Publications)

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2021.1969986>

Covering the Wildfire of Mati in Greece: Undermining the Systemic Human Impact on the Environment

Abstract

The Mati (Greece) wildfire of 23 July 2018 received extensive news coverage. It dominated the Greek public discourse for several years to the extent that it was ascribed to being used as a tool for electoral power. In spite of its significance, no research has focused on investigating the news coverage of this event. This research paper examines the news discourse of the Mati Wildfire by studying 1,573 news articles, using ideological discourse analysis (IDA). It analyses the dominant narratives and constructions of the nine most prominent news websites in Greece and reveals if there is a systemic undermining of human impact on the environment. The findings showed that the news outlets did not cover the wildfire as an environmental event, but rather a political issue. The disseminated constructions were of a populist discourse that supported a polarized logic of a positive image for a particular group (i.e., the main opposition party) and a negative one for the outgroup (i.e., the then-government). As a result, the study emphasises how crucial it is for journalists to critically explain the role and effects of human activity on the environment (Anthropocene), instead of simply focusing on political or otherwise discussion of events.

Keywords:

Anthropocene; Climate Change; Discourse; Mati; News Websites; Wildfire

Introduction

Following the wildfires in the summer of 2018 in Greece, and in context of the deadliest wildfires that happened in other continents like the USA and Australia around the same time, Greece's Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis (2019 – to date), said that the nation should reconsider its approaches to dealing with disasters (Protothema.gr, 2018a; Masters, 2018). He added,

“[...] almost 100 people were burned in a residential area so close to Athens [...] let us separate the construction problems from the miserable crisis management and the most miserable communication management effort to cover up what was not done” (Protothema.gr, 2018a).

Notably, the discourse around disaster management turned political to the extent that Mitsotakis' government, the New Democracy (ND) which was not in power at the time, used this narrative as a most influential tool to gain the people's support and win subsequent elections. The government in power in 2018 when the wildfires occurred, a coalition of the parties of Syriza (Coalition of the Radical Left) and Independent Greeks (ANEL) led by Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, mismanaged the narrative around the disaster and so suffered severe electoral losses in the region of Attica in 2019 (Mylonas, 2019; Tsatsanis et al., 2020).

The wildfires that devastated Greece in 2018 were most disastrous in a village called Mati where the state had systematically neglected the protection of the environment in favour of alternative projects like the construction of buildings violating the laws of the country. This was facilitated by politicians' negotiations during electoral periods which saw the changing of laws to suit populist voters' will (Xatzigeorgiou, 2020; Delevegos, 2019). In other words, government efforts were not focusing on creating sustainable solutions to protect the environment and the citizens but rather to win votes. It can therefore be said that 2018 Attica wildfires are an example of governance failure and the deaths of the 102 citizens can be blamed on all the parties that have governed the country, past and present, for not dealing effectively with the illegal constructions that have systematically damaged the environment (Dimelli, 2017; Apostolopoulou & Pantis, 2010).

The news media's role in highlighting issues systematically in order to facilitate debate and intervention cannot be overemphasised. Studies have shown that the news

outlets follow the politicians' statements based on various reasons, including a lack of time, access, and the ideological background of the news outlets (Bennett et al., 2019; Karyotakis et al., 2019; Veneti et al., 2020). However, environmental journalism and the news coverage about Greece is an area that requires greater attention (Hovardas, 2014; Giannoulis et al., 2010). The Greek media landscape is characterized by strong connections between the politicians and the journalists (Papathanassopoulos, 2017). In addition, it is a polarised system that tends to benefit the party that is about to win the elections, as there is the assumption that the winning party will support the news outlets that disseminated the party's ideas during the elections (Papathanassopoulos, 2017; Iosifidis & Boucas, 2015).

In spite of the skewed narrative of climate change in the media, the voices that call for closer attention to the environmental impact that human activity has on citizens' daily lives have increased in Greece and worldwide over time, due to the catastrophic events related to climate change (Ehlers & Krafft, 2006; Lorimer, 2017). More specifically, the theoretical basis of this paper is grounded in Anthropocene, a concept whose core idea is that humans need to understand that they are a part of a system that involves them and the consequences of their actions. "Anthropocene therefore really commences when humans become aware of their global role in shaping the earth, and, consequently, when this awareness shapes their relationship with the natural environment" (Lorimer, 2017, p. 123).

This theoretical concept argues for a more holistic approach that understands human activity as part of the natural world, that humans cannot be disconnected from the natural environment. The humans are identified as an essential element of the natural system because they tend to influence the other parts of the system positively or negatively, such as the animals, the planet, and their ecosystems. This new approach has become more prominent in the last decade (Ehlers & Krafft, 2006; Lorimer, 2017). However, in journalism there has so far been minimal focus on Anthropocene's ideas for analyzing the systemic impact that human activity has on the planet despite the calls for more thorough studies (Nadler, 2019; Cottle, 2019; Lewis & Maslin, 2015).

This concept underlines the need for interrogation of the news coverage of the wildfires, which has been marginal in Greece although related incidents have been taking place in different parts of the world such as Australia, United States of America, and other European or Latin American countries (Hopke, 2020; Crow et al., 2017; Houston et al., 2012; Nilsson & Enander, 2020). The current research situates itself in

this gap, to analyse the news coverage, enhance the relevant literature and expand our understanding of the systemic impact that human activity has on the environment. The wildfires of 2018 in Greece, especially the case of Mati, were selected not only for its prominence on a global scale but also because there were accusations of exploiting that event for political reasons from both the governments that were ruling Greece from 2015, until the time that this paper is written (Syriza's Account 2012-2019, 2020).

This paper analysed 1,573 news articles of Greece's most prominent digital news media through an analytical approach of discourse analysis to reveal their dominant narratives and constructions. Also, it reveals if there is a systemic undermining of human impact on the environment considering the Mati wildfire.

The Problematic News Coverage of Wildfires

News media often cover wildfires under the common category of natural disasters. They are portrayed as extreme phenomena that do not happen frequently and, thus they are rarely attributed to human activity. For example, people tend to blame the weather conditions such as wind and extreme heat during such an event. As a result, the connection between human activity and the destruction of the environment, such as the provocation of wildfires, is not evident in people's minds (Berglez & Lidskog, 2019). That is one of the reasons why the news media tend to neglect to highlight the systemic impact that human activity has on the planet. During these events, usually, the coverage focuses on stunning images, celebrity statements, heroic stories of those that try to help in dealing with wildfires, an anthropocentric discourse that underlines the dreadful consequences for the individuals that lose their houses, close relatives, and in some cases, governments are blamed for their management (Morehouse & Sonnett, 2010). Although in the last twenty years the world has seen a rise in extreme weather phenomena such as wildfires, the news media tend to avoid open discussion of linkages to climate change (Berglez & Lidskog, 2019; Pinto et al., 2020).

In particular, in studies conducted in the United States of America, Canada, Sweden, Australia, and other countries of Europe, the news outlets during the wildfires do not pay so much attention to scientific knowledge about why the wildfires emerged (Morehouse & Sonnett, 2010; Öhman et al., 2016; Gutsche et al., 2017). It is an event that disrupts the normality of the news coverage, demanding a more intense reporting of the events and, therefore, more human resources than reporting breaking news

(Morehouse & Sonnett, 2010; Öhman et al., 2016; Gutsche et al., 2017). Research has shown that following only breaking news is not the best choice for the public in order to be informed about such complex events, as the news coverage does not provide thorough details about the incidents and is mainly based on officials' opinions [without through interpretation] (Morehouse & Sonnett, 2010; Öhman et al., 2016; Gutsche et al., 2017). In the meantime, in some countries, any event, in this case wildfires, could easily become a political tool for gaining power in upcoming elections. As a result, studies have revealed that as these incidents unfold, there can be political pressure on the media or other authorities responsible for dealing with the crisis to twist coverage and interpretation in favour of political interests (Donovan et al., 2011; Castelló & Montagut, 2019).

However, more disconcerting facts about human activity and its relation to natural disasters are coming to light daily. For instance, it has been demonstrated that since 1986 major wildfires are occurring four times more. Also, there is six times more burning of forest areas in the Western United States now, as compared to the period 1970 - 1986 (Running, 2006). Further, it has been observed that some fires cannot be controlled despite the human resources and the money spent for suppressing them, resulting in spending billions of US dollars without success (Running, 2006).

This knowledge has pushed some news outlets to have a well-rounded portrayal of the wildfires instead of sensationalizing the news to attract readers (Hopke, 2020). Social media platforms are also following suit and are helping with reporting various aspects of crisis through disseminating multimedia content. Besides, social media platforms help in collecting financial assistance and providing basic necessities (e.g., clothes and food) for those in need due to the evacuation or destruction of their houses. Consequently, social media do not just follow the news coverage but also effectively promote emergency policies and assistance (Boulianne et al, 2018; Crow et al., 2017).

The problem with social media platforms though remains the same as with traditional news organizations. News media organizations do not cover incidents by chance as there are specific rules and editorial concerns that must be applied while reporting an issue and levelling up its importance up in the daily agenda news. Some of these unwritten rules are the proximity of an event and the country's cultural background that it takes place as well as the country that the news organization is located. For instance, the news outlets that are headquartered in North European countries like Norway, Sweden, and the Netherlands will report fires that are taking

place in the Southern countries of Europe, Spain, Portugal, and Greece more extensively. Similarly, wildfires that occur in the United States of America tend to be reported more frequently by European and other Western countries, as it is believed that they share identical ideological and cultural values (Berglez & Lidskog, 2019). Therefore, in the news coverage, there is lack of constant coverage of the wildfires on a global scale, including the focus on the human impact's role in provoking them and harming the environment.

The Anthropocene Era

The call for concerted efforts towards supporting and implementing a common global plan for dealing with the consequences of human activity to the planet sparked off the debate about the Anthropocene era, a term not commonly used in journalism studies (Nadler, 2019; Cottle, 2019). According to Lewis & Maslin (2015), two dates (1610 & 1964) are the most possible for the beginning of the Anthropocene era. The core idea of the Anthropocene era is that humans need to understand that they are a part of a system that involves them and the consequences of their actions. “‘Anthropocene’ which is derived from the Greek words ‘Anthropos’ (human) and ‘cene’ (recent or new) is evident when humans become aware of their global role in shaping the earth and consequently, when this awareness shapes their relationship with the natural environment” (Lorimer, 2017, p. 123). Human activity cannot be separated from the actions and the results of the other beings of the ecosystem.

Furthermore, Anthropocene highlights the fact that humans, and their activities, are primarily to blame for present and future severe environmental changes. “The impacts of human activity will probably be observable in the geological stratigraphic record for millions of years into the future, which suggests that a new epoch has begun” (Lewis & Maslin, 2015, p. 171). Human activity has significantly altered the planet, provoking extreme phenomena, such as ice melting, climate change, and other human interventions on Earth that cannot disappear, like skyscrapers, highways, and dams. In addition, these interventions have reduced Earth's biodiversity, leading to the extinction of many species (Laurance, 2019). For instance, “humans and their livestock now account for 96% of all mammal biomass on Earth” (Laurance, 2019, p. 954). Subsequently, there must be a focus on explaining the ways human activity has resulted significantly in climate change and the other harmful phenomena against the

environment and the planet. Then, finally, to identify these issues' anthropogenic roots and tackle them (Lowe, 2019).

Thus, scientists are calling for clear identification of the ways humans are promoting the systemic undermining of the environment, for creating new ways of dealing with this crucial issue and changing the main practices and paradigms to benefit the environment (Lorimer, 2017). Environmental crisis should not be taken lightly, but on the other hand, according to scholars like Latour, if humans as geological actors realize their potentials, they can succeed in creating various futures (Lorimer, 2017).

Thus, although this study is focusing on wildfires, we can acknowledge that human activity is influencing other parts of the planet. Anthropocene is not just focusing on explaining small elements of that new reality, but it is a holistic approach that sheds light on all the aspects of this new era of global change, including issues such as water availability, human living conditions, and food supply (Ehlers & Krafft, 2006). However, all these concerns cannot be tackled without the news media's promotion, as they can influence the public about environmental issues. Those news outlets that occasionally cover environmental news or even have a relevant section on their website tend to raise environmental awareness (Antonopoulos et al., 2019). In addition, news outlets, through their coverage, shape the public debate concerning science, policy, and governance influencing everyday lives (Boykoff, 2009).

Wildfires and the Pathogens of Greek Journalism

Greece and many other southern European countries such as Italy and Spain have experienced wildfires due to climate change in the past decade. One of the major causes of the wildfires is human activity, specifically arson (Goldammer, 2006). Combined with the human activity are other factors such as the demographic expansion of the Balkan nations, the mobility of the citizens from the rural areas to the cities, and the abandoning of care for forest management (Goldammer, 2006). Exacerbating this is the fact that in the last decade Greece was under an unprecedented financial crisis, which resulted in a further undermining of the tools and the infrastructure for dealing effectively with extreme weather conditions like wildfire (Lekakis & Kousis, 2013).

Scholars have been calling for alternative practices concerning the putting out of fires as Greece moves from one deadly fire to the next. The most recent events were in 2000, followed by 2007, which claimed the highest human casualties (77 deaths) in

wildfires in Greece prior to 2018. On 23 July 2018, the country witnessed the burning of Mati village. This incident was recorded as the deadliest wildfire in its history and one of the deadliest globally in the 21st century, with 102 people reported dead (Hovardas, 2014; Newpost.gr, 2019).

The Mati wildfire was blamed on arbitrary buildings, which were however legalised for the purpose of collecting taxes (Lekakis & Kousis, 2013). Similar regulations were the construction of the mining site in Skouries (Northern Greece), which has been noted to be controversial because of fracking next to environmentally protected areas. Proponents of the mining site vouch for the reviving of the local economy and putting families' survival first; while the opposing side argues for an investment that will have devastating long-term results for the well-being of the environment and the local communities (Hatzisavvidou, 2017; Tsavdaroglou et al., 2017).

As all this happens, the Greek media system and journalism pathogens do not help to improve the coverage regarding wildfires and environmental issues to inform the public about the adverse long-term effects of human activity in the environment. Greece's media system is known for polarization, where there is a constant interplay amongst the politicians and the journalists, instead of focusing on exposition of the issues at hand (Papathanassopoulos, 2017). Nevertheless, in the current research, a uniformity amongst the examined news media was observed, showing that they used similar discourses, mainly undermining the then-government and benefiting the main opposition party.

The aforementioned interplay results in the nurturing of 'clientelistic' relationships between the media and the governments, promoting a certain truth and an ideology that preserves the dominant narrative of the main opposition or governmental party, depending on which side favour is being sought from (Iosifidis & Papathanassopoulos, 2019; Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Not surprisingly, the public broadcaster and the relevant news organizations run by the state tend to adopt a pro-governmental coverage and change the structure of the organizations often to benefit the governing party (Iosifidis & Papathanassopoulos, 2019; Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Adding to these facts, in the last years, a few businessmen with a global impact have dominated the high concentrated Greek media market by buying or funding major news organizations that involve newspapers, online outlets, and television stations (Kalogeropoulos, 2019).

Moreover, in Greek journalism, many news websites tend not to produce many news stories independently, as that practice is considered expensive. Thus, there is a plethora

of recycled and copied content. The news stories are taken from other news organizations (including the state's Greek news agency), and they are rewritten by the journalists of each online news outlet to create the illusion of different content (Saridou et al., 2017). The problematic functioning of Greek journalism was reflected in the Media for Democracy Monitor 2021, in which the country was ranked at the bottom of the monitor, scoring 42 out of 90 points, showing that despite Greece's democratic tradition, there is a serious democratic backsliding including the functioning of its media industry (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2021).

Furthermore, Greece scored zero points on the dependency scale of the journalists and the news outlets on powerful societal actors, showing a lack of a watchdog function and professional training. Papathanassopoulos et al., (2021, p. 214) noted that the "leading news media houses in Greece are owned by powerful entrepreneurs, coming from other sectors of the economy, who use media companies as an effective instrument of serving their business interests." Such linkages undermine the ability of the media to effectively interrogate issues pertaining to climate change and its human causes and solutions.

Methodology

While examining the news coverage of the Mati wildfire, this study focused on analysing the first two weeks of the event, from 23 July 2018 when the event started, to 06 August 2018. That period was specifically selected in order to allow for an examination of the first days of the incident, as the wildfire was still considered breaking news then. Besides, it was observed that after twelve days the news outlets stopped covering the wildfire so extensively. The overall number of the collected news articles was 1,573 from the nine most prominent news websites in Greece (see Table 1), based on the country's list of the most popular news websites from the *2018 Reuter's Digital News Report* (Newman et al., 2018). It seems that the majority of the news websites included in the sample were having close connections with ND and Syriza had no evident support (see Table 1).

The keyword for the search was "Mati" ("Μάτι") in Greek and it was performed from 21 to 26 January 2021. The news articles' collection was conducted through the search engines of the news websites and, in the case of not discovering many articles from the website's search engine, then an identical search was conducted through

“Google Search Engine”. After the initial collection was done, the duplicate stories were removed from the sample and those that were irrelevant to the wildfire, although they made reference to it, were also removed.

Table 1. Description of the news websites from which data was collected.

<i>News Outlets</i>	<i>No. of News Stories</i>	<i>Information about the news websites</i>
<i>Iefimerida.gr</i>	112	Iefimerida was launched in March 2011, and it is not affiliated with any other traditional news outlet. According to its Chief Editor (former journalist of Protothema), Iefimerida tries to be accountable only to its readers and to the ethics of independent and objective journalism.
<i>In.gr</i>	22	It was founded in November 1999 and in August 2017, was sold to the Alter Ego Media S.A. owned by the Greek businessman Evangelos Marinakis. Marinakis has been accused of having close connections with ND.
<i>Makeleio.gr</i>	16	Like the daily newspaper with the same name, the website is owned by the journalist Stefanos Chios. On 19 January 2020, it completed five years of existence. Makeleio, despite its popularity, is very controversial as it has been accused of spreading fake news, defamation, etc. At the end of July 2020, Chios was shot and was led to the Intensive Care Unit. For that attack, Chios accused Mitsotakis. Makeleio usually expresses the far-right ideology.
<i>News247.gr</i>	35	The website is owned by the company 24Media that is providing online content through various platforms. News247 tries to stick to the facts and does not support a particular political party.
<i>Newsbeast.gr</i>	318	Newsbeast belongs to the Copelouzou family, prominent businessmen of Greece. The website’s stance is not clear, as there are some hints of being in favor of ND.
<i>Newsbomb.gr</i>	555	Newsbomb is owned by Dimitris Giannakopoulos, an influential businessman that owns several news outlets and the renowned pharmaceutical company, Vianex. Newsbomb tries to stick to the facts and not support a specific ideology.
<i>Newsit.gr</i>	378	Newsit belongs to the journalist Nikos Evangelatos who seems to have a close connection with ND.
<i>Protothema.gr</i>	119	Protothema is the website of the popular conservative-tabloid newspaper that bears the same name. It seems to have very strong connections with Mitsotakis’ family.
<i>Skai.gr</i>	18	Skai.gr is the website of one of the most popular national TV stations. It is owned by the influential businessman Giannis Alafouzos. The website, like the other Alafouzos’ news outlets, supports Kyriakos Mitsotakis and ND.

Source: Iefimerida.gr (2017a; 2017b), Kanellou (2017), Saridou et al. (2017), Triantis et al. (2019), Ekathimerini.com (2020), Tvxs.gr (2020), Zougla.gr (2012), Fimes.gr (2012), & Alexandri (2020).

This paper adopted the ideological discourse analysis (IDA) method of critical discourse analysis (CDA) introduced by van Dijk (2013; 1995) aiming to see if there is a focus on the systemic human actions in provoking the wildfire. This approach will help answer the study's research question:

RQ1: How are the most prominent online news websites in Greece narrate and construct the coverage of the Mati wildfire?

Furthermore, this study examines the news discourse and tries to address the call for providing more insight into the wildfires' journalistic coverage through other methods than the standard use of framing (Morehouse & Sonnett, 2010; Berglez & Lidskog, 2019; Castelló & Montagut, 2019; Houston et al., 2012).

When using the phrase ideological constructions, we refer to a socially shared belief system because "as soon as ideological beliefs are accepted and taken for granted by all members of a community, by definition they are no longer ideologies but will count as knowledge in that community" (van Dijk, 2013, p.4). It has been demonstrated that ideological constructions play a crucial role in studying news coverage (van Dijk, 2009). The current study through IDA is focusing on exaggerations (i.e., extreme examples or fallacies for promoting a certain narrative), authority or argumentation (i.e., in-group versus the out-group, e.g., ND versus the then-government), actor description (the characteristics of the in-group, "we," are represented positive instead of the negative portrayal of the out-group, "others"), and the comparison that promotes a positive idea about "we" against the "others" (van Dijk, 1995; Chiluya & Chiluya, 2020). All these elements are highlighted (see bolded words and phrases) in the exemplars of the paper.

Only a small amount of data is represented in the analysis and the findings, as after reading all the 1,573 news articles it was found that they had similar content. They were developed and written around the following two major aspects: constructing the mismanagement of a deadly wildfire, and the idealization of the main opposition party. The only exception in the sample was the news articles from Newsbomb.gr, as they were not so critical against the then-government, following a more detached approach. However, Newsbomb.gr's news articles were also developed around these two main aspects.

Analysis and Findings

Constructing the Mismanagement of a Deadly Wildfire

While assessing the news coverage of the wildfire, it was observed that the majority of the news outlets were focusing almost exclusively on sensationalized stories blaming the authorities for dreadful mismanagement of the wildfire without providing explanations regarding the systemic undermining of the environment in Greece with controversial practices such as the illegal (arbitrary) buildings (Lekakis & Kousis, 2013). Although these are valid arguments considering that Mati's wildfire was the deadliest in the recent history of the country (Masters, 2018), this is a clear and constant construction of the idea that the people are not responsible even in the cases where they built their houses without following the legal procedures of the Greek state. Besides, except for the law's violations, it was crucial that some of those buildings in Mati were in protected forestlands. As a result, such presentation seems to promote the idea of "we" against the "others" who were mismanaging the fire and their supporters through exaggerations, including the idea of victimhood and an effort of hiding the truth (Exemplar 1).

Exemplar 1: To **refresh the memory** of the Manager of Sismanogleio Hospital **who does not remember the time** when the first dead with unknown credentials arrived at the Hospital from the fires, although only a few days passed from **the tragedy of the world-shaking event**. We announce that we have a photo with the first dead person who was transported and was in that ward of the hospital's ICU that **tragic** night (Skai.gr, 2018a).

Like in other cases of natural disasters, the news websites pay attention to statements by popular artists and celebrities because celebrities' statements during such incidents are influential (Boulianne et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the statements seem again to focus on the idea of an in-group against the outgroup (i.e., the higher-ranking officials that, through their mismanagement, led to the citizens' deaths). Meanwhile, these statements are only focusing on the deaths and not on the environmental aspects of the event. The wildfire is not the main incident but an unpredicted event that occurred, which seems not to be related to the environment. The mismanagement that cost the lives of the citizens is the core focus point of the news coverage (Exemplar 2).

Exemplar 2: I do not want **to say names**, because in such moments you **should not “lower”** as a person. The opposite. We must be above. And to **think first of all the people who lost their lives...** (The statement belongs to a popular Greek singer, Newsit.gr, 2018).

Interestingly, the mismanagement of the response to the Mati’s wildfire is not treated as a systemic problem and so all the Greek governments past and present should share blame for supporting illegal construction of buildings in forestlands (Dimelli, 2017; Apostolopoulou & Pantis, 2010). However, such allocation of responsibility is indicated as an isolated case and the wildfire emergence is shown as the responsibility of the higher-ranking officials, in particular those that were affiliated with the government in power at the time. During the construction of this deadly mismanagement, despite the obvious wrongdoings of the then-government, the journalists also use fallacies that tend to highlight disproportionately the government’s actions and responsibilities and undermine the results that the human activity had on the specific area in which the wildfire emerged (Exemplar 3).

Exemplar 3: Here on this page what you read is written with a name and **not with the hood of ghosts**, similar to those **who must be blamed and are responsible for the deaths of the people** and now hide behind a **murderous state party mechanism** that covers them so as not to **pay for their misdeeds** (Makeleio.gr, 2018).

In some cases, there were even references to past wildfires in the country, such as the major one in 2007, in order to strengthen the idea of the people (“we”) that demand justice against Syriza (“others”). These constructions and fallacies promoted by the journalists also imply that all the Greeks are victims of that mismanagement, which will always be remembered in the country’s collective memory. All the provided exemplars of the study are not supposed to be opinion articles but news articles that are actually reporting and offering coverage of Mati’s wildfire events (Exemplar 4).

Exemplar 4: The images from the place that was the epicentre of the tragedy, the Mati, which **“disappeared” from the map** on Monday night, **are shocking and leave no room for non-responsibility**. The 26 hugged people who were found charred in the field **in search of salvation** have already been marked in the **collective subconscious**, like the tragedy in Ilia in 2007. **The victims demand**

justice and justice is not SYRIZA's announcement limited to distancing remarks, as if it were a party who does not rule, but is still in opposition (In.gr, 2018).

Idealizing the Main Opposition Party

During the Mati's wildfire, the Greek government was a coalition of Syriza and ANEL, two parties that were ruling the country from 2015. New Democracy is the most prominent political party in the country, as it did not lose its power throughout the years of the financial crisis, such as PASOK that was later transformed into KINAL and became a small party that was not able to form a government. ND was Greece's government for many years, including the years during which other wildfires ravaged the country, like the one in 2007 that was mentioned before. In other words, ND should have taken a share of the blame for promoting the constant building in forestlands and protected natural areas (Hovardas, 2014; Mylonas, 2019; Lekakis & Kousis, 2013; Fouskas, 2019).

Mati's site plan was not transformed during the coalition government's years, but we are talking about decades of undermining the environment. Nevertheless, from the study's collected articles, it seems that ND and its leader, Kyriakos Mitsotakis (Prime Minister of Greece, 2019-present), are presented as the ideal solution for guaranteeing that the country will not face similar problems in the future. One of the arguments for being a good solution for the country is representing Mitsotakis as a compassionate leader in comparison to the governmental officials (Exemplar 5).

Exemplar 5: The president of ND was informed about **the horror** that took place on the plot that became a grave for 26 people, **without his dialogue being recorded by the cameras**. Mr. Mitsotakis **did not want to make statements**. It is noted that **ND** has announced that it **will allow the three-day period of national mourning to pass before making any political move** (Protothema.gr, 2018b).

To make more evident the different values between the main opposition party and the government, there are also comparisons between them. The government officials are portrayed as individuals who are afraid of the people's rage and, thus, they try to avoid face-to-face discussions and are accompanied by a large contingent of security

personnel who have the task of protecting them from the people. One prominent case is the comparison between Mitsotakis and the then-Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras, who seemed to be clueless about what was going on with the wildfire response and rescue operations. In addition, Tsipras had staged a meeting with the residents of Mati, who were not actual residents, but soldiers and firefighters. As a result, there is a positive representation of the ND and Kyriakos Mitsotakis against the negative opinion about Tsipras and Syriza although both of the influential politicians' visits were organized beforehand. Besides, it is constantly implied that the then-government did not fulfil its responsibility in comparison to the professionals that "did what they had to do" (Exemplar 6).

Exemplar 6: During his hour-long tour he met with soldiers and firefighters and **with just one resident of the area. Apparently embarrassed**, Mr. Tsipras asked: "How many hours are you here in the battle?". When he received the answer "some 72, some 48, some 24" the prime minister **asked puzzled: "Constantly?"** ... A man from the fire department also replied to Mr. Tsipras: **"We did what we had to do ..."** (Iefimerida.gr, 2018).

Furthermore, again there is a highlight of what would have happened if ND were the government instead of Syriza and ANEL, as there would not have been such corruption and strong clientelistic relationships with the ones responsible for dealing with the crisis. The most prominent officials would have been in charge due to their relevant bios and qualifications, a narrative promoted by ND (Protothema.gr, 2018a). Interestingly, when ND became the government, the exact opposite seemed to have happened, as there were accusations that even individuals with fake degrees and other qualifications were put in charge of important offices (Kontranews.gr, 2019). In particular, the Mati's Chief of the Hellenic Police became the right hand (Secretary General of Public Order) of the Minister of Citizen Protection of Greece (Politis, 2019). Adding to these facts, as a former government of Greece, ND was not known for tackling the pathologies of the state, such as clientelistic relationships, but seemed to support them (Fouskas, 2019). As a result, once again, the journalists, through actor descriptions and comparisons, seemed to idealize ND as a possible new government without contextualising its possible faults also (Exemplar 7).

Exemplar 7: Mr. Koumoutsakos states that things would be different if it were a ND's government "because **serious people would have been selected for serious duties. Because there would be even a rudimentary coordination of people and services that was now criminally non-existent.** Because the state **would not be a branch of Koumoundourou**" (Newsbeast.gr, 2018).

Moreover, the news discourse not only focuses on the reasons and the ways why an ND government would have been better, but it also pays disproportionate attention to arguments that are not so relevant to the wildfire. Therefore, it is promoting a two-state party system developed around Syriza (left-wing ideology) and ND (right-wing ideology), showing that the right-wing ideology is the one that can offer to the country growth, security, and prosperity. Furthermore, that discourse supports the new polarized system that has developed around these two parties due to the changes in the Greek politics of the last decade (Fouskas, 2019).

One such case is the transfer of Dimitris Koufontinas (left spectrum-Revolutionary Organization 17 November) to another prison (Thepressproject.gr, 2021). The media coverage promoted the fallacy of ND, which argued that the government cared more for the renowned terrorist than the Greek people who had been affected by the wildfires. The promotion of that fallacy could be related to a positive depiction of ND and a wrong depiction of Syriza to further polarize the public based on ideological beliefs (right-wing versus left-wing ideology). The fallacy tried to connect Koufontinas with Syriza, showing that they shared the same values (Exemplar 8).

Exemplar 8: "In the morning, the terrorist Koufontinas was transferred to the rural prisons of Volos. **Mr. Tsipras**, at a time when Greece is mourning and its citizens are blaming you for impotence, cynicism and cover-up, **is the service of the serial killer a priority?**" wrote on his twitter account the president of ND (Skai.gr, 2018b).

If we look thoroughly at Koufontinas' case, it seems that this discourse is constantly promoted to undermine human rights and spread hate against the left-wing ideology. Since Greece is a Democracy, every person has specific rights that must be respected. Koufontinas' transfer to another prison in 2018 was already planned according to the country's rule of law. It is not reasonable that it should have been stopped due to the wildfire. In addition, his case became far more prominent when Mitsotakis was the

Prime Minister, as Koufontinas, after a hunger strike for almost two months, was about to die. That death would be the first case of death by hunger strike in Europe for the 21st century (Thepressproject.gr, 2021).

Conclusion

The current study aimed at investigating the dominant narrative and the constructions that the journalists and the news media were using during the Mati wildfire, to provide insights into the coverage of environmental issues. This research paper took a different direction from the major studies as it was not focusing on the frames of the news media but on the news discourse, which is not usually examined in the case of wildfires. The main idea was to identify if the news outlets and the journalists are paying closer attention to the systemic undermining of the environment by human activity as Anthropocene is suggesting.

The research findings can be considered alarming because in the examined case it seems that the wildfire was not covered and reported as an environmental issue but almost exclusively as a political one. These findings point to the conclusion that has been observed in other studies of coverage of natural disasters where the discussion about climate change and human effects are almost absent (Pinto et al, 2020).

Further, the identified constructions support a polarized logic (right-wing versus left-wing ideology) that promotes a positive image for a certain group and a negative one for the outgroup (ND versus Syriza). The dissemination of those narratives employs fallacies and a problematic argumentation that seems to benefit Greece's main opposition party, which eventually became Greece's new government after winning the elections in 2019. The findings align with those studies that argue that phenomena such as wildfires are used for realizing political goals (Donovan et al., 2011, Hovardas, 2014; Castelló & Montagut, 2019).

The effort to idealize the main opposition party raises questions about the media's essential role in Greek society. Greece is known for a polarized media system that tries to benefit one party over another, depending primarily on the clientelistic relationships with the media owners and the journalists (Papathanassopoulos, 2017; Iosifidis & Boucas, 2015). That problematic coverage, considering the Mati wildfire that promoted a united ideological front, seems to be strongly associated with the declining democratic

values of the country, as its news outlets owned by influential businessmen heavily depend on the support of certain parties, for selfish and often personal benefit in the long run (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2021). In the examined case, the ND being the most prominent party after the fall of the dictatorship in Greece, it is reasonable that it has formed powerful clientelistic relationships with the majority of the news organizations in comparison to Syriza (Fouskas, 2019; Syriza's Account 2012-2019, 2020).

ND's long-lasting power in the political competition adds more insights into why there is a uniformity amongst the examined news websites of the study, as most of the study's news outlets promoted a specific discourse that benefited ND, and Syriza seemed to have no evident support. That goes against the idea of the Greek polarized media system, showing that there is no pluralistic coverage in the case of Mati. The dissemination of a particular discourse and not different viewpoints reveals problematic media functioning that can undermine democratic progress (Trappel & Tomaz, 2021). Moreover, in the Greek media scene, there is a profound lack of professionalism and the watchdog role of the journalists, making it more difficult to challenge the well-established power relations in the industry (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2021).

Therefore, after so many deadly wildfires and despite the fact that Greece is known globally for having that particular environmental problem, the main constructions plans and approvals do not try to raise awareness about the environmental problems that the country is facing. This results in further systemic exacerbation of the problems that human activity causes to the country and the everyday life of the citizens respectively.

Despite the obvious mishandling of the government's case, there is a tendency for exaggerating responsibility, or misappropriation of where the buck should stop. Thus, irrelevant issues such as the case of Dimitris Koufontinas emerge and take centre stage, drawing attention away from the climate change and human impact issue, probably in order to support covert political goals.

In addition, the findings demonstrate a populist discourse of "us versus them" that has been observed again in cases of wildfires (Nilsson & Enander, 2020). However, the current findings broaden our knowledge about populism, as in Greece populist attitudes tend to be associated with the left parties, such as Syriza (Nikisianis et al., 2019).

This paper is also relevant for improving the coverage of environmental issues such as wildfires, globally. While the news media practitioners and environmentalists have

responsibility to bear, citizens, politicians, and other members of civil society have to understand that for a holistic approach to be achieved regarding the improvement of the environment, every societal part has a role to play. Wildfires and other environmental phenomena that are labelled as extreme will be intensified in the coming years due to the extreme impact humans have on the planet. As a result, they should not be treated as irrelevant to our daily lives or political incidents. Civil society's initiatives can promote an Anthropocene perspective on the daily agenda and, thus, a less polarisation of the media concerning environmental issues (Waisbord, 2011). In the end, the main goal of the news coverage of environmental issues is to benefit every part of society and have a global impact.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

References

- Alexandri, M. (2020, June 18). *The "Petsas list" and the acquisition of media propaganda* (In Greek). Retrieved from <https://tvxs.gr/news/ellada/i-lista-petsa-kai-i-eksagora-tis-mintiakis-propagandas>
- Antonopoulos, N., Karyotakis, M.-A., Kiourexidou, M., & Veglis, A. (2019). Media web-sites environmental communication: Operational practices and news coverage. *World of Media*, 2, 44–62. <https://doi.org/10.30547/worldofmedia.2.2019.3>
- Apostolopoulou, E., & Pantis, J. D. (2010). Development Plans versus Conservation: Explanation of Emergent Conflicts and State Political Handling. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 42(4), 982–1000. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a42163>
- Bennett, S., Wal, J. ter, Lipiński, A., Fabiszak, M., & Krzyżanowski, M. (2013). The Representation of Third-Country Nationals in European News Discourse. *Journalism Practice*, 7(3), 248–265. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2012.740239>
- Berglez, P., & Lidskog, R. (2019). Foreign, Domestic, and Cultural Factors in Climate Change Reporting: Swedish Media's Coverage of Wildfires in Three Continents. *Environmental Communication*, 13(3), 381–394. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2017.1397040>

- Boulianne, S., Minaker, J., & Haney, T. J. (2018). Does compassion go viral? Social media, caring, and the Fort McMurray wildfire. *Information, Communication & Society*, 21(5), 697–711. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2018.1428651>
- Boykoff, M. T. (2009). Media representational practices in the Anthropocene Era. In *Uncertainties in environmental modelling and consequences for policy making* (pp. 339-350). Springer, Dordrecht.
- Castelló, E., & Montagut, M. (2019). Framing Forest Fires and Environmental Activism: A Storytelling Contest about Human Intervention in Nature. *Communication & Society*, 32(4), 291–306. <https://doi.org/10.15581/003.32.4.291-306>
- Chiluwa, I., & Chiluwa, I.M. (2020). Separatists or Terrorists? Jews or Nigerians? Media and Cyber Discourses on the Complex Identity of the ‘Biafrans.’ *Journal of Language and Politics*, 19(4), 583–603. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.19041.chi>
- Cottle, S. (2019). Journalism coming of (global) age, II. *Journalism*, 20(1), 102–105. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884918807030>
- Crow, D. A., Berggren, J., Lawhon, L. A., Koebele, E. A., Kroepsch, A., & Huda, J. (2017). Local media coverage of wildfire disasters: An analysis of problems and solutions in policy narratives. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 35(5), 849–871. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263774X16667302>
- Delevegos, D. (2019, June 1). *The big special favor with the arbitrary buildings in forests and forestlands* (In Greek). Retrieved from <https://www.capital.gr/oikonomia/3363412/to-megalo-rousfeti-me-ta-authaireta-se-dasi-kai-dasikes-ektaseis>
- Dimelli, D. P. (2017). The Effects of Tourism in Greek Insular Settlements and the Role of Spatial Planning. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 8(1), 319–336. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13132-016-0364-x>
- Donovan, G. H., Prestemon, J. P., & Gebert, K. (2011). The Effect of Newspaper Coverage and Political Pressure on Wildfire Suppression Costs. *Society & Natural Resources*, 24(8), 785–798. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08941921003649482>
- Ehlers, E., & Krafft, T. (Eds.). (2006). *Earth System Science in the Anthropocene: Emerging Issues and Problems*. Springer-Verlag. <https://doi.org/10.1007/b137853>
- Ekathimerini.com. (2020, July 27). *Gunman shoots fringe journalist outside home*. Retrieved from <https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/255144/gunman-shoots-fringe-journalist-outside-home/>

- Fimes.gr. (2012, October). *iefimerida.gr: who are hiding behind iefimerida, owners* (In Greek). Retrieved from <https://www.fimes.gr/2012/10/iefimerida-gr/>
- Fouskas, V. K. (2019). The Greek Conundrum. *The Political Quarterly*, 90(4), 772–776. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12783>
- Giannoulis, C., Botetzagias, I., & Skanavis, C. (2010). Newspaper Reporters' Priorities and Beliefs About Environmental Journalism: An Application of Q-Methodology. *Science Communication*, 32(4), 425–466. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1075547010364927>
- Goldammer, J. G. (2006). Fire Ecology of the Recent Anthropocene. In E. Ehlers, & T. Krafft (Eds.), *Earth System Science in the Anthropocene: Emerging Issues and Problems*, pp. 63–87. Springer-Verlag. <https://doi.org/10.1007/b137853>
- Gutsche, R. E., Jacobson, S., Pinto, J., & Michel, C. (2017). Reciprocal (and Reductionist?) Newswork. *Journalism Practice*, 11(1), 62–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2015.1111159>
- Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511790867>
- Hatzisavvidou, S. (2017). Disputatious Rhetoric and Political Change: The Case of the Greek Anti-Mining Movement. *Political Studies*, 65(1), 215–230. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321715624425>
- Hopke, J. E. (2020). Connecting Extreme Heat Events to Climate Change: Media Coverage of Heat Waves and Wildfires. *Environmental Communication*, 14(4), 492–508. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2019.1687537>
- Houston, J. B., Pfefferbaum, B., & Rosenholtz, C. E. (2012). Disaster News: Framing and Frame Changing in Coverage of Major U.S. Natural Disasters, 2000–2010. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 89(4), 606–623. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699012456022>
- Hovardas, T. (2014). “Playing With Fire” in a Pre-Election Period: Newspaper Coverage of 2007 Wildfires in Greece. *Society & Natural Resources*, 27(7), 689–705. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920.2014.901462>
- Iefimerida.gr. (2017a, August 10). *The announcement of in.gr: The new era will begin in a few days* (In Greek). Retrieved from <https://www.iefimerida.gr/news/355538/i-anakoinosi-toy-ingr-i-nea-epohi-tha-xekinisei-entos-oligon-imeron>

- Iefimerida.gr. (2017b, March 28). *Six years iefimerida.gr: People of politics, letters, and arts speak* (In Greek). Retrieved from <https://www.iefimerida.gr/news/327482/exi-hronia-iefimeridagr-miloy-anthropoi-tis-politikis-ton-grammaton-kai-ton-tehnon>
- Iefimerida.gr. (2018, July 30). *Tsipras went to Mati at 8:20 in the morning with 11 escort vehicles and 2 cameras - The awkward questions [video]* (In Greek). Retrieved from <https://www.iefimerida.gr/news/434595/o-tsipras-pige-sto-matistis-820-proi-me-11-synodeytika-kai-2-mihanes-oi-amihanes>
- In.gr. (2018, July 24). *Government's hide and seek for the national tragedy in flames* (In Greek). Retrieved from <https://www.in.gr/2018/07/24/politics/kyvernisi/kryftouli-tis-kyvernisis-gia-tin-ethniki-tragodia-stis-floges/>
- Iosifidis, P., & Boucas, D. (2015). *Media policy and independent journalism in Greece*. Open Society Foundations. <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/media-policy-and-independent-journalism-greece>
- Iosifidis, P., & Papanthanasopoulos, S. (2019). Media, politics and state broadcasting in Greece. *European Journal of Communication*, 34(4), 345–359. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323119844414>
- Kalogeropoulou, A. (2019). *Digital News Report: Greece*. Retrieved from <http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/survey/2019/greece-2019/>
- Kanellopoulos, D. (2017, June 11). *Mitsotakian Media* (In Greek). Retrieved from https://www.efsyn.gr/tehnesh/media/113252_mitsotakika-mesa-enimerosis
- Karyotakis, M.-A., Antonopoulos, N., & Saridou, T. (2019). A case study in news articles, users comments and a Facebook group for Article 3 of the Greek Constitution. *KOME*, 7(2), 37–56. <https://www.doi.org/10.17646/KOME.75672.31>
- Kontranews.gr. (2019, December 6). The “excellence” of fake degrees exposes Kyriakos (In Greek). Retrieved from <https://kontranews.gr/POLITIKI/I-aristeia-ton-plaston-ptyhion-ekthetei-ton-Kyriako>
- Laurance, W. F. (2019). The Anthropocene. *Current Biology*, 29(19), R953–R954. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2019.07.055>
- Lekakis, J. N., & Kousis, M. (2013). Economic Crisis, Troika and the Environment in Greece. *South European Society and Politics*, 18(3), 305–331. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2013.799731>

- Lewis, S. L., & Maslin, M. A. (2015). Defining the Anthropocene. *Nature*, 519(7542), 171–180. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature14258>
- Lorimer, J. (2017). The Anthro-scene: A guide for the perplexed. *Social Studies of Science*, 47(1), 117–142. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312716671039>
- Lowe, B. S. (2019). Ethics in the Anthropocene: Moral Responses to the Climate Crisis. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, 32(3), 479–485. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10806-019-09786-z>
- Makeleio.gr. (2018, July 28). *They burned us. Submarine Missions Unit: "At 9 pm we had located more than 50 dead. They knew..."The report of truth and horror* (In Greek). Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3gl1H8D>
- Masters, J. (2018, July 27). *5th Deadliest Wildfire Globally in Past 100 Years: 87 Dead from Monday's Greek Fires*. Retrieved from <https://www.wunderground.com/cat6/5th-Deadliest-Wildfire-Globally-Past-100-Years-Greeces-87-Deaths-Mondays-Fires>
- Morehouse, B. J., & Sonnett, J. (2010). Narratives of Wildfire: Coverage in Four U.S. Newspapers, 1999-2003. *Organization & Environment*, 23(4), 379–397. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026610385901>
- Mylonas, H. (2019). Greece: Political Developments and Data in 2018. *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook*, 58(1), 113–122.
- Nadler, A. (2019). Nature's Economy and News Ecology. *Journalism Studies*, 20(6), 823–839. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2018.1427000>
- Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Kalogeropoulos, A., Levy, D. A., & Nielsen, R. K. (2018). *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2018*. Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
- Newpost.gr. (2019, September 7). *The fires that burned the forests of Greece from 2000 to 2018 (video)* (In Greek). Retrieved from <https://newpost.gr/ellada/5d7277f3e29abfb447011369/oi-pyrkagies-poy-ekapsan-ta-dasi-tis-elladas-apo-to-2000-eos-to-2018-vinteo>
- Newsbeast.gr. (2018, August 5). *Koumoutsakos: They made Greece a middleman country* (In Greek). Retrieved from <https://www.newsbeast.gr/politiki/arthro/3876181/koymoytsakos-ekanan-tin-ellada-mesistia-chora>
- Newsit.gr. (2018, August 1). *Anna Vissi: "People in positions that do not deserve to be and at the moment this happens, they do not show the appropriate responsibility. Not even emotion"* (In Greek). Retrieved from

<https://www.newsit.gr/media/anna-vissi-anthropoi-se-theseis-pou-den-aksizoun-na-einai-kai-ti-stigmi-pou-symvainei-ayto-den-epideiknyoun-tin-analogi-ypeythynotita-oute-kan-synaisthimatismo/2590948/>

- Nikisianis, N., Siomos, T., Stavrakakis, Y., Markou, G., & Dimitroulia, T. (2019). Populism Versus Anti-populism in the Greek Press: Post-Structuralist Discourse Theory Meets Corpus Linguistics. In T. Marttila (Ed.), *Discourse, Culture and Organization: Inquiries into Relational Structures of Power* (pp. 267–295). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-94123-3_12
- Nilsson, S., & Enander, A. (2020). “Damned if you do, damned if you don’t”: Media frames of responsibility and accountability in handling a wildfire. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 28(1), 69–82. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5973.12284>
- Öhman, S., Nygren, K. G., & Olofsson, A. (2016). The (un)intended consequences of crisis communication in news media: A critical analysis. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 13(5), 515–530. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2016.1174138>
- Papathanassopoulos, S. (2017). Greece: A Continuous Interplay between Media and Politicians. In P. Bajomi-Lázár (Ed.), *Media in third-wave democracies: Southern and Central/Eastern Europe in a Comparative Perspective* (pp. 75–89). Budapest: L’Harmattan.
- Papathanassopoulos, S., Karadimitriou, A., Kostopoulos, C., & Archontaki, I. (2021). Greece: Media concentration and independent journalism between austerity and digital disruption. In J. Trappel, & T. Tomaz (Eds.), *The Media for Democracy Monitor 2021: How leading news media survive digital transformation* (Vol. 2) (pp. 177–230). Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855428-5>
- Pinto, J., Myrick, J. G., & Xie, L. (2020). Constructing Hurricane Florence’s Flooding: Comparing Local and National News. *Journalism Practice*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2020.1832905>
- Politis, G. (2019, July 16). *The “proud” Chief of Police in Mati became General Secretary with New Democracy* (In Greek). Retrieved from https://www.ethnos.gr/politiki/50796_o-yperifanos-arhigos-tis-astynomias-sto-mati-egine-genikos-grammateas-me-ti-nea
- Proposal of the SYRIZA Central Political Committee to the Organizations and the Party Congress. (2020). *Syriza’s Account 2012-2019* (In Greek). Athens: Avgi.
- Protothema.gr. (2018b, July 26). *Kyriakos Mitsotakis in Mati - He did not make any statements to the cameras* (In Greek). Retrieved from

<https://www.protothema.gr/politics/article/808361/sto-mati-auti-tin-ora-o-kuriakos-mitsotakis/>

Protothema.gr. (2018a, July 31). *Mitsotakis for fire in Mati: There can be no political responsibility without resignation* (In Greek). Retrieved from <https://www.protothema.gr/politics/article/809447/deite-live-tin-ektakti-sunedeuxi-tupou-tou-kuriakou-mitsotaki-gia-tin-tragodia-sto-mati/>

Running, S. W. (2006). Is global warming causing more, larger wildfires?. *Science*.

Saridou, T., Spyridou, L.-P., & Veglis, A. (2017). Churnalism on the Rise? *Digital Journalism*, 5(8), 1006–1024. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1342209>

Skai.gr. (2018a, August 2). *POEDIN's revealing document: The first dead arrived in Sismanogleio on 23.03* (In Greek). Retrieved from <https://www.skai.gr/news/greece/foto-ntokoumento-poedin-o-protos-nekros-eftase-sto-sismanogleio-stis>

Skai.gr. (2018b, August 3). *Mitsotakis: Greece is mourning but is the transfer of Koufontina a priority?* (In Greek). Retrieved from <https://www.skai.gr/index.php/news/politics/mitsotakis-i-ellada-thrinei-alla-proteraiotita-einai-i-metagogi-kouf>

Thepressproject.gr. (2021, February 26). *Dimitris Koufodinas' life in danger, after 50 days of hunger strike in Greek jail*. Retrieved from <https://thepressproject.gr/dimitris-koufodinas-life-in-danger-after-50-days-of-hunger-strike-in-greek-jail/>

Trappel, J., & Tomaz, T. (2021). Democratic performance of news media: Dimensions and indicators for comparative studies. In J. Trappel, & T. Tomaz (Eds.), *The Media for Democracy Monitor 2021: How leading news media survive digital transformation* (Vol. 1) (pp. 11–58). Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. <https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855404-1>

Triantis, V., Spyropoulos, N., & Andrianopoulos, V. (2019, November 4). *Revelation: Here is the secret financier of Marevas – “Protothema”* (In Greek). Retrieved from <https://www.documentonews.gr/article/apokalypsh-idoy-o-kryfos-xrhmatodoths-marebas-prwtoy-oematos>

Tsatsanis, E., Teperoglou, E., & Seriatos, A. (2020). Two-partyism Reloaded: Polarisation, Negative Partisanship, and the Return of the Left-right Divide in the Greek Elections of 2019. *South European Society and Politics*, 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2020.1855798>

- Tsavdaroglou, C., Petrakos, K., & Makrygianni, V. (2017). The golden ‘salto mortale’ in the era of crisis. *City*, 21(3–4), 428–447. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2017.1331563>
- Tvxs.gr. (2020, August 26). *Chios accuses the “Mitsotakis environment” of attempting to assassinate him* (In Greek). Retrieved from <https://tvxs.gr/news/ellada/o-xios-katigorei-periballon-mitsotaki-gia-tin-apopeira-dolofonias-toy>
- Van Dijk, T. (1995). Ideological Discourse Analysis. *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Discourse Analysis*, 4, 135–161.
- Van Dijk, T. (2013). *Ideology and Discourse*. Oxford University Press.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (2009) News, Discourse, and Ideology. In K. Wahl-Jorgensen & T. Hanitzsch (Eds.), *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, pp. 191–204. New York: Routledge.
- Veneti, A., Lilleker, D. G., & Reilly, P. (2020). Photographing the ‘battlefield’: The role of ideology in photojournalist practices during the anti-austerity protests in Greece. *Journalism*, 21(6), 855–872. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884918809521>
- Waisbord, S. (2011). Can NGOs Change the News? *International Journal of Communication*, 5, 142–165.
- Xatzigeorgiou, A. (2020, December 4). *New special favors in site planning* (In Greek). Retrieved from https://www.efsyn.gr/politiki/kybernisi/271405_nea-roysfetia-sto-horotaxiko
- Zougla.gr. (2012, February 14). *Christakis Copelouzos’ Newsbeast* (In Greek). Retrieved from <https://www.zougla.gr/arthrablog/article/472484>