



Contested representations: A comparative analysis of palm oil sustainability in Malaysian and Dutch media

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of palm oil as the world's most produced and consumed vegetable oil has prompted various policy initiatives to help govern the industry in a sustainable manner. These initiatives include transnational sustainable certification schemes, such as the Roundtable of Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), and national level sustainability standards, such as Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil. To date, attempts to find consensus on sustainable policy and processes has been characterised by tension and disagreement. Most notably, stakeholders participating in policy dialogue from producing countries are unsatisfied with the outcomes of transnational palm oil governance. Tension stems from observations that sustainability is understood differently in the palm oil producing countries of the Global South compared with Northern consumption markets. To understand the different framings of palm oil and potential governance solutions, we investigate media coverage of palm oil sustainability in two different countries: the Netherlands – the largest importer of palm oil in Europe – and Malaysia – the second largest exporter of palm oil in the world after Indonesia. From a sample of 397 Malaysian and Dutch newspaper articles between 2000 and 2015, we employ framing analysis to examine the similarities and differences in media representations of palm oil sustainability. Our findings reveal considerable differences in the way palm oil sustainability is framed in the two countries. Malaysian media frame palm oil as a sustainable industry yet underpinned by a distrust towards transnational sustainability governance (e.g. RSPO) and a perception of unfair treatment towards producing countries by the West. Conversely, Dutch media frame the West as proud consumers of palm oil, who are driving up sustainability standards through NGO scrutiny and participation in transnational processes. We argue that a comparative analysis of media frames offers instructive insights for understanding processes of transnational sustainability governance. In particular, we posit that reconciling policy tensions between North and South palm oil stakeholders could be achieved by highlighting the differences in sustainability framings at different points in the value chain to identify contestation and consensus.

1. Introduction

Recent decades are characterized by increasing levels of economic globalization and the related proliferation of global commodity chains. Tropical commodities are often produced in the Global South but consumed globally, thereby linking developing economies to global markets [1,2]. Low entry barriers and low investment costs make agricultural commodity production an accessible path to earning a living [3]; it is estimated that 2.5 billion of the world's rural poor are directly dependant upon such commodities for their livelihoods [4]. However, commodity production is also associated with severe sustainability issues [5]. Many

of these challenges are related to the expansion of agricultural commodity production in tropical regions, which leads to biodiversity and habitat loss, land degradation, deforestation, increased pressure on water and energy resources, and environmental pollution due to pesticide and fertilizer use [6,7]. Moreover, the expansion of commodity production is associated with problems concerning equity, most prominently the economic and political marginalization of smallholder farmers [8]. These environmental and social challenges have prompted a variety of governance responses. Next to state responses, the complexities of globalization and the proliferation of global commodity chains have led to a stronger political role for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and

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local communities, as well as actors from the private sphere, such as multinational corporations [9]. The globally interlinked nature of the challenges connected to global commodity chains have prompted actors from the market and from civil society to initiate governance responses on the transnational level. The transnational nature of these governance arrangements, however, makes them prone to value conflicts between stakeholders from wide-ranging localities and with differing interests [10].

This article takes the palm oil industry as its object of study. In the past decade, palm oil has become the largest produced and consumed vegetable oil in the world. The growth of the palm oil industry has resulted in a rapid expansion of the global planting area in the past forty years, with the majority of planting occurring in Malaysia and Indonesia [11,12], followed by more recent expansion in the frontier geographies of West and Central Africa [13], Papua New Guinea [14], and Latin America [15]. The manner and scale of this expansion has come at the direct expense of biodiversity-rich tropical forests and peat soils, leading to large greenhouse gas emissions [5,16,17]. Research has also drawn attention to varying impacts to smallholder livelihoods and food security – both positive and negative – as a consequence of oil palm conversion [18], as well as reports of exploitative and unsatisfactory working conditions in plantation estates [19,20].

A variety of policies and governance mechanisms at different scales have been initiated to address the sustainability concerns associated with palm oil production [21,22]. At a national scale, policies to limit deforestation and set standards for good agricultural practice have been established. The most prominent transnational governance arrangement in this policy arena is the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), a multi-stakeholder initiative (MSI) which aims to advance the production, procurement, finance and use of sustainable palm oil products [23]. The RSPO has developed a set of environmental and social criteria, which companies comply with in order to produce certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO) [24]. With several thousand registered members representing different parts of the supply chain – from oil palm producers, traders, consumer goods manufacturers, retailers, banks/investors to environmental and social NGOs – it is the aim of the RSPO ‘to minimize the negative impact of palm oil cultivation on the environment and communities in palm oil-producing regions’ [24]. Decision-making processes are based on the principles of consensus and transparency. In spite of the relative success in terms of membership growth and increased production and consumption of CSPO, a growing body of research shows that the attempts of the RSPO to regulate the sector have at best been limited in succeeding to govern the industry [10,25–29]. A variety of stakeholder groups within the RSPO – predominantly from producing countries – are unsatisfied with the outcomes of the MSI [30]. Discomfort with the RSPO stems largely from a fundamentally different understanding of the palm oil industry, the sustainability challenges encountered, and the (governance) solutions towards resolving these challenges amongst different stakeholder groups [8,10,31–36]. For governance arrangements to be effective in addressing the often complex sustainability challenges associated with global commodity chains, they have to be able to deal with multiple frames in society and policy, and seek an acceptable temporary synthesis between conflicting stakeholder views and values [10,37]. To be able to do so, more insights in these different frames and the values underlying these could be considered a first step in this direction.

To better understand the different framings of palm oil, related sustainability challenges and possible governance solutions, this paper conducts an inductive framing analysis of the media coverage of palm oil sustainability in two different countries: the Netherlands – the largest importer of palm oil in Europe – and Malaysia – the second largest exporter of palm oil in the world after Indonesia. Notwithstanding its position as one of the leading countries in the tropics to establish commercial-scale oil palm plantations [38], Malaysia is of particular interest in this study because of its role in shaping palm oil sustainability discourse. Malaysian oil palm companies and industry associations (e.g.

Malaysia Palm Oil Association) were closely involved in the establishment of the RSPO’s Principles & Criteria (P&Cs) in the early 2000s. This led to the official launch of the first RSPO certification system in 2007 hosted by the Malaysian Ministry of Plantations Industries and Commodities [39]. Malaysian firms were also early adopters of progressive ‘no deforestation, no planting on peatlands and no exploitation’ policies [22], and in 2017 the Malaysian government developed their own standard for sustainable palm oil, the Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO). Furthermore, in 2015 the Malaysian state of Sabah announced a scheme to support *all* oil palm producers achieve RSPO certification by 2025 [40]. While the impact of Sabah’s state-wide certification scheme is still unknown, it reflects the intent of Malaysian state and non-state actors to engage in and influence palm oil sustainability policy and practice.

In this study, we compare Dutch and Malaysian newspapers over a fifteen-year time period with the aim to examine the similarities and differences in media framing as a means to analyse conceptualisations of palm oil sustainability and the governance thereof in two contrasting geographies. The media functions not only as a key channel through which information is communicated but also in shaping national level political discourse and debate [41]. We recognise that in both Malaysia and the Netherlands there are a wide range of actors (e.g. NGOs, government, industry, academia, etc.) who frame palm oil sustainability subject to their own values and agendas. Furthermore, these actors – to a lesser or greater extent – seek to influence the media in their portrayal of the key issues [42]. Distilling and analysing national media representations, therefore, provides an instructive window into national level debates, conversations and discourses, as well as the respective positions held by specific actors.

2. Framing sustainability and sustainability governance

The frame concept in media studies refers to ‘a storyline or unfolding narrative about an issue’ ([43]: 385) and its repetitive use helps the reader, viewer, or listener interpret the meaning and significance of that information [44]. Manoff ([45]: x) observes that media frames ‘bring order to events by making them something that can be told about; they have power because they make the world make sense’. As Lockie argues ([46]: 314) ‘frames provide principles for selecting, emphasizing, and presenting specific information that typically leaves unstated any number of assumptions and theories about what is important and why’. In the media, framing devices can include metaphors (e.g. catchphrases, graphics and photographs) and are often accompanied by reasoning devices including the causes of events, their consequences, and appeals to principles [44].

Lockie ([46]: 314) argues that media frames contribute to as well as reflect discourses that extend beyond the immediate written content of a newspaper article or broadcast. Discourse refers to ‘an ensemble of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices’ ([47]: 175). In this way discourses contribute to the reproduction of networks by helping participants make sense of social relationships [48] i.e. by linking words and symbols with power, knowledge and expertise [49]. Orgad ([50]: 25) argues that ‘power relations are encoded in media representations, and media representations in turn produce and reproduce power relations by constructing knowledge, values, conceptions and beliefs.’ Studying media representations of specific topics and how these differ over time is thus a useful entry point in the exploration and analysis of public discourses [51] and an equally useful adjunct to research on ‘sustainability politics’ [46].

Ever since the term ‘sustainability’ and ‘sustainable development’ came to prominence researchers have grappled with its usefulness as a unifying concept [52–54]. Generally, sustainable development is defined as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’

[55]. Mansfield ([56]: 47) suggests that sustainability offers ‘a vision of socio-ecological integration that breaks down the categories ‘human’ and ‘nature’ and instead focuses on intersections of multiple and complex processes that do not obey our efforts to neatly categorise them’. In so doing ‘sustainability can allow deeper understanding of the causes of environmental degradation and social injustice, and how these are interconnected, a project that requires attending to relations of power’ ([56]: 47). Yet, the concept of sustainability is not neutral and is understood and applied in a variety of ways by different people with different positionalities and situated knowledges. As Redclift [57] surmises it is not always clear to what sustainability refers or what is being sustained. More disparagingly, Sneddon et al. ([54]: 264) argue that sustainability should be ‘resuscitated and rescued from those proponents of sustainable development who use it to advance a development agenda that is demonstrably unsustainable’. The way in which users of the term avoid engagement with politics and power relations in sustainability debates has also drawn criticism from commentators. Mansfield [56] argues that many researchers fail to address the inherently political issues that underpin their own understanding of the term, which subsequently turns sustainability into a technical, rather than, political issue. Similarly, sustainability in relation to palm oil is often understood as a rather technical issue. However, different understandings of sustainable palm oil are connected to fundamentally different solution pathways, which are often incompatible with one another [36].

In view of the ambiguity surrounding the term sustainability and calls to explicitly address questions of power and politics in sustainability debates, analysis of sustainability frames in the media can thus prove to be a useful research endeavour for three reasons, especially in relation to transnational governance arrangements. First, considering the varied and conflicting interpretations of the term sustainability and the governance thereof [58,57], analysis of the specific sustainability frames employed by the media reveals how specific actors understand and apply the term in everyday public discourse. As Redclift ([57]: 82) argues ‘only by exposing the assumptions, and conclusions, of these [sustainability] discourses [can] we hope to clarify the choices, and trade-offs, which beset environmental policy’. Here, investigations at different spatial scales are also important to illuminate how sustainability is understood within specific geographical settings. Academic research on media representation of sustainability related topics – most commonly climate change – has tended to focus on countries in the Global North [59–61]. Considering the global reach of palm oil and its production in countries in the Global South, adding analyses of the media from these locales will provide insight into understandings of sustainability both at the sites of production and consumption whilst also helping to inform wider theoretical developmental debates pertaining emerging economies in the Global South [62].

Second, consistent with Foucauldian interpretations of discourse analysis, examining the different framings of sustainability in relation to palm oil will help to ‘trace the discursive power struggles underlying environmental politics’ ([47]: 181). In unpicking the framings portrait in different geographies, this form of analysis allows one to see environmental politics both as a process that seeks to generate an answer to a real world problem, and as a critical struggle where conflicts between discourses may be exacerbated, sidestepped or resolved [47].

Third, analysis of media framing can cast light on the role of the media in the process of sustainability policy formation and institutionalisation; ‘how the media portrays a particular issue influences how the public and policy makers understand and engage with it’ ([63]: 138). For example, Lockie [46] demonstrates the role played by the British media in shaping the UK government’s policy position at the time of the Brent Spar oil rig crisis in the 1990s. Similarly, in a longitudinal study of US media framing of the poor, Rose and Baumgartner [64] argue that as the media frames shifted over time the US government policy followed in tow. In both studies the media were not simply portraying events as they happened; rather, the media narrative formed a key area of struggle and policy formation [46,64]. Thus, investigating media framing of palm oil sustainability and governance not only provides insight into

the way the media can shape the policy landscape and dynamics within transnational governance arrangements like the RSPO, but also has the possibility to provide clues on the policy solutions that might carry currency within such arrangements in the future.

With these discernments from the literature in mind, the paper now turns to an overview of methodology before moving to the main findings and analysis.

3. Research approach

The Malaysian and Dutch media landscapes have a number of different features. Malaysia’s media landscape is characterised by censorship and low press freedom. It might be dangerous to disrespect the strict rules that surround journalism in Malaysia [65], which Tamam & Abdullah [66] label as a pseudo-democracy. The Malaysian media landscape consists of a spectrum with extremes on both sides: on one side there are the *Radio Television Malaysia* (RTM) and the *Bernama* national news agency, which are both government-owned; on the other side there are the independent internet fora, websites and platforms created by civil society groups, businesses or individuals [67]. Most newspapers fall in between those two extremes, as they are government-owned or government-linked, which means they are regarded as private companies, but in reality face strict governmental supervision [67].

In the Netherlands, there is considerable press freedom according to the 2015 World Press Freedom Index. The country is fourth (out of 180) on the ranking list and has even been on the first place in previous years [65]. Bakker & Vasterman [68] argue that an important reason for this high rank is that Dutch media policy is based on the Dutch constitution. Article 7 states that ‘no one shall require prior permission to publish thoughts or opinions through the press, without prejudice to the responsibility of every person under the law’ [69]. Three privately owned publishers control ninety percent of all paid newspapers in the Netherlands. The five newspapers with the highest circulation numbers are based in Amsterdam (*NRC Handelsblad*, *Trouw*, *de Volkskrant* and *de Telegraaf*) and Rotterdam (*Algemeen Dagblad*). The *Algemeen Dagblad* and *de Telegraaf* are considered to be ‘popular media’ while the others are characterized as ‘quality newspapers’ [68]. All newspapers have their own political colour, regional character or political orientation.

Seven news media were selected for analysis in this study: four from the Netherlands (*De Telegraaf*, *De Volkskrant*, *NRC Handelsblad* and *Trouw*) and three from Malaysia (*New Straits Times [NST]*, *The Star*, *Malaysiakini*). Our aim was to identify news media that offered insights across a spectrum of political perspectives whilst also representing those with substantial readerships in the respective countries. As shown in Table 1 below, the seven news media reflect a cross-section of political views in each country, including the most widely circulated English and Dutch language newspapers in Malaysia (*NST* and *The Star*) and the Netherlands (*Telegraaf*), respectively. The selected Dutch newspapers represent different political orientations; *de Telegraaf* can be placed on the relative right side of the political spectrum, *de Volkskrant* more to the left, *NRC Handelsblad* can be classified as progressive liberal, and *Trouw* as progressive Christian. Compared to the Netherlands the news media in Malaysia are defined in terms of their support of the local and/or federal government rather than a specific left or right wing political agenda. During the period of study, *The Star* and the *NST* had ties to the federal government whilst *Malaysiakini* was, and continues to be, a well-respected independent online website. Press censorship is a characteristic of the journalistic landscape in Malaysia [70]; indeed, the country ranked 147th in the world for press freedom in 2015 [65]. In view of the limited presence of opposition backed print media, *Malaysiakini* represents a news media that offers an alternative, more critical view of palm oil reporting as compared with the *NST* and *The Star*.¹ For

¹ Brown (2005) observes that *Malaysiakini* is by default an oppositional medium, since its critical views of government administrations has restricted access to official sources

Table 1
News media selection for the Netherlands and Malaysia showing political orientation/government link and circulation numbers (2014).

Country	Name	Political orientation / Government link	Circulation numbers 2014
Netherlands	<i>De Telegraaf</i>	Right	520,000
	<i>De Volkskrant</i>	Left	250,000
	<i>NRC Handelsblad</i>	Progressive liberal	200,000
	<i>Trouw</i>	Progressive Christian	100,000
Malaysia	<i>The Star</i>	Government linked	302,713
	<i>New Straits Times</i>	Government owned	77,316
	<i>Malaysiakini</i>	Independent	n.a.

the Malaysian sample, only English newspapers were chosen since they are well circulated in urban areas, where 73% of the Malaysian population lives [71]. English is also an official language in Malaysia and compulsory in schools [72] and, therefore, not read solely by ‘those in agenda-setting positions’ ([73]: 4).

The primary data collection involved a keyword search of all palm oil related articles published in the seven news media between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2015. The time period was chosen with three likely drivers of coverage in mind. The first was the steady rise of palm oil as the world’s leading vegetable oil throughout the 2000s, overtaking soyabean oil in 2006 as the most produced vegetable oil [74]. By 2017 palm oil and the derivative palm kernel oil commanded around 70 percent of the global share of vegetable oils [75]. The second was the creation of the RSPO in 2004 and the third was the commitment to ‘no deforestation, no peatland and no exploitation’ in December 2013 by the world’s leading palm oil trader, Wilmar International [22]. Both events were preceded with media reporting of various palm oil related stories in the years leading up to and after the respective events. The archive start year of *The Star* and *Malaysiakini* are 2003 and 2005, respectively.

The article sample was constructed by searching for articles in the *LexisNexis* database using a combination of ‘palm oil’ AND ‘sustainab!’ for the Malaysian news media and ‘palmolie’ AND ‘duurza!’ for the Dutch newspapers. Each keyword was searched for throughout the full text of the newspaper, including headlines, sub-headlines and the article itself. All sections of the newspaper (i.e. National, World, Business, Supplements, etc.) were included in the search. Only articles that mentioned ‘palm oil’ a minimum of five times were selected to ensure that the articles had a primary or secondary focus on palm oil. This sampling strategy ensured the exclusion of articles from the business supplements that reported the price of palm oil in commodity trading markets. News media not available on *LexisNexis* (*The Star* and *Malaysiakini*) were found via the news media’s own online archive. The words ‘sustainable’ and ‘sustainability’ were used in combination with ‘palm oil’ to search for articles and only those that mentioned palm oil a minimum of five times were selected.

In line with previous studies adopting inductive approaches to news media framing (e.g. [76]), each article was inductively coded to identify specific frames. Multiple frames could be assigned to allow for the possibility of a ‘hybridisation of frames’ within a single article [72]. Following Manzo and Padfield [72], one author coded all articles to ensure the highest possible reliability of the analysis. To validate the selection and coding process, a different author checked a sample of ten out of every hundred articles. All frames found in the analysis of the articles were grouped into specific frame packages which, in turn, were summarized in a frame analysis table (see Table 2 below) [76,77]. Frame packages are ‘a cluster of logical organized devices that function as an identity kit for a frame’ [50,78], which consists of a ‘core frame’, ‘framing devices’ and ‘reasoning devices’ [79]. The core frame is the central idea for interpreting events and depicts the issue at stake, which essentially defines the package as a whole. Framing devices on the other hand are the demonstrable indicators of a frame, for example, the spe-

cific terminology or vocabulary, metaphors and catchphrases. Reasoning devices are understood as the causal line of argumentation of a frame and indicate what is conceived as the problem, and which solutions are considered possible or appropriate [76,77,79]. Taking this approach does therefore not only shed light on what is understood as sustainable palm oil, but also shows what is considered the main problem to be solved and what (type of) governance is appropriate in addressing this problem.

In support of the media framing analysis, a small number of semi-structured interviews were conducted with current and former journalists working in Malaysia (2) and the Netherlands (1). These interviews provided detailed insights into the news media landscape in both countries specifically related to the issue of palm oil sustainability and helped in contextualizing the identified frame packages.

4. Results

4.1. Sample size Malaysia

For the Malaysian part of the media framing analysis, 329 articles from different newspapers (published between 2000 and 2015) were analysed. The vast majority of the articles (266) were found in the government-owned newspaper the *NST*, which is 81% of the total sample. In the independent *Malaysiakini* 42 articles (13%) matched the selection criteria and from the government linked newspaper *The Star*, 21 articles (6%) were selected. Fig. 1 shows the number of palm oil and sustainability articles per year.

4.2. Identified frame packages in Malaysian sample

In the Malaysian sample, 5 frame packages were identified. Table 3 below gives a comprehensive overview of all identified frame packages. The identified frames mostly have a very positive outlook on the sustainability of the palm oil sector. There is only one frame package – the smallest out of the four – that conflicts with this positive framing and which questions the sustainability of the palm oil sector. Palm oil sustainability in the Malaysian newspapers was mainly characterized in terms of efficiency and competitiveness, and as a major driver of socio-economic development. In general, the economic and social dimensions of sustainability were emphasized, while the environmental dimension were less visible. Fig. 2 below presents the total number of articles and proportion of each of the five frame packages in the Malaysian media from 2000 to 2015.

4.2.1. Frame package 1: a sustainable Malaysian sector

The frame package that occurs most often (in 194 out of 329 articles) in the Malaysian newspaper sample is labelled ‘a sustainable Malaysian sector’. Occurring in almost 60% of the selected articles, this is the most dominant frame on palm oil sustainability identified in the Malaysian newspaper sample. This frame package’s main premise is that the palm oil sector is a sustainable sector, which is the driving force of stable

Table 2
Example of frame analysis summary table (based on [76,77]).

Frame	The title of the frame package
Overarching theme	The overarching issue the frame refers to
Definition of the problem	The problem that is reflected in the frame package
Cause	The reason that this frame puts forward for the existing problem
Consequences	The impact of the problem according to the frame package
Moral values involved	The moral values that are the drivers of the frame package
Socio-economic interests	The socio-economic interests that are interrelated with the message of the frame package
Possible solutions/ actions	The ways put forward by the frame package that can solve the problem for the future
Non-solution	Unacceptable solutions according to the frame
Metaphors/ choice of vocabulary	The way of writing used to strengthen the frame and put it into effect

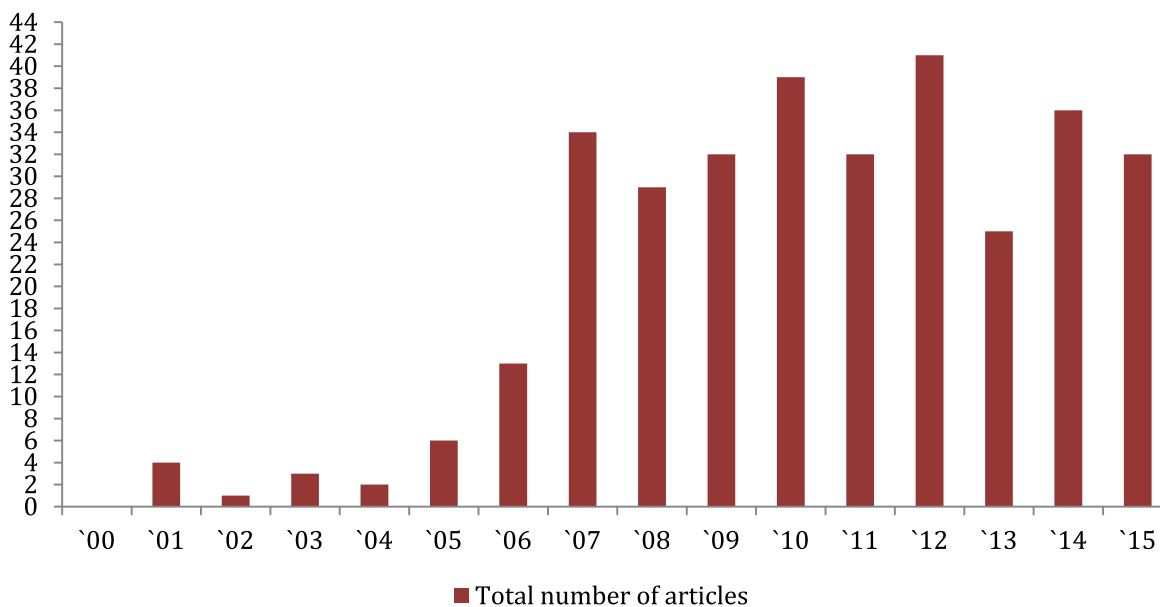


Fig. 1. Total number of articles per year (Malaysia).

economic development. Within this frame, the efficiency of the crop compared to other vegetable oils and the sustainability of palm oil production are emphasized. Malaysia is presented as a producer of high quality and increasingly sustainable palm oil. In the newspapers, the palm oil sector is compared to other palm oil producing countries (such as Indonesia) and other vegetable oils (such as soybean and rapeseed oil). The conclusion is unambiguous; Malaysian palm oil is doing much better than the others in terms of sustainability. In that sense sustainability related to palm oil is not presented as a challenge, but rather as something that is already achieved and is superior compared to other agricultural regions and sectors.

4.2.2. Frame package 2: unfair treatment by the west

The second most dominant frame package 'Unfair treatment by the West' is identified in more than half of the articles in the Malaysian sample. This frame package conveys a strong feeling of being unfairly treated by Western environmental NGOs, which are funded by Western governments. Western sustainability demands are therefore presented as smear campaigns funded by the governments of Western countries, which are launched to blackmail the palm oil sector. These Western actors are accused of consciously overlooking the sustainability of the Malaysian palm oil sector. The articles stress that Western countries are campaigning against palm oil to protect their own vegetable oil markets. From the year 2007 onwards it becomes one of the most important elements in the media-discussion regarding palm oil and sustainability.

4.2.3. Frame package 3: distrust of the RSPO

The third frame package is visible in 148 of the 329 articles in the Malaysian sample (45%) and focuses on the discussion around standard-setting bodies and how the deliberative space in these governance arrangements should be structured. The newspaper articles question the intentions of the RSPO; is the RSPO willing to help and support the growth of the sector and does it provide a market or does it impose Western values on Malaysia? The articles portray a clear distrust in the multi-stakeholder approach of the RSPO and raise doubts over the intentions of the initiative. Moreover, the articles question whether the RSPO is a return to colonialism coming back to haunt palm oil-producing nations under the guise of environmental concerns. The national MSPO standard is presented as a solution to convince consumers of the sustainability of the sector.

4.2.4. Frame package 4: securing competitiveness

The fourth frame package, which occurs in one third of the selected articles is concerned with securing the competitiveness of the palm oil sector and is present in the large majority of articles published between 2001 and 2004. The main points highlighted in this frame are raising efficiency through innovation and the importance of international cooperation to safeguard the market position of Malaysian palm oil. This frame is situated in the context of growing international competition from Africa and South America. The occurrence of this frame in the articles is highest in 2007, has a slight downward trend after that year and increases again from 2014. Around the first peak, biofuel is por-



Fig. 2. Number of articles and proportion of palm oil sustainability frame packages in the Malaysian media, 2000–2015.

Table 3
Identified frame packages in Malaysian sample.

	A sustainable Malaysian sector	Unfair treatment by the West	Distrust of the RSPO	Securing competitiveness	The downside of palm oil production
Overarching theme	Palm oil production in Malaysia is sustainable	Unfair treatment by Western countries	Distrust in multi-stakeholder approach of RSPO	Need to secure competitiveness of Malaysian palm oil sector	Strong will of Malaysia to survive in global market has its downsides
Definition of the problem	There is no problem: Malaysian produced palm oil is sustainable	Western countries attempt to blackmail palm oil sector; West overlooks sustainability efforts	Uncertainty over the intentions of Western actors establishing the RSPO	International competition is growing. Malaysia must invest in innovation & international cooperation	Smallholders and indigenous people are victims of large palm oil companies
Cause	Palm oil brings welfare and a stable economy	Western countries want to defend their own vegetable oils market	Hidden agenda of the RSPO	Other vegetable oils are conquering the market. Palm oil expanding to Africa and South America	Economic interests prioritised above social or environmental interests
Consequences	Palm oil industry needs to be protected	Environmental NGOs behind smear campaigns (funded by Western governments) influence consumers	Means to impose sustainability criteria; green colonialism	Malaysian palm oil will not always be logical choice; needs to distinguish itself from competitor nations & other oils	The palm oil industry has negative impacts
Moral values involved	Moral duty of Malaysians to endorse and support producers	Blackmailing without solid evidence is morally unacceptable	Western countries should not impose their rules	Malaysia's future welfare is most important.	Environmental interests ignored whilst economic interests prevail
Socio-economic interests	Creates stable jobs and incomes; sector is the driving force behind the national economy	Unfair treatment driven by protection of EU vegetable oils industry	RSPO compliance might safeguard market in the West	Securing Asian market highest priority for government & industry to keep leading position	Government and palm oil industry are interwoven
Possible solutions/actions	Malaysia must continue to lead in terms of product quality & regulatory compliance	European consumers have to be convinced of palm oil sustainability; Western institutions should do research before engaging in smear campaigns	National standard (MSPO) can convince consumers of palm oil sustainability	Indonesia is important companion in securing competitiveness of Southeast Asian palm oil; Technical innovation can raise the efficiency and the quality of Malaysian palm oil and so create competitive advantage	RSPO needs to take smallholders into account; government should not ignore them
Non-solution	Limiting compliance with sustainability regulations. This would damage the sector	Not undertaking campaigns/marketing to prove palm oil sustainability	Only focussing on the RSPO standard	Not cooperating with Indonesia. This weakens position of Asian palm oil in global market	Stricter compliance with international treaties and standard-setting bodies
Metaphors/choice of vocabulary	<p>"Malaysian Palm oil: A gift from nature, a gift for life, sustainably produced since 1917"</p> <p>"Malaysia's palm oil industry is burnishing its green image"</p> <p>"Sime Darby Plantation Sdn Bhd has been very conscious"</p> <p>"Palm oil is... a healthy choice/ only destroying 0.4 percent of Malaysian forest"</p> <p>"EU agriculture sustainability is far below that of Malaysian palm oil."</p> <p>"Malaysia's palm oil industry is generally seen as better organised and regulated than its neighbour's."</p>	<p>"uphill task for palm oil producers to convince European consumers who have been strongly influenced by the successful anti-palm oil campaigns"</p> <p>"industry is often vilified for the plight of orang-utans - but mud-slinging won't save them"</p> <p>"hurled the sector with a number of accusations."</p> <p>"based on unfounded allegations"</p> <p>"without offering scientific evidence to support their claims"</p>	<p>"abiding to the earlier demands of Western consumers"</p> <p>"a tool to overturn smear campaigns against palm oil."</p> <p>"Is colonisation coming back to haunt palm oil-producing nations under the guise of the environment?"</p>	<p>"take advantage of any new market opportunities for palm oil"</p> <p>"industry needs to explore all available means to enhance productivity and its competitiveness"</p> <p>"alliance aimed at strengthening the commodity's position in the global marketplace"</p>	<p>"Malaysia's lucrative palm oil industry and unabated logging"</p> <p>"The state is in collusion with the palm oil industry and they are acting with impunity."</p>

trayed as a new opportunity to strengthen the market position and to take a leading role in building partnerships with potential international buyers. From 2014 onwards, there is increasing attention for innovative practices that can raise the efficiency and the quality of Malaysian palm oil to maintain its competitive advantage.

4.2.5. Frame package 5: the downside of palm oil production

The last identified frame package in the Malaysian sample is much smaller (14%) as compared to the other four. This frame package displays moderately critical views towards the sustainability of the palm

oil sector. Most of these are related to social issues, such as labour conditions on plantations or the living conditions of indigenous communities (especially in Sabah and Sarawak). In stark contrast to the other frame packages, criticisms of the role of the government are expressed within this frame. It is said that the Malaysian government is interwoven with the palm oil industry and economic interests are prioritised at the expense of environmental and social interests. As a consequence, smallholder farmers and indigenous people become victims of large-scale palm oil development. It is noteworthy that this frame package mainly occurs in *Malaysiakini*, which is the only independent news media in the

sample. When this frame is present in *The Star* or the *New Straits Times* it is directly counter-framed by the Malaysian government. This indicates that efforts are being made in order to make frame package 5 as marginal as possible. In contrast with frame package 3, stricter compliance with international treaties and standard-setting bodies is presented as a solution in this frame, rather than a problem in and of itself. According to this frame both the RSPO and the Malaysian government need to take better care of the interests of smallholder farmers.

4.2.6. Malaysian frames changing over time

The Malaysian frames found in the analysis are relatively consistent with each other. The only frame that conflicts with the others is frame package 5. The identified frames are not a direct conceptualisation of palm oil sustainability as such, but rather a reaction to external framings of sustainability in the palm oil sector. Colonial history is referred to in most of the frame packages, whilst national pride is also interwoven in most frames.

The largest number of articles written on palm oil sustainability is between 2007 and 2012. An explanation for this can be found in the foundation of the RSPO in 2004 and the discussion it provoked, especially in the years after it was established. Furthermore, the interest and controversies in the debate around palm oil as a biofuel have a large share in the increased media attention. In 2010, for example, a peak is observed in articles that point at unfair treatment by Western actors because the EU decided to raise import barriers on palm oil biodiesel.

Frame package 4, concerned with securing competitiveness of the palm oil sector, remains mostly stable over time. Palm oil is of major importance to the Malaysian economy, which makes a stable position on the global market essential. Positive profiling of the sector and international cooperation are presented as important tools to maintain that position.

Palm oil sustainability - and by extension, the RSPO - is increasingly observed in the articles as a Western concept. When the RSPO was launched in 2004, it was perceived in the Malaysian context as a positive and hopeful sign for fruitful future cooperation where all parties would have an equal say in the debate on palm oil sustainability. In its first years of existence, the standard-setting body is seen as an opportunity to ensure a stable market position in the future. A few years later, however, not much is left of the initial enthusiasm and a growing criticism of the RSPO becomes visible in the articles, which stress that Western parties increasingly press their mark on the sustainability criteria as expressed in the RSPO. In the last years of our sample, the RSPO is mainly portrayed as a dominant Western instrument aimed at structuring the market in their favour.

4.3. Sample size the Netherlands

In the Dutch sample, 68 articles from 4 different newspapers were analysed. This is a much lower sample size, compared to the 329 articles in the Malaysian sample. This indicates a smaller presence of the topic in Dutch newspapers compared to Malaysia. Thirty articles (44% of the total sample) were found in *de Volkskrant*, which is a newspaper with a left political orientation. In the progressive Christian newspaper *Trouw*, 18 articles (27%) matched the selection criteria. From the progressive newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*, 14 articles (21%) are selected and in the more right-wing *Telegraaf* 6 articles (9%) are found. In the Dutch article sample four frame packages comprised of eleven sub-frames are identified. Fig. 3 below shows the number of articles per year.

4.4. Identified frame packages in Dutch sample

Table 4 below gives a comprehensive overview of all identified frame packages in the Dutch newspaper sample. In these frame packages the Dutch are portrayed as leaders and mediators in the efforts towards addressing the negative consequences of a rapidly growing palm oil sector

in tropical regions. It is emphasized that Dutch actors, such as Unilever, are taking a prominent role in the establishment of RSPO. In the articles, the negative environmental impacts of palm oil production are emphasized, while only a few articles articulate the economic importance of the industry to producing countries. Fig. 4 below presents the total number of articles and proportion of each of the five frame packages in the Dutch media from 2000 to 2015.

4.4.1. Frame package 1: NGOs as sustainability benchmark

The first frame package is found in 44 of the 68 Dutch articles, which is two thirds of the total sample. Articles identified within this frame are mostly present between 2008 and 2011, a period of growing scrutiny over the veracity of the RSPO implementation process, as well as an intensification of debate surrounding the merits of palm oil as a biofuel. This frame reveals the significant role played by NGOs in the sustainability debate in the Netherlands. NGOs are presented as a trustworthy actor who closely scrutinize the progress in the RSPO and ensure that best (environmental) outcomes are met. Journalists frequently refer to NGOs and use them as their main source of knowledge regarding palm oil sustainability. A former Dutch journalist commented that NGOs are perceived by Dutch journalists as reliable and trustworthy sources of information who provide relatively unbiased views.

4.4.2. Frame package 2: proud palm oil consumer

The second frame package – the Netherlands as a proud consumer of palm oil – occurs in 27 of the 68 articles (40%) of the sample. The Netherlands is portrayed as a very important player in the palm oil supply chain and a leader in the field of sustainability. This pride is reflected in the way journalists write about the Dutch role in the market with particular reference to home-grown companies, such as Unilever, as a means to visualize the leading Dutch position. Both the industry and government are considered leaders in this field. Furthermore, there is a strong focus on the stable economic competitiveness that is created by making sustainability important in the palm oil sector.

4.4.3. Frame package 3: limited sphere of influence

The third frame package is found in 27 articles, which represents 40% of the total sample. Articles in which this frame is present discuss the complexity of the various challenges associated with palm oil sustainability whilst highlighting the limited sphere of influence of the Netherlands to fundamentally address these challenges. In particular, these articles report on environmental and human rights abuses at production level and the problems associated with a growing demand for palm oil in developing countries. Large importers of palm oil, including India and China are said to not stimulate the enforcement of sustainability criteria at producer level, which makes the efforts of Dutch actors very limited. Therefore, the influential international actors need to be convinced to follow the high sustainability standards propagated in the Netherlands. Furthermore, articles highlight the 'invisibility' of palm oil within products which makes it difficult for end-users to be sure if they are buying from a sustainable source.

4.4.4. Frame package 4: the responsible west

The fourth frame package occurs in 28% of the total sample. The frame package is mostly visible between 2007 and 2011 but largely absent afterwards. In this frame the West is characterised as a paternalistic actor espousing strong sustainability values and with a responsibility to inform and educate actors in palm oil producing countries. The articles frame Western countries holding values that are presented as the most appropriate and only way towards a sustainable future, while producing countries portrayed as having lower sustainability standards. This frame indicates that consuming markets bear a responsibility to promote sustainability by purchasing palm oil certified by the RSPO. Articles refer to the way certification can break the link between consumption and environmentally unsustainable practices in producing areas.

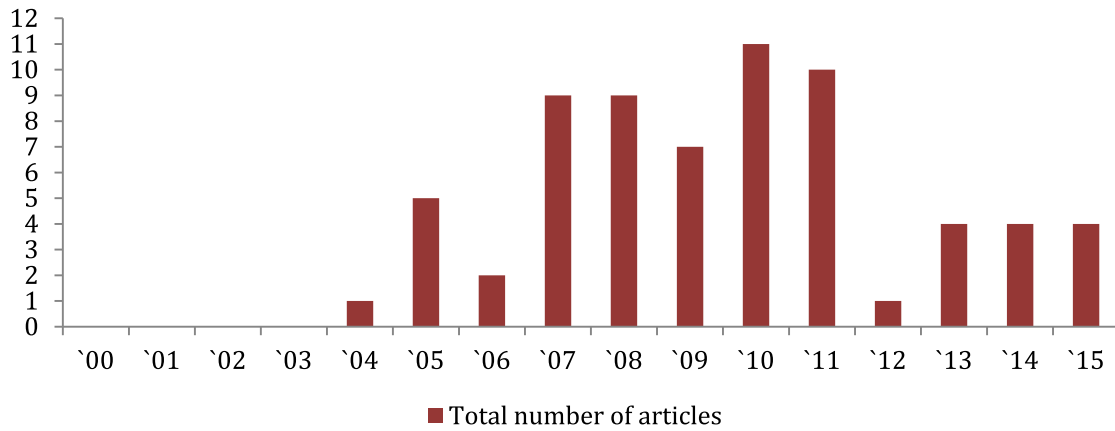


Fig. 3. Total number of Dutch articles in the sample per year, 2000–2015.

Table 4
Identified frame packages in Dutch sample.

	NGOs as sustainability benchmark	Proud palm oil consumer	Limited sphere of influence	The responsible West
Overarching theme	NGOs know what a sustainable industry looks like	Pride for being a sustainable player in the palm oil sector	The sphere of influence of the Netherlands is limited	Consuming market bear responsibility for sustainable value chains
Definition of the problem	Governments and companies are seen as biased	The Netherlands has to protect their leading sustainability position in the palm oil market	The Netherlands is not the only influential actor	Producing countries have low sustainability standards
Cause	Governments and companies have other interests	The Netherlands is leading actor due to high sustainability standards	Unsustainable production practices and a growing demand for palm oil	Environmental and social costs are seen as externalities
Consequences	NGOs have a leading position in providing knowledge and solutions	Sustainability in palm oil is endorsed by industry and government	Other important actors involved need to step up their sustainability game	Unsustainable practices in the industry
Moral values involved	NGOs as moral compass	Sustainability as moral obligation	Sustainability is dependant on other actors	Consuming markets responsible to enhance sustainability
Socio-economic interests	NGOs provide trustworthy sustainability information	Maintaining position as leader in palm oil sustainability	Convincing influential actors will safeguard sustainability	Sustainability is important to show and is profitable.
Possible solutions/ actions	Using information provided by NGOs	Increasing the market share of Dutch companies will enhance global sustainability	Convincing influential actors to follow the high sustainability standards of the Netherlands	Western markets should buy sustainable certified palm oil
Non-solution	Not trusting NGOs	Bashing the palm oil sector wouldn't bring us any further	Developing countries like India and China don't enforce sustainability criteria	Giving responsibility to actors in production areas
Metaphors/ choice of vocabulary	<p>"Civil society organizations did a, according to Greenpeace, failed attempt to preserve the palm oil market."</p> <p>"When Greenpeace had once again released a damning report on the Indonesian company, Unilever suspended its contract with Sinar Mas"</p> <p>"companies have close partnerships with environmental organizations like WWF or Natuurmonumenten. From this form of branding; they borrow a sustainable image.</p>	<p>"The Netherlands is the first country in the world where business is undivided in favour of sustainable palm oil."</p> <p>"This is again an example of something where the company is ahead of competitors."</p> <p>"That is three years earlier than has so far been the plan. Moreover, the company promises to only use palm oil from traceable sources."</p> <p>"large companies [...] see sustainability as an increasingly important pillar of their corporate policy because they fear a lack of raw materials. You can really see that they are now taking major steps."</p> <p>"the Netherlands plays a key role"</p>	<p>"Producers of oil palm often clash with the land rights of the local population."</p> <p>"wastefully sprinkled"/ "abuse of chemicals"</p> <p>"Working conditions are often far below the standards of the ILO"</p> <p>"problems in the production of palm oil are immense."</p> <p>"there are numerous social conflicts on the plantations"</p>	<p>"It should not be the case that rainforest is cut down on the other side of the world, so that we can meet our Kyoto targets"</p> <p>"The Unilever, Carrefour and WalMarts of this world, which are leading in Europe and North America, also play a key role in East Asia. Change should come mainly from them.</p> <p>"Changes can be made fast, but in Indonesia and Malaysia there is still a lot of resistance, both in business and in politics. They see sustainability as a new kind of Western colonialism."</p>

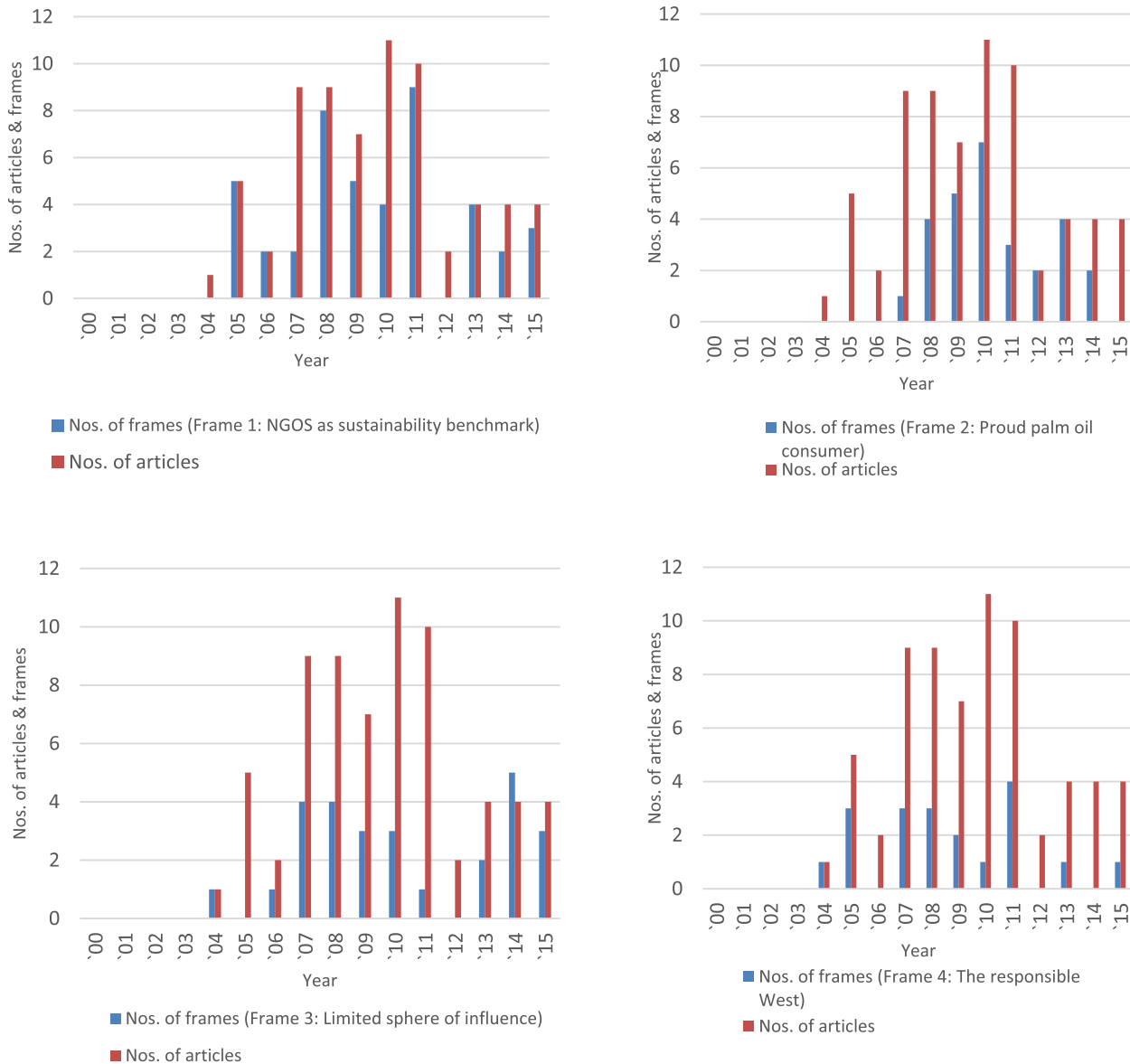


Fig. 4. Number of articles and proportion of palm oil sustainability frame packages in the dutch media, 2000–2015.

This frame does recognize the resistance of Indonesian and Malaysian actors towards certification in both in business and in politics and acknowledges that these actors view sustainability as a new kind of Western colonialism. In these articles the West is framed as a largely homogenous group of actors all holding the same values towards palm oil sustainability.

4.5. Dutch frames changing over time

The Dutch sample consists of 68 articles over the past 15 years, which makes it difficult to identify clear and reliable trends. Overall, it is very noticeable how little media attention has been given to the subject. Most articles on palm oil and sustainability are published between 2007 and 2011 and all 4 frame packages generally follow that trend. Before the foundation of the RSPO in 2004, no articles are published on the topic at all, which is perhaps surprising considering preparations for the standard setting body were in full progress by then. From 2011 onwards there is generally less interest in the subject in the newspapers analysed.

5. Comparing Malaysian and Dutch media frames

Our results show that the media frames in Malaysia and the Netherlands differ in three main ways: in terms of their content; in terms of the sources in which they are grounded; and in terms of the governance arrangements that are deemed appropriate to regulate the issue.

First, when we compare the content of the Malaysian and Dutch frames on sustainable palm oil, we see different elements of sustainability being emphasized in both geographies. Narratives on palm oil sustainability present in one geography are absent in the other, and vice versa. In the different frame packages present in Malaysian newspapers, we see a clear focus on ‘profit’ in portraying the sustainability of the palm oil sector. Drawing similarities with the way climate change is framed in the Malaysia media as a stimulus for the growth of green businesses and industries [72], palm oil is mostly presented as having a positive impact on the national economy, and, therefore by extension shown to bring prosperity to the Malaysian populace. Furthermore, Malaysian frames of palm oil sustainability are often historically embedded as illustrated by references to the role of British colonizers in establishing the

first large-scale palm oil estates, particularly in Peninsular Malaysia. Articles also reference the historical exploitation of natural resources (e.g. native forests, wetlands) in Europe, particularly as a means to highlight the perceived hypocrisy of Western actors who call for restrictions to resource development in Malaysia, a frame which is largely absent in the Dutch part of our sample.

In Dutch newspapers we see much more of a focus on 'planet' in portraying the (un)sustainability of the sector. Palm oil is largely presented as an unsustainable crop responsible for deforestation of highly biodiverse rainforest. In contrast to the Malaysian part of our sample, there is limited acknowledgement or discussion of history in the Dutch framing of palm oil sustainability; neither the Dutch's role in establishing palm oil as a commercial commodity in Southeast Asia, nor discussion of the Netherlands' own exploitation of forest and peatland soils for national development causes. This shows that the context which shapes the media framing of palm oil sustainability is influenced by whether the country is a palm oil consumer or palm oil producer and, in that sense, seems to coincide with the main vested interests in a specific geography. However, we are not arguing that there is a homogenous experience for countries that either produce or consume palm oil. Indeed, this generalisation fails to acknowledge that most palm oil producing countries also consume the commodity in significant quantities. Likewise, the framing of palm oil sustainability in so-called consumer countries in the Global North is unlikely to be in any way uniform, as indicated by the limited uptake of RSPO certified palm oil in Japan as compared with countries in Europe [80].

Second, this analysis illuminates the knowledge authorities associated with the identified frames. The main knowledge source found in the Malaysian sample is the Malaysian government compared with NGO knowledge sources in the Netherlands. The difference in the knowledge sources reflects wider north-south tensions in palm governance. From a Malaysian media perspective, knowledge inputs from government officials lend themselves to uncritical, nationalistic, and pro-industry viewpoints. These types of knowledge sources map onto and reinforce the frame packages identified in our Malaysian sample, notably a sustainable palm oil industry, distrust towards transnational sustainability governance (e.g. RSPO) and a perception of unfair treatment towards producing countries by the West (see Table 3). Moreover, uncritical journalistic practice as characterising the Malaysian media articles can also breed and support the circulation of counter narratives. Goldstein [[81]: 754] refers to the emergence of a 'divergent expertise', an alternative scientific network in Malaysia and Indonesia that supports a peatland management strategy of palm oil development despite scientific evidence highlighting the ecological risk. The reliance on government knowledge sources in the Malaysian media thus helps to support and create space for the emergence and circulation of ideas and discourses underpinning pro-palm oil visions, which in turn reinforce broader north-south tensions concerned with transnational palm oil governance. Conversely, in seeking out knowledge insights from so-called trustworthy NGOs the Netherlands media presents the country, and the West more broadly, as a responsible player seeking out 'critical truths' on the ecological and social aspects of palm oil. Here, the knowledge sources reinforce and support the narrative of the Netherlands as a proud consumer but with limited spheres of interest in transnational palm oil governance.

Third, our research shows that the governance arrangements deemed appropriate to regulate palm oil sustainability are integral to the frames present in both Malaysia and the Netherlands. Malaysian news portrays a distrust in approaches of the RSPO and questions the intentions of the initiative. Moreover, the articles raise the question whether the RSPO is a form of green colonialism. Instead, the national sustainable palm oil standard (MSPO) is presented as a much more appropriate solution to increase the sustainability of the sector. In the Dutch part of our sample, the RSPO is framed as the key governance arrangement to regulate palm oil sustainability. Certification is portrayed as a way to consume responsibly by avoiding environmentally unsustainable practices in producing areas. Interestingly, some articles do not recognize the resistance of Indone-

sian and Malaysian actors towards certification in both in business and in politics and acknowledges that these actors view sustainability as a new kind of Western colonialism.

6. Discussion and conclusion

This paper aims to better understand the cognitive divide between Northern consuming countries and Southern producing countries related to sustainability by comparing the media coverage of palm oil in the Netherlands and Malaysia over a fifteen-year time period. Recognising that the media does not operate in a political vacuum and that news comes about differently in the respective media landscapes [82,83], the ways in which the frames are portrayed in the media 'contribute to discourses that extend beyond the immediate textual content of the newspaper or broadcast' ([46]: 314). They also contribute to the reproduction of networks by helping participants make sense of social relationships [48]. This justifies two main conclusions resulting from the research.

First, analysis of the specific sustainability frames employed by the media provides insights into how the concept is understood and applied in everyday public discourse within specific geographical settings. Specifically, this research has shown a significant divide in the way Malaysia – the second largest exporter of palm oil – and the Netherlands – the largest European importer of palm oil – frame palm oil sustainability and the proposed governance thereof in their respective media. This highlights the value and necessity of geographically grounded research such as media analysis of palm oil sustainability in specific countries, to better understand the global and local palm oil discourse. Previously, Castree [84] has called for new stories about nature and a new style of human-environment research, which he refers to as Global Change Research (GCR). As it relates to palm oil and other commodities of global significance, we argue that GCR seeking to 'thicken the connections' [85] between commodity production and consumption in specific geographies should have a growing place in research agendas of the future. Moreover, uncovering the different framings of sustainability helps to 'trace the discursive power struggles underlying environmental politics' ([47]: 181). The vast differences between sustainability framings indicate that media outlets in the respective geographies are selective in how they portray palm oil sustainability. As becomes apparent from our analysis, this selectivity is based on the specific cultural, political, historical and economic context in which these frames come about.

Second, investigating media framing of sustainability provides important insights for understanding processes of transnational sustainability governance. The first conclusion explains – at least partially – the difficulty to regulate such a controversial crop in a global context. While key stakeholders use the same concept of sustainability, they interpret it to have a very different meaning. Previous research shows that the RSPO has not been able to bridge the different framings of palm oil sustainability present in the value chain [30,32,86,87]. Similarly, other high-risk forestry and agricultural sectors, such as soya bean, beef and seafood products would also benefit from analyses of the local-global framings of sustainability and attempts to examine how these interact with the architecture of their respective governance and policy mechanisms. Climate change, labour issues and developer-community conflict characterise numerous commodity chains across the Global North and South. Reconciling policy tensions might be best achieved by highlighting the differences in sustainability frames at different points in the value chain – as demonstrated in this comparative study between a producing and consuming countries – to identify points of contestation and consensus.

The outcomes of discursive struggles within MSIs are not only a matter of *power in* MSIs, but also of *power over* MSIs, which can be defined as the ability of actors to shape and regulate the architecture of interactive governance arenas [88]. As most of these standard-setting MSIs are established by Northern actors, this might explain the found prevalence of Northern frames on sustainability within these initiatives [30,36,86]. Opening up the discussion on the architecture of these MSIs for more

stakeholder groups might increase the opportunities to get more discourses on sustainability to the fore within these arenas. Moreover, MSIs such as the RSPO can benefit from 'steering more explicitly on dovetailing regulative and normative structures of global and local organizational fields' ([89]: 421). As palm oil sustainability seems to be culturally specific and should be understood as a reflection of both global forces and the local politics of development, by better studying local framings of sustainability, MSIs and other governance arrangements can more actively connect to local knowledge politics and locally embedded solution pathways. Further research on framings in regional newspapers might provide an even more fine-grained understanding of local discourses around sustainability.

The emergence of alternative, or rather competing, certification schemes in Malaysia and Indonesia [30] since 2011 reflects the degree to which deeply entrenched differences between specific consumer countries in the Global North (e.g. The Netherlands) and specific producer countries have come to characterize recent palm oil debates. Media analyses provides a window into the respective positions of different actors, helping us to better understand how these positions are founded and whose knowledge is being referred to support the respective positions [90]. Indeed, our analysis has highlighted clear differences in the types of knowledge sources underpinning the discourses in the newspapers in both countries; we have argued that these differences reflect broader north-south tensions and perceptions of transnational sustainability governance by the media in the respective countries.

Further research into alternative media forms, such as social media and blogs, as well as non-textual analysis of videos, commissioned public programming, and corporate media resources, might provide an even more nuanced and enlightening picture of sustainability discourses in different localities and can illuminate frames that are silenced in mainstream media. Applying textual and semantic analytical techniques Veltri and Atanasova [91] discuss the potential for studying *Twitter* as a communicative space for climate change and conclude that it presents both new challenges and opportunities. In view of the abundance of online palm oil media material, such methodological approaches could open up new avenues of understanding the extent of palm oil discourses and how they are operating in the virtual environment. Not only would such studies add to our understandings of palm oil sustainability discourses, but it would also contribute more broadly to a growing number of studies examining print, digital and social media in the Global South.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Further reading

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