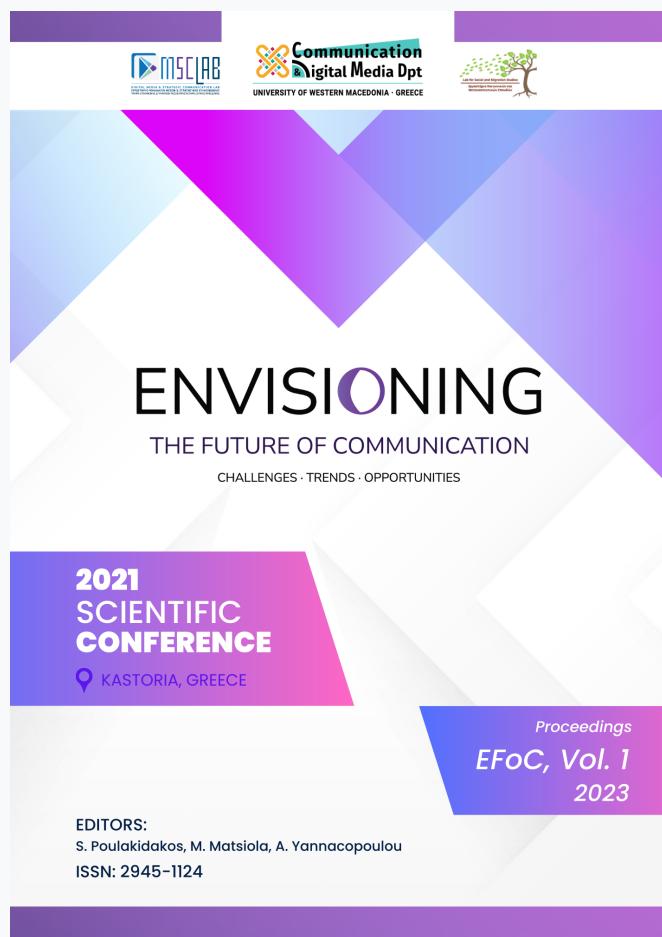


# Envisioning the Future of Communication

Vol 1, No 1 (2023)

Envisioning the Future of Communication - Conference Proceedings vol.1



## Readings and discourses of a crisis

*Michalis Tatsoglou*

doi: [10.12681/efoc.5336](https://doi.org/10.12681/efoc.5336)

Copyright © 2023, Michalis Tatsoglou



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

## **Readings and discourses of a crisis: Reports and comments on Efood's labor issue**

Michalis Tastsoglou\*

### **Abstract**

The current research aims to describe the dominant ideas that emerged alongside Efood's labor issue. The food delivery company attempted to achieve a new labor agreement with its employees, but the project fell down as the platform's users objected to the company's practices and they massively started to unregister. Our research's objective is twofold. First, to analyze and categorize Greek news sites reports according to the readings they suggest. Second, to analyze and categorize the Facebook users' comments in the pages of the same news sites. The research scrutinizes discourses of journalists and citizens in order to enlighten the ideologies hidden behind their positions. The main research question is what ideas can be found in each discourse and how they are intertwined with the labor nature of the issue. The reports under analysis come from four different news sites and their Facebook pages.

**Keywords:** labor rights, neoliberalism, ideology, discourse.

### **Introduction**

The current paper presents a case study on a labor crisis focused on readings and discourses regarding a labor issue. The Efood online delivery platform, a popular application for delivering food products at home, attempted to change the employment status of its employees without their consent and the issue came to the spotlight of the media agenda.

The research aims to complete multiple tasks. First, to highlight an urgent issue which occupied the Greek public opinion under the lens of ideology. Second, to analyze different media reports on the issue, and the corresponding journalistic views on it, since the media tend to offer specific readings which vary according to their approach to reality (Pleios, 2021). Finally, our paper investigates individuals' opinions on the issue expressed through Facebook comments, posted on the news sites' Facebook pages.

The topic emerged on the 17th of September 2021. However, it didn't emerge out of the blue. Two days earlier, the delivery platform Efood had attempted to downgrade 115 delivery workers from their standard employee status to freelancers. It had suddenly informed them via email that the company was going to keep under its roof only those employees who would accept the offer written in the email. This is a decision aligned with the neoliberal set of policies, commonly known as Washington consensus policies (Di Muzio, 2018). Despite this

---

\* Adjunct lecturer, Communication & Media dept. at National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Communication & Digital Media dept. at University of Western Macedonia.

being common practice, there are plenty of questions arising due to the morality of enterprise culture (Wilson, 2018) and the consequent violation of labor rights (Blanton & Peksen, 2016).

The main scope of this paper is to analyze how the media reported the issue and how the citizens responded to it. Therefore, it is organized around the concept of the different schemes of the interpretation of the media content proposed by Stuart Hall (1980, 2019<sup>a</sup>, 2019<sup>b</sup>). The case study concludes that the news' sites were in favor of the workers' rights more or less. Nevertheless, this support differs between the various media we conducted research on. Each news report included different sources, arguments and meanings, while the posted comments emphasized different aspects of the story. In addition, as it was expected (Kadushin, 2012; Sianis, 2020; Pleios 2021), some comments chose to represent more polarized attitudes by contributing to justify the company's strategy.

## The case

Efood is a delivery service platform in Greece. It offers an application and a site where a wide selection of fast-food brands, restaurants and supermarkets and their products are hosted for sale. It is a company that dominates its market section and this dominance became even more obvious during the lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Konti (2021), a journalist working for the newspaper Kathimerini in Greece, the company's business turnover for 2020 increased by 50%, while its net profit increased by more than 25% compared to the previous year, surpassing the total amount of 20 million euros.

Despite its rapid economic enlargement, the company attempted to reduce its labour costs. In autumn 2021, the company's staff consisted of more than 4000 employees, while the platform provided services to 15000 stores in 90 different Greek cities (Lampiris, 2021). However, being a delivery worker is a very difficult, if not a dangerous job. Although platforms such as Efood are enlarged and play an increasingly important role in consumers' daily life at an almost global scale (Aloisi, 2018; Lin et al., 2020), commercial intermediaries tend to act upon an unregulated framework that doesn't protect workers' rights. For example, Figueroa et al (2021) claim that in NYC, app-based couriers have been working as independent contractors who lack the protections and rights a common employee enjoys. This condition became even more prevalent during the pandemic. In Greece, in early October 2020, food delivery workers called a strike asking for corporate motorcycles, a collective bargaining agreement and individual protection equipment among others (Tziantzi, 2020). These demands show that their working conditions needed to be improved.

Regarding our case study, no less than 115 Efood delivery workers suddenly received an email which informed them that their employee status was going to be demoted (from employees to freelancers). In case anyone refused this deal, the company would not renew her/his contract. The email in question included also a reference to a "batch", according to which the company assesses the efficiency of its employees. The email is as follows (translated from Greek):

«Dear Rider, in the context of increasing the productivity of the fleet and the wider strategy of the company, we would like to suggest you to participate in the freelancing cooperation scheme. We want to continue our cooperation, but based on the above and your batch (which is formed by various parameters), we estimate that it would be better to continue working as a freelancer.

You will have the flexibility to choose your working hours and increase your earnings. Otherwise, we would like to inform you that there is no possibility of renewing the existing contract.

Please inform us immediately via ticket for the acceptance of the above, in order to inform you about the next steps».

A wave of reactions was caused due to the company's policy. Thousands of the platform's users deleted their accounts, while a negative trend against Efood was shaped in the social media. After these reactions, Efood officially responded by denying the accusations of blackmailing and sought to control the damage by claiming that the mail was poorly written and did not reflect the company's culture and respect for labor rights.

## **Freelancing: A neoliberal practice**

The practice of demoting an employee to free-lancing status should not be treated as an isolated incident (Ahsan, 2020; Figueroa et al., 2021). It is clearly part of a broader approach to working relations, which seeks to increase the employees' productivity through hard competitiveness (Papatheodorou, 2015).

Competitiveness can take various forms. It characterizes the neoliberalization of economy as a process (Peck, Brenner & Theodore, 2018). This has been implemented in Greece in an intense way since the signing of the First MoU in 2010 (Tastsoglou, 2022), while the dominance of neoliberalism marks a number of similar practices aiming to dissolve the welfare state. Employers and companies move away from their traditional commitments to workers, which were established during the era of Keynesianism (Heywood, 2013; Schram, 2018).

A core value of neoliberalism is competitiveness (Hayek, 1988; Tastsoglou, 2022). Usually, under the conditions of globalized capitalism, competitiveness is manifested through competition which produces stagnation or reduction in wages in order to increase profits (Harvey, 2005; Bauman, 2011; Crouch, 2011).

The reduction of the welfare state and the costs it entails for employers is mainly achieved through deregulation of the labor market. Deregulations comprise the privileged regulatory regime applied by a neoliberal way of governance (Lipietz, 1987; Harvey, 2005; Crouch, 2011). They seek to relieve employers from expenditures such as insurance coverage, compliance with schedules, compliance with licenses, compliance with working conditions, as well as from other practices which aimed to allow state interventions (Brown, 2019). In this way, given the ever-increasing unemployment, workers are enjoying reduced benefits in favor of competitiveness.

To this extent, the neoliberal ideology has succeeded in facilitating a top-down class struggle (Kotz, 2002; Brown, 2019; Tastsoglou, 2022), where the capital is constantly making labor to accept less and less advantageous agreements and contracts. Workers are essentially being blackmailed to let go of their rights in order not to lose their jobs, as the demand for labor is very high due to unemployment. The “industrial reserve army”, as Engels (1845/2009) called it, also contributes ideologically to this blackmailing process by acting as a vehicle for even greater neoliberalization of modern societies. Regarding the food distribution sector, there is a general institutional deficit. Stakeholders and workers are eager to see the outcome of the regulatory bills expected to be applied at a European level (Raschke, 2020). In any case, the lack of institutional framework is already causing problems for employees, while companies seize the opportunity to maximize their profits.

A key factor in the exercise of biopolitics in the era of neoliberalism is the enterprise culture (Doxiadis, 2015; Wilson, 2018). This is a theorem based on each individual thinking of her/himself as an entrepreneur and perceiving his/her workforce as his/her personal business. In this context, the individual has to become more and more competitive in order to improve the status of her/his “enterprise”. The two most appropriate ways to do this are self-improvement, due to which even education is treated as an investment, and the commitment to economic efficiency, i.e., not to do something if it does not result in profit. In both cases the profit constitutes the most basic value of personal business. But what happens when the individual-enterprise works for another business?

In this case the individual-enterprise should compete its colleagues, even if they work for the same employer. This process has two consequences as well. First, the productivity of the individual goes up not in order to make the most, but to achieve the most profits for the employer. Second, competition between co-workers is growing, resulting an alienation between employees. When everyone looks at the interests of their own “business”, they are isolated from their colleagues, therefore the employees cannot form a common bloc to claim their rights (Fuchs & Sandoval, 2014). This is in line with the general tendency of neoliberalism to attack trade unions (Hayek, 1960).

The individual-enterprise, therefore, is persistently trying to improve her/himself and become more productive, but without any extra earnings (Marttila, 2018; Tastsoglou, 2022). (S)he produces more, but this happens in a compulsory context (Bruff, 2014), where (s)he produces more so as not to lose her/his job, since there are, first, other individuals-enterprises under the same employer, and second, hundreds of thousands of unemployed people willing to participate in this productivity crescendo. As a result, just as a company constantly strives to offer the best possible product at the lowest possible cost to the customer, so does the individual-enterprise. But, in this case the customer is the employer. However, the latter is not a customer. The employer is the one who enjoys the profit. As a result, wages remain low despite the steady increase in employee productivity.

This enterprise culture is the central concept in the case of Efood employees. The company attempts to achieve a reduction in labor costs based on the productivity of workers, but without losing their workforce. Thus, the employees who were evaluated as more efficient in their work, continue to work under the same regime/terms. The less productive- according to the company- workers are forced to accept another contract, worse than the previous one, which makes them self-employed, although they remain under the same employer. In essence, it is a purely ideological practice: it is neoliberalism, the dominant ideology of the 21st century.

## **Method, tools, and research questions**

This presentation concerns a case study. Despite the fact that case study comprises also a teaching strategy (Kokkos, 2017), it has to do with a more general approach to educational research, either as a strategy or as a method (Cousins, 2005). In this research, case study is implemented as a method under the scope of contributing to a better apprehension of Efood's practice coverage. It is an *intrinsic case study* (Cousins, 2005), which attempts to go deep in a case that problematized- strongly but temporarily- the Greek public opinion. Thus, the research method implemented is critical discourse analysis, which focuses on the "language at use in the world" (Gee, 2011) approaching it as a communicational form through which power relations are being reproduced.

The research aim is twofold. First, it attempts to analyze journalistic reports on the issue. Second, to present the Facebook users' discourse as it was expressed in the form of comments. In order to satisfy these two different research objectives, we investigate a range of questions set by CDA (Gee, 2011), which are used here as analytical tools and are divided into two groups. The first one concerns tools applicable to news reports, while the other one includes discourse analysis tools.

The tools come from various disciplines of social science, including communication theory, agenda-setting, ideology, discourse analysis and cultural studies. Regarding the news reports analysis, the research utilizes five tools: framing twice, aspects of power relations, a list of objects and dictated practices. The Facebook comments are investigated through the schemes of media content interpretation, quantitative frequencies regarding the users' position towards the company, discursive elements that indicate a specific ideology, a bipolar scheme with neoliberalism and solidarity in its poles and dictated actions, a discourse analysis' tool which is the only one recruited for both objectives.

### *Framing I (news reports)*

Framing regards the dominant aspect of an issue that the journalist chose to focus on. Frames are used to organize meaningful schemes (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989) which direct the reader towards a specific aspect of an issue. There are plenty of typologies over frames (Iyengar, 1996; Kendall, 2011; Chatzikonstantinou, 2020). In this research we use the frames proposed by

Semetko & Valkenburg (2000). These frames are attribution of responsibility, conflict, economic consequences, morality and human interest.

#### *Framing II (news reports)*

Framing II refers to which aspects of the issue are highlighted by the journalists. In this case, the investigation of framing follows a more open approach by noting down the main organizing ideas of each report (Weaver, 2007), as they are presented by the authors.

#### *Aspects of power relations (news reports)*

Laclau & Mouffe (1985) considered power relations as a constitutive element of a discourse. Discourses tend to describe power relations by placing things, concepts and ideas in an evaluative order. They suggest a typology of power relations which includes relations of subordination, relations of oppression and relations of domination. Subordination means that the subject expresses a discourse where the subordination seems rational and it is not contested. Oppression describes relations where the subordinated subject attempts to compete with people or/and institutions to which is subordinated. Finally, domination is present in a discourse when the relations of subordination are thought of as arbitrary, oppressive and unacceptable.

#### *A list of objects (news reports)*

According to Gee (2011), any attempt to analyze a text should contain an enlisting of the subjects/objects/topics to which the text refers. This choice means that other objects have been dismissed, while it expresses a kind of preference at the same time. Doxiadis (2011) also places objects at the heart of apprehending a discourse by specifying them as one of the four main axes of how to do a discourse analysis.

#### *Dictated practices (news reports and Facebook comments)*

Dictated practices comprise a discourse analysis tool taken from the same toolkit as the list of objects. Gee, (2011) calls it the “doing and not just saying” tool, because he believes that a discourse always includes some social practices dictated by the text. Each speaking subject tends to urge others to perform some practices which the analyst has to bring to the surface.

#### *Schemes of media content interpretation (Facebook comments)*

According to Stuart Hall (1980), each message can be decoded in three ways: dominant, negotiating and oppositional reading. In the first one, the reader adopts the position of the writer by decoding the message in accordance with the latter. Negotiated readings means that the reader only partially agrees with the writer. In the last occasion, the reader is opposed to the meanings offered by the writer.

#### *Position towards the company (Facebook comments)*

This tool was made ad hoc in order to present the users’ attitudes towards the company. This variable has three values: positive, negotiated and negative. It is something similar to the previously explained tool, but, in this case, users’ attitudes are at stake in general. While the

reading type is used to investigate the users' attitude towards the news report, their position concerns if they accept the company's policy or not.

#### *Elements of ideology (Facebook comments)*

This tool is implemented in order to detect specific words or practices that are central in an ideology. It is an ongoing deductive process which aims to collect the most significant quantitatively ideological elements in users' discourse. These elements consist of principles, symbols and practices that tend to a specific political ideology. In this case, the focal ideology is neoliberalism.

#### *Neoliberalism vs solidarity (Facebook comments)*

As the theoretical framework showed, freelancing falls into a wider range of neoliberal practices. Neoliberalism is an ideology which tends to underestimate growing inequalities (Wilson, 2018; Brown, 2019). As a result, solidarity, an attempt to reduce inequalities, lies at the opposite pole. In this case, users' comments are categorized into the two poles.

The method's implementation is based on two main research questions. These are the following ones:

- RQ1: What is the dominant representation of reality in each journalistic text?
- RQ2: How do Facebook users "decode" the news items concerning the Efood issue?

To answer RQ1 the research aims to explore the news sites' reports on the issue. Four news sites were chosen. *Protothema.gr* and *Capital.gr* are two news sites with conservative ideology. *Efsyn.gr* and *Rosa.gr* are the other two chosen sites, which represent a more leftist approach in politics. *Protothema.gr* and *Efsyn.gr* are the websites of two newspapers (*Proto Thema* and *Efimerida ton Syntakton*), while *Capital.gr* and *Rosa.gr* are digital news sites. From each news site we analyzed the first report referring to the case. The four reports were published the same day (17th of September 2021). To answer our first research question, we examined five discursive aspects: framing I, framing II, aspects of power relations, a list of objects and dictated practices.

To answer RQ2 the comments on the Facebook pages of the four news sites were scrutinized. For the needs of this research 149 comments were collected. These comments were posted under the reports that were analyzed for the first RQ. 73 of them regarded the conservative news sites (21 from *Protothema.gr*, 52 from *Capital.gr*) and 76 the leftist news sites (24 from *Efsyn.gr*, 52 from *Rosa.gr*). The analytical tools applied in order to answer the second RQ were: dictated practices, reading types, position towards the company, elements of ideology and neoliberalism vs. solidarity dipole.

## Results

*RQ1: What is the dominant representation of reality in each journalistic text?*

Regarding the news report of [Protothema.gr](https://www.protothema.gr/economy/article/1162034/efood-allazei-to-ergasiako-kathestos-ton-dianomeon-adidraseis-sta-social-media/) (<https://www.protothema.gr/economy/article/1162034/efood-allazei-to-ergasiako-kathestos-ton-dianomeon-adidraseis-sta-social-media/>), the title (“Efood: Changes the working status of delivery workers -Reactions to social media”) shows a supporting mood for the workers. However, it degrades the reactions to the virtual public sphere. The report frames the issue as a conflict, as a matter of a battle between capital and labour. It also dedicates its first lines to social media reactions which reflect a negative position towards the company (“Chaos on social media from Efood's decision”). The report expresses a sense of competitiveness by describing relations of oppression (“efood tried to escape from the stricter contract framework of wage labour”). The report also includes some additional evidence (such as social media interactions, relations of production, the e-mail, GSEE- the Greek confederation of workers). Therefore, a dilemma emerges as a dictated action, while each subject has to choose a side: competitiveness vs. poor working conditions. We think that the dominant reading reflects on the conflict between ownership and labour, but under the scope of competitiveness.

The news report of Capital.gr (<https://www.capital.gr/epixeiriseis/3582368/i-efood-allazei-tis-ergasiakes-sxeseis-ti-apanta-i-etaireia>) was titled “Efood changes working relationships - What the company answers”. As far as it concerns framing I, economic consequences come first, but this is a common trend in this site (a matter of ideology). However, the framing II analysis highlighted the danger of unemployment for Efood's workers, even if the title emphasizes on the company's response. Capital.gr, though follows a more neoliberal rationale compared to Protothema.gr and despite its economic focus, describes relations of domination (“Its intentions, to change its model, had already become clear since last July”), relations that are not accepted by the workers (“The Union of Catering, Hotel Tourism and Related Professions Employees of the Prefecture of Attica will hold a meeting”), something that was also found by the framing II tool. The referred objects included the e-mail, Efood's policies, “gig workers”, Efood's response, but there was no reference to social media reactions. By the way, the news report requests for regulation at a European level. So, its primary stance suggests a “stand-by” approach on the issue.

The leftist sites of our research presented the clash between ownership and labour as a product of blackmail. [Efsyn.gr](https://www.efsyn.gr/oikonomia/elliniki-oikonomia/310715_kataggelies-ergazomenon-stin-e-food-gine-free-lancer-i-efyges) ([https://www.efsyn.gr/oikonomia/elliniki-oikonomia/310715\\_kataggelies-ergazomenon-stin-e-food-gine-free-lancer-i-efyges](https://www.efsyn.gr/oikonomia/elliniki-oikonomia/310715_kataggelies-ergazomenon-stin-e-food-gine-free-lancer-i-efyges)) published an article under the title “Complaints of Efood employees: Take freelancing or leave it”. The newspaper's article combined two frames in its presentation. The human-interest frame on the one hand and the economic consequence frame on the other. Hence, the report attempted to highlight the consequences of this neoliberal practice (“it exempts the company from insurance fees”). The company's mail was reproduced in the first lines and then the report

focused on delivery union reactions. Framing II also shows us a willingness to underline relations of domination (“‘partners’ by force”), focusing on a trade union alert. Efsyn attempts to correlate the Efood problem with governmental policies by hosting the opinions of opposition parties. The dominant reading suggests the conception of this practice as a blackmailing process.

Regarding the news report of Rosa.gr (<https://www.rosa.gr/koinonia/dianomeis-e-food-katangelloun-apeiles-apolisis-se-osous-arnithoun-na-einai-aftoapaxoloumenoi/>), its title is “Efood delivery workers: They report dismissal threats to those who refuse to be self-employed”. The leftist site reacts to the company’s policy almost in the same rationale with Efsyn, except for the aspect of politicization that was excluded from the Rosa.gr news report. Nonetheless, the report framed the issue as a conflict, and underlined the clash between the two sides. According to framing II, the news site interpreted Efood’s policy even in the first lines after presenting the e-mail (“the company saves the costs of insurance fee by declaring them as self-employed”). The representation of this clash was also obvious both in the list of objects and the practices dictated by the author. The list contained the e-mail, a critique to the practice of freelancing and reactions from delivery unions. It had no references to the government. The report also declared a trade union alert as a suggested action including a union’s poster. Similar to the case of Efsyn.gr, the report described relations of domination which contribute to representing the company’s policy as blackmail.

#### *RQ2: How do Facebook users "decode" the news items concerning the Efood issue?*

The comments on Facebook were less critical towards the company under the posts of the conservative sites, especially in Protothema.gr page. However, the users tended to express solidarity towards the workers. Their main scheme of interpretation had to do with negotiating the report’s offered dominant approach. Ten out of 21 comments expressed a negative attitude towards the company (“stay away from them”, “Bye-bye Efood”), six others attempted to offer a negotiated scheme (“Does anyone expect ideal working conditions in platforms?”) and five expressed a more condescending apprehension (“Facebook animals”, “it’s only 115 individuals”). The negative comments invoked surplus value and free market justice (expressed through deleting the application), while the positive ones presented either a sense of pragmatism or a sense of anti-communism. On the one hand, five of the analyzed comments focused on the company’s attempt to extract more surplus value and four of them were found to believe in a free market justice by dictating people to delete the Efood application. On the other hand, two comments represented a neoliberal pragmatism and two anti-communist beliefs. The majority of the comments expressed solidarity with workers (14 comments), and five appear to be mostly neoliberal. Regarding the dictated practices, three of them were more common. Six comments suggested not to react, four to delete the application, and three of them to blame the government.

Facebook users who commented on capital.gr page, expressed themselves in a negative way against Efood (“too good to be true”, “it wants to drain the employees”), despite the site’s

conservative ideology. The total of comments in the same site revealed a more polarized situation, as eleven comments were found positive towards the company, while the majority of them preferred a negotiated (nine comments) or a negative attitude (thirty-two comments) towards Efood. The ideological parameters detected in the comments were similar to the comments in Protothema.gr Facebook page. On the one hand, the users focused on surplus value in nine comments (“more expenses for the employees”, “we support the stores, not intermediaries”) and on free-market justice rationale conceptualized on the base of deleting the app (“delete”, “deleting the application loading”) was found in six cases. On the other hand, anti-communism was expressed in four comments, while competitiveness and individualism (two basic principles of neoliberalism) were found in two comments. As a result, 35 comments expressed solidarity and 13 favored neoliberal ideals. The significant difference in comparison with the Protothema.gr page is that the majority of the comments (18 out of 52) promoted deleting the app as a solution. Apart from regulation (eight asked for regulation, while two other asked for deregulation), other dictated practices were no reaction (in seven comments), critique to the government (in four comments) and a suggestion for customers to turn back to the shops (in two comments).

In the left sites’ pages, the users were more negatively disposed toward the company. The majority of the users expressed solidarity towards the workers (“no employee shall be dismissed”, “boycott”). As a result, the users tended to adopt the dominant reading (which includes an even more explicit conceptualization of Efood’s policy as a threat or a blackmail), accompanied by an expression of critique to the government. The left sites also presented a tendency to strongly support the movement for deleting the app. The users’ position against Efood was negative in twenty-one comments (out of twenty-four) on the Efsyn.gr page and in forty comments (out of fifty-two) in Rosa.gr page. However, in Rosa’s page there were also eleven comments that seem to adopt a more negotiated position towards the company (“there are also workers who side with their employer”). Regarding the ideological parameters found in the comments, in the case of Efsyn.gr, six of them focused on surplus value (“development everywhere... at the expense of everyone”) and other three on the aspect of free-market justice (“we the consumers made you king, we will overthrow you”). In the other left page, Rosa.gr, 13 comments highlighted the extracted surplus value (“they drink the employees’ blood”) and four of them the free-market justice under the same notion (“uninstall now”, “boycott”). However, in Rosa.gr competitiveness was supported in three comments and individualism in two. 22 comments out of twenty-four were in favor of solidarity in the case of Efsyn.gr, while forty-six out of fifty-two expressed the same attitude in Rosa.gr. Nevertheless, in the latter page, only two included a neoliberal sign. Deleting the app was the most common dictated practice in the comments. Thirteen out of twenty-four Efsyn.gr comments supported the cancelling of the Efood movement, while thirty out of fifty-four were found to do the same in Rosa.gr Facebook page. Furthermore, the second most common dictated action was to negatively react towards the government with six related comments in each page.

## Conclusions

The principal remark regarding the research is the fact that neoliberal policies such as the Efood's practice discussed here are not legitimized by the public opinion to be implemented. This was confirmed both in the cases of news' reports and Facebook comments.

Concerning the first RQ, *what is the dominant representation of reality in each journalistic text*, the two right sites presented the issue more moderately. In contrast, the two left sites preferred to support the employees explicitly. Nevertheless, three out of four sites presented relations of domination, except for *Protothema.gr*. This tendency revealed a generalized negativity towards policies like this. The framing I tool did not offer remarkable results. The conflict frame proved to be the dominant one, while *Capital.gr* and *Efsyn.gr* framed the issue by underlining economic consequences. Another important finding showed that all the reports referred to relations of production, something that was proven through examining the list of objects and framing II. Furthermore, the left sites signaled a danger by suggesting a trade union alert. On the other hand, *Capital.gr* suggested that one should wait and see how the case would develop, while *Protothema.gr* focused on competitiveness. These findings impel that there was a consent in favor of workers in the four reports, despite the different ideologies they represent.

Concerning the second RQ about *Facebook users' "decoding" of the Efood issue*, the site's position expressed through the report was found to have an effect on the user's statements. The right sites hosted more alternative or positive against Efood arguments in comparison to the left ones. Although they were not the dominant ones, they represented more than a fifth of the total comments (16 out of 73), while in 76 comments taken from the leftist pages only two of them adopted a positive attitude towards the company. In any case, solidarity was by far the dominant value in all four cases, but in different proportions. Most of the comments reacted in a negative way to the excess profit that Efood tried to make and this means that they criticize exploitation. Deleting the app was by far the most often dictated action, with the exception of *Protothema.gr* Facebook page. However, the right sites hosted more "don't react" opinions, while the comments in the leftist media Facebook pages tended to criticize the government.

## References

Ahsan, A. (2020). Entrepreneurship and ethics in the sharing economy: A critical perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 161, 19–33. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-018-3975-2>.

Aloisi, A. (2018). 'With great power comes virtual freedom'. A review of the first Italian case holding that (food-delivery) platform workers are not employees. *Comparative Labor Law & Policy Journal*, 2018. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3260669>.

Bauman, Z. (2011). *Collateral damage: Social inequalities in a global age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Blanton, R. G., & Peksen, D. (2016). Economic liberalisation, market institutions and labour rights. *European Journal of Political Research*, 55(3), 474-491. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12137>.

Brown, W. (2019). *In the ruins of neoliberalism: The rise of antidemocratic politics in the West*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bruff, I. (2014). The rise of authoritarian neoliberalism. *Rethinking Marxism: A journal of economics, culture & society*, 26(1), 113-129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08935696.2013.843250>.

Chatzikonstantinou, M. (2020). Cognitive and emotional versatility of the news framing of mobile populations. The case of the ‘refugee crisis’. [Doctoral dissertation, Communication and Media dept., National and Kapodistrian University of Athens].

Cousins, G. (2005). Case study research. *Study Research, Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 29(3), 421-427. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03098260500290967>.

Crouch, C. (2011). *The Strange Non-Death of Neoliberalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Di Muzio, T. (2018). Disciplinary neoliberalism, the tyranny of debt and the 1%. In D. Cahill, M. Cooper, M. Konings & D. Primrose (eds.), *The Sage handbook of neoliberalism* (pp. 457-468). London: Sage.

Doxiadis, K. (2011). *Discourse analysis: A social-philosophical grounding*. Common Ground Publishing.

Eagleton, T. (1991). *Ideology: An introduction*. London: Verso.

Engels F. (1845/2009). *The condition of the working class in England*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.

Figueroa, M., Guallpa, L., Wolf, A., Tsitouras, G., & Colón Hernández, H. (2021). *Essential but unprotected: App-based food couriers in New York City*. Los Deliveristas/ Workers Justice Project. <https://losdeliveristasunidos.org/ldu-report>.

Fuchs, C., & Sandoval, M. (2014). Introduction: Critique, social media and the information society in the age of capitalist crisis. In C. Fuchs & M. Sandoval (eds.), *Critique, social media and the information society* (pp. 1-50). New York: Routledge.

Gamson, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1989). Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, 95(1), 1-37. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2780405>.

Gee, J. P. (2011). *How to do Discourse analysis: A toolkit*. Oxon: Routledge.

Goffman, E. (1986). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.

Hall, S. (1980). Encoding/decoding. In S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe & P. Willis (eds.), *Culture, Media, Language* (pp. 117-127). London: Hutchinson.

Hall, S. (2019<sup>a</sup>). *Essential essays vol. 1*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Hall, S. (2019<sup>b</sup>). *Essential essays vol. 2*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Harvey, D. (2003). *The new imperialism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hayek, F. (1960). *The constitution of liberty*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Hayek, F. (1988). *The fatal conceit: The errors of socialism*. London: Routledge.

Heywood, A. (2013). *Political ideologies: An introduction*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Iyengar, S. (1996). Framing responsibility for political issues. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 546, 59-70. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1048170>.

Kadushin, C. (2012). *Understanding social networks: Theories, concepts, and findings*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kendall, D. (2011). *Framing class: Media representations of wealth and poverty in America*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

Kokkos, A. (2017). Teaching strategies for the adult education. <https://blogs.sch.gr/politism/files/2017/10/%CE%95%CE%BD%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%B3%CE%CE%84%CE%BA%CE%AD%CF%82-%CE%95%CE%BA%CE%80%CE%B1%CE%CE%95%CE%CE%85%CF%84%CE%CE%9A%CE%AD%CF%82-%CE%A4%CE%CE%87%CE%BD%CE%CE%BA%CE%AD%CF%82-%CE%91.-%CE%9A%CF%8C%CE%BA%CE%BA%CE%BF%CF%82.pdf>.

Konti, D. (2021, 9 June). Explosive rise in Efood's turnover amid a pandemic. *Kathimerini*. <https://www.kathimerini.gr/economy/561393664/ekriktiki-anodos-tziroy-tis-efood-en-meso-pandimias/>.

Kotz, D. M. (2002). Globalization and neoliberalism. *Rethinking Marxism*, 12(2), 64-69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/089356902101242189>.

Laclau, E. & Mouffe, C. (1985). *Hegemony and socialistic strategy: Towards a radical democratic politics*. London: Verso.

Lampiris, G. (2021, 13 November). The new moves of e-food after the turmoil with the delivery workers. *Capital.gr*. <https://www.capital.gr/epixeiriseis/3594780/oi-nees-kiniseis-tis-e-food-metatin-anataraxi-me-tous-dianomeis>.

Lin, P. M. C., Au, W. C., Leung, V. T.Y., & Peng, K. L. (2020). Exploring the meaning of work within the sharing economy: A case of food-delivery workers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102686>.

Lipietz, A. (1987). *Mirages and miracles: The crisis of global Fordism*. London: Verso.

Marttila, T. (2018). Neoliberalism, the knowledge-based economy and the entrepreneur as metaphor. In D. Cahill, M. Cooper, M. Konings & D. Primrose (eds.), *The Sage handbook of neoliberalism* (pp. 565-579). London: Sage.

Papatheodorou, C. (2015). Economic crisis, poverty and deprivation in Greece: the impact of neoliberal remedies. In S. Mavroudeas(ed.), *Greek capitalism in crisis: Marxist analyses* (pp. 67-81). Oxon: Routledge.

Peck, J., Brenner, N., & Theodore, N. (2018). Actually existing neoliberalism. In D. Cahill, M. Cooper, M. Konings & D. Primrose (eds.), *The Sage handbook of neoliberalism* (pp. 3-15). London: Sage.

Pleios, G. (2021). *Fake news: The transformation of propaganda in the information society*. Athens: Gutenberg.

Raschke, D. (2020). The Digital Services Act and beyond: an eFood perspective. *Journal of Consumer Protection and Food Safety*, 15, 305–306. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00003-020-01307-9>.

Schram, S. F. (2018), Neoliberalizing the welfare state: Marketizing social policy/disciplining clients. In D. Cahill, M. Cooper, M. Konings & D. Primrose (eds.), *The Sage handbook of neoliberalism* (pp. 308-322). London: Sage.

Semetko, H. A., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2000). Framing European politics: A content analysis of press and television news. *International Communication Association*, 50(2), 93-109. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2000.tb02843.x>

Sianis, P. (2020). Social Networking Service and journalism in Greece. *Media Analysis*. <https://medianalysis.net/2020/06/19/mesa-koinonikis-diktosis-kai-dimosiografia-stin-ellada/>

Tastsoglou, M. (2022). *The hegemony of neoliberalism in the discourse on Memoranda: A discourse analysis of governmental officials, 2010-2018*. Athens: Papazisis.

Tziantzi, A. (2020, 6 October). Two-wheeled strike because there is no one left! *I Efimerida ton Syntakton*. [https://www.efsyn.gr/ellada/koinonia/262948\\_dikykli-apergia-giati-den-perisseyei-kaneis](https://www.efsyn.gr/ellada/koinonia/262948_dikykli-apergia-giati-den-perisseyei-kaneis).

Weaver, D. H. (2007). Thoughts on agenda setting, framing and priming. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 142-147. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00333.x>

Wilson, J. A. (2018). *Neoliberalism*. New York: Routledge.