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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND “GREEN” CONCEPTS

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Abstract

In the aftermath of the financial crisis that broke out in 2008, new terms to talk about sustainable development started to emerge: the “green” economy and “green” growth. Some countries supported their usage and others did not. The literature witnessed the recrudescence of the debate on the relationship between economic activity and taking care of the environment, divided into three stances: degrowth advocates, “green” growth backers, and the growth agnostics. This paper dives into the different “green” terms, paying special attention to the case of Argentina. Unlike in previous papers, which have analyzed country interventions in international forums, the methodology here was to search the web pages of the most relevant local players. The most traditional terms “sustainable development” were strongly predominant, and the concepts of “green” economy or “green” growth were few and far between.

Keywords: Argentina, sustainable development, green economy, environment, environmental concepts.

INTRODUCTION²

The concept of sustainable development emerged from the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, which brought together most of the countries in the world in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972, to discuss environmental issues at the global level for the first time. As a result, in 1982, the World Commission on the Environment and Development was assembled to design a “global program for change.” This led to the famous 1987 Our Common Future report (CMMAD, 1987), generally known as the Brundtland Report for the last name of the former prime minister of Norway who presided over it (Gro Harlem Brundtland), defining the term “sustainable development.”

A second similar conference was convened 20 years later in Río de Janeiro (Brazil, 1992), known as the Earth Summit. At that meeting, the Agenda 21 was approved, an action plan with an eye to achieving “sustainable development” in the twenty-first century. Three specific conventions came out of that gathering: biodiversity, climate change, and desertification. Ten years after Río (in 2002), countries met once again to agree on the sustainable development actions in Johannesburg (South Africa) at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. And, recently, in 2012, most of the world’s nations came together in Río de Janeiro yet again at what has come to be known as the “Rio+20 Summit” because it was held twenty years after that first meeting in 1992 in the same city in Brazil. The statement titled “The Future We Want” was crafted at that conference. As part of the preparations for the event, several “green” concepts, seemingly distinct from those under the “sustainable development” umbrella, came into use.

Essentially, in the advance meetings for Río+20, participants started to use alternative terms. In March 2009, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) began to use the concept of “green economy” in the Global Green New Deal (PNUMA, 2009). In June of the same year, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) employed the phrase “green growth” in the Green Growth Group Ministers’ statement (OECD, 2009). By May 2012, the World Bank had made it official with “green and inclusive growth” in its Annual Report (World Bank, 2012), explicitly adding the third dimension (social) to “green growth.”

Nevertheless, at Río+20, countries espoused extremely divergent opinions about the “regreening” of the discussion on sustainable development. This may have been because one of the two topics on the Río Agenda was precisely this theme. The other was to define stronger institutionality to achieve sustainable development (Bina, 2013).

This “new” terminology spurred debate, prompting a series of papers that sought to encapsulate the differences in the stances held by each nation (or group of nations) by analyzing the documents submitted to international discussion forums (or the remarks made by the representatives of each country at these events).

The introduction of these new “green” words also fueled the recrudescence of the discussion on the relationship between the economy and the environment, revolving around three postures: 1) advocates of a degrowth strategy as a solution to environmental problems; 2) believers that “green” growth is indeed possible; and 3) the growth-agnostics who claim that what really matters is social welfare.

Against that backdrop, this paper introduces two significant innovations in the literature. One, it is an attempt to clarify the scope and differences among the words used. Two, it offers an alternative way to analyze the discourse of the myriad stakeholders involved in environmental affairs in each country, drawing, rather than on statements made at international

forums, on the information posted on the websites of different stakeholders bound up in environmental issues. To do so, we look at a case study: Argentina.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 analyzes the different “green” concepts and provides a brief overview of the position of each country pursuant to previously published literature. The same section reviews the various stances held on the relationship between economic growth and the environment, as well as the criticism each has undergone. Section 3 explains the methodology used in this research, the data gathered for it, and analyzes the results. Finally, Section 4 offers some conclusions.

2. THE DIFFERENT CONCEPTS AND POSITIONS HELD BY THE COUNTRIES AT INTERNATIONAL FORUMS

2.1 Sustainable Development and Regreening Words

The multiple concepts (“sustainable development,” “green economy,” “green growth,” and “inclusive green growth”) have been defined in the spheres in which they have appeared. Table 1 shows the textual definitions of each case.

Table 1. Definitions of the Different Green Concepts

<i>Concept</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Sustainable development	CMMAD (1987), POINT 3, PARAGRAPH 27	“Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”
Green economy	PNUMA (2011), PAGE 9	“...a green economy as one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. In its simplest expression, a green economy can be thought of as one which is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive.”
Green growth	OECD (2009), CONSIDERATIONS, PAGE 1 (ACKNOWLEDGING THAT “GREEN” AND “GROWTH” CAN GO HAND-IN-HAND)	“Green growth will be relevant going beyond the current crisis, addressing urgent challenges including the fight against climate change and environmental degradation, enhancement of energy security, and the creation of new engines for economic growth.”
Inclusive green growth	World Bank (2012), page 2	“Inclusive green growth is not a new paradigm. Rather, it aims to operationalize sustainable development by reconciling developing countries’ urgent need for rapid growth and poverty alleviation with the need to avoid irreversible and costly environmental damage.”

Notes: The original Spanish text of the Brundtland Report speaks of “sustained development” and “lasting development.” The PNUMA (2009) report did not formally define the term “green economy,” which is why PNUMA (2011) is cited here. The latter two quotes were only found in English as no official Spanish translation could be located.

Source: Created by the authors.

In light of the above definitions, it would seem important to first differentiate what the terms economy, economic growth, and economic development mean in their standard acceptances. Generally speaking, economics is defined as the science that studies how societies manage scarce resources to produce goods and services, which are distributed across different individuals. On another note, economic growth is understood to mean the expansion of a country’s potential gross domestic product (GDP), while economic development is a more general term referring to processes that drive up the standard of living (see, for example, Mochón and Beker, 2008, pp. 536 and 556).

From these three definitions, it therefore emerges that, strictly adhering to the verbatim words, it is possible for an economy to exist without growth and development, just as there can be an economy with growth but lacking development. Being strict with the terminology, a “green economy” can be seen as a concept that permits the option of no growth and/or non-development. Thus, for an economy to be “green” does not mean that there is automatically sustainable development, because a growing economy (even if it is growing “greenly”) does not necessarily translate into greater justice in distribution, not to mention for socially marginalized groups.

In this regard, sustainable development appears to be a broader concept than the rest, particularly so after reading the preface written by the chairwoman of the commission that drafted the Brundtland Report, in which she asserts: "What is needed now is a new era of economic growth—growth that is forceful and at the same time socially and environmentally sustainable" (p. 13). Accordingly, it is worth underscoring that the notions that have started to emerge ever since "green" growth was combined with "inclusive" (meaning inclusive sustainable development or development with social inclusion) are absolutely redundant, because sustainable development is economically, environmentally, and socially so.

Another aspect worthy of reflection on the "regreening" of the discussion is that several authors assert that these "new" terms are meant to inject momentum into, operationalize, and serve as a means to achieving sustainable development.³ This is in acknowledgement that in reality, conceptually speaking, inclusive "green" growth is nothing more than an add-on to the traditional sustainable development. It bears mention that this change in vocabulary started to brew in a time when the 2008 financial crisis was having an impact on both the economic and social spheres, at the same time as the scientific community was issuing calls to raise awareness on environmental damage (especially through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: IPCC 2014).

All of the above is evident in the OECD Ministerial Declaration (2009), affirming that they will seek "green growth strategies as part of our response to the current crisis..." This is moreover recognized in several academic publications (example, Bina, 2013).⁴ In fact, many of the stimulus packages to overcome the crisis contained "green" components (Barbier, 2010). Although there is not full consensus on this point, the idea is that jobs in "green areas" (energy efficiency, expanding water and sanitation networks, etc.) are more labor-intensive and, therefore, stimulate the economy (Spencer *et al.*, 2012).⁵

As a result of these changing terms, the stakeholders involved in the international debate on environmental matters began to consolidate their positions as to which was the most appropriate.

2.2 The Positions of Different Countries and Groups

The literature studying the differences between sustainable development and the rest of the concepts is rather limited, tending to emphasize the stance each country holds toward each term. In broad strokes, these papers are predicated on documents published and presentations made by the parties at the international discussion forums.⁶ Below is a look at several of these.

The *Green Economy Coalition* (GEC, 2012) analyzes countries' responses to the draft of the Río-20 meeting (Zero Order Draft), which was drafted and debated at several preparatory meetings for the Río Summit (starting in May 2010). Similarly, the Stakeholder Forum for Sustainable Development, based on official remarks at the first preparatory meeting, drew up a matrix of the opinions espoused by each country (SFSD, 2012). Along similar lines, Quiliconi and Peixoto (2013) examined the opinions held by seven Latin American countries as expressed at the second preparatory meeting for Río+20 of Latin American countries organized by ECLAC in Chile in November 2011. Likewise, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) described the positions expressed both orally and in writing at the preparatory meetings for the Second Earth Summit by the G-20 countries with respect to "green growth" and its measurement, but did not classify the countries depending on how favorable their opinions were (Kabaya, 2012).

Table 2 summarizes the different positions held toward the "green" concepts expressed by the different states in various publications. In general, it appears that the European Union and the United States are broadly optimistic, while other countries, like Bolivia, Ecuador, or Venezuela, are critical of this new wave. Argentina is the only country showing itself to be skeptical in all of the cases. Even so, the methodology used in these papers (analysis of speeches and written comments made by the countries in international forums) does not permit clear distinctions to be drawn between the different stakeholders' stances on environmental matters within the same nation. Nevertheless, internal discrepancies in opinions can be the genesis for the government's own skeptical view. That is why this research sets out, using the case of Argentina, to analyze this issue in greater detail.

Table 2. Selected Results on Countries' Positions with Respect to Regreening the Sustainable Development Conversation

<i>Fuente</i>	<i>Posiciones y países en cada una</i>
Green Economy Coalition (2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Actively engaged: China, Costa Rica, Botswana, Brazil, Ethiopia, EU, Ghana, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Thailand, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Russian Federation, South Africa, United States of America. – Luke warm: Argentina, Egipto. – Opposed/highly dubious: Bolivia, Venezuela. – No mention: Honduras.
Stakeholder Forum for Sustainable Development (2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fully supportive: Barbados, China, EU, Indonesia, Norway, South Korea, Senegal, Sweden, Switzerland, United States of America. – Unsure: Argentina, Australia, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, G77, and China, Mauritius, Mexico, Uruguay. – Generally skeptical: Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, Japan.
Quiliconi and Peixoto (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Optimistic: Brazil, Mexico, Costa Rica. – Skeptical: Argentina, Peru. – Critical: Venezuela, Ecuador.

Note: The original version of this table contained citations in English when this was the original language of publication.

Source: Created by the authors.

2.3 Economic Growth and the Environment

As already mentioned in the introduction, in addition to research papers on the stances held by each country toward these new terms, these words have also helped reopen the debate on the relationship between the economy and the environment. In this regard, there are basically three points of view on the relationship between economic growth and the environment: "degrowthers," "green growthers," and the "agnostics."

The first are represented by the proponents of the Club of Rome, which in the nineteen-seventies, commissioned scientists from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to study the relationship between economic growth and the environment. This research was summarized in *The Limits to Growth* (Meadows *et al.*, 1972). It concluded that if world population growth, industrialization, pollution, food production, and natural resource production were allowed to proceed unchanged, the earth would reach its absolute growth limit in a time span of 100 years. Practically at the same time as the Meadows *et al.* (1972) work was published, so too were papers by the Romanian Georgescu-Roegen (1971) and his disciple, Daly (1973).

Advocates for this viewpoint forecast that the planet has only a limited capacity to support human activity and propose degrowth as the solution.⁷ Strictly speaking, degrowth would occur in the transition toward a new steady state that would become possible within natural bounds. According to the ecological economists, environmental problems are due to an overly large economy, which goes beyond the capacity of the planet to sustain it (Daly, 1973). They do not believe that growth is a solution but rather a problem, and that degrowth is not an end but rather a means to solve the planetary crisis. The goal is to "live with less." The proposal is to grow while keeping in mind nature, after shrinking the economy to a scale that considers the environmental impact.

Criticism of the degrowth literature recognizes that although the discourse is well-written, the theory lacks empirical evidence as to its feasibility (see Martínez-Alier *et al.*, 2010; Cosme *et al.*, 2017; Weiss and Cattaneo, 2017). Kallis (2011,p.874) justifies this lack of empirical evidence by stating that "degrowth" is actually a word that serves as an umbrella term to encompass a position. It is a matter of understanding the planet's limits, that these limits do exist, and that technological miracles cannot be expected to ward them off. Another critique of this stance is that degrowth may entail living in a simpler society in which less work is needed, but could bring negative consequences for developing countries where a minimum level of material welfare has not yet been attained (see Martínez-Alier *et al.*, 2010, p. 1743).

Ever since the Industrial Revolution, the world has continued to grow, both in terms of number of inhabitants and in terms of production. Thus, another group of economists holds that growth will not run out in spite of natural limitations. They line up behind the concept of "green" growth described above. Defenders of this stance believe that it is possible to grow in consideration of the environment and that this growth can come at a low or even negative cost. With that in mind, they might be called optimistic, because they believe that emissions and production can be absolutely decoupled. The seed of this possibility resides in the traditional idea of the Kuznets environmental curve, pursuant to which the ratio between these two variables is an inverted U shape, so beginning at a certain level of income per capita, emissions start to fall (Grossman and Krueger, 1995). There is consensus that if this were to come about, the change in trend would owe not to an automatic mechanism, but rather to changing consumer behavior, whether that be because they would be wealthier or more aware and demanding of environmental policies from their governments. Another factor is technological change (which has to do with the markets, but also regulations).

This stance is criticized by those who believe that "green growth" is not possible. Specifically, Victor and Jackson (2012)

argued that UNEP's optimism is based on its forecast of investment in the time period 2010-2050 of 2% of global GDP. Regardless of how appropriate the model is, it only manages to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 17% by 2050, less than what is required to solve the climate problem. Moreover, other papers have negated the Kuznets curve for certain pollutants, like carbon dioxide (for example, Dasgupta *et al.*, 2002). The behavior of the ratio between the economy and environmental impact has been studied for countries in Latin America, without finding the inverted U pattern (see references in Table 3, Galindo *et al.*, 2014). Rather, there is a negative relationship between growth of the product and taking care of the environment, due in part to the high content of natural resources in exports from the region.

Nevertheless, other economists differ from both of these two positions. This "third way" finds its origin in the traditional concept of sustainability. The idea is that neither economic growth nor environmental sustainability is an end in and of itself, but rather that the goal should be to maximize social welfare, defined based on the values of each society. This stance is aligned with Bifani (1997, p. 34): "The objectives of economic and social development should be underpinned by adequate environmental management. Moreover, the environment is the set of resources that can be exploited with economic-social and environmental rationality to achieve development objectives that are valid in the long term."

More recently, some authors have started to refer to this third path as a-growth (coined by Van den Bergh, 2011). A-growth suggests a sense of agnosticism toward economic growth. This does not mean that this school of thought is against economic growth, but rather against economic growth that fails to consider social and environmental sustainability. One example that is often used to illustrate that growth cannot be an end in and of itself is that of India, whose GDP has risen even as human development standards remain low, measured by life expectancy, health, education, etc. (see Drèze and Sen, 2013).

A series of indicators have emerged in an effort to correct the problems underlying GDP as a measure of progress. For example, the Genuine Savings Index, indicators of happiness and subjective satisfaction, or the set of indicators known as the Sustainable Development Goals (Jakob and Edenhofer, 2014). The biggest issue with this in-between position (a-growth) is therefore defining what welfare means. Figuring out which indicator to use to measure welfare is no easy matter since, as Fleurbaey and Blanchet (2013) affirmed, the problem with challenging the GDP as a measurement is not the lack of competitors but the abundance.

Up until now, this paper has outlined three alternative points of view on the relationship between the environment and the economy, as well as their arguments and critiques. None can be considered superior to another. Explaining them helps support interdisciplinary communication, because it makes clear that regardless of the stance held toward the environment, in all of the cases, the economic sciences understand that the market alone cannot tackle the environmental question, because it is a typical case of a "market failure." This is because these are cases in which the activities of one economic agent have an impact on another directly, with no offset in the middle. As such, policies must be implemented to correct this impact (Fullerton and Stavins, 1998).

Based on this overarching framework discussing the positions taken by countries in international discussions and academic debates regarding the issues of the economy and the environment, the following section details the methodology used in this paper, the data, and the results obtained from this analysis.

3. METHODOLOGY, DATA, AND RESULTS

The research for this paper entailed analyzing the websites of the major bodies involved in environmental affairs, including both national governmental agencies and other stakeholders: non-governmental organizations (NGO), business chambers, academic institutions, and the press. The analytical procedure was to use the Google search engine to find the websites of the institutions chosen and the environmental concepts of interest.

Following this methodology, the governmental bodies included in the analysis were as follows:⁸ the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Nation, the Ministry of Production, Ministry of Foreign Relations and Worship, the Presidency of the Argentine Nation, and the Ministry of Energy and Mining. The local NGOs included: the Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN – Environment and Natural Resources Foundation), Fundación Ciudad (City Foundation), Fundación Metropolitana (Metropolitan Foundation), and Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina (Argentina Wildlife Foundation). Likewise, the Unión Industrial Argentina (UIA –Argentina Industrial Union), the Sociedad Rural Argentina (Argentina Rural Society), and Instituto para el Desarrollo Empresarial de la Argentina (IDEA - Business Development Institute of Argentina) were added to the mix to reflect the opinion of the business sector. The academic centers included the following universities with some sort of specialized department in environmental affairs: Universidad de San Andrés, Universidad Católica Argentina (UCA), Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (Flacso), Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA), and Universidad Di Tella. Finally, the following media outlets were included in the analysis (daily paid written press), which, according to the Instituto Verificador de Circulaciones (2016) have the highest readership in the country: *Diario Clarín*, *Diario Popular*, and *Diario La Nación*. Table A.1 of the Appendix contains the websites where the searches were conducted (last viewed on November 15, 2016).

The words used in the searches were as follows: "green economy" (GE), "green growth" (GG), "inclusive green growth," "green growth with inclusion," "sustainable development," "inclusive sustainable development," "sustainable development with inclusion." In Spanish, the term sustainable can be translated as both *sostenible* and *sustentable*, so the search was performed with both options so as not to omit any relevant information. We will deal with the differences between the two forms below.

Once the references to each of the concepts were located, only those considered to be related to environmental themes were recorded (based on the headlines). Press clippings, articles, academic documents, and more were all included. Photos and videos whose headlines were specifically tied to the searches were also considered. The count was done based on the number of publications found, not the number of terms appearing in them. For example, if an article contained the term "green economy" twice, the article was counted just once, regardless of how many times the term appeared in it. After the references were found, a second review was performed to check the publications found. Table 3 summarizes the results after this second layer of control.⁹ It is important to underscore that the table is designed to illustrate the order of magnitude in terms of the frequency that the "green" terms appear in the different bodies and organizations chosen, so the count of publications ought to be interpreted in relative terms rather than absolute.

First, it appears that most of the environmental references are related to the "development" concepts, while the terms "green economy" and "green growth" account for only a small percentage of the total mentions found. This result reflects, in part, the "novelty" of the newer "green" concepts for local stakeholders, although it might also be attributed to the skepticism prevailing around them.

A second question arising from the analysis is that the notion of the "green economy" was far predominant over "green growth" in all of its variations. This may be explained in part because the actions and discussions undertaken by local stakeholders on environmental matters take place largely within the framework of UNEP concepts, meant to support countries on environmental matters, rather than as part of the OECD definitions, as the OECD is for developed countries and Argentina does not belong to it.

A third interesting point that comes up from Table 3 is that the Spanish form *sustentable* predominates over *sostenible*. This may be due, on the one hand, to the fact that many of the articles captured in the search include the official names of the local government offices working on environmental matters. Essentially, the body charged with environmental affairs in Argentina is called the *Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable* (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development). Additionally, it is to be expected that the official designation of the national environmental body would have direct influence on the discourse of the different local stakeholders, which also explains, in part, the predominance of the version *sustentable*.

A linguistic aside is fitting here. In English, the terms used are *sustainable development and sustainability*,¹⁰ but in Spanish, according to the Real Academia Española (RAE): *Sostenible* means: 1. "That which can be sustained. 2. Especially in ecology and economics, that which can be maintained over a long time period without exhausting resources or causing serious environmental harm." *Sustentable* means that which can be sustained or defended with reasons. But the word *sustentabilidad* does not even appear in the RAE dictionary, and *sostenibilidad* means the quality of being sustainable. As such, it is definitely correct to speak of sustainable development in Spanish as *desarrollo sostenible* and of *sostenibilidad*, and not *desarrollo sustentable*.

A fourth point to highlight is related to the differences across stakeholders. Public agencies use the new "green" concepts with a more critical view. Analyzing the references from the governmental bodies, they reflect the national authorities' concern that "regreening" is in reality "green protectionism" and a driver of national policies. For example, there is the assertion that: "...in recent years, new instruments and arguments have been added that raise the degree of discretion available to those setting commercial policy. Among these new questions, three stand out: i) the application of 'green growth' and 'green economy' concepts as a new justification to put into practice commercial and environmental measures with commercial effects" (see Lottici *et al.*, 2013).¹¹

On another note, a search for the "green" concepts to elucidate the stance of the NGOs, business organizations, and academic institutions reveals that while "growth" or "green economy" are cited on the web pages of the principal local environmentalist NGOs and the academic centers chosen, very few appearances of "green" terms turned up on the official pages of the business chambers analyzed. Nevertheless, there were mentions related to "development with inclusion," reflecting the business chambers' support for the national government's position on "green" concepts.

(SEE TABLE 3)

For example, in the case of Unión Industrial Argentina: "The Argentine Industrial Union adheres to the national position, which will be presented formally at the Río+20 Summit, and emphasizes the instrumental nature of the 'green economy' concepts as yet another tool where our country could have great potential. However, the union deems it necessary to remark that this is not the only approach to consider in decision-making processes, as it does not *per se* guarantee the achievement of long-term sustainable development and economic growth objectives" (UIA, 2011).¹²

Other stakeholders do not share this perspective. The director of FARN, one of the most influential NGOs when it comes to environmental issues in the country, asserted (on the position of the Argentine state with respect to regreened concepts):

The denial of the Argentine state is not understood...the concept of 'green economy' is still not defined, but the worst thing we can do is not even discuss it. This is where changes need to happen. Moreover, Argentina advocates for sustainable development while failing to justify why it does not apply it.¹³

For their part, academic centers are starting to study these issues, tying them primarily to the changes in productive

processes that the new "green economy" concepts require and the national and international reforms that these processes entail. Finally, the mainstream media outlets refer to different definitions in their coverage of the G-20 and Río+20 meetings, generally reproducing the position of the national government and other stakeholders' pronouncements on the subject.

CONCLUSIONS

In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, in an attempt to overhaul and craft a more operational term for sustainable development, several international organizations began to speak of the "green economy" or "green growth." The discussion began to gather steam around the world, especially at the preparatory meetings for the Río+20 summit.

When the above terms are analyzed in detail, it emerges that "green economy" does not necessarily lead to "green growth," and that the latter, in turn, does not automatically mean "green development." The broader term is sustainable development (economically, environmentally, and socially). Likewise, the analysis clearly shows that the new terms added to sustainable development (read: "with social inclusion" or "inclusive") are redundant.

In turn, the examination of the documents published by each country or their remarks at international meetings suggests significant differences across their stances. Some nations are particularly optimistic about the utility of this "regreening" of the environmental discussion, while others see the phenomenon as frankly negative. In all of the works reviewed, Argentina took a halfway position. The hypothesis of this paper is that this stance can, in part, be explained by the differing opinions held by the relevant stakeholders in the country.

In an effort to capture these differences, it is not enough to analyze the official documents submitted to international forums as is usually done. That is why, to enrich this study, we conducted an intensive search for these various "regreening" terms on the websites of public agencies, influential non-governmental organizations, business clusters, the academic world, and media outlets in the country related to environmental topics.

Based on the information found, we conclude that, one, stakeholders in the country scarcely use "green" terms, preferring to broaden the use of more traditional concepts bound up in sustainable development (in both the *sustentable* and *sostenible* forms). This *a priori* may be due to the fact that these are relatively new terms that have yet to really work their way down into the discourse spoken by national actors, but it also may be that these actors are not fully convinced of the benefits of using them. Second, it appears that the notion of the "green economy" is far more frequent than "green growth"—whether inclusive or not—in the "green" universe. One possible interpretation is that the latter is promoted by UNEP (the body uniting all sorts of countries, whether industrialized or not, including Argentina), while the latter is used by the OECD (a group of developed countries to which Argentina does not belong). Third, another result is that the *sustentable* form of "sustainable development" is predominant over the *sostenible* form, even though *sostenible* is the correct term according to the RAE.

Qualitatively analyzing the references gathered from the various stakeholders intervening in these discussions in Argentina, the following emerges: the government holds a skeptical stance toward the new "green concepts"; NGOS, towing the international line, want these environmental topics to be part of the local conversation, too; business organizations tend to back the national government's position; academic centers are starting to study the topic; and the mainstream media outlets refer to these concepts primarily as part of their coverage of the G-20 and Río+20 meetings.

The analysis in this research of the different "green" concepts is tied into the broader discussion on the relationship between economic growth and the environment. Several authors believe that the solution to the environmental impact on the planet is to reduce the level of economic activity, which would imply austerity in using resources. Others hold that it is possible to continue growing, but with a lesser impact; still other professionals assert that the debate is something else altogether, about how to attain better welfare (meaning striking a balance between economic earnings and caring for people and the planet). The debate on the economy and sustainability is far from resolved. Such is the case in the Latin America region, too.

Finally, one interesting way to further build on the research in this paper would be to delve into whether there are any differences between the policies advocated by those who find "green" concepts attractive and those who object, at both the country level and the level of the experts who work on this topic. All in all, beyond the differences in terminology employed and the points of view with respect to "green" words, there is no doubt that lasting development will require working toward concrete actions rather than just defining new concepts.

APPENDIX

Table A1. Web Sites Reviewed for the Databas

<i>Institutions</i>	<i>Website</i>
Government	
Ministry of the Env. and Sust. Development	http://ambiente.gob.ar/
Ministry of Production	http://www.produccion.gob.ar/
Ministry of For. Relations and Worship	http://www.cancilleria.gov.ar/
Presidency of the Nation	http://www.caserosada.gob.ar/
Ministry of Energy and Mining	https://www.minem.gob.ar/
NGO	
FARN	http://www.farn.org.ar/
Fundación Ciudad	http://www.fundacionciudad.org.ar/
Fundación Metropolitana	http://metropolitana.org.ar/
Fund. Vida Silvestre Arg.	http://www.vidasilvestre.org.ar/
Business Chambers	
UIA	http://www.uia.org.ar/
Sociedad Rural Argentina	http://www.sra.org.ar/
IDEA	http://www.ideared.org/
Academic Institutions	
San Andrés	http://www.udesa.edu.ar/
UCA	http://www.uca.edu.ar/
Flacso	http://flacso.org.ar/
UBA	http://www.uba.ar/
Di Tella	http://www.utdt.edu/
Newspapers	
<i>Clarín</i>	http://www.clarin.com/
<i>La Nación</i>	http://www.lanacion.com.ar/
<i>Diario Popular</i>	http://www.diariopopular.com.ar/

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- ² The authors would like to acknowledge the work of Adrián Lagranda, Mariano Serra, and Luca Vugdelija in gathering the data and Orimar Socorro (from the UCEMA library) for the literature search. The idea for this paper came up in a project conducted for the LATN network. Opinions expressed in this publication are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of CEMA University.
- ³ World Bank (2012) explicitly states that "inclusive green growth is the pathway to sustainable development." As Jacobs (2012, p. 5) contended, every institution that speaks of "green growth" does so not to replace sustainable development, but rather as a way to achieve it ("The official institutions promotion green growth insist that it is not a substitute for sustainable development but a way of achieving it").
- ⁴ Bina (2013) concluded that this change in concepts was meant to "economize" the environmental discuss in a moment of crisis, seeking out rapid actions to respond to it.
- ⁵ In reality, the country that began to make "green" investments as way to revive the economy was South Korea. In fact, this was the precursor to "green" growth, thanks to the public stimulus offered to energy-efficient buildings, low-consumption vehicles, and efficient use of water and waste management (Morgera and Savaresi, 2013; Lorek and Spangenberg, 2014). It is therefore no coincidence that the meeting of the oECD ministers from which the statement on "green" growth emerged was presided over by the prime minister of South Korea at the time: Han Seung-soo (<http://www.oecd.org/mcm2009/>). South Korea is one of the countries that has implemented the most "green" growth policies ever since (Sonnenschein and Mundaca, 2016).
- ⁶ For example, Bina (2013) analyzed 24 texts to illustrate each of the concepts.
- ⁷ Weiss and Cattaneo (2017) and Cosme et al. (2017) reviewed publications in this branch of literature, asserting that literature of this kind has proliferated substantially in recent years. According to these latter authors, ever since the first academic paper was published using the word degrowth (in 2006), the number of web pages referring to this term has multiplied twenty-fold.
- ⁸ They were identified based on the authors' prior knowledge of the role these local stakeholders play in environmental affairs.
- ⁹ For reasons of space, the text citations are not listed in the article, but readers may feel free to write to the authors at vvd04@ucema.edu.ar to request them.
- ¹⁰ According to the Oxford dictionary, the definition of sustainable is: "1. Able to be maintained at a cer-tain rate or level: 'sustainable economic growth' and 2. Able to be upheld or defended: 'sustainable definitions of good educational practice.'"
- ¹¹ Cited verbatim from the Revista Argentina de Economía Internacional, num. 1, February 2013. Director for Multilateral Economic Affairs and G20, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina.
- ¹² Text citation from Revista UIA, num. 46, year 6, November 2011.
- ¹³ Text citation from the newspaper La Nación, June 2012.