# Article information:

‘But does sustainability need capitalism or an integrated report’ a commentary on ‘The International Integrated Reporting Council: A story of failure’ by Flower, J. - ScienceDirect  
<https://www-sciencedirect-com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/science/article/pii/S1045235414000756?via%3Dihub=>

# Article summary:

1. The International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC) has shifted away from its founding sustainability objectives to a weak, diluted, business-as-usual reporting framework embedded within an explicit capitalist ideology.

2. While it is difficult to argue against IIRC's objective of creating a globally accepted reporting framework that integrates financial, environmental, social and governance information in a clear, concise, consistent and comparable format, there are concerns about whether Integrated Reporting can achieve its environmental and social objectives.

3. The proposition that sustainability is subordinate to capitalism is highly controversial and strips sustainability of its radical vision. Integrated Reporting appears to relegate sustainability to a footnote of contemporary neo-liberal governing.

# Article rating:

May be slightly imbalanced: The article presents the information in a generally reliable way, but there are minor points of consideration that could be explored further or claims that are not fully backed by appropriate evidence. Some perspectives may also be omitted, and you are encouraged to use the research topics section to explore the topic further.

# Article analysis:

The article titled "But does sustainability need capitalism or an integrated report" is a commentary on the International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC) and its failure to achieve its original objectives. The author, Flower, offers a comprehensive analysis of the IIRC project and concludes that it has been professionally captured and can no longer claim to be a credible form of sustainability reporting.

While Flower's critique is based on a content analysis of key IIRC documents, his theoretical framework is at times idiosyncratic and draws on conventional theories of financial reporting, regulatory theory, agency theory, Kantian ethics, decision-usefulness, stakeholder theory, capitalism, political economy, and even insights from a Baseball Hall of Famer. However, despite the lack of a coherent theoretical framework, Flower's identified serious contradictions between the IIRC objectives and the emerging practices.

The article questions whether Integrated Reporting can achieve environmental and social objectives as claimed by IIRC. While it is difficult to argue against IIRC's objective to create a globally accepted reporting framework that integrates financial, environmental, social and governance information in a clear, concise format; there is very little evidence that these initiatives have substantively reduced the negative social and environmental impacts of corporations.

Flower correctly problematises the incompatibility of conventional reporting practices with sustainability. The extent of transformation sought by the IIRC is apparent when you are welcomed to their website with the following quotation: “Capitalism needs financial stability and sustainability.” This statement highlights the inherent contradiction between capitalism's focus on profit maximization and sustainability's focus on long-term environmental and social well-being.

Overall, while Flower's critique may have some potential biases due to his unconventional theoretical framework; his analysis provides critical insights into a complex multi-dimensional object of study. The article raises important questions about whether Integrated Reporting can achieve its intended objectives given its embedded capitalist ideology.

# Topics for further research:

* International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC)
* Sustainability reporting
* Capitalism and sustainability
* Environmental and social impacts of corporations
* Conventional reporting practices
* Integrated Reporting and its intended objectives

# Report location:

<https://www.fullpicture.app/item/2352338ec9eee11648b97aa69acb9a1a>