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## Environmental Political Communication: Nation-Branding and Political Socialization Through Environmentalism

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### 10.1 Introduction

Individual, social, and technological developments in the twenty-first century have affected social practices. Environmental issues have become vital in public and political arenas and transformed them (Hansen & Cox, 2015). The transformation of these social practices shaped social rules and institutions and the methods of political institutions and regulations. For example, The Environmental Performance Index (EPI) coordinated by Yale University's Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy in collaboration with Columbia University Center for International Earth Science Information Network, provides an annual data-driven summary of the state of sustainability around the world (Environmental Performance Index, 2020).

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Environmental communication occurs every day (Pezzullo & Cox, 2018). Political institutions and organizations have existed in conflict and reconciliation by taking root in power relations in line with their values and interests. The results of these conflicts and collaborations have spread to social-cultural practices and have gained institutional functioning. Media is essential at this point. Social practices that interact communicatively in a network exist and spread through the media as images in society's mind. The central role of media and communication is defining the environment as an issue for public and political concern (Hansen & Cox, 2015). In this context, environmentalists were able to put the environmental issue into the political agenda after much effort, especially as a result of global warming and pollution. It is seen that primarily the production of information on environmental issues that emerged with the media and its communication network later became a method used by the political authorities/institutions, corporate companies, and other actors to convince the society and create perception.

Communication is a human activity, and these communicative activities have a social, political, and individual goal. Environmental communication and environmentalism as a tool of political communication translate human relationships with the rest of nature. Jurin et al. (2010, 3) define this process as people trying to make new meanings from the emotions created by the world around us; the human population has risen "during the last few centuries with rapidity usually found only in the microbial realm. We crave nature even as we crowd everything non-human"

Dahlgren (2009) stated that media plays a crucial role in the political process. As an institution, media is an important concept as it can reach a large part of society. Its structure includes media, technical, economic, philological, and cultural aspects of society. In terms of the universality that democracy claims, conflicting priorities are in all parts of society. The media, which is shaped by market economy conditions, shapes the universal structure of social integrity by granting authority to the citizens

Environmental communication should contribute to society and the environment in some way. This contribution is provided by activities that will mobilize society. These are seminars and panels where environmental damages are explained, websites that increase environmental awareness,

articles, publications, films, campaigns, and environmentalist movements organized by environmental groups (Milstein, 2009).

As Castells stated, “the process of social change requires the reprogramming of the communication networks in terms of their cultural codes and the implicit social and political values and interests they convey. It is not an easy task” (2009, 302). This is because communication networks are diverse and incisive, and these networks can involve and contain cultural differentiation of messages in this new public space. Castells also stated: “The public mind is captured in programmed communication networks, limiting the impact of autonomous expressions outside the networks” (ibid.)

However, in a world marked by the rise of mass self-communication, social movements, and insurgent politics, people have the opportunity to be in the public space from multiple channels. With the help of non-hierarchical communication networks and traditional media to disseminate the images and messages, individuals, even if they come from a lower position of financial, symbolic, and institutional power, have stronger chances for implementing social and political change.

Castell (2009) states that:

However, their accrued power as alternative messengers comes with a servitude: they must adapt to the language of the media and to the formats of interaction in the communication networks. On balance, the rise of networks of mass self-communication offers greater chances for autonomy. However, for this autonomy to exist, social actors must assert the right to mass self-communication by preserving freedom and fairness in the deployment and management of the networked infrastructure of communication and in the practice of the multimedia industries. (2009, 302)

In this context, environmentalists could put the environmental issue into the political agenda. After a long struggle especially on global warming and environmental pollution. Hence, the production of information on environmental issues that emerged with the media and its communication networks later became a method used by the political plane, corporate companies, and other actors to create the desired perception within society.

The peculiar “non-political politics of climate change”, as described by Hammond (2018, 2), is considered a signifier of a transformation from “post-politics or post-democracy which supports this transformation. Hammond believes that non-political politics of climate change is both a symptom and a cause. This situation creates the questions whether part of the problem may be about the way that climate change is typified, negotiated, and submitted to the public, and whether a separate representation is possible to politicize climate change instead of de-politicizing it (Hammond, 2018, 2).

This chapter discuss the relationship between environmental communication and political communication and how environmental communication works as a nation-branding tool.

## 10.2 Environmental Political Communication

### 10.2.1 What Is Environmental Communication

Environmental communication is simply defined as the transmission of information focused on environmental issues. Media organizations, political parties, and all the participants in social life include all communication practices on environmental issues. Environmental communication differs from other types of communication in terms of both the breadth of its fields of study and its characteristics. It is expressed as a pragmatic and constructive tool used to understand the environment and relations with natural life. This situation provides an opportunity to negotiate between different points-of-view of the society in revealing environmental problems and in the face of these problems. Environmental communicators are based on the assumption that a crisis environment will arise when nature is affected by human-induced problems. In this case, they reflect how nature–human relations are and those who build and adopt man’s relationship with nature. In this context, environmental communication achieves the following goals:

1. warns the public against environmental problems,
2. ensures that the public is informed about environmental problems,

3. educates people against environmental problems,
4. activates against environmental problems,
5. helps to solve environmental problems and ensures that steps are taken in this way.

Robert Cox, a renowned scholar in Communications Studies, whose principal research areas are environmental and climate change communication and strategic studies of social movements, pointed out two aspects of environmental communication. According to Cox, environmental communication is a pragmatic and founding discipline. It covers the relationships we establish with the natural world as well as understanding the environment. According to Cox, communication on the environment is both pragmatic and constitutive. In terms of the quality of being pragmatic, Cox stated as follows:

It consists of verbal and nonverbal modes of interaction that convey an instrumental purpose. Pragmatic communication greets, informs, demands promises, requests, educates, alerts, persuades, rejects, and more. For example, a pragmatic function of communication occurs when an environmental organisation educates its supporters and rallies public support for protecting a wilderness area or when the electric utility industry attempts to change public perceptions of coal with TV ads promoting “clean coal” as an energy source. “Buy this shampoo” or “vote for this candidate” are explicit verbal pragmatic appeals. (Pezzulo and Cox, 2018, 34)

Furthermore, according to Cox, environmental communication is constitutive; thus, this type of communication necessitates both verbal and nonverbal types of interaction that “shape, orient, and negotiate meaning, values, and relationships” (*ibid.*). This type of communication helps people look from a certain viewpoint and remember specific notions and emotions. It also encourages people to communicate with other people and elicits very clear emotions that motivate people.

## 10.2.2 The Relation of Politics, Democracy, Media, and Political Socialization

There are three primary conditions for evaluating democratic functioning in a country: constitutionality, participation, and rational choice. First, there should be a standard set of procedures and rules that everyone understands and it determines the state's functioning. The behaviour of citizens and the operation of the country are governed entirely by these collectively agreed rules. Secondly, citizens' participation in decision-making mechanisms is essential, and the institutional functioning is regulated accordingly. Finally, in the operation of the institutional state, we have mentioned, citizens should have the ability to choose/decide the best for them among many options for their collective social interests. Thus, citizens should be aware of the developments in the society's institutional functioning and the state and have full knowledge about the structure of this functioning.

From these angles, citizens should be well informed in a democratic process, know the political process and its operations even at the maximum level, and know the factors in action to make decisions about them. The media gains importance at this point. First, in a democratic process, the media informs the citizens about what happens in the social environment in which they live. Second, it teaches and enables reflection on the facts in the social process. Third, the media creates a platform where all the elements of social-political operation can be discussed. This platform plays a role in creating a spiritual public opinion by providing all political thoughts and discourses to be addressed. Fourth, it enables the media to monitor political institutions and structures before the public. Media is a bridge between political power and institutions and society and acts as a control mechanism. It ensures that political authorities and institutions' actions and discourses reach the public through the transfer of public opinion to political authorities and institutions. Finally, the media undertakes the political process and functioning, archiving of social orientations.

In a democracy, a free press should also be free from economic forces, such as market pressures and advertising dollars. Powerful economic

forces should not prevent the media from covering important issues of the day and thus limit debate. A press free from governmental and economic control will have great benefits for citizens because such a press should have several key characteristics. First, the media should act as an intermediary between citizens and elites, providing both with the information essential for a well-functioning democracy. Specifically, media organizations should provide citizens with the information and analysis necessary to make smart decisions. Further, the media should cover how citizens think about issues so that elites will be able to make educated decisions on behalf of their constituents. Second, a free press should provide a forum for diverse views. Elite and citizen opinion from across the spectrum should be presented so that debate can be wide-ranging, and critical or alternative voices will be heard. Finally, the media should play a “watchdog” role. Because citizens cannot attend every city council meeting or participate in every public hearing held by a federal agency, they rely on the media to scrutinize the actions of public officials. The media should provide citizens with the information necessary to hold the government accountable and act as a check on the judicial, legislative, and congressional branches of government. This vision of the media is most consistent with the one held by participatory democratic theorists. Participatory theorists want citizens to be actively engaged in the political process. By providing accurate information, the media creates knowledgeable citizens ready to participate in the give-and-take of politics. Moreover, by presenting diverse viewpoints, the media ensures that both privileged and marginalized voices will be heard. This facilitates participation on the part of all citizens, thus redressing inequality in society, a core concern of participatory theorists. Participatory democratic theorists believe that political participation makes people better citizens, and they see the potential for the media to assist in that process (Clawson & Oxley, 2017).

### 10.2.3 A Brief Look Into the Effect of Political Communication

People live together and build all elements of social functioning together. This sociality and cooperation that they create need to establish a continuous relationship with each other. People are members of many groups, and this grouping also creates communication and identity structures. Sociality plays a vital role in the formation of human identity.

According to Louw (2005), this situation constitutes an interactive process, and the “collectivities” that develop in this interactive continuum can be the origin of identity (2005, 95–96). This includes that the people reconcile themselves with the so-called collectivities, rhetoric, applications supporting these reconciliations. As people internalize this rhetoric and applications, they can build up an identity from these collectivities and their norms.

Symbolic interactionists like Erving Goffman struggle with the sense of self that emerges Interactive continuum of sharing originated from such relationships (ibid.). Each of these reconciliations and collectivities represent content and identity that incorporated with these relationships. Thus, people are complex creatures; therefore, a person can participate in various groups and internalize different identities. In the end, generally, in a specific group, identity or relationship dominates the others.

All these processes have a specific purpose. Especially from this point, political communication, political powers, and institutions aim to reach every segment of society to maximize their ideas, actions, and functioning. The media acts as a platform for political authorities and institutions in this respect. Political advertisements, statements of those who have a say in the state administration, conferences, etc.

The existence of global information networks producing instant transmission of news to world audiences makes it hard to manage the news. Some democratic governments understand that the relationship between the official establishment and the media is necessarily below points show that the relationship between this type of governments and the media:

- It becomes virtually impossible to customize news for one audience since it spills over to other audiences. Yet, politicians address domestic

audiences with themes that will resonate with them, as during elections, foreign audiences are expected to treat such rhetoric with indulgence.

- Investigative journalism and competition for eyeballs ensure that the media are alert and scrutinize official statements. However uncomfortable this may be for officials, openness and transparency are essential features not only of a democracy but also of a good system of foreign affairs governance.
- Astute spokespersons and background briefers slant news to spin the story. Control over language and the use of the “right” key phrases shape the immediate perception (e.g., the restrained, nonemotive words with which an Israeli attack that results in Palestinian fatalities is typically reported by CNN). However, over the medium-term, news management does not work for the same reason that the public cannot be manipulated all the time.
- Often the best news management comes from the heads of government; they have a range of options for communicating their standpoint. Leaders who have media skills gain an advantage.
- A consequence of the rising importance of domestic publics is that foreign ministry spokespersons now focus mainly on the home reactions to foreign affairs issues, to the point of reduced attention to projecting home policy to the foreign media. This is an inversion of the past role of foreign ministries. By the same token, even on overseas visits, leaders are much more interested in what the home media say than in reaching out to foreign publics via the media in the countries visited. Ideally, the one should balance the other, and foreign ministries have their work cut out in ensuring that the latter are treated as an equal priority.
- The diaspora is often a key multiplier in terms of spreading messages about the country of origin and helping in image projection. An increasing number of countries now have an explicit diaspora outreach policy. (Rana, 2011, 86–87)

Castells states;

Messages, organisations, and leaders who do not have a presence in the media do not exist in the public mind. Therefore, only those who can convey their messages to the citizens at large have the chance to influence their decisions in ways that lead to their own access to power positions in the state and/or maintain their hold over political institutions. (...) The media constitutes the space where power relationships are decided between com-

peting political and social actors. Therefore, almost all actors and messages must go through the media in order to achieve their goals. They have to accept the rules of media engagement, the language of the media, and media interests. (Castells, 2009, 194)

### **10.2.4 The Emergence of Environmental Communication and Its Relationship with the Political Communication**

Environmental communication is a daily issue, and it occurs every day in our lives. Environmental problems cannot be separated in human life, just like in communication structure, and they are essential for human life. Environmental communication tries to reveal ecological problems and includes an effort to create consciousness and awareness. This effort to create awareness is an element of pressure that directs political powers and institutions, sectoral and economic structures, and social movements to act on the environment. However, environmental communication can be an element of pressure and can transform into one of the political communication tools used by political authorities, institutions, and/or countries. This section will discuss both the definition of environmental communication and its connection with political communication.

First, the concept of environmental communication might be confusing for the people; therefore, this is simply called a talk on environmental issues such as air and water pollution, climate change, polar bears, and destruction of forests. A clearer definition for environmental communication is needed, including languages, images, protests, music, and scientific reports. Pezzullo and Cox define this as:

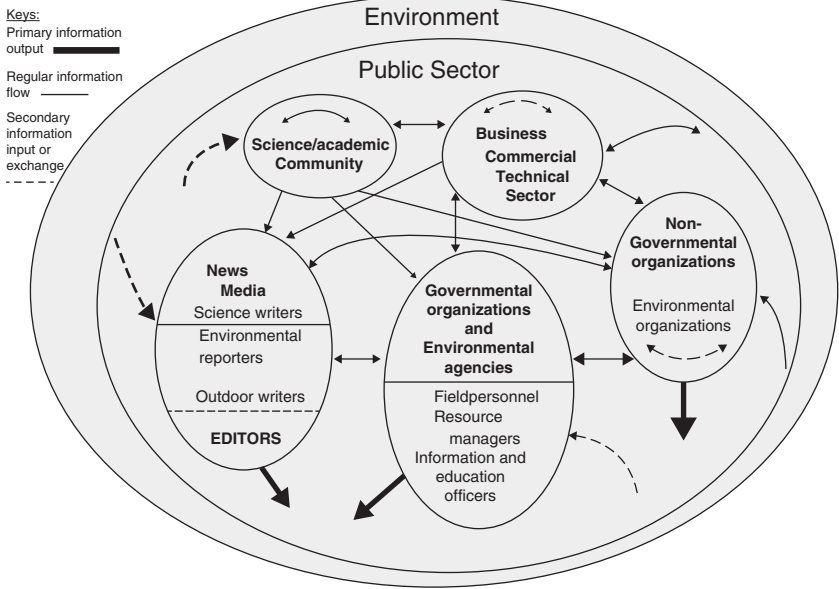
Our language and other symbolic acts do something, as well as say something. Language actively shapes our understanding, creates meaning, and orients us to a wider world. From this perspective, communication may focus on what we express (emotions, information, hierarchies, power, etc.), how we express it (in which style, through which media, when, by whom, and where, etc.), and/or with what consequences (cultural norms, political decisions, popular trends, etc.). (2018, 12)

At this point, symbolic interaction is important because it provides a stronger definition of environmental communication because it shows us the world that we live in in a more transparent way. Environmental communication is used to emphasize “the pragmatic and constitutive modes of expression—the naming, shaping, orienting, and negotiating—of our ecological relationships in the world, including those with non-human systems, elements, and species” (Pezzullo & Cox, 2018, 13). In line with this definition, environmental communication serves two different functions: First is the pragmatic function, verbal and nonverbal interactions using for an instrumental purpose. The purposes include welcoming, requesting, demanding, informing, promising, educating, persuading, and alerting, among others. The second function is the constitutive function which the verbal and nonverbal interactions use for shaping, orienting and negotiating meaning, values, and relationships (ibid.).

Environmental Communication does not appear as just a communication method. It is a structure that forms the basis of many types of research. However, environmental communication has an economic infrastructure rather than a scientific construction. Primarily, companies operating in the production sector within the framework of the sustainable development principle attach importance to environmental communication in the idea of a sustainable company. The concept of maintaining the balance of profit, making human resources “sensitive” in the institution’s operation, and of course, increasing the elements of being preferred by the consumers with its “environmentally friendly” image is at the forefront. The idea of “respecting the Earth” appears as a profit-oriented organization. Economics and technological developments constitute only one pillar of environmental communication.

At this point, it is necessary to examine Environmental communication within the framework of the “Communicating Environmental Information Model” exhibited by William Witt in 1973 (Fig. 10.1).

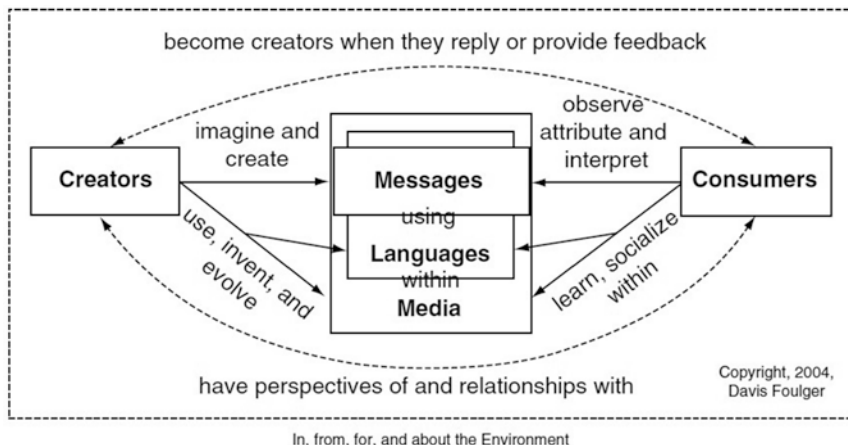
When the Communicating Environmental Information Model is examined, it can seem that many different elements are included in the communication structure: The economic, scientific, non-state actors in the social structure and political powers and institutions interact. Communicating about the environment means establishing relationships with all social institutions from “nature.” This relationship has become a



**Fig. 10.1** “Communicating Environmental Information Model,” Witt (1973), cited in Jurin et al. (2010, 16)

social and cultural phenomenon in developing communication technologies, especially with structures such as green marketing, green advertising and green art. Davis Foulger created the formation of the “Ecological Model of the Communication Process” by redesigning William Witt’s model in today’s conditions (Fig. 10.2).

This model defines environmental communication through “creating an image” in line with today’s conditions. Although this definition is perceived as an economic structuring, image-creation elements are also related to economic, political, and sociological aspects in today’s conditions. Image creation is an economical approach, especially as an act of influencing consumer behaviour and creating a consumer’s perception. However, environmental problems have a political base, and their economic structure makes environmental communication the centre of attraction for political communication. Also, NGOs use environmental communication and political communication elements, primarily because they are defined as “outsider groups”. First, they use these tools



**Fig. 10.2** “Ecological Model of the Communication Process,” Davis Foulger (2004), cited in Jurin et al. (2010, 18)

to access the media and attract public attention. Second, these structures act intending to frame environmental issues and use media and communication elements accordingly. In addition to being the factors that trigger social movements, NGOs are also an essential element of political pressure in politics in the twenty-first century. Many environmental organizations operate in the field of politics.

At this stage, it is necessary to discuss the environmental movement’s politicization. The development of environmental actions occurred in two waves. The first wave is the “nature protectionism” understanding that continued from the end of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century. Many environmental protection organizations emerged during this period. The new ecological problems created by industrial society have led to an increase in environmental protests worldwide. Considering that the demonstrations and rallies carried out by environmentalist organizations and groups with an environmentalist understanding did not find the desired response in the political field, environmentalists led to party formation. Green politics emerged from environmentalists thinking that the natural and urban social environment in which people live and their relations with this environment

should change. They expressed their criticism on this issue as a second wave.

Green politics was shaped on the axis of values adopted by non-governmental organizations focused on green understanding, which has the characteristic of being a pressure and interest group in expressing the green parties and environmental problems that started to be established after the twentieth century. These environmentalist non-governmental organizations continue their activities in line with the environmentalist approach they take as a basis. Green parties (Maesele, 2015; Bhattarai & Adhikari, 2017; Pezzullo & Cox, 2018; Hammond, 2018; Wang & Keith, 2020), which were established in between 1970s and 1980s in countries such as New Zealand, Australia, England, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Ireland have adopted different values in their party programmes, but they share some similar criteria. Green parties express that they value environmental goals, embrace social justice, participatory democracy, non-violence, and derive their strength from three elements: environmentalism, democracy, and social justice.

With the public and environmental organizations' pressure, the states try to be "environmentally sensitive". From countries' perspective, especially with the increase of digital communication technologies, environmental organizations and the public face more pressure to solve environmental problems or be environmentally sensitive. Apart from that, ecological communication is an excellent political communication tool in terms of guiding public perception. As a political communication tool, environmental communication is necessary to create the image of political authorities and institutions concerned about environmental problems. We will discuss the elements of this phenomenon at the point of nation-branding in the following section.

## 10.3 Nation-Branding Through Environmental Communication

### 10.3.1 The Scope of Nation-Branding

Nation-branding, in short, is the name given to communication activities that highlight local and international goals and national priorities, resulting from the interaction of commercial and public sector activities with each other. Nation-branding activities are the reorganization of the capital, the effort to obtain economic, political, and sociological advantages in line with various goals and objectives by combining public and private sector resources. In this way, it is aimed to be at the forefront of tourism, especially in the international arena, being an attractive centre of foreign capital investments in import–export activities, higher education, and a qualified workforce.

For clarity, it is necessary to distinguish between a national brand, defined as a brand available nationally as distinct from a regional or test-market brand and a nation-brand, which refers to the brand is the country, state, or nation in question. “The nation-brand is defined as the unique, multi-dimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for all of its target audiences. This definition acknowledges the multi-faceted nature of the nation-brand, together with the need to integrate national identity dimensions. Moreover, the proposed definition of the nation-brand also recognises the contention that brands exist in consumers’ minds rather than being a totally controllable creation of the marketing function. The definition, therefore, incorporates a reference to perceptual attributes and target markets. (...) Nations are making increasingly conscious efforts to hone their country branding to recognise the need to fulfil three major objectives: to attract tourists, stimulate inward investment, and boost exports. A further objective for many nations is talent attraction, whereby countries compete to attract higher education students and skilled workers” (Dinnie, 2008, 15–17). In addition, nation-branding increases the stability of the currency. This stability brings with it international credibility and investor confidence. This credibility and reputation increase

international political influence and national determination to build strong partnerships. Consequently, nation-building is getting a more substantial structure by enhancing trust, pride, ambition.

However, nation-branding is an image-building process for countries. Especially in international relations, the state's image that demonstrates respect for social and international values, human rights, and democratic functioning, leads to the formation of a positive image of the country in the eyes of other nations. However, while nation-branding provides the separation of countries from each other in terms of the principle of values in the international arena and a positive perception of foreign public opinion, it also appears as a priority in domestic politics and acts within the framework of national pride.

Nation-branding is defined as a form of “soft” power, in contrast to the “hard” power of military or economic assets. Softer than sticks, less coercive than carrots, the public articulation by national leaders of a conscious strategy that draws on their jurisdiction's territorial, cultural, and commercial specificity promises to yield more significant results than the narrower conception of traditional power resources. Such a strategy also appeals to state-crafters as better suited to the “public” or “popular” diplomacy requirements of nation-states in the contemporary context. The unprecedented expansion and decentralization of information systems mean that national interests are now broadcast to audiences at large, complicating or overriding the narrowcasting of traditional state-to-state diplomacy. As a communications strategy, nation-branding promises to generate international awareness of a national client, using proven marketing techniques to break through the clutter of a saturated and fragmented global media environment (Mogaji, 2021). To carry influence or curry favour, national representatives must find a way to make their jurisdiction visible in the competitive attention economy of media consumption. Nation-branding conveys to the world that the nation is not only visible but also well regarded in international circles. Moreover, as an intensely visual practice, the nation's brand image itself—its logos, slogans, typefaces, and symbols—is well suited to the global vernacular of modern media. It is the quintessential national shorthand for today's hyperbolic global information context (Aronczyk, 2013).

### 10.3.2 Environmental Communication as a Tool of Nation-Branding

There are specific reasons why the ecological movement emerged as a social movement. The primary reason is the dramatic increase in economic problems related to land, water, and air. The damage to the environment is scientifically and technically measurable. The fact that even “invisible” disasters such as global warming and ozone depletion can be measured and the results are shared with the public ensures that the environment remains on the global agenda concretely. Besides, the fact that the ecological damages and the compensation for these damages have ceased to be local and have reached universal dimensions and threaten not only today’s humanity but also humanity’s future has led to the formation and development of the ecological movement. It has expanded into environmental politics. This expansion in the ecological movement has had both theoretical and practical gains. The ecological movement contributed to political theory by developing the perimeter-centricity versus the anthropocentricity and by bringing the idea of limiting the notion of progress. Although it is small in terms of voting and parliamentary representation, ecological politics has had many positive effects on political life, with the media’s attention, environmental awareness, nuclear policy, and disarmament.

Castells defines the concept of politics as the distribution of power in state institutions. Power relations in these institutions construct meaning through the image of the human mind. Castells describes this situation as the images of ideas in the human mind. According to Castells, social structuring is different from individuals in image formation and social communication. Media plays a decisive role in contemporary societies. Messages that are not included in the media cannot be included in the public. These structures are also valid for political powers and institutions.

In other words, increasing awareness of environmental problems is essential for the media. There are several reasons for this. One of the reasons is that there are personal reasons as environmental issues affect people’s living space and life directly. This is why many journalists are professionally and ideologically committed to spreading ecological

awareness. For example, the Society of Environmental Journalists, which was established in 1990 to include journalists operating in North America, can be cited as an example in this context. While media and media professionals convey the messages of the environmental movement, they reproduce the messages within the framework of journalism and the commercial enterprises of the media.

The contemporary economic and technological transformation that the media are now undergoing has introduced new issues and is reshaping institutional structures. Economic pressures are reducing the workforce in traditional journalism while also opening up new opportunities. While statistics are hard to come by, specialized journalists (environment, science, health) seem to be particularly threatened as news organizations lay off workers. Environmental reporters may be joining health and science reporters in being seen as an expensive luxury in newsrooms, meaning more and more stories about the environment could be covered by general assignment reporters for whom all this is unfamiliar territory. In addition to that the new opportunities, which generally involve new Internet-based media, may be very good for democracy in terms of the proliferation of voices, but may also dilute the impact of informed voices, making it more difficult for information consumers to discern what points of view should be deemed legitimate and which “truths” are simply made up to fit someone’s preconceptions—or to serve their interests (Priest, 2015).

In today’s world, it is sometimes argued, anyone can be a journalist: bloggers, tweeters, activists, scientists, and even ordinary citizens can act as journalists. So, can public relations people be telling the story from the point of view of a particular stakeholder? The Internet hosts the viewpoints of all these groups and more, and as traditional journalism retreats, stakeholder-supported websites proliferation. In one highly visible effort, in 2009, research universities in the English-speaking world banded together to create a site designed to publicize their own news—including environmental news—directly to the public. On the one hand, this may result in more publicity for important research work; on the other, its governing board is made up of the communication officers of the participating universities, a group with an unambiguous stake in the institutional promotion. These trends—one economic, one technological, both

eroding traditional journalistic practice—may be a good sign for broader participation in both journalism and policy. Yet observers of contemporary trends might well be concerned that it is too easy, in today's world, for individuals to avoid confrontation with viewpoints incompatible with their own while seeking out “maverick” perspectives that could reinforce their prejudices. People can live in their own realities; in other words, making consensus irrelevant. The practice of “objective” and “balanced” journalism takes on new meaning in this context. Often missing from studies that focus on media messages about the environment and science is a detailed account of audiences and how they differ. We do not always fully understand what specific factors cause dynamics such as agenda-setting or framing to influence certain people in certain ways. We know that to be motivated to act, people need to recognize the existence of a problem, and they also need to see themselves as part of the solution. Media accounts need to make clear to people what they can do—to suggest a clear and realistic path toward action—and why they should do it. This inevitably involves ethical and value-based reasoning, as well as scientific arguments. Journalists, trained to be “objective” in covering other kinds of stories, often shy away from these dimensions. Most do not see motivating audience action to be part of their job description. In addition, audiences bring their ideas into the equation; they are not simply passive consumers of media messages (Priest, 2015).

Secondly, the media can create a social construction on the environment. It undertakes the task of creating social awareness when conveying environmental organizations' messages. For example, the “Global Day of Action against Climate Change” organized by Greenpeace and independent environmental organizations was held in 2005 when the Kyoto Protocol was going to become legally effective. The Internet and the media enabled the content and structure of this action to be publicized and initiated international activities. Additionally, the “Live Earth” concert organized by Al Gore in 2007 was broadcast on television, radio, Internet, and wireless channels in more than 130 countries with the participation of names such as Madonna, Lenny Kravitz, Metallica, and Roger Waters.

From the state, environmental communication elements are used to reduce social pressure factors, use resources economically efficiently,

consolidate national identity in domestic policy, compete in the international arena, and create a strong state image within the scope of nation-branding. Nepal is a particularly good example, as it is a state with substantial activities in agriculture, hydropower, and tourism, and is one of the countries affected by climate change. However, as a country in the category of Less Developed Countries in terms of economic development, it is among the countries most affected by environmental problems due to nature-dependent life. For these reasons, it supports all state institutions and social development under the leadership of the Ministry of Population and Environment (MOPE) to create awareness against climate change in Nepal and to take an overall and cooperative action regionally. Also, social awareness studies and training on state and sectoral environmental problems were organized within the scope of the Climate Change Management Division and Environment Division in the internal functioning of the ministry (Anup, 2018, 24).

Apart from the state functioning, it is possible to talk about the private sector-based operation. The green hotel brands in Malaysia are one example. Malaysia is a popular tourist destination, especially for cultural tourism, eco-tourism, and nature tourism. Ahn and Kwon stated that a “green hotel” is alternatively known as an “environmentally friendly hotel,” an “eco-friendly hotel,” or a “sustainable hotel.” “Green hotel” refers to lodging that offers various eco-friendly principles and programmes (e.g., reducing waste, improving towel use frequency, installing low-flow showerheads, using energy-efficient lights, minimizing energy consumption, and adopting recycling practices) (2020). A green hotel refers to facilities devoted to saving energy and water and decreasing solid waste to minimize the impact on the environment (Hsiao et al., 2014, 199). Many hotel brands in Malaysia have initiated green hotel practices, especially those that are chain affiliated. This situation appears as a step towards affecting the perception of the country along with the brand perception.

It is possible to see the image-creation efforts of local regions or cities using environmental communication elements. In May 2008, a new place brand for Växjö as “the Greenest City in Europe” was presented, paraphrasing the headline of the recently aired BBC programme. With the Greenest City in Europe (GCE) place brand, both the political and business leaders wanted to maintain the position of Växjö as a prominent

city in the field of environmental policy, yet at the same time emphasize the strong local economic development (Andersson, 2016). In Växjö, the will and capacity of investing public funds in large-scale infrastructures that contribute to environmental policy-making have a long tradition, trailing back long before the decision to become a fossil fuel-free city, with the investments in the lake restoration and thermal power plant as the most notable examples. However, since the launch of the GCE place brand, several additional major public investments have been made to support the green branding of Växjö. As noted by members of staff in the municipality, many of these investments have been facilitated by using the credibility of the GCE place brand as leverage. Major public investments have also continued to be made in the local thermal power plant. With an investment of approximately 108 million euros, the production of heat and electricity became 100% based on bio-based fuels (i.e., wood-chips) in 2015. The investment was motivated by the opportunity to reduce the emissions of carbon dioxide even further while improving the city's green image. The city has also invested in a local biogas plant with some support from national funding programmes. The production of biogas has primarily been aimed at providing the local fleet of buses with biogas instead of diesel. Prior to these investments, the issue of diesel-fuelled buses had, for some time, caused concern among staff members in the local administration and was considered a sore spot for the credibility of the GCE place brand and the identity of Växjö as a green city (ibid.).

One way of attracting positive international attention is to launch campaigns that aim to have foreign audiences in “awe” of the country in question. For example, Estonia aims at being a technological avant-gardist when it comes to statecraft. The country prides itself on having the first paperless parliament in the world. It has initiated a programme for “e-residency,” where the country offers e-citizenship to foreign nationals (Tamppuu & Masso, 2018). The strife for “soft power value” through engaging in such projects is evident. A similar example is that of the Swedish government—then headed by techno-optimist Prime Minister Carl Bildt—when it launched the first embassy in the virtual environment of Second Life. All activity was abandoned once the goal of getting international press attention was reached (Bolin & Miazhevich, 2018, 10).

## 10.4 Conclusion

Environmental problems are among the essential elements of human life. These elements require coexistence beyond individual behaviour patterns and can be solved by acting on common decision-making mechanisms and shared public opinion. In particular, awareness of environmental problems is a priority. However, there are specific requirements for social relations to work. The first of these needs is that individuals can notice social factors and facts. In other words, people have to know the existing problems to establish a connection with that problem. Secondly, it is a necessity to ensure social coordination. This coordination requires the coexistence of many different views and experiences. A social organization follows this structure. In other words, political powers and institutions, economic processes, and social movements form the basis of the structure.

Today's economic structures come to the fore with the production and distribution of symbols and information. These structures are used not only by economic institutions but also by political powers and institutions. Image creation is a crucial element in today's social functioning. In light of all these structures, it is essential to define the concept of environmental communication.

Environmental communication is an element intertwined with the concepts of political communication and nation-branding. The main reason for this is that environmental problems have both economic and political consequences, political authorities and institutions have social bases that they must persuade to put them and keep them in power. In this case, environmental problems damage leads to social movements by NGOs and environmentalists, creating pressure for the political authorities and institutions to respond and provide solutions. This pressure is expressed as environmental communication.

However, environmental communication also emerges as a political communication tool. In this direction, political authorities and institutions can use environmental communication tools to persuade social movements and/or come to the fore economically and politically. As in the Nepal example, these tools can be organized by the state and are

expected to raise public awareness of environmental problems and gain economic and political benefits. As in the case of green hotels in Malaysia, some economic initiatives can generate an economic income while at the same time creating a positive impact on the perception of the state on the peoples of other states. As in the Vaxjö example, these environmental political communication elements can be used within more local elements. While these local elements positively affect other nations' perceptions of the relevant state, they also reinforce national feelings and domestic political elements.

While environmental communication is a functioning field within itself, on the other hand due to the underlisted reasons, environmental communication acts as a part of political communication in the sense that:

- being oriented towards values, actions, and daily life practices,
- being individualistic as well as having the potential to organize a social action, in other words, to provide political socialization,
- Based on environmental ideology and goals despite being embellished with cultural elements and conveying environmental elements to society; environmental communication frames environmental issues and to try to create a perception through the media.

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