Examining the Role of Human Rights, Markets, Media and Ethics in Environmental Governance

Kariuki Muigua

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Kariuki Muigua*

Abstract

Environmental governance models are evolving due to marketization, decentralization, and globalization, highlighting the importance of cross-scale problems and affecting individual environmental action. Collaborative governance is becoming more popular as corporations, political players, and civil society organizations allocate environmental costs. The political climate supporting environmental legislation is evolving, with more players involved in decision-making and a shift towards economic, informational, cooperative, or self-regulatory tactics. To ensure collective action for environmental protection and conservation, environmental governance approaches involving all players are needed. This paper makes a case for the place of a human rights approach, market-based approaches, the media and ethics in enhancing environmental governance, in addition to the existing traditional top-down approaches.

1. Introduction

Three main forces—marketization, decentralisation, and globalization—are laying the foundation for the hybridization of environmental governance approaches.[1] It has been observed that individual environmental action is becoming less successful as a result of these changes in social and governmental relations.[2] Cross-scale concerns are becoming increasingly important in environmental governance initiatives, and the weaknesses of

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[1] Lemos, M.C. and Agrawal, A., 2009. Environmental governance and political science. *Governance for the environment: New perspectives*, pp.69-97, p.73.
[2] Ibid., p.73.

any one governance agent are becoming more apparent.[3] As political players in state agencies, business offices, non-governmental organisations, and civil society organisations try to divide the costs of environmental action, this has resulted in increasingly loud calls for collaborative forms of governance.[4]

The structure and substance of the main environmental issues that environmental policymaking must address have undergone a significant transformation.[5] Concurrently, there is a significant shift occurring in the political context that supports environmental legislation.[6] A wider range of actors participating in political decision-making, the growing significance of governmental levels other than the nation-state, and a shift in the modes of steering away from direct regulation and towards a greater emphasis on economic, informational, cooperative, or self-regulatory strategies are the characteristics of this change.[7]

Environmental policy faces significant challenges in addressing environmental problems and addressing strategies.[8] Despite some successes, the focus is now on areas where policy has not significantly improved over time. The regulatory repertoire and actors involved have grown, but traditional hierarchical intervention is being replaced by

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[3] Ibid., p.73.

[4] Ibid., p.73.

[5] Jänicke, M. and Jörgens, H., 2020. New approaches to environmental governance. In *The ecological modernisation reader* (pp. 156-189). Routledge, p.167.

[6] Ibid., p. 167.

[7] Ibid., p.167; *New Tech, New Threats, and New Governance Challenges: An Opportunity to Craft Smarter Responses?* (no date). Available at: https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2019/08/new-tech-new-threats-and-new-governance-challenges-an-opportunity-to-craft-smarter-responses?lang=en (Accessed: 13 May 2024); Gunningham, N. (2009) 'Environment Law, Regulation and Governance: Shifting Architectures', *Journal of Environmental Law*, 21(2), pp. 179–212; 'Diplomacy as an instrument of good governance - Diplo Resource' (1998), 14 August. Available at: https://www.diplomacy.edu/resource/diplomacy-as-an-instrument-of-good-governance/ (Accessed: 13 May 2024).

[8] Jänicke, M. and Jörgens, H., 2020. New approaches to environmental governance. In *The ecological modernisation reader* (pp. 156-189). Routledge, p.168.

cooperative governance.[9] This may weaken state authority and democratic legitimacy, while new policy instruments can help address unresolved environmental problems. Despite this, traditional hierarchical intervention remains dominant.[10]

Climate change is causing a re-evaluation of society's foundations. Businesses argue technology can save the environment, while politicians advocate for international environmental agreements.[11] Economists advocate for forest protection, while environmentalists question the solution to ecological problems.[12] Governance plays a crucial role in coordinating these diverse voices and securing collective action for a sustainable future.[13] Institutionalism's insights have gained widespread acceptance, impacting governance by emphasizing the importance of rules in securing cooperation and providing certainty for various actors.[14]

Some authors have rightly argued that while new modes of environmental governance are often linked to less hierarchical and "softer" forms of steering, they also carry a

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[9] Ibid., p.168.

[10] Ibid., p.168.

[11] Evans, J.P., 2012. *Environmental governance*. Routledge; cf. *Why relying on new technology won't save the planet* (no date) *ScienceDaily*. Available at: https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/04/200420125510.htm (Accessed: 13 May 2024); Wright, C. and Nyberg, D. (2017) 'An Inconvenient Truth: How Organizations Translate Climate Change into Business as Usual', *The Academy of Management Journal*, 60(5), pp. 1633–1661; Hariram, N.P. *et al.* (2023) 'Sustainalism: An Integrated Socio-Economic-Environmental Model to Address Sustainable Development and Sustainability', *Sustainability*, 15(13), p. 10682. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/su151310682.

[12] Evans, J.P., 2012. *Environmental governance*. Routledge.

[13] Evans, J.P., 2012. *Environmental governance*. Routledge; Glass, L.-M. and Newig, J. (2019) 'Governance for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: How important are participation, policy coherence, reflexivity, adaptation and democratic institutions?', *Earth System Governance*, 2, p. 100031. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esg.2019.100031; *Reimagining governance for a just energy transition* (no date) *UNDP*. Available at: https://www.undp.org/blog/reimagining-governance-just-energy-transition (Accessed: 13 May 2024); Ireland, P. and Thomalla, F. (2011) 'The Role of Collective Action in Enhancing Communities' Adaptive Capacity to Environmental Risk: An Exploration of Two Case Studies from Asia', *PLoS Currents*, 3, p. RRN1279. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1371/currents.RRN1279.

[14] Evans, J. and Thomas, C. (2023) 'Institutions, rules and actors', in *Environmental Governance*. 2nd edn. Routledge.

normative agenda to open up politics and make environmental decision-making more effective and performance-oriented, but also more inclusive, transparent, accountable, and reflective.[15] The deliberative shift, thus, refers to the variety of comparatively overt initiatives to democratize environmental politics while concurrently promoting more successful environmental policies.[16] It is associated with the deliberative principles of democracy as expressed by researchers of democracy, governance, and policy.[17]

It is against this background that this paper critically examines the role of a human rights approach, market forces, the media and ethics in enhancing environmental governance, in addition to the existing traditional top-down approaches to environmental governance.

2. Environmental Governance: Challenges and Prospects

The seventeenth century saw the emergence of the notion of government, which maintained that power was not only wielded by the state and by laws but also by a wider range of individuals and organisations.[18] This redefines the role of the sovereign in maintaining the state since it means that powers other than the state can frequently sustain the state more successfully than their own institutions.[19]

In general, governance is described as the structures, procedures, and people that decide who decides what, how, and for whom, as well as if, what, and how actions are

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[15] Bäckstrand, K., Khan, J., Kronsell, A. and Lovbrand, E., 2010. The promise of new modes of environmental governance. In *Environmental politics and deliberative democracy*. Edward Elgar Publishing, p.3.

[16] Ibid., p.3; see also Bennett, N.J. and Satterfield, T., 2018. Environmental governance: A practical framework to guide design, evaluation, and analysis. *Conservation Letters*, *11*(6), p. e12600, p.6.

[17] Ibid., p.4.
[18] Evans, J. and Thomas, C. (2023) 'Governing the environment', in *Environmental Governance*. 2nd edn. Routledge.
[19] Ibid.

performed, by whom, and with what outcome.[20] The procedures via which governance works and is performed are known as governance processes.[21] These include the formulation of institutional mandates, the negotiation of values, the settlement of conflicts, the enactment of laws, the creation of policies, the dissemination of information, and the implementation of policies.[22] As a result, these procedures are crucial to the decision-making process as well as its execution.[23]

The application of institutionalised power to shape environmental outcomes and processes is known as environmental governance.[24] Certain scholars assert that it highlights the connection between power and governance, highlights the role that institutions play in governance, and implies that the goal of governance is to affect both the results of the environment and the processes that lead to these consequences.[25] Managing individual or group behaviours in the interest of public environmental benefits and associated social consequences is the specific goal of environmental governance.[26] Understanding how environmental choices are made and if the ensuing laws and procedures provide socially and environmentally sustainable results is the essence of understanding environmental governance.[27]

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[20] Bennett, N.J. and Satterfield, T., 2018. Environmental governance: A practical framework to guide design, evaluation, and analysis. *Conservation Letters*, *11*(6), p. e12600, p.2.

[21] Bennett, N.J. and Satterfield, T., 2018. Environmental governance: A practical framework to guide design, evaluation, and analysis. *Conservation Letters*, *11*(6), p. e12600, p.6.

[22] Ibid., p.6.

[23] Ibid., p.6.

[24] Lemos, M.C. and Agrawal, A., 2009. Environmental governance and political science. *Governance for the environment: New perspectives*, pp.69-97, p.71.

[25] Ibid, p.71.

[26] Bennett, N.J. and Satterfield, T., 2018. Environmental governance: A practical framework to guide design, evaluation, and analysis. *Conservation Letters*, *11*(6), p. e12600, p.2.

[27] Ibid., p.6.

Although environmental issues are frequently perceived as having managerial, technological, or behavioural components, environmental governance is receiving more focus as a comprehensive approach to dealing with these difficulties.[28] Research on topics including resource shortages and conflicts, allocation and access, and biodiversity protection in forest, agricultural, freshwater, marine, and even atmospheric systems has been spurred by interest in environmental governance.[29] It has been suggested that one of the key variables influencing whether environmental management and conservation are successful or unsuccessful is governance.[30]

Environmental issues require multilateral action, driven by global meetings organized by intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, and multinational corporations.[31] International relations studies show how nation-states interact, with realist, neo-realist, and liberalist theories being influential.[32] Liberalist scholars argue that non-state actors like NGOs are the most critical players in international relations.[33] Multilateral environmental agreements can take the form of declarations or treaties, with the latter being legally binding.[34] The transboundary nature of environmental issues necessitates collective action, with global environmental governance primarily driven by global meetings.[35]

Think tanks, religious institutions, the media, campaigners, and humanitarian organisations are just a few of the many entities that fall under the umbrella term

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[28] Bennett, N.J. and Satterfield, T., 2018. Environmental governance: A practical framework to guide design, evaluation, and analysis. *Conservation Letters*, *11*(6), p. e12600, p.1.

[29] Ibid., p.1.

[30] Ibid., p.1.

[31] *Global governance | 4 | v2 | Environmental Governance | James Evans, C* (no date). Available at: https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/mono/10.4324/9781003334699-4/global-governance-james-evans-craig-thomas?context=ubx&refId=d0438e39-4764-4e93-96ef-516a2dbd10a5 (Accessed: 12 May 2024).

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

"NGOs."[36] Networks, which comprise several independent players connected by voluntary agreements, represent the shift from government to governance.[37] Global civil society networks, on the other hand, are an example of pure governance that includes non-state players and goes beyond the state.[38]

This paper thus looks at the role of some of these non-state actors and the guiding principles that should inform their active role and participation in enhancing environmental governance for sustainability.

3. Human Rights and Environmental Governance

Human rights are inextricably linked to the environment; one cannot enjoy one's rights without a clean, safe, and healthy environment, and one cannot have sustainable environmental governance without first establishing and upholding human rights.[39] Given that the right to a healthy environment is guaranteed by more than 100 international constitutions, awareness of this link is growing.[40] For instance, the Constitution of Kenya guarantees that 'every person has the right to a clean and healthy environment, which includes the right-(a) to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations through legislative and other measures, particularly those contemplated in Article 69; and (b) to have obligations relating to the

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[36] Lemos, M.C. and Agrawal, A., 2009. Environmental governance and political science. *Governance for the environment: New perspectives*, pp.69-97.

[37] *Networks | 5 | v2 | Environmental Governance | James Evans, Craig Thom* (no date). Available at: https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/mono/10.4324/9781003334699-5/networks-james-evans-craig-thomas?context=ubx&refId=e8c2474b-9329-4db7-babe-dc97c24f9630 (Accessed: 12 May 2024).
[38] Ibid.

[39] Environment, U.N. (2018) *What are environmental rights? UNEP - UN Environment Programme*. Available at: http://www.unep.org/explore-topics/environmental-rights-and-governance/what-we-do/advancing-environmental-rights/what (Accessed: 12 May 2024).

[40] Ibid.

environment fulfilled under Article 70.[41] This is closely connected to economic and social rights under Article 43 thereof some of which cannot possibly be realised without securing the right to clean and healthy environment, to wit, 'every person has the right-to the highest attainable standard of health, which includes the right to health care services, including reproductive health care; to accessible and adequate housing, and to reasonable standards of sanitation; to be free from hunger, and to have adequate food of acceptable quality; and to clean and safe water in adequate quantities.[42]

The environment is the subject of numerous recognised human rights. Substantial (or basic) rights and procedural (or means of achieving substantial) rights make up environmental rights.[43] Substantive rights include civil and political rights like the freedom of association, life, and immunity from discrimination; economic and social rights like the right to food, health care, and a decent standard of living; cultural rights like the right to visit places of worship; and collective rights impacted by environmental degradation like the rights of indigenous peoples.[44] Legal rights must be enforced in accordance with formal procedures specified by procedural rights. Three essential access rights are encompassed by procedural rights: participation by the public, access to justice, and information access.[45]

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[41] Article 42, Constitution of Kenya, 2010, Government Printer, Nairobi: Available at: http://www.kenyalaw.org:8181/exist/kenyalex/actview.xql?actid=Const2010 (Accessed: 12 May 2024).

[42] Article 43, Constitution of Kenya 2010.

[43] Environment, U.N. (2018) *What are environmental rights? UNEP - UN Environment Programme*. Available at: http://www.unep.org/explore-topics/environmental-rights-and-governance/what-we-do/advancing-environmental-rights/what (Accessed: 12 May 2024).

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

The concept of human rights has influenced international law and a number of global governance organisations.[46] Alongside this process of impact, the breadth and scale of human rights have expanded in the context of international politics.[47] Treaties, conventions, and general principles that both state and non-state entities acknowledge serve as the primary sources of international law.[48]

In environmental governance, a stronger emphasis must be placed on human rights concepts. For example, addressing the fundamental unfairness of climate change from a human rights viewpoint can assist, as the individuals who have contributed the least to the issue will be the ones most affected by its repercussions.[49] Notably, this is not only applicable to climate change but also all other aspects of environmental governance, so as to come up with governance structures that take care of human rights, including greater participation of people in governance structures for sustainability.

The fundamental recognition of the close connections and mutual reinforcements of human rights, peace and security, and development is the basis of the 2030 Agenda.[50] In order to accelerate the achievement of all other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), SDG Goal 16 offers a foundation for justice for all, peace, and strong institutions.[51] For the 2030 Agenda to be fulfilled in its entirety, SDG16 is therefore both a prerequisite and an

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[46] Bloor, K. (2022) 'Global Governance: Human Rights and Environmental Governance', *E-International Relations*, 19 May. Available at: https://www.e-ir.info/2022/05/19/global-governance-human-rights-and-environmental-governance/ (Accessed: 12 May 2024).

[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Lewis, B. (2010) 'The role of human rights in environmental governance: the challenge of climate change', *Environmental Law, Ethics and Governance* [Preprint]. Available at: https://repository.globethics.net/handle/20.500.12424/4239889 (Accessed: 12 May 2024).

[50] U.N.E.P (2021) 'Human Rights and the Environmental Rule of Law - Issue Brief SDG 16'. Available at: https://wedocs.unep.org/xmlui/handle/20.500.11822/35408 (Accessed: 12 May 2024).

[51] Ibid.

enabler.[52] Creating strong environmental governance structures arguably falls under implementation of SDG 16.[53]

4. Role of Markets in Environmental Governance

Market-based environmental governance techniques have gained prominence as a result of decentralisation and globalization, which have contributed to the state's downfall.[54] By carefully weighing the costs and benefits of different environmental strategies, market- and agent-focused instruments seek to mobilise individual incentives in favour of environmentally positive outcomes rather than depending on hierarchically organized, regulatory control, or even purely participatory structures.[55] In some aspects, including where their legitimacy and authority come from, they are different from more traditional regulatory methods, where others argue that the effectiveness of these instruments stems from their use of market exchanges and incentives to promote environmental compliance.[56]

Market mechanisms are many and include, among the main examples, voluntary agreements, eco-taxes and subsidies based on a combination of market incentives and regulation, certification and eco-labeling, and informational systems.[57]

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[52] Ibid.

[53] de Wit, M.P. (2020) 'Environmental Governance: Complexity and Cooperation in the Implementation of the SDGs', in W. Leal Filho et al. (eds) *Affordable and Clean Energy*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, pp. 1–15. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71057-0_25-1; Amaruzaman, S., Trong Hoan, D., Catacutan, D., Leimona, B. and Malesu, M., 2022. Polycentric environmental governance to achieving SDG 16: evidence from Southeast Asia and Eastern Africa. *Forests*, *13*(1), p.68.

[54] Lemos, M.C. and Agrawal, A., 2009. Environmental governance and political science. *Governance for the environment: New perspectives*, pp.69-97, p.76.

[55] Ibid., p.76.
[56] Ibid., p.76.
[57] Ibid., p. 76.

Markets are increasingly incorporating environmental goods like clean air and water, and it is crucial to understand how this logic is implemented and how common environmental resources can be captured in market valuations.[58] Markets for carbon emissions are particularly important, as they represent the most ambitious attempt to apply market principles.[59] Markets solve the tragedy of the commons by turning common resources into private property, which are then allocated or sold to individuals and groups.[60] Market advocates believe that institutions create markets for environmental goods, allowing them to be traded like any other good.[61]

Governments' willingness to experiment with market-oriented initiatives can be partially explained by the challenges associated with implementing traditional regulatory tools.[62] Additional components of the argument include rising consumer knowledge of environmental problems and the significant expenses associated with complying with environmental rules.[63] The internalization of favourable environment preferences among relevant stakeholders, most notably citizens and consumers, is critical to the effectiveness of market mechanisms.[64]

As a reaction to the ecological destruction, the usage and promotion of "green markets" has grown recently, despite the difficulties in valuing biological variety and its benefits

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[58] *Markets | 6 | v2 | Environmental Governance | James Evans, Craig Thoma* (no date). Available at: https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/mono/10.4324/9781003334699-6/markets-james-evans-craig-thomas?context=ubx&refId=81cb4804-d871-46fa-ae41-64e55b8157fd (Accessed: 12 May 2024).

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Lemos, M.C. and Agrawal, A., 2009. Environmental governance and political science. *Governance for the environment: New perspectives*, pp.69-97, p. 77.

[63] Ibid., p.77.

[64] Ibid., p.77.

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and quantifying natural wealth.[65] Market-driven policy tools have proliferated, including certification programmes, carbon or biodiversity offsets, payments for environmental services, and wetlands banking.[66] The question of whether these processes are generating the unwarranted commoditization of ecosystem services or if they merely represent a reductionist version of free market fundamentalism is up for debate.[67] Market approaches are not currently the most popular policy alternatives for biodiversity conservation and environmental preservation, despite their importance.[68] Various models and mechanisms are used to achieve environmental governance; they frequently combine market tools, community-based institutional arrangements, and governmental command and control.[69] Certain scholars contend that hybrid regimes are better equipped to handle governance issues arising from the underlying complexity and common good nature of ecosystem services.[70]

Certain writers contend that under certain situations, financial incentives might help enhance the governing structures of natural ecosystems.[71] But we also need to pay close

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[65] Muradian, R. and Rival, L. (2012) 'Between markets and hierarchies: The challenge of governing ecosystem services', *Ecosystem Services*, 1(1), pp. 93–100. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecoser.2012.07.009.

[66] Ibid.; see also Gómez-Baggethun, E. and Muradian, R., 2015. In markets we trust? Setting the boundaries of market-based instruments in ecosystem services governance. *Ecological Economics*, *117*, pp.217-224, p. 217.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.; see also *Market-Based Approaches to Biodiversity Conservation: An Overview of Experience in Developed and Developing Countries* (no date). Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317692003_Market-Based_Approaches_to_Biodiversity_Conservation_An_Overview_of_Experience_in_Developed_and_Developing_Countries (Accessed: 13 May 2024).

[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Muradian, R. and Rival, L. (2012) 'Between markets and hierarchies: The challenge of governing ecosystem services', *Ecosystem Services*, 1(1), pp. 93–100. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecoser.2012.07.009; see also Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1996. *Saving biological diversity: economic incentives*. OECD; Emerton, L., 2001. Community-based incentives for nature conservation; Ling, M. and Xu, L. (2021) 'How and when financial incentives

attention to how they are designed, making sure that they work specifically well in certain socioeconomic circumstances and that they have the ability to change the way that rules are made.[72] When it comes to societal acceptance and efficacy, these two factors are crucial.[73]

Market instruments should thus consider these factors and also be used together with the other instruments in order to enhance environmental governance for sustainability.

5. Role of Media in promoting Environmental Governance

In order to promote fairness and transparency in the decision-making processes, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe signed the *Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters* (Aarhus Convention)[74] in 1998.[75] This comprehensive agreement places a strong

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crowd out pro-environmental motivation: A longitudinal quasi-experimental study', *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 78, p. 101715. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2021.101715; Langat, D., 2017. Guidelines for establishing payment for ecosystem services schemes in Kenya; Ramsdell, P., Sorice, M. and Dwyer, A. (2015) 'Using financial incentives to motivate conservation of an at-risk species on private lands', *Environmental Conservation*, 1, pp. 1–11. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0376892915000302; Lubchenco, J. *et al.* (2016) 'The right incentives enable ocean sustainability successes and provide hope for the future', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 113(51), pp. 14507–14514. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1604982113; Tedesco, A.M. *et al.* (2022) 'The role of incentive mechanisms in promoting forest restoration', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 378(1867), p. 20210088. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2021.0088; Emerton, L., Kallesoe, M.F. and De Alwis, D., 2005. Financial incentives for ecosystem conservation: a review of the development of markets for environmental services in Sri Lanka; Piñeiro, V. *et al.* (2020) 'A scoping review on incentives for adoption of sustainable agricultural practices and their outcomes', *Nature Sustainability*, 3(10), pp. 809–820. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-020-00617-y;

[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, Aarhus, Denmark, 25 June 1998, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 2161, p. 447.
[75] *Introduction to Human Rights and the Environment | UNEP Law and Environment Assistance Platform* (no date). Available at: https://leap.unep.org/en/courses/introduction-human-rights-and-environment (Accessed: 12 May 2024).

emphasis on the right to information and public participation in environmental issues.[76] The Preamble to the Convention notes and acknowledges the importance of making use of the media and of electronic or other, future forms of communication.[77] The preambular paragraphs place a strong emphasis on the value of creating capacity, education, and better communication via the use of media and technology means.[78]

According to studies, a lack of relevant information more than a lack of knowledge is the reason why the public is reluctant to get involved in environmental conservation.[79] An alternate reason for the Willingness of Citizens to Pay (WTP) for environmental governance can be found in the media.[80] According to the study, media frequency greatly raised people's WTP, with personal environmental responsibility serving as a moderating factor.[81] The usage of traditional media, as opposed to new media, has a substantial impact on people' WTP.[82]

According to environmental communication theory, the media is a vital source of environmental information for the general public as well as a major force in influencing public opinion on environmental concerns.[83]

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[76] Ibid.

[77] Preamble, *Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters* (Aarhus Convention), 1998.

[78] *The Aarhus Convention: An Implementation Guide (second edition) | UNECE* (no date). Available at: https://unece.org/environment-policy/publications/aarhus-convention-implementation-guide-second-edition (Accessed: 12 May 2024).

[79] Wang H, 'Knowledge or Responsibility? The Role of Media Use on Citizens' Willingness to Pay for Environment Governance' (2022) 14 Sustainability 14538 <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/21/14538> accessed 12 May 2024.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Wang H, 'Knowledge or Responsibility? The Role of Media Use on Citizens' Willingness to Pay for Environment Governance' (2022) 14 Sustainability 14538 <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/21/14538> accessed 12 May 2024.

In response to stakeholder expectations for accountability and transparency, businesses are depending more and more on Voluntary Environmental Disclosures, or VED.[84] Although the financial performance of the firm is the primary interest of shareholders, non-shareholder stakeholders frequently have concerns that are only tangentially connected to that success (e.g., environmental stewardship, company alliances, among others).[85] In reference to Voluntary Environmental Disclosure (VED), there is a contention that some facets of governance, publicity, and VED quality are related to one another.[86] Studies indicate that coverage of environmental issues in the media, unfavourable coverage of environmental issues in the media, and the independence, diversity, and skill of the board are all positively correlated with VED quality.[87] Supplemental study results indicate that managerial choices regarding environmental reporting are influenced by institutional investors only when adverse environmental media coverage occurs.[88] Further evidence that the quality of environmental disclosures improves with time comes from longitudinal analysis results.[89] In other words, according to the findings, companies that are perceived by the media as having poor environmental legitimacy actively work to alter public opinions by providing voluntary, high-quality disclosures of environmental information.[90]

It has also been observed that environmental protection agencies are increasingly using official social media channels to promote environmental governance, particularly in fast emerging nations, as a result of increased concerns about environmental challenges and

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[84] Rupley, K.H., Brown, D. and Marshall, S., 2012. Governance, Media and the Quality of Environmental Disclosure. *Journal of Accounting and Public Policy, Forthcoming*.

[85] Ibid., p.4.

[86] Rupley, K.H., Brown, D. and Marshall, S., 2012. Governance, Media and the Quality of Environmental Disclosure. *Journal of Accounting and Public Policy, Forthcoming*.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid., pp. 33-34.

information and communication technology improvements.[91] The use of social media by the government has brought about a number of improvements in environmental governance efficacy, but it has also brought about certain difficulties. [92]

Environmental awareness is a strategic communication strategy that aims to increase environmental knowledge, inform people about the dire consequences of human progress, and educate them about sustainable development.[93] In the creation and sharing of awareness, the general public, local producers, scientists, administrators, policymakers, and government politicians all have significant responsibilities to play.[94] It is obvious that raising environmental awareness is essential to igniting interest in the environment for the benefit of our planet.[95] People's knowledge of the environment is greatly increased via social media, conferences, seminars, and the media.[96] There are

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[91] Chang, H., Li, Y. and Liu, M. (2024) 'The role of government social media in enhancing environmental governance', *China Economic Journal*, 17(1), pp. 40–55. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/17538963.2023.2300865.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Jharotia, A.K., 2018, March. Role of media in enhancement of environmental awareness. In *Conference: Power of Media: Shaping the Future, At Tecnia Auditorium, New Delhi*.

[94] Shumshunnahar, M. and Amin, M. (2023) 'Role of Mass Media in Promoting Environmental Health and Awareness in Bangladesh: A Case Study', *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 10, pp. 32–40. Available at: https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.108.15214.

[95] Ibid.; see also Bailleau, R. (2024) 'The benefits of raising environmental awareness', *i2Comply*, 8 April. Available at: https://www.i2comply.com/health-safety/the-benefits-of-raising-environmental-awareness/ (Accessed: 13 May 2024); Fiel'ardh, K., Fardhani, I. and Fujii, H. (2023) 'Integrating Perspectives from Education for Sustainable Development to Foster Plant Awareness among Trainee Science Teachers: A Mixed Methods Study', *Sustainability*, 15(9), p. 7395. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/su15097395; 'Why Environmental Education and Awareness are Crucial for a Sustainable Future' (2023), 10 April. Available at: https://greenliving.guru/environmental-education-and-awareness/ (Accessed: 13 May 2024); Piscitelli, A. and D'Uggento, A.M. (2022) 'Do young people really engage in sustainable behaviors in their lifestyles?', *Social Indicators Research*, 163(3), pp. 1467–1485. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-022-02955-0; Fang, W.-T., Hassan, A. and LePage, B.A. (2023) 'Environmental Literacy', in W.-T. Fang, Arba'at Hassan, and B.A. LePage (eds) *The Living Environmental Education: Sound Science Toward a Cleaner, Safer, and Healthier Future*. Singapore: Springer Nature, pp. 93–126. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-4234-1_4.

[96] Ibid.; see also Scholtz, B., Burger, C. and Zita, M. (2016) 'A Social Media Environmental Awareness Campaign to Promote Sustainable Practices in Educational Environments', in, pp. 355–369. Available at:

several government environmental awareness radio and television programmes available.[97] Environmental awareness has been greatly aided by social media, an online communication platform that is expanding quickly.[98] On social networks, people exchange posts, videos, images, and comments along with their emotions. Social media has completely changed how people communicate and how the world is constructed.[99] It

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https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-23455-7_19; Reimer, T. (2023) 'Environmental factors to maximize social media engagement: A comprehensive framework', *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 75, p. 103458. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103458; Ghermandi, A. *et al.* (2023) 'Social media data for environmental sustainability: A critical review of opportunities, threats, and ethical use', *One Earth*, 6(3), pp. 236–250. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2023.02.008; Pabian, A. and Pabian, B. (2023) 'Role of Social Media in Managing Knowledge of the Young Generation in the Sustainability Area', *Sustainability*, 15(7), p. 6008. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/su15076008.

[97] Ibid.; Ngigi, S. (2018) 'Media and Environmental Awareness in Kenya: A Case of TV', Vol. 67, 2018; 'Environment Education & Awareness – Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment' (no date). Available at: https://macce.gov.sc/environment-department/environment-education/ (Accessed: 13 May 2024); Sun, W. and Lei, W., 2018. 'My health is my own business': Radio, television and advice media in post-Mao China. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 21(2), pp.139-154; Saikia, R., 2017. Role of mass media in creating environmental awareness. *Natl J Multidiscip Res Dev*, 1(2), pp.1-4; Paudel, P.K., Bastola, R. and Lopchan, P.T. (2020) 'The coverage of environmental issues in FM radios in Nepal: the current status and challenges', *Heliyon*, 6(7), p. e04354. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e04354; 'Raising Awareness through Public Outreach Campaigns' (no date) *SDG Accountability Portal*. Available at: https://www.sdgaccountability.org/working-with-informal-processes/raising-awareness-through-public-outreach-campaigns/ (Accessed: 13 May 2024); National Environment Management Authority, *Green Initiatives in Kenya*, National Environment Management Authority, 2012, First published 2012. Available at http://nema.go.ke/images/Docs/Media%20centre/Brochures/Green%20Economy%20Booklet.pdf (Accessed: 13 May 2024).

[98] Ibid.; see also *(PDF) Social Media and Environmental Activism: Exploring the Influence of Facebook on Pro-environmental Behaviour of Undergraduates* (no date). Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373265589_Social_Media_and_Environmental_Activism_Exploring_the_Influence_of_Facebook_on_Pro-environmental_Behaviour_of_Undergraduates (Accessed: 13 May 2024); *Can social media help to save the environment?* (2016) *World Economic Forum*. Available at: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/04/can-social-media-help-to-save-the-environment/ (Accessed: 13 May 2024).

[99] Ibid; see also Ausat, A.M.A., 2023. The Role of Social Media in Shaping Public Opinion and Its Influence on Economic Decisions. *Technology and Society Perspectives (TACIT)*, 1(1), pp.35-44.

has brought global information to the public and has aided in raising environmental consciousness among people all over the world.[100]

Without information, there cannot be an appropriate public communication process or successful public engagement, which makes information a crucial component of environmental governance.[101] The media typically has a significant impact on the dissemination of vital information to the public, especially with regard to environmental concerns.[102]

From the foregoing, it is clear that all forms of media play an important role in influencing environmental governance and this should be given a space in promoting effective environmental governance for sustainability. Journalists have an obligation to hold all parties involved—the government, business community, and individual citizens—responsible.[103] Despite this, it has been noted that journalists lack specialized understanding of environmental and sustainable development concerns for financial reasons related to the unstable nature of the industry, employers' editorial decisions, a lack of technical expertise, or even a lack of personal resources.[104] At the beginning of any

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[100] Ibid.; see also Puentes, C., 2021. Social media and environmental activism: An evolving relationship. *Retrieved March*, *17*, p.2022; Hindmarsh, R. and Calibeo, D.L., 2017. The potential of new and social media for environmental activism. *Sociotechnical*, p.55.

[101] Huang, Y. *et al.* (2021) 'Predicting citizens' participatory behavior in urban green space governance: Application of the extended theory of planned behavior', *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 61, p. 127110. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2021.127110.

[102] Ibid.

[103] 'Media plays a vital role in addressing the environmental crisis, says CS Owalo – Kenya News Agency' (2024), 3 May. Available at: https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/media-plays-a-vital-role-in-addressing-the-environmental-crisis-says-cs-owalo/ (Accessed: 12 May 2024).

[104] Nwaha RNN, lamero F and Souhe LE, 'Increasing the Role of Media in Natural Resources Governance: Where Do We Want to Go and How? – Experiences and Lessons and Perspectives' (February 2021) https://cidt.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Rachel-Natacha-NGO-NWAHA-EN.pdf (Accessed: 12 May 2024); 'Lack of financial resources – FPU Knowledge & Quality' (no date). Available at: https://kq.freepressunlimited.org/themes/media-and-conflict/lack-of-financial-resources/ (Accessed: 12 May 2024).

project, journalists should be systematically trained through workshops with the goal of acquainting them with the activities that will be carried out in order to facilitate their comprehension and, therefore, public perception.[105] There is a need for media houses to continually invest in their journalists and build capacity in order to enhance their role in reporting and influencing environmental governance. Collaboration in such capacity building with environmental experts would go a long way in achieving this.

6. Ethics and Environmental Governance

The transition from accumulating financial prosperity to maintaining built, natural, human, and social capital that is equally distributed throughout society and nations requires an earth stewardship strategy.[106] The public's desire for this vision may reach societal tipping points due to the widespread worry about the planet's future and support for sustainable growth paths.[107] Earth stewardship involves proactive shaping of physical, biological, and social conditions to sustain critical earth-system processes, supporting nature and human wellbeing at local-to-planetary scales.[108] It prioritizes sustainable and equitable future changes over returning to a prior system state.[109]

In tackling the 2030 Agenda, which is people-centered and recognises that a healthy planet is a necessary condition for Sustainable Development, adopting an ethical and

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[105] Ibid.

[106] Chapin, F.S. *et al.* (2022) 'Earth stewardship: Shaping a sustainable future through interacting policy and norm shifts', *Ambio*, 51(9), pp. 1907–1920. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-022-01721-3.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid.; Chapin, F.S., Pickett, S.T., Power, M.E., Jackson, R.B., Carter, D.M. and Duke, C., 2011. Earth stewardship: a strategy for social–ecological transformation to reverse planetary degradation. *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*, *1*, pp.44-53.

[109] Ibid.

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values-based approach where humans learn to live in peace with nature and with one another is crucial.[110]

A new environmental governance system, the involvement of the entire spectrum of society, and the use of creative strategies that safeguard the environment based on ethical and behavioural shifts in environmental governance have all been suggested as necessary for the transition to a more sustainable future.[111] Arguably, building such an innovative paradigm benefits greatly from the stewardship role played by leaders of indigenous and religious groups.[112]

Some researchers have demonstrated the role of environmental ethics via the perspective of collaborative care by emphasizing restorative, liberatory practices that are based in reciprocal human-nature relations and caretaking ethics.[113] These studies emphasise environmental governance systems that, by utilising a variety of community leadership, skills, and experience from throughout the globe, place decision-making at the centre of the people most linked to a particular resource and the material and spiritual nourishment it offers.[114]

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[110] Environment, U.N. (2021) *The Role of Environmental and Spiritual Ethics in Global Environmental Governance*, *UNEP - UN Environment Programme*. Available at: http://www.unep.org/resources/policy-and-strategy/role-environmental-and-spiritual-ethics-global-environmental (Accessed: 12 May 2024).

[111] United Nations Environment Programme (2021) 'The Role of Environmental and Spiritual Ethics in Global Environmental Governance - Policy Brief'. Available at: https://wedocs.unep.org/xmlui/handle/20.500.11822/36627 (Accessed: 12 May 2024).

[112] Ibid.; see also Omoyajowo, Koleayo *et al.* (2023) 'Exploring the interplay of environmental conservation within spirituality and multicultural perspective: insights from a cross-sectional study', *Environment, Development and Sustainability* [Preprint]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-023-03319-5.

[113] Diver, S., Vaughan, M.B. and Baker-Medard, M. (2024) 'Collaborative care in environmental governance: restoring reciprocal relations and community self-determination', *Ecology and Society*, 29(1). Available at: https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-14488-290107.
[114] Ibid.

The three principles of "care in place," "care in power," and "care in commoning" are central to collaborative care in environmental governance. By putting a priority on relationships, caring ethics, and social justice, these themes seek to tear down societal hierarchies.[115] "Care in place" explores how communities revitalize their relationships with their lands and waters, while "Care in power" examines how communities engage in resource decision-making and environmental governance.[116] "Care in commoning" explores creative collective action and commoning practices, challenging exploitation models and celebrating collective capacities for cross-boundary connections.[117]

Collaborative care, rooted in Indigenous knowledge systems, emphasizes the importance of community-led cultivation of reciprocal relations for the sustainability of our cultures, societies, and Earth.[118] Care in place is embedded in various Indigenous knowledge

[115] Diver, S., Vaughan, M.B. and Baker-Medard, M. (2024) 'Collaborative care in environmental governance: restoring reciprocal relations and community self-determination', *Ecology and Society*, 29(1). Available at: https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-14488-290107.

[116] Ibid.; Reed, R. and Diver, S. (2023) 'Pathways to healing: Indigenous revitalization through family-based land management in the Klamath Basin', *Ecology and Society*, 28. Available at: https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-13861-280135.

[117] Ibid.; Austin Locke, T., 2020. *Fields of Commoning: Attempts at Creating (Un) Common Worlds in New Cross* (Doctoral dissertation, Goldsmiths, University of London).

[118] Ibid.; *Collaborative care in environmental governance: restoring reciprocal relations and community self-determination | Request PDF* (no date). Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/377449643_Collaborative_care_in_environmental_governance_restoring_reciprocal_relations_and_community_self-determination (Accessed: 13 May 2024); Campos Navarrete, M. and Zohar, A. (2021) 'Rethinking sustainable development by following Indigenous approaches to community wellbeing', *Tapuya: Latin American Science, Technology and Society*, 4(1), p. 1946315. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/25729861.2021.1946315; David-Chavez, D.M., Valdez, S., Estevez, J.B., Meléndez Martínez, C., Garcia Jr, A.A., Josephs, K. and Troncoso, A., 2020. Community-based (rooted) research for regeneration: understanding benefits, barriers, and resources for Indigenous education and research. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples, 16*(3), pp.220-232; Mazzocchi, F. (2020) 'A deeper meaning of sustainability: Insights from indigenous knowledge', *The Anthropocene Review*, 7(1), pp. 77–93. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/2053019619898888; Diver, S. *et al.* (2019) 'Recognizing "reciprocal relations" to restore community access to land and water', 13(1), p. 400. Available at: https://doi.org/10.18352/ijc.881; Turner, N.J., Cuerrier, A. and Joseph, L. (2022) 'Well grounded: Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, ethnobiology and sustainability', *People and Nature*, 4(3), pp. 627–651. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1002/pan3.10321; *Indigenous knowledge and implications for the*

systems, worldviews, and practices. For example, Hawaiian cultures have ethics of care rooted in *kuleana*, which refers to rights and responsibilities stemming from long-standing relationships with resources and land.[119] Restoring these relationships is crucial for restoring the land and remaking injured places recovering from resource extraction.[120]

Care practices enhance community-level intrinsic responsibility, sometimes replacing state-based governance approaches with extrinsic, top-down practices.[121]

The revitalization of place-based relationships requires communities most affected by resource use to be involved in decision-making at local and global scales.[122] This involves

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sustainable development agenda - UNESCO Digital Library (no date). Available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245623 (Accessed: 13 May 2024).

[119] Ibid.; *Evolving wildlife management cultures of governance through Indigenous Knowledges and perspectives - Fisk - The Journal of Wildlife Management - Wiley Online Library* (no date). Available at: https://wildlife.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jwmg.22584 (Accessed: 13 May 2024); Tuteur, N.M. (2022) 'Reframing Kānāwai: Towards a Restorative Justice Framework for Indigenous Peoples', *The Indigenous Peoples' Journal of Law, Culture, & Resistance*, 7, pp. 59–92; Mokuau, N. (2011) 'Culturally Based Solutions to Preserve the Health of Native Hawaiians', *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 20, pp. 98–113. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/15313204.2011.570119; *Cultivating Aloha 'Āina Through Critical Indigenous Pedagogies of Place* (no date) *Journal of Folklore and Education*. Available at: https://jfepublications.org/article/cultivating-aloha-aina/ (Accessed: 13 May 2024); Kamelamela, K.L. *et al.* (2022) '*Kōkua aku, Kōkua mai:* An Indigenous Consensus-driven and Place-based Approach to Community Led Dryland Restoration and Stewardship', *Forest Ecology and Management*, 506, p. 119949. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foreco.2021.119949; Conway, D.M. (2005) 'Safeguarding Hawaiian Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Heritage: Supporting the Right to Self-Determination and Preventing the Commodification of Culture'. Rochester, NY. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1371372; Antonio, M.C.K. *et al.* (2024) 'Cultural Practice and 'Āina Connectedness as Tenants of Mauli Ola, Optimal Health and Wellbeing', *Genealogy*, 8(2), p. 39. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy8020039.

[120] Ibid; Antonio, M.C., Felipe, K., Keaulana, S., Furukawa, S.K., Taitague-Laforga, M., Irvine, J.L., Makua, K.L., Vegas, J.K., Keli 'iholokai, L., Ke Ola O Ka 'Āina Research Team and Thought Partners and Ho-Lastimosa, H.I., 2024. Cultural Practice and 'Āina Connectedness as Tenants of Mauli Ola, Optimal Health and Wellbeing. *Genealogy*, *8*(2), p.39.

[121] Ibid.; Marshall, G.R., Hine, D.W. and East, M.J., 2017. Can community-based governance strengthen citizenship in support of climate change adaptation? Testing insights from Self-Determination Theory. *Environmental Science & Policy*, *72*, pp.1-9.

[122] Diver, S., Vaughan, M.B. and Baker-Medard, M. (2024) 'Collaborative care in environmental governance: restoring reciprocal relations and community self-determination', *Ecology and Society*, 29(1). Available at: https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-14488-290107.

challenging uneven power relations and incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems into environmental governance.[123] Collaborative care frameworks emphasize the importance of family, including non-human relatives, in environmental governance.[124] This requires transforming environmental governance systems through meaningful power sharing, dismantling knowledge hierarchies, and reallocating land and resources, thus calling for a shift in environmental governance systems.[125]

Care in power emphasizes the importance of environmental governance in addressing structural inequities in decision-making, contributing to environmental and racial injustice, and the need for Indigenous environmental justice to foster reciprocal relationships between Indigenous peoples and land and waters.[126] Indigenous care ethics aim to challenge dominant power structures, challenge colonial legacies, and assert Indigenous self-determination through a relational approach.[127]

Collaborative care and commoning aim to re-establish reciprocal socio-natural relationships by restructuring consumption, production, waste, and information exchange.[128] This process dismantles colonization, capitalism, and patriarchy, focusing on rebuilding care connections.[129] Commoning connects people and places across social,

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[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid.; Austin Locke, T., 2020. *Fields of Commoning: Attempts at Creating (Un) Common Worlds in New Cross* (Doctoral dissertation, Goldsmiths, University of London).

[125] Ibid.; see also *Understanding the role of place in environmental sustainability* (no date) *The British Academy*. Available at: https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/understanding-the-role-of-place-in-environmental-sustainability/ (Accessed: 13 May 2024).

[126] Diver, S., Vaughan, M.B. and Baker-Medard, M. (2024) 'Collaborative care in environmental governance: restoring reciprocal relations and community self-determination', *Ecology and Society*, 29(1). Available at: https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-14488-290107.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Diver, S., Vaughan, M.B. and Baker-Medard, M. (2024) 'Collaborative care in environmental governance: restoring reciprocal relations and community self-determination', *Ecology and Society*, 29(1). Available at: https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-14488-290107.

[129] Ibid.

political, economic, and ecological boundaries, forming networks of place-based communities.[130] These connected communities support broader social movements for survival, dignity, equality, and freedom. Commoning emphasizes the interconnectedness of people, species, and ecosystems across time, space, and difference.[131]

According to some studies, there are a number of ways to ensure that environmental policies reflect ethical considerations, empower communities, address systemic inequalities, promote democratic governance, enhance ethical awareness, and facilitate collaborative solutions to global environmental challenges.[132] These include boosting community engagement, promoting environmental justice, enhancing transparency, implementing ethical education, and fostering international cooperation.[133]

7. Entrenching the Role of Human Rights, Markets, Media and Ethics in Environmental Governance

Environmental governance should involve communities and the public for ethical, practical, and substantive reasons. Participation involves designing institutions and rules that allow all parties to participate in decision-making, forming a legitimate basis.[134] SDG Target 16.3 emphasizes the importance of the rule of law in ensuring civic space,

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[130] Ibid.; Austin Locke, T., 2020. *Fields of Commoning: Attempts at Creating (Un) Common Worlds in New Cross* (Doctoral dissertation, Goldsmiths, University of London).

[131] Ibid.

[132] Baker, Elijah. (2024). Ethical Implications of Environmental Policies and Practices. International Journal of Philosophy. 3. 37-40. Available at: https://doi.org/10.47941/ijp.1868.

[133] Ibid.

[134] *Participation and politics | 9 | v2 | Environmental Governance | James* (no date). Available at: https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/mono/10.4324/9781003334699-9/participation-politics-james-evans-craig-thomas?context=ubx&refId=07b48d0a-d1c3-4d94-abbe-855b1b456c7a (Accessed: 12 May 2024).

diversified media, information access, and basic freedoms.[135] It is in favour of inclusive society, citizen involvement, and institutional responsibility. Realising economic, social, and cultural rights, including the right to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, and accomplishing the objective of "leaving no one behind" depend on these SDG 16 components as well as strong, transparent institutions.[136]

Participation in environmental decision-making is one of the rights granted under Articles 21 and 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)[137]. This includes formulating laws, regulations, policies, projects, and initiatives. Including the perspectives of those affected by environmental policy increases public support, promotes deliberative governance, and protects rights based on a clean, safe, and sustainable environment.[138] A number of international environmental instruments, such as the Rio Declaration's Principle 10[139], the Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants (POPs)'s Article 10(1)(d)[140], the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)'s Article 14(1)(a)[141], the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)'s Article 3(a)[142], and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

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[135] U.N.E.P (2021) 'Human Rights and the Environmental Rule of Law - Issue Brief SDG 16'. Available at: https://wedocs.unep.org/xmlui/handle/20.500.11822/35408 (Accessed: 12 May 2024).

[136] Ibid.

[137] UN General Assembly, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 999, p. 171, 16 December 1966.

[138] Knox, J.H. and Morgera, E., 2022. *Human Rights and the environment: the interdependence of human rights and a healthy environment in the context of national legislation on natural resources* (Vol. 109). Food & Agriculture Org., p. 14.

[139] United Nations, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (A/CONF.151/26, vol. I).

[140] United Nations, The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, opened for signature May 23, 2001, UN Doc. UNEP/POPS/CONF/4, App. II (2001), reprinted in 40 ILM 532 (2001).

[141] United Nations Environment Programme (1992) *Convention on biological diversity, June 1992*. Available at: https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/8340 (Accessed: 13 May 2024).

[142] United Nations, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, Paris, 14 October 1994, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1954, p. 3; depositary notification C.N.176. 1995.TREATIES-6 of 27 July 1995.

(UNFCCC)'s Article 6(a)[143], acknowledge the value of public involvement in environmental decision-making.[144] Once more, the specific obligations included in Articles 1 and 6–8 of the Aarhus Convention are closely related to the human right to a healthy environment.[145]

The Bali Guidelines state that early public engagement in the decision-making process and open participation to all members of the public who may be impacted are necessary for it to be effective.[146] States must take more action to encourage the involvement of women and people from marginalised communities, as well as give the general public a sufficient chance to voice their opinions.[147] According to Guideline 11, states are required to make sure that the appropriate authorities consider public opinions when making final decisions, provide reasons for their judgements, and make the decisions and explanations available to the public.[148]

A collaborative approach from government agencies, human rights players, market players, media and community at large can go a long way in informing, coming up with and putting in place an effective environmental governance structure that not only takes care of the environment but also addresses the needs and concerns of all stakeholders, n fulfilment of sustainable development goals.

8. Conclusion

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[143] United Nations, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, May 9, 1992, S. Treaty Doc No. 102-38, 1771 U.N.T.S. 107.

[144] Knox, J.H. and Morgera, E., 2022. *Human Rights and the environment: the interdependence of human rights and a healthy environment in the context of national legislation on natural resources* (Vol. 109). Food & Agriculture Org., p. 14.

[145] Ibid., p.14.

[146] Ibid., p.14; Etemire, U., 2016. Insights on the UNEP Bali guidelines and the development of environmental democratic rights. *Journal of Environmental Law, 28*(3), pp.393-413.

[147] Ibid., p.14.

[148] Ibid., p.14.

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This paper has explored the various roles and place of human rights, market instruments, media and ethics in informing effective environmental governance. From the discussion, it is clear that the traditional top-down approaches to environmental governance are not adequate but also that the new approaches suggested are collaborative and require to be implemented together. For instance, from the foregoing discussion, it is clear that human rights approaches guarantee the rights of communities but also give them a platform and a voice to actively participate in informing decision-making processes. It has also emerged that the market-based instruments present a viable tool that can empower communities financially while also promoting environmental protection and conservation. In addition, it is also clear that all forms of media play a huge role in not only information dissemination but also in whistleblowing on environmental ills. They hold all persons accountable for environmental responsibilities. Environmental ethics, if well cultivated, can go a long way in enhancing effective environmental governance structures.

It is therefore important that all these are not only recognised but government agencies in charge of policy- making actively engage them in informing environmental governance structures for societal acceptance and support.

Human Rights, Market Instruments, Media and Ethics remain key in effective Environmental Governance.

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