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Bibliography. Book review

## *Ética de la comunicación ambiental y del cambio climático*

María Teresa Mercado and Gemma Teso (Coords.)

Published by Tecnos, Madrid, 2024, 437 pp. ISBN: 978-84-309-9006-1

Climate change is one of the main challenges –if not the most important– that our society faces. It has been 35 years since the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) first warned in its first report that the planet was warming, primarily due to human activity, which would have catastrophic consequences. Today, the signs are evident: average temperatures are rising, we suffer more frequent and intense heat waves, droughts, wildfires, and floods are proliferating. Sea levels are also rising, ocean currents are changing, and food security and even human health are at risk.

Facing a challenge of such colossal dimensions is only possible if citizens become aware of the problem and demand solutions. A 180-degree shift in our way of life is necessary, leading us to production and consumption methods that are respectful and sustainable. But achieving this new model will only be possible if the challenge is approached from an ethical standpoint that also permeates the numerous communication actions that are essential.

This collective book arrives at a very timely moment, providing a necessary reflection on the different ways in which ethics must be part of environmental and climate change communication. As its authors highlight, ethical commitment is essential for society to make the radical decisions needed to change not only the energy and production models but also our way of life and our relationship with nature.

This work is coordinated by María Teresa Mercado and Gema Teso, two of the most authoritative and prestigious voices in the field of environmental and climate change communication research. The lineup of authors also includes over twenty recognized researchers in this field, whose work has allowed us to understand the current state of climate change communication in Spain and provided valuable proposals for effectively reaching the public.

As the authors demonstrate, ethics must play a critical role in climate change communication, because only with truthful and accurate information can we positively influence public perceptions of climate change and the political decisions that must be made to foster the cultural shift we need. The book appeals to the responsibility of the various actors involved in climate change communication: businesses, communicators, and public administration. For businesses, clear and honest communication based on sustainability actions is proposed, abandoning the widespread practice of greenwashing and adopting more sustainable and transparent practices.

For their part, communicators must undertake the crucial task of democratizing information, ensuring that all citizens can access relevant knowledge to face a crisis that affects everyday life. The information must be prudent, precise, and balanced, avoiding partisan biases and sensationalism.

It is also proposed that when reporting on climate change, journalists prioritize serving society. This implies addressing environmental issues comprehensively and from a perspective of climate justice that assigns each agent their share of responsibility. The work of informers must also be courageous, to propose the behavioral changes that the current climate crisis

demands to citizens. Maintaining balanced positions does not mean being neutral but defending the principles imposed by service to society. In this sense, there is a warning against the false balance that has given undue weight to the positions of climate change deniers, spreading information that contradicts the scientific consensus on this phenomenon.

Climate change communication based on ephemeral news, sensationalist logic, and striking headlines can anchor citizens in defeatist and skeptical positions. Against this, the ethical perspective should help create spaces for reflection and citizen participation that drive new proposals. Among them is a new “environmental edu-communication,” which can help journalism reconnect humans with nature through well-contextualized information that goes beyond specific events and helps understand environmental processes.

Finally, ethics can also help improve the work of public administrations. Among their main challenges is creating a legal framework that promotes sustainability initiatives and informational transparency, ensuring that real and verifiable actions are implemented.

Several authors in this book refer to the phenomenon of dis- and misinformation, a widespread issue that significantly hampers climate action. Despite the broad consensus on the existence of anthropogenic climate change, information that questions the agreement among scientists or downplays climate action continues to spread. Ethics also stands as a pillar to combat disinformation, providing a collaborative perspective to seek the common good.

Thus, this book offers a varied and multifaceted approach necessary to explore a complex issue that must consider multiple aspects. We are facing a work that is solid in its approaches and rich in its proposals. Its reading makes it very clear that ethics must play a key role in involving the entire society in action against the climate crisis.