PRESSURE POINTS: THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
PLANNING FOR PLANNERS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

by

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Abstract

This thesis addresses the question of how planners can develop communications plans to maximize their effectiveness when dealing with the mass media during the planning and implementation of sustainable development policy initiatives. Sustainable development brings new imperatives to the practice of planning, bringing attention to the need to develop within the earth's carrying capacity. The creation and implementation of sustainable development policy is fundamentally a cultural issue. Communication is a cornerstone of culture, as the medium for information exchange and the exercise of power, and the mass media are one of the most important communicators in today's society, exercising considerable influence over culture.

The mass media also play a key role in governance and public policy, as a powerful but volatile stakeholder in policy communities. Within the context of the imperatives of sustainable development, planners should be cognizant of their role as social change agents, and use the mass media as a tool to broaden the education, information exchange and dialogue on the sustainability implications of their projects. Planners can accomplish this most effectively by developing communications plans to accompany policy initiatives. By drawing on theory from many fields, including culture, communications, planning, social change, mass media and policy analysis, and integrating these issues into the practice of communications planning, this thesis proposes some communications planning guidelines, a list of issues to address, and a planning framework to facilitate the development of an hierarchy of communications plans.
# Table of Contents

**Abstract**................................................................................................................................................. ii  
**Introduction**.............................................................................................................................................1  
  
  Setting the Stage.....................................................................................................................................2  
  Communications and Planning..................................................................................................................3  
  The Problem Statement.................................................................................................................................4  
  The Methodology.......................................................................................................................................5  
  The Basic Argument.....................................................................................................................................5  
  Stylistic Issues...........................................................................................................................................7  

**1. Sustainable Development: A Cultural Issue**......................................................................................8  
  
  1.1-Origins of Sustainable Development......................................................................................................8  
  1.2-Definitions.............................................................................................................................................8  
  1.3-Dimensions and Factors............................................................................................................................11  
  1.4-Ecosystem and Social Systems as a Nested Hierarchy.............................................................................13  
  1.5-Sustainable Development Planning.........................................................................................................14  
  1.6-Implementing Sustainable Development Policy:  
    From Science to Mass Media.......................................................................................................................16  
  1.7-Planners have a Unique Communications Opportunity..........................................................................17  
  1.8-Sustainable Development and Social Change........................................................................................19  
  1.9-Summary..................................................................................................................................................20
4.4-A Theoretical and Practical Foundation for Sustainable Development Planning: Proactive Advocacy through Strategic and Ethical Communications .............................................................. 68

4.5-The Ethics of Sustainable Development Planning ......................................... 73

4.6-Sustainable Development Planning: Theory and Practice ............................... 78

4.7-Summary........................................................................................................... 81

5. Social Change Theory: *A Structure for Sustainable Development*

*Planning Strategy* ........................................................................................................ 82

5.1-Introduction............................................................................................................. 82

5.2-Social Change Theory............................................................................................ 83

5.3-Theoretical Models of Social Change...................................................................... 85

5.4-Social Change Processes ......................................................................................... 90

5.5-Promoting Change.................................................................................................. 94

5.6-Sustainable Development Planning, Social Change and Mass Communication ......................................................................................................................... 101

5.7-Summary .................................................................................................................. 103

6. The Mass Media: *Sustainable Development can be the Message* ...................... 104

6.1-Introduction ............................................................................................................. 104

6.2-Mass Media and Mass Communication .................................................................. 106

6.3-The Mass Media and the Communication Process ................................................. 109
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.4-The News Model</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5-Mass Media and Culture</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6-Interaction between Mass Media and Society</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7-Effects of the Mass Media</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.8-Criticisms of the Mass Media</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.9-The Mass Media and Sustainable Development</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.10-Summary</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Policy Communities, the Mass Media and Sustainable Development:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mass Media are a Stakeholder</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1-Introduction</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2-Policy Analysis</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3-A Generic Policy Community</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4-Policy Community Relationships and Interaction</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5-The Relationship of the Mass Media with the Policy Community</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6-Summary</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Communications Planning for Sustainable Development Planners:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements and Guidelines</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1-Introduction</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2-Communications Planning: Definitions, Elements and Principles</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.3-Proposed Communications Planning Guidelines for Planners

in a Sustainable Development Initiative .................................................. 180

8.4-Challenges Facing Sustainable Development Planners in

Communications Planning ........................................................................ 191

8.5-Conclusion ......................................................................................... 193

9. Conclusion ........................................................................................... 195

9.1-Introduction ...................................................................................... 195

9.2-Problem Statement Revisited .......................................................... 195

9.3-Directors for Further Work ................................................................. 200

Appendix A - Communications Planning Issues for

Sustainable Development Planners ......................................................... 202

Appendix B - A Communications Planning Framework for

Sustainable Development Planners ......................................................... 218

Bibliography and References ................................................................ 287
Introduction

"If we do not succeed in putting our message of urgency through to today's... decision makers, we risk undermining our children's fundamental right to a healthy, life-enhancing environment. Unless we are able to translate our words into a language that can reach the minds and hearts of people young and old, we shall not be able to undertake the extensive social changes needed to correct the course of development.

...We call for a common endeavour and for new norms of behaviour at all levels and in the interests of all. The changes in attitudes, in social values, and in aspirations that the report urges will depend on vast campaigns of education, debate and public participation" (The Brundtland Commission, 1987; xiv).

"...Useful information and knowledge are important to help people act. Planned communication can increase the probability that they will act..." (Middleton, 1985: 34).
"To be or not to be involved with the mass media is not an option for local government officials (or planners). The role that the media play in our democratic processes mandates a relationship between media representatives and those in government (and their consultants).

...The most important goal... should be to develop a two-way relationship between the government and the media, in which government plays an active role, rather than the reactive one of simply responding to inquiries. This active stance is important if the local government is to function effectively in encouraging communication and the sharing of information on all sides of important issues that affect the community" (Patterson in Arnold et al., 1983: 99).
Communications and Planning

The quotes on the previous pages set the stage for this thesis. Cultural elements such as values, aspirations and communication play a fundamental role in the processes of policy and decision making which determine the relative sustainability of society. The mass media, including TV, radio and the publishing industry, have become some of the most important ‘communicators’ in today’s society, influencing values, aspirations, expectations and thereby behaviour. The imperatives of sustainable development, as discussed in the next chapter, now confront planners as cultural issues in policy and development initiatives.

It is my assertion that if planners are to be effective in the 21st century in implementing sustainable development policies, they must engage the mass media to both reach a wide audience to increase the dialogue on public policy and environmental issues, and to ensure the principles and perspectives associated with sustainable development are in wide circulation in our culture. To accomplish these goals, communications initiatives should be planned to accompany many sustainable development policy initiatives.
The Problem Statement

This thesis focuses on the question:

*How can planners develop communications plans to maximize their effectiveness when dealing with the mass media during the planning and implementation of sustainable development policy initiatives?*

At the time of writing this thesis, the American Planning Association, the Canadian Institute of Planners and the Planning Institute of BC do not have guidelines for their members on how to effectively deal with the mass media. Most planning organizations do not, at present, explicitly incorporate communications plans into policy development initiatives. This thesis explores the relationship communications planning could have to sustainable development policy planning, arguing that in contemporary society, communications planning is necessary to successfully develop and implement effective sustainable development policies. At the conclusion of this thesis, by integrating communications planning practices with sustainable development issues, I propose a set of guidelines and create a framework to guide the development of communications plans to accompany sustainable development initiatives.
Methodology

This thesis addresses the above problem statement by surveying a range of literature including:

- Sustainable development theory;
- Cultural theory;
- Communications theory;
- Planning theory;
- Social change theory;
- Mass media and cultural critique theory;
- Policy analysis theory; and
- Communications planning practice.

It is not the intent of this thesis to examine any of the above topics comprehensively. Rather, elements from each are drawn together to form an argument and framework for communications planning to support sustainable development planning initiatives.

Basic Argument

The thesis examines issues surrounding the mass media and mass communications and its impacts on sustainable development planning. Mass communication is the sending of messages, primarily news and entertainment, to a large audience. The mass media are the companies which develop and send those messages. This thesis argues that if sustainable
development initiatives are to be effective in today's cultural and political context, many will need to be supported by mass communications initiatives. Therefore, planners will need to do communications planning. The argument is structured around several key points.

The first point is that creating and implementing sustainable development policies and initiatives is fundamentally a cultural issue. While the core issue of sustainability is the impact of societal behaviour on the earth's ecosystems, the factors which can influence or change societal behaviour, fall within the domain of culture. This issue is addressed in chapter 1.

The second point is that, since communication is one of the most important cornerstones of culture, and in today's societies, the mass media are one of the most important and powerful communicators, planners should engage the mass media and use mass communications initiatives to increase education and initiate wide dialogue on sustainable development issues and policies. In order to effectively develop and implement mass communications initiatives, planners must understand the principles of communication and in particular, mass communication, and their relationship to culture. These issues are addressed in chapters 2 and 3.

The third point in my argument is that developing communications initiatives will force planners to confront many ethical, policy development and social change issues. Therefore, the planner's role as a communicator must be contextualized within planning theory, social change theory and policy analysis. These issues are addressed in chapters 4, 5 and 7.
The fourth point is that the mass media have a tremendous influence in many policy-related areas and that, as a communicator, the media have many unique characteristics. In order to successfully engage the mass media or implement any mass communications initiative, planners should plan their interactions with the mass media. This planning process must integrate the communications plan with the overall policy planning process. These issues are addressed in chapters 6, 7 and 8.

The fifth and final point is that a set of guidelines and a planning framework are needed to connect ecological, cultural, ethical and social change issues to a sustainable development communications initiative in such a way as to promote effectiveness, efficiency and comprehensiveness. Chapter 8 presents the guidelines, and the communications planning framework is in Appendix B.

**Stylistic Issues**

The thesis is focused on identifying and organizing ‘issues’ which arise from the fields of theory brought to bear on its central question. As a result, there is a lot of information presented in each chapter. In order to keep this information organized for the reader, I have used ‘table-like’ formatting in some places. These are not tables, in the formal sense of the term, and therefore, are not labelled as tables. Rather, they are meant to be read as part of the text.
Chapter 1 -
Sustainable Development Planning:

Science Meets Culture

1.1 The Origins of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development emerged as a concept in the late 1980s with the publishing of the Brundtland Report. This UN sponsored study brought to the forefront, the realization that the health of the economy and the environment are closely connected.

1.2 Definitions

There are many definitions of sustainable development. The original definition, in the 1987 Brundtland Report, is “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987: 43). More recently, “the National Commission on the Environment has defined sustainable development as ‘a strategy for improving the quality of life while preserving the environmental potential for the future, of living off interest rather than consuming natural capital. Sustainable development mandates that the present generations
must not narrow the choices of future generations but must strive to expand them by passing on an environment and an accumulation of resources that will allow its children to live at least as well as, and preferably better than, people today. Sustainable development is premised on living within the Earth's means’ ”(1993:2 in Beatley, 1995:340).

The British Columbia Round Table’s definition in its final report, “Strategy for Sustainability” is similar. “Sustainability means that each generation of humans passes on to the next generation resources (such as farmland and topsoil, fish and wildlife, forests and minerals, and natural landscapes) and environmental quality (such as pure water, clean air, healthy ecosystems and livable communities) that are undiminished and, as much as possible, enhanced so they can be maintained indefinitely from generation to generation” (BC Round Table, 1995: 17). Most sustainable development definitions stress the importance of living within the ecological carrying capacities of the planet, living off the ecological interest, and protecting future generations. The list of environmental problems which forms the foundation for most sustainability discussions covers many serious issues.

A List of Environmental Problems Which Sustainable Development Addresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Population growth</td>
<td>a) Population growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Environmentally</td>
<td>b) Environmentally damaging industrialization associated with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>damaging industrialization associated with providing resources and energy needed by the growing population</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Rapid urbanization of the growing population</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Atmosphere** | a) Air pollution  
b) Acid rain  
c) Climate change  
d) Ozone depletion |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| **Water**      | a) Surface water pollution  
b) Ground water pollution  
c) Surface water scarcity  
d) Ground water scarcity |
| **Waste**      | a) Solid waste excess  
b) Hazardous waste |
| **Land Degradation and Resource Depletion** | a) Decline in high-value tree stocks  
b) Soil erosion  
c) Decline in fish and wildlife stocks  
d) Depletion of oil, gas, coal, and mineral stocks  
e) Loss of biodiversity and habitat |

(1993 Environmental Scan, CCME: 28- Appendix B)

Sustainable development is a set of multi-dimensional principles and practices created in response to the recognition of threats to the planet's ability to support life associated with present forms of development and economic behaviour (WCED, 1987). As the above table illustrates, the list of problems affecting the integrity of global ecosystems is long. If these problems are not dealt with, it is predicted that society will face environmental changes incompatible with a good quality of life for all humans on the planet (Rees, 1995).
1.3 Dimensions and Factors of Sustainable Development

Initially, sustainable development, because it encompasses both environmental and human systems, was seen to involve factors in three key dimensions: environmental, social and economic (BC Round Table, 1995:17). Since sustainable development initiatives have begun to be implemented, another dimension has become visible. Because the initiatives, which meet the requirements of the three dimensions of sustainability, are implemented through 'institutions,' and since meeting these requirements simultaneously will present great challenges to these institutions, a fourth dimension of sustainable development can be identified: the institutional dimension.

Dimensions and Factors in Sustainable Development Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical/Ecological Dimension</th>
<th>a) Resources: renewable and non-renewable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Pollutants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Life support systems such as habitat, biodiversity, energy, water, and atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Dimension</td>
<td>a) Capital wealth creation and productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Resilience of economic systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Sustainable employment and wealth distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) Sustainable profitability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e) Effective markets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Social Dimension:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Population control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Individual and community health:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Food, clothing, shelter / housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Education and information access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Self-realization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Social structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>Culture and heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>Stable and fair governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Security, justice and compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f)</td>
<td>Values, beliefs and ideologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g)</td>
<td>Information, education and research systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h)</td>
<td>Equity and tolerance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Institutional Dimension

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Planning systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Political and governmental decision-making systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Justice, legal, and peace / order-keeping systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>Crisis response systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>Corporate systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f)</td>
<td>Health-care and other social support systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g)</td>
<td>Educational and research systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h)</td>
<td>Leisure and recreation systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The above list of factors can be extended and organized in many ways and all of the above elements operate in an interdependent fashion. However, the important point is that sustainable
development focuses on how the first dimension, the environment, is ultimately impacted by activity connected with the other three dimensions. Without a healthy environment, the social, economic and institutional dimensions will quickly unravel. That fact notwithstanding, within the pragmatic context of creating and implementing sustainable development initiatives, the sustainability of all the dimensions and systems must be addressed.

1.4 The Ecosystem & Social System as a Nested Hierarchy

Many of the problems of environmental degradation and resource over-exploitation are the result of human economic activity, predicated on the prevailing economic models of the ecosphere (Rees, 1995). At present, the dominant world view, as manifest in economic theory, models human systems as separate and independent from the ecosphere. Rees argues instead that human systems are simply a subset of ecosphere systems because without the ecosphere which supports life, humans would not survive. Rees and other ecological economists, argue that, because economic activity does not include ecosystem limits in planning, decision-making and pricing mechanisms the prevailing economic model is inaccurate, they can, in large measure, be seen as a primary cause of society's present unsustainable course. This view of human / ecosystem relationships sees human systems as subsystems of the global ecosystem because humans are entirely dependant on flows of resources and life-support services from the ecosphere (Daly, 1992 in Rees, 1995).

A comprehensive discussion comparing economic world views is beyond the scope of this
thesis, however, the important point to be made for present purposes, is that the ecosphere, as the locus of the planet's life-support systems, must be protected from extensive or irreversible damage or human systems (social and economic) will become unstable. Therefore, if human societies are to survive and prosper, development must take place in a manner which meets both human and ecosystem needs in order to achieve a condition of ecological and geopolitical stability (Rees, 1995; Milbrath, 1989).

Sustainable development practices recognize the limits of the capacity of the earth's ecosystems to survive human-caused disturbances, both chemical and physical (Rees, 1995). The Brundtland report concluded that with current development practices, those limits would be exceeded within the next century as the world's population reached 10 billion. However, development cannot simply stop since the current and the additional population must have food, housing and other goods and services. Therefore, in order to be sustainable, the impacts of development and consumption on the planet must be reduced through changing business and development practices so as to align them with ecological principles and constraints.

1.5 Sustainable Development Planning

Planners, in most organizations and corporations focus on developing options for, and analysing impacts of, future action. Therefore, sustainable development is a planning issue.

The mandate for planners when dealing with sustainable development initiatives therefore, can
be summed up in the primary goal of sustainable development: to achieve a good quality of life for all within the ecological capacity of the earth’s ecosystems (Milbrath, 1989). Rees states this goal has two fundamental aspects: geopolitical security and ecosystem health (Rees, 1995). This goal includes several imperatives.

**Imperatives of Sustainable Development Planning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Protection</strong></th>
<th>The earth’s ecosystems must be protected from disturbances which can threaten their ability to support a good quality of life for all.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Repair</strong></td>
<td>Ecosystem damage must not only be stopped, the damage needs to be repaired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Efficiency</strong></td>
<td>Consumption of energy and resources must be undertaken in the most efficient way possible in order to conserve resources and reduce waste.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inter-generational Equity</strong></td>
<td>Sustainable development is fundamentally about future generations and their right to inherit a planet in as good a condition as it was when present generations inherited it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergency Preparedness</strong></td>
<td>Recognizing that disasters, from both natural and human causes, will occur, planning for these disruptions should be undertaken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enhancement</strong></td>
<td>Beyond protection and efficient development, development should take place in ways which enhance the health and resilience of social, economic and physical systems to ensure their stability over the long time horizons consistent with sustainability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Beatley, 1995; Milbrath, 1989; Rees, 1995)
A development, policy or initiative is seen to be sustainable if it meets the imperatives of sustainability in each dimension. If these are not dealt with, the initiative will likely encounter significant destabilizing forces in the future. More importantly, the health of global ecological systems, which are impacted by local initiatives, must be ensured by meeting these imperatives or the resulting regional and global environmental instability will destabilize both economic and social systems.

1.6 Implementing Sustainable Development Policy: From Science to Mass Media

The fundamental issue in sustainable development is how the human sphere interacts with the ecological one, therefore, a framework for structuring sustainable development analysis and policy development must have both an ecological and human (including social, economic and institutional systems) dimension. The ecological dimension will necessarily be more technical, focusing on the science of ecology, and will involve the design and implementation of policy and developments to meet ecological performance targets. However, the cultural aspects, connected to the institutional behaviour which will be necessary to set and meet the targets or to plan and design a policy or development, are key to sustainable development. Therefore, planners, while developing initiatives to meet ecological performance targets, will need to focus on cultural issues, since the changes in human and institutional behaviour, necessary to meet the targets, will be fundamentally defined by cultural dictates.
As Daly and Cobb point out, general knowledge of the issues of sustainable development and the options to deal with the issues is one of the first steps to addressing the cultural foundations of unsustainable development.

"...The first step has not yet been taken by the public at large and their political leaders. Despite deep-seated uneasiness they cling to old patterns of thought. Politicians either do not understand that the situation has changed or fear to address the issue publicly. The press occasionally reports the wild facts but then goes back to its usual news as if nothing had happened. ...The number and the magnitude of the problems troubles people, but this leads more to the psychological need to escape than to deeper reflection about causes. Having no handles on solutions, and even doubting that any are possible, many seek to get what they can now, leaving the future to look out for itself. Others find comfort in technological optimism. ...The second step is widespread recognition that most of the problems faced by humanity today are interconnected and indeed have a common source. ...The third step is the recognition that human beings still have the possibility of choosing a livable future for themselves and their descendants. Humanity is not simply trapped in a dark fate" (Daly and Cobb, 1994: 362).

1.7 Planners Have a Unique Communications Opportunity

Planners, because of their role in shaping future behaviour, face both a responsibility to deal with sustainability issues and, because they can offer solutions or processes to develop solutions, a great communication opportunity. The special insight planners offer into the
complex workings of social, economic and ecological systems as well as governance, can be drawn on to create and communicate potential solutions.

Policy development, by itself, will not create a sustainable society because policy development processes all too often happen with insufficient public education, communication, or cultural subtlety. Policy development processes also rarely have the resources or mandate to engage the social change or cultural issues connected to a sustainable development policy. As a result, many sustainable development policies are less effective than they could be. “Scientific studies and blue ribbon panels appointed to study social problems and make policy recommendations are often ignored in the absence of a larger political climate conducive to change” (Harper, 1993: 220).

Because communication is of premier importance in dealing with the problems Daly and Cobb allude to, and the mass media are one of the most important ‘communicators’ in Western society, the mass media will be a key player in the development of a sustainable society. With communications initiatives to spread information on sustainable development issues in strategic and persuasive ways, a political climate conducive to sustainable development-oriented initiatives can be promoted. These communications initiatives will need to include mass communications programs, involving the mass media, to educate citizens on sustainable development issues, options and tradeoffs. Therefore planners will benefit from understanding ‘media-culture’ connections in their endeavours to develop effective plans to engage these systems in promoting education and dialogue on sustainable development issues.
Some reasons why planners, when implementing sustainable development initiatives, need to do mass communications planning and engage the mass media include:

a) The need for extensive education of all members of the public and other stakeholders in policy communities;

b) The need to support existing political will to make changes in development patterns and deal with tradeoffs;

c) The need to educate individuals on the impacts of personal behaviour on the environment; and

d) The need to engage in public discourse with individuals and institutions who are using the mass media to influence political agendas and personal behaviour in ways which decrease the sustainability of communities, the economy, and ecological systems.

1.8 Sustainable Development and Social Change

The element of change inherent in many sustainable development initiatives places sustainability planning in the terrain of social change and asks planners to be agents of social change. Sustainable development will be achieved by a cultural or paradigm evolution to change how society operates at both functional and philosophical levels, followed by changes in policy and development (Daly and Cobb, 1994).

"Century-old habits of mind do not give way readily, especially when they are established in all the places of prestige and high leverage" (Ibid, 363). "The transition that is needed cannot be
effected by appeals to people’s political interests alone. It goes too deep. It cuts against patterns of thought and expectation that have been cultivated for generations. It must appeal to long-term interests in unaccustomed ways. The long-term includes the lifetimes of children and grandchildren, and it must assume a deep concern for them. ...Our point is only that the changes that are now needed in society are at a level that stirs religious passions. The debate will be a religious one whether that is made explicit or not. The whole understanding of reality and the orientation to it are at stake. ...Getting there, if it happens at all, will be a religious event, just as getting to where we are now was a religious event. ...The victory will go to those who can draw forth these deepest energies of the centred self and give them shape and direction” (Ibid, 379-80).

1.9 Summary

If planners are to promote sustainability in their work, they must be cognizant of the sustainable development issues connected to their projects. These issues have local and global aspects as well as social, economic and environmental dimensions. Planners will also need to recognize that they are working within the dimensions of culture when they address the goal and imperatives of sustainable development as they develop and implement policy. Planners should be aware of the specific cultural patterns shaping the points of view and behaviours of stakeholders which impact a sustainable development policy or initiative, as implementing a policy may require a modicum of social change. The theories and structure of social change will be discussed in later chapters.
To develop a better understanding of culture and its relevance to sustainable development, I will now discuss the relationships of culture and communication to sustainable development planning.
Chapter 2 -

Culture: Definition and Reproduction

2.1 Introduction

While sustainable development imperatives address societal behaviour which is negatively impacting the earth’s ecosystems, the ideology, rationale and motivations behind the behaviour, lie within the terrain of culture. Therefore, societal changes toward sustainability, will be debated, developed and struggled over, on a cultural playing field. Since planners focus on developing and recommending options for present and future actions, planners can be more effective if they understand the dimensions and processes of culture.

2.2 Definitions and Dimensions of Culture

What is culture? “Culture is generally defined as a blueprint according to which the members of a society or a group go about their daily lives” (Fuchs, 1995: 27). Culture can be seen to be both indistinct and very real at the same time. “A society’s culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members”
(Goodenough in Geetz, 1973: 11). Culture is a multitude of shared values, shared beliefs, and common expectations around which people organize their lives (Fuchs, 1995: 36).

Culture can be seen as having material, ideational and organizational aspects. The materialistic aspects of culture include the set of observed behaviours and material objects that are involved in people living with their environment. The ideational or nonmaterial aspects of culture include the set of values, beliefs, standards and rules for behaviours governing individual and societal behaviour. The organizational aspects can be seen as a manifestation of both ideational and material aspects occurring when humans organize and act as a collective.

**Dimensions and Elements of Culture**

b) Customs, traditions, and rules defining permissible variations in behaviour  
c) Systems of meaning and symbols  
d) Knowledge, ideas, ideologies, philosophies and historical memory  
e) Artistic expression  
f) The ability to transmit culture to the next generation (communication) which includes languages. |
|---|---|


The Materialistic Dimension

- a) The range and patterns of social behaviours
- b) The economic means of production
- c) Technology
- d) Resources
- e) Techniques

The Organizational (sub)Dimension
(CCME, 1993; Alexander, 1995)

- a) The economic system
- b) Science and technological innovation
- c) Institutional structures
- d) Policies and legislation
- e) Information systems
- f) Planning systems

These dimensions are so intertwined in reality that it is difficult to separate them. However, for purposes of analysis, it is expedient to separate them.

The nonmaterial aspects of culture such as ideologies and values become “material” and “organizational” when acted upon through the creation of social and physical structures (Lull, 1995). The nonmaterial aspects of culture are used by individuals and groups for “...defining, describing, explaining, clarifying, ordering, organizing, and communicating what they do and how they live” (Fuchs, 1995: 28).

The cultural factors from the ideational dimension have a great effect on the material and organizational dimensions. Ecosystems are impacted by the activity connected to the organizational and physical dimensions, both of which largely stem from the characteristics of
2.3 Subcultures

Society is not culturally homogenous. It is made of many small groups, called subcultures (Fuchs, 1995), who can be seen to share unique cultural values, patterns and behaviour. Some subcultural groups identify themselves as promoting sustainability, thereby, potentially alienating other groups holding contrary opinions. The characterization, by some business groups, of environmental protection legislation as being the result of the government bowing to pressure from environmentalists is an example of a conflict between subcultures. Planners consequently face challenges in ‘de-politicizing’ the goals of sustainability; connecting the concepts and imperatives of sustainability to the mutual interests of all groups or subcultures.

2.3.1 Identity

Two of the most important elements to examine when identifying and engaging subcultures are the ‘identity’ characteristics and the ‘social rules for behaviour’ which exist within each subculture.

Reproducing a culture is a participatory activity comprised of people creating identities and interacting with each other within a context of social structures and rules for behaviour (Kellner, 1995). Today, many individuals lack cultural roots and therefore their identity must be constantly reproduced and re-contextualized by observing their context and how their
choices affect others (Berrigan, 1977: 39-40). Modern cultural boundaries are becoming very complex and less geographical (Lull, 1995: 67) and the reasons for this are many. Ethnic ties are becoming weaker and more consciously defined, in many highly industrialized societies, with respect to identity, primarily because, in today's globalizing cultures, the linguistic and cultural ties of traditional cultures are fragmenting (Berrigan, 1977: 38). Some go as far as to argue that, in highly industrialized societies with extensive cultural and mass media industries, "a person chooses to be a minority", a member of a counter culture, and thereby "creates an identity" (Ibid, 38). Creating an identity involves conscious choice. This element of 'choice' in one's identity and the daily process of 'reinventing oneself' means that the identity of many individuals and their subcultural groups is perpetually changing (Ibid, 78).

This flux in identity and its associated changes in values, beliefs and actions, presents challenges to planners who must stay abreast of stakeholders' characteristics.

2.3.2 Social Rules

Consistent with the concepts of identity and "subcultural groups," rules develop and evolve to which individuals consciously subscribe in order to visibly remain members of a subcultural group. These "social rules" define 'comfort zones of behaviour' which influence the overall pattern of choices all individuals make in all areas of life (Lull, 1995: 66). These rules provide information for individuals on how to navigate their social environments and are sometimes learned through unconscious socialization experiences and at other times, the rules are sought out and chosen or consciously learned. These social rules embody certain ideologies and
values. However, the existence of the rules has no consequence until they are made tangible by
being obeyed and this fact underlines the activity of reproducing cultural patterns during daily
life (Ibid, 64). Ideology has no life until 'someone' uses and therefore reproduces and embodies
it (Fiske, 1990).

While social rules are powerful factors in individual and group behaviour, the rules are dynamic
and are always being transformed, disobeyed, and negotiated by people to serve their own
interest (Ibid, 44-52). While the rules may evolve, most individuals are members of a
subculture and will usually share or mutually agree upon the appropriate rules for social
behaviour within their group, even if those rules or the individual’s subcultural membership
will change in the future.

2.3.3 Leadership and ideology

Social rules, which influence an individual or group’s behaviour link ideology to authority and
power by providing cognitive frameworks, rooted in ideology, to encourage certain behaviours
and communication patterns. These rules shape meaning and hegemony (power) in social
relations (Lull, 1995: 53-54). Influence on identity and social rules is an intrinsically important
element of leadership from a cultural point of view. Each subcultural group adopts or responds
to leaders who can identify the ideological characteristics unique to a subculture and then
reflect or communicate these effectively. Culturally speaking, leaders can access power
through persuading individuals and subcultural groups to construct personal and social
identities which result in their subordination (Fiske, 1990: 177).
The ability to influence others is not an ethical issue itself, it is simply a mechanism by which anyone can use ideology to exercise power in society. Ethical issues arise, however, around how and why one would try to influence others. Through advertising and other initiatives, many, including corporations, governments and interest groups, try to shape culture and influence individual and group behaviour for many purposes. Since implementation activities for sustainable development initiatives will take place in a cultural terrain where many are exercising power through attempting to influence others’ perceptions, planners will be more effective if they understand these processes, including the relationships between ideology, communication and leadership, and respond in a proactive manner.

2.4 Cultural Reproduction

Cultural reproduction is the process whereby individuals and groups embody ideologies, values, customs, and organizational and economic relations through daily actions and thereby ‘reproduce’ old or new cultural patterns. Culture is not a static entity. Rather it, and its subcultural components, are undergoing constant change, redefinition, deconstruction and recreation. “Cultural orientations, like languages, are open systems whose particular forms, styles, and meanings are constantly created, reinforced, and transcended (ie. generated) in actual uses” (Lull, 1995: 70). The concept of cultural reproduction is rooted in the fact that larger cultural or subcultural patterns are built on the ‘daily life’ of individuals. Every individual, daily invents or reinvents a way of life by drawing on new or old cultural and subcultural patterns in each dimension of culture. The malleability of cultures is especially evident in
global trends, in both behaviours and values, which are promoted through the mass media.

Don Alexander (1995: 41) argues that society can be seen as a system reproducing itself through daily actions on several levels.

Aspects of Cultural Reproduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>a) Attitudes toward nature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Attitudes toward other people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Attitudes toward self</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>a) Political institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Cultural institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Family and community organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production</th>
<th>a) Forms of ownership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Mechanisms of allocation and distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Technologies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From a cultural reproduction point of view, the fact that at present, many societal behaviours are unsustainable, simply means that society is reproducing an unsustainable society through daily actions. While achieving sustainability will entail many changes in cultural thought and behaviour, these changes will likely be evolutionary in nature, rather than revolutionary, and will take place through shifting the direction of cultural reproduction processes. Relatively small changes in values and behaviour can begin a cultural reproduction process to develop a more sustainable society.
2.5 Culture and Sustainable Development Planning

Planners are called upon to be ‘leaders’ in integrating the issues and goals of sustainability into their work (Rees, 1995). However, the concept of proactive and strategic leadership complicates many conventional theoretical roles of planners which the planning profession, with the possible exception of progressive, advocacy and ‘radical’ theories of planning. These latter theories argue that planners participate daily in reproducing culture through embodying cultural values, practices and patterns in their work (Forester, 1989). Because planners are involved in guiding the creation of the policy and development structures within which society functions, the cultural values which planners reproduce in their work can have an impact on the relative sustainability of society.

2.6 Paradigms

The cultural term ‘paradigm’ appears in much of the writing on sustainable development. The concept of a paradigm can be likened to the complete collection of ideational cultural characteristics which an individual may hold, including values, beliefs and knowledge.

“Many of the contradictions associated with sustainable development can be traced to differing fundamental beliefs and assumptions about the nature of humankind-environment relationships. These differing paradigms (pre-analytic visions or world views) define and delimit any
significant problem to be analysed and determine the scope, depth, and direction of our thinking about it. ...Because we acquire a particular world view simply by living, growing up, and being educated in a particular socio-cultural milieu, we are often unconscious that we even have one and that we operate from it in virtually everything we do. Therefore, most of us are generally unaware of the subtle ways in which the prevailing paradigm shapes our understanding of, and approach to, societal problems or that there may be more viable alternatives" (Rees, 1995: 344).

Rees' view of the connection between the ideational or paradigmatic dimension of culture and the material and organizational dimensions, is consistent with those discussed earlier in this chapter. His suggestion that planners need to take a leadership role in promoting sustainable development suggests that planners need to be agents of cultural change.

2.6 Summary

Any policy or development initiative will embody a unique profile of factors within each dimension of culture including the Ideational (Paradigmatic), Material and Organizational. Culture is reproduced daily by everyone. Cultural characteristics come in unique constellations embodied in certain groups, called subcultures, who, within a range, share important values and beliefs and subscribe to similar rules for social behaviour. Planners need to consider the subcultural characteristics of stakeholders in an initiative, and recognize that each subcultural group will address the issues of sustainability in a different manner. Planners can increase their effectiveness by integrating these insights into both the substantive and communicative aspects
of an initiative.

In order to effectively interact with the complexities of subcultures and cultural reproduction processes, planners need to understand the relationship between culture and communication, as discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter 3 -

Communication and Culture: The Access Point for Sustainable Development Planners

3.1 Introduction

One of the most important cornerstones of culture is communication. It is through communication that individuals and groups are socialized, interact with others and pass cultural elements on to the next generation. More importantly, for the purposes of this thesis, it is through communication that power is exercised in a culture, through persuasion and the exertion of influence on values, identity and other cultural elements. The relationship between culture and communication is important to understanding how social change, the mass media, and sustainable development planning interact.

3.2 Communication and the Dimensions of Culture

3.2.1 Communication and Ideational Dimensions of Culture

Communication and nonmaterial culture are connected through ideology, consciousness and
hegemony (Lull, 1995: 6). “Ideology” is essentially organized thought which can be expressed through behaviour. “Consciousness,” in cultural terms, is the sum of attitudes, values, etc... held by an individual or a group. A range of ideologies are in circulation within a culture and in its subcultures at any moment in time. These are used by individuals and groups to give a conceptual structure to their lives, relations, and behaviour.

The particular constellation of ideologies in circulation in a culture at any point in time will differ from other points in time. This constellation is created through the interaction of individuals and groups, each putting forth their ideas and values through various means. Those who can more effectively shape the consciousness of others can gain a certain amount of cultural power or hegemony. Many individuals and groups purposefully try to shape the consciousness of others through the promotion of various ideologies. Thus, culture becomes a site of ideological and hegemonic struggle, a struggle which planners must engage if they are to effectively educate the public and stakeholders in the issues and imperatives of sustainable development. I propose that effective communication, including mass communication through the mass media, is key to this engagement.

3.2.1.1 The Active Audience

Early communications researchers believed that mass media messages had a direct effect on the audience. Reception theories, however, have discounted the ‘hypodermic needle’ model of the effects of communication by arguing that a message only becomes ‘concretized’ through eliciting a reader’s response (Berger, 1995: 110). Therefore, the meaning believed to be in the
message cannot have a direct effect because the meaning is not ‘in’ the message, rather it is produced by the audience as they interact with the message and the sender. Meaning is made by flows of awareness and analysis between the audience’s inner self or psyche and their outer context. Therefore, the meaning of a text is never self-evident and meaning “cannot be imposed” (Lull, 1995: 143-144). Planners should, in order to communicate most effectively, consider in advance the range of meanings which the public and stakeholders might ‘extract’ from communications initiatives.

3.2.1.2 Cognitive Dissonance

Cognitive dissonance is the experience of being exposed to ideas which are contrary to the ones you hold. This experience is generally avoided by audiences and therefore, their interpretations of messages cannot be easily shifted from their cultural and personal understandings or predisposed readings (Berger, 1995). The reader’s place in the social structure strongly affects their reading of the text (Ibid, 105). Since discrepancies often exist between the subcultural and personal characteristics of the sender and the audience, the sender must craft his or her message to fit more easily with the understandings and lexicon of the audience, in order to minimize the cognitive dissonance experienced by the audience. Planners need to address the fact that many sustainable development principles and practices will create experiences of cognitive dissonance in various audiences, and use language and imagery in their communications initiatives to try to minimize cognitive dissonance.
3.2.1.3 Ideology in Communication

Elements of ideology are embodied within the signs and codes used in any message (Fiske, 1990). Thus, a message can give ideology life in the public realm (Ibid, 171). When decoding a message, an audience, and the ideologies they hold, engage the ideology embodied in a message. If cognitive dissonance occurs between the ideologies in the text and those held by the audience, an ‘ideological dialogue or struggle’ ensues within the audience. The audience then responds to the ideological elements in a variety of ways, depending on the context and the other characteristics of the message. No audience automatically adopts the ideologies in any message." Ideology is negotiated and contested, it is not imposed or assumed"(Lull, 1995: 167).

As discussed previously, ideology has no physical life or impact until ‘someone’ uses and thereby manifests it in the material dimension of a culture (Fiske, 1990). Communication plays an important role in the transfer of ideas and other ideological elements into the physical realm of a society. Planners participate in this process daily, as communication and especially debate, forms the core of much policy development work. Policies which are implemented can be seen as a ‘concrete’ form of the ideologies embodied in the policy debate and final policies adopted.

3.2.2 Communication and Material Dimensions of Culture

The connection between the various types of communication and the material dimension of culture is more concrete than their connection to ideational culture. The material dimension is
physically created by humans acting on cognitive impulses whose foundation lies in the ideational dimension. Therefore, the material dimension of culture can be seen as a manifestation of elements from the ideational and institutional dimensions. This point highlights a key assertion of this thesis, namely that since the physical dimension of culture is where societal activity physically impacts the earth’s ecosystems, communication can be seen to be directly connected to the relative sustainability of society.

3.2.3 Communication and Organizational / Institutional Dimensions of Culture

Communication is connected to the organizational dimension of culture through the ways in which individuals and groups communicate with each other, which reproduce or change a constellation of social relationships, especially with respect to power or hegemony.

The role of communication in the institutional dimension of culture is important to sustainable development planning. In industrialized countries, most activity, which seriously impacts the earth’s ecosystems, takes place within an institutional context including governmental regulations, banking practices and relationships within the economic system. Planners, working within these institutional structures, have an opportunity to communicate and manage information in such a way as to highlight sustainability issues. Planners will face challenges when bringing some sustainability issues to the discussion when those issues are seen to be counterproductive to the interests of key stakeholders.
3.2.3.1 Communication and Hegemony

In the absence of outright physical violence, culture becomes the terrain of the struggle for power in society and communication becomes the primary weapon (Lull, 1995; Kellner, 1995). Hegemony is a process whereby groups use communication to gain power in the socio-cultural realm by shaping each other’s consciousness and thereby actions. The ideologies, held by those with a certain amount of power in a society, can shape the cultural reproduction processes in society and thereby influence its political, economic, social and environmental policy (Lull, 1995).

In order to understand how communication interacts with culture and how to engage the hegemonic struggle inherent in communication in the public realm, planners need to be knowledgable about basic communications theory.

3.3 An Introduction to Communication Theory

I will now present a brief introduction to the basics of communication theory in order to clarify terms and concepts and to provide a framework for the analysis and the planning of communications initiatives.

3.3.1 Social Interaction

John Fiske’s definition of communication embodies both its general nature and its cultural connections. He defines communication as “social interaction through messages” (Fiske, 1990: 38)
2). This interaction occurs at many scales.

**Four scales of communication**

| **Intra-personal communication** | Dialogue which takes place within ourselves. |
| **Interpersonal communication** | Dialogue within a one-on-one context. |
| **Small group communication** | Dialogue amongst a relatively small group of individuals. |
| **Mass communication** | Dialogue which takes place through venues of broadcast to many individuals. |

(Berger, 1995: 11)

In daily life, we most frequently experience verbal or written types of communication, at a conscious level. However, there are several other types we encounter as well.

**A Typology of Communication**

| **Environmental** | Messages conveyed by the characteristics of created environments. |
| **Behavioural** | Messages conveyed through the behaviours of organizations and individuals. |
| **Qualitative** | Messages consisting of impressions of attributes of a something. |
| **Interpersonal** | Messages exchanged directly between individuals. |
| **Mediated** | Messages communicated by some media, usually technological. |

(Brody, 1991: 59)

Studying scales and types of communication is undertaken from two schools of analysis.
Schools of Communication Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Process School</strong></th>
<th>The study of messages and their transmission processes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Semiotic School</strong></td>
<td>The study of the production and social exchange of meanings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(McQuail / Windahl, 1981; Fiske, 1990)

"Process models" are concerned with the processes and components of the communication process, namely the sender, medium, channel, transmitter, receiver, audience, noise, and feedback.

Semiotic models, on the other hand, are primarily concerned with the generation and social circulation of meaning (Fiske, 1990: 39). This latter type of analysis is concerned more with the social or normative aspects of communication than with the physical process of communication.

Both aspects of communication are important to this thesis as both have impacts on the ecological and social condition of our society and therefore, are important to sustainable development planning. Successful communication planning involves an understanding of both the processes of communication and the ways in which meanings are being exchanged during the communication.

### 3.3.2 The Process of Communication

Most theorists agree on five basic components in a communication process. Arthur Berger has identified these as:
**a) The Artist / Sender:** The creator or source of the message;

**b) The Artwork / Text / Message:** The physical message which is sent, intended or unintended;

c) **The Medium:** The channel used to transmit the message to an audience, intended or unintended;

d) **The Audience:** Those who receive the message, intended or unintended; and

e) **The Context:** The systems which comprise the context for the communication process, including time, space and society (Berger, 1995).

Every message conveyed through the five types of communication at any scale can be seen to have the above five components. This process model of communication is conceptual but it provides a framework for both the analysis and planning of communications. For analysis, the above components provide a structure for unpacking and organizing the components and sequence of a communications event. For sustainable development planners, the above components can provide a structure or framework for planning, research, strategy, organization, allocation of resources and implementation of a communications initiative.

### 3.3.2.1 The Communication Sequence

The simple process model of the circular character of communication can be described as follows. A 'sender' composes and sends a 'message' through a 'channel' or 'medium' to an 'audience.' Along the way, the message will pick up certain elements of distortion. The audience may or may not receive the message. If they do receive the message, they may or may not choose to respond and give some type of feedback to the original sender, directly or
indirectly. All of this process takes place within a complex societal context whose aspects will act as influential forces on all components of the communication process.

For planners involved in sustainable development, a process model can offer a conceptual structure to organize the physical process of communication. However, the goal of communication is to exchange meanings. Semiotic models can offer a framework for this aspect of communications analysis and planning.

3.3.2.2 Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of the meanings being exchanged in communication. From this point of view, communication is “meanings in social circulation” (Fiske, 1990: 162). Semiotic models are complex and abstract because the exchange of meanings cannot easily be studied empirically (Ibid). The following review of semiotics is important to this thesis because it lays out the framework for analysis and composition of messages.

3.3.2.3 The Text and Reality

Underlying the exchange of meaning embodied in a message, there lies the fundamental question of the relationship which any message has to ‘reality.’ There are several theories of the relationship between a text and reality.
Relationships Between a Message / Text and Reality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Mimetic</strong></th>
<th>A text imitates life.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective</strong></td>
<td>A text is a complete work of its own, independent of anyone’s reality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pragmatic</strong></td>
<td>There is a direct cause and effect connection between the text and its audience, regardless of what ‘reality’ may be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expressive</strong></td>
<td>The text is a result of the emotional condition of the psyche of the artist and therefore imitates the artist’s reality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Berger, 1995: 43).

Analysts of messages typically start with one or more of these assumptions, although the assumptions are often implicit. When communications planners are developing a message or planning a campaign, they can increase effectiveness if they are aware of how their audience may view the message with respect to their perception of reality.

In sustainable development, the manner in which information is communicated can influence an audience’s perception. For instance, an impassioned plea for environmental protection can easily be seen as having an ‘expressive’ relationship. On the other hand, a scientific report can more easily be perceived to have a mimetic relationship, if it appears to be reporting facts.

When examining the meanings conveyed by a communication event, both the message and the social systems which form the communication’s context need to be considered.
Elements of Semiotic Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textual Analysis</th>
<th>The analysis of the signs and codes in a message or text and their possible meanings.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Systems Analysis</td>
<td>The analysis of the social dimensions within which those meanings are exchanged, including society's macro-structures (the power and resource distribution in social system) and its micro-structures (the processes of everyday life).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Fiske, 1990: 162)

3.3.2.4 Textual Analysis

Textual analysis examines two aspects of the text:

a) Signs

b) Codes.

3.3.2.5 Signs

Signs are elements of a message which refer to something other than themselves. ‘Words’ are considered to be ‘signs’ within this context.

Ways in Which Signs Carry Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denotation</th>
<th>The face value or ‘common sense’ meaning of the sign (the signifier) and what the sign refers to (the signified).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connotation</td>
<td>The feelings and cultural values associated with the sign and the symbolic meanings attached to a sign from conventional use and association.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Fiske, 1990: 85-90)

44
Signs are chosen strategically by the sender to represent the meanings which they intend to convey to their audience, however, it must be assumed that senders are not aware of the full significance of their work. The belief that senders know in advance the full significance of their work to all audiences is called the “intentional fallacy” (Berger, 1995:155). The sender may ‘encode’ an elaborate strategy of meanings in the message but the audience may not interpret the message in such a way as to access those encoded meanings. The opposite may also occur. The political nature of planning communications in contemporary society, often results in spontaneous comments by a politician or bureaucrat about a policy issue, being examined repeatedly and carefully by the mass media, and in the process, a large amount of meaning becoming associated with the comments.

3.3.2.6 Codes

The order or pattern in which signs are used conveys meaning and is connected to cultural conventions. Codes are organization systems governing the use or syntax of the signs to ensure that meaning can be communicated to other members of a culture or a subculture (Fiske, 1990).

Elements of Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message Content</th>
<th>The subject matter and tone of the message.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Message Form</td>
<td>The implicit meaning of the message which is visible in patterns of behaviour and how the information is reported or conveyed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messenger</td>
<td>The ‘kind of person’ used to be the ‘messenger.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To facilitate effective communication of meanings between individuals, it is important to ensure a match between the codes used in a message to those used by the intended audience.

Several types of codes can be identified:

**Types of Codes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elaborated / Narrowcast / Arbitrary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These code patterns are used when the audience is a narrowly defined group which is exchanging complex information in a manner independent of popular culture.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broadcast / Restricted / Conventional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These code patterns are more simplified and used for daily conversation. They tend to be drawn from shared cultural experiences and stress similarities, emotions, and the cultural status quo.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aesthetic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These codes embody power, status and values and tend to be flexible and associated with the ‘elite’ in a culture.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Fiske, 1990; Lorimer and McNulty, 1991; Berger, 1995)

At present, the reports written by planners and academics concerning sustainable development can be difficult for the public to understand because the signs and codes used by planners and academics (including the language, the report or journal article format, and the messengers or publishing institutions) are typically mismatched with those used by the public.

Communications associated with a sustainable development initiative will need to face the challenge of matching the messenger, the content and form of the message to the wide range of subcultural audiences who need to be educated about sustainability in such a way as to promote clarity and discussion on its issues.
David Suzuki’s television show, “The Nature of Things,” is an example of where complex ecological issues, closely connected to sustainable development, are discussed using signs, codes and a medium which reaches a much wider audience than the more academic reports which form the foundation for what Suzuki says during a show.

3.3.2.7 The Target Audience

In order for a sender to communicate their message and its meaning, it is very important to match the signs and codes used in a message to the ones used daily by the intended audience of the message. In order to do this, communications planners study audiences and identify types. The audience is typically categorized through a process called psychographics. The members of each target market have similar characteristics and these characteristics inform the senders on how to shape their message to catch the audiences attention and to limit ‘aberrant decoding’ or audience misunderstandings (Berger, 1995). Each person may belong to several different ‘code-using’ groups. A failure to clearly identify and understand the audience, will most likely result in ineffective communication, unless the audience greatly resembles the sender and a ‘fit’ is accidentally achieved.

3.3.2.8 The Social Systems in the Communication Context

The next stage of semiotic analysis involves examining the socio-cultural systems within which a communications event takes place. Semioticians argue that the systems of signs used in a communications event are inseparable from the social practices of the text’s users (Fiske, 1990).
Scales of Society’s Structures for Semiotic Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Macro Structures</th>
<th>The power and resource distribution patterns in social systems and how communication engages these.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Micro Structures</td>
<td>The processes of everyday life into which a communications event participates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Fiske 1990: 162).

The examination of communications within the context of the macro and micro structures of society is too large a topic for this thesis, because, in order to examine this topic, one would need to explore many theories and models of society in order to contextualize any communications event and its impacts. However, it is important that communications planners recognize that their various audiences likely live within different cultural and societal micro- and macro-structures. Furthermore, audiences will also likely subscribe to different world views and will therefore, understand history and society’s macro-structures in different ways. Research into these issues is important to inform effective communications initiatives. One approach is to examine a message or communications initiative from a range of cultural analysis positions.

Common Types of Cultural Systems and Communications Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychoanalytic analysis</th>
<th>The study of the human psyche indicators in a message using the Freudian models.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marxist analysis</td>
<td>The study of the stakeholders interaction from an economic/class and economic production point of view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist analysis</td>
<td>The study of women’s conditions including patriarchal power, stereotyping, and victimology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociological analysis</td>
<td>The study of individual and social roles, status, power, and values as indicated in a text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical analysis</td>
<td>The study of relativity in the motives driving those involved in a process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mythical analysis</td>
<td>The study of psychological Jungian archetypes at play in the individuals involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic analysis</td>
<td>The study of the aesthetic aspects of the text, its conventions, art, and beauty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foucauldian analysis</td>
<td>The study of the power relationships in a process or communications event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural analysis</td>
<td>The study of the cultural context for an audience and text including politics, economics, and social relations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Berger, 1995; Lorimer and McNulty, 1991)

### 3.3.2.8 Sustainability Analysis of Communications

For the purpose of this thesis, I will present another interpretive or critical approach to message analysis; a sustainability analysis model. In a later chapter, I outline the implications of sustainable development planning principles to communications. This analysis focuses around ensuring the processes and products associated with the sender, message, medium, embodied ideologies, and resulting behaviours meet the mandates of sustainable development.

Many more models of society, including its structure and function, could be used to analyse a communications event. However, rather than discuss the models further, for present purposes, it is sufficient to be aware of the way in which the communication process involves exchanging meanings within society’s micro and macro structures.
When both the process and semiotic models are combined, a potentially complex model of communications can emerge. I have created a simplified description of such a model through compiling the basic elements of many models.

3.3.2.9 A Generic Communication Model of Process and Meaning

The sender has a perception of and a relationship with contextual reality. He or she consciously and unconsciously interacts with other individuals / organizations within this context. The sender then chooses to communicate with an audience. According to a body of social conventions, he or she creates a message and encodes it with a series of signs and codes with the intention that the audience will receive the desired meaning. The sender then transmits this message through some channel or medium to its audience. Along the way, the message may pick up conceptual and physical distortions.

The audience receives the message at some geographical and temporal site. Upon reception, the audience decodes the message and extracts a meaning from it. The intentional message combined with all of the unintentional aspects of the social interaction process of communication and characteristics of the audience’s context are what the audience decodes in order to extract meaning from the message. Since most communication involves sharing and arguing perceptions of reality, the audience will decide whether they agree or disagree with all or part of the message or simply remain indifferent to it. The audience’s ‘reading’ of the message may or may not correspond to the sender’s ‘preferred reading’ (the message sender was trying to communicate) of the message. The audience may also use the message and its
elements in many ways, from serious to absurd, incorporating it into their lives in ways which suit them.

The audience then, theoretically, engages in sending a message back to the original sender, consciously or unconsciously, through some means. This return communication is called feedback. The model for the feedback process can be seen to mirror the process of the original message with the sender and audience roles reversed. During this entire process a social relationship is being developed between the sender and the audience. This social relationship is important as its characteristics will greatly shape future communications and social interactions (McQuail and Windahl, 1981; Brody, 1991; Berger, 1995; Fiske, 1990).

The above summarizes a compilation of theoretical models to create a generic description of a communication process. Its elements and processes will have unique characteristics for each specific communication or social interaction process. For instance, the social conventions, rules, processes, typical messages, timing and feedback methods which characterize communication within a planning department will vary greatly from the ones which characterize a television advertisement for soap. Each of the differences will result in a different ‘meaning’ being communicated.
3.4 Communication, Culture and Sustainable Development

Planning

In sustainable development plans, planners and policy makers often call for the 'education' of the public or other stakeholders, however, few develop communication strategies to contribute to that education. In some cases, communications or education plans are developed but not implemented. On the other hand, many other individuals, groups and corporations create mass communications strategies to promote their interests. As a consequence, sustainable development initiatives can often get out-competed on the stage of public policy discussion.

Since sustainable development planning requires planning changes for many aspects of society (Rees, 1995) and since mass media is an effective tool for initiating and influencing public discussion (Lull, 1995), planners can increase their effectiveness in sustainable development policy creation and implementation if they learn to effectively use mass communication. However, communications planning presents challenges to current roles for planners and for current planning models. In order to effectively engage mass communication technologies and industries, planners need to understand social change theory and develop ethics to guide communication initiatives.
3.5 Summary

Sustainable development initiatives and principles will interact with all three dimensions of culture through communication. The 'ideational' aspects communicated affect the behaviour of the 'institutional' components of a culture which in turn directly affect the 'material / physical' components which affect the earth's ecosystems directly.

Communication types include environmental, behavioural, qualitative, interpersonal and mediated. The model of the communications process offers a structure to planners when planning communications and includes the elements of the sender, the message, the medium, the audience, the context and the feedback mechanisms. The target audience for a communications initiative will have unique subcultural characteristics which a planner needs to understand in order to communicate effectively. These characteristics will influence the scale and types of communication required to reach them as well as the signs and codes (message content, form and messenger) which will be the most effective. More importantly, the characteristics of the target audience will define how they decode the message and the meanings they extract from it to minimize cognitive dissonance.

Communication engages and often embodies power in social relations. Individuals and groups use communications initiatives to contend with each other for power in society. Therefore the strategic use of communication, especially mass communication, becomes a primary means to influence society. Many groups, such as politicians, corporations and interest groups who try to
implement change in society use mass communication to effect change. Forester (1989) argues that planners must consider the hegemonic power inherent in communications. Planners’ positions afford them power and they must both use it and be aware of how best to ethically use this power to further democracy and sustainable development mandates.
Chapter 4
Planning Theory and Communication:

Neutrality to Strategy

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines some common theories of planning and connects the role of the planner in sustainable development to communication. The cultural change issues which planners encounter in sustainable development initiatives can call into question many conventional theories of planning practice, because of their focus on 'neutrality.'

This chapter will discuss some conventional theories of planning, explore several complications to these theories arising from sustainable development and communications, and then, explore alternative theory which could provide a foundation for integrating strategic communications, sustainable development issues and social change.
4.2 Planning Theory, Models and Practice

Conceptually, “planning is the guidance of future action” (Forester, 1989: 3). As a profession, planning has evolved institutionalized roles and methods of developing and implementing policy and plans for initiatives in the present and future.

4.2.1 The Roles of a Planner

Forester identifies five roles for the planner in a project or institution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles of a planner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incrementalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structuralist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Advocate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Forester, 1989: 31).

While he proposes these as discrete categories, Forester also argues that planning may be rational in theory and principle, but is anything but rational in practice (Ibid, 7) and therefore, confounds the above theoretical dichotomies (Ibid, 13). However, for present purposes, the above roles can be seen to be divided into two approaches:

1. *The neutral advisor* (Technician, Incrementalist and Structuralist); and

2. *The proactive or radical strategist* (Liberal Advocate and Progressive).
4.3 The Model of the Neutral Advisor

The traditional model of the planner in an institution, especially the government, is that of a neutral advisor. The advisory role of bureaucratic and professional planners requires them usually to use a rational model and methodology of planning which theoretically examines problems objectively and then develops, analyses, and proposes options for solving the problem. This practical role corresponds to Forester's theoretical roles of technician, incrementalist and structuralist.

4.3.1 The Rational Planning Method

The traditional, rational method of planning has many variations in the literature, most with four basic stages:

**Steps in the Rational Planning Methodology**

1) Goal setting in response to identified problems;
2) Identification of alternatives to achieve goals;
3) Evaluation of the alternatives; and
4) Implementation of the alternative chosen.

(Hudson, 1979: 388)

The following assumptions describe some of the characteristics of 'neutrality' underlying the rational planning model and the role of planners as public servants.
Foundational Assumptions Underlying the Concept of the Neutral Planner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Politics versus Policy</strong></th>
<th>“Politics and policy are separated from administration: thus politicians make policy decisions; public servants execute these decisions.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Merit</strong></td>
<td>“Public servants are appointed and promoted on the basis of merit rather than of party affiliation or contributions.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political Inaction</strong></td>
<td>“Public servants do not engage in partisan political activities.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Privacy</strong></td>
<td>“Public servants do not express publicly their personal views on government policies or administration.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anonymity</strong></td>
<td>“Public servants provide forthright and objective advice to their political masters in private and in confidence; in return, political executives protect the anonymity of public servants by publicly accepting responsibility for departmental decisions.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Loyalty</strong></td>
<td>“Public servants execute policy decisions loyally, irrespective of the philosophy and programs of the party in power and regardless of their personal opinions; as a result, public servants enjoy security of tenure during good behaviour and satisfactory performance.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995: 326)

4.3.2 Communications and the Neutral Advisor

A planning methodology based on the above assumptions gives rise to particular communication practices, as outlined below, which incur increasing professional risk, as one becomes more outspoken or critical.
The Gradient of Planning Communications

| 1) Technical Information Transfer | Providing information and analysis of a scientific or technical nature for consideration primarily by their professional colleagues within and outside government. |
| 2) Procedural Information Transfer | Describing the administrative process and departmental organization and procedures. |
| 3) Administrative Information Transfer | Explaining the content, implications, and administration of specific government policies and programs. |
| 4) Policy Program Discussion | Discussing, within the framework of governmental or departmental policy, the solution of problems through changes in existing programs or the development of new programs. |
| 5) Discussion of New Issues | Discussing issues on which governmental or departmental policy has not yet been determined. |
| 6) Discussion of Politics and Policy | Explaining the nature of the political policy process in government. |
| 7) Reform Advocacy | Advocating reforms in the existing organization or procedures of government. |
| 8) Constructive Criticism | Commenting in a constructively critical way on government policy or administration. |
| 9) Criticism of Policy | Denouncing existing or potential government policies, programs, and operations. |
| 10) Partisan Commentary | Commenting in an overtly partisan way on public policy issues or on government policy or administration. |

(Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995: 339-40)

Within the practice of a neutral advisor, with its primary communication roles of information transfer and conciliation, communications which go beyond the first four categories generally
entail professional risk (Ibid). Planners hired by organizations whose role is to study and offer critique of existing policy may engage in more critical discussions. However, these criticisms, if offered from the base of a visibly alternative ideology, will generally meet with high levels of political and professional opposition, such that many planners temper their criticisms in policy discussions.

The model and methodology of the neutral advisor has come under much criticism, in part because it is based on a theoretical position of objectivity and political neutrality. Furthermore, few theorists believe that the model of neutrality has ever accurately described the “practice” of planning (Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995; Pross, 1992; Forester, 1989; Friedman, 1993).

4.3.3 Challenges and Complications to Planner as Neutral Advisor

While there are many criticisms of the planning model of the neutral advisor, for present purposes, I will highlight three characteristics of sustainable development planning which compromise the concept of neutrality:

1) The political nature of planning practice;

2) The unique imperatives of sustainable development; and

3) The socio-cultural power relationships (hegemony) developed by planners during daily communication.

4.3.3.1 Planning is Political

The first criticism of the neutral advisor model is that it rarely acknowledges the highly political
nature of planning. While theoretically, the planner's role is to simply develop and implement policy according to moral and ethical values defined by elected politicians or other leaders, the reality of practice shows that "such bureaucratic innocence has never existed in modern democratic states" (Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995: 325). As a model of government, however, it is perpetuated by both components of government, politicians and the bureaucracy, because it has benefits for both. "Elected representatives have a stake in preserving the notion that public servants are neutral instruments of political masters.... Public Servants also have an interest in preserving these convenient fictions so that they may retain their anonymity and be sheltered from public attack" (Ibid, 333-34). However, public servants, especially planners, have been increasingly recognized as having power in the political sphere, through advisory roles, as well as through the creation, enforcement, and adjudication of regulations and rules (Ibid, 1995).

Mass communication initiatives and the increased role of the mass media in government initiatives has undermined anonymity. "The increased interaction of public servants (including planners) with both individual citizens and specific 'publics' or clientele groups, reveals the nature of (their) official involvement in policy development. The cumulative impact of the growing information and conciliation functions performed by public servants is a gradual, but significant, decline in official anonymity" (Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995: 342).

"Planners work on problems with people. The problem-work is potentially technical; ...the people-work is always political..." (Forester, 1989: 4). "Simply to say that analysts provide information is correct, but not terribly helpful. 'How' do they provide the information, and
what practical, political, and ethical difference can they make? Analysts are not apolitical problem solvers or social engineers. Instead, they are actually pragmatic critics who must make selective arguments and therefore influence what other people learn about, not by technically calculating means to ends or error signals, but by ‘organizing attention’ carefully to project possibilities, organizing for practical political purposes and organizational ends” (Ibid, 18).

“Planning analysts transmit facts, but they also shape relationships, political ties, and others’ attention, thus shaping not only others’ thinking but their concerns and participation too” (Ibid, 19). “Planning analysts are more than navigators who keep their ships on course: They are necessarily involved with formulating that course” (Ibid, 16).

The above critique of the theory underlying the model of the neutral advisor focuses on the fact that the model does not explicitly recognize the political implications of planners’ work, especially their communications, and therefore, offers little in the way of ethical or practical guidance to planners in these issues.

4.3.3.2 Sustainable Development and Its Unique Imperatives for Change

Grabow and Heskin (1973) argue that society must change to become sustainable and that traditional planning techniques, associated with the model of the neutral advisor, tend to resist change. Grabow and Heskin agree with Rees (1995) when they say that in order to achieve sustainability, “…change must take place in all realms: social, economic, technological, scientific, educational, religious, cultural, sexual, and political” (Grabow / Heskin, 1973: 112).

For planners to take up this mantel, which, as Rees (1995) argues, is the ethical course of action
for planners in the face of the alternatives, will require planners confront many issues which the model of the neutral advisor does not address.

The role of the anonymous, apolitical, objective, neutral planner becomes compromised in sustainable development planning because sustainable development planning requires that planners engage other stakeholders in discussions on issues of science, culture, values and economics (Rees, 1995; Daly and Cobb, 1994).

During the implementation of sustainable development policies, planners have to address the winners and losers which new sustainable policies will give rise to. Planners will have to engage in extensive education campaigns for stakeholders and the general public to encourage consideration and dialogue on the potential effects of ‘business-as-usual’ versus tradeoffs inherent in addressing sustainability issues. Discussions of this sort, around sustainable development policies, can entail considerable professional risk as outlined in the earlier discussion on neutrality and communications. Moreover, from the relatively privileged position many planners enjoy, the power they hold through access to and control of key information flows, the initiatives promoting such changes need to take place with a eye to the ethical issues raised by such communications.

Therefore, due to the complexities and cultural issues inherent in planning any sustainable development initiative, the model of the neutral advisor offers an insufficient theoretical foundation on which to build professional ethics and practice.
4.3.3.3 Planning is Communicative Action

The third criticism of the theoretically anonymous and neutral advisor comes from the recognition that most of the work which contemporary planners engage in is done through communication with other stakeholders on a project. A planner's anonymity and political neutrality becomes compromised during communication. Along with the loss of anonymity, comes the recognition that planners and other public servants exercise a significant amount of power in the policy making process. Forester (1989) offers a conceptual structure for the power planner's exercise through communication.

Forester (1989) argues that fundamentally, planning is communicative action. The contemporary planner uses communication to focus stakeholder's attention, and thereby, move initiatives along in particular dimensions and directions. A planner engages in "attention-shaping communicative action rather than instrumental action as means to particular ends" (Ibid, 138). Forester argues that planners: use 'attention-shaping' to move analysis to implementation, reproduce political identity and relationships through management of information, and make claims on many issues to initiate action (Ibid, 157).

4.3.3.4 Society's Attention

Forester argues that society's attention is like capital which can be focused on certain issues or areas. "The control of information is a source of power in the planning process" (Forster, 1989: 7). "...Even though planners may often have little formal authority, they influence decision-making processes in several subtle ways. ...(They) listen to some concerns but ignore others,
call attention to these issues but neglect or de-emphasize those, time what information they give to whom, and so shape other people's expectations, hopes, and fears" (Ibid, 9). "...Here lies the crucial practical and ethical issue for planning analysts. In a democratic society citizens should be able not only to find out about issues affecting their lives but also to communicate meaningfully with other citizens about problems, social needs, and alternative policy options. If the very work of planners and policy analysts is to shape the communications -- the warnings, reports, promises, assurance, justifications, and so on -- that influence citizens's action, then should not planning analysts be responsible for anticipating and counteracting alterable, misleading, and disabling claims and learn to nurture well-informed, genuinely democratic politics and discourse instead" (Ibid, 22)?

Forester therefore, argues that the belief of neutrality which underlies the planning roles of the technician, incrementalist and structuralist, is compromised during practice because of the social impacts of planner's behaviour and communications. The foundation for this argument lies in the fact that through communication, planners exercise considerable cultural and political power.

4.3.3.5 Power and Communication

Forester presents a matrix on the relationships between power, proposing that power can be exercised in these areas in three ways:

a) Influencing decision making;

b) Shaping and setting agendas; and
c) Shaping felt needs.

"Planners transmit facts, but they also shape relationships, political ties, and other's attentions, thus shaping not only other's thinking, but their concerns and participation too" (Ibid, 19).

Altering expectations is a very powerful aspect of planners' work (Ibid, 141). A planner exercises power through communication through the managing of:

a) Comprehension -- through how problems are framed;

b) Trust -- through providing sources of assurance;

c) Consent -- through establishing sources of 'legitimacy'; and

d) Knowledge -- through representation of facts (Ibid, 38).

4.3.3.6 Distorted Communications

The "organizational and political context of (planning) practice is a structure of selective attention ...created through providing access or withholding information" (Ibid, 139). How a planner communicates and frames a project greatly affects how it is viewed politically and economically (Ibid, 142).

Forester argues that highly manipulative information management can have negative effects on citizens, and ultimately the quality of democracy, if it results in citizens becoming ignorant of key issues, depoliticized, isolative or cynical (Ibid, 11-78).

In the face of the power which planners wield through communication, it would follow that
there should be guidelines for how planners and other public servants communicate with stakeholders. However, "formal written guidelines on (planners and other public servants making) public comment are so sparse that considerable uncertainty exists as to the rights of public servants in this area"(Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995: 338-39).

It is now clear how communication within the realm of policy and development planning is important to the processes of cultural reproduction. The social structures inherent in policy development processes established and maintained to a certain degree through the management of comprehension, trust, consent and knowledge, reproduce cultural structures, ideologies, and hegemonic relationships, and ultimately the behaviour of individuals, organizations, governments, and society as whole.

Therefore, due to the combination of the political nature of planning, the wide range of issues sustainable development illuminates, and the power of communication in the daily practice of planning, the simplistic theory of planners as neutral advisors becomes an inadequate foundation for practice. An alternative theoretical foundation is needed to offer guidance to planners working in a highly politicized environment in which powerful individuals and groups are saturating the public discussion with strategically planned communications initiatives; the context for many sustainable development initiatives.
4.4 A Theoretical and Practical Foundation for Sustainable Development Planning: *Proactive Advocacy and Strategic, Ethical Communications*

4.4.1 Non-Euclidian Planning

The paradigm underlying the traditional role of the planner as a neutral advisor is a Euclidian and Cartesian model of objective knowledge and institutional action (Friedman, 1993; Rees, 1995). However, as discussed above, this model offers little guidance for day to day planning practice, especially in sustainable development initiatives.

A planning theory which recognizes the complexity of ecological systems and the cultural context for policy is needed; one which provides a theoretical and practical foundation for sustainable development planning and its associated communicative activity.

The work of Friedman (1993) can be seen as a beginning of the creation of a new theory. He proposes a more pragmatic definition of planning. "Planning is that professional practice that specifically seeks to connect forms of knowledge with forms of action in the public domain. ...What we need to do, then, is to rethink the questions of knowledge and action. What knowledge is relevant and with whose actions are we concerned? ...Planning ...becomes a way of bringing planning knowledge and practice to bear directly on the action itself. Central to a
non-Euclidian planning model are planners acting as responsible, thinking urban professionals rather than as faceless bureaucrats engaged in the production of anonymous documents. Face-to-face interaction in real time is the new model of planning" (Friedman, 1993: 482).

The models of Euclidean and Non-Euclidean Planning contrasted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Euclidean Planning</th>
<th>Non-Euclidean Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>(the neutral advisor)</em></td>
<td><em>(the proactive strategist)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Values</strong></td>
<td>Normatively neutral and focused on</td>
<td>Normative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>efficiency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy</strong></td>
<td>Focused on allocation, maps, public</td>
<td>Innovative... bringing new things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Politics</strong></td>
<td>Adherence to bureaucratic non-political approach</td>
<td>Political and concerned with implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power</strong></td>
<td>Disempowering and centrist</td>
<td>Focused on transaction and empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning</strong></td>
<td>Closed, short on learning, document-oriented</td>
<td>Open and based on social learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Friedman, 1993: 483)

Forester’s work can be seen as taking the normative, transactive, political, and learning aspects of Friedman’s model into the daily practice of planning, by focusing on the daily communication patterns of planners. Forester argues that the goal of planning communications needs to be the “correction of the needless distortions that disable, mystify, distract, and mislead others”(Forester, 1989: 21). In this argument, Forester is trying to expose the power which planners exercise through daily communication. Forester identifies a number of
communication-related verbs which embody a planner's work including: describe, indicate, designate, explain, alert, point out, specify, suggest, notify, ask, shape, warn, present, suggest, agree, argue for, argue against, offer, comment, and report (Ibid). The question is not, therefore, whether or not planners exercise power through communication, but rather whether they do so in a conscious, ethical and planned manner.

A body of theory which can serve as a foundation for sustainable development planning will need to provide a conceptual structure for planners to use as a guide as they engage the cultural issues connected to sustainable development, within a highly politicized context where communications and the flow of information is the key to managing power, political identities and stakeholder behaviour. By combining Friedman's Non-Euclidean model of planning with Forester's observations on planning communications, and bringing them to bear on the imperatives of sustainable development, a theoretical foundation can be obtained which can offer context and guidance to sustainable development planners.

4.4.2 Change Through Strategic and Ethical Communications

Planners are given responsibility for offering guidance on institutional and individual future action. "Approaching sustainability, from the assumption of the ecological paradigm, clearly assigns professional planning a significant role in the reconstruction of national and global society" (Rees, 1995: 357). Sustainable development issues have brought new ecological, social and economic imperatives to bear on many policy discussions. The effects of not pursuing a more sustainable course are not desirable, in many cases not only for future generations, but for
present ones as well (Ibid). However, as discussed in the first chapter, developing and implementing initiatives to address the roots of the problems which sustainable development principles deal with, will take place within the terrain of culture and therefore, be politicized and communicative in nature.

Underlying the problems which sustainable development addresses is a paradigm (Rees, 1995). This paradigm or world view, including values, assumptions, and behaviour patterns, has generated, rationalised and provided a cognitive structure for society’s patterns of interaction with the biosphere. Therefore, it would follow that, as Rees proposes, in order for society to ‘engage in its own reconstruction’, a new paradigm may be needed; one that recognises the limitations and fragility of life-support ecosystems and resources and finds an equitable way to distribute the resources amongst the world’s population. “Social and resource planners have a key role to play in the design and implementation of both national conservation plans and the international treaties that will be required to allocate the world’s finite ecological budgets fairly” (Ibid).

The challenge of sustainable development brings together the practice of planning and the dynamics of world views or paradigms. “Planners, by the very nature of their profession, are uniquely positioned to play a leadership role in this transition. ...Planning provides a context in which the specialized knowledge of other disciplines comes together and begins to make unified sense” (Ibid, 355).
Consistent with Friedman's definition of planning, planners can bring knowledge of sustainable development issues and perspectives to bear on public policy, development plans and other initiatives. In so doing, many new issues will arise, not addressed by conventional policy development practices. Changes are required to the theoretical foundations underlying planning practice, in order to deal with these new issues and to provide guidance to planners as they engage the cultural struggle over becoming more sustainable. The first change required, as discussed above, is that planners refuse to take refuge in the illusion of moral neutrality which the model of the neutral advisor offers, and instead accept their politicization and communicative power and further accept the ethical responsibilities which accompany this condition.

In the face of politicization and the recognition of the power planners exercise through their communication, and in the absence of direct accountability to the public, such as politicians face through elections, planners can adopt ethical guidelines, rooted in democracy, citizen empowerment and sustainable development principles, to inform their work. These ethical guidelines must clearly address two key issues: the imperatives of sustainable development and the cultural hegemony (power relationships) which planners (re)create through communication and their management of information.
4.5 The Ethics of Sustainable Development Planning: *Imperatives* of Sustainable Development

Planners, when dealing with a sustainable development project, should ensure policies promote the goal and objectives of sustainable development:

**Primary Goal of Sustainable Development Planning Initiatives:**

| To promote socio-cultural, geo-political and ecological health and stability through enhancing a good quality of life for all within the ecological capacity of the earth’s ecosystems. |
| Milbrath, 1989; Rees, 1995 |

**Objectives of Sustainable Development**

| a) To *protect* what needs protecting to ensure social and ecological system integrity. |
| b) To *reverse* current unsustainable activities or directions. |
| c) To achieve *maximum efficiency* with what we consume (reducing, re-using and recycling). |
| d) To promote *inter-generational equity*. |
| e) To *enhance* the health and resilience of physical, social and economic systems. |
| Beatley, 1995; Milbrath, 1989; Rees, 1995 |

Any policy or development initiative which meets the above goal and objectives can be seen to be promoting sustainability.
4.5.1 The Ethics of Sustainable Development Planning: Cultural Hegemonies and Communication.

The ethical concerns, connected to the power of planners’ communications and their cultural and hegemonic effects, focus on issues of the goals, methods and impacts of the communication.

Ethical goals for a planner’s communications should include:

a) Promoting and strengthening democracy;

b) Appropriately empowering citizens;

c) Engaging hegemonic structures and relationships in society; and

d) Providing leadership and guidance to society in its efforts to become more sustainable.

Forester further clarifies these goals:

**Ethical Issues for Planning Communications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Structures</th>
<th>Planners should ensure they clarify the elemental structure of the communicative actions which characterize their daily work.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Planners should develop criteria to assess public communications and arguments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying Distortions</td>
<td>Planners should identifying the essential types of disabling distortions and correct them whenever possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planner’s Role</td>
<td>Planners should clarify their role in perpetuating or counteracting distortions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planners should recognize how their communications reproduce or affect the political and economic structures of power and ideology within which they work.

(FORESTER, 1989: 156)

4.5.2 Ethical Methods of Communication

Forester offers some principles to inform planner’s communications in order to meet these goals:

**Ethical Communication Principles for Planners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clarity</th>
<th>Revealing true alternatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Correcting false expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Countering cynicism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Fostering inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Promoting political responsibility, engagement, and action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Planners communicate to many different audiences, each at a different scale. Forester points to three scales and suggests communication practices which will promote ethical interactions.
**Ethical Practices for Planning Communications at Different Scales**

| Face to Face Scale | a) Revealing meanings  
b) Checking intentions  
c) Determining roles and contexts  
d) Checking evidence |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Organizational Scale** | a) Minimizing jargon  
b) Organizing counter-advocates  
c) Making decisions in participatory manner  
d) Using independent expertise |
| **Scale of the Political and Economic Structure** | a) Demystification  
b) Exposing unexpressed interests  
c) Democratizing the state / politicizing planning  
d) Institutionalizing debate and criticism |

(Forrester, 1989: 151)

### 4.5.3 Ethics of Social Change Advocacy

As planners begin to actively promote sustainable development through both daily communications and more planned communications initiatives, the ethical issues which can arise are similar to those considered in social change theory. A planner promoting sustainable development can be seen as a social change agent promoting social change. Social change theory is important to inform sustainable development planning and will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. However, for purposes of this discussion on ethics, strategies promoting social change can be seen as ethical if they adhere to the following criteria:
Criteria for Ethical Social Change Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accepting</strong></td>
<td>The social change agents must take responsibility for their actions and their impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibility</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ensuring Consent</strong></td>
<td>There must be informed consent on the part of each stakeholder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preserving Access</strong></td>
<td>Stakeholders must retain their autonomy and have access to their usual sources of information and social support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eliminating</strong></td>
<td>There must be no threats of extreme or negative consequences connected to a failure to change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threats</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preserving Reason</strong></td>
<td>Stakeholder’s dignity must not be challenged and no extra-ordinary techniques must be used to overwhelm stakeholder’s reason.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Dignity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Counteracting</strong></td>
<td>No special vulnerabilities connected to age, sex, education or financial status should be exploited to promote the change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exploitation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The necessity for achieving sustainability provides a strong impetus for planners to serve as social change agents and to use communications to promote change. Since cultural structures of power and hegemony are reproduced through communication, planners must allow the above ethical considerations to inform their practice.

### 4.5.4 Hegemonic Implications of Planning Communications

Forester proposes a number of methods whereby planners can affect the power structures which exist in society through their communications. "...By seeking to play an educative and organizing role, informing citizens about forthcoming projects and ensuring citizens access to relevant information, planners may resist social relations of knowledge that might otherwise
leave citizens practically ignorant. By aiding citizens’ political and community organizing toward democratic control of resources and investments, planners may alter political relations of consent that would otherwise allow formally democratic but substantively autocratic policies to ensue. By encouraging citizen’s local autonomy and the protection of social networks as countervailing influences to professional power, planners may mitigate the dependency and helplessness that current service-delivery organizations.... create. By broadening the content of alternatives presented to affected citizens in community, labour, and environmental organizations, planners may work to expand citizens’ vision, to clarify real policy and productive possibilities, and to focus public attention on actions that directly address the needs of the poor the undeserved, and the powerless” (Forester, 1989: 79).

4.6 Sustainable Development Planning: Theory and Practice

The preceding discussion on planning theory and practice, highlights the complex context in which planners find themselves when dealing with sustainable development issues and imperatives. The theoretical insights offered by Friedman, Forester, Grabow and Heskin offer a politicized and communicative structure within which to locate sustainable development planning. However, it is important to note that within a political and organizational structure and mandate of a neutral advisor, planners must pick up the mantel of change agent with caution. Planners can quickly lose their apparent credibility with organizations and stakeholders, who rely on planners to provide relatively objective advice, if that advice appears to be driven by an ideology far from the dominant social paradigm. As promoting sustainable
development means engaging an ecology-based paradigm, sustainable development planners face many challenges in this area.

Therefore, several points need to be highlighted around sustainable development planning. The first is that, while achieving sustainable development may ultimately require society to "reconstruct itself" (Rees, 1995), the changes will have to take place in relatively small steps. Therefore, planners must develop methods of simultaneously being relatively neutral advisors (technicians, incrementalists and structuralists) and also be progressive change agents.

The second point is that through careful proactive advocacy for sustainable development and through strategic and ethical communications initiatives, planners can introduce and promote sustainable development principles into every project and stakeholder group they encounter. This process draws on the communicative power which planners wield and provides a social structure of discussion and learning through which progress towards sustainability can be made.

The third point concerns the unique opportunity planners have with respect to communicating with the public around sustainable development. In the search for a more sustainable lifestyle, many people, because they are not aware of solutions, become cynical (Daly and Cobb, 1994). However, planners are presented with a comparative advantage in their communicative endeavours; namely, they, through their expertise and practice, can offer the much needed solutions which can offer vision and hope to the stakeholders with whom they are working.
The special insight planners offer into the complex workings of society and governance can be drawn on to create legitimate solutions which can be effectively communicated.

The fourth point, and one which forms the core of this thesis’s argument, is that if the role of planner’s communication is so primary in sustainable development planning, then the mass media, as one of the most important communicators in today’s society, should be harnessed by planners to promote sustainable development principles and practices. Unfortunately, the planning profession, currently, has not formally acknowledged its implicit relationship with the mass media. As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, the American Planning Association (APA), the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP), and the Planning Institute of British Columbia (PIBC), have no official guidelines at present for their members, outlining effective and ethical ways to engage the mass media. A number of publications are available on ‘effective communications’ for planners and these suggest that the mass media can be an important tool for planners. “Effective (and ethical) use of the mass media can contribute to the fulfilment of... long term goals (such as)... promoting an informed citizenry... (and) strengthening community identity” (Paterson in Arnold et al, 1983: 100-101). However, these publications do not acknowledge the importance and complexity of sustainable development, nor do they offer much guidance in how to ‘plan’ communications strategies and initiatives. This thesis is an attempt to address this problem and integrate the issues of communications planning, especially for mass communications through the mass media, with sustainable development planning theory and practice.
4.7 Summary

To be effective in sustainable development initiatives, planners need to consider many issues around their role as communicators. The role of the planner in society would suggest that they should bring sustainable development issues to light in their projects (Rees, 1995). Since much planning work is essentially communicative in nature, planners should be aware of the ethical and hegemonic issues surrounding their communication-related activities. These ethical issues include access to information, education, empowerment, attention-directing, political identities, stakeholder comprehension, trust and consent.

Both the complexities of planning practice and the cultural terrain of sustainable development problematize the conventional model of the neutral planner. More radical theories of planning offer a foundation for sustainable development planning; one which can provide guidance to the contemporary planner because it addresses the communicative, hegemonic and political nature of planning.

In order for sustainable development planners to be effective in implementing initiatives and in engaging the hegemonic struggles which characterize the cultural terrain of sustainable development, they must also understand the processes of social change, as discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter 5 -
Social Change Theory: A Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development Planning

5.1 Introduction

As argued in the first several chapters, sustainability will be achieved through changes in the realm of culture (Daly and Cobb, 1994; Milbrath, 1989). Furthermore, planners need to play a proactive role in promoting sustainable development policies (Rees, 1995). Beyond policy analysis work, communication will be a primary activity connected to this endeavour (Forester, 1989). When planners encourage such socio-cultural changes, they become social change agents.

In order to be effective in promoting change, planners need to be aware of the nature of social and cultural change. Sociological theories have emerged which describe social change
processes and these theories offer frameworks which planners can use when planning sustainable development initiatives which involve social change, or to better understand the strategies other stakeholders may be using to promote their agendas. The issues of cultural hegemony and communications in planning social change are further highlighted in this discussion.

In this chapter, I discuss the basics tenets of social change theory, how changes occur and spread, strategies for promoting change and issues surrounding agents of change, focusing on implications to sustainable development planning.

5.2 Introduction to Social Change Theory

Social change can be defined as “...the significant alteration of social structure and cultural patterns throughout time”(Harper, 1993: 4). At the root of perspectives on social change lies the concept of social structure. “Social structure is the network of relationship in which people are embedded” (Ibid, 5). The social structure is one of the most important contextual aspects of a culture which may accelerate or slow the rate of change in any direction. Changes in social structure are closely connected, often causally, to changes in patterns of behaviour, ideas, beliefs and other aspects of culture.
5.2.1 Types of Change

There are several types of change.

Qualitative Types of Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Progress</th>
<th>A qualitative improvement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evolution</td>
<td>A general change typically toward more complexity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Change in more tangible areas such as economics, often in keeping with agreed upon goals or values.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Harper, 1993: 8-9).

A fourth type of change exists, “revolution”, which can be seen as an extreme and rapid form of evolution.

5.2.2 Scales of Change

There are several scales at which change can take place within society including the individual, the group, the organization or institution, the national society, and the world. There are also several types of change which could take place in the social structures at each scale, including changes in individuals, roles, activities, relationships and overall structures (Ibid, 6).

Harper highlights the hegemonic struggles which characterize today’s societies and cultures by pointing out that “...the planning of change is more pervasive in the contemporary world than in the past” (Ibid, 212). Mass communications technology has been especially important in this process because it has allowed many to use communications strategies to reach broad audiences.
and thereby introduce ideas and make claims in order to intentionally influence the behaviour and perceptions of large segments of society. As argued in the previous chapter, sustainable development planners need to engage this hegemonic struggle if they are to be effective. Planners should, therefore, be clear on the scales and types of changes they are promoting, ones which may be connected indirectly to their initiatives, in order to be effective and to ensure ethical criteria are met during the promotion of social change.

5.3 Theoretical Models of Social Change

Models of social change offer sustainable development planners a framework for understanding and strategically and ethically planning change. There are three general theories of the nature of change in the structure of society and in its processes:

\[ a) \text{ Structural Functionalism Theory;} \]

\[ b) \text{ Conflict Theory;} \text{ and} \]

\[ c) \text{ Interpretive Theories.} \]

Examples can be found of change processes in the recent history of sustainable development which embody the principles of each theory.

5.3.1 Structural Functionalism Theory

Structural Functionalism is a theory of change which is focused on the survival of societal systems. “Structural functionalism assumes that a society is a system of interrelated parts and
subsystems that function in ways that promote the survival of the whole system. The initial focus of much functional thinking is to define activities necessary for the survival of the entire system” (Harper, 1993: 90). “Functionalism locates the origins of change in ‘malintegration’ which produces strains (which are followed by) ...innovations that deal with such strains” (Ibid, 112). Functionalist theory sees dissension as normal and describes society’s operation as one of managing these tensions. Culture is seen as a key integrator of all of the other societal system components and it is in the terrain of culture that the struggles over change are met and negotiated (Ibid, 91).

The process of change, from the structural functionalist point of view, starts with a conceptual past which has a tradition and culture with a specific social order, including patterns which are in a state of uneasy equilibrium. This cultural order tends to experience perpetual stress from various pressures for change. These pressures facilitate innovations which create a sequence of adaptive changes. The social system grows, differentiates, and undergoes structural change until it reaches some new state, which is then institutionalized. As soon as the new state is institutionalized it conceptually becomes the ‘past’ and the cycle of structural functionalist change begins again (Ibid, 94).

The emergence of “pro-environment” values in North America, in the last 30 years, can be seen as an example of this theory. The internal social, philosophical and political stresses caused by reactions to environmental degradation have resulted in environmental protection initiatives in many jurisdictions.
5.3.2 Conflict Theory

Conflict theory focuses on conflict between groups over the control of scarce resources (including authority and power), locating the sources of change in structural inequalities between the groups (Ibid, 112). Social influence and control is seen as the “currency” of conflict theory. The social system is therefore seen as being of two groups:

a) Those who want to maintain their authority; and

b) Those who want to redistribute or renegotiate that authority (Ibid, 98).

Therefore, conflict theorists are especially interested in ‘interest groups’, their characteristics and their relationships to other groups.

5.3.2.1 Culture as the Terrain of Conflict

In conflict theory, “culture is viewed as symbolic formations and ideologies that become tools in social struggles between various groups and classes. In other words, ideas and values produce not only solidarity and unity but also social control related to the interests of particular groups as well” (Ibid, 96). “Conflict theory stresses the production of culture as one of the ways in which an existing system reproduces itself and that change-producing contradictions become manifest as widespread disillusion with conventional cultural symbols. When disillusionment, disbelief, and cynicism about the dominant symbols of society become widespread, this is a harbinger of significant change” (Ibid, 97).

Examples of conflict theory can be seen in the cultural struggles around sustainability in many countries, foregrounded by the appearance of the Green Party, as well as in the political
activities of environmental groups and in the anti-consumerist initiatives of groups like the Media Foundation with their magazine ‘Adbusters.’ Those with authority respond in different ways to the internal stresses caused by intergroup conflict. An example of a response to environmental and academic lobby groups can be seen in the proposal by the Canadian Federal Progressive Conservative Party, during the 1997 election, to reorganize the federal departments which oversee resources and the environment, into one umbrella department called the Department of Sustainable Development.

5.3.3 Interpretive Theories

Interpretive theories take the position that the sources of change lie in the ‘perception’ of trouble with the existing situation. Those who would make change attempt to redefine situations and issues and thereby, change perceptions of reality and consequently change the public policies that flow from such perceptions (Ibid, 112). “Change does not happen automatically when the external conditions change, but rather when people redefine situations regarding those conditions, and alter social behaviour accordingly” (Ibid, 106).

5.3.3.1 The Primacy of Perception

Interpretive theories focus on social interaction, negotiation and the exchange of “…meanings, symbols, and social definitions that constitute both society and change” (Ibid, 89). This type of theory is composed of the work of those who focus on perception, symbology, and meaning in society. “Society and culture are created through the evolution of meaning. Human society is
fundamentally an ongoing process rather than an entity or structure” (Blumer in Harper, 1993: 104). “As they interact, humans constantly negotiate order, structure, and cultural meanings among themselves. Negotiated order in this sense may include the reaffirmation, defence, rearrangement, change, or destruction of existing social arrangements and cultural meanings” (Strauss, 1978 in Harper, 1993: 104). As is immediately apparent, communication initiatives become the primary tool, used by many, to influence or change the perceptions of issues.

To interpretive theorists, social structures are simply temporary by-products of the processes of change, interaction and social negotiation. “Societal structure and coherence exists only within the framework of those outlooks, meanings, and definitions that are broadly established. Within these, there is a shifting melange of groups and structures, based on class, ethnicity, occupation, residence, and so forth, each of which develops its own differentiated and somewhat particularistic subcultural ‘definition of the situation” (Ibid, 105).

5.3.3.2 Redefinition and Claims-making

Pressures for change begin to emerge when definitions of a societal situation become problematic. New ideas, values, and ideologies arise when the existing ones are perceived as not working. These new ideological attributes sanction new forms of action.

The way in which people change their perceptions is somewhat unclear or ill defined in these theories. One method typically accepted is the process of ‘claims-making’ whereby some, within a social structure, propose new perceptions or a redefinition of the elements of the older
structures, in such a way as to facilitate a change in perception.

The claims of many environmental groups and academics about the negative future implications of continuing certain types of economic activity can be seen as an example of claims-making. More importantly, the introduction of the "ecological paradigm" (Rees, 1995; Milbrath, 1989) can be seen as an initiative to change the perception of the relationship between the economy and the environment and to thereby, change the public policy which flows from such perceptions.

Models describe and organize perceptions of reality and while they are never completely accurate, they offer frameworks for understanding change. “Structural Functionalism” and “Interpretive” theories offer frameworks for understanding the cultural changes relevant to sustainable development planning. Conflict theories, with their focus on inter-group conflict, provide a framework for understanding the hegemonic interaction of those involved in sustainable development policy creation.

5.4 Social Change Processes

Changes typically originate within an individual or small group and then spread. The change is often initiated by an “agent of change” in response to a perceived problem. The interpersonal discussions which follow begin to spread the change within a small group. The process of how an individual adopts a change or innovation and changes actions in response goes through a
series of specific steps:

1) *Individual Change Process*

   a) Knowledge of the change;

   b) Persuasion that the change is desirable or necessary;

   c) A decision to change and how to achieve the change; and

   d) Action.

2) *Social Structure Change Process*

   a) Stimulation of group interest;

   b) Initiation of a new idea;

   c) Legitimation of the idea by the group’s power holders, especially ‘value-leaders; and

   d) A decision to act by some influential decision subgroup in the system.

   (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971, in Harper, 1993: 134)

5.4.1 Causes for Change

Two causes of change can be identified from the point of view of culture.

*Materialistic Change*

Economic factors (natural resources, wealth, or the tools and techniques, technologies) produce changes in social interaction, social organization, and, ultimately, cultural values, beliefs, and norms (Ibid, 65).
Ideational Change

Ideas, values and ideologies promote or reject change through addressing issues of legitimacy, social solidarity and defining problems and contradictions which need solutions (Ibid, 70-71). Ideational change is closely connected to communication.

Rees (1995) and Milbrath (1989) argue that sustainable development will involve a paradigm shift or in other words, an ideational change which will in turn drive change at the materialistic level. However, both ideational and materialistic change will need to take place simultaneously (Grabow and Heskin, 1973). Planners can initiate change in either dimension, but if a proposed change is to be effective at the level of society, it must adopted.

5.4.2 Change Adopter Profiles

A change can be adopted at any scale, ie: by an individual or a social system (Harper, 1993: 131). The societal profile of individuals who adopt changes typically includes five types.

Profile of Change Adopters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Adopter</th>
<th>Percentage of Target Population</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovators</td>
<td>2.5% of target population</td>
<td>This group enthusiastically adopts change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early adopters</td>
<td>13.5% of target population</td>
<td>This group adopts the change relatively easily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early majority</td>
<td>34% of target population</td>
<td>This group adopts change only after the early adopters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late majority</td>
<td>34% of target population</td>
<td>This group generally resists change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laggards</td>
<td>16% of target population</td>
<td>This group actively resists most changes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Harper, 1993)
This matrix shows how the cultural reproduction process can simultaneously facilitate a culture with great diversity and one that changes very slowly. A change agent can often relatively easily persuade about 15% of the population to adopt a change that is amenable to them. If the new change shows relative permanence in this first 15%, then another third of the population will likely adopt the change resulting in adoption by about half of the target population. The last half of the population will, however, resist the change and if they adopt the change, will do so only after much time and influence from contextual factors. This coexistence of adopters and resisters results in many diverse ideologies being in circulation in a culture. Therefore, change agents must plan strategically and target their audiences carefully.

This demographic profile of change presents a communicative challenge to planners in promoting sustainable development. The first two steps require encountering communications which explain the changes. If enough individuals and small groups adopt a change, the change may then begin to have an influence at the larger scale of subcultures, social structures and society’s systems. These larger structures then go through an adoption process which in turn feeds back into the adoption process of individuals within the society.

Changes connected to achieving sustainability have, by and large, been adopted by the “innovators” (the first 2.5%) in many fields. However, the manner in which this group has approached sustainability may not have a good ‘fit’ with the subsequent societal groups as each group has a unique profile of motivations and contextual issues and forces. Sustainable development planners face many communication challenges in shaping their sustainability...
messages to fit increasingly large segments of the population, segments whose approach to the issue may require planners to develop new strategies, strategies which, as the segments become larger, will need to include mass communication initiatives involving the mass media.

5.5 Promoting Change

As argued earlier, planners may need to promote social change when implementing sustainable development policies and that process may involve planners acting as social change agents. Because social change is a complex and systems-oriented process, planners need to develop strategies to guide this aspect of their work.

5.5.1 Types of Change Strategies

There are generally five types of strategies open to those who would act as a change agent and promote social change in terms of a change in attitude or behaviour in a target group (Harper, 993).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitative Strategies</th>
<th>These focus on stakeholders discussing the issues and mutually finding solutions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Re-educative Strategies</td>
<td>These focus on educating stakeholders on the issues, options and changes which need to take place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasive Strategies</td>
<td>These focus on persuading stakeholders to make changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power / Coercive Strategies</td>
<td>These focus on forcing stakeholders to make changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Strategies</td>
<td>These focus on a mix of the above strategies used at different times during a change process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Ibid)
Promoting change, through any of the above strategies, has 3 elements:

a) *The change agent*;

b) *The change desired* in behaviour or attitudes; and

c) *The target population*: individuals, groups, organizations, communities, societies

(Ibid, 217).

Each strategy has strong and weak points, depending on the particular constellation of these three variables.

*Facilitative Strategy*

a) In this strategy, the change agent’s role is to provide information and resources, cooperate with groups involved, and illuminate the issues.

b) This strategy is effective when the problems to be addressed are clear, the goals are broad, and stakeholders are willing to learn and change.

c) This strategy is less effective when there is resistance to change, especially in powerful stakeholder groups and / or the change must take place quickly.

*Re-Educative Strategy*

a) In this strategy, the change agent’s role is to present information objectively to groups involved.

b) This strategy is effective when the benefits of the change are clear, the groups involved have fears about the change and do not have the requisite knowledge and skills, but are capable of responding.
c) This strategy is less effective when the benefits of the change are not clear, there exist strong feelings connected to the change which overpower the rational arguments, or unbiased/objective information is not available.

**Persuasive Strategy**

a) In this strategy, the change agent's role is to argue persuasively for a change using more emotionally-based arguments.

b) This strategy is effective when the groups involved are capable of changing but are unaware of the need to change or the benefits of a change, and/or there is little objective information available to present rational arguments for change.

c) This strategy is less effective when the change agent has low credibility in stakeholders' eyes, the group mistrusts the information or facts in the argument, or the groups are not capable of changing due to a lack of skills or resources.

**Power / Coercive Strategy**

a) In this strategy, the change agent's role is to set the standards, punish non-conformance and create and exercise a monopoly on the rewards associated with conformance.

b) This strategy is effective when the change required is supported by accepted social values and a majority of those in the political system who can punish non-conformance, and the changes asked for are primarily behavioural.

c) This strategy is less effective when the changes are complex, alienation in the
involved groups is undesirable, or expensive enforcement systems must be maintained.

Mixed Strategies

a) In this strategy, the change agent’s role is to strategize which of the above methods to use in what circumstances.

b) This strategy is effective when ‘freeze and thaw’ cycles of education and enforcement are needed.

c) This strategy is less effective when Ideological attitudes of the groups involved mandate a single strategy.

(Harper, 1993)

All five strategies may need to be used by planners when promoting sustainable development policies and communication plays a strategic role in each.

5.5.2 Resistance to Change

The social structure and the roles of individuals within society are important to social change but these roles and structures do not change easily. “An invention is acceptable to a society in direct proportion to the degree that the innovation ‘does not’ require a change in the roles or social organization of that society” (Rogers, 1972: 7 in Harper, 1993: 137). There are many reasons for an individual’s or system’s resistance to change.
Reasons for Resistance to Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>The fear of the new and untried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Dissonance</td>
<td>The change is perceived to be inconsistent with prevailing values and norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>The results of the change may be inconsistent with existing aesthetic tastes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Costs</td>
<td>The change is perceived as a threat to existing vested interests in terms of money or status.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The process of change or innovation adoption is inextricably connected to the social structures which the change would affect. “Innovations with the probability of reinforcing or enhancing power or status will readily be adopted by elites, but innovations that appear to threaten the existing scheme of things will be resisted by these elite and will be viewed most favourably by low-status groups and persons with little at stake in the existing system” (Ibid, 129). Since sustainable development asks for change in many areas, especially in economic practices and paradigms (Rees, 1995), resistance can be anticipated. Communications plays a very important part in creating many of the conditions associated with lower resistance to a change.

5.5.3 Characteristics of Highly Acceptable Change Initiatives

The nature of a change affects how easily it is adopted. As change agents, planners will need to shape the changes proposed in sustainable development initiatives so they are more readily adopted. Some characteristics of changes which are more easily adopted can be identified.
## Characteristics of a Change Initiative More Likely to be Accepted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicability</strong></td>
<td>It can be passed on easily through various means of communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk and Security</strong></td>
<td>There is relatively little risk inherent in accepting the change and it offers no threat to security or autonomy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persuasiveness</strong></td>
<td>It has a relatively wide scope of appeal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advantageousness</strong></td>
<td>Visible advantages can be gained by accepting the change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compatibility</strong></td>
<td>It has many aspects which are compatible with existing values, practices and experiential knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Simplicity</strong></td>
<td>The change is simple and clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Divisibility and Malleability</strong></td>
<td>The change can take place in small stages which are not all laid out at the beginning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Possessibility</strong></td>
<td>Individuals affected by the change can ‘possess’ the change project as ‘their own.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Popularity</strong></td>
<td>The change has visible support from popular leaders and top officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interest</strong></td>
<td>The change offers new and interesting experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authorship</strong></td>
<td>The problems addressed by the change were identified by those who will have to change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consensus</strong></td>
<td>The change project has consensus agreement by all involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
<td>There are many similarities between the change agent and those undergoing the change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Congruity</strong></td>
<td>The change agents exhibit empathy to those experiencing the change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Empathy</strong></td>
<td>The group of individuals experiencing the change trust each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
<td>There are many provisions for feedback in the change program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>Results are immediately visible from making the change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


If sustainable development policies can be seen as a force of change or an innovation, then, by using the above list as criteria for both sustainable development policy initiatives and the
communication initiatives to accompany the policies, planners can achieve an easier fit between sustainable development initiatives and culture.

5.5.4 Motivations for Change

Another key issue in promoting change, is to recognize the motivations driving the behaviour of those targeted for a change initiative. Alexander presents several key motivations or principles which sustainable development planners need to be cognizant of, when developing strategies and change initiatives.

Motivations for Decisions or Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Necessity</td>
<td>This principle focuses on what is perceived to be necessary and needed, and the reasons why. Promoting change using this principle involves introducing new ‘imperatives.’ This principle drives decisions of most important decision-makers in government and business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality</td>
<td>This principle focuses on ethical behaviour. Promoting change using this principle involves facilitating empathy building and a more widespread clarity of cause/effect patterns in society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality</td>
<td>This principle operates at the level of the ‘paradigm’ and focuses on modes of “being” which are congruent to a perception one has of reality. Promoting change using this principle involves developing new ‘growth’ forums to facilitate experiencing new ways of being which may cause changes in one’s world view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasure</td>
<td>This principle focuses on seeking fulfilment of needs and desires. Promoting change using this principle involves demonstrating new ways of achieving fulfilment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Alexander, 1995: 42)
Sustainable development planners can be more effective in policy debates if they identify the principle underlying arguments put forth by stakeholders in an initiative.

5.6 Sustainable Development Planning, Social Change and Mass Communications

"An innovation (change) will not come into being until the cultural base is sufficiently developed to permit its occurrence" (Ibid, 123). This concept is a cornerstone in this thesis. The social changes associated with sustainable development policies will not be adopted by society until the cultural base has been developed to support it. Mass communications initiatives utilizing the mass media, will need to be used in many cases to introduce the issues and proposed changes into the culture.

5.6.1 Limits to Mass Communications as a Tool for Social Change

It is important to re-iterate that mass communications initiatives disseminated through the mass media rarely cause rapid or dramatic changes, for many reasons including, the "one-way" character of mass communication. To facilitate change most effectively, discussion and learning must take place which requires two way communication. "The mass media appear to be more effective in disseminating new information than in (directly) changing behaviour or attitudes. They appear to have little persuasive effect without reinforcement by interpersonal communication in an informal group context. ...Effective persuasion usually requires interactive
communication between the change agent and the potential adopters” (Harper, 1993: 130).

Mass communication mediums are limited in their effects for many reasons.

**Limiting Characteristics in Mass Communication**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uni-directional</td>
<td>It is relatively one-way communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiences</td>
<td>It offers selective exposure of the message to certain target audiences only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>Characteristics of engagement of mass communication by audience usually results in selective perception of meanings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>Audience usually has only a selective retention of messages and meanings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


While mass communication may not directly ‘cause’ social change, the ideas presented through mass communication often become both normalized and become the topics and ideas discussed inter-personally.

Sustainable development has been included in many policy discussions in the last decade, however, partly because the term and its concepts have not figured prominently and clearly in the mass media, politicians often do not find public support for sustainable development policies proposed by planners within their jurisdictions. By using social change strategies, planners can develop effective social change initiatives which promote sustainable development and utilize the mass media.
5.7 Summary

Redeveloping in a more sustainable manner will involve social change. Social change theories and strategies offer guidance to planners on how to develop and communicate sustainable policies and initiatives effectively.

Models of change, such as those in Structural Functionalist, Conflict and Interpretive Theories, can offer guidance on the type and scale of change involved, as well as on the strategy and process of change which will be effective for an initiative. It is also important to consider the change process and the profile of adopters and resisters in the change process and especially, the influence of the ‘elites’ or the ‘empowered’ in the process. Planners can increase their effectiveness as change agents by shaping the aspects of the proposed change to make it easy to adopt. Finally, planners need to consider what change strategies will be most effective to use with each group in an initiative, including facilitative, re-educative, persuasive, power-coercive or a mixture of all. All social strategies and processes involve communication and, in many cases, mass communication, if they are to be effective. In order to use mass communication and engage the mass media, planners need to understand the characteristics of the mass media, as discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter 6 -

The Mass Media: Sustainable Development can be the Message

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the mass media industry. It examines types of media, the mass media as a communicator, some effects of the mass media on society, criticisms of those effects, and finally, implications for sustainable development planning of the mass media's role in society.

The following chapter looks more closely at the role the mass media play in policy communities.

6.1.1 Why are the Mass Media Important to Sustainable Development Planning?

The mass media are important to sustainable development planning for several reasons including their ability to educate, influence political will, promote agendas, legitimize certain views, and socialize and reinforce values, beliefs and behaviour. Sustainable development initiatives often call for widespread 'education' of all involved (CCME, 1993). Since most Canadians receive news and information about their larger world through mass mediums such as newspapers, magazines, radio and TV, if the education is to take place, it will need to take
place, at least in part, through mass mediums. There are many challenges sustainable
development planners will face in interfacing sustainable development initiatives with the
industry of mass media. The first, and most important, at this point in time, is the general
ignorance in the planning profession of the key characteristics of the mass media industry. In
order to effectively and creatively engage the mass media while promoting sustainable
development initiatives, planners must understand this industry and how it operates.

6.1.2 Proliferation of the Mass Media

The industry of mass media is very profitable and has grown significantly since World War II.
It is now dominated by monopolies and multinational economies of scale, such as global news
agencies. By the early 1980s, the 4 main western news agencies produced 34 million words of
news per day (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991: 279). By far, the most important and powerful
medium developed in this century is the television. By the 1980's, 7 out of 10 Americans had
never known a world without TV (Clark, 1988: 330).

The proliferation of the mass media has made it a key force in shaping politics and culture.
Beyond its economic stature, the mass media have become inextricably connected to
contemporary political processes. Most governments rely heavily on the mass media
institutions to relay their messages to the public. Governments frequently respond immediately
to what appears in news broadcasts. Often the questions asked during 'question periods' in the
Canadian House of Parliament reflect the issues being investigated by members of the mass
media (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991).
6.2 Mass Communication and the Mass Media

Lorimer and McNulty define mass communication as: "The practice and products of providing leisure entertainment and information to an unknown audience by means of corporately financed, industrially produced, state regulated, high tech, privately consumed commodities in the mediums of print, screen, audio, and broadcast media" (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991: 36). This definition includes many of the important aspects of the industry of mass communication which has become an important component of culture in industrialized societies.

Mass communication and the mass media are not the same thing. Mass media, especially in a Western model, are the corporations who engage in mass communication for profit (Berger, 1995, 7). The products most commonly associated with the mass media include:

**Types of Mass Media**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspapers</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Dailies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Weekend supplements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Weeklies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Semi-weeklies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Bi/tri-weeklies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periodicals</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) General magazines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Topical, special interest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Academic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Other Print
- a) Catalogue
- b) Direct mail

### Outdoor
- a) Billboards
- b) Car Cards
- c) Signs

### Books
- a) Domestic
- b) Foreign

### Broadcast (private/public)
- a) Radio
- b) TV

### CDs, Records, Tapes
- a) Small and Large companies
- b) Audience specialties

### Movie Theatres / Film
- a) Small and Large companies
- b) Audience specialties
- c) Domestic / Foreign

### Internet
- a) Websites

(Lorimer and McNulty, 1991: 42)

This list covers a wide array of mass communications industries. In this thesis, when I refer to the mass media and its characteristics and influences, I will mostly be referring to the news and entertainment industries of newspapers, magazines, radio, and television.

#### 6.2.1 Mass Media Models

It is important to note that the model of the mass media which predominates in North America is not the only type. Several types of mass media systems can be identified including:
Mass Media Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communist</td>
<td>The government operates media for purposes of political propaganda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>The government tightly controls and censors media messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libertarian</td>
<td>The media is privately owned and controlled under principles of the ‘free press.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>It is similar to the Libertarian model with emphasis on ethical aspects of social impacts of media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>An audience is captured and served for purposes of advertising revenues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Lorimer and McNulty, 1991: 72; Berger, 1995: 118)

The significance of this ‘Western’ model lies in the combination of the concepts of the ‘free press’ with the ethics of entertainment and economics, because what is profitable becomes the primary guide for most media programming decisions (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991).

The Western model has many implications for sustainable development planning. As will be discussed in more depth later in the chapter, the Western media are generally loathe to send messages which might threaten business profitability. As many sustainable development initiatives have economic implications, planners, using the media as an educational and promotional venue, will need to address the economic implications of their proposed initiatives, using ecological economic models and full cost accounting methodologies.
6.3 The Mass Media and the Communication Process: Elements and Characteristics

The mass media have unique characteristics as communicators. Many of these characteristics have to do with the fact that the mass media are generally corporate institutions and are involved in 'mass' communications. As was discussed in the third chapter, the communications process is seen to have 5 elements: the sender, the message, the medium, the audience and the feedback mechanisms (Berger, 1995). The process of communication, with respect to the mass media, has many unique aspects.

6.3.1 Mass Media as Sender

The mass media, as a "sender" of messages, have several unique characteristics which shape its communication patterns.

The Profit Motive

The mass media is comprised of economically-motivated institutions whose first goal is to capture an audience so revenue can be derived from advertising (McQuail and Windahl, 1981: 4; Lorimer and McNulty, 1991: 279). Therefore, the quality and ethical standards generally adopted by the mass media are those that capture large audiences and the other standards that apply are generally those imposed by the government (Ibid, 207).
The Mass Media as an Institution

While in the conventional communication process model, the sender is seen to be a singular entity, the mass media is, in fact, a diverse, commercial institution with an internal order, culture and a collective paradigm. As a result, a mass media institution has a variety of motives, perception filters, goals, mandates and constraints. A mass media institution will have multiple players, creators, identities, values and points of view, not all of which agree (Lull, 1995).

The Mass Media and Ideology

Within a mass media institution, those who make decisions about what information will be broadcast are termed ‘gatekeepers’ and include, the government, the media corporation owners and editors (McQuail and Windahl, 1981; Lull, 1995: 118). While gatekeepers can control what messages are broadcast, they cannot control what meanings their audiences decode from those messages. Moreover, within the institutions themselves, consultants of many kinds are used at all levels of the design of information and they also serve as gatekeepers, influencing what information is conveyed and how the media relates to a community (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991: 194). Therefore, from the ideological point of view, “mass media outlets are multi-vocal” (Lull, 1995: 126).

The Mass Media as Messenger and Speaker

The mass media serve as both a messenger and a speaker. On one hand, they are merely a commercial conduit which can deliver large audiences to a variety of organizations and
individuals who are willing to pay to get their message out to that audience (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991). On the other hand, the mass media not only produce their own messages, they also “create” messages through ‘gatekeeping,’ implicit or explicit angles on news stories, and through the planned or unplanned collaging together of certain news, entertainment and advertising messages within a short period of time (Kellner, 1995).

6.3.2 Mass Media Messages

The messages sent by mass media institutions also have many unique characteristics.

Mass Media Messages are Commodities

Mass media messages are produced as commodities and must be ‘consumable,’ repeatable, complex and advertiser-friendly and therefore, must be audience-interest focused in order to sell (Lull, 1995; Lorimer and McNulty, 1991: 80-82).

Mass Media Messages are Tailored to Subcultures

The message must be targeted to subcultures and developed with appropriate signs and codes to be received with a minimum of aberrant decoding. However, since most mass media messages are expensive to make and to send, the message must reach as many target audiences as possible, creating a complex mandate for the authors of such messages.

The Signs and Codes used in the Message must be Accessible

The signs and codes chosen for a mass media message are shaped strategically in three areas:
a) Message Content:

The message’s subject and tone must be conveyed with signs and codes appropriate to its target audience to communicate effectively.

b) Message Form:

How the message is delivered conveys meaning. Therefore, the formal aspects must be compatible with the aesthetic values of the target audience.

c) The Messenger:

Meaning is communicated based on the characteristics of the person, venue or medium used to deliver the message as the speaker must strike a ‘resonant chord’ with the audience to promote effective communication (Fiske, 1990: 75).

Mass Media Messages have Both Personal and Mass Appeal

Mass media messages must be styled to have mass appeal and be able to be personalized by individuals in the target audiences at the same time. This is typically accomplished by focusing on concrete events and narratives with simple themes.

Mass Media Messages avoid Cognitive Dissonance

Mass media messages tend to interpret events in a manner consistent with “status quo common sense.” This method for avoiding cognitive dissonance in the message is especially important in television where the spoken words convey one type of information and the images may convey many other sorts of information. As Marshall McLuhan argued, “The simultaneous insists on the harmonious” (McLuhan and Zingrone, 1995: 275).
Constraints of the Medium

Mass media messages are compiled and distributed according to a body of law, custom, or expectations (McQuail and Windahl, 1981: 4). The mass media are subject to not only the cultural predispositions of their audiences and advertising clients, but also to regulatory forces of the government and the professional standards of professionals within the institution.

6.3.3 Mass Mediums

Once the message has been created, it must be transmitted to its targeted audiences. The choice of the medium to be used is usually made prior to the message being created, as the medium shapes the message. It is at this juncture that McLuhan's famous quote, 'the medium is the message' becomes an important concept; the medium embodies various values and assumptions and various media offer unique constraints and opportunities, thereby significantly influencing the nature of a message. Beyond the influence of the medium on the message before it is sent, the technological message transmission process is imperfect and the message will pick up physical and conceptual distortion as its transmitted (Fiske, 1990). Several aspects of the mediums used by the mass mediums bear mentioning.

Technology

A medium is the technology used to manage message production and transmission. The range of mediums includes print, radio, television, film, and types of environmental installations (Fiske, 1990; Lorimer and McNulty, 1991).
The Influences of the Medium

The medium used to transmit a message shapes the message through the medium’s opportunities and constraints around time, importance of visuals, cost, generally targeted audiences’ characteristics, and finally, the scale of transmission (Berger, 1995). Each medium organizes around and encourages particular elements of ‘content’ and particular relationships between elements, depending on the medium itself and on the scale of issues being addressed. (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991:106). Local, regional and national scale media consider different things as newsworthy and important (Woodcock, 1986: 94).

Media: the New and the Old

Historical media were dominated by things such as buildings, pictures, songs, banners, and coins. Newer forms include clothing and even people, such as athletes via endorsements (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991: 37). “New media are not just mechanical gimmicks for creating worlds of illusion, but new languages with new and unique powers of expression” (McLuhan and Zingrone, 1995: 272). Rushkoff (1994) argues that our culture has become a “datasphere,” comprised of many layers of communications technology and mass mediums. Kellner (1995) further argues that through the media, a parallel “media culture” has been created in the media which interacts with “real-life” culture. The term virtual reality embodies the extent to which many feel the technological mass media has reached.

For communications planners promoting sustainable development, it is important to both normatively critique the opportunities and constraints of various media and to recognize their
relative strengths and weaknesses. It is also important to understand the impacts and interactions the mass media and its technology have with the environment. Some mediums have more impact on the environment than others due to their technology, resource use and pollution profile.

6.3.4 The Mass Media’s Audience

The audience of the mass media is a poorly defined and very diverse group. “Mass audiences” are much less homogenous and stable than models usually allow for and they are constantly changing their expectations of the media” (McQuail and Windahl, 1981: 8). Every individual will have his or her own unique reaction to a mass media message. As it is impossible to study all reactions to a message, the study of the interaction of the message and the audience usually occurs at a group or (sub)cultural level (Ibid, 4). There are several characteristics of mass media audiences that a planner should keep in mind when developing communications plans.

An Active Audience with Many Interpretations

Meaning, as circulated by the message, is a dynamic interaction between the message and the audience (Fiske, 1990). The meaning is not ‘in’ the text. It is produced in the interaction between the reader (audience) and the text. The production of meaning is an active process and therefore the audience is seen as an active component of the communication process rather than a passive one. Therefore, mass media messages always produce a” multiplicity of meanings” (Lull, 1995: 123).
Many Meanings will be Decoded

The mass media audience reads or decodes meanings from a mass media message in a variety of ways. "Decoding refers to the re-translation of a message in order to extract meaning" (McQuail and Windahl, 1981: 4). Sometimes their reading of the message may be the 'preferred reading' which the sender desired, but many times the audience obtains a different meaning, an 'aberrant decoding,' of the message (Fiske, 1990).

Target Audiences

To deal with the widespread distribution of mass media messages and the unique characteristics of each subculture, which may receive and decode the message, communications planners need to categorize their audience into 'target markets' through a process called psychographics. The members of each target market have similar characteristics and these characteristics inform the senders on how to shape their message and choose the medium in order to catch the audience's attention and to limit 'aberrant decoding' or audience misunderstandings (Berger, 1995).

It is the audience which will connect a mass media message to society (Fiske, 1990). The 'active' audience examines and circulates messages and meanings within their own life, experience and social groups (Berger, 1995). In the process they will use them and distort them in many ways. The meaning which is extracted from a text by a reader will be greatly determined by cultural context. Some of them then send a variety of forms of feedback to the mass media institution which is then used by the institution in a variety of ways to shape future
6.3.5 Feedback

Feedback refers to the process whereby the communicator obtains information on how or whether the receiver received the message (McQuail and Windahl, 1981: 4). This process of sending messages and returning feedback embodies the circularity of communication and is part of the important process of the mass media and the public negotiating a view of reality.

Effective communication allows for feedback. Failure to offer venues for feedback often results in an audiences’ natural impulses to respond to a message becoming too “loud” and thereby creating psychological distortion at the point of reception (Fiske, 1990: 22). The process of giving feedback to a mass media institution or its clients generally requires an institutional initiative to receive the feedback.

### Mass Media Feedback Mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critic’s and Fan’s Communications</th>
<th>Critics and fan clubs correspond around issues, allowing a media institution to hear feedback.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalized Accountability</td>
<td>Corporate management give feedback to producers. Media institutions are also held accountable to government organizations, who receive information from audiences on various aspects of media programming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Responses of Consumers</td>
<td>The relative popularity of a mass media’s products or messages is seen as a consumer response to programming or advertising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Feedback</td>
<td>E-mail and “call-in” lines to radio and TV stations, as well as ‘letters to the editor,’ offer direct feedback channels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editor’s Impressions</td>
<td>Editors receive feedback on their institution’s messages from many sources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the areas where the unique characteristics of the mass media as a communicator are most visible is in how the mass media approach news.

### 6.4 The News Model

The mass media model of news reporting has not only shaped what is considered news, but also the model on which the information is structured when it is being researched and reported.

#### Elements of the News Story Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis</th>
<th>A summary of an event or a proposal by a primary source.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antithesis</td>
<td>An alternative and conflicting perspective to introduce drama.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>A synthesis of the two ‘without resolution’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The need for news sources to appear to be presenting objective and unbiased news encourages a mode of presentation which focuses on different views of a situation but minimizes substantive partisan commentary and conclusions. This limit to analysis in news generally keeps the points of view presented in a news story within the boundaries of ‘conventional’ thought.

Sustainable development theory suggests that many issues in society need to be rethought from
a new ‘ecologically-focused paradigm’ (Rees, 1995). It can be difficult to present points of view from a ‘new paradigm’ in the mass media without those views becoming marginalized and mass media tend to edit or marginalize ideas which introduce cognitive dissonance.

6.4.1 Conflict Escalation

The lack of resolution in news stories and the need to create drama to attract audiences causes some to criticize the mass media for promoting conflict, as such stories leave the audience with little but a description of the conflict (Lull, 1995; Lorimer and McNulty, 1991). This pervasive sense of conflict in the news can affect government because the focus on conflict in government policy can create the impression that the government is not listening to the public. The cynicism which can result from frequently being left with the impression that the government does not care or cannot seem to do anything about a problem, can become ‘common wisdom’ over time. In the face of this cynicism, government sponsored initiatives to promote sustainable development can be easily interpreted as corrupt or ineffectual or as bowing to pressure from environmental interest groups. This condition encourages planners, as the authors of many government programs, including sustainable development policies, to develop effective communications plans and initiatives to educate the public and other stakeholders on the intents, methods and progress of such programs.

6.4.2 Criteria for Newsworthiness

The criteria which journalists, reporters and editors use when deciding what to print or broadcast are illuminating and present their own set of challenges to planners.
Criteria for Newsworthiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>A Newsmaker</strong></th>
<th>The newsmaker must be identifiable and preferably important.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Simplicity</strong></td>
<td>The issue must be significant and unambiguous and able to be reported with a simple vocabulary and restricted, broadcast codes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drama</strong></td>
<td>The issue must be able to be dramatized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personalization</strong></td>
<td>It must have personal significance to someone, preferably many people or important people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuity</strong></td>
<td>It must fit into preconceived notions of reality and what news is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consonance</strong></td>
<td>It must fit with the reporters preconceived notions of newsworthiness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Surprise</strong></td>
<td>It must have some unexpected aspects to it; it must be 'new.'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


These criteria and the use of certain codes and language as well as the topics covered by various media institutions bring criticism from all sides. The institutions which cover news in a 'tabloid' style are criticized for pandering to the lowest common denominator of social morality and decency. On the other hand, the media outlets which focus on complex issues and world affairs can be criticized for being elitist (Berrigan, 1977; Lorimer and McNulty, 1991). The criteria for newsworthiness will present challenges to sustainable development planners who endeavour to use the mass media to educate public audiences on the complex issues and tradeoffs in sustainability.

As is evident from the above descriptions, the mass media have a unique relationship with information, technology, their audiences and commerce, and therefore, present many challenges to sustainable development planners who would engage the mass media. Because the mass media are influential in society, their unique characteristics have impacted many aspects of
6.5 The Mass Media and Culture

Since communication plays an important role in culture and the mass media are an industry of communication, it is important to understand how the mass media engage and affect society and culture. Furthermore, since, as previously argued, implementing sustainable development has everything to do with culture, it is important, for those who would promote sustainable development with mass communication techniques, to understand the relationship between the mass media and culture.

6.5.1 Media Culture: Popular and Elite

Mass media messages affect culture in many ways. The effects will be discussed shortly, however, first it is important to discuss the two primary ways mass media messages interact with culture; ways which differ primarily in scale.

The first method is the most simple and focuses on the individual scale. The mass media affects a culture from this point of view by purposely and directly influencing individuals. This method can be seen as bounded in space and time and structured around the 'intent' of the media institution and the direct response in the individual.

The second method is less distinct, but possibly more important and concerns the indirect
manner in which the mass media can influence individuals and a culture as a whole. This method has been highlighted by both Kellner and Rushkoff. In contemporary society, while other forms of communication form a context for mass mediated messages, media messages also form a cultural context for daily life. This notion is highlighted in Kellner’s book, ‘Media Culture’ where he argues that the overall pervasiveness of mass mediated messages in today’s culture can be seen to have formed an actual culture in itself; a ‘media culture’ which operates parallel to and interacts aggressively with culture in ‘real-time-and-space’ (Kellner, 1995). In other words, a ‘virtual culture’ of media messages, news and entertainment, has been created by saturating the context for contemporary daily life with media messages. This virtual ‘media culture’ then becomes a pervasive system of values, behaviours, technology, etc... with which society interacts. This virtual culture thereby gains access to real-life culture and can have a great influence by becoming a reference point for decisions in daily life. By choosing to act in a manner consistent with images and notions which exist in the media culture, individuals embody the media culture’s characteristics. The media culture’s characteristics can thereby shape “real-life” culture through individual’s actions.

The cultural context for messages, especially mass media messages, can be seen to involve two types of culture, commonly referred to as ‘popular’ culture and ‘elite’ culture (Fiske, 1989). Elite culture is connected with important and influential individuals and decision-making systems, as well as with certain cultural institutions. Popular culture is a term for the culture of daily life, particularly, the daily life of those in less powerful segments of society. In a democracy, saturated with mass mediated communication, ‘popular’ culture and ‘elite’ culture
often struggle against each other to influence political will (Ibid).

The recognition of these two 'classes of culture' is important as much work done on sustainable development has been done within the realms of the so-called 'elite:' government, consultants, empowered interest groups and academics. Popular culture 'harvests' some information from the studies and communications of the 'elite', but much of the information on sustainable development remains in relatively arcane policy and research documents. Meeting the call for mass education, voiced in many sustainable development policy documents, and translating information from these 'elite' documents into forms more palatable for mass consumption and incorporation into popular culture, presents a challenge to planners.

6.6 Interaction Between The Mass Media and Society

The effects of the media can be considered at the general level of society and culture, as well as at the level of government policy. As few of the effects of the media on society can be actually empirically quantified or explained, there remains much contention on what the actual effects are or what the actual mechanisms are by which the mass media affect any individual, group or culture. However, most agree the media have a significant impact on society. For present purposes, I will examine a few of the mechanisms and effects which some have proposed.

6.6.1 The Relationship Between Mass Media Messages and the Audience’s Reality

To begin with, it is important to point out that, for most mass media institutions, influencing
society at any deep level, especially at the level of ideology, is a priority which falls far behind making profit (Lull, 1995). Mass media producers must produce ‘popular’ messages in order to be successful. Therefore, the mass media generally should not be seen as a malicious force, strategically trying to shape society. However, some owners of media corporations have explicit social and public policy agendas. Before I discuss the effects of the media on society, I want to explore some of the mechanisms whereby the media interact with society.

6.6.2 Mechanisms the Media Use to Engage Society

The mass media craft their messages to engage their audiences, with an eye to promoting a range of responses. The mechanisms include direct actions consciously undertaken by the media, and indirect influences, more the result of the proliferation of mass media messages in contemporary life. Because, the audience has control over whether to receive a media message, in that they can turn the page or the channel at will, the media have developed a number of methods to engage an audience and keep its attention.

Mechanisms for Mass Media Messages to Engage an Audience

| Striking a Responsive Chord | The media create characters and situations in a text or message with which their target audience can identify. The belief is that an individual’s behaviour can be influenced by objects, language or examples of behaviours which are strategically associated with characters with which the individual may identify. |
| Sensationalism | Events which embody an audience’s worst fears or greatest desires are publicized to get ratings and thereby psychologically connect many aspects of a message to an audience through emotions and ideas. |
**Saturation**  
Media driven “topic saturation” increases the frequency of the topic’s occurrence in daily life discussions and imagery.

**Experiential Collage**  
Media events and real world events intermingle in a pervasive ‘information landscape’ which forms a context for daily life. (Lull, 1995: 149).

Mass media messages have the most impact on audiences in areas of information which are outside their experience (McQuail and Windahl, 1981: 7). The effects of media messages can be seen to occur through a process within the daily lives of individuals where, “lived reality and media reality interact with one another through a constant process of mutual selection, re-stylization, and redisplay” (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991: 133). People select and weave publicly available symbolic discourses from mass media messages into their everyday lives and therefore into their identities and activities. Therefore, the mass media can enable a message to influence individuals and cultures at a large scale. The “impacts of subtle... symbolism can be far greater than often-repeated representation of dominant ideology” (Lull, 1995: 126).

However, this all being said, while a media message can engage a person’s sense of reality, viewers interpret what they see on TV, what they hear on the radio, or what they read in print, differently than what they see and feel in ‘real life’ (Berger, 1995).

Sustainable development planners need to develop strategies to utilize these mechanisms of influence to promote sustainable development. Since audiences will use, in any way they choose, information on sustainable development conveyed through the media, planners need to plan messages which provide potent symbols for audiences to weave into their lives. Rushkoff
(1996) calls these symbols, when introduced by the media, 'media viruses' because the manner in which these symbols or key words and ideas interact with society resembles the manner in which a virus interacts with a biological organism. Others call these symbols, 'memes.' The term 'sustainable development' can be seen as a conceptual meme or virus; by the time an audience has come to terms with what the term sustainable development means, they understand its importance and wide reaching implications, including those relating to themselves.

6.6.2.1 Identity

Identity is a key factor in the mechanism by which mass media messages can influence individuals, one which advertisers are increasingly using to access markets, especially youthful markets as this group is less sure of personal identity than more mature groups. As is evident, 'identity' is closely connected to the concept of subcultures which was discussed at the beginning of the section on culture and communication. The messages spread by the mass media can influence an individual and therefore culture through shaping the repertoire of identity choices. The imagination is very important in shaping identity. The images in an individual's imagination are formed partly out of personal memories, as well as images proffered by the mass media. These images become interwoven and become incorporated into our culture through personal behaviour and identity creation (Lull, 1995: 109-111). Media images offer the imagination with characters, settings, and events which may embody a 'hidden culture' with biases (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991). The identity repertoire offered by mass media messages, as with messages from other sources, include the rules by which one is to
behave. These rules define ‘comfort zones of behaviour’ which influence the overall pattern of choices we make in all areas of our lives and thereby connect mass media messages to society through behaviour (Lull, 1995: 66).

Since identity is a keystone in personal and therefore, subcultural behaviour, sustainable development planners must address the issue of identity. However, planners must make the values of sustainable development general enough that they do not become too closely associated with any particular subcultural group.

6.6.2.2 Choice of Signs and Codes

The signs and codes which are used in mass media message have a large influence on what can be communicated. The use of ‘broadcast’ and ‘restricted’ codes, previously discussed, is noticeable in the reporting of news where complex issues are being examined with restricted time limits and information. Noam Chomsky (1987) has focused much of his notable work on this issue.

The limited lexicon of words and ideas used in most mass media messages, creates challenges for sustainable development planners who would introduce more complex ideas into discussion. Communications promoting sustainability will need to be carefully planned and strategically designed to effectively introduce the issues of economics, ecology and society into mass media discussions.
6.7 The Effects of the Mass Media on Society

A number of theoretical positions on some of the media’s impacts have been postulated. These include:

a) Socio-political influence
b) Socialization
c) Agenda setting
d) Gate keepers
e) Cultivation
f) Reinforcement
g) Creation of ‘spirals of silence’
h) Cultural ethnocentrism
i) Legitimization

The following discussion of these theoretical arguments may appear polemical to some, however, in presenting these arguments, I am not declaring my agreement with any of them. Rather, I am describing some of the arguments put forth in the literature about the effects of the mass media on society. It is also important to note that these effects may be deemed beneficial or detrimental depending on certain contextual conditions and the motives of those involved. Following the description of the effect, I point out some challenges or opportunities that effect
may present to planners working on sustainable development projects.

6.7.1 Socio-political Influence

The mass media are the primary forum through which citizens receive information about the political issues and economic and social conditions in their society (Lull, 1995). Analysis of the cultural patterns in the media illuminates perceptions and trends of the real socio-political condition of society. Politics is about power and "...the media demonstrate who has power and who is powerless," dramatizing struggles for power in society (Kellner, 1995: 2). In so doing, the mass media present subtle rules for behaviour which link ideology to authority and power by providing cognitive frameworks for reference that encourage certain behaviours and communication patterns and construct meaning and hegemony in social relations (Lull, 1995: 53-54). These rules link public agendas with private behaviours by using technology to bring the issues and discussions into the private realm. Theoretically, the mass media messages in the political sphere offer a structure for a private relationship to authority by presenting a 'macro-scale' discourse on society and ideology (Ibid, 61). The mass media can be seen as performing the role of a story teller, telling stories that describe and demonstrate deep mythical, cultural structures, recreating the dominant paradigm dynamically, and imbuing certain objects with power and giving them cultural meaning through signification into these deep myths (Fiske, 1989: 121).

From a more practical point of view, beyond demonstrating who has power, the media exercise influence in the political realm through focusing on one issue obsessively, saturation coverage
of an issue and by pressuring the government on certain issues (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991).

Another aspect to the mass media's influence on the political sphere, is the crossover of formats, particularly in television, between news, or those used primarily to convey information, and those used for entertainment. When information programs are collaged with entertainment programs and produced to be very entertaining, a steady stream of fact and fantasy is delivered to the viewer nearly simultaneously in a relatively undifferentiated manner (Berger, 1995: 62). As a result, the "desirable image," both physical and conceptual, now plays an inordinantly large role in both advertising and politics (Kellner, 1995).

As a result of these areas of political influence, "social change can be slowed or 'spurred on' in part by the mass media. Relatively few of them, however, are equipped or disposed to deal with major social issues" (Brody, 1991: 27). Moreover, the primary use of mass media messages, is for entertainment during leisure time. The in-depth analysis of political issues would likely be found desirable to only a small audience. Because of the need to gain a large viewership / readership, unpopular topics and programs are generally avoided (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991).

Achieving a sustainable society will require strong political leadership (Alexander, 1995). The role of the mass media in politics presents a strong argument for sustainable development planners creating communication strategies for the promotion of sustainable development, involving the mass media. It is my contention that the potential environmental catastrophes we
may face if we do not address the problem of sustainability, as discussed in the chapter on sustainable development, suggest that planners promote the agenda of sustainability in the mass media. By engaging the mass media strategically, the influence of the mass media in politics can be used to increase the profile, education and dialogue on sustainable development.

6.7.2 Socialization

“Socialization is the process through which we learn or are trained to be members of society, to take part in new social situations, or to participate in social groupings” (Fuchs, 1995: 16). Mass mediated messages can participate in the socialization of individuals through emphasis on certain roles, attitudes, values, and desires (Berger, 1995: 62). Mass media images, popularized through catchy sound bites and slogans, become used in routine social interactions if they have widespread familiarity (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991: 20). The ideologies embedded in these slogans and phrases thereby become circulated in society (Fiske, 1995). Kellner argues that both the information and entertainment conveyed by the mass media are a source of ‘cultural pedagogy’ in that they educate individuals in how to behave, as well as what to think, feel, believe, fear, and desire (Kellner, 1995: 2).

Kellner argues that “‘media culture’ is now the dominant form of culture which socializes us and provides materials for identity in terms of both social reproduction and change” (Kellner, 1995: i). The mass media themselves are both the originator of these socializing messages and they are a venue which allows other ‘speakers,’ who have the resources to pay for messages in the media, to access large audiences.
Because the mass media is a powerful tool for promoting an agenda, the mass media become a venue for hegemonic struggle for many who would influence society for their own benefit. However, forces of socialization are almost always met with resistance (Fiske, 1989). The promotion of any agenda, through the allusion to rules or attitudes which have a socializing effect must be done in a subtle manner so as to overcome the natural resistances individuals and groups have to the forces of socialization.

Overcoming resistance is accomplished by the mass media in two primary ways. The most common method is ‘incorporation.’ Incorporation describes the process of subsuming and assimilating resistance through strategic ideologically-related repositioning of objects, opinions and behaviours. To be “popular,” the speaker must catch the audience’s attention, speak within the range of the dominant ideologies, and incorporate the audiences’ resistances simultaneously (Fiske, 1989: 183; Williamson, 1994). Radical ideas rarely appear in mass media except in an incorporated or marginalized form. The goal of ‘incorporation is to show that even the ‘rough edges’ fit within the range of dominant ideology (Lull, 1995: 36).

Another frequently used strategy, to overcome resistance to socialization forces, is the commodification of the symbols of resistance (Fiske, 1990). It is believed that by identifying and adopting the aesthetic signs and symbols of those who are actively resisting the socialization forces, that the clarity of the resistance will be weakened. This method is used often by advertisers.
While advertising messages in the Western mass media may use the aggressive socialization techniques described above, much of the “news” media would deny the use of such tools. The primary aspect of socialization which the news media participate in can be seen to be the maintenance of the status quo through the minimization of cognitive dissonance in their messages, primarily accomplished by keeping the ‘angle’ used in reporting news consistent with the dominant paradigm of their audience. Through socialization mechanisms, such as those discussed above, the media play a fundamental role in articulating and consolidating ideological positions in society (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991).

Patterns of socialization and overcoming resistance are important to sustainable development planners because of the challenge posed by promoting new behaviours inherent in becoming more sustainable (Rees, 1995). Incorporation and commodification can already be seen in the mass media as pro-environment messages and the ‘green look’ have been adopted by many governments and major corporations whose daily operations may not conform to principles of sustainable development. Sustainable development planners can use the socializing influences of the mass media to promote sustainable development but they will need to find ways to increase effective education of sustainability issues to challenge the appropriation and incorporation of their messages.

6.7.3 Agenda Setting

Agenda setting is the persuasive presentation of certain issues and topics as being of high priority (Berger, 1995: 63). In the strategy of setting an agenda, many tactics are used by the
mass media, one of the most effective being to present an issue as being of ‘common sense’
importance. If the ideas of one group can be accepted as ‘common sense’ rather than as
partisan ideology, then their agenda, and its underlying ideology, becomes both more dominant
and disguised (Fiske, 1990: 176).

One challenge facing planners is to find ways to promote sustainable development principles
and actions through the media so as to increase the priority of sustainability. This will likely
include presenting the basic tenet of sustainability, that of improving the quality of future
generations lives and enhancing the integrity of the ecosphere, as the only ‘common sense’ way
to approach development. Moving sustainability into this ‘common sense’ position will require
detailed communications planning, since current ‘conventional wisdom’ in many groups, is not
built upon the knowledge and value system which underlies sustainable development thought.

6.7.4 Value Cultivation

Value cultivation occurs through repeatedly conveying certain values in entertainment-oriented
messages (Berger, 1995: 66). Because the mass media’s messages tend to be “seductive” rather
than prescriptive in nature, the mass media can ‘cultivate’ attitudes and values in a culture
(Fiske, 1990: 150). The ability of the mass media to repeatedly spread entertaining and
seductive messages at such a large scale means that the mass media play an important role in
the cultivation of certain values in a culture.

Sustainable development principles are built on the foundation of a particular constellation of
values (Milbrath, 1989). Planners will need to plan communications initiatives which consistently spread and cultivate values which support increased sustainability, in a manner found desirable and entertaining by many audiences.

6.7.5 Reinforcement

The mass media tend to reinforce the status quo paradigm and to legitimize 'what people already think' on many topics (Berger, 1995: 67). This statement is a generalization because mass media outlets also look for dissenting views in order to make programming interesting. Moreover, each media outlet deals with new ideas differently depending on their audience. The challenge for those holding 'non-status quo views' is to keep their views from becoming marginalized within the context of conventional thought.

Because most mass media outlets are corporations who subscribe to consumerist ideology, these points of view tend to be supported by the mass media. The TV industry, in particular, with its expensive production and operation costs, finds it often in its own best interest to expose, dramatize, popularize, and reinforce certain beliefs and values which stabilize the existing socioeconomic system by encouraging its audiences to keep working and consuming (Lull, 1995: 10-13). The source of revenue for most mass media organizations is advertising by producers of consumer goods. A consumer-oriented society is often promoted in mass media messages though favourably displaying a highly consumerist lifestyle.

Since sustainable development theory challenges the assumption that high rates of consumption
and "industrial throughput" are good for society in the long run (Rees, 1995; Jacobs, 1995), planners will need to emphasize the values of 'green economics' in messages sent through the media, and develop strategies to address the tendency of some in the media to marginalize these viewpoints.

6.7.6 Gatekeeping

Gatekeeping is the term used to describe the process whereby decision makers in mass media organizations decide what is newsworthy and legitimate (Berger, 1995: 64). The role of gatekeepers, who include journalists, editors and media outlet owners, is to keep the messages sent by a media institution, popular, palatable to advertisers, and entertaining to their audience.

Since gatekeepers tend to edit messages which could create cognitive dissonance, planners will need to do communications planning to strategically shape their messages about sustainability issues so gatekeepers in the mass media permit coverage and discussion of such issues.

6.7.7 'Spirals of Silence' or Attention

'Spirals of silence' is a term used to describe how ideas can become marginalized as a result of mass media behaviour. The theory of silence spirals posits that when the mass media either refuse to recognize and present certain points of view, the public tend to discuss their concepts less, out of fear of appearing 'different' and thereby marginalizing themselves (Berger, 1995: 68). Therefore, the less a concept is discussed seriously, the more 'silent' everyone becomes about it. This process is especially effective in political news reporting where certain points of
view can become ‘conventional’ because influential journalists promote them and many other journalists then follow their lead (Russell, 1994). This spiral principle can also work in reverse. It is also possible for the mass media to introduce topics into discussion which may not be in popular discussion at present and thereby facilitate discussion rather than silence.

The promotion of sustainable development issues through mass communications is important in order to keep the sustainability agenda in the media spotlight and thereby, in discussion. The failure to address sustainability on a repeated basis, may result in a negative ‘spiral of silence’ on the issue. An example of this negative spiral can be seen in the 1997 federal election in Canada where environmental issues were hardly discussed by any party. In the face of this ‘silence’, citizens run the risk of being seen as ‘not in touch with the real issues’ if they tried to bring environmental issues into political discussions.

6.7.8 Cultural Ethnocentrism

Western media corporations and their messages have come to dominate the world media industry (Berger, 1995: 69). American mass media messages have greatly impacted the thoughts, values, aspirations, and ‘common sense’ ideology of audiences in other countries. Global capitalism and news gathering is creating a world information system which covers and interprets primarily only things which are no threat to the global media industry and its supporters (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991). Some have argued that an international cultural hegemony of American-oriented messages has appeared because the USA has built the largest mass media industry and has thereby, exercised influence on cultures throughout the world.
James Lull argues that evaluating this issue of cultural hegemony is complex, because cultures are rarely 'pure' in the first place. Throughout history cultures have been interacting with each other. However, sometimes the influence can be destructive (Lull, 1995: 121). "World cultures are being continuously re-contextualized into new provinces of meaning ...but in complex ways because cultural production processes are many and not limited to the processes by which mass media tries to influence a culture" (Ibid, 150). A culture tends to mutate and evolve through the fusing of new hegemonic cultural production with historical cultural memory and practice (Ibid, 155) and often new opportunities, including new choices in ideas and lifestyles, are presented by interacting with another culture. The rise in democratic values and women's rights can be seen as a beneficial impact of many cultures interacting with Western media messages.

True sustainability will only occur when nations around the globe effectively adopt and implement sustainability policies together, because the global ecosphere and economic system is comprised of systems, interconnected at the scale of the planet (Rees, 1995; WCED, 1987). The access of Western mass media to global audiences, and the popularity of American culture which has accompanied this proliferation, offers planners a great opportunity to widely increase education and dialogue on sustainability issues.
6.7.9 Legitimization

Media coverage, by providing a ‘theatre and a stage’, can give something ‘legitimacy’ simply by recognizing and, thereby, normalizing its existence (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991: 144). The media coverage may not change a cultural predisposition to the subject under discussion, but the normalization of something’s existence through repeated coverage may impact emotional responses through conditioning and desensitization.

The ability of the mass media to give ‘legitimacy’ through coverage can be used strategically by planners. Some concepts in sustainability theory involve new ideas and techniques. If planners can introduce these concepts successfully, so as to survive the ‘gatekeeping’ functions in mass media institutions, some presently marginalized ideas may gain increased credibility and circulation.

6.7.10 Non-linear Effects

It is important to reiterate that, the above discussion notwithstanding, the mass media’s messages do not have a hypodermic needle-like impact on a passive audience. The complexity of the contexts for both media organizations and for their audiences, combined with the fact that the meaning of a message is negotiated by the audience and that any message cannot really effect society greatly until it is embodied in someone’s actions, means that the mass media and their messages have few effects which can be reliably predicted (Brody, 1991; Kellner, 1995). The key factor in the effectiveness of a mass media message is how it interacts with the perceptions of ‘reality’ which audiences hold (Berger, 1995). Planners can harness the above
mechanisms, whereby the mass media influence society, to raise the issues of sustainable
development in public discourse, however, persistence and strategy in communications are
required to do this effectively (McKenzie-Mohr, 1996).

6.8 Criticisms of the Mass Media

Critics abound in the analysis of the impacts of mass media on culture. Many of the aspects of
the mass media's influence on culture, discussed in the preceding section, are seen by many to
be negative. Again, it is important to recognize that the mass media and their messages have an
impact on culture viewed as both positive and negative. Normative judgements depend on
personal values. The purpose of this thesis is not to pass judgement on the mass media or to
promote it, but rather to illuminate how it engages culture and to propose methods whereby
planners can engage the mass media in such a way as to further sustainable development
initiatives. However, I will summarize some of the more common critiques of the mass media
(Berger, 1995).

Fragmentation

Assuming individuals are impacted by mass media messages in some measurable way, and
therefore, society can be influenced ideologically by the presence and messages of the mass
media, some feel that more traditional ways of living and being are becoming fragmented by the
activities of the mass media.
*Escapism*

Critics argue that there are detrimental effects from viewers voluntarily suspending disbelief for many hours everyday while watching entertaining programs.

*Addiction*

Many who argue against so-called escapism also argue that the addictive qualities of television in particular are detrimental. This argument tends to also assume that media messages are of low quality and therefore large scale consumption is undesirable.

*Passivity and Privatism*

Some argue that too much private media consumption, especially watching TV, contributes to a lack of civic activity and a general passivity toward many important issues in society.

*Sexuality Stereotyping*

Many feminists have argued that unhealthy sexual stereotyping is caused by portraying women in limited (primarily sexual) roles to sell products.

*A False Picture of Reality*

Some argue that the manner in which the mass media portray reality is narrow, because they present only the range of themes and programs which are profitable to present.
Stereotyping

Some argue that media images of individuals and subcultures tend to stereotype characters and give viewers unrealistic views of themselves and others.

Ethnocentrism

Current communications theory argues that the dominance of USA culture in global mass media promotes American predispositions and values and is used by some institutions as a hegemonic tool.

Cultural Homogenization

The cultural homogenization process is believed to be caused by a steady supply of media images which present a limited number of ideas, identities, behaviours, and values to large audiences through technological mediums.

Hegemony

Some critics argue that the so-called ‘socio-economic elites’ are the fabricators of the dominant ideology because they control the communication industry and can saturate the public realm and influence the culture with their values (Lull, 1995: 8).

Hyper-Consumerism

Many criticize the mass media for promoting a consumer culture. In mass media messages, advertising is always suggesting new ways to gratify real or supposed needs by creating a false
sense of anxiety by displacing meaning from the real to the ideal and then suggesting ‘customer’ ‘methods’ as solutions to these anxiety-based needs (Lull, 1995: 105).

Conflict Escalation

Critics argue that in order to create the drama needed to get good ratings especially for news agencies, conflict is emphasized and even purposely promoted.

6.8.1 An Important Caveat: The Mass Media Are Only One Factor In A Culture

Notwithstanding the above criticisms and the fact that the mass media can articulate and impact the ideologies in circulation in a culture, mere “articulations of... ideologies do not ‘determine’ culture” (Lull, 1995: 114). While they can create forces which can shake, inspire, or undermine, certain cultural values and patterns, explicitly promoting any ideology places a far second in the media industry to making money (Ibid, 136). “Communication has its effects (on society) through the actions of people” (Middleton, 1985: 33). This pragmatic approach is important to remember because it can be easy to mistake the motives and messages which are spread by the mass media with the actual effects of those messages.

6.9 Mass Media and Sustainable Development

It is clear from the above discussion that the mass media and their messages play an important role in society. While the mass media may have an indeterminant effect on any individual at any moment in time, they exert an influence on the ideational and materialistic aspects of
culture, especially over the long term (Fiske, 1990). The relationship between the ‘culture industry’ of the mass media, and the culture itself, is a mutually reproductive one where they both influence each other (Kellner, 1995).

6.9.1 Challenges to Consider

A number of the criticisms of the media raised in this chapter highlight specific challenges planners should consider when planning mass communications to accompany sustainable development policy initiatives.

6.9.1.1 Hegemony

Criticisms of the mass media on the issue of hegemony draw on a class-based view of society. “The concept of ‘freedom of the press’ is predicated on the need to expose the audiences to an ideological spectrum within the context of elites enfranchised by class connections competing to get their messages out” (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991: 57). The connection to hegemony comes as the mass media are used by certain individuals and groups who have access to or control over mass media organizations to introduce their philosophies, culture, and morality into the culture and keep it there where it becomes a shared entity in the cultural community. Their ideas might not otherwise be in circulation (Lull, 1995: 32). Moreover, in the case of sending feedback from the public to political bodies, the public often have to stage spectacles to get the mass media to communicate their messages back to politicians. However, the so-called elite do not need the mass media to communicate with politicians (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991). Because mostly entrenched business interests control or support the mass media
institutions, certain public agenda’s may not be promoted by mass media institutions in a
favourable light.

The changes necessary to achieve sustainability will create new ‘losers’ and ‘winners’ in the
economy, and at times therefore, challenge the power of the existing ‘elite.’ Planners will need
to develop strategies to open dialogue, increase education on the issues and confront opposition
in the struggles played out in the mass media, connected to the impacts of proposed sustainable
development initiatives.

6.9.1.2 Consumerism

The essential ideology of business, and therefore the mass media, is private consumerism, an
ideology which is often at odds with some goals or interests of the public and government.
Therefore, the mass media tend to use their position to insert their interests into the political
realm to ensure their interests are looked after, thereby reaching beyond a simple role of
messenger (Lull, 1995).

The role of the mass media in promoting consumerism can present a challenge to planners
promoting sustainable development through a mass medium. Sending messages through mass
media can be very expensive, and therefore needs the support of advertisers. Since, to date,
most corporations, who are large enough to afford the costs of advertising charged by the
largest media outlets, have barely embraced or are yet to address the imperatives of
sustainability, planners will need to find creative ways of introducing the concepts of
sustainable development into mass mediated discourse.

6.9.1.3 Conflict in Sustainable Development

The need for conflict and drama in news presents an interesting challenge for proponents of sustainable development. Sustainable development presents the mandate for initiatives to balance environmental, economic and social concerns (WCED, 1987). Approaching problems in this manner reduces the conflict inherent in decision making and therefore reduces the drama which news media cater to. More drama and therefore news can be generated by polarizing issues into economics versus environmentalism versus social justice. As a result, journalists and ENGO's can often frame sustainable development issues in a polarized manner, one looking for dramatic news, and the other catering to that desire in order to have their causes covered by the media. Sustainable development planners will need to find other means, besides conflict, of making their initiatives newsworthy in order to promote widespread education through the news media.

6.10 Summary

The comments in this chapter on using communications planning to promote discussion of the issues and the agenda of sustainable development have highlighted both the challenges and opportunities presented to planners for using the mass media strategically to further education and sustainability policies. The mass media have influence at both the political and individual level and are an important cultural force. Therefore, planners can strategically engage the mass
media as a means to increase education and discussion on sustainable development issues and policies.

Effectively engaging the mass media requires knowledge, strategy and planning. This chapter has explored the issues and methods which characterize the mass media industry and how this industry interacts with culture. By bringing knowledge of this industry to communications planning processes, sustainable development planners can ensure effective communication initiatives.

Planners most frequently engage government, the public and other stakeholders during policy development processes. The mass media are an increasingly important stakeholder in policy development processes because of their political influence. Planners need to understand how the mass media impacts stakeholders in policy development processes if they are to plan effective communications initiatives.
Chapter 7 - Policy Communities, the Mass Media and Sustainable Development: The Mass Media are a Stakeholder

7.1 Introduction

Most planners work directly or indirectly on ‘policy’. The process of making policy, has become very complex, especially within the governmental context. The context of policy development processes and the conditions for exercising power in society have changed since the proliferation of mass communication technologies. The mass media have become an important influence in the development and implementation of policy, especially policy which impacts a wide range of the public, through shaping and moving information in such a way as to directly or indirectly exert influence on other stakeholders involved in policy development.

Governmental policy, including how it is made and implemented, is an important aspect of sustainable development. Due to the interconnectedness of ecological, social and economic systems, planners working on sustainable development initiatives will be involved in shaping
policy on an increasingly wide range of issues. Planners, therefore, need to understand the role the mass media play in the group of stakeholders involved in any sustainable development policy initiative.

7.2 Policy Analysis

The definition of ‘policy’ includes government decision-making and action, both in the present and in the future. While decision-making is mostly focused on the present, a policy is a decision about the present with an eye to how it will affect decisions in the future (Ham and Hill, 1993). The policy making process is pluralistic in that it includes many actors involved in making decisions together through consultation, public participation and many other decision-making forums (Stanbury, 1990). Addressing the process of policy development requires an examination of the concept of the policy community, stakeholders and their inter-relations.

7.2.1 Policy Development is a Complex Process

The processes and contexts for making policy have become increasingly complex. “Forty years ago, lobbying and government were much less complicated. ‘...it was possible to work with just one minister and department. Policy recommendations would come up through the department; the minister would decide what he wanted to do; then he would take his proposals to Cabinet’(referencing Kirk). Action would be authorized with a minimum of fuss” (Pross, 1992: 142). The increased complexity of policy making has many elements.
## Issues in Increased Complexity in Policy Making Processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>There are increasingly more individuals / organizations who demand to be consulted in the policy making process.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inter-Jurisdictional Issues</strong></td>
<td>There is an increased importance of federal-provincial element and needed inter-jurisdictional agreements on more issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bureaucratization</strong></td>
<td>The policy making process has become more formal and bureaucratic at some levels of government and hence, slower.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Division of Labour</strong></td>
<td>There is a finer division of labour and more specialized expertise involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Centralization</strong></td>
<td>There are more central agencies with more power over departments involved in discussions and decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Flux</strong></td>
<td>There is a more rapid turnover of both politicians and senior bureaucrats, resulting in a reduced level of expertise, control and continuity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scale</strong></td>
<td>There is a greatly increased scale of operations in many areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Participation</strong></td>
<td>There is a stronger demand for greater public participation in all policy communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Privacy and Access to Information</strong></td>
<td>There is greater access to government information legislation as well as privacy protection for individuals involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Polling</strong></td>
<td>There is more reliance on scientific public opinion polling by politicians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources</strong></td>
<td>Fewer resources are available for decision making processes and data collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>Communication between stakeholders has improved with new technology.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Stanbury, 1990: 4-9).

Sustainable development policy creation, within a governmental context, includes all of the above complexities and more, such as long time horizons, future generations of stakeholders and many environmental and social issues which both have not been addressed in the past and require much cross-disciplinary and cross-jurisdictional work to achieve meaningful
agreements.

7.3 The Policy Community

The 'policy community' is the term used to describe the group of individuals and organisations involved in making policy (Pross, 1992; Stanbury, 1990; Healey, 1990; Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995). "The policy community is a place to articulate and reconcile interests and interest groups and to provide a means of crossing organizational lines. It studies alternatives, debates consequences of current and proposed policies, secures administrative arrangements for implementation, and holds the collective memory" (Stanbury, 1990: 8).

The policy community is a forum for groups and individuals to negotiate a mutually beneficial solution to planned action with respect to their various positions and interests. "The concept of the policy community...show(s) how policy specialization accords to a relatively small public a dominant say in the creation and implementation of policy. ...(There are) both conservative and dynamic tendencies inherent in the relationships generated within the community. ...Though the policy community dominates its policy field... it is by no means impervious to change but experiences constant internal tension as competing groups -- particularly those of the active public -- challenge established policy paradigms" (Pross, 1992: 268).

7.3.1 The Stakeholders

Various authors on policy analysis categorize the stakeholders in a policy community in
different ways. There is generally a division made between the governmental stakeholders and the non-governmental stakeholders, both organized and unorganized (Stanbury, 1990). While generic types of stakeholders may be similar for most policy processes, any specific policy development process will have a unique constellation of each type of stakeholder. However, for the purpose of developing the communications planning framework within this thesis, I have created a conceptual ‘generic’ policy community and categorized its stakeholders into six groups. The six stakeholders in my generic policy community are:

1) Governments (at different scales)

Each level of government has certain powers, resources and jurisdiction. They often must work together to streamline their jurisdictional powers and interests and to create effective policy (Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995).

a) Politicians

Politicians are democratically elected in Canada and work with each other to achieve their ends. The need for popularity drives much of their work and keeps other powerful interests in policy communities in check (Van Loon and Whittington, 1987).

b) Bureaucratic Staff

The bureaucracy administers government programs and is answerable to the politicians. It is complex and powerful. It has a lot of control over policy through control over information and access to decision-making power (Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995).
2) Consultants and Experts

Consultants are experts who are involved in policy making from a professional point of view. They supply key information to other stakeholders (Ham and Hill, 1984).

3) Interest Groups

Interest groups are organizations of individuals who have a shared interest and put pressure on decision makers to act in a manner beneficial to that interest. They are very diverse and often powerful. They are also often relied upon, by other stakeholders, for information in their areas of expertise (Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995).

4) Industry and Business

Individuals and corporations, like interest groups, exert pressure on the government to develop policy which favours profitable conditions in their sector or industry (Stanbury, 1990).

5) The Unorganised Public

This group is comprised of all who are not involved in one of the other groups in a policy community. They tend to have little direct input into policy except through sanctioned public participation processes. However, their opinions are an important influence on politicians (Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995).

6) The Mass Media

The mass media participate in policy making through channelling and shaping direct and
indirect communications between members of the policy community (Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995). This generic policy community will be used to demonstrate not only how a policy community functions and to describe the typical stakeholder interests involved, but also to inform the framework for communications planning.

These stakeholders develop policy, primarily through communicating with each other and by interacting in antagonistic and cooperative ways. Each of these players has a variety of important and unique characteristics which influence their role in the policy community. A comprehensive description of the complexities of a policy community and its operations is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the relationships which the mass media have with the other members is an important aspect of this thesis.

7.4 Policy Community Relationships and Interaction

An interaction and communication matrix can be created with all six policy community stakeholders on each axis; the matrix entries containing a description how each player interacts with each other player. Discussing all relationships highlighted in this theoretical matrix is beyond the scope of this thesis. I will, however, examine in greater detail, the manner in which the mass media interact with each of the other policy stakeholders. (The matrix is meant to be read from the point of view of the stakeholders listed on the vertical axis being the ‘actors’ and those on the horizontal axis being the recipients of the action)
# Policy Community Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Community Relationship Matrix</th>
<th>Government Politicians Bureaucracy</th>
<th>Professional Consultants</th>
<th>The Mass Media</th>
<th>The Organized Public (Interest Groups)</th>
<th>The Unorganized Public</th>
<th>Business and Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business and Industry</strong></td>
<td>Lobbying</td>
<td>Hired for advice</td>
<td>Advertising and sources of info</td>
<td>Supportive or antagonistic relationships</td>
<td>Consumers and labour</td>
<td>Competition and cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Unorganized Public</strong></td>
<td>Source of regulations, services and funds - leadership</td>
<td>Little interaction, some consultation</td>
<td>The primary source of information about their world</td>
<td>An audience, issue-based relationship</td>
<td>Sub-cultural group interaction</td>
<td>Source of goods and services, target of discontent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Organized Public (Interest Groups)</strong></td>
<td>Lobbying for their interest</td>
<td>Employed for lobbying and research purposes</td>
<td>Frequently targeted audience as medium to reach other audiences</td>
<td>Coalitions, competition, conflict</td>
<td>Source of new resources and support</td>
<td>Source of support or target for action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Mass Media</strong></td>
<td>High priority target for coverage and source of information</td>
<td>Research target for information</td>
<td>competition for viewers and advertising revenues</td>
<td>Sources of news and information</td>
<td>The viewers / audience to which programming is aimed</td>
<td>Sources of advertising revenues, information, and stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Consultants</strong></td>
<td>Important client and source of info</td>
<td>Competition and coalitions</td>
<td>Cautious interaction</td>
<td>Clients and sources of information</td>
<td>Targets for some consultation</td>
<td>Clients and sources of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Government -Politicians -bureaucracy</strong></td>
<td>Different scales / jurisdictions</td>
<td>Hired to do research and make recommendations</td>
<td>Cautious interaction - used to get messages out to public</td>
<td>Sources of information, support and antagonism</td>
<td>Voters</td>
<td>Regulation and support when possible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.5 Relationships of Mass Media with the Policy Community

The mass media have a unique relationship of exchange with every member of a policy community. In order for planners to respond effectively to the communications component of policy development, they need to understand these relationships.

7.5.1 General Involvement of the Mass Media in a Policy Community

While the mass media may or may not be "directly" involved at any point in a policy development process, the mass media are a member of nearly every policy community because any other policy community member can bring them into the decision-making process. The mass media often then chose to become heavily involved. They also tend to become involved at crucial times of conflict or resolution in a policy making process.

7.5.1.1 The Mass Media’s Position: A Key Source of Information

The mass media, because of their large audience, is an important player in the exchange of information and meaning between other community members, especially between governments and citizens. The information the mass media report is often the only information which the public have on the issues and choices being addressed in a policy community. However, the Western model of media, with its focus on advertising revenues and the resulting close relationship between most mass media organizations and business, flavours the media’s relationship with policy community members and with information in general.
“A key function of the media is to provide information to the public. Similarly, a major responsibility of the government in a democratic society is to inform the public about the institutions and processes of the government and about the programs and services offered by departments and agencies. The media and government pursue different objectives through their provision of information. In very general terms, government officials want to get their message to the public without stirring up the political waters... However, the media’s objective of attracting a large audience can often best be achieved by rocking the boat”(Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995: 502).

“The media serve as ‘filters’ for information; they aim also to influence the attitudes and behaviour of both government officials and members of the public. Thus the media both reflect and influence public opinion”(Ibid: 503). “Like pressure groups, ...the mass media or the news media, act as intermediaries between the government and the public... Unlike pressure groups, the mass media transmit much information for the sake of transmitting information rather than for the purpose of influencing public policy, ...compared to pressure groups, which tend to represent well-defined interests to carefully identified officials, the media’s audience, both within government and among the public, tends to be broader and more diffuse”(Ibid, 502).

7.5.1.2 Discretion in the Policy Community

Frequently the more institutionalized members of a policy community prefer not to have the mass media involved in the policy process. This is partly because the mass media tend to concentrate on conflict. When a policy process is moving ahead without problems, it often is
not considered to be news and therefore the mass media will not cover the process. The issues discussed in the policy community are typically complex and therefore rarely amenable to mass media coverage in the news. Keeping the media out of the process is preferred by most serious institutionalized interests groups so as not to damage important relationships with other players. Media coverage may also invite more input by previously latent interests and thereby slow or complexify the existing policy process (Ibid).

Because of the number of stakeholders and the complexity of many of the issues addressed during the sustainable development policy making process, planners will be presented with many challenges in managing the mass media’s involvement. However, the mass media will be involved, whether the planner desires it or not. Therefore, a good course of action for a planner is to develop management strategies to deal with the mass media’s involvement. Since the mass media involve themselves in the terrain of communications, the planner’s strategies can often be effective by taking the form of communications plans. As planners often play an organizational and facilitation role in a policy community, they would do well to gain an understanding of how the mass media relate to other policy community members. I will now look closer at the relationship the media have with the other members of a generic policy community.

7.5.2 The Mass Media’s Relationship with Government

The mass media and the government have an uneasy but interdependent relationship. Their relationship involves information, power, profit, and a general atmosphere of distrust.
However, the strategic management of this relationship is key to the success of both the
government and the mass media industry. Because planners involved in sustainable
development policy processes, frequently work directly or indirectly for the government, this
relationship is one of the most important foci of sustainable development communications
planning. Key issues to consider in the relationship between the mass media and the
government include: the right of free speech, interdependency in the flow of information,
bureaucratic anonymity, political image, trial balloons, journalists as watchdogs, influences on
political agendas and the media’s profit motive.

**Primary Participants in Government and Media Interactions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministers</td>
<td>Journalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of Parliament</td>
<td>Editorial executives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public servants, especially senior public servants</td>
<td>Owners of media organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information officers (and “spin doctors”) hired by government departments and agencies</td>
<td>Consultants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995: 502)

Traditionally, in keeping with the model of the planner or bureaucrat as a ‘neutral advisor,’
planners have tried to limit their interaction with the media to providing basic factual
information on programs and initiatives. It has been the traditional role of politicians or very
senior public servants to engage the media in exchange of opinions and ideas (Kernaghan and
Siegel, 1995: 503). However, because of the strategic role which information plays in
developing sustainability policy, planners may need to take a more proactive role in dealing
with the media. A new role could present many institutional challenges to planners, unique to each situation and initiative. In order to address the institutional implications of these issues, planners will need to illuminate the issues of the media and communications planning at the beginning of their sustainability initiatives, and discuss these issues with their clients or supervisors.

7.5.2.1 - Democracy and Free Speech

In less democratic or capitalist countries, the mass media can be controlled to a greater extent by the government. In a Western democracy, the mass media are primarily industries of profit within a capitalist economy (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991). Controls on what the mass media ‘choose’ to communicate are limited by the concept of ‘the right to free speech’ and laws governing decency.

Some, however, argue that the political views of those who own important media corporations can limit political discussion in the mass media. It is understandable that few media corporation owners would encourage their employees to promote political positions which could be detrimental to business.

7.5.2.2 - Interdependency

The government relies heavily on the mass media to communicate to the public about policy issues of general concern. The mass media, in turn, rely on the government for ‘news’ to report. This mutual relationship, while important to both parties, is often an uneasy one.
“Given the intermediary role of the media between the government and the public, government officials are well-advised to develop and preserve cordial relations with both print and electronic media. ...The development of informal relationships based on friendship and long association are also mutually beneficial to the exchange if information” (Ibid, 504).

7.5.2.3 - Several Communication Channels

“Governments cannot and do not rely solely on the media to communicate with the public. Much information is exchanged through correspondence and telephone calls between officials and citizens and through publications and direct mailings aimed at the general public or particular groups. But government information appears to be transmitted most effectively through the media. ...It is noteworthy that a substantial portion of government information transmitted through the media takes the form of advertising paid for by public funds” (Ibid, 503). “A survey for the Federal Task Force on Government Information found that Canadians learn about government programs primarily through the mass media. In order of priority, the reported sources of federal information were ‘television, newspapers and magazines, radio, friends and relatives, government publications, public servants and Members of Parliament, and associations and clubs” (To Know and Be Known, vol.2, p. 50 in Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995: 503).

7.5.2.4 - Bureaucratic Anonymity

The mass media serve both to transmit information from government staff to the public and to give the public information about bureaucratic decisions and, to a certain extent, the individuals
within the bureaucracy. "The media serve as excellent channels of communication to the public for officials engaged in public comment that requires the description and explanation of government programs. ...The media coverage helps to limit bureaucratic power by exposing the activities of public servants to public questioning and criticism. ...The media... analyse the purposes and, whenever possible, identify the personalities involved in the development and administration of programs. ...Most government contacts with the media are handled by public servants who strive to utilize the media to support their political superiors, to publicize their department's activities, to obtain favourable comment on these activities, and to seek public reactions to proposed policies and programs" (Ibid, 503).

7.5.2.5 -Impacts on the Bureaucracy

"There are few research studies on which to base an assessment of the media's impact on the attitudes and decisions of public servants. The nature and importance of interaction with the media depend on such factors as the public servant's responsibilities, their level in the hierarchy, and their department. ...Much of the impact of the media on public servants is... indirect. ...Public servants can be greatly affected... by news stories dealing in a critical or erroneous way with their departments or with policies or programs for which they have some responsibility" (Ibid, 504-05). "Care should be taken not to exaggerate the overall influence of the media on the bureaucracy; but the potential influence of the media and its actual influence in particular circumstances help to constrain the exercise of bureaucratic power." (Ibid, 505)
7.5.2.6 - Perception and the Political Image

In politics ‘perception is reality’ (Stanbury, 1990). Public perception plays an important role in government decisions in-designing and administering public policy. The mass media play a major role in influencing the public’s perception of politicians and government actions. In turn, the potential visibility of government actions and the possibility of public scrutiny shape the behaviour of government departments” (Ibid, 16). “Senior public servants are anxious to ensure that media coverage of departmental activities does not embarrass their political superiors. Thus, senior bureaucrats who brief ministers for questions in the legislature or from the media, monitor news stories so as to anticipate questions that might be asked. (In Canada), ...news stories in The Globe and Mail, The Financial Post, and Le Devoir are often the basis for questions to ministers in the House of Commons” (Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995: 505).

7.5.2.7 - Trial Balloons

The access governments have to public opinion through the mass media is very important. “In contrast to their relations with many pressure groups, government officials do not usually look to, or depend on, the media for information of a technical nature; rather they are interested in media coverage of a political or policy nature bearing on the activities of other governments or the attitudes of the general public -- or particular sections of the public.” (Ibid, 502). In traditional policy development processes, it can be important to get some media coverage of a policy development process in order to test the latent interests’ and the public’s responses. This testing is often termed ‘releasing a trial balloon.’ “Like pressure groups, various media organizations disagree on public policy issues and therefore send conflicting signals to
government officials as to the content of public opinion” (Ibid, 496).

7.5.2.8 - Watchdogs

“The media see themselves more as watchdogs of the public interest than as purveyors of government information. ...They stimulate reform in government by exposing mismanagement, corruption, and illegality. ...The media have a strong incentive to break through the barriers of government secrecy to get a controversial, dramatic, or exciting story that may involve public servants” (Ibid, 504).

Journalistic Mandates in Tradition of the Free Press

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>To behave within an acceptable range of a socially-responsible professional.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>To seek the truth and to expose and combat falsehoods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratings</td>
<td>To get sensational ratings for their work in order to achieve professional success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caution</td>
<td>To act carefully in the face of the possible negative social or professional consequences of their work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Lorimer and McNulty, 1991)

7.5.2.9 - Agenda Setting

“There is always plenty of competition for the limited number of places on the political agenda” (Stanbury, 1990: 7). “The media... help set the public agenda by selecting from the enormous volume of available information items to which they give special prominence or continuing attention. ...They make judgements as to what government-provided information is publicity that merits dissemination and what appear to be propaganda to be disregarded”
(Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995: 504).

7.5.2.10 -Power Plays

The government is not powerless to manage an over-critical media. They use three strategies to keep the media in check. The first is "secrecy." In response to media scrutiny, the government is very careful about what information they allow the mass media access to. "Public servants... attempt to keep secret from the media any information that would adversely affect their departments or themselves; and if damaging information is uncovered by the media, public servants usually work to minimize its negative impact" (Ibid, 503). The second strategy is favouritism amongst journalists. A journalist will seriously threaten their contacts within the government by being too critical of the government (Woodcock, 1977). "‘Friendly’ journalists may receive preferential treatment in the form of advance notice of upcoming developments, access to public officials, or confidential information" (Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995: 504). The third strategy is by exploiting competition within the media industry. "The media are by no means a homogeneous entity; thus the government can occasionally achieve its objectives in communicating with the public by taking advantage of competition and conflict among various media organizations" (Ibid, 502-503).

7.5.2.11 -Profit

The profit motive of the mass media as an industry also enters into this relationship.

Commercial mass media corporations rely on viewership to attract advertisers and thereby revenue. The motive to gather a wide viewership and other agendas and constraints become
influencing factors in the exchange of information and meaning between the government and the public. From an ideological standpoint, the ideologies of democracy and capitalism which dominate most mass media messages, influence both what and how the media will communicate with respect to government's role in policy.

7.5.2.12 -Sustainable Development Planning

The relationships between the government and the mass media is important to sustainable development planning. The government will rely to a great extent, as in all policy discussions, on the mass media to communicate with the public over issues and tradeoffs related to sustainable development policy. The challenges planners and government officials will face in communicating the complexities of sustainable development will require strong relationships between government and the media. Planners will have to plan for impacts of sustainable development policy and initiatives on the image of politicians. The 'watchdog critique' will be heavy when controversial policy decisions are made.

7.5.3 The Mass Media's Relationship with Professional Consultants

Consultants involved in policy development will have a relationship with the mass media in several ways. The media often try to access consultants involved in a project for information. The close relationship between government bureaucracy, industry and professional consultants tends to emphasize a consultant's anonymity during a process as well. Like an institutional interest group, a consultant does not want to 'rock the boat' and threaten any favoured status he or she might have with their client or others in the policy community. On the other hand,
consultants not directly involved in the process may be interviewed by the mass media as experts and sources of opinion and critique. The media will often juxtapose the work of two or more consultants which contradict each other.

Planners will need to use consultant’s expertise strategically to both explain and support sustainable development policy initiatives. Professional consultants with professional status have credibility which a communications planner can exploit. It is also important, that planners ensure consultant’s work is credible and media friendly in both format and organization. Because sustainable development issues address environmental and economic issues in new ways, ways which may have a significant effect on public policy, inaccuracies in facts will receive potentially harsh treatment in the media, undermining the credibility not only of the initiative and the people involved, but also of the very idea of sustainable development. A planner will be more effective if prepared for this challenge.

7.5.4 The Mass Media’s Relationship with Interest Groups

Most reporters approach interest groups to get information and views on a policy issue and its conflicts. The mass media often feature in their stories, the conflicting views of interest groups, especially when these groups’ views differ from the policy proposed by the government.

7.5.4.1 Interaction

Different types of interest groups interact with the mass media in different ways. Some interest groups, especially ‘issue-oriented’ groups, use the mass media to get their messages out to the
public by focusing on conflict. Other interest groups, mainly institutionalized ones, rarely solicit coverage by the mass media because their preferred audiences for their views are not the general public (Stanbury, 1990). Institutionalized interest groups often have established relationships with the government. Media attention, because it is often not desired by the government politicians or the bureaucracy, can threaten that relationship. "Once they have survived the first round in the game of positional politics, groups tend to become less vocal, less inclined to invoke public opinion. Problems of legitimacy give way to problems of communication. Instead of clamouring to be consulted, they are hounded for advice" (Pross, 1992: 155). The mass media may use members of these groups as 'experts' or communicate their opinions in their programs.

Information disseminated by the mass media may stimulate members of the unorganized public to join or organize into an interest group. These same groups will often then use the mass media to communicate their message to other members of a policy community. Much of the focus of the mass media with respect to interest groups is on the 'real impacts' of policy. Making policy always creates losers and winners (Kernaghan and Siegel, 1995) and the mass media uses members of interest groups to voice the views of both winners and losers in a policy change process.

Sustainable development policy making involves many interest groups. Planners will need to deal with the role the mass media may play with each of the interest groups directly or indirectly involved in a policy development process. The focus of some sustainable
development policy making processes on consensual or collaborative decision-making models (Dorcey, 1991) may reduce the type of intergroup conflict which attracts negative coverage by the mass media.

7.5.5 The Mass Media’s Relationship with Business and Industry

Most major mass media organizations have a very close relationship with industry because most mass media pay for their operations and make profit by selling advertising to businesses and individuals. The goal of a mass media corporation is to deliver the largest possible ‘readership’ or ‘viewership’ to its advertisers so that it can charge those advertisers high fees for advertising space or time. Both the goal of profit and the close relationship with its advertisers, agendas and products, affect the type of information conveyed and the manner in which it is conveyed. The media tend to “serve somewhat as an ideological arm of the business community” (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991: 238). However, as previously mentioned, promoting a specific ideology takes a distant second to the goal of making profit. Furthermore, a mass media outlet can have its credibility as a news source questioned by many, if it displays too great a political bias (Woodcock, 1977).

The close connections between the mass media and industry will present challenges to planners involved in developing sustainable development policy. Since sustainable development policy often advocates changes in business practice and a reduction in “throughput” in the economy (Rees, 1995), mass media corporations may marginalize messages on reducing consumption. These messages may then need to be re-contextualized within other more palatable issues, such
as public health, waste reduction and environmental protection; messages which the media have demonstrated they will deal with in a favourable light.

7.5.6 The Mass Media’s Relationship with the Unorganized Public

The unorganized public are the mass media’s primary audience. As was mentioned earlier, the mass media study the public and categorize them into ‘target markets’ according to different characteristics. Programming and advertising are then strategically aimed at these target markets using language, signs and codes, which are typical of that group (Fiske, 1990).

7.5.6.1 -Types

There are several general types of mass media messages including: news or documentaries, editorials or opinion pieces, advertising and entertainment. The mass media shape programs and messages in all of these areas to achieve the greatest viewership.

7.5.6.2 -Access to Government

The public, as mentioned before, rely on the mass media as the primary source of information on the government, as well as on the world in general. In turn, the public often rely on the mass media to communicate their messages back to politicians, by staging spectacles to draw the mass media’s attention to their positions on various issues (Lorimer and McNulty, 1991). Berrigan discussed how in many of the small communities he studied, “...political demonstrations were often staged solely for news coverage and these events only ‘happened’ if the television said they did” (Berrigan, 1977: 31). Politicians frequently pay close attention to
such events as indicators of public will.

Planners can strategically use mass communications initiatives to both get information to the unorganized public, as well as to build public support for sustainability initiatives, and thereby build political and corporate will to implement the initiatives.

7.5.7 Mass Media Institutions’ Relationships With Each Other

Mass media institutions essentially compete with each other for a limited audience. Each outlet targets key audiences by matching their programming to the audience’s preferences and time of day when they use the mass media. This target audience approach is spawning many so-called ‘specialty’ channels or magazines which focus on a small segment of the population.

Another issue arises in this area when certain individuals purchase controlling interests in many media outlets. Many have criticized the control so few individuals have over many of the media outlets in North America and have called on the government to regulate the ownership of mass media corporations (Lorimer and McNulty, 1990). The attitudes held by the media’s ‘gatekeepers,’ including owners and editors, need to be considered by planners. Many of these individuals have demonstrated a willingness to direct their corporation’s employees to take a certain point of view on an issue.

Planners involved in sustainable development policy initiatives will need to take into account the political and economic interests held by large mass media conglomerates. A failure to do so
may result in negative media coverage at key points in a sustainable development policy initiative; coverage which could de-rail a wide-reaching and expensive policy initiative, far into its process. Planners also need to be aware that each media outlet targets different audiences and the interests and attitudes which characterize these audiences need to be taken into account.

7.6 Summary

Sustainable development initiatives can involve diverse and large policy communities and difficult and complex processes for planners to manage, especially from the point of view of communications management. The mass media are volatile members of any policy community, as they thrive on conflict and conflict is often avoided during policy development processes. Interaction with the media must be carefully managed, because the perceptions they disseminate to their audiences will often be the only information that audience will receive on the topic. Planners, if they are to be effective, need to carefully plan their interactions with the mass media. To fail to do so, is to invite potential problems and also to miss a great opportunity to manage information effectively during the initiative.

Every policy or development initiative will have a specific group of stakeholders in the policy community. The generic policy community includes: government, consultants, the mass media, the organized public, the unorganized public and industry. The mass media’s coverage can have an effect on other stakeholders in a policy community, especially the unorganized public. The mass media may or may not pick up any angle given to them by an interest group or
another stakeholder. The mass media can ‘flush latent interests’ out of the unorganized public
with coverage of contentious issues resulting in a quick expansion of the interests groups
involved in a policy initiative. In this way, the mass media can heighten conflict in a policy
community and communications plans must take into account critical times in policy
development when media silence is desirable.

The role which mass communication has begun to play in society has made the mass media a
key stakeholder in policy initiatives. Planners working on sustainable development policy
initiatives can increase their effectiveness by developing communications strategies to ensure
the necessary information is being communicated at the right time in an effective manner
between members of the policy community, especially with respect to the mass media’s
involvement. Planners role as anonymous advisors may be compromised by their role in
strategically offering information to the media and being accessible to them for their coverage
of an initiative.

Planners can use the media to test certain initiatives or policies by getting coverage of the issue
in the media to see other stakeholder’s reactions. Because the mass media will cover a policy
initiative by asking for opinions from the stakeholders and will cross reference those opinions
with those of other ‘experts,’ communications plans must recognize the media’s need for access
to credible experts. Policy community stakeholders, especially planners, cannot be seen to
favour certain media outlets without compromising credibility and opening themselves to
criticism.
Chapter 8 -
Communications Planning for
Sustainable Development Planners: Elements
and Guidelines

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the field of communications planning and propose a set of communications planning guidelines which address many of the issues raised in the preceding chapters. Appendix B contains a complete summary of the communications planning issues this thesis raises.

As with other types of planning, communications planning uses a 'rational' planning model as its foundation to structure and organize the planner's work. "Planning and organizing the media relations program should follow essentially the same process used in developing any other type of program" (Paterson in Arnold et al, 1983: 100). Fortunately, this foundation allows communications planning techniques to integrate well with traditional policy planning methods.
Communicating the right information to individuals and groups involved in any sustainable development policy or initiative is important to its success. "...Useful information and knowledge are important to help people act. Planned communication can increase the probability that they will act, but it cannot guarantee it" (Middleton, 1985: 34). In an era where most of the information and critical commentary the public receive about government policies and initiatives is received through the mass media, planners need to develop communications plans to accompany their policy proposals in order to maximize the effectiveness of their policies. "A media relations program will be significantly more effective if it is carefully planned and organized" (Paterson in Arnold et al, 1983: 125).

8.2 Communications Planning: Definitions, Elements and Principles

8.2.1 Definitions

At its most general level, "Communication planning is the creation, allocation and/or use of communication resources to achieve socially valued communication goals..." (Middleton, 1985: 21). Middleton identifies two further definitions of communication planning:

1) The Preparation of Plans

"The preparation of both long-range and short-range plans for the efficient and equitable use of communication resources, and for the realization of communication policies, in the context of a
particular society’s goals, means and priorities, and subject to its prevailing forms of social and political organization” (Hancock, 1981: 12 in Middleton, 1985: 21).

2) Guiding Principles

“Communication policies are sets of principles and norms established to guide the behaviour of communication systems. Their orientation is fundamental and long range, although they have implications of short-range significance. They are shaped in the context of society’s general approach to communication. Emanating from political ideologies, the economic and social conditions of the country and the values on which they are based, they strive to relate these to the real needs and prospective opportunities of ‘communication’” (UNESCO, 1972 in Middleton, 1985: 21).

These two definitions cover many issues.

a) Communications plans address many aspects of the ideological, materialistic and organizational facets of culture.

b) Communications plans are rooted in the larger mandate and policies of the organization that is the author of the communications.

c) Communications plans are both short and long term oriented.

d) Communications plans are not only plans but also principles to guide communication activity, including communications planning.

e) Communications plans and initiatives are instruments to further other goals, objectives and initiatives of the organization.
8.2.2 Communication Planning Activities

Many complex activities must be undertaken by a communications planner in order to develop effective plans, policies, principles and norms to guide communications. Many of these activities are not included in simple definitions of communications planning. I present a communications planning framework for planners in the next chapter which outlines and organizes communications planning issues and practices relevant to sustainable development initiatives.

8.2.3 Relationship Building

The foundation of communication is relationships. Therefore, communications planning is fundamentally about planning actions which will build a relationship between communicators and their audiences (Brody, 1991). Communications planners need to be aware of the deeper relationships which lie at the root of their organization with those to whom they are communicating. They need to also recognize that few relationships are short term. For any organization which intends to prosper, a long term point of view must be brought to relationship building and communications initiatives. “Relationships involve commitment as well as communication” (Ibid, 68).

8.2.4 Mass Communications and the Mass Media

As planners create communications plans, it is important to keep the difference between mass communications and the mass media clear. Mass communications initiatives involve many
media. The 'mass media' are the industry which are connected to a few of the most prolific mass mediums such as newspapers, magazines, radio and TV. The corporate 'mass media' have less dominance in other forms of mass communication such as newsletters and the Internet.

8.2.5 Terms

As in any discipline or field of practice, there are some key terms used in communications planning.

**Terms in Communications Planning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plans</th>
<th>The plans are the sum of an organization's communication initiatives.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Plan</td>
<td>A plan is a set of perceptions, programs and projects, both operational and strategic, which utilize many strategies and tactics to achieve stated goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Program</td>
<td>A program is a stakeholder-specific communications initiative designed to achieve, in whole or in part, the goals of a communications plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects</td>
<td>Projects are tasks of all kinds which need to be accomplished to implement a program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies and</td>
<td>Strategies and tactics are the “techniques that communicators use to achieve their goals and objectives. Strategies define the transactions or exchanges that communicators propose to encourage the development of ...relationships. Strategies are implemented through one or more tactics or message delivery systems. Strategies and tactics are specified in greater detail as one moves down the continuum from strategic plan to operational plan and thence to program and project.”</td>
</tr>
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</table>
8.2.6 Communications Planning: The Need for Guidelines and a Planning Framework

Each individual or organization involved in communications planning has a unique set of variables to take into account, and their communications plans and initiatives reflect these. For planners, especially those involved in a government bureaucracy addressing sustainable development, the scope of issues and factors to consider, when developing communications plans, is very large. Therefore, a framework is needed to organize these variables and issues so they can be addressed systematically and thoroughly, in order to ensure the communications planned will be ethically defensible within a sustainable development mandate.

Appendix B contains a framework which organizes the issues raised in the thesis into a hierarchy of communications plans. This communications planning framework has five basic elements:

   a) Connecting Communications Planning to Policy Initiatives

   b) Research

   c) Planning

   d) Implementation

   e) Evaluation

These five elements are consistent with the generic planning process used in many disciplines and, in reality, like many rational planning models, the steps are often done simultaneously or in an iterative fashion. The following guidelines embody the key issues raised in the thesis and in the framework.
8.3 Proposed Communications Planning Guidelines for Planners in a Sustainable Development Initiative

Communications planning will challenge existing planning practice in many ways. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, at this point in time, the professional planning organizations in North America have not developed communications guidelines for their members. In this section, I propose some communications planning guidelines for planners. These guidelines are not intended to be comprehensive, but rather a first step for the profession of planning. The guidelines are organized into five categories.

a) General Perspectives
b) Sustainable Development and Social Change Considerations
c) Cultural and Policy Community Relationship Considerations
d) Institutional and Corporate Considerations
e) Communications Planning Techniques

8.3.1 General Perspectives

These guidelines focus on the general principles for integrating communications planning into policy initiatives.

1. Recognize that communications will always be a key component of developing or implementing any initiative or plan. Consider the magnitude of the role of
communications in all projects, especially sustainable development initiatives.

2. Be proactive toward communications-related challenges and opportunities in an initiative, and integrate communications planning into conventional planning processes.

3. Recognize the stakeholder involvement process chosen for your project, will greatly shape the goals and objectives for the accompanying communications initiatives. Generally, planning processes, which focus on consensual approaches to decision making, will help insure against undue “conflict acceleration” by the mass media.

4. Remember that the communications plan and its initiatives, are not the end itself, but rather a tool to further the goals and objectives of the planning process. Therefore, they should be integrated with clear and specific goals into the larger planning process and strategy, although the communications initiatives may need to begin before the “official” launch of the process.

5. Recognize that communication is about building and maintaining relationships and consider how you could use mass communication to help build better relationships with various members of your policy community.
6. Plan to build relationships with the mass media. Consider the role the mass media, with their associated constraints and opportunities, could or will play in your project. Also consider how and when mass media involvement could hinder your relationships with other stakeholders.

7. Allow the insights gained from addressing communications issues to shape the policy initiative’s outputs, timing, phases, and stakeholder involvement processes. Perceptions gained when addressing the characteristics of ‘target audiences’ can inform understanding of a policy community and its politics.

8. Ensure your communications initiatives promote stakeholder education and an increase in ‘dialogue’ on key policy issues, especially around perceptions and tradeoffs associated with sustainability. Plan to use the effects the mass media have on society to your benefit.

9. Be prepared to fine-tune your communications plans as situations arise.

8.3.2 Sustainable Development and Social Change Considerations

These guidelines address the sustainable development and social change issues which will arise during communications planning for sustainability initiatives.

1. Use communications strategies and initiatives to raise public and stakeholder
awareness of the long term social, economic and ecological implications of any policy initiative.

2. Address social change issues and your institution’s positions and goals in these areas. Develop an understanding of the role you, your organization and its initiatives play in maintaining the status quo or encouraging social change. Accept the political nature of your work and work to maintain your credibility by developing communications strategies which are proactive and progressive, but also realistic and pragmatic, especially from a political point of view.

3. Carefully consider the professional and ethical implications of any proactive communications strategies or initiatives and develop some performance goals or criteria to guide your work. Ethical goals may include clarifying distortions of meaning and empowering stakeholders who are disadvantaged within the policy community due to political-economic structures of power, especially structures reproduced through communication.

8.3.3 Cultural and Policy Community Considerations

These guidelines address cultural issues which will form the context for communications initiatives, as well as the relationships within the affected policy communities which will be impacted by communications initiatives.
1. Consider the extent of the heterogeneity of the cultural context you and other stakeholders are working within. Profile the constellation of the subcultural groups associated with your project, their understandings, misunderstandings around sustainability and other issues in their communities which affect how they feel. This should be done early in the process, and the information used to shape both the policies and the communications initiatives to achieve a ‘fit’ with these groups.

2. Identify the profile of power in your stakeholder community relationships and use communications to help (re)produce constructive and ethically defensible empowerment of all stakeholders.

3. Consider how the mass media might impact relationships your organization has with other policy community members, and the relationships they have with each other, especially with respect to the timing and types of issues discussed by the mass media.

4. Consider how the mass media may interpret or characterize your organization’s reputation, initiatives, and relationships with other stakeholders. Consider the political ideology and political alliances you may appear to be associated with, via your communications initiatives. Specifically, plan communications to respond to the comments by the ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ inevitably associated with
any policy initiative.

8.3.4 Institutional and Corporate Considerations

These guidelines address some institutional implications of integrating communications planning into policy analysis work.

1. Incorporate communications priorities into your organization’s mission statement, goals, objectives and practice in every project. Commit your organization to communications goals over the long term. Plan to build and keep credibility through communications.

2. Commit resources to the process of building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders and the mass media. Develop a corporate / institutional identity which is ‘media-friendly’.

3. Develop a hierarchy of communications plans, which incorporate communications into all levels of your organization and its activities, from the goals/objectives and mission statement of your organization, to projects and individual communications initiatives.

4. Systematize the development of communications plans so they can be developed efficiently and institutionalize communications strategies into every initiative.
This system will include several components:

   a) Develop and maintain a data system on critical issues including:
      stakeholders, culture and subcultures, environmental issues and facts,
      government policy, trends, experts and technology;
   b) Develop and keep current target audience profiles;
   c) Be aware of the ‘lifetime’ of your work/information in terms of how
current it is and when it will be out of date;
   d) Establish institutional initiatives to monitor feedback on
communications and general planning initiatives;
   e) Develop information management systems which automatically create
media-friendly information packages; and
   f) Develop a menu of communications products to choose from
including: reports, brochures, news releases, articles, flyers, newsletters,
fact sheets, video footage, etc...

5. Explain to consultants and clients how important communications planning is to
the success of their work and discuss its implications to their project. Develop
guidelines to ensure your work for your clients is communications/mass media
friendly.

6. Allocate resources to both communications planning and communications
initiatives as part of any major project. Identify and train staff who are to be the
media liaisons, both in general and for each particular project.

7. Ensure communications issues are included in all important decision making processes on a project and within your organization. This usually means the communications planner/office needs to be included in all important decision making groups. If the institutional context doesn’t allow for a specific person to be given that responsibility, embody that perception and responsibility yourself, as a planner.

8.3.5 Communications Planning Techniques

These guidelines address the pragmatic and practical issues of developing and implementing communications plans.

1. Develop clear goals and criteria for communications initiatives, both to guide the creation and implementation processes and to evaluate results.

2. Identify the constraints of the mass media industry, in particular the unique constraints each media outlet has, be clear on how they may affect your project and plan to deal with them effectively. Constraints typically include deadlines, type of information (graphic, audio, visual or written), and length / extent / amount of detail which can be dealt with.
3. Always have a contact person available to media outlets and follow up on inquiries from the media immediately. Ensure this person has the appropriate resources and information and can speak for the organization.

4. Build relationships with the people in the mass media companies you deal with, including journalists, reporters, contributing writers and editors. Be proactive, honest and build a relationship with them, based on credibility, trust and mutual interest.

5. Develop skills in dealing with the mass media. These typically include:
   a) Develop excellent communication skills, both written and spoken;
   b) Learn to explain your message in complete stories with simple language and themes, using illustrations and focusing on positive benefits;
   c) Learn to convey your point in intelligent but strongly worded statements which will trigger their interest and thereby become newsworthy;
   d) Ask journalists what they need and let them educate you;
   e) Learn to speak in short and ‘quotable’ statements;
   f) Develop a comfortable ‘TV’ image for yourself and your organization;
   g) Develop the ability to discuss planned action without raising expectations of the media or other stakeholders to an unreasonable level,
as setting overly high expectations will ensure future problems and
cynicism and loss of credibility;
h) Treat all mass media outlets with equality and fairness and do not
 overtly favour one over another; and
I) Do not attempt to influence their editorial integrity.

6. Plan to offer the mass media information they can use in the formats they need.
Consider the criteria for newsworthiness when shaping messages for the mass
media.

a) Is the information relatively new?
b) Is the issue triggered by an important ‘newsmaker’?
c) Is it simple to report?
d) Is it dramatizable?
e) Is there personal significance to the audience?
f) Are its themes consistent with common-sense ‘reality’?
g) Does it fit with the reporters’ view of what is important?
h) What makes this unique?

7. When developing messages to send to the mass media, match the message to the
audience(s), the medium(s), the type(s) of media organization and the messenger
who will be attributed with the message. Ensure the composition of the message
addresses, at a minimum, issues such as language characteristics of the intended
audience(s), credibility of the organization and ‘messenger,’ sources of legitimacy for key points of message, desired results from the message and how those results will be measured.

8. Look for the ‘positive’ aspects of your work to form the ‘core’ of your messages, especially in sustainable development initiatives.

9. Consider, in advance, a range of possible media responses to your communications initiatives by predicting possible questions, article headlines, how they will make it newsworthy (according to criteria mentioned above), considering which of your critics they will use to present the ‘other side’ of the debate, how they will describe you or your organization, and what sort of conclusions they may draw. Plan answers for the probable questions and objections. Plan for opposition to your work to be highlighted and explore the principles which will likely underlie that opposition. Plan responses to these points of possible opposition.

10. Plan for crises which will require communication to respond and develop a generic strategy for each project to shape responses immediately following a crisis, so as to keep those ‘immediate’ responses in line with the overall strategy for the project.
8.4 Challenges Facing Sustainable Development Planners in Communications Planning

Planners, as they develop communications plans to accompany sustainable development policy initiatives, will face many issues and challenges in integrating the sustainable development policies with contemporary culture through the mass media. This thesis has tried to outline many of those challenges. Some of the more important include the following.

**Complex Information**

The issues around sustainable development often involve complex information about ecology, economics and social and institutional relationships. The mediums of the most popular mass media are relatively poor at communicating much complex information because of the use of restricted, broadcast communication codes and time constraints.

**Mass Media Deadlines**

The time available for developing most mass media messages is so short that it is rarely enough to fully research and understand the issues and choices associated with a sustainable development initiative.

**Small Information Bites**

The brevity required by most mass media messages does not allow for much information to be
communicated.

Cognitive Dissonance
The mass media avoid creating cognitive dissonance through their messages. The changes sustainable development proposes will introduce new ways of thinking, living and doing business and these will not integrate easily into the dominant paradigm as presented in the media.

Mediums' Environmental Impacts
Mass mediums such as newspapers, magazines and TV can have large impacts on the environment through consumption of energy and resources and production of waste.

Corporate Interests
One of the most important areas of reforms to achieve sustainability will be in economics (Rees, 1995). The mass media corporations will likely be resistant to any sustainability-oriented economic reforms which they perceive as a threat to themselves or their advertisers.

Conflict
The values of a sustainable society tend to emphasize peace and consensus while mass media messages, especially news stories, tend to focus on conflict in order to garner attention.
Entertainment

The mass media tend to program short information segments of news with large amounts of entertainment for the widest sold programs and media products reduces effective discussion of issues due to time shortages and an audience’s expectations of entertainment.

Feedback Limits

The social learning processes necessary to find effective directions for sustainable development initiatives require communication and feedback. Mass mediums are not generally ‘feedback-friendly.’

8.5 Conclusion

Planning and implementing sustainable development will be complex. Mass communications initiatives will be necessary to promote wide scale understanding of the issues in order to develop political will and harness the creativity necessary to implement sustainable development policy. By understanding the core issues and directions of sustainable development and the cultural context which will shape their implementation, the planner can identify social, economic and institutional issues which will be affected by environmental initiatives. By understanding the relationship between communication and culture, the planner can plan effective communication initiatives to promote the desired cultural changes. By understanding the normative and social change issues surrounding mass communication
initiatives, planners can both ensure their actions are ethical and that sustainable development is being promoted.

Finally, since the tool most planning initiatives use is policy and the mass media is inextricably located on the nation’s political stage, by understanding how the mass media affect policy communities and thereby, their policy outputs, the planner can more effectively plan and manage their interactions with the mass media and other policy community stakeholders to be most productive in promoting sustainable development initiatives.
Chapter 9 - Conclusions

9.1 Introduction

The thesis opened with quotes which underlined both the importance of responding to the urgent mandates and principles of sustainable development and the importance of planned communication, education and social change in initiatives to promote sustainability.

Planning, as a profession which focuses on directing future action, is now inextricably involved in an increasingly global policy and development system where values, aspirations and communication play a fundamental role in policy and decision-making which in turn greatly affects the relative sustainability of society's behaviour.

9.2 The Problem Statement Revisited

The problem statement of the thesis was:
How can planners develop communications plans to maximize their effectiveness when dealing with the mass media during the planning and implementation of sustainable development policy initiatives?

The thesis addressed this problem statement by integrating the issues of communications to sustainable development planning, exploring many theoretical aspects of planning, sustainable development and communications planning. It concluded by proposing a set of guidelines to guide the development of communications plans to accompany policy and sustainable development initiatives. Appendices A and B offer planners a much more detailed analysis and organization of the issues and communications planning methodology.

The thesis focused on literature in areas relevant to the issue including: sustainable development theory, cultural theory, communications theory, planning theory, social change theory, mass media and cultural critique theory, policy analysis literature and finally, communications planning literature. By drawing together theory from each of these areas, a foundation of issues was established which outlined how mass communications and the mass media affect sustainable development planning. This foundation of issues was then integrated into a framework for communications planning (Appendix B) to establish a communications planning framework for sustainable development planners.

The dimensions, themes, issues and importance of sustainable development were explored in the first chapter. This chapter concluded that, because of the connections between politics,
communications and paradigms, sustainable development would not be able to be realized with policy reports alone. Since decision-making processes are fundamentally based in cultural and value systems, implementing sustainable development is a cultural issue involving aspects of communication and cultural reproduction. In the face of this cultural foundation to sustainability, planners' work, while ultimately answerable to environmental integrity, takes place within a cultural context and therefore, needs to address cultural values, processes and issues.

The second chapter outlined the basic issues of culture, cultural reproduction and subcultures, and argued that a culture is a sum of many subcultures; groups of people who share cultural characteristics such as values. While decisions about lifestyle and other behaviours, which form the 'material components' of our society, are predicated on 'ideational factors' such as cultural values, identity and norms, these cultural attributes, both ideational and material, are not static. Rather, they are reproduced through daily action and therefore, they change and are malleable to a social change agent, such as a planner.

The third chapter discussed the important role of communication, in particular mass communication, in culture. This chapter outlined the theory of communication processes and the unique characteristics of mass communication, connected it to the structural and reproductive nature of culture, and then adapted it into a form compatible with a communications planning framework.
The fourth chapter addressed the role of the planner as a strategic communicator, in theory and practice. Communications planning poses problems for the traditional role of the planner as a relatively anonymous and unpolitical technician and adviser. Through using radical and communicative theories of planning, a theoretical structure was offered to contextualize the issues planners will face and the role they may play as a social change agent when planning communications to accompany a sustainable development initiatives.

The fifth chapter examined the models and processes of social change. Since planners who respond to the call from the Brundtland Commission to promote sustainable development through communication will be engaging cultural reproduction processes and serving as social change agents, they must understand the structure and processes of social change to be effective and to ensure ethical issues are considered. Models of social change also offer guidance to planners in developing effective communications plans.

The sixth chapter explored the characteristics of the mass media and its role in culture and society. The ideological influence and economic impact of the mass media on society directly affects the relative sustainability of our society. Because of this magnitude of influence, in particular the mass media’s role as the primary source of policy-related information accessed by the public, sustainable development planners must understand the mass media and integrate mass communications initiatives with policy. Through strategically engaging the mass media, planners can use them as venues to promote sustainable development through education and persuasion.
The seventh chapter explored issues relating to the policy community and the role of the mass media in it. If policy directly affects societal behaviour and thereby, affects the impact society has on the environment, then the processes whereby policy is set must be addressed. This chapter explored the interactions of members of a policy community, paying particular attention to the role of communication and the mass media in the policy community. As key players in a policy community, planners need to understand and engage the mass media when developing and implementing communications plans connected to sustainable development initiatives. The mass media can greatly affect the level of knowledge and political will within a policy community for a sustainable development initiative.

The eighth chapter introduced the basics of communications planning, proposed a set of communications planning guidelines for planners involved in sustainable development initiatives, and concluded by summarizing some key challenges planners will face when addressing the mass media in a sustainable development initiative. The guidelines pulled together many of the key issues raised in the previous chapters in a manner which offers direction and perspective to a planner developing communications strategies.

For the purpose of increasing readability, a summary of the issues raised in the thesis and a communications planning framework are located in Appendices A and B rather than in the main body of the thesis. Appendix A summarizes the basic issues from the previous chapters which should be considered when developing communications plans. Appendix B outlines a detailed framework which planners can use to create a hierarchy of communications plans to
accompany sustainable development initiatives, ranging from large scale strategic communications plans all the way to specific messages. It presents a methodology to create, implement and evaluate the plans, to ensure the communications plans integrate with the organizational activities and effectively promote the values and behaviour associated with sustainable development.

9.3 Directions for Further Work

The thesis focused on theoretical frameworks and issues and, while it is beyond the scope of this thesis, further work is needed in several areas.

9.3.1 Techniques for Education

More work is needed in developing techniques which a planner can utilize to educate his/her clients, whether in the private or public sector, on the need for communications planning. Planners usually work in an advisory capacity, inside or outside a bureaucracy, and effective communications planning is frequently outside the jurisdiction of a planner, or sufficient resources are not allocated to allow such work.

9.3.2 Document Templates

Further work is also needed on structuring the issues, raised for each type of communications plan, into a format which would efficiently yield a ‘plan document,’ one which could be used to educate and guide an organization’s decision makers in developing communications
activities to accompany a policy or development initiative.
Appendix A - Communications Planning Issues for Sustainable Development Planners

This appendix summarizes the key issues raised in the chapters of the thesis which planners should address when developing communications initiatives to accompany a sustainable development policy initiative. These issues are organized into 4 sections:

a) Sustainable Development Issues
b) Culture and Communication Issues
c) Planning Theory and Social Change Processes
d) Mass Media and the Policy Community Issues

The issues are drawn together into a large checklist of considerations, to which a planner can refer at any stage in a communications planning project.

Sustainable Development Considerations

1. How does the initiative further the primary goal and objectives of sustainable development?
**Primary Goal of Sustainable Development:**

To promote socio-cultural, geo-political and ecological health and stability through enhancing a good quality of life for all within the ecological capacity of the earth’s ecosystems (Milbrath, 1989; Rees, 1995).

**Primary Sustainable Development Objectives:**

| Protect | what needs conserving to ensure social and ecological system integrity. |
| Reverse | the unsustainable patterns at present. |
| Achieve | maximum efficiency in consumption (reducing, re-using and recycling). |
| Ensure | inter-generational equity. |
| Enhance | the health and resilience of the physical, social and economic systems on the earth. |

(Beatley, 1995; Milbrath, 1989; Rees, 1995)

2. What are the implications of the planning and communications initiative to the environmental, social, economic and institutional dimensions of sustainable development?

**Dimensions of Sustainable Development**

| Environmental / Physical Dimension | a) Non-renewable resources: |
| - | b) Pollutants: |
| - | c) Renewable resources: |
| - | d) Life support systems: |
| - | :Habitat and biodiversity systems, energy, water, material |
### Social Dimension:

- a) Individual and Community Health
  - Food, Clothing, Shelter / Housing, Safety, Education and Information access, Self-realization
- b) Social Structures
- c) Culture and Heritage
- d) Stable and Fair Governance
  - Security, Justice, Compassion
- e) Values, Beliefs and Ideologies
- f) Information, Education and Research Systems

### Economic Dimension

- a) Capital Wealth Creation and Access
- b) Wealth Stability
- c) Sustainable Employment
- d) Sustainable Profitability
- e) Effective Markets

### Institutional Dimension

- a) Planning systems
- b) Governmental decision-Making Systems
- c) Justice, Legal, Order and Peace-Keeping Systems
- d) Crisis Response Systems
- e) Corporate Systems
- f) Health Care Systems
- g) Leisure and Recreation Systems


3. How does each component of a communications process perform with respect to the goal and objectives of sustainable development?
**Components of a Sustainable Development Communication Process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The sender</strong> (individual or organization)</th>
<th>Do the following aspects of the sender embody or subscribe to the principles of sustainability?:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Its philosophy, mandates, goals;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Its organizational patterns, culture and belief systems; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Its economic behaviour.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The message</strong></th>
<th>Do the following aspects of the message embody principles of sustainability?:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Its possible meanings;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Its production processes, physical and social; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Its possible short / long term effects on each target audience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The medium</strong></th>
<th>Do the following aspects of the medium embody principles of sustainability?:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) The technology: creation, use, obsolescence and disposal;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) The effects of its interaction with the audience; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) The long term effects of repeated use of the technology.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The audience</strong></th>
<th>Do the following aspects of the communication initiative’s relationship to the audience embody principles of sustainability?:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) The priority of each group targeted with the message; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) The probable short / long term effects from message and medium.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The context</strong></th>
<th>What aspects of the context will affect impact of the message?:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Other forms of communication and messages being sent by both the sender and others; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) The relative power of this message to contextual messages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Berger, 1995; Lorimer / McNulty, 1991; Fiske, 1990; Kellner, 1995; Middleton, 1985)
Cultural and Communication Considerations

1. How does the planning and communications initiative promote a more sustainable condition in each dimension of culture?
   
a) Ideational Dimension - Values, beliefs, customs, knowledge, paradigms;
   
b) Materialistic Dimension - Behaviour, technology, economics, resources; and
   
c) Organizational Dimension - Institutional systems.

2. How does the planning initiative establish a sequence of steps to facilitate a transition toward sustainability in areas where large changes are difficult?

3. How does the planning and communications initiative stimulate cultural reproduction processes in such a way as to create a more sustainable society?

Aspects of Cultural Reproduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>a) Attitudes toward nature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Attitudes toward other people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Attitudes toward self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>a) Political institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Cultural institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Family and community organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>a) Forms of ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Mechanisms of allocation and distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Technologies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

206
4.

H o w is the planner and the planning and communications initiative addressing
subculture issues?

Subculture Issues
Identity and

W h a t are the characteristics o f the identity o f the audiences targeted b y the

Ideology

communications initiative and what ideological positions underlie that identity?
H o w are these evolving i n response to socio-cultural forces? H o w can they be
shaped to promote cultural reproduction processes which favour sustainability?

Social Position and W h e r e
Rules

does each targeted audience fit relative to other k e y groups and what

social rules define appropriate behaviour for each audience, i n areas impacted b y
the planning or communications initiative?

H o w does the initiative promote or

change existing hegemonic relationships between groups?

Communication

W h a t communication mediums access each audience and what is the opinion the

Mediums

audience has o f the medium?

Language and

H o w do the signs and codes (message content, f o r m and messenger) need to be

Meaning

crafted to ' f i t ' with the targeted audiences and increase the probability o f the
desired meanings being conveyed?

Leadership

H o w can the planning and communications initiative access and gain support
f r o m those respected as leaders i n each subculture?

5.

H o w does the planning or communications initiative promote the paradigm o f
sustainability by promoting more sustainable conditions i n the ideational and
institutional dimensions o f culture? H o w does the initiative capitalize on existing
sustainability consciousness and encourage its manifestation i n material form and

207


Planning Theory and Social Change Considerations

1. What roles will the planner be fulfilling in this initiative and in the communications surrounding it?
   
   a) Technician
   b) Incrementalist
   c) Liberal Advocate
   d) Structuralist
   e) Progressive

   To what extent will the planner be fulfilling the conventional role of a neutral advisor and to what extent can the planner promote sustainable development as a proactive strategist?

2. What are the normative characteristics of the initiative and the communications associated with it?
   
   a) Are the values and paradigm underlying this initiative both understood and explicit?
   b) Are the ethical issues associated with the communications being addressed?
   c) Have the learning possibilities connected to the communication been maximized?
3. What are the hegemonic issues surrounding the initiative and the communications associated with it?

   a) How is attention being directed and shaped?

   b) How are the political identities implicit in the communications being reproduced?

   c) What claims are being made explicitly and implicitly which will affect attitudes and behaviour?

   d) How is 'comprehension of problems and surrounding facts' being managed?

   e) How is trust being managed through assurances and predictions?

   f) What sources of legitimacy are being drawn on to gain consent?

4. What are the social change issues and implications associated with the initiative or its associated communications?

   A Summary of Social Change Issues Relevant to Sustainable Development and Communications Planning

   | Type and Scale of Change | What are the type and scale of change planned for associated with a sustainable development initiative: progress, evolution or development in the individual, small group, organization, institution, society or global scale? |

209
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Change Models</th>
<th>Which model or combination of them can offer guidance or information on the strategy and process of change which will be effective in an initiative?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Structural Functionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Conflict Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Interpretive Theories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Structure</td>
<td>What is the profile and influence of the ‘elites’ or ‘empowered’ in the change process as well as the profile of adopters and resisters?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Characteristics</td>
<td>What aspects of the change will make it easy or difficult for adopters and resisters?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Process</td>
<td>What stages can be predicted and planned for associated with an initiative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Strategies</td>
<td>What change strategies will be most effective for the planner or change agent to use with each group in an initiative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Facilitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Re-educative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Persuasive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) Power-Coercive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e) Mixed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mass Media and Policy Community Issues

1. How will the initiative and the communications plan address the unique characteristics of the mass media as a communicator?
### Characteristics of the Mass Media as a Communicator

| **Mass Media as Sender** | a) The profit motive drives the industry.  
  b) A mass media organization is complex with many players and agendas.  
  c) The ideology of business drives the mass media industry but any media outlet will be 'multi-vocal' from the point of view of ideology.  
  d) The mass media are both messenger and speaker. |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Mass Media Message Characteristics** | a) Mass media messages are commodities and must be saleable.  
  b) Mass media messages are aimed at target markets.  
  c) The messages will be composed to match the language, signs and codes which characterize their target audiences.  
  d) The messages must be able to be personalized with mass appeal.  
  e) Most messages will offer analytical ‘angles’ which are consistent with the dominant values and world view of their target audience. |
| **Mass Mediums** | a) Technology shapes the message content and experience.  
  b) Each medium has its own scale of transmission.  
  c) Each medium reaches a different profile of target markets.  
  d) There are many mass mediums. |
| **Mass Media Audiences** | a) The mass media research and target messages at certain groups but the messages will be spread much wider than that group.  
  b) The audience will decode its own meaning from the message.  
  c) The audience will do what it wants with the message, its elements and its meanings. |
| **Mass Media Feedback Systems** | Mass media feedback mechanisms are varied and sometimes difficult to access.  
  However, feedback is necessary to effective communication. |
Mass Media messages are part of a ‘media culture’ which all members of society interact with, and which has many impacts on individuals and on society as a whole. Critics have identified the primary impacts the mass media and their messages have as being:

a) Socio-political influence
b) Socialization of its audience in behaviours and values
c) Agenda setting or influencing
d) Gate keeping of information and viewpoints
e) Cultivation of certain values and viewpoints
f) Reinforcement of status quo viewpoints
g) Spirals of silence or attention on certain issues
h) Cultural Imperialism of North American news and entertainment and their cultural aspects
i) Legitimization of issues and activities covered in the news
j) Lifestyle alteration due to the physicality of mass media equipment
k) Identity influence through limited identity choice offerings
l) Simplistic language used for broadcast affects culture
m) Conflicts are escalated by inflammatory news coverage
n) Promotion of consumerism through advertising

2. What will the mass media likely consider to be newsworthy?
The News Model

Issues will get news coverage when they fit the criteria for newsworthiness which include:

- The issue is triggered by an important ‘newsmaker’;
- It is simple to report;
- It is dramatizable;
- There is personal significance to the audience;
- Themes are consistent with ‘reality’;
- It fits with reporters view of reality and what is important; and
- It is relatively ‘new.’

3. How will the mass media likely interact with each member of the policy community associated with the initiative, and how will that affect the project/process?

Issues in the Relationships between the Mass Media and the Policy Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members of a Policy Community</th>
<th>Who are the stakeholders in the policy community associated with the initiative?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latent Interests</td>
<td>What latent interests exist which could be ignited through mass media interaction with stakeholders or coverage of the initiative? What would be the impacts on the project and other stakeholders, should this happen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymity for Planners</td>
<td>How will the planner’s role as anonymous advisors be compromised by offering information to the media and being accessible to them for their coverage of an initiative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Media Criticisms and Agendas</td>
<td>How might mass media criticisms effect stakeholders in the policy community, especially the unorganized public? What specific positions or angles might the mass media may pick up if presented to them by an interest group or another stakeholder?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coverage and Conflict
When might mass media coverage of the initiative heighten conflict? How should the communications plans plan for critical times in policy development when media silence is desirable?

Timing and Audiences
The timing and angle of mass media coverage will be slightly different for different target audiences based on issues of 'interest' for each audience.

Experts and Credibility
The mass media will cover a policy initiative by asking for opinions from the stakeholders and will cross reference those opinions with those of other 'experts.' How can the communications plan manage the media’s need for access to credible experts?

Equal Treatment
Policy community stakeholders, especially planners, cannot be seen to favour certain media outlets without compromising credibility and opening themselves to criticism.

Trial Balloons
Planners can use the media to test certain initiatives or policies by getting coverage of the issue in the media to see other stakeholders’ reactions.

Ethical Issues in Planning Communications

1. How can the communications plan support communications which:
   
   a) Reveal relevant and true alternatives;
   
   b) Correct false expectations;
   
   c) Counter cynicism;
   
   d) Foster inquiry; and
   
   e) Spread political responsibility, engagement, and action. (Forester, 1989: 162).

2. Does the communications plan address ethical issues which underlie the planner’s role
in the policy community?

**Ethical Communication Principles for Planners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developing Criteria</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying Distortions</td>
<td>Planners should identify the essential types of disabling distortions associated with their professional communications and correct them whenever possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the Planner's Role</td>
<td>Planners should clarify their role in perpetuating or counteracting distortions in information and understanding, and the reasons why they play that role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncovering Hegemonic Structures</td>
<td>Planners should recognize how their communications interact with, reproduce or affect the existing political-economic structure of power and ideology, between the stakeholders in the policy community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Forester, 1989: 156)

3. How do the initiatives and planned communications rate with respect to the following criteria?

**Ethical Social Change Criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>What responsibility should the planner, as a social change agent, take for his or her actions and communications associated with the initiative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent</td>
<td>There must be informed consent on the part of each stakeholder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Stakeholders must retain their autonomy and have access to their usual sources of information and social support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats</td>
<td>There must be no threats of extreme or negative consequences connected to a failure to change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reason and Dignity

Stakeholder’s dignity must not be challenged and no extra-ordinary techniques must be used to overwhelm stakeholder’s reason.

Exploitation

No special vulnerabilities connected to age, sex, education or financial status should be exploited to promote the change.


4. How does the communication plan prepare the planner and other stakeholders to engage in ethically defensible communication at different scales?

Ethical Practices for Planning Communications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Face to Face Scale</th>
<th>The face-to-face scale involves the planners daily communication with others and raises issues of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Revealing meanings;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Checking intentions;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Determining roles and contexts; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) Checking evidence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Scale</th>
<th>The organizational scale involves institutional practices of communication and raises issues of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Minimizing jargon;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Organizing counter-advocates;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Making decisions in participatory manner; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) Using independent expertise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Economic Structure Scale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The scale of the political economic structure most directly engages the communication relationship between the mass media and the public, for it is at this level that cultural production takes place. This scale raises issues of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Demystification;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Exposing unexpressed interests;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Democratizing the state / politicizing planning; and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Institutionalizing debate and criticism.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Ibid, 151)
Appendix B - A Communications Planning Framework for Sustainable Development Planners

The scope of issues and factors to consider when developing communications plans to accompany a sustainable development initiative is very large. A planning framework can help organize the variables and issues so they can be addressed systematically and thoroughly and the resulting communications plans will be ethically defensible within a sustainable development mandate.

This communications planning framework has five basic elements:

a) Connecting Communications Planning to Policy Initiatives
b) Research
c) Planning
d) Implementation
e) Evaluation

This structure is used to organize communications planning for sustainable development planners. The five steps are part of an overall communications planning process, and in reality, like many rational planning models, the steps are often done simultaneously or in an iterative
connecting communications plans to policy initiatives

The field of communications planning recognizes the close relationship between successful policy implementation and successful communications initiatives. Communications directors should be involved in "...developing recommendations to maintain or change company policies and programs, and design of new policies and programs related to social performance... (and) participate in corporate strategic planning, especially identifying social performance objectives and relationships between social and economic objectives, and developing strategies and programs to accomplish approved objectives" (Anshen, 1974 in Brody, 1991: 102). A primary reason for involving communications people in company policy development and implementation, is to ensure consistency across the many types of communications typical of an organization: environmental, behavioural, etc...

In order to successfully connect a communications plan to a policy, a strategy is needed for both
the policy development and implementation processes. Each communications strategy will be
unique to the organization and the policy initiative. However, there are some key issues to
consider and a methodology through which many of these issues can be responded to in such a
way as to connect a communications plan with a policy initiative.

A Methodology for Integrating Mass Communications Planning into a Policy-Making
Process for Sustainable Development

Through systematically integrating the wide range of issues associated with a sustainable
development initiative, into a sequence of communications plans, planners can create and
implement comprehensive communications strategies, which integrate effectively into an
organization’s structure and function.

The methodology used to plan for an effective interaction between the mass media and the
sustainable development policy process has several detailed components. These components
parallel the stages of conventional communications planning with some additional aspects
which are uniquely relevant to sustainable development policies.

Connecting Communications Plans to a Policy Initiative.

Since the mass media generally pay attention to concrete events or issues, it is useful to involve
the mass media in a sustainable development planning process when a specific policy initiative
with identifiable stakeholders begins.
The first step is to map out the policy making process in as much detail as possible. Consider how the process will unfold through each step. Consider how stakeholders will engage each other at each stage in the process. This analysis can be achieved efficiently by considering the following issues

**Stakeholders and Stakeholder Relationships**

a) Who are the stakeholders who will be involved directly and indirectly in the process?

b) How do the stakeholders in the policy community feel about you and each other?

c) What historical relationships will impact this process?

d) How will the public interpret this project and what do they need to know to make an informed decision about it?

**Process Points**

a) What are the key points in the policy process where agreement is needed?

b) What stakeholder process are you using and what methods are you using to reach agreement?

c) What information does each stakeholder need before each of these key points to make an informed decision?

d) What information needs to be in public discussion to facilitate further constructive dialogue between stakeholders?
Political Context

a) What political climate will benefit each stakeholder and the process in general?

b) Can you predict who will be the winners and losers out of this decision and how will they react?

c) What information needs to be in public discussion to keep reactions from derailing the process entirely?

d) How should you integrate your proposed communications initiatives with the communication protocol of yours and your stakeholder’s organizations?

The Mass Media’s Involvement

a) When will the mass media likely involve themselves, whether planned for or not?

b) What sort of messages or events or information would be beneficial to the process if it were in public circulation through the media at the key decision points?

c) What information could create conflict around the project, were it to be circulated by the media?

d) What sequence of media coverage events will lend the process credibility and support the legitimacy and clarity of the decision and the decision makers?

e) What information and events do you need to develop to promote this sequence of coverage events?

f) How can you help the stakeholders prepare for the communications demands and interaction with the mass media?
Resources

a) How can you meet the communications demands with the resources you have?

b) What is involved in raising the profile of necessary communications directives so decision-makers approve the necessary resources?

c) Based on the answers to these questions, what are the priorities for research and action?

These are a few of the more important questions a communications planner can consider when developing communications strategies and plans for a project.

The rest of this appendix, organizes, in more detail, the issues a communications planner should address when developing a range of comprehensive communications plans.
Research for Communications Plans

The research stage of communications planning is one of the most important. Decisions about what to do throughout the rest of the planning process will be based on information gleaned at this stage. The information needed for developing effective communications plans has several key characteristics and comes from many sources (Brody, 1991).

**Organizational**

Internal data, qualitative and quantitative, on the organization the planner is working within is needed, including formal and informal organizational structure, attitudes, history, trends and issues.

**Stakeholders**

Data is needed which can produce meaningful insights into the quality of the relationships the planner’s organization has with the groups and stakeholders with whom they will be dealing frequently such as other members of a policy community.

**Contextual Systems**

Basic information is needed about relevant aspects of the contextual systems within which the organization will be communicating. These include the socio-cultural, communications, technological, psychological, political, legal and economic systems operating in society.
Measurement Indicators

Data is needed which can serve to indicate changes in attitude or behaviour in the audience, to measure success of communications initiatives.

Profiles

‘Profiles’ offer a useful method for managing the information gleaned in research. A ‘profile’ is an organized body of the information on an organization, audience group or system. It can be seen to be similar to “trend-watching.” In order to develop the clarity necessary to create effective communications plan, profiles should be created for each component in a policy or communications initiative. Through building a profile, information gaps can be easily identified and information can easily be updated over time.

In order for the analysis in a profile to be comprehensive, a systems analysis approach is effective and considers the following issues.

Components and Structure:

a) How are your stakeholders organized, especially with respect to power and jurisdiction?

Values, Objectives and Mandates

a) What is the self image each stakeholder group has?

b) What are the goals, directions and activities they are directing their resources toward?
c) Why are they involved in your project?

d) How does involvement meet those goals?

**Constraints**

a) What are the limitations imposed by factors, internal and external, on their organizations?

b) How are they responding?

**Resources**

a) What resources does each stakeholder have to bring to this project to achieve its objectives?

**Management**

a) What kind of management does each stakeholder group have and how will they likely behave in the project as a result?

**Inputs and Outputs**

a) What, in general terms, is the flow of wealth, material and information into and out of each stakeholder group?

**Linkages**

a) What is the constellation, significance and characteristics of the connections this
stakeholder has with others in and outside of the project?

**Forces and Trends**

a) What is the collection, scale, significance and magnitude of influences exerted on each stakeholder by various sources of power?

b) What directions is each stakeholder likely to move in response to the forces?

**History and Myth**

a) What is the historical ‘story’ of the stakeholder with respect to the project, related issues, you and other stakeholders?

The above issues need to be continuously tracked by communications planners for every stakeholder or system related to their organization or its initiatives. This activity, at its largest scale, is often called ‘trend watching’ (Brody, 1991: 82-83).

The information necessary to create comprehensive profiles of the systems relevant to any communications planning exercise require good quality and readily accessible sources. The importance of quality research cannot be over emphasized for communications planning. Many resources can be misused if the wrong information is used to direct the planning and the initiatives. Because the scope of many sustainable development initiatives is so wide, there will be typically many stakeholders and related issues which need researching. A planner creating communications plans for a sustainable development initiative will need to develop reliable
methods to manage the scope of the information they need to both research, organize and access. Systems-oriented profiles of the stakeholders in a policy community and of the contextual societal systems is an effective way to organize this information.

A structure or hierarchy of plans need to be developed in order to organize and effectively implement communications plans.
Developing A Hierarchy of Communications Plans

Because of the scope of issues and the associated body of stakeholders which characterize sustainable development initiatives, planning communications to accompany sustainable development initiatives should take place at several scales, and therefore, several types of plans need to be addressed.

It is important to develop communications plans or at least address communications issues at each scale. By not planning ahead, it will be very difficult to be prepared and have clarity on how to address communications issues and opportunities as they arise. Poor communications will negatively affect the project, its investment of resources and time, and ultimately, relationships with stakeholders. Poor communications will often make implementation of a policy initiative more difficult than if the communication is good. There are several types of communications plans in the hierarchy (Brody 1991).

**Strategic Plans**

Strategic planning integrates communications initiatives with long range and larger organizational goals and focuses on the relationships an organization has with other stakeholders.

**Operational Plans**

Operational planning is focused on action plans within a defined time period which
systematically implement strategic plans through programs, campaigns and special events.

**Program Plans**

Program plans are stakeholder-specific initiatives within an operational plan.

**Campaign and Special Event Plans**

Campaign and special event plans are project-specific events which focus on achieving the goals of an operational plan and may target several stakeholders.

**Crisis Plans**

Crisis communications plans are prepared in advance of any possible crises in the initiative as a contingency to minimize negative impacts on the process or stakeholder relationships.

The process of developing each of these plans is similar. "Communications plans, programs, campaigns, special events, and crisis management strategies differ little in structure and design" (Brody 1991, 156). They differ primarily in their scale, time spans and intensity.

There are several steps to developing communications plans (Middleton, 1985; Brody, 1991) including:

1. **Choosing the Planning Methodology**

   The methods used to create a plan will need be project-specific to deal with the issues addressed in the plan.
b) Research and Analysis

Each plan requires unique information on which to base decisions.

c) Planning

The planning process involves many stakeholders, ideas, goals, objectives, and decisions and results in a plan document outlining and allocating future actions within the organization.

d) Creating the Plan Documents

The document is created to organize the planning project, to facilitate communication of goals, objectives and the action plan to all involved, and to provide organizational and initiative continuity.

e) Implementation

Implementation requires following through on activities outlined in the plan.

f) Evaluation and Fine-tuning

Evaluation involves analysing whether the initiatives met their goals and fine tuning the plan to make it more effective.

The framework which follows, focuses on issues which need to be addressed at one or more of the above steps.
Strategic Communications Plans

The first, most conceptual and wide reaching communications plan which needs to be addressed, reaches far beyond any one initiative. It involves organizational strategy.

The strategic plan is the foundation for all other communications plans within an organization or initiative. Other levels of communication planning do not address the communication at the level of institutional policy (Brody, 1991: 104). The key question in strategic communications planning is “What should be the characteristics and attributes of transactions between the organization and its stakeholders?” (Ibid, 103).

Strategic planning:

a) Integrates communications initiatives with the long range goals of an organization;

b) Focuses on the relationships an organization has with others; and

c) Focuses on synchronizing all five forms of communication emanating from an institution to ensure consistency.

Strategic planning requires an ‘interdisciplinary approach amongst the existing traditional communications sub-disciplines (Ibid, 106). “Strong disciplinary and media orientations often work to the disadvantage of organizations. Economy and efficiency require comprehensive communication efforts free of interdisciplinary conflicts and cross-disciplinary gaps” (Ibid,
Developing strategic communications plans requires the planner to address a number of issues including:

**Organizational Goals, Policies, and Initiatives**

a) What is the mission statement of your organization and what are its strategies to achieve its goals?

b) What are its operating philosophies and social performance objectives which underly how it addresses meeting its economic goals?

c) How might these philosophies and social objectives shape the tone of the organization’s communications initiatives?

d) What stakeholders are intrinsically connected to the process of meeting its goals?

e) How might increasing communications affect organizational policies and programs?

**Relationship Building**

a) What relationships does your organization want to develop, maintain or strengthen with stakeholders?

b) What values do these stakeholders have and what do you need to do to strengthen those relationships?

c) Where do key stakeholders’ values conflict and how should you position your organization to maintain the best relationship with each stakeholder?
d) What mediums will work best to communicate with each stakeholder?

e) How can mass communications broaden your relationships and strengthen ones you have?

f) What roles will you as a planner be playing in these relationships and what are the ethical implications of these roles, if there are any?

**Consistency**

a) What messages is your organization sending in general to the public and to each stakeholder through:

- Organizational environments;
- Organizational behaviour;
- Product or service quality;
- Interpersonal communication; and
- Mass media messages?

b) Where do inconsistencies exist and what might be some of the impacts?

c) What changes are needed to ensure consistency amongst these messages?

**General Strategies**

a) What general strategies does your organization use when developing relationships and communicating with other groups?

b) What mediums does this communication use?

c) How effective are these and how could they be made more effective?
d) How do these communications aid in meeting the goals of your organization?

**Cultural Context Issues**

a) What role does your organization play in its political, social and economic context and local and larger scales? How does or can it use the mass media to its advantage in positioning itself culturally?

b) What cultural patterns do its policies and activities reinforce and what patterns does it challenge?

c) How is it a leader toward achieving honourable or noble (normative) goals? Do its mass media initiatives demonstrate this?

d) How do these goals and activities fit with those with whom your organization has key relationships and can mass media communications initiatives assist in building better relationships?

**Resources and Priorities**

a) What resources do you have allocated to communications and communications planning? Is it a sufficient amount? Where can you get more? Can you use your existing resources more effectively?

b) What relationships are higher or lower priority and are the resources allocated accordingly?

c) What role do or could mass media communications play in these relationships and what types of mass media will be the most resource efficient to reach each of your
stakeholders?

**Sustainable Development Issues**

a) What is your organization’s policy on sustainable development principles, priorities and practices?

b) What is its strategy for steps toward more sustainable practices?

c) How can each component of your mass media communications initiatives (sender activities, message, medium, messenger and feedback channels) be shaped to better meet the social, economic and environmental objectives of sustainable development?

d) How can your mass communications initiatives promote sustainable development objectives in your stakeholder’s organizations and in the general public?

**Mass Media Considerations**

a) What mass media engagements at what times does your strategic plan suggest will be necessary?

b) How will those messages fit with the motives, constraints and mediums of the mass mediums likely to be used?

c) How will the target audience and feedback constraints associated with the mass media affect your organization’s messages and relationships with the audience groups?

d) How can the results of your mass communications initiatives be measured?

e) How can media messages and their probable ‘angles’ affect the relationships other stakeholders have with you and each other in the policy community you are working
Social Change Strategies

a) What social power structures will be impacted by your project and communications, how and with what probable results?
b) Who is going to be asked to make what kind of changes at what costs?
c) How will the proposed changes need to be structured to be more easily adopted?
d) What social change strategies will be most effective with each stakeholder and what role could the mass media or mass communications play in the strategy?
e) In general, what messages will need to be sent by what messenger through what mass media outlets to each group in what order to encourage the desired changes?
f) What changes may be necessary in your organization or its policies to make mass communications initiatives credible?
g) What ethical issues arise from the social change aspects of the planned mass communication initiatives?

The above issues need to be addressed, formally and informally, during the process of creating and updating strategic communications plans. Some of the information will need to be included in the plan document.
Operational Communications Plans

The goal of operational communications planning is to implement the goals of a strategic communications plan, within a specific period of time, connecting communication goals to the functioning of the organization and to specific policies, initiatives and stakeholder relationships. "Operational communication plans encompass all of an organization's communication programs..., designed and implemented in parallel with and in support of organizations' operational plans (at other levels), and are usually established on annual bases" (Brody, 1991: 108). "Operational communication... is action-oriented. The objectives of operational communication are specified as stakeholder behaviours rather than predispositions"(Ibid, 104). When developing an operational communications plan, the planner needs to address a number of issues including:

**Strategic Plan Components**

a) What are the goals, objectives and priorities of the strategic communications plan which need to be implemented during the time period covered by this operational plan?

b) How will insights gained from developing the operational plan be used to fine tune the strategic plan?

**Primary Stakeholder Relationships**

a) What stakeholder relationships can be created or strengthened by communication associated with this operational plan?
b) What are the highest priority relationships to be cultivated?

c) What is the history and present condition of these relationships and what initiatives can be undertaken in this plan to improve them?

**Messages**

a) What series of messages need to be sent to each stakeholder in the operational time period to facilitate a better relationship and more clarity on activities?

b) What sequence of messages need to be sent, based on the desired educational process or on the dialogue which may emerge?

c) What other commitments or initiatives might be needed to follow up on such communication? Does your organization have the resources for follow up?

d) What other messages will each stakeholder be receiving from others during this period? How will these messages, as the context for yours, shape the meaning of your messages? How should you prepare for the influence of this context?

e) Ensure your messages contain information on how to give feedback. What do you need to do to ensure the feedback will be dealt with in a way which will further organizational and relationship goals?

**Mediums**

a) What mediums are the best to reach your stakeholder during this operational period?

b) What mediums will your resources allow you to use and with what frequency?

c) As mediums greatly shape both the message and how your audience will interpret the
message, what mediums will lend credibility to your messages, initiative and relationship-building activities?

d) How can the medium you choose clearly promote your sustainability goals, socially, economically and environmentally?

E) How will the medium affect feedback?

**Resources and Priorities**

a) What resources do you have available for each component of the operational plan, based on allocations and priorities identified in the strategic plan? How can the strategic plan’s priorities be fine-tuned through analysis of resources demands in this operational plan?

b) What are types of resources you have available and where can they support different aspects of your communications initiatives and stakeholder relationship building endeavours?

c) Consider the range of objectives for your relationships and communications. How can you achieve as many as possible with each communications initiative?

d) What partnerships could be established to increase resources available?

e) What are the implications of the source of your resources or the possible partnerships you may establish to your relationships with stakeholders?

**Sustainable Development Issues**

a) What are the environmental, social and economic implications of the initiatives
outlined in the operational plan? How can they be shaped to promote a sustainability agenda more clearly?

b) How can addressing sustainability issues in your communications plan further educate your organization or help fine tune your organizational policies or goals?

c) How will an explicit agenda of promoting sustainability affect your relationships with stakeholders during the period of time covered by this operational plan?

d) How do you need to prepare for communications initiatives to continue to strengthen stakeholder relationships during this period?

Cultural and Communication Issues

a) How will cultural trends affect your communications initiatives during this plan’s time period? How are these trends affecting stakeholders in your project? How can you use these trends to your favour to strengthen relationships, dialogue and promote sustainability?

b) What new issues or stakeholders may emerge in your cultural context during this time? c) Based on these cultural observations, how might past communications and organizational profile be reinterpreted by stakeholders? What communications should you plan to address or capitalize on this?

d) What hegemonic issues may arise during this time period? How can your communications initiatives support a desirable hegemonic balance amongst stakeholders?

e) How will your communications initiatives reproduce cultural aspects and
relationships? How could your communications be shaped to promote the reproduction of culture toward a more sustainable condition?

**Planning Theory and Social Change Issues**

a) What types, scales and stages of social change are being sought or are achievable with respect to each stakeholder or target audience for the time period covered by this operational plan, based on strategic social change goals?

b) What roles will the planner need to play with each stakeholder during this time to promote the social change objectives?

c) What role can communications play, especially those involving the mass media during this time period, in achieving these goals?

d) How should the planner deal with the ethical issues which arise from this activity, especially concerning the attention focusing, political identity reproduction, information dissemination and management of trust and legitimacy?

**Mass Media Considerations**

a) Based on goals identified as priorities for the operational plan’s time period, how can the mass media be best engaged to help achieve those goals?

b) What sequence of mass media communications initiatives is needed? What preparation is necessary to ensure appropriate materials are developed and events and issues are carefully sequenced and highlighted so that mass media interaction will be beneficial to the initiative within the desired time period?
c) What steps toward sustainability can be feasibly discussed in the mass media during this time period? How can these steps capitalize on other issues being discussed in the media?

d) How will mass media involvement on these issues affect each stakeholder relationship? What preparation or communication is necessary to ensure media coverage benefits the relationships?

e) How might an agenda of sustainability be perceived as an asset or threat by media corporations? What planning and preparation is needed to encourage a positive ‘angle’ from the media?

Policy Community Issues

a) Based on the policy community work planned for the period of this operational plan, when would media involvement be most beneficial? When should the media be less involved?

b) When, based on the policy development work program and issues which will emerge, might each stakeholder want to use the mass media to promote their agenda in the policy community? How should the planner respond?

c) What stakeholder relationships might be most easily damaged by media involvement? How will the media likely portray the relationships and conflict associated with the project?

d) How can stakeholder relationships and interests be characterized so as to promote a sustainability agenda in the media?
e) What latent interests or new stakeholders might emerge from media coverage during this operational plan's time period? What preparation is necessary to anticipate and respond to these interests?

Operational communications plans take the larger organizational goals and strategic communications plans and policy initiatives, and begin their implementation by identifying specific steps to be taken within a specific time period. As the operational plan is developed and implemented, fine tuning must be done, not only of the operational plan, but also of the strategic plan.

The next step in developing the hierarchy of communications plans, is to identify and create plans for specific communications programs in order to implement the operational plan.
Program Plans

From strategic and operational plans, programs should be developed to direct the interaction between an organization and its stakeholders. Programs are less organization focused and more audience-focused, addressing strategies for dealing with particular audiences. If the larger scale planning, which will have been completed before a program is undertaken, is accurate and is followed closely, the program should have some measure of success.

The goal of a program plan is to detail an initiative through which an organization can engage in meaningful interaction, including consultation, with one or more stakeholders. If the stakeholders are few in number or similar, a program can be more general in nature. However, in sustainable development initiatives, the groups of stakeholders are typically large and diverse. As a result, program plans need to be developed generally with only one or a few stakeholders in mind. Each stakeholder program will have many links with programs aimed at other stakeholders. However, those links will only become evident after a program has been outlined individually for each stakeholder group. When developing a program, planners need to address a number of issues including:

Operational Plan Components and Priorities

a) In accordance with stakeholders, priorities, initiatives, preparations and time line identified in the operational plan, establish a stakeholder-specific communications
program for each stakeholder. These programs will be further broken into specific campaigns/events at the next level of planning.

**Key Stakeholders**

a) What are the goals and objectives for each stakeholder group, as identified in the operational plan for this time period? What steps for each stakeholder are necessary to follow to achieve these goals?

b) Based on the operational plans goals, what specific goals and objectives can be identified for each stakeholder communications program? How will elements of the program for any particular stakeholder be connected to programs for other stakeholders?

c) How can one program meet the communication goals and objectives for more than one stakeholder or subgroup?

d) What component of the program form each stakeholder needs to involve the mass media?

**Specific Context**

a) Following the identification of a communications program for each stakeholder, consider the other communications each stakeholder will be receiving directly and indirectly, both from other stakeholders and from other sources. How will these contextual communications affect your ability to meet your communications goals with each stakeholder?
b) How could you refine both your messages and your timing within the program to increase the effectiveness of your communications initiatives?

c) What role will or could the mass media play in your program? What role will they play in the contextual communications?

**Strategies and Tactics**

a) Following the identification of specific goals and objectives for each stakeholder communications program, consider what strategies you want to use to achieve these goals?

b) What tactics would be best suited to achieving the goals?

c) What strategies and tactics used for other stakeholder groups offer support or cause conflict?

d) How do the chosen goals, objectives, strategies and tactics for each stakeholder group fit with your organization’s mission statement and image? Is fine-tuning needed for either?

e) Communication program plans focus on strategies and tactics for communicating and developing relationships with target stakeholders.

**Message**

a) Based on the goals, objectives, strategies and tactics identified for each stakeholder program, what sequence of messages should be sent to achieve the goals and objectives?

b) What possible discrepancies might arise between these written/verbal/media
messages and your organization’s image and behaviour? How could these be addressed with each stakeholder?

c) How will feedback be encouraged and consultation dealt with for each stakeholder?

Medium

a) What mediums, and in what sequence, could be best used to reach each stakeholder? When should mass mediums be used and which ones will be most useful?
b) What resources are available and how does this influence the choice of mediums?
c) What image will each medium convey about your organization, your initiative and your relationship with stakeholders?
d) What innovative or alternative mediums could you use?

Accountability

a) How are you planning to analyse the impacts or success of each stakeholder program? How does the analysis method affect the program, strategies, tactics and feedback methods?
b) How will results be used to fine-tune the program as well as the operational and strategic plans?

Resources

a) What resources, including money and staff time, are available for each stakeholder’s program? Keep priorities clear during allocation of resources.
b) Reconsider how programs for each stakeholder could be streamlined or combined with those for other stakeholders.

c) What partnerships might be available to reach each stakeholder? What are implications of these possible partnerships?

**Organizational Policy Change**

a) Consider the implications of proposed communication strategies and tactics for each stakeholder to the organization's mission statement, image and other activities.

b) How can what has been learned during the communications planning process help to fine tune organizational priorities and policies to achieve both greater effectiveness and greater consistency?

**Sustainable Development Issues**

a) What are the environmental, social and economic implications of each stakeholder program?

b) How can education and the sustainability agenda be further promoted in each program? What information packages or events need to be developed to promote the education of each stakeholder?

c) What institutional constraints are you and your stakeholders facing which will seem to be roadblocks to achieving sustainability with respect to elements of the program?

d) How can the environmental impact of the mediums be reduced for those chosen for each stakeholder program.
e) How does the plan include the mass media and how will the media address issues connected to sustainability?

**Cultural and Communication Issues**

a) Consider the subcultural characteristics of each stakeholder group you are developing a program for. What values and behaviours does each group have and how can this help refine the program, choice of mediums, strategies and tactics?

b) What values and behaviour does each stakeholder group have which can be seen to be consistent with sustainability principles? How can these be capitalized upon to promote sustainability?

c) What transition stages will be needed in the social change strategy to encourage each stakeholder group to adopt more sustainable agendas or practices? How do these stages affect the priorities for the program?

**Planning Theory and Social Change Issues**

a) What social change strategies have been chosen as probably the most effective for each stakeholder? How are these being implemented in this program?

b) What form will resistance to change initiatives likely take and what responses will be appropriate?

c) How might the social change strategies chosen for different stakeholder groups cause conflict or inconsistencies in image and practice within your organization?

d) How can the social change agenda promote greater and more meaningful dialogue
between stakeholders, and thereby strengthen relationships?

e) What roles will the planner need to play? How should the ethical issues around each role be addressed? How does this analysis affect the choice of strategies and tactics?

f) What role will the mass media play and how will they respond to the social change components of the program?

Mass Media Considerations

a) What events and mass media focused initiatives are planned for each program?

b) Since most all stakeholders will interact with the mass media at some level when they are involved, how should the mass media component of each program be synthesized to save resources and be the most effective?

c) How will the constraints of mass mediums and the media industry, such as deadlines and the need for visual images, affect the program, strategies and tactics?

d) How will the messages you are introducing into the mass media sphere fit with the context of other media messages?

e) How will the media likely interpret your work and stakeholder relationships?

f) How should you fine tune your programs and prepare for the impact the media may have?

Policy Community Issues

a) The mass media will want to have access to all stakeholders who want to enter into the 'mass mediated' discussion. What sort of conflicts might be highlighted by such
coverage? How should you plan to prepare for those conflicts so that relationships are strengthened in the policy community rather than damaged?

b) How should the planner prepare for the scrutiny of their neutrality and anonymity, which may result from media investigations?

c) What history does each stakeholder have with the media and with other stakeholders? How will the media likely frame this initiative and stakeholder relationships in its historical context?

d) What latent interests might be flushed out from media involvement? How can they be included?

e) What information needs to be made available to the media and in what format to encourage fair coverage?

A list of special events and specific communications initiatives, which an organization needs to implement, can be compiled from integrating all stakeholder communication program plans. In order to use resources efficiently, these events should be combined where possible. This especially important to optimize media coverage.

The next level of planning is focused on developing special event plans, to further plan and implement the operational and program plans.
Campaign & Special Event Plans

The goal of a campaign or special event is to engage specific stakeholder groups at a specific point in time to implement a component of a communications program which is part of a strategic, operational and program plan. The campaign or special event has a defined purpose and goal which is achievable in the allotted period of time.

"Mass communication campaigns are similar to programs in that both consist of strategies and tactics. Campaigns usually are shorter in duration than programs but longer than special events... and may be cyclical. ...Special events may be self-contained or organized as components of programs or campaigns" (Brody, 1991: 110). Both campaigns and special events are stakeholder and time period-specific.

When developing a plan for a campaign or event, the planner must address a number of issues including:

Goals and Reasons

a) What is the purpose and the list of goals for the campaign/event? What are you trying to accomplish and why?

b) How does campaign/event meet the goals of stakeholder program plans as well as the organizational strategic and operational plans?
c) What role does this campaign/event play in the larger strategy of the program plans? Where is it in the sequence of initiatives contained in the operational plan?

**Audience / Stakeholders**

a) Consider the information from the research profiles on the stakeholders targeted with this campaign/event.

b) What mediums will be most effective in reaching the targeted stakeholder(s)? What ‘messengers’ will be most effective in reaching them and giving the communications initiative credibility in those stakeholders’ eyes?

c) How much feedback do you anticipate from this initiative? How best can you provide these stakeholders with opportunities for feedback?

**Context**

a) At what time will your campaign/event be best implemented so as not to conflict with other events in your targeted stakeholders’ lives?

b) What other messages are your stakeholders being targeted with by whom, around the same time or issue?

c) Consider the cultural context within which your campaign/event will be received. How are your targeted stakeholders situated within the context? What reactions are they having to the context?

d) How should you shape your messages, strategies and tactics in this campaign/event to achieve the best ‘fit’ possible with the stakeholders and strengthen your relationship
with them?

e) What messages being communicated by the mass media are shaping the context for your messages?

**Messages**

a) Consider all types of communication your organization has with its targeted stakeholders. Which types should be highlighted in this campaign/event? What role should mass communications, especially via the mass media, play?

b) What language and images will be most useful in reaching your audience?

(See section on message planning later in this chapter)

**Medium**

a) What mediums will reach your stakeholders most effectively to convey the information you want to convey in this campaign/event? How will the medium shape the message and its meaning?

b) What types of mass media will be most effective?

c) How cost effective will each medium be?

**Resources**

a) What resources have been allocated to this campaign/event?

b) What potential do those resources offer to meet the goals set for the campaign/event, including follow up? Do adjustments need to be made to ensure resources and
objectives are aligned realistically?

c) What agreements are necessary to establish partnerships to share resources?

**Implementation**

a) What specific tasks need to be done for each stage of the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the campaign/event?

b) Who, specifically, is responsible for these tasks?

c) How will fine tuning be done?

**Evaluation**

a) How will evaluation be performed and who will do it?

b) What (indicators) specifically will be measured or evaluated?

c) How cost-effective was the campaign/event in meeting your goals?

d) Is the campaign/event repeatable?

e) What implications do the evaluation results have to strategic, operational and program plans, as well as organizational goals and policy? How can the evaluation results update your stakeholder profiles?

f) What implications do the results have on stakeholder relationships? What further work is necessary?

**Sustainable Development Issues**

a) How will this campaign/event promote environmental, social and economic health in
local and stakeholder communities, as well as at larger scales?

b) Consider the importance of the visibility of promoting sustainable practices, such as recycling, job training and supporting local ‘green’ businesses, at any public events associated with the campaign/event.

c) What environmental impacts will be associated with the use of the mediums chosen for this campaign/event? Can these impacts be mitigated? Can mitigation measures be part of overall campaign/event strategy to increase awareness and learning?

d) How can the messages and associated activities/events build on the mass media’s understanding of sustainability to take it one step further?

e) What inconsistencies might the media identify in the sustainable development aspects of your project or communications initiatives? How should you prepare for this?

Cultural and Communication Issues

a) What are the values of your targeted stakeholders’ subcultures and what speakers, mediums and protocol should be used to reach them effectively?

b) How can your communications initiative help reproduce cultural directions which are empowering to the stakeholders?

c) What will be ‘new’ for your audience in this initiative, and how can it be used to build stronger relationships and more credibility for your organization?

d) How will feedback be accommodated?
Planning Theory and Social Change Issues

a) How does this event fit into the larger social change strategies underlying the overall project? How will this event change the audience’s perception of issues in the project?
b) How can the messages in the campaign/event be shaped so they are most easily understood and their recommendations adopted?
c) How does this campaign/event address inter-stakeholder hegemonies? What are a range of predictable reactions from other stakeholders? What preparation is necessary to address these reactions?
d) What roles will the planner have to play for this campaign/event to be effective?
e) What ethical issues arise around this campaign/event? How can criteria for ethical communications and social change initiatives shape the campaign/event?
f) How is stakeholder trust, comprehension and consent being affected through this campaign/event?

Mass Media Considerations

a) What goals and objectives underlying this campaign/event can effectively be met through mass communications and mass media coverage?
b) How does this campaign/event need to be shaped to address the unique characteristics of the mass media’s motives, messages, mediums, audiences and feedback systems.
c) How will this campaign/event fit, in the media’s eyes, with the sequence of initiatives your organization is staging during the project? Will inconsistencies appear during their coverage or investigation?
d) How will the campaign/event match the criteria for newsworthiness?

e) How could the mass media be used, through this campaign/event, to launch a ‘trial balloon’ on some aspects of the project?

Policy Community Issues

a) How will each stakeholder in the project respond to the campaign/event, especially the mass media components?

b) What preparation is needed to ensure the coverage and resulting dialogue will strengthen stakeholder relationships? What preparation is necessary to ensure stereotypes of past ‘labels’ of stakeholder groups do not damage policy community relationships or twist media interpretations?
Crisis Response Plans

Crisis communications plans are prepared to facilitate prompt and effective responses to crises which arise within a project which could have negative effects on the project or on key stakeholder relationships. Crises in a project can quickly and negatively impact an organization’s or planner’s credibility.

“Crisis communication plans are prepared far in advance of potential crises that may never occur. Crisis communication plans are developed on contingency bases to minimize the impact of worst case problems” (Brody, 1991: 111). They are very general so as to be applicable in many situations and to many types of crises.

The goal of crisis communications plan is to prepare an organization for serious problems which might occur in a project and ensuring that the organization will be able to respond and communicate in a manner which preserves the good will in its relationships with the policy community. There are several types of crises which should be planned for (Brody, 1991: 111):

*Predictable Crises*

Most organizational processes, especially those which involve many other stakeholders, do not occur without problems and crises. Experience within the organization and from other similar organizations can predict certain crises and help develop effective response strategies.
Unpredictable Problems which are Unprecedented in Scope

Unpredictable crises need flexible and principle-based response strategies. The goals of the organization and its relationships with its stakeholders are key to effective response plans.

Self-Inflicted Problems

Crisis which are the result of problems with processes within an organization must be planned for. However, many serious self-inflicted crises can be prevented with good internal communications planning.

There are many issues in crisis communications planning. Preparing a crisis communications plan should be done at the same time as all other plans are being completed. It is during the planning stage where desired outcomes are identified and it is at that time the failure of plans, strategies and tactics should be considered seriously and incorporated into a crisis plan. In developing crisis communication plans, a planner must address a number of issues including:

Identification, Evaluation and Prediction

a) What possible crises could occur during both the policy project and the communications initiatives in the following areas?

- Technological;
- Confrontational;
- Malevolent; and
- Managerial.
b) What misunderstandings or antagonistic reactions might occur?

c) Based on your organization’s mission statement, what qualities would be appropriate to guide the reaction, especially in light of the goal of preserving relationships?

d) Consider the possible crises in the policy initiative and their:
   - sources;
   - types (potential, dormant, imminent, current, recurring);
   - life cycle stages (social expectation, political, legislative, regulatory responses);
   and
   - complexity.

e) What research is necessary to prepare?

f) Develop a general action plan which includes strategy, tactics, options and evaluation components.

**Risk Management Planning**

a) How might the identified possible crises affect your organization’s credibility with stakeholders?

b) What risks are associated with the proposed crisis response options?

c) After reviewing the possible range of problems, crises and response options, can a generic response template be developed for your organization to minimize risk in crises?

d) What role might the mass media play in a generic response template?
Response Steps and Structure

Response steps typically include the following:

“1) Define the problem
2) Establish objectives
3) Catalogue resources
4) Gather information
5) List assumptions
6) Assessing potential
7) Formulate policy
8) Define audiences
9) Establish strategies and tactics
10) Organize and assign tasks
11) Establish schedules and monitoring systems
12) Assess results”

(Brody, 1991: 198).

Time Horizons

a) Consider the probable deadlines for each stage of a crisis response plan for dealing the
problem in general and for communicating with each stakeholder in order to preserve
relationships and credibility?

b) When should you engage the mass media in this process?
Crisis Conversion

a) Consider the possible crises which have been identified. What information can be gleaned about your organization, its policies and plans, and most importantly about its relationships with other stakeholders?

b) What strengths and weaknesses can be identified in the organization, its policies and the project and its process plan?

c) Can these be improved through integrating the mass media into the policy project or changing how you deal at present with the mass media?

d) Could a crisis be capitalized upon to increase profile and credibility and to increase the depth of the discussion of key issues, acquire special attention by decision makers, and spur changes needed in various areas?

Sustainable Development Issues

a) What impacts could a crisis have on your organization, on the project or on stakeholders?

- Environmentally;
- Socially; and
- Economically.

b) What are the environmental impacts of the crisis response options?

c) How could engaging the mass media decrease any negative impacts of a crisis?

d) How might critics address your project or communications from the utopian points of view often associated with sustainable development? How could you respond?
e) What aspects of predicted crises are particularly related to policies aimed at achieving sustainability?

f) What stakeholder communication or education is needed to prepare your organization, key decision makers and stakeholders for utopian critique from other stakeholders or the mass media?

**Cultural and Communication Issues**

a) How might each subcultural group identified in your stakeholder community mentally reposition you based on possible crises? What stereotypes or power relationships might be reinforced or challenged by a crisis and by any particular response plan?

b) How can you prepare stakeholders to respond to a crisis in a way which preserves credibility and commitment to principles of sustainability?

c) How might the response plans aimed at each stakeholder be perceived by other stakeholders and the mass media in particular?

d) Consider the values held by each of your stakeholders, and explore how these values can be used as criteria to shape and influence the choice and fine-tuning of crisis response plans, especially with respect to communications.

f) What communication campaigns might be needed with any stakeholder to restore faith and goodwill?

**Planning Theory and Social Change Issues**

a) How can your organization, through its crisis response elements of actions,
communications and engagement with the mass media, maintain or enhance stakeholder relationships through addressing the issues of: legitimacy, trust, assurance and comprehension?

b) How can the response plan promote healthy power relationships within the stakeholder community, especially by responding immediately to stakeholder concerns and need for information?

c) What roles will the planner be asked to play when responding to crises?

Mass Media Considerations

a) How should your organization respond to the possibility that the mass media may escalate the crisis, searching for inadequacies in your organization and focusing on the damage done to other stakeholders connected to the crisis?

b) What information will be needed to be made available to the mass media for each identified crisis?

c) Who would be most effective at delivering this information to the mass media, in what venue? What sequence of media engagements would be effective?

d) Does the policy initiative have any negative effects on the mass media or those who advertise/support them? How should you respond to concerns in this area?

e) What options are available to address the world view differences which form the foundation for principles of sustainability through a crisis? What communication campaigns might be needed to provide the facts and education of stakeholders, including the media, to harness the crisis as an opportunity to increase knowledge and
understanding of sustainability?

**Policy Community Issues**

a) How can your response plan help strengthen policy community relationships through encouraging cooperation amongst stakeholders in meeting the crisis? What mutual interests can be identified to help stakeholders focus their crisis response resources?

b) How could the mass media participate in damaging fragile relationships amongst stakeholders? How should the crisis response plan address and prepare for such problems?

Many ‘crises’ are created by interpersonal and inter-organizational disagreements during the course of a project. Implementing plans in any area of public policy incur political implications. Many ‘interests’ will not emerge until they feel a threat. The interests will usually be represented by ‘activists’ and “...their ethical legitimacy and seriousness must be accepted” (Brody, 1991: 187). The issues of politicization and activism are especially applicable to sustainable development initiatives because they frequently involve changes to existing practices.

In dealing with disagreements, the communicator’s greatest asset is organizational credibility. ‘Credibility’ is a commodity gained over time and at great expense in effort and consistency. Credibility is easily lost and once lost, is doubly difficult to regain (Ibid, 181-82). Credibility can be gained by demonstrating the correctness of an institution’s purpose or motives, by
accepting the legitimacy of other's arguments, by behaving in a fair and equitable manner, and by effective communication (Ibid). Developing credibility and responding to crises effectively requires good communications planning.

**Message Planning**

The communications planning issues and processes outlined so far have focused on relationships between the planner, his or her organization and other stakeholders in a policy community. It is important to address the process and intricacies of developing the actual messages which will be created and exchanged with each stakeholder during the implementation of the above plans.

The message is the venue for exchanging meaning between an organization and other policy community stakeholders. The goal of a message is often many layered, however, it is most often to communicate some meaning between two individuals or groups.

Effective messages are complex to create and within an organization, many individuals, and even sometimes whole departments, may be involved in the technical aspects of creating and sending a message. A complete analysis of the technical processes of creating and sending a message vary significantly with each mass medium and that discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, I want to focus on the thinking and planning which must take place to
ensure the right message is sent with the right characteristics to the right audience to ensure the message is consistent with the full communications plan. A planner needs to address a number of issues when developing a message including:

**Audience**

a) To whom is this message targeted?

b) Consider the research information from your stakeholder/audience profiles. What values and preferences do they have?

c) What are their social and political values and activities?

d) What is their economic status and what attitudes do they have which underlie this status? How are they seen by others because of their economic condition?

e) What is their attitude toward the environment?

f) What relationships do they have with other stakeholders? What relationships do they have with your organization?

**Purpose**

a) What is the purpose for the message? What are you trying to achieve?

b) Position this message fit into the larger strategic, operational, program, campaign and crisis communications plans.

c) What are the goals for this message with respect to: enhancing your relationship the audience, educating them and eliciting feedback?

d) What do you intend to do with information you receive in response to this message?
Should you include that purpose in the message?

**Message Elements and Content**

a) What are the facts to be included?

b) What rhetorical style should be used?

c) How can the legitimacy of your organization and the message be incorporated implicitly into the message?

d) What emotional tone should the message have?

e) What ‘hailing device’ will you use to get your audience’s attention?

f) How will you provide interest and keep their attention and make the communication engaging and maybe even enjoyable?

g) How are you addressing their primary concerns in the message?

h) What ‘riddle’ or ‘tag-line’ can you offer to get your audience to engage and think about your message?

i) How will you give directions for how your audience can respond?

**Messenger**

a) Who should be the ‘messenger(s)’ for the message in order to be perceived by the audience as being believable, sincere and important?

b) What meanings will the audience attach to each option for messenger?

c) How similar is your messenger to the audience?
**Medium**

a) What mediums, especially mass mediums, will most effectively reach your audience?

b) How will these mediums shape the content and tone of the message? How will other messages sent by this medium affect your message through the ‘collage’ process the audience perceives? How can the message be shaped to ‘fit’ within this mass media collage environment?

c) How will the audiences, to whom the message is not directed but who may encounter it, respond?

d) What resources are required for the chosen medium(s)? How important is this message in the priority of messages and audiences for these resources?

**Message Character and Meanings**

a) What type of language (narrowcast versus broadcast signs and codes) are best suited to the audience and the chosen medium(s)? What are the constraints and opportunities associated with these signs and codes?

b) How does the chosen messenger fit with the chosen signs and codes? Are they commonly associated or is there an intended discrepancy?

c) What meanings will be implicitly conveyed by the message, the medium and the message’s characteristics? Given that certain social practices typically accompany the use of certain signs and codes, what action might be needed by your organization to accompany, support or respond to these implicit meanings?
Simplicity and Feedback Potential

a) Consider your analysis and message development work. How can you make the message simpler and more straightforward?

b) How can you shape the message to encourage feedback? What feedback is likely to come?

c) What does your organization need to do to both receive the feedback and to respond appropriately? What are the resource implications of dealing with feedback?

Sequence and Effects

a) Where does this message fall within the sequence of messages planned in the campaign or stakeholder program? Does the sequence need to be fine-tuned in light of insight gained during the development of this message?

b) How will this message and the planned sequence of messages build credibility and a better relationship with stakeholders?

c) What organizational and philosophical commitment to stakeholders is being implicitly created through this message and others in the sequence?

Consistency

a) Consider what messages your organization is sending through other venues. How consistent are they with the message you are developing?

b) What organizational implications exist with regard to refining message consistency at this stage of the project?
c) What are the implications to the project and stakeholder relationships of inconsistencies connected with the message being created?

Message Context

a) Consider the context within which, the audience will receive the message. The context will affect the 'meaning’ associated to a message and a particular constellation of audiences. Some of the more important contextual variables to consider include:

- Historical, political, social and institutional relations of stakeholders;
- Values; and
- Trends.

The context profiles developed early in the communications planning process should be drawn on for these message ‘micro-context’ considerations.

Sustainable Development Issues

a) What are the environmental impacts associated with sending the message? Can they be reduced? Can the reduction be highlighted as part of the message?

b) How can unavoidable environmental impacts be dealt with, both physically and conceptually to maintain organizational credibility? Do not take lightly the credibility implications of your audiences response to visible environmental impacts associated with communications initiatives in a sustainability project (such as excessive use of paper).

c) How does your message fit with the values and principles of sustainable
development?

Cultural and Communication Issues

a) What are the audiences’ subcultural characteristics including identity (group self-image) characteristics, social rules for behaviour and qualities of their leaders? How does the message need to be shaped to fit with these for the widest range of audience subcultures possible?
b) What cognitive dissonance might occur in the audience or in the mass media ‘messenger’ when they receive your message, if it is being developed from an alternative paradigm? What things in common exist between the audiences world view and that of sustainability which can inform the message?
c) How can this message assist in shifting some cultural reproduction processes to become more in line with principles of sustainability?

Planning Theory and Social Change Issues

a) How does this message fit with the organization’s goals, relationship plans, and longer term social change strategies?
b) What role does this message need to play within any social change strategy being used to promote sustainable development in the project and the communications plan?
c) What motives underlie message? Is it part of a ‘claims-making’ strategy, or a inter-group power struggle, or an education initiative?
d) What roles is the planner playing by developing this message?
e) How will this message interact with messages others are sending to the same audience?

**Mass Media Considerations**

a) What constraints and deadlines are associated with the medium chosen and how does this affect the message and its development process?
b) Are their aspects of the message which are not suited for mass mediums? What aspects are especially good for mass mediums?
c) How does the message meet the criteria for newsworthiness?
d) Given most mass mediums are also saturated with advertisements and other messages, how does this message need to be shaped to catch the targeted audience’s attention?
e) What threats does this message pose to the mass media? Will advertisers supporting the media oppose the message?
f) What non-mass media focused communications initiatives should accompany the mass media messages?

**Policy Community Issues**

a) How will other stakeholders react to messages sent to or through the mass media? What effects might your mass media messages have on relationships within the stakeholder community?
b) What stereotypes of stakeholders and stakeholder relationships, typically associated with mass media coverage or messages, need to be addressed, avoided or changed?
How can this message deal with this issue?

c) What discussion and information exchange protocol needs to be followed with each stakeholder with respect to the information being conveyed in the message under development to preserve stakeholder relationships?

**Conventional Message Development Guidelines**

Brody offers some pragmatic message development guidelines for communications planning.

1. Draw attention to attractive attributes;
2. Do not get caught up in the mythology of your organization;
3. Remain emotionally somewhat detached to ensure mental clarity;
4. Accept organizational weaknesses directly and work to minimize them;
5. Deliberately create organizational advantages;
6. Be aware of 'competition' and competitiveness... even when the competition is inertia;
7. Work with comparative strengths and weaknesses;
8. Overcome laziness and uncreativity;
9. Deal directly with those in your organization who have to 'sell it'... they know the comparative strengths and weaknesses and perceptions;
10. Address your 'unique selling proposition'... build a 'superiority statement' and use it as the heart of your messages;
11. Express your message in terms which are 'meaningful' to your audience; and
12. Don't get flashy or brilliant... make it accessible first.
Once the research and planning has been completed for a communications strategy and the events and messages have been developed in accordance with that strategy, the plans must then be implemented.

Implementation

Implementation is where action agreed to in the plan is taken and the plan is not significantly changed, although it may be occasionally fine-tuned to be more effective.

Communications initiatives to accompany sustainable development policies are forays into a complex and highly politicized environment. No planner or plan can accurately predict what any initiative will entail, they can only predict and prepare communicators in an organization with tools and knowledge to deal with what they find there.

During the implementation of a communications plan, the planner will need to address a number of imperatives and issues.

Following the Plan

It is important that the communications plan be followed. Making significant changes to the
communications plan or strategy during implementation will likely result in poor results as effective communications requires good planning. There is not enough time during implementation to do such in-depth (re) planning. The changes which are made should be ‘fine-tuning’ only (Brody, 1991).

**Prepare for Mass Media Idiosyncrasies**

The mass media have many unique characteristics, as discussed in this thesis, which manifest themselves to communicators during the implementation of a plan. These include:

a) Their messages are commodities and must be saleable;

b) The language used and concepts discussed will most likely be very basic and elementary;

c) New ideas will have to contextualized easily with respect to popular ‘common sense’ ideas;

d) The message must conform to criteria for newsworthiness if news is the venue;

e) The time allotted to journalistic research and reporting will be extremely limited;

f) Opposing points of view will be used in the coverage so communicators must plan for ‘antagonistic’ questions and critique; and

g) The medium will greatly affect the message.

**Choose and Prepare Messengers and Spokespersons**

Communications planners must choose appropriate spokespersons and prepare them for communicating and interacting with the media. (Anshen, 1974 in Brody, 1991: 102).
Credibility is one of the most important aspects of working with the media when implementing a communications plan. Building credibility requires professionalism, honesty and accuracy (Paterson in Arnold et al, 1983: 104). Media spokespersons you choose or use, must be trained to communicate their points in short, news-friendly packages. They must also be educated in the finer points of dealing with journalists, such as when to be ‘off the record’ and how to give background information which will not be ‘attributed’ to any particular speaker.

**Media Contact/Public Information Officer**

Beyond other designated spokespersons, the communications planner must ensure there is a person designated as a contact person for the media. Successful implementation of a communications plan requires that the media can have easy access to an organizational representative. It is imperative that this contact person return calls from the media promptly. The mass media are always working to short deadlines. Protocol must be established to effectively and efficiently handle inquiries by the media in order to connect them to the appropriate spokesperson. Protocol must also be established to identify who is permitted to contact the media to obtain coverage of an issue (Paterson in Arnold et al 1983: 101-107).

**Information Release**

Planners must plan the right time to release information or to get media coverage. The media tend to respond mainly to ‘new’ information and current events which can ‘concretize’ issues. Calendars informing the media of important events and timing of initiatives can assist in effective timing of media coverage (Paterson in Arnold et al 1983: 103). Timing within the day
is also important to consider as different media have different deadlines.

Information must be released to the media in order of importance. Due to deadlines, limited copy space or time, and nature of the mass media approach to information, the most important aspects of the issue gaining coverage must be summarized at the beginning of a news release or an interview with a journalist. The aspects of a ‘story’ considered by journalists to be the most important are the well known five ‘W’s’: Who, What, Where, When, and Why.

**Monitoring**

Media coverage and situational change can occur rapidly during an effective communications campaign. The planner must stay on top of the campaign’s progress at all times and be ready to make small changes to the plan where necessary.

**Background Information**

It is important to have packages of background information available on as many aspects of an initiative as possible to help the mass media give balanced and informed coverage.

**Delicate Situations**

Communicators must try to anticipate and plan for delicate situations. When these situations occur, the communicator must be honest, credible and must treat the media representatives in an honourable fashion. Failure to deal well with delicate situations will cost the planner and the organization credibility in the eyes of the media (Paterson in Arnold et al, 1983: 100). Refer to
crisis communications plans in these occasions.

**Fine-tuning**

Planners must make adjustments and changes to the communications plan where and when necessary during implementation to ensure maximum effectiveness. It is wise to refer to original research in the organizational and contextual system profiles for more information. Occasionally, more research may be necessary.

**Legal Issues**

There are legal implications to communications plans and initiatives. Planners must understand them and be prepared to respond appropriately. Some include: copyright, libel, slander, rights to privacy, etc...

**Sustainable Development Issues**

In the fine-tuning process, planners need to look for messages and mediums which can achieve the same ends and have less environmental impact. The planner must never lose sight of the goals of sustainable development and should look for opportunities to continue the education of his or her organization and audiences on the basic issues and paradigm of sustainable development.

**Cultural and Communication Issues**

Each subculture is constantly changing and evolving, as is society as the sum of its subcultures.
The communications patterns considered compatible with any subculture therefore, will be evolving as well. Planners must fine tune their plans and initiatives to ensure a good ‘fit’ with their audiences. Effective feedback mechanisms are necessary to ensure this learning can take place.

**Planning Theory and Social Change Issues**

The planner will likely need to adapt roles to meet the challenges of implementing a plan. Those roles must remain explicit in the planner’s mind in order to understand the ethical implications related to each. As a communications plan is implemented the communications structures, comprehension levels, identities and legitimacy issues will evolve. The initiative must be fine-tuned to meet these changes. As a plan is implemented, resistance to proposed changes will change and different strategies may need to be employed to reach the plan’s goals.

**Mass Media Issues**

Implementing a communications plan will require many adjustments as the context for the mass media components of the plan will be changing daily due to other news items, priorities and programming. Moreover, messages sent through mass mediums may take on different meanings than intended in the plan to such an extent that additional communications work is necessary.
Policy Community Issues

The planner must ensure good communications channels exist between policy community members during the implementation of a plan because the mass media will inevitably change the meanings of many messages and affect relationships within the community.

Admonitions

To the above description of issues, Brody offers some admonitions for communications planners:

a) Never get overconfident;

b) Seize the initiative whenever possible. Be assertive and aggressive in your tactics;

c) Preempt criticisms by admitting mistakes;

d) Be honest and candid at all times;

e) Strategically ‘cast’ the other players in your struggle; and

f) Always be accessible to the media with an individual who is knowledgeable and authorized to speak for the organization.

(Brody, 1991: 155-56)
Evaluation and Learning

"Planners and decision-makers need to recognize the complexity of most planning efforts and be willing to learn openly by accepting and learning from imperfect planning, plans and action.” (Middleton, 1985: 71)

Since the relationships created through communication rarely disappear in a policy community in a short period of time, most relationships develop over a series of communications events. In order to learn to communicate more effectively, planners must evaluate past communication events to discover what initiatives or techniques were effective. In order for this evaluation process to be efficient, planners must ‘plan to learn.’ “The goal... is to get and use information about the effectiveness of planning and of planned action in order to improve both” (Ibid).

“Assessment requires a precise answer to a complex question: To what extent did messages sent in the course of the communication effort produce desired results?” (Brody, 1991: 18).

When evaluating a plan, planners need to address a number of issues.

**Scale of Goals and Objectives to be evaluated**

It is important when evaluating a communications plan to separate the relative effectiveness of a communications initiative with the effectiveness of a larger communications goal or strategy. Success or failure of any initiative or campaign may or may not indicate the effectiveness of the
overall plan or strategy.

Criteria and Indicators

Planners need to define and get organizational agreement on criteria and indicators to use in evaluation before they attempt to assess the effectiveness of a campaign or initiative.

Proof

Since important decisions may be based on the results of the evaluation process, the relative effectiveness or failure of an initiative must be clearly proven.

Targets

In order to define success of an initiative as well as to ensure that the overall organizational and communications plan goals are achieved, targets must be set for each initiative. The initiative's performance can then be tested against the targets to evaluate its effectiveness and to identify where the initiative needs to be fine-tuned.

Efficiency

Resources are always limited. The relative efficiency of the communications initiative in meeting its targets and achieving the overall goals of the plan need to be evaluated with respect to the amount of resources allocated to the initiative.
Changing Plans

Communications plans and programs need to be changed and amended in response to evaluation results as part of continuing planning cycles. (Anshen, 1974 in Brody, 1991: 102).

Reporting

The results of the evaluation process should be compiled in a manner which allows the planner to fine-tune existing plans and to ensure more effective plans in the future. Results which are recorded in a manner where results can be traced over time allows the organization to have a clearer idea of issues in its relationships with other members of a policy community and therefore, to communicate more effectively.
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