

# **Theoretical Model to Evaluate Environmental Discourse Analysis**

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## **Abstract:**

The developing discourse on environmental issues over the past decade refers to cities as a central and significant factor in creating a new agenda for sustainability. Following the Johannesburg Summit (2002), the Government of Israel decided to adopt Agenda 21 to promote sustainable development through cooperation between the government ministries and environmental organizations.

Subsequently, Israel's local authorities were assigned the responsibility for managing the environment in their own districts.

In the past decade Israel's local authorities have implemented actions promoting sustainability. However, preliminary research has shown that the level of environmental functioning in most of these authorities is poor (Zipper, 2013). This in turn, underlines the importance of investigating and examining how ready the local authorities are to adopt environmental policies in their districts and which discourse analysis shapes the environmental policies of these local authorities.

**The goal:**

To propose a comprehensive framework to define specific analytical discourses as a basis for evaluating how the local authorities meet the principles of sustainability.

Constructing such a model will be used later to evaluate the environmental analytical discourses of local authorities in Israel, and to evaluate the failures in concepts and actions towards implementing a sustainable reality, a reality in which the local authorities play a central role in ensuring the quality of life and the environment in Israel and globally as well.

A review of the research literature shows that a common framework to evaluate discourse analysis has not been formulated. The current models are either partial or eclectic, and are not based on a systematic evaluation. Therefore, it is necessary to formulate a comprehensive model to characterize the analysis of environmental discourses.

**Work process:**

The first stage\_presents the theory of constructing models to evaluate the discourse according to the analytical discourses proposed in the research literature. We will learn that the environmental discourse changes over time, and each period reflects new ideas and concepts, and accordingly analytical discourse in the literature also changes and varies. These various classifications conceal different interpretations. In order to characterize the various analytical discourses and how they are distinct from each other, it is necessary to reveal how each discourse analysis refers to each of the four dimensions of the model (human-nature relationships; legitimacy to act; the scope of the environmental question; approach to change (time)).

The second stage\_shows the general model, in which we have examined the connection between the dimensions of the discourse in the proposed model and the analytical discourses as presented in the research literature. We learn that the proposed model reflects the current dimensions in the research

literature, and through these dimensions shows the paradigmatic changes that have occurred in the development of environmental thought.

The third stage shows the development of environmental concepts and the paradigmatic changes that have come about in the discourse. These concepts have enabled classifying the theories of thought and environmental concepts into four periods, four cycles of change from the mid-nineteenth century until the present, the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The fourth stage examines the connection between the paradigmatic changes throughout the historical development of the discourse and the dimensions of the model created, and indicates the need to update this model. Construction of an advanced and comprehensive model that will fully express the dimensions of the dominant discourses in each period and characterize the development of the environmental concept in each period.

### **Results:**

The research literature formed the basis for a model to analyze multidimensional discourse analysis. Since the existing models lacked a comprehensive overview of changing environmental thinking, the model needed updating.

Updating and enhancing the model were conducted further to the changes in the environmental discourse and the nature of these changes shown in the model relate to the changes in the understanding of environmental challenges, the changes in policy goals and the wider range of players' discourse analysis in environmental issues.

The model developed allows for a range of options to characterize the discourse analysis of the main players in the local authorities and to study and evaluate which worldviews they are based upon. It helps to investigate the everyday reality of the local authorities to promote sustainability.