

Encoding and Decoding Story, Place, and Self: Towards Situated Environmental
Journalism in the Brazilian Atlantic Forest

by

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A dissertation accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in Communication and Media Studies

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Summer 2025

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: Encoding and Decoding Story, Place, and Self: Towards Situated Environmental Journalism in the Brazilian Atlantic Forest

The Brazilian state of Paraná hosts the largest remaining stretch of the critically endangered Atlantic Forest, or *Nhe'ẽry*, in the original Guarani language, where multiple environmental threats render coastal residents as especially vulnerable. Mainstream Brazilian environmental journalism has been described as superficial, lacking in source diversity, and as a violent field where specialized training is scarce. I draw from Hall's (1990) Encoding/Decoding model, Cantrill and Senecah's (2001) concept of sense of self-in-place, and Zelizer's (1993) interpretive communities framework to investigate the production and consumption of environmental journalism in the Paraná coast. The reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) of 569 pages of data—including the transcripts of 33 in-depth interviews with local journalists and residents, relevant documents, memos, and fieldnotes from newsroom and community observation—rendered three themes and ten subthemes related to encoding, decoding, and possible futures. All journalists expressed a great deal of care for the environmental beat and are often frustrated with place-based, structural, and editorial limitations that impede them from producing the coverage they aim for. Community members are often portrayed as only hosts, victims, and villains of their own environmental stories, within a coverage that generally falls into a tourism or tragedy binary and conforms with a colonial narrative that undermines the socioenvironmental power of these communities and alienates them from relevant environmental matters. Community members' complex and, at times,

paradoxical relationships with place were central to their decoding processes. Most had overwhelmingly positive experiences with journalists and were eager to build better relationships with local media, as they were optimistic about the transformative power of a more critical and representative coverage that they envision as place-based, solutions-oriented, and that emphasizes positive examples of pro-environmental behavior. I argue that the “self-in-place” must be considered as a defining variable in investigations of encoding and decoding processes, and I offer place-based recommendations on how local communicators can achieve the coverage they desire. Findings are being used in the co-creation of a culturally situated environmental journalism guide, in collaboration with a community advisory board, which will be available for free to local media-makers.

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Sprada Mira, B., Del Vecchio-Lima, M., (2024). Review of *Forests of Refuge: Decolonizing governance in the Amazonian Guiana shield*, by Yolanda Ariadne Collins. *Environmental Communication*, 18(5), 666–670.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2024.2367503>

Mira, B. (2021). Review of *The Local and the Digital in Environmental Communication*, by Joana Díaz- Pont, Pieter Maesele, Annika Egan Sjölander, Maitreyee Mishra, and Kerrie Foxwell-Norton. *International Journal of Communication* 15(2021), 8–10. doi: 1932–8036/2021BKR0009

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I want to thank my husband Karl. You were there for all of it, every day, and you were perfect. You're the best teammate anyone could ever have in their corner, and I'll never find the right words to express how grateful I am to have you in mine.

Obrigada to my family, Giane, Marcelo, and Sofia, and to our dogs, Mel, Ziggy, and Rita, for your unwavering love and for making sure that I always felt it even while so far away from each other. You made me who I am, and you are all over this work.

Obrigada to my grandparents, Marli, Gerson, Carmo, and Carlinhos for teaching all of us how to love this place.

As we say in Brazil, "*quem tem amigo tem tudo!*" To have a friend is to have everything. And I am so lucky to have everything in so many people: Lu, Helena, Stephanie, Mafê, Luiza and Murillo, Maíra, Raquel, Laura, Martina and Vitor, and many more. You hold me together. And special thanks to my cohort! I'm so grateful to have shared this experience with such an amazing group of people.

Thank you to Chris Chávez, my committee chair and advisor, for being such a sincere source of encouragement, knowledge, laughter, and guidance every step of the way. Thank you to Hollie Smith and Catalina de Onís for being the most incredible role models. It has been a true privilege to learn kindness, strength, and purpose from both of you. A big thank you to Julie Newton, Ashley Cordes, and Senyo Ofori-Parku for all your valuable advice and support, and for being such great sources of inspiration. Dan and Deb, you have so deeply shaped my time in the SOJC, in the absolute best way possible. Thank you for believing in me and for giving me the opportunity to be the storyteller I had only dreamt of being. Obrigada to Renan Colombo and Sérgio Surugi de Siqueira, for

the constant and undivided attention you gave me during the most challenging time of my Ph.D. journey.

I am extremely grateful for the academic and financial support I have received from the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and Communication, Graduate School, Center for Science Communication Research, Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies, and the Sylff Foundation. Your investment in me and this work made all of this possible.

Finally, and most importantly, I want to express my deepest gratitude to every study participant and every person on the Paraná coast that has directly or indirectly been a part of this project. You have welcomed me so warmly and taught me so much over my whole life and especially in these past four years. You have trusted me with your stories, and I don't take that lightly. You will always have a friend and ally in me. Muito obrigada, de coração.

To Mel and Marli, who loved this place just as deeply as I do.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I was about eleven years old in 2008 when my father excitingly interrupted my breakfast on a warm, sunny morning in Guaratuba, to hand me the newspaper featuring a photo of two majestically red *guarás* that had just been found nearby. This was huge news. A couple of the mesmerizing species of bird that named the town (“*Guará*”, the bird, and “*tuba*”, which means “many” in Guarani language) had been documented inhabiting the area for the first time after an 80-yearlong period of local extinction. I was about one month old the first time I went to Guaratuba. I learned much of what I know about care in this place, as I grew up watching the transformations in the landscape across the street from the house myself, my parents, my sister, my eight cousins, my seven uncles and aunts, my four grandparents, and countless friends shared over every summer, winter, holiday, birthday, and special occasion.

I took notes as our local neighbors fought tirelessly to protect the *restinga* (a kind of coastal vegetation; See Figures 1, 2 for transformation over decades) that shields the town from high ocean tides, and I observed how some tourists laughed when stuffing trash into the burrows of the many burrowing owls that the *restinga* was home to. One year, locals decided to name the owls—yes, all of them—Gertrude. I witnessed the most enthralling and silent sunrises of my life on that beach, but I also noticed how every summer, the Gertrudes (Figure 3) would seek refuge in our garage to escape from the rowdy crowds. I watched the neighborhood grown-ups have screaming matches with disrespectful visitors, and my best-friend and I searched—at thirteen years old, brooms in hand, knee-deep in muddy water—for a license plate lost by a man driving through our

often-flooded dirt street (See Figure 1). Years later, I watched government pave it. I wondered about the exuberant and absent *guardá*, and I celebrated its return. But it was only during the development of this project that I saw them, in-person, for the first time.

Figure 1

Our street in Guaratuba in the early 1990s (Photo by: Gerson Sprada, early 1990s).



Figure 2

Our street in Guaratuba in 2021 (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2021).



Figure 3

Gertrude hidden in our garage (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2024).



Drawing from cultural studies, journalism studies, and environmental justice frameworks, I adopt an ethnographic-style approach to examine processes of production and consumption of environmental journalism in coastal Paraná, in an effort to 1) for the first time, record current environmental storytelling practices in the study site and 2) co-create, in collaboration with study participants, an environmental journalism resource guide that is entirely place-based and dedicated to the journalists working within this unique media landscape. I interviewed 33 coastal residents and journalists, conducted observations in newsrooms and community events, and analyzed public documents in my investigation of how these communities encode and decode environmental media about their places. The reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) of 569 pages of data has yielded three themes and then subthemes, as well as several recommendations for

research and practice. In this project, I map out the environmental media dynamics of a cultural and ecological hotspot that has never been studied journalistically before, as well as contributing to the theoretical, methodological, and geographic diversification of the environmental communication field. I also offer support to the Brazilian journalistic class, aimed at increasing the representation of traditional communities within local environmental narratives, as well as improving the quality and reach of local environmental news media.

In March 2025 I was invited by P20, a community member I had interviewed for this study to join them on a boat tour to see the *guarás* in the Guaratuba Bay. Two local guides, both experts, occasionally gathered a maximum of ten guests on their small speedboat to watch thousands of bright red *guarás* returning to their islands at sunset. Each day, the *guarás* leave the bay at sunrise in search of food and return at sunset for the evening. I was able to bring along the group of friends I was with that day: two Canadians visiting Brazil for the first time, and three Brazilians who were unfamiliar with the town and the history behind what they were about to see. Out on the bay, we watched the skies turn pink against the bright green mangroves (Figures 4 and 5). P20 was in her mid-60s and had lived in Guaratuba for 18 years. This was also her first time seeing the *guarás*, and she wept as she marveled at the countless birds that flew above us, remembering the days where this seemed so far from reality. My husband, who did not have any history with Guaratuba at all, shed some tears too. I was bewildered. The foreigners were amazed. One of the Canadians, stunned by the views of the bay, asked: “How could anyone ever be sad here?” “You can’t!” I said smiling. As a good Brazilian, I never miss a chance to applaud my country. But I was not being entirely truthful.

Figure 4

Guarás out on the Guaratuba Bay (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2025).



Figure 5

Guarás out on the Guaratuba Bay (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2025).



I have always been a tourist, of sorts, in Guaratuba. I was born and raised in the capital of Paraná state, the city of Curitiba, and my family have religiously spent much of their free time in Guaratuba since the early 1960s. Some of my family members on both sides moved there and became full-time residents. But Curitiba was the place where I went to school, attended doctors' appointments, and got my first job as a journalist. Guaratuba was where I cut my hands trying to crack the hairy, mangrove crab legs we waited all year to eat, where I danced through many *Carnavais*, and where I was certain, as a kid, that if I got high up enough on the tallest of the waves, I could see Africa on the other side of the horizon. I came into this project with a heightened sense of awareness around the fact that I have never and will never fully understand the experience of those who are residents of the Paraná coast; those who have cultivated complex and profound relationships with the land over centuries of exploitation—many of which who are currently living in a constant state of vulnerability to socio-environmental threats of many kinds.

Because I employ the term “vulnerability” often in this book, I must acknowledge the interdisciplinary differences in the conceptualization of the word, and the fact that using it to describe communities can contribute to further stereotyping (Lankao & Qin, 2011). In this study, I draw from Cutter & Finch's (2007) definition of social vulnerability, which “identifies sensitive populations that may be less likely to respond to, cope with, and recover from a natural disaster,” (p. 2301) although I expand their natural hazards scope beyond disasters to account for other forms of environmental threats and injustices, such as access to basic infrastructure such as housing, water, sewage, and waste management systems and locals' abilities to manage and use their lands and the

historical processes that explain their current state. As the authors explain, the populations that are most exposed to and affected by such threats are also often part of groups that have been marginalized based on racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, gender, age, ability, and other sociodemographic variables. Throughout the text, I reflect on literature and findings in conversation with a variety of data that help characterize the participating communities, and offer context on how they respond to environmental issues.

I have been lucky enough to grow up learning the ways of the Paraná coast through my decades of consistently visiting the seven towns that comprise it: Guaratuba, Morretes, Matinhos, Paranaguá, Guaraqueçaba, Pontal do Paraná, and Antonina. I was able to nurture valuable relationships—some lifelong—and to build the cultural and geographic competencies I needed to navigate it safely and appropriately. Importantly, I was able to do this while simultaneously making it far into higher education, where I found several sources of support for my goals to positively contribute to these communities. I relied on these privileges to complete this study, which is my best attempt to rigorously document residents’ experiences with the ways in which their environmental stories are being told by local news media.

Brazilian environmental journalism is often characterized as episodic—generally focused on breaking news with little context or follow-up stories—and lacking in both context and diversity of sources—meaning official and government sources are often prioritized over community voices—as local journalists regularly find themselves working without the appropriate resources or training (Carvalho & Loose, 2018; Zamith et al., 2013; da Costa Bueno, 2007; Girardi et al., 2012). Scholars globally have offered insightful guidelines on the most effective strategies of informing, educating, and

engaging the public on matters of the environment (Armstrong et al., 2018; Markowitz et al., 2014). However, they have also highlighted the lack of methodological, theoretical, and geographic diversity in the field of environmental communication, and how the field often fails to provide practitioners with culturally relevant and actionable recommendations (Schäfer & Painter, 2021; Besley, 2015). Less than 2% of environmental media studies in English-language journals focus on Brazil, and only 22% of studies worldwide employ qualitative methods (Takahashi et al., 2021).

In their survey of the global peer-reviewed environmental communication body of knowledge—most of which comprised of environmental journalism studies—Comfort and Park (2018) found that over half (52.8%) of the contemplated articles were U.S. based, 19% based in Europe, and developing countries including Brazil and India accounted for less than two percent of studies. Such findings make clear that the majority of environmental communication research and related public-facing resources and recommendations are created by the West, for the West, mostly failing to serve the publics in the Global South who are most vulnerable to environmental threats (Banzhaf et al., 2019; Mohai et al., 2009).

In this study, I address these gaps by relying on Stuart Hall's Encoding/Decoding (2007) model and his conceptions of cultural identity (1990), which assume that any kind of communication process is necessarily informed by socioeconomic, cultural, and identity variables. Furthermore, I incorporate Zelizer's (1993) take on the literary-theory interpretive communities framework, which draws from cultural studies to challenge notions of journalistic practice as objective or neutral, but rather as shaped by communities that are bounded together by shared meanings, interpretations of events, and

the identities of its members. As stated by the author in her 2009 revision of the framework:

Since the idea of journalists as interpretive communities was first broached, scholars have fruitfully used it to explain news practice. This is because journalism's interpretive communities assert their presence in multiple ways. First, journalists come together through discussions of critical incidents in the annals of journalism, what Levi-Strauss once called 'hot moments' – phenomena or events through which a society or culture assesses its own significance (...) Second, journalists create community by correcting and temporally recontextualizing practice beyond news relay (...) Third, journalists consolidate themselves collectively when discussing everyday work, such as politics or the police beat (...) Fourth, journalists use collective interpretations to guide them in actual practice. (p. 297)

Zelizer's (1993) ideas on journalists as interpretive communities serve both as avenues to explain news practice, but also as a boundary-setting framework that allows investigators who apply it to differentiate between subgroups within the larger journalistic class that may be covering the same stories from distinct perspectives, emphasizing these groups' unique characteristics that may cause potential differences in journalistic practice and product. Finally, I also draw from Gutsche's (2014; Gutsche & Shumow, 2019) work that singles out and emphasizes "place" as a defining variable in the journalistic storytelling mix, specifically "place-making as a journalistic function" (Gutsche 2014, p. 490). Drawing from geography scholars such as Harvey (2009), Lefebvre (1991), Soja (2010), and Round (2008), Gutsche (2014) defines "place" by opposing it to "space": While "space" marks a "particular geography for a specific purpose", place "refers to the meanings assigned to a geography or location" (Gutsche, 2014, p. 492).

Gutsche and Shumow (2019) have highlighted how local news outlets benefit from their geographic and cultural proximity to their audiences in relation to national

news outlets in the context of sea-level rise in Miami, which cements local news as the experts, while “ultimately positioning national journalists as ‘outsiders’” (p. 443).

Further, Gutsche encourages media scholars to draw from the concept of news place-making in their investigations to “explore cultural interactions and functions of different spheres of the journalistic communities” (p. 505). Considering how the Paraná coast is regularly reported on by local and state news outlets, I recruited journalists based on the coast—who were also community members themselves—and journalists based on the state’s capital of Curitiba—who work in state-wide news outlets that report on the coast from a distance—in order to expose any differences in their experiences covering the environment in the same area while rooted in highly distinct media and socioeconomic landscapes.

Former Australian senator Christine Milne, who was once the leader of the Tasmanian Greens (the first green political party in the world), stated that ecological ideas alone cannot save us from the environmental crisis we created for ourselves. Real change can only be accomplished through a return to our ecological identities, or our ecological selves. I intentionally employ the word “return” here, as opposed to any word that would imply that such an identity would need to be created. Milstein and Sotomayor (2020) argue that:

(...) perhaps for an increasing majority of us humans, it seems as if our ecological selves have become steadily less accessible. The lack of earthly self-awareness in an increasingly human-centered world is reflected in the invisibility and deniability we assign to our environmental interlinkages, impacts, and interdependencies. And this lack of wakefulness is reified in the largely unabated extractive and destructive orientation that powerful interests and the majority of governments maintain toward the planet. (p. xvii)

In other words—words from also Australian environmentalist John Seed—the illusion that nature and culture are in any way separate has been manufactured and maintained over millennia in humans’ exploitation of the land, skies, and seas. “The Earth has never pushed us away,” he said, in a conference I attended. When we make the effort to return to it, it “comes rushing back to us.” Environmental communicators can play a central part in reducing this gap, as agents who have significant power over the environmental discourse, who are capable of shaping—to some degree—the ways in which their audiences interact and experience their environments. Local news media, specifically, may be especially well positioned for this task given their cultural and geographic proximity to their audiences and their access to every-day environmental stories. But this culture-centered approach is not yet common practice within the environmental communication field. In this study, I argue for its application by mapping out the communicational habits and needs of the communities in question; exploring participants’ perceptions of local environmental news from the point of view of both the encoder and the decoder; describing how local journalists are currently catering to and representing the coastal region; and, finally, outlining ways in which a place-based framework could be employed by said journalists to support their work.

Defining Culture

As a constructivist deeply influenced by the linguistic turn, Foucault (1980) proposed the idea of discourse—a set of statements that provided a language for speaking about something, at a particular time and place—as constitutive. The French philosopher was a proponent of the concept of discursive formation, which implied that meaning could not exist outside of discourse, and knowledge could only be produced through the

examination of such meanings (Hall, 2001). To Foucault, knowledge could be used in the regulation of practices as a form of power—and power, was everywhere: within familial structures, the workplace, relationships, and, importantly, within the body (Hall, 2001). It did not necessarily operate in a top-to-bottom fashion, nor was it restricted to large-scale institutionalized systems of oppression, as asserted in the Marxist school of thought (Foucault, 1980). Foucault was among those who challenged Marxist convictions that all social processes could be reduced to power imbalances related to socioeconomic class and labor, redirecting the conversation of power toward the micro scale, the “many, localized circuits, tactics, mechanisms, and effects through which power circulates” (Hall, 2001, p. 77). He also proposed that power not only represses and controls, but it produces; it produces discourse.

Early Frankfurt School members Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno’s work related to the culture industry also marked a shift from Marxist critique, of domination through labor and economic control, toward one of domination through ideology and “mass” culture, deeply influenced by Gramsci’s (2019) thoughts on cultural hegemony. In their work conducted amid World War II, they claimed that the culture industry hinders the public’s ability of thinking critically, maintaining the ruling class’s social order. Horkheimer and Adorno’s (2007) critiques of popular culture assumed a high degree of alienation among the masses, who, they believed, were being robbed of the access to “real” culture, while mindlessly consuming whatever futile product was offered to them by those in control of the industry. Enthralled by the “mass production of sexuality” (p. 55) that required no effort to consume, the masses were considered, by them, to be plagued by the “incurable sickness of all entertainment” (p. 52), manipulated by the

industry's "vulgarized deep psychology" (p. 71), and likely "glad to use the time not spent at the production line in being simply carried along" (p. 51). Those who attempted to resist would be tagged as inadequate and incorporated by the system. Adorno and Horkheimer (2007) saw the people's consumption of popular culture as a parallel to the work in industrial production lines: mechanical, repetitive, and familiar.

In contrast, Williams (1958) did not conceptualize culture as a "visible sign of a special kind of (...) cultivated people" (p. 7), or an artifact to be kept in a museum, but as ordinary; as a group's common meanings, purposes, and values that are expressed through the arts, institutions, education, cuisine, and one's whole way of life. He discussed culture as a structure of feeling (2015): an elusive form of consciousness that comes to be through the complexity of interpreting lived experiences. Seeing culture as natural to the people, the British scholar disagreed with Marxist suggestions that the working class was deprived of culture or excluded from cultural spaces. Williams stated:

A dying culture, and ignorant masses, are not what I have known to see. It is stupid and arrogant to suppose that any of these meanings can in any way be prescribed; they are made by living, made and remade, in ways we cannot know in advance. (1958, p. 9)

In "The Analysis of Culture" (1998), Williams defined three categories of culture, and suggested corresponding forms of analysis to each one. The first, *ideal* culture, refers to culture as a state of human perfection, as its analysis entails the identification and description of the values who seem to be permanently universal to the human condition. The second, *documentary* culture, refers to culture as a body of creative or intellectual work about the human experience that can be analyzed through criticism and evaluation of form, content, and language. The third form of culture is *social* culture, and its analysis concerns one's way of life, as in their family structure, social relationships, and how they

communicate. The three forms of culture are not mutually exclusive nor comparative, and each analysis will produce different, but complementary, findings. In the same essay, Williams made sure to highlight how objects of study cannot be analyzed without careful consideration of the contexts that shape them, but to assume that the context is fully determining of the end product would be misguided. The research questions that drive this study are situated in the realm of Williams' social culture.

Williams' contributions were heavily influenced by his upbringing in the British countryside. James Carey, on the other hand, was a U.S. American communication theorist that offered insight on processes of communication and culture in the United States. Carey (2007) drew from Dewey when describing the *transmission* and *ritual* views of communication: the first referring to the act of disseminating information over a distance for the control of a people, and the second being a space of community, sharing, and fellowship among citizens rooted in common values. A newspaper, in the transmission view, is seen as a mere instrument for the spreading of news, knowledge, and entertainment over space, while in the ritual view it will be seen as a vehicle through which a particular perspective of the world is represented and confirmed—some form of discourse, essentially (Carey, 2007). The author also added a *cultural* view of communication, in which communication is the symbolic process through which reality is constituted and transformed—precisely what I sought to explore in this study.

Becoming a Story: Hall's Encoding/Decoding Model of Communication

I chose Hall's (2007) Encoding/Decoding model of communication to guide me through this study, as it accounts for the external, contextual processes behind the producing and consuming of journalistic text, stating that every message is necessarily constructed through meaningful discourse, and that "communities, culture, and media

constitute each other” (Bødker, 2016, p. 409). In his model, no event or concept can be communicated without first having meaning attributed to it. In its raw form, the event or concept cannot have a communicative effect; it must first “be appropriated as a meaningful discourse and be meaningfully decoded” (2007, p. 165). In other words, for a message to entertain, persuade, inform, educate, fulfill any need, or serve any purpose, it must first “become a ‘story’” (p. 164) and be properly understood as such by the receiver.

As stated by Hall: “If no ‘meaning’ is taken, there can be no ‘consumption’” (p. 164). Hall also posits that the commonly made distinction between denotation (literal meaning) and connotation (associative meaning) can only be used for analytic purposes, as in the real world purely literal meanings—or meanings that are universally agreed upon—are incredibly rare. It is at the connotative level that we can observe how “dominant or preferred meanings” reflect the dominant social order of the social, cultural, and political worlds these messages travel through (p. 169). These preferred meanings have the “institutional, political, and ideological order imprinted within them” and carry the “everyday knowledge of social structures” that is embedded in the hegemonic culture (p. 169).

Hall suggests communicative processes be thought of in terms of four key moments that are distinct, but linked within one circuit: production, circulation, distribution/consumption, and reproduction. Each of these moments are relatively autonomous, yet determinant of each other. They occur within cultural, discourse, and linguistic boundaries, and the communicative process can only be considered successful when the meaning of the originally encoded message is correctly decoded—understood—and translated into social practice. Several factors directly shape how a message is

encoded by a producer and decoded by a receiver, including what Hall represents in his model as “frameworks of knowledge”, “relations of production”, and “technical infrastructure” (2007, p. 165). What Hall calls “distortions” or “misunderstandings” (p. 166)—when the communicative process is unsuccessful, and the receiver does not assimilate the correct meaning—are common due to the asymmetry that exists within the encoding and decoding process.

There are three positions that a receiver can operate within when decoding a message: the dominant-hegemonic, negotiated, and oppositional positions. The first is what Hall describes as ‘perfectly transparent communication’” (p. 171). In other words, this is the rare occasion in which the audience understands the message exactly as intended by the producer; they are “operating inside the dominant code” (p. 171). This hegemonic viewpoint, as explained by Hall, can often be misjudged as “what is ‘natural’, ‘inevitable’, ‘taken for granted’ about the social order” (p. 172). Adjacent to this dominant code, is the professional code, which is when professional media makers encode and distribute a message that has already been encoded within this hegemonic viewpoint often taken as common sense. Even so, the professional code remains somewhat independent of the dominant code, as professional conventions and standards are applied to the original message prior to its distribution, and not in the moment of encoding itself. Hall (2007) questions media professionals’ true ability to find relative autonomy while still linked to hegemonic elites, going as far as to say that common journalistic values of objectivity and impartiality may facilitate the reproduction of dominant ideologies “inadvertently, unconsciously, ‘behind men’s backs’” (p. 172).

The negotiated position, or negotiated code, is perhaps the most common of the three. In this position the decoder negotiates the legitimacy of the hegemonic code at an abstract level, with an oppositional position that occurs on a smaller, more intimate scale: “It accords the privileged position to the dominant definitions of events while reserving the right to make a more negotiated application to ‘local conditions’, to its own more corporate positions” (p. 172). This is what Hall (2007) describes as “particular” or “situated logics” (p. 172), referring to decoders’ contrasting or unequal relationships with the current powers at play. Dominant meaning makers will see this as a failure to communicate. Lastly, Hall explains the oppositional code. This occurs when the receiver of the message understands both the connotative and denotative aspects of the discourse, yet they decode the message in a “globally contrary way” (p. 172). That is, the decoder is coming from a wholly alternative framework, does not acknowledge the legitimacy of dominant codes, and, therefore, completely opposes the message.

Hall’s model has been appraised, criticized, discussed, and reframed extensively over the decades, (Pillai, 1992; Xie et al., 2022), and even Hall himself, once during an interview, questioned his model’s ability to stand the test of time, stating that he never expected these texts to be used in the decades of research that followed its publication (Hall cited in Gurevitch & Scannell, 2002). Nevertheless, Hall’s Encoding/Decoding model marked a crucial departure from more positivist models of communication, as it acknowledged nuance and complexity on all moments of the communicative process. Specifically, it highlighted the undeniable authoritative role played by culture, power, and identity in these moments.

Jacks and Hastenpflug Wottrich (2016) conducted an analysis of Hall's impact within Brazilian communication scholarship. It was only in the 2000s that his texts made their way into domestic reception research, in conversation with crucial Latin American cultural theorists such as Jesús Martín-Barbero and Néstor García Canclini, as "Encoding/Decoding" was only translated and published in Portuguese in 2003 (Jacks & Hastenpflug Wottrich, 2016). Jacks and Hastenpflug Wottrich found that Hall's model and his conceptualization of cultural identity were well-received among Brazilian theorists, but that "Encoding/Decoding" was seen "much more as a theoretical horizon than as a model for analysis of reception" and that the "relative fragility of the theoretical incorporation perceived in these works contrasts with the vigor of the appropriations of the research focused on identity." (p. 165). This Latin American tradition of studying identity in communication has not often been as present in investigations of local environmental journalism in Brazil, which may have contributed to the establishment of acontextual environmental journalism practices. If this understanding of how deeply connected topics of the environment are to place, culture, power, and the very identities of different communities, the transformative potential of environmental coverage for socioenvironmental justice lies at stake.

A Cultural Identity Framework

Considering the idea of culture described by Williams as something that is shared by a people in relation to the construction of one's individual self, Hall (1990; Hall & du Gay, 1996) proposes the concept of cultural identity: a process that is constantly subjected to transformation, and inherently tied to the individual's place, time, and context (Hall & du Gay, 1996). In his reflections on the representation of colonized peoples, Hall describes two sides of cultural identity. The first in terms of a shared

culture, a collective self that exists underneath several other artificial or superficial “selves,” rooted in a people’s shared history and ancestry, playing an important role in post-colonial rediscoveries of an identity that was stripped, in many ways now dispersed, in acts of “imaginary reunification” (p. 224). The second conception sees cultural identity as a process of becoming that belongs to the future and the past, across place, time, and history. Hall describes a cultural identity that is hybrid and layered, and highlights how the uniqueness of the many groups that comprise the Global South is lost in dominant Western discourses:

(...) we are very much ‘the same’. We belong to the marginal, the underdeveloped, the periphery, the ‘Other’. We are at the outer edge, the ‘rim’, of the metropolitan world—always ‘South’ to someone else’s ‘El Norte’. (Hall, 2015, p. 227)

Assmann and Czaplicka (1995) also describe the complexity of cultural identity by considering the concept in relation to the notion of a group’s collective memory. Every individual memory one has exists in communication with the memories of groups of people that share a sense of unity based on members’ “common images of their past” (p. 127). To the authors (1995), “every individual belongs to numerous such groups and therefore entertains numerous collective self-images and memories” (p. 127). Relatedly, Hall (1996) elaborates on the concept of ethnicity, stating that “ethnicity” acknowledges the historical, linguistic, and cultural elements of an identity, solidifying his argument that individuals are always speaking from a particular place, time, and ethnic location. While many recognize how the common history of displacement, slavery, and colonization has been profoundly formative of Global South nations, the diversity and heterogeneity of non-Western cultural identities are largely undermined by Western scholarship.

The Latin-American Tradition in Communication Theory

Mignolo (2005) affirms that Latin America was not discovered—but invented, or imagined, as part of the West but simultaneously at its margins. The idea of Latin America emerged from the European way of telling their own story, when colonizing the continent, leaving non-Europeans no choice but to give up their language, collective memory, and systems of knowledge (Mignolo, 2005). Once Latin American nations became independent, the *mulatos*, *criolos*, and *mestizos* that constituted this new society found themselves in an internal colonial dynamic of their own: in responding to the colonial wound, some would position themselves against the colonizer, while others strived to be like them (Mignolo, 2005). The postcolonial concept of *Latinidad*, as Mignolo (2005) points out, ended up being a “double-edged sword” (p. 59). In a singular case of double consciousness, White/elite Creoles quickly adjusted to their new economic, but not epistemic, independence, which to this day continues to place Black and Indigenous Creoles at the margins.

Toward the end of the 19th century the Latin Creole elites saw themselves as European, at least in comparison to the African and Indigenous Creole populations. But to Europe and the United States, they were still not white enough. World War II cemented the Latin American status of “Third World” globally (Mignolo, 2005). It was in this post-war setting, amid the “development” waves of the mid-20th century and the U.S.-funded military dictatorships of several Latin American countries starting in the 1960s, that the Latin American field of communication established its roots in media/cultural imperialism, innovations in communication, media policies, and media and culture (Waisbord, 2014). Latinx scholars went on to establish a strong tradition in critical cultural theory, in studies of consumer culture, youth culture, globalization,

internationalization, hybridity, and the negotiation of national and regional cultural identities.

Within a context of profound socioeconomic, racial, and cultural inequality, social science scholarship in Latin American has a strong tradition in critically focusing on social conflict (Waisbord, 2014). Martín-Barbero (2016) argued that early Latin American communication scholarship followed an informational/instrumental paradigm, influenced by the Frankfurt School, and saw mass media as a vehicle for imperialist ideological reproduction, failing to consider it as a space in which cultural meaning is produced. A shift to a domestic critical/ideological paradigm was observed in the 1980s, as most dictatorships ended, influenced by the cultural studies of Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall, French semiotic structuralism, and the critical consciousness of Marx and Freire (Canclini, 2001; Martín-Barbero, 2016; Waisbord, 2014). Mass media ceased to be seen as a market, but as a space where the public sphere is redefined, and democracy rebuilt. Waisbord (2014) states that the informational tradition never became native to Latin America, but mostly served to justify the need for more critical arguments.

Martín-Barbero (2016) described the centrality of the role media have in Latin America as “disproportional and paradoxical” (p. 280), as some of these nations fail to offer its citizens basic needs such as quality systems of health and education. The study of the Latin American identity is indeed one of contradictions, that rejects strict binary notions of one being either hegemonic or subaltern and recognizes ambiguity in social processes (Canclini, 2001). It contextualizes its regional and/or ethnic demands in the global context and proposes a politic of recognition instead of identity. To Canclini (2001), if “identity” assumes some form of homogeneity it will necessarily imply some

form of othering, while recognition embraces difference and reciprocity in the multicultural setting that is Latin America.

Relatedly, as argued by Vinelli (2017), Western representations of Latin America mostly fall into prejudiced and reductionist stereotypes: “Our world is reduced to an immutable essence, a superficially marvelous essence which is also backward and even sometimes fearsome, but which can prosper if it follows the advice of its civilized, powerful mentors” (para. 6). While Latin American media scholarship is, in fact, generally informed by shared or parallel histories of colonization, exploitation, and displacement, perhaps, from a regional perspective, this totalizing idea of a Latin American “essence” as described by Vinelli, may undermine the diversity of local knowledge systems. There may be insight to be drawn from a narrower, hyper-local gaze within Latin American scholarship that can emphasize and recognize, to Canclini’s (2001) point the heterogeneity of Latin American identities.

While hardships of some Latinx immigrant agricultural communities in the U.S. are well documented (Minich, 2019; Peacock, 2019; Vásquez et al., 2019), there are still many significant conversations that must be advanced. Latin Americans are experiencing issues with ecologically unequal trade, biopiracy, and the growth of “green deserts,” which are tree plantations maintained solely for wood and paper pulp, and reforestation monocultures of invasive species that appropriate locals’ land and water resources (Porto, 2012; Martinez-Alier et al., 2016). Beyond that, they are forced to deal with global “pro-environmental” policies that appear to be much more concerned about the fertility rates of local women than the overconsumption and exploitation of local resources by the Global North (Pellow, 2017). The environmental justice movement is global, to some

extent, in the sense that it shares common goals, frames, and forms of mobilization. However, the realities of struggle across countries and cultures varies greatly.

Applying an Environmental Justice Framework

An underlying framework of environmental justice is essential to the study of any environmental media, as it informs choices in study design and method, and contextualizes findings and discussions. As highlighted by Sandler & Pezzullo (2007), environmentalist movements around the globe, however well-intentioned, have largely failed to employ an intersectional perspective in the environmental conversation. Traditional environmental discourse is often associated with the preservation of scenic natural beauty, or the protection of wildlife, with a clear distinction between the natural and the built environment, and the natural being associated with the wild, the untouched, free of anything social or human (Sandler & Pezzullo 2007).

With the emergence of conversations on toxic pollution in communities of color and “fueled by the last embers of the CRM” (civil rights movement) (Pulido, 2017, p. 19) in 1970s and 1980s United States, the environmental justice movement began to take shape, with scholars often citing the Warren County Protests of 1982 as a definitive starting point (Pellow, 2017; Mohai et al., 2009). In 1991, activists and scholars from the United States, Canada, Central America, and the Marshall Islands gathered for the first National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit (known as Summit I), in which they outlined the seminal 17 principles of environmental justice (Sandler & Pezzullo, 2007). Since then, through advocacy work, academic scholarship, policymaking, and more, the movement has consistently illuminated how socioeconomic, racial, gender, and ethnic minorities are more vulnerable to environmental risk,

represented in academia through the works of Giovanna DiChiro, David Pellow, Laura Pulido, Paul Mohai, and several others (Mohai et al., 2009). Summit I speaker Dana Alston challenged the environmentalisms that constructed “the environment” as distant and pristine, with the following reconceptualization that remains at the heart of the environmental justice framework still today:

Our vision of the environment is woven into an overall framework of social, racial and economic justice. The environment, for us, is where we live, where we work, and where we play. (Alston in Pezzullo & Sandler, 2007, p. 7)

“Where we live, work, play, and pray” (“pray” was added to the definition after Summit I; Figure 6) characterizes the environment as all the spaces and places in which humans exist in, including the body, the home, and the land. In this perspective, ecological sustainability can never be achieved without first addressing ecological and other related forms of violence toward certain groups and populations (Pellow, 2017). Environmental justice scholars consider the intersectionality of environmental injustices as they address several forms of inequalities related to globalization, climate change, public health, environmental policymaking and knowledge building, improper waste management, gentrification, migration, energy, pollution, and more (Mohai et al., 2009). Discussions of the racial and socioeconomic dimensions of the environment have been at the forefront of the environmental justice conversation since its conception, and more recent work connects it to other influencing variables, such as gender, ethnicity, colonialism, and sexuality (Wald et al., 2019; Pellow, 2017). The environment, here, is considered in relation to self, as an extension of the self. As explained by Chicana poet Lucha Corpi: “Justice has a lot to do with a sense of self, in a group, in culture, in your environment” (in Nuñez, 2019, p. 194).

Figure 6

Local children playing in Superagui (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2025).



Tensions Between Environmentalisms

This refocusing of environmentalism proposed by the environmental justice movement was received with caution by more traditional environmentalists, who felt uneasy about shifting their goals entirely away from issues such as the conservation of

biodiversity, animal rights, and more—illustrated in the collection of essays in Sandler & Pezzullo's (2007) "Environmental justice and environmentalism: The social justice challenge to the environmental movement." In the collection, Deluca (2007), for example, argued that basic philosophical assumptions of each movement prevent the reconfiguration of this biocentric model to fit within the environmental justice framework. Wenz (2007) argued that, while there are no inherent conflicts between the two traditions, differences in their conceptual frameworks make a seamless combination of the two very difficult. Conversely, Jamieson (2007) defended that concerns about justice have always been at the core of traditional environmentalism. Allen, Daro, and Holland (2007) found that while the movements are similar in theory, there are significant differences in how issues are problematized within them and how they perceive their practices in the field.

Collectively, the authors' arguments provide a strong case against the traditional environmental movement completely redefining its core mission. Several authors agree that there is value to both the biocentric and ethnocentric models and express more optimistic hopes of healing the tensions between movements, fostering a space of mutual appreciation, cooperation, and alliances based on well-defined goals on both sides (Sandler & Pezzullo, 2007). But, as so eloquently put by Latinx author Ana Castillo in Jaquette Ray (2019):

We hear about what environmentalists care about out there. We live on dry land but we care about saving the whales and the rainforests too. Our people have always known about the interconnectedness of things, the responsibility we have to "our mother" and to seven generations after our own. But we, as a people, are being eliminated from the ecosystem, like the dolphins, like the eagle. We are trying very hard now to save ourselves before it's too late. Don't anybody care about that? (p. 242)

Several parallels can be drawn between the Paraná coast and these conversations around the different faces of environmentalism, particularly regarding dubious conservation policies, the tourism industry, and the idea of environmental privilege, explained by Park and Pellow's (2013) examination of the "world-class" resort town of Aspen, Colorado. In 1999, a unanimously-approved resolution by the City Council of Aspen petitioned the U.S. Congress to restrict the number of immigrants—from almost one million people to a mere 175,000—entering the United States. The town justified the request by citing the alleged impact immigrants had on the country's ecosystems; a claim rooted in a contradictory sense of pride for being environmentally conscious, while allowing for the construction of lavish resorts that are essentially maintained through the labor of the immigrants they sought to criminalize (Park & Pellow, 2013). Here, Park and Pellow (2013) explain the concept of environmental privilege:

Environmental privilege is embodied in the fact that some groups can access spaces and resources, which are protected from the kinds of ecological harm that other groups are forced to contend with every day. These advantages include organic and pesticide-free foods, neighborhoods with healthier air quality, and energy and other products siphoned from the living environments of other peoples. (p. 4)

Environmental privilege, according to Park & Pellow (2013), can easily be missed and is rarely questioned, given the social distance that exists between the privileged and the vulnerable. In one example, they cite the geographical and social distance between the regions of countries like Nigeria, Ghana, India, Pakistan, Brazil, and the Philippines and the U.S., who disposes of toxic waste in these lands. Under the guise of "environmentalism," nativists found a more comfortable way of arguing for measures of population control that are deeply rooted in racist and colonial discourse (Park & Pellow, 2013). This distorted version of environmentalism works in close association with the

perpetuation of racial capitalist structures, and Park and Pellow's (2013) critiques can quite easily be applied to the Paraná coast, considering how this is also a region marketed as an environmental sanctuary, often at the exploitation of local cultures and ecosystems, and knowledge systems.

The colonial nature-culture divide that many scholars have described separates place from self does so purposefully and strategically to facilitate the exploitation of lands and waters globally, through the denigration of "Indigenous people's land management practices, land tenure systems, science and knowledge systems, and political sovereignty and self-government," as well as the assimilation of Indigenous persons into abusive and repressive systems (Whyte, 2021, p. 74). "Numerous Indigenous peoples of what's currently called the US never really used anything like wild concepts to describe their relationships with land, water, plants, animals, and ecosystems," explains Whyte (2021, p. 72). Further, as TallBear (2015) points out, the nature-culture divide, at its very core, suggests that it is up to humans to name, manage, and even "save" nature, naturalizing a hierarchal relationship rooted in domination.

Guarani Mbyá authors and thinkers in the Atlantic Forest, or *Nhe'ẽry*, in the original Guarani language, have reflected on the ways in which they continue to resist the nature-culture divide, displacement, cultural erasure, and other forms of oppression. Papá & Vera Britos (2023) remind us that the story of the Atlantic Forest is one of destruction, and they highlight, as a form of resistance, their collective aim for *teko porã*, which Takuá (2018, p. 6; translation by the author) defines as "a philosophical political, social, and spiritual concept" and as a "representation of the good way of being and living" in a

webbed community that values balance, reciprocity, dialogue, and respect. “We believe we are nature” says Papá (Papá & Vera Brito, 2023, p. 11), as he reflects further:

This is why I ask myself: why do the *jurua* [non-Indigenous people] insist on separating forest from forest, saying that that is a vegetable, this isn’t, and I am a human, I am an ‘other’, as if we are not part of all of this? However, we are part of it, because the *Nhe’ẽry*, the Atlantic Forest, is here in us. (Papá & Vera Britos, 2023, p. 12; translated by the author).

In her 2017 essay, Vera Tupã Popygua Timóteo da Silva describes nature as “beginning, middle, and end” (para. 13; translation by the author). When lacking this situated understanding of these relations of self and place that are unique to different communities—described, in the context of the Atlantic Forest and the Guarani peoples, by Ladeira (2021) as a “vital bond” (p. 11; translation by the author)—encoders of environmental stories are at risk of “recreating exploitative patterns from the past,” as put by Todd (2015, p. 251), regardless of however well-meaning they may be.

Sense of Self-in-Place in the Study and Practice of Environmental Journalism

In the realm of environmental communication research, Priest (2015) calls attention to the fact that, historically, scholars in the communication discipline have thought about the mass media as having effects on a mass audience, rarely recognizing the influence of individual, cultural, or regional differences. In reality, Priest (2015) states, “there are many audiences, with different expectations and underlying beliefs that strongly influence their media choices and their receptivity to particular explanations” (p. 303). In relation to climate communication, specifically, Cox and Pezzullo (2022) provide a related and essential reminder:

Cautioning us that climate communication warrants a culture-centered framework, Munshi, Kurian, Cretney, Morrison, and Kathlene (2020) argue that *part of the failure of climate communication has been its universal approach, attempting to reach “the public” in general.* [emphasis added] Instead, they argue, climate communicators should take into account cultural values, place,

power, and narrative to generate more meaningful public engagement. (Cox & Pezzullo, 2022, p. 214; my highlight)

Scholars have shown, for example, that individuals are more likely to defend beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes that align with their sense of identity when facing new or opposing information (Dobbins et al., 2021). In another example, Hoffman (2011) found that individuals are more likely to accept scientific evidence on climate change when presented by a fellow member of their cultural community. If the effectiveness of such interventions depends on how sensitive the messages are to cultural differences between distinct audiences, a cultural identity theoretical framework can prove to be useful to communicators in creating more targeted messaging. This recommendation is especially needed considering the unequal conditions of environmental vulnerability around the world, and the historical processes that led to this condition. The emergence of the environmental justice movement brought forth a broadened concept of environment that captured the experiences of those in the Global South, including the Latinx population, which Pulido (in Wald et al., 2019) describes as “indigenous, black, brown, and white; as colonized and colonizer; as *trabajador y jefe*; as land based, urban, and immigrant. This is the full complexity of Latinx life in the Americas” (p. xv).

Often under the guise of promoting cultural pluralism and diversity, media industry actors, policymakers, journalists, academics, and activists have exploited traditional communities in search of the next “exotic” and “authentic” expression of popular culture that can be polished into a spectacle (Muniz, 2017; de Carvalho, 2010). Regardless of whether the intentions behind such initiatives are pure or not, de Carvalho (2010) argues that given “where we are currently, it makes no sense in speaking of hybrid cultures and cultural exchanges without recognizing the screaming power asymmetries in

the realm of culture” (p. 46; translation by the author). Even though the focus of my research questions is not necessarily these asymmetries, it would be irresponsible to conceptualize this—or any—research project, in cultural studies and about Brazilian environmental journalism without acknowledging the relations of inequality that are at the nation’s very core. Especially since resistance to inequality has, historically, been such a central element of Latin American popular culture (de Carvalho, 2010).

EC scholars have increasingly emphasized the importance of tailoring environmental messaging to audiences’ cultural and environmental selves, or their senses of “self-in-place” (Cantrill & Senecah, 2001; Cox & Depoe, 2015), which would require a careful analysis of the identities in question prior to the creation and distribution of any content. Cantrill & Senecah (2001) coined the term “sense of self-in-place” to describe the mechanisms through which “humans understand and process various claims and arguments regarding the human relationship to and responsibilities for managing the natural world” (p. 185). This concept recognizes the relational aspects of place, and how its specificity derives from a wide range of sources (Massey, 1994). Speaking to some aspects of one’s sense of self-in-place therefore becomes an essential aspect of fairly and sustainably maintaining natural and cultural ecosystems, and any communicative attempt to spark pro-socioenvironmental behaviors “must involve understanding how people construct their sense of self-in-place in a region” (Cantrill & Senecah, 2001 p. 185).

In environmental journalism, specifically, Gutsche (2014) suggests that “scholars adopt a notion of news place-making as an understanding of the ideological (and practical) work journalists (and their sources) do in shaping dominant understandings of geography” (p. 505). Such level of understanding and preparation of journalists, however,

can only be achieved with the appropriate financial, organizational, and educational support; resources that are often out of reach for communicators, especially in the Global South (Massarani & de Castro Moreira, 2020; Dunwoody, 2015). Environmental journalists, particularly, struggle with uncertain newsroom routines, organizational powers at play (Tandoc & Takahashi, 2014) and, in Brazil, a severe lack of funds and specialized training (Carvalho & Loose, 2018).

There are many examples of environmental journalists that have produced regionally and socially relevant environmental reporting around the world, such as Saldaña Rocca, in Peru, who demanded justice for the inhumane treatment of Native populations, and Fidel A. Reyes, in the Philippines, who exposed the U.S. exploitation of mineral and marine resources in the country, and Randau Marques in Brazil, who highlighted environmental injustices taking place during the Brazilian military dictatorship (Kovarik, 2020). Cases like these, however, are hardly the norm. As outlined in earlier sections of this book, scholars have found mainstream environmental journalism in Latin America and Brazil, specifically, to be generally episodic, short of diversity of sources, and, at times, influenced by the media agenda of the West (Nuñez & Moreno, 2016; Zamith et al., 2013; Girardi et al., 2012; Hansen, 2011; Hellebrant & Hellebrant, 2010).

When journalists neglect how place, culture, and power influence the production, circulation, and processing of a message, providing their audience with factual coverage that is lacking in contextual and cultural relevance, they relinquish their power of magnifying community voices and influencing public decision-making on environmental issues (Cox & Pezzullo, 2022; Dobbins et al., 2021, Girardi et al., 2012). Beyond that,

they fail to acknowledge the many dimensions that comprise any given environmental issue, including those of social justice, politics, science, culture, economics, colonialism, globalization, representation, and more (Wald et al., 2019; Bødker & Neverla, 2012). The adoption of a more situated approach to environmental journalism can mitigate, to some extent, some of the current shortcomings of environmental journalism by furthering the development of more critical and contextualized practices of reporting, which will then lead to the production of more meaningful, representative, and culturally resonant stories. This would approach an ideal practice described by da Costa Bueno (2007):

Environmental journalism must enhance the dialogue between the professor and the fisherman, the agriculturist and the rural worker, the biologist and the woodsman, and must not stigmatize the knowledge of the *pajés* [Healer; Indigenous leader]. (da Costa Bueno, 2007, p. 36; translation by the author)

Environmental journalism is a widely researched topic, especially in comparison with other areas of study within EC (Comfort & Park, 2018). However, scholars have pointed out an overall lack of methodological and theoretical diversity within studies of environmental coverage and the practice of environmental journalism. About half of EC studies around the world are rhetorical or content analyses of news coverage of environmental events (Comfort & Park, 2018; Hansen, 2011). Within research in climate journalism, Schäfer and Painter (2021) found surveys as the dominant method of choice and urged scholars in the field to opt for the employment of more qualitative research methods, especially participant observation, and ethnographic-like work in newsrooms worldwide. Similarly, Hartley (2008) argued for a cultural, qualitative approach to the study of journalism, which states that consumers’ “sense-making practices are what make journalism meaningful as social uptake” (p. 12). This cultural approach investigates news media within the context of the audiences’ everyday lives (Hartley, 2008).

With this project, I add to the qualitative body of knowledge in environmental journalism by magnifying the voices and experiences of those who are underrepresented in the field globally and domestically. Through the following exploratory research questions, I emphasize the coastal community of Paraná's perceptions and needs related to environmental news coverage in their area, as well as map out the current production practices of environmental journalists based on the coast and in the state's capital: 1) How are coast-based journalists encoding environmental stories in coastal Paraná? 2) How are capital-based journalists encoding environmental stories in coastal Paraná? 3) How are community members decoding environmental stories in coastal Paraná?

Method

In my investigation, I employed a variety of ethnographic data collection techniques including in-depth semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. In the first semester of 2025, I conducted 33 interviews with 23 community members (see Table 1) in the seven towns that form coastal Paraná, and 10 journalists—six being coast-based and four capital-based (see Table 2) working with environmental news in the area. To participate in the study as a community member, one had to have been a full-time resident of the coast for at least three years. To be included as a journalist, the participant had to either be employed by or own a news media organization and have some experience covering the environment on the coast. The experience did not have to be extensive, considering that none of the news outlets present in this sample had an environmental beat, and journalists themselves were not specialized in environmental stories. College degrees or professional registrations were not part of the inclusion criteria, as these are not required to practice journalism in Brazil. Journalists

in this sample were either residents and employed by an outlet in one of the seven coastal towns, or residents and employed by an outlet in the state's capital, Curitiba. Participants were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling techniques, and interview transcripts, memos, and collected documents were thematically analyzed following Braun & Clarke's (2022) six-phase reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) method on NVivo qualitative coding software.

Table 1
Participating Community Members.

	Age	Occupation	Education	Years as resident	Town
P0	38	Artist	College (complete)	Born & raised	Antonina
P1	63	Tour guide	College (current)	50	Paranaguá (Ilha do Mel)
P2	27	Journalist	College (complete)	Born & raised	Matinhos
P3	54	Artisan	College (incomplete)	14	Pontal do Paraná
P4	31	Business owner	College (complete)	Raised	Antonina
P5	49	Fisherman	Third grade	Born & raised	Pontal do Paraná
P6	70	Business owner	College (complete)	Raised	Paranaguá (Ilha do Mel)
P7	42	Public servant	PhD (current)	40	Guaratuba
P8	71	Fisherman	High school (complete)	Born & raised	Paranaguá
P9	47	Professor	College (complete)	Born & raised	Guaratuba
P10	35	Manager	Masters (complete)	4	Pontal do Paraná
P11	59	Cook	College (incomplete)	5	Antonina
P12	48	Fisherwoman	High school (complete)	10	Pontal do Paraná
P13	62	Retired (teacher)	Masters (complete)	15	Guaratuba
P14	61	Business owner	First grade	Born & raised	Guaraqueçaba
P15	55	Journalist/Retired (teacher)	College (complete)	7	Guaratuba
P16	50	Teacher	College (complete)	23 years	Guaratuba
P17	51	Contractor	High school (complete)	45 years	Guaratuba
P18	61	Business owner	College (Incomplete)	37	Paranaguá (Ilha do Mel)
P19	41	Cultural producer	College (complete)	8 years	Paranaguá (Ilha dos Valadares)
P20	64	Real estate agent	College (complete)	18	Guaratuba
P21	42	Teacher	Masters (complete)	Born & raised	Guaraqueçaba
P22	45	Business owner	College (complete)	33	Morretes

Table 2
Participating Journalists.

	Age	Education	Years as resident	Years as journalist	Stories per day	Town	Journalism degree
P23	64	High school (complete)	33	33	1/3 days	Pontal do Paraná	No
P24	38	College (current)	Born & raised	13	2	Paranaguá	No
P25	25	College (complete)	n/a	4	1	Curitiba	Yes
P26	64	College (current)	20	42	5	Guaratuba	No
P27	43	College (incomplete)	Born & raised	4	15	Paranaguá	No
P28	49	College (complete)	8	25	20	Pontal do Paraná	Yes
P29	29	College (complete)	Born & raised	5	3	Paranaguá	Yes
P30	29	College (complete)	n/a	11	5	Curitiba	Yes
P31	29	College (complete)	n/a	8	2/week	Curitiba	Yes
P32	24	College (complete)	n/a	3	2/week	Curitiba	Yes

All interviews were conducted in Portuguese, which is my native language, and were transcribed via the Trint online automated transcription software. All participant quotes in this dissertation were originally in Portuguese and translated to English by me.

Data Collection Procedures

Participants were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling techniques, and interview transcripts were thematically analyzed following Braun & Clarke's (2022) reflexive thematic analysis method on NVivo coding software. All data collection procedures and documents were reviewed and approved by the University of Oregon's Institutional Review Board in the United States, and the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná's Committee for Ethics in Research, in Brazil, prior to the collection of any human-subjects data. My main form of data collection was in-depth semi-structured interviewing, which is one of the most common methods in qualitative research due to its descriptive, analytic, and revealing powers, and because it allows the researcher to understand the studied phenomena through a perspective other than their own (Rubin &

Rubin, 2011). I followed Rubin and Rubin's (2011) responsive interviewing practices, in which the researchers consider the interviewees as conversational partners, making the process more comfortable for the participant by building a relationship with them, using a friendly, gentle, and supportive tone, and following a flexible interview protocol (See Appendix A for full protocols in English and Portuguese).

Participants were sent the recruitment invite and informed consent form (see Appendix B for recruitment invites and Appendix C for informed consent forms in English and Portuguese) either in person, via social media (including messaging application WhatsApp), or email, and were offered the choice to be interviewed remotely or in-person, in any location of their choosing. Before the interview began, I explained the informed consent document, answered any questions, and collected their signature as well as my own on two copies of the form; one for me and one for them to keep. If participants chose to be interviewed remotely, after our interview was over I sent them a recording of the informed consent process, which featured me going over the form in its entirety and the participant giving their oral consent at the end, as well as the form itself. Remote participants received a version of the form that did not contain a designated space for signatures.

Interview questions fell under two broadly defined sections that reflect the larger themes of the research questions: the first section referring to participants' perceptions of and experiences with local environmental news media, and the second section concerning participants' reflections on their own cultural identities and experiences with the studied places. Two semi-structured interview protocols have been used in this study: one designed for journalists, and another for community members. To ensure accuracy and

credibility during the interview and analysis stages, I frequently checked in with conversational partners to ensure comprehension of what was being said; I emphasized quotations that were representative of the participant's experience; I was intentional about selecting participants who will be the most informed about the studied topic; I paid attention to potential exaggerations or omissions on the participants' end; and, finally, I have been transparent about this dataset and related procedures in this report (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Since I can simultaneously be seen as part of and an outsider in the participating communities, I have also considered the ways in which my Western research training might have clashed with what is what is considered appropriate, respectful, and acceptable in a conversational setting, and made all possible adjustments to ensure participants' comfort and safety.

I have also relied on Rubin and Rubin's (2011) valuable guidelines on how the researcher decides to position themselves in relation to participants. They argue that a good strategy in cultural research is to play the role of apprentice or novice that needs to be taught what those in the community already know. In topical research, however, the researcher will be better accepted when seen as someone fair, who can be trusted, and informed enough to be asking questions. The authors underscore that the role the researcher chooses must be "understood and accepted in the interviewees' world," as well as a part of who you actually are" (p. 74). Seeing that my proposed research questions contemplate both cultural and topical aspects of environmental coverage, I adopted both the novice and expert roles described by the authors, adapting my own communication strategy depending on the interview setting. In total, I collected just over 36 hours of

interview data, and interviews lasted, on average, one hour and six minutes. The shortest interview lasted 31 minutes and the longest, one hour and 46 minutes.

After participants completed the interview process, they had the opportunity to participate in the observation process as well, in which I observed and took notes of participants in public community gatherings or, in the case of journalists, in their workspaces. Observations were only conducted upon invitation from participants during or after the interview. I spent one workday with a coast-based journalist and one workday with a capital-based journalist as they worked on the field and in the newsroom. Several community members invited me to participate in events or join them in outings so they could share their experiences with me as residents. In most cases I observed and took fieldnotes on a notebook, with the exception of the days I joined participants during Carnival celebrations, in which I opted to use a voice recorder to record my notes for convenience. Before the data collection with human subjects began, I collected fieldnotes and documents—mostly tourism advertisements and flyers—during two month-long visits to the study site in 2022 and 2023. All transcribed data, collected documents, and memos amounted to 569 pages of single-spaced text and were thematically analyzed through Braun & Clarke’s reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) method.

Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA)

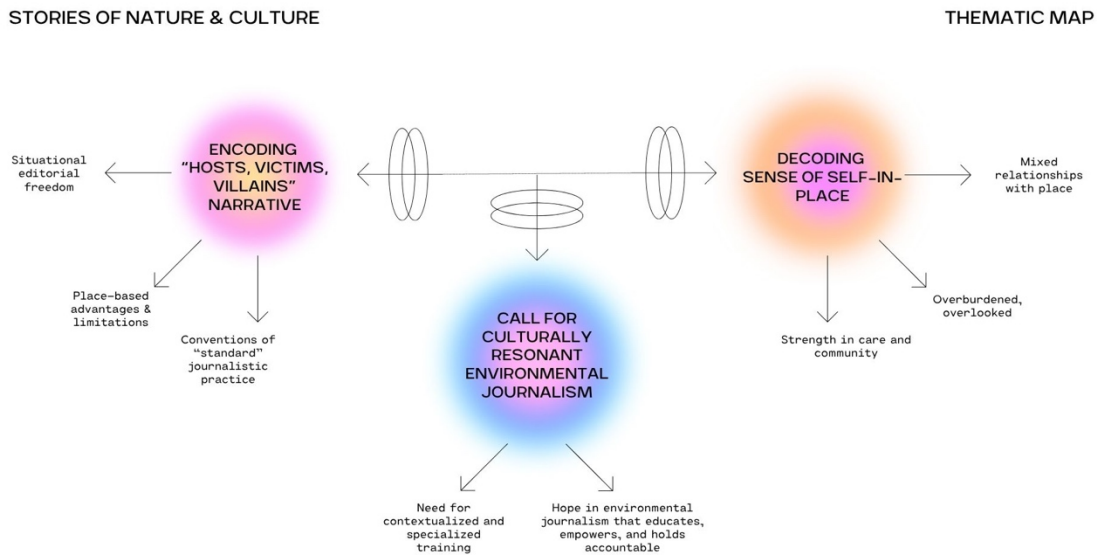
Braun and Clarke (2022) describe their RTA method as a subjective and situated means to “make meaning of the world that has been presented to you in your data, to develop potential patterns of meaning” (p. 43). Through the suggested six phases of analysis—familiarization; data coding (at least two rounds); generating initial themes; developing and reviewing themes; refining, defining, and naming themes; and writing up the report—the researcher is required to conduct critical thinking on their own role as an

instrument of interpretation of the dataset. I was the only person coding this dataset, which is standard practice in RTA. As RTA views coding as a process shaped by what the researcher's unique perspective, the agreement between multiple coders coming from multiple perspectives is not considered a measure of accurate analysis. In RTA, the "analysis and interpretation of the data cannot be accurate or objective, but they can be weaker (e.g. unconvincing, underdeveloped, shallow, superficial) or stronger (e.g. compelling, insightful, thoughtful, rich, complex, deep, nuanced)" (p. 9). Whether the analysis is stronger or weaker is dependent on the rigor of engagement with the data, as opposed to any measure of agreement between more than one coder.

I began my analysis by listening to all interviews and voice notes while simultaneously reading the transcripts automatically generated via Trint. Most of the transcriptions were not accurate, therefore I rewrote much of them manually as I listened to the audio files. I conducted two rounds of inductive coding, in which initial codes were generated from raw text. These codes were then refined in a second round of coding and continued to be refined, combined, and altered during the initial generating, later reviewing, and final defining of themes. First, candidate themes were considered in relation to the codes themselves, followed by another round of development in which themes are considered in relation to the entire dataset. Handwriting, thematic mapping and color-coding were essential practices during the generation and definition of themes. I sorted codes into candidate themes by labelling them in different colors on NVivo, and later I used these colors to map out the themes and subthemes on paper. I concluded the analysis with 314 codes, sorted into three main themes, and 10 subthemes (see Figure 7 for final thematic map). All revisions were recorded via notetaking.

Figure 7

Final thematic map (Source: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2025).



Chapter Breakdown

In chapter two, *Defining and Contextualizing Environmental Communication and Journalism*, I draw from communication, cultural studies, and media literature to define the terms I use throughout this book and provide a brief history of the field in the Global North and in Latin America and Brazil. I tell the story of Brazilian science and environmental journalism, which have been shaped by several political, socioeconomic, and cultural tensions over time; from the colonial rule of the Portuguese to the military dictatorship between the 1960s and 1980s, to the more recent rise of right-wing movements in the nation. Even in times of highly restricted fundamental freedoms, Brazilian environmental journalism found ways to grow. In this chapter, I also address the issue of the lack of specialized training available in Brazil and provide an overview of the study site's media landscape.

In chapter three, *Environmentalisms in The Paranaense Atlantic Forest*, I present the Atlantic Forest in Paraná through the history of its people and their culture, as well as its ecological significance to Brazil and the world. Most of area's inhabitants today descend from the mixing of European colonizers and settlers, Black enslaved Africans brought to Brazil by colonizers, and Indigenous populations. I discuss how their once fishing-based economy shifted to tourism and cargo transportation, and how relevant cultural landmarks, such as the Fandango Caiçara, fishing practices, culinary traditions, and more directly relate to the region's relationship with the local environment, local media, and regulatory agencies. I provide brief introductions of each of the seven towns that make up the coast of Paraná: Paranaguá, Guaraqueçaba, Pontal do Paraná, Guaratuba, Matinhos, Morretes, and Antonina. This is presented in conversation with environmental justice literature, as I discuss how different traditions of environmentalism have marginalized the populations that are most vulnerable to environmental threats.

In "*There's a Lot More Identity Hidden There to be Dug Out and Shown*": *Decoding Sense of Self-in-Place*, the fourth chapter, I examine the experiences of community members as both the consumers and subjects of local environmental coverage. Their complicated relationships with their places directly shape their decoding of environmental news—which render mostly negotiated or oppositional reads. In coastal residents' experience, local media did not accurately or sufficiently portray locals' environmental stories, despite having had generally positive past experiences with journalists. Some participants, however, expressed some resentment toward journalists and environmentalists, which stem from deep rooted feeling of abandonment and exploitation from all major institutions. Community members were nonetheless eager to

explore the potential they saw in having local media as an ally, pointing out that news media is one of the few, if not the only, source of environmental education available to most locals. They wish to see themselves and their communities in local environmental news shown as powerful and capable agents of change.

In chapter five, “*Why Not Hear the Stories of Those Who Live There Year-Round?*”: *Encoding a “Hosts, Victims, Villains” Narrative*, I show how journalists in this sample agree that their current coverage generally perpetuates a “hosts, victims, villains” narrative about coastal residents, mainly focused on either tourism or tragedy, in which residents are often portrayed as hosts to visitors on vacation, or as victims or perpetrators of environmental crime and injustice. I explore journalists' encoding processes that generally reflect the trends previously identified in the literature but manifest themselves differently depending on the journalist's interpretive community. Specifically, journalists struggle with place-based limited editorial freedoms, enjoy distinct place-based advantages, and are often restricted to “standard” journalistic practices that hinder their environmental reporting. Journalists hope for more opportunities for specialized and contextualized training—especially those who were coast-based, given that there are no college-level journalism schools on the coast.

In the sixth and final chapter, “*It's About Appreciating Attitudes that Better our Collective Lives*”: *Call for Culturally Resonant Environmental Journalism*, I offer concluding thoughts regarding the findings presented in chapters four and five, as well as their theoretical and practical applications. Overall, participants agreed that local environmental coverage should be place-based, solutions-oriented, and should prioritize storytelling of residents that set positive examples of pro-environmental behavior—

contrary to current coverage which prioritizes eco-tourism and extreme weather. I argue for the use of culture-centered frameworks such as Hall's Encoding/Decoding in future explorations of environmental journalism as well as in its practice, which center cultural identities and senses of self-in-place of both producers and consumers of environmental media in each of the key moments of the communication process. I also address the limitations of working with Hall and Zelizer's frameworks, and offer recommendations for further research and practice.

CHAPTER II

DEFINING AND CONTEXTUALIZING ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION AND JOURNALISM

Da Costa Bueno (2007), defines environmental communication (EC) as a process that aims to circulate and exchange experiences, emotions, information, and knowledge regardless of channel or format, characterizing it as an activity that can be carried out by anyone—journalists, scientists, lawyers, fisher people, Indigenous people, etc. (da Costa Bueno, 2007). Cox and Pezzullo (2022) understand EC as symbolic action, that is necessarily persuasive, and occurs in the discursive space that is the public sphere. Their definition of EC emphasizes its pragmatic function, which refers to verbal and nonverbal interactions with the instrumental purposes of educating, informing, persuading, alerting, and entertaining, and its constitutive function, that relates to interactions of all forms that orient and shape meanings, values, and relationships. The scholarly body of knowledge in EC is comprised of studies in environmental journalism, green advertising, public health and risk communication, science communication, environmental organizational communication, environmental law and policy, and more (Cox & Pezzullo, 2022).

EC scholars and professionals globally are being put to the test. The increasing frequency and proximity of communities to often devastating, at times avoidable, environmental threats take place alongside the rapid and ceaseless emergence of new mediated forms of communication. Environmental communicators, and those who study the practice of EC, are grappling with the challenges of a larger and more diverse audience, simultaneously connected to multiple channels of communication, in a time of

unfaltering global environmental and public health crises, and in the age of information overload.

The formal study of EC has its roots in the work of scholars James G. Cantrill and Christine L. Ovariec (1996). In their seminal book “The Symbolic Earth: Discourse and Our Creation of the Environment” the authors proposed that the environment one experiences is largely constructed by discourse. This initiated a discussion on the constitutive processes through which the environment is discussed, the meanings that are attributed to it, and how this discourse shapes one’s relationship with the natural (Carbaugh & Cerulli, 2013). Today, the field is guided by three major assumptions: environmental issues are materially and discursively constructed; representations of the natural environment both reflect and shape one’s social, economic, and ideological views; and social, cultural, economic, and other types of context challenge dominant relations of power related to the environment (Cox & Depoe, 2015).

Cox and Depoe (2015) outline the field’s most pressing and overarching research questions: How do we represent nature and the environment? What effects do different environmental sources have on audiences? How are dominant systems and discourses of “environment” developed and maintained? How is EC related to people’s values, beliefs, and behaviors? How do different forms of production, dissemination, and reception of scientific knowledge contribute to our understanding of the environment? How does our sense of “self-in-place” influence our environmental understanding and/or behaviors? And finally, how do local/Indigenous cultures understand the environment in everyday life?

Environmental Communication as a “Global” Field of Research

The field of EC can no longer be characterized as “new” or “emerging” in academic circles of the Global North, as it is a well-established subfield of communication and media studies. The legitimized status that EC research has acquired over the past three decades in the West, however, is not necessarily emulated in nations of the Global South (Girardi et al., 2012). Despite the field’s theoretically global scope, voices of scholars in countries like Brazil are still at the peripheries of discussion, whether because of a language barrier or a lack of support, even from their own institutions, for EC research (Comfort & Park, 2018). The result of most of EC scholarship being designed and conducted by scholars in Global North is a body of rigorously researched and insightful articles, manuals, and guidelines, that lack cultural specificity. Beyond that, while EC scholars have been successful in building expert knowledge on effective forms of connecting audiences to the environment through communication, they have largely failed to provide practical and meaningful guidance to those working outside of academia (Besley, 2015):

The richness and depth of the environmental communication researchers’ community are a source of strength but, ultimately, it may also need to focus a little less on critique and theory generation and more on developing and testing ideas that lead to useful guidance. We need to make it both theory-based and rigorous, but we also need to ensure that it is designed to have an impact. (p. 402)

The gap described by Besley (2015) is even greater when considering how far expert advice is from practitioners in the Global South. Between the expectation of research being presented and published in English (Banerjee & Sowards, 2022) and a profoundly unequal distribution of communicative power across the globe (Hansen, 2011), Hansen (2011) points out “this is a field that remains inadequately researched as

there are relatively few studies that directly make [cross-cultural or cross-national] comparisons” (p. 16). Similarly, Lester (2015) argues, the “study of environmental media and communications (...) often remains bounded by cultural, language, and political borders” (p. 233). While significant strides have been taken since the publication of Belsey (2015), Hansen (2011), and Lester (2015), and EC scholars worldwide have greatly contributed to the field within their own nations and languages, recent studies still reveal the seriousness of this gap—especially in the exportation of global science into English-language academic circles—including Takahashi (et al.)’s 2021 study, which showed that less than 2% of environmental media studies in English-language journals focus on the environmental heavyweight that is Brazil, and Comfort and Park’s survey of global peer-reviewed environmental communication literature, which showed that out of the 504 articles published by 51 countries between 1973 and 2017, only 8 focused on Brazil.

Defining Environmental Journalism

While the concept of environmental communication refers to a wide range of activities that can be practiced by anyone, environmental journalism is more narrowly defined by Cox and Pezzullo (2022) as “the researching, verifying, writing, producing, and broadcasting of news about the environment to the public sphere, traditionally by trained professionals” (p. 178). The authors define environmental news as “information about the environment that exceeds the role of environmental journalists and may include firsthand eyewitness accounts, environmental advocates, and/or anti-environmental advocates” (p. 178). In approaching the task of translating and circulating several forms of environmental knowledge, across multiple channels that target a wide audience,

environmental journalists often find themselves negotiating the tensions that come with playing potentially contradicting roles within the profession (Tandoc & Takahashi, 2014). The act of journalistically covering environmental news implies the delicate balancing of “politics, business, science, nature, and culture, in between the individual and the common, but also in between the local, regional, and global levels” (Bødker & Neverla, 2012, p. 152).

Scholars have argued that the West still largely dominates the global media agenda, meaning that non-Westerners are likely to consume more environmental news and science from the Global North than in their own nations (Kovarik, 2020; Carvalho & Loose, 2018). However, the rise of the digital sphere as a social space facilitated transnational processes of environmental communication, which can now, in some cases, be simultaneously global and local (Díaz-Pont, et al., 2020). New media and technology connect, to some extent, environmental communicators around the world with similar or dissenting concerns and experiences (Díaz-Pont, et al., 2020). The changing media landscape has had different effects in different regions. While in the West scholars have observed the downfall of traditional forms of media, some Asian countries, such as China and India, are observing the rise newspaper readership, for example (Cox & Pezzullo, 2022). This is an important reminder of how much of what is found and published in EC must be interpreted within contextual and cultural boundaries (Banerjee & Sowards, 2022).

This kind of inquiry is especially needed to investigate journalistic processes in communities within the Global South, where the social structures that shape the ways in which information circulates and discourses are crafted have been built through centuries

of oppression and exploitation. Content analyses of environmental news coverage in the study site are necessary, as this is a severely under researched region (in terms of journalistic research). However, a deeper understanding of how environmental news circulates in this region can only be achieved through comprehensive, qualitative analyses that break down the local mechanisms that underlie how environmental news is encoded by journalists and decoded by audiences. Takahashi et al. (2025) found that, out of the 27 Spanish and Portuguese-language climate communication scholarly articles published in peer-reviewed journals about Brazil, only 5 were focused on local contexts. This lack of local contextualization and reliance on international perspectives can deeply and negatively impact audiences' perceptions on the climate crisis, as it distances the issue from local realities.

The State of Environmental Journalism Globally

It was only in 1990 that the Society of Environmental Journalists was created, just two years before the historic RIO92 (the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the “Earth Summit”); both significant moments that solidified “the environment” as a beat in several newsrooms worldwide (Friedman, 2015; Cox & Pezzullo, 2022). Since then, the role of traditional news media has undergone consecutive periods of deep transformation, to which, scholars argue, some vehicles have not been able to successfully adapt to (Brainard, 2015). In the United States, for example, the consistent downsizing of newsrooms meant less resources dedicated to the environmental beat, rendering specialist reporters scarce and overworked (Sachsman & Valenti, 2015). Under these conditions, that echo throughout other, but not all, parts of the world, scholars have observed the rise of independent, international, online outlets with specialized environment sections (Friedman, 2015). The modern journalist is often seen

as more of a curator than the gatekeeper that is once was (Schäfer & Painter, 2021; Williams, 2015).

The rise of new forms of media also meant an upsurge in citizen journalism, due to the increasing number of people who can produce and disseminate content on their own. This content is oftentimes an eye-witness account of a newsworthy event while the event is still occurring; a kind of access that few journalists could have had in the past (Allen & Evart, 2015). In 2020, newspapers were only cited by about 5% of global surveyed audiences as their main source of environmental information and were characterized as less important of a source than conversations with friends and family (Newman, 2020, cited in Schäfer & Painter, 2021). Despite these trends, studies of legacy news media, specifically print media, were found to account for about two-thirds of all EC studies globally until 2010 (Schäfer & Schlichting, 2014, in Schäfer & Painter, 2021; Comfort & Park, 2018).

Geographically, Boykoff, McNatt, and Goodman (2015) found what they describe as a “critical regional ‘information gap’” (p. 224) in their large-scale, cross-cultural longitudinal study on climate news reporting in 50 newspapers around the world, which showed low levels of climate coverage in South America and Africa between 2004 and 2014. The current societal dynamics environmental communicators in the Global South work in are the result of historical events such as colonization, displacement, slavery, fascist regimes and military dictatorships, and administrations that have actively been hostile against the dissemination of science and freedom of speech (Gascoigne, et al., 2020). It would be impossible to study the communication of environmental issues in Brazil without recognizing these systems of oppression and inequality that have shaped

the nation's very essence. Trying to identify and understand patterns within Brazilian culture devoid of critical thinking would be an irresponsible task, for unequal relations of power have been at the center of Brazilian social processes since colonial times. I draw from critical-cultural literature on communication and media to center such relations in my examination of environmental journalism in the study site.

Approaching the Environment as Culture and Identity

Cox and Pezzullo's (2022) definition of EC as pragmatic and constitutive encapsulates the functional and cultural facets of EC and acknowledges how the two can occur simultaneously when a message is thoughtfully designed. It also hints at how communicating the environment can intersect with discourse around related societal matters. The "Família Folhas," or "Leaf Family," campaign in the city of Curitiba, Brazil, is an illustrative example of this. Described by local media as one of the most loved families of Curitiba (Prosa Nova, 2023), the Família Folhas 1990 municipal campaign promoted awareness on proper waste sorting and management in the city. Designed by one the country's most famous cartoonists, Ziraldo, the characters in this family of leaves, a mother, father, a young son, and young daughter, were featured in advertisements, billboards, on the side of garbage trucks, trash cans, and more, and they would also pay visits to schools and host public educational events advocating for their cause (Prosa Nova, 2023).

The campaign was considered a success and helped cement Curitiba's national reputation as the "green city" of Brazil (Traad, 2023). In 2023, Curitiba brought back the *família* to raise awareness on climate change and other environmental issues. The family had aged, grown in size, and also grown more diverse, with each character representing a

different facet of environmental activism (Bem Paraná, 2022). The mother and father, Mr. Folha and Ms. Fofô, are now senior citizens who are eager to learn and advocate for climate action and ethical waste management. The son, Fifo, is a “pet dad” to an adopted dog, Folheco, representing new family structures and emphasizing the importance of animal adoption and sustainable commercial practices. The daughter, Fófis, is now a single mother of two and promotes initiatives for women within vulnerable communities impacted by climate change. One of her children, the daughter Flora, has a prosthetic leg. She stands for representation and inclusion of minorities within the environmental movement.

The case of the Família Folhas encapsulates one of Cox & Pezzullo’s major points, in which they advance the characterization of the EC discipline from a discipline of crisis to a discipline of crisis *and care*, drawing from feminist and Indigenous thought. This definition is better suited for newer EC movements that are concerned with intersectionality, questions of social justice, and the incorporation of culture as the essential maker of meaning, in favor of a more contextualized and humanistic approach to the field (Moser, 2015). Valuable insight has been found in the study of successful EC appeals toward individual and group identities, which are expressed through the establishment of a consistent and coherent movement (Besley, 2015), attitudes and behaviors related to climate (Pechar & Mayer, 2015), green marketing and consumerism (Cox & Pezzullo, 2022), and more.

Within the adjacent field of science communication, Davies and Horst (2016) address science communication’s social welfare role in culture and democracy, by examining topics such as transformations in production and dissemination of knowledge,

and the role of identity and citizenship in these processes. The authors provide a crucial reminder that not only do identities of communicators and audiences shape how mediated messages are constructed and received, but how the scientists' identities, the producers of knowledge themselves, are constructed within the collective space of a university, of a department, which can deeply orient their practice (Davies & Horst, 2016). The subjectivities of knowledge production and dissemination are becoming increasingly central to conversations of EC, especially in the search for some form of communication model that not only educates, but also engages (Dunwoody, 2015).

Environmental Communication in Latin America

As explained earlier in this book, Latin American scholars in communication have developed a strong disciplinary tradition that is unique to the region, through the pioneering contributions of scholars such as Martín-Barbero, Canclini, Mattelart, and more. These scholars and others who followed challenged Western positivist notions of media effects, amid the severe political instability of many Latin American countries in the second half of the 20th century, opting for a culture-centered approach that grew to be a distinctive feature of Latin American communication scholarship (Takahashi, 2023).

Latin America is uniquely vulnerable to environmental threats given that societal change in the region “is intimately related to nature and natural resources” (de Castro et al., 2016, p. 1). In the context of profound socioeconomic inequality, violence against journalists and activists, and lack of resources available to universities and research institutions, Latin American scholarship tends to be focused on social conflicts, with three agendas standing out in emerging Spanish- and Portuguese-language EC journals: media coverage of the environment, strategic communication in environmental education, and

environmental behavior change (Román Núñez & Cuesta Moreno, 2016). Research on Indigenous forms of knowledge and communication practices has grown since the start of the 21st century, as well as the development of the field outside of national borders (de Castro et al., 2016; Takahashi, 2023). Today, Latin American scholars argue that what is missing from Latin American scholarship is a return to the tradition of rigorous theory-building in media effects and critical cultural studies (Waisbord, 2014; Takahashi, 2023).

In their review of Portuguese and Spanish-language climate change communication literature, Takahashi et al. (2025) found several gaps. Most articles analyze climate discourses found in newspapers, magazines, and digital news outlets, yet a significant number of articles were literature reviews or conceptual pieces. Many studies in their sample found that Latin American climate coverage tends to be pessimistic, alarmist, and catastrophic, with some studies pointing out that the offering of solutions to ameliorate these grim predictions are rare. When solutions are provided, the authors found, they are usually reductionist and optimistically technocratic. This review also reaffirmed previously identified trends in Brazilian environmental journalism, such as a lack of diversity in sources: renowned experts dominate news stories while other voices are faint. Many authors in the study sample relied on framing theories analyses, but, overall, few studies were grounded in theoretical frameworks, and many did not present formal research questions or hypotheses. Beyond that, the authors state:

(...) the interpretation of results can deviate considerably from the evidence presented. The criticisms and recommendations for policies, actors, and institutions can appear to be imbued with political connotations. (p. 5)

In the field of Latin American environmental journalism, specifically, Takahashi, Pinto, Chavez, and Vigón (2018) found that, in the current circumstance of modern

dependency that exists in Latin America (most Latin American countries are dependent on selling their natural resources to more developed nations), the media serves a watchdog role. Nuñez and Moreno (2016), however, found in their review of Latin American EC literature significant critiques of environmental journalism in the region. The authors describe a trend of superficial coverage that is descriptive, but not contextual, and call for a more pedagogical and educational approach to covering matters of the environment (Nuñez & Moreno, 2018; Zamith et al., 2013). While scholars agree that Brazil has the most developed network of environmental journalists in Latin America, they see severe limitations related to how environmental stories are told, and a shortage of resources for coverage and training of EC professionals (Nuñez & Moreno, 2016; Takahashi et al., 2018; Schäfer & Painter, 2020).

Communicating Science and the Environment in Brazil

Research on environmental communication in Brazil can be considered an emerging field, in comparison to the state of research in the Global North, with the first environmental journalism course at the university level in the country only being taught in 2004, and research on the subject dating back just 20 years (Takahashi et al., 2025; Nepote et al., 2020; Girardi et al., 2015). In their analysis of environmental journalism theses and dissertations, Girardi, Camana, and Loose (2015) found that, between 1987 and 2020, there were just over 100 EC scholarly documents registered in the country's National Council for Scientific and Technological Development database: eight PhD dissertations, 90 master's thesis, and three professional master's capstone projects. The authors found a high concentration of EC research in the Southeastern region, where Brazil's largest cities—São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro—are, followed by the Southern, Northeastern, Center-Western, and Northern regions respectively. Content analyses,

interviews, and surveys were the most used methods, and studies that examined print media comprised 78% of this sample, even though Brazil has historically been a TV-centered nation (Girardi et al., 2015; Schäfer & Painter, 2020). Takahashi (2023) found that Brazilian scholars have especially contributed to the field of EC with work at the intersection of environmental and science communication and journalism.

Between the 16th and 18th centuries, when Brazil was still under colonial rule of the Portuguese, the communication of science, or even the practice of science itself, was nearly non-existent, given the country's small and largely illiterate population (Massarani & de Castro Moreira, 2020). In the 18th century, the press and publication of books were prohibited in Brazil by their colonizer, the Portuguese, rendering education a luxury that only the few who studied abroad could access. It was only in the 19th century, when the Portuguese Court moved to Rio de Janeiro, that the ban was lifted and the first national science & technology institutions were created (Massarani & de Castro Moreira, 2020). The small scientific community that had been built began to promote their work in the country's first radio station, decades after Brazil's independence from Portugal, in the 1920s. The “centuries-old idea of Brazil as an ‘Eden’ helped fuel an early 20th century campaign by scientists and journalists for public protection of natural resources,” highlights Kovarik (2020, p. 54), and the first Brazilian Conference on the Protection of Nature took place in 1934, culminating in a legally binding Forest Code, and the creation the nation's first national parks (Kovarik, 2020).

Following a global trend of popularizing science after World War II, the Brazilian Society for the Advancement of Science was founded in 1948, and a few newspapers, mainly in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, invested in creating science beats (Massarani &

de Castro Moreira, 2020). During this time science began to be referenced in art, such as in the sambas of Cartola, and the poetry of Carlos Drummond de Andrade and Vinicius de Moraes; the country invested heavily in building science museums; and initiatives such as the supplement *Ciência para Todos* (Science for All) published monthly by the newspaper *A Manhã*, and the science section on the Sunday edition of newspaper *Jornal do Comércio*, counted with contributions of the nation's most notable scholars (Massarani & de Castro Moreira, 2020).

But this was interrupted when, in 1964, Brazil faced a military coup supported by the United States that had profound effects on the country's social, economic, and educational spheres. Enforcing severe censorship, many journalists, scientists, and students were brutally persecuted, tortured, murdered, or forced into exile for voicing their dissenting opinions or sharing their findings on certain topics—presently or in the past—that went against the Military's discourse (Massarani & de Castro Moreira, 2020). Even in these conditions, the Brazilian Society for the Advancement of Science kept organizing in favor of democracy, holding annual meetings that attracted over 20 thousand students, educators, and more, per meeting (Massarani & de Castro Moreira, 2020). The events promoted the idea that science was an important tool in addressing social issues and served as a space of development for science communication (Massarani & de Castro Moreira, 2020).

The Brazilian field of science communication saw great advances in the 1960s and 70s. Along with several other Latin Americans, some of which were also going through U.S.-supported military dictatorships, scientist and writer José Reis became part of the movement that created national science journalism associations across the

continent. Reis was the president of the first Brazilian Science Journalism Association, and, in 1978, the José Reis Award for Science Communication was created to recognize journalists', scientists', and institutions' work in science communication (Massarani & de Castro Moreira, 2020). Yet, to this day, scholars argue that science journalism in Brazil still generally operates with a limited idea of what science is, with little regard to the context of its production and its social impacts. Discussions of science related to public policy are usually left out of news coverage, as is science from other Latin American countries:

Science is often presented as a spectacular occurrence, where scientific discoveries are episodic and made by particularly gifted individuals. Real or imagined applications of science are given great emphasis, but the process of its production, its contexts, its limitations, and its uncertainties are usually ignored, and simplified conceptual models of the relationship between science and the public prevail. (Massarani & de Castro Moreira, 2020, p. 162)

Once the dictatorship ended in 1985, the country saw further growth in science communication, with the creation of several publications, television programs, radio programs, TV stations, festivals, and institutions (Massarani & de Castro Moreira, 2020). International concern with the Amazon grew in the 1980s, especially due to the reports of hundreds of murders of Native community members, environmentalists, and human rights advocates, including the 1988 murder of famous environmentalist Chico Mendes. This concern led to the creation a 9.4-million-hectare reserve for the communities of the Yanomami ethnicity along with other notorious environmental initiatives at RIO92, which involved more than 100 national leaders and 10 thousand journalists (Kovarik, 2020). But the strides in favor of the protection of Brazil's natural environment and those who are most vulnerable within it have been few and far between. As environmental journalist Eliane Brum (2025) points out:

At least two realities remained after the re-democratization of Brazil, after 21 years of a corporate-military dictatorship: the police brutality in *favelas*, peripheries, police stations, and in jails against the poor, mostly Black, is one of them; the other is the colonial project for the Amazon, which sees it as a body for the exploitation of goods. (para. 3; translation by the author)

Brazilian Environmental Journalism

The Brazilian military dictatorship was a time of extreme exploitation of Brazil's natural resources and Native peoples, in favor of the industrial-scale production and exportation of essential commodities to the United States and Europe. Kovarik (2020) states that: "In 1960s Brazil, the authoritarian system alienated mainstream journalists and made some of them more determined to press ahead with environmental reporting" (p. 58). In 1966, for example, 17-year-old Randau Marques wrote an article about lead poisoning among cobblers in his town. The teenager was then judged by a military tribunal, imprisoned, and tortured with electric shocks (Kovarik, 2020). After his release, he still worked as environmental journalist and founded the Brazilian Society for the Progress of Science, going on to be one of the first to expose the deforestation in the Amazon, the genocide of the Yanomami people, and what is known as the "Valley of Death", located in a refinery center in the town of Cubatão, where cancers and birth defects plagued the community (Kovarik, 2020). In a 2005 interview, Marques shared that his strategy to keeping the military away was to tell these stories through "science" rather than "environmental" frames:

'The [Brazilian] military regime, I discovered, saw in the scientist a kind of shaman who could provide gifts like the atomic bomb,' (...) 'The strategy was to "hide" behind the label of "science" instead of "environmental" reporting, to not get censored/imprisoned/tortured.' (Marques in Kovarik, 2020, p. 59)

While journalists in Brazil today are not operating under the censorship of a military dictatorship—although former president Jair Bolsonaro has recently been charged

with leading a far-right military coup to stay in power (Phillips & Rogero, 2025)—many still operate with fear. Brazil is one of the most dangerous countries for environmental journalists in the world (Lopes de Oliveira & Lewenstein, 2024; Cox & Pezzullo, 2022), and these journalists continue to do their work amid a “chronic scarcity of funds” (Carvalho & Loose, 2018, p. 3). Giuliano Galli, who is the Journalism and Freedom of Speech Coordinator in the Vladimir Herzog Institute, in Brazil, said in an interview that they observed a sharp increase in reported cases of violence against journalists who work in the Amazon region after the brutal and widely covered assassination of English journalist Dom Phillips and Brazilian indigenist Bruno Pereira in 2022 (Nascimento, 2024). According to a recent UNESCO report, 70% of environmental journalists globally have reported suffering attacks and intimidations, especially those who cover deforestation, mining, illegal hunting, and those who access remote areas in their fieldwork—all common practices in Brazil (UNESCO, 2024). The report also found that 45% of journalists have censored themselves in their environmental coverage out of fear. This is one of the causes that can be linked to the many limitations described in scholarly literature regarding Brazilian environmental journalism.

In 2007 da Costa Bueno described five “syndromes” in Brazilian environmental journalism: 1) The Zoom Syndrome (narrow coverage, not interdisciplinary, segmented), 2) The Wall Syndrome (the de-politization of the environmental debate, making its sole focus a “technical, objective, unbiased” perspective), 3) the Academic Source Syndrome (only using specialists as sources), 4) the Green Indulgence Syndrome (prevalence of green marketing, greenwashing), and, finally, 5) the Beached Whale Syndrome (sensationalism in environmental coverage). Even though these observations are nearing

their 20-year anniversary, many still ring true. There seems to be a consensus among scholars over time in stating that mainstream Brazilian environmental news coverage is superficial, episodic, fragmented, and lacking in the offering of potential solutions to the covered issues (Takahashi et al., 2025; Carvalho & Loose, 2018; da Costa Bueno, 2007; Zamith et al., 2013; Girardi et al., 2012). Scholars have also suggested that the mainstream Brazilian media agenda is greatly influenced an international agenda (Carvalho & Loose, 2018; Hellebrant & Hellebrant, 2010; Zamith et al., 2013), having few newsrooms with specialized staff covering the environment regionally:

(...) it is reasonable to argue that we are more likely to be informed about the impact of sea level rise in New York, as told by indirect sources, than to hear an account of how the Brazilian coast could be affected by climate change, told by a local journalist with the ability to provide rich context to the story. (Hellebrant & Hellebrant, 2010, p. 307)

In relation to climate coverage, specifically, Zamith, Pinto, and Villar (2013) found that between 2008 and 2010, sources in climate-related articles in Brazil's largest newspaper, *Folha de São Paulo*, were 47% government; 19% academic; 10% environmental interest group; 10% other; 9% independent research group; and 4% industry group. Studies that compared climate coverage in South America and the United States, found Brazilian vehicles mostly focused on the consensus around climate change, as opposed to U.S. American newspapers, who presented climate change as an issue that was still heavily debated and polarized (Carvalho & Loose, 2018; Zamith, Pinto, Villar, 2013). Climate skepticism was found to be almost non-existent within Brazilian news media, but climate-related news stories were most commonly found in large, national circulation newspapers that usually belong to the largest media conglomerates in the

country, as opposed to in more regional or community-based news outlets (Carvalho & Loose, 2018).

Media Landscape on the Paraná Coast

While there are no studies about environmental journalism in the Paraná coast, some related research can be useful in providing an overview of the media landscape in the study-site. News media is unevenly distributed in the state of Paraná, characterized by a concentration of hegemonic mass-news outlets in urban centers with higher HDI scores, and the presence of news deserts outside these areas (Ribeiro & Junior, 2022). This scarcity of news described by the authors, however, is nuanced and should not be interpreted as a complete lack of access to news. Authors Ribeiro and Junior (2022) state that:

It is not that the news desert observed on the map necessarily corresponds to a total lack of access to state or national information, that is reproduced by large outlets. But what can be deducted is that, in these spaces, local production that delineates culture, identity, and the necessities of their towns and peoples, is nonexistent. (p. 18; translation by the author)

In 1996, Brazilian journalist Alberto Dines created, in partnership with Brazilian university Unicamp, the Institute for the Development of Journalism (Projor). Projor hosts a database called “Atlas da Notícia”, or “News Atlas”, that allows users to consult a list of news registered outlets in all states of Brazil. According to their latest data (2019), the search for news outlets in Curitiba yields 244 results. In comparison with Paraná’s coastal towns, the search in Paranaguá shows 15 results, five results in Pontal do Paraná, three results in Guaratuba, two results in Matinhos, one in Antonina, and zero results in Morretes and Guaraqueçaba. Still according to this database—that encompasses online, television, radio, and print journalism—most news outlets on the coast are small, employing between one and five employees. The actual numbers of news outlets that

exist today on the Paraná coast likely differ from the Projor (2019) database, as its been several years since it was last updated, and it does not account for the informal or unregistered news outlets that are common in the region. Still, it offers a helpful starting point to those looking to further understand the local media landscape.

Brazilians have been known to consume news mostly via television, although Brazilians today spend most of their media engagement time online (Guttmann, 2024). However, one study found that television heavily dominates media consumption within the Environmental Protection Area of Guaratuba: Fernandes et al. (2017) found that 92.85% of the population considered their televisions as their main source for information and entertainment, while 72.85% relied on radio, 51.42% had their cellphones, and 10% had internet access. This data may be outdated, but it draws attention to the importance of considering how the different processes of urbanization and modernization that occurred on the coast have historically impacted community members' access to technology and levels of digital literacy. The quality of both investigations and the practice of journalistic processes in this area heavily depend on one's understanding of just how heterogenous the Paraná coast is.

During the months of data collection conducted for this study, I spent a few days in the Superagui Island, which is part of the town of Guaraqueçaba. Upon my arrival, I was instructed by the owners of the bed & breakfast I was staying in to contact a local that would take me to the location in Barra de Ararapira, one of the most secluded villages of the already remote island, about 15 miles away from where I had arrived. After a turbulent and rainy hour on a small but speedy *voadeira*—a speedboat whose name

literally translates to “that flies”—I disembarked at the Superagui village with no cell signal (Figure 8).

Figure 8

Beach in the Superagui Village (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2025).



Apparently, my phone carrier did not cover that region well. As I searched for an establishment with wi-fi, locals informed me that the internet on the whole island was down because of a fire that had occurred nearby and affected cell-phone towers. The owner of the boat that took me to Superagui and the three workers of the only restaurant that was open in town all tried to help me connect with the man who was supposed to take me to Ararapira, with no luck. The server offered to share her data with me—her provider did cover the island—so I could pay for my meal and the boat trip. The signal was only restored in the evening, and by then I had already found myself a different place to spend the night. Luckily, the owners of the restaurant also owned a small bed & breakfast, and even the boat driver had offered me a room in his family home. I still could

not connect to the wi-fi from my room; it only worked in the common area of the bed & breakfast.

The near impossibility of communicating with others that day came in sharp contrast to what I had experienced just over two hours away, when conducting interviews in Guaratuba in the days leading up to my stay in Superagui. That week, over 620 thousand tourists and locals drank, danced, and sang in downtown Guaratuba for five days of Carnaval celebrations, enjoying over 40 free concerts played by 15 bands on four large stages built across the city's main street, between the beach and the town's square (Quintana Bernardi, 2025). Crowds swarmed over beaches, restaurants, local businesses, and the streets, constantly recording and posting themselves on social media, while local and state news outlets broadcasted everything. Communities in less urbanized areas are not simply lacking in access to news. Rather, they struggle with a lack of access to news *about themselves* (Ribeiro & Barros Junior, 2022). It is imperative that communities see themselves in environmental coverage, if environmental journalists are at all concerned with achieving their goals of informing, persuading, educating, entertaining, and more. In other words, environmental journalists working within microregions such as the Paraná coast must carefully develop their understandings of the area's cultural landscape (Ribeiro, 2007) in the same intensity as they do their scientific knowledge of the environmental landscape.

CHAPTER III

ENVIRONMENTALISMS IN THE PARANAENSE ATLANTIC FOREST

In the first few pages of this book, I mentioned that my street in Guaratuba would frequently flood before it was paved in the mid 2010s. This meant that, whenever there was a storm approaching, we had to plan our days accordingly and make sure that no one would need anything that required leaving the house for. Of course, our planning was not always successful. The storms, after all, were not always graceful enough to offer us much warning. One fateful day in 2005, my sister, my mother, and I absolutely needed to go downtown to meet my grandmother during one of these Homeric storms. Our street had become nothing short of a river, but that did not stop us. Whatever errand the four of us had to run was simply too important. I was 9, my sister was 5. My mother slowly and carefully drove us out into the muddy water that had risen to the height of an adult knee, and it quickly made its way into the car—and the engine—way before we made our way to the corner. We turned back. My grandmother, who was in a non-flooded part of town, somehow convinced us that she was the person to come to our rescue in her 1989 Chevrolet Kadett (see Figure 9). And rescue us she did. My sister and I screamed with fear and excitement as our tiny, gentle, knitting-loving grandmother shifted into the first gear—where she remained, the whole time—and fiercely plowed through the rain, the wind, and that muddy water all the way to the paved side of the neighborhood. We emerged victorious. The exhaust pipe spat out water, exhausted. This became one of our favorite memories of her.

To my family, the flooding of our street was an inconvenience that we found ways to laugh about. It became part of the adventure that was spending our summers at the

beach. The water never entered our home or ruined our furniture. It never really scared us in that way. After all, we always knew that our *actual* home, where we kept the birth certificates and photo albums, was up in a building in downtown Curitiba. When in Guaratuba, I used to have nightmares where I would wake up to find ocean waves crashing into our house. But every time, without fail, I woke up safe, on my dry bed. Aside from the occasional nightmare, I never felt that my life was at risk facing an environmental threat.

Figure 9

The 1989 Kadett (Photo by: Gerson Sprada, early 2000s).



Residents of the Paraná coast, however, have recently been through catastrophic instances of extreme weather. Following a three-year drought (Brum, 2021), the state of Paraná, in Southern Brazil, experienced severe storms throughout late 2022 and 2023.

The consequences of the storms have led to two dead, several injured and/or unhoused, and persisting roadblocks that isolate coastal communities from the rest of the state, restricting their access to basic supplies and medical attention (Barros, 2022; Prota, 2022; Boursuk, 2023; See Figure 10). It is well known that nations in the Global South are far more vulnerable to environmental threats, despite being the ones with the smallest environmental impacts on a global scale. The term “environmentalism of the poor” was introduced in the late 1980s referring to the environmentalisms in rural and Indigenous populations in India and Latin America, and, today, the term encompasses the fight against environmental injustices in several areas of the Global South (Martinez-Alier et al., 2016).

Figure 10

Mudslide caused by storm on Graciosa Road (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2023).



Brazilian Environmental History

Brazil occupies an interesting place in the Latin American community. Mignolo (2005) states that at the same time that Brazil remains marginal to the idea of Latin America, as “(...) a stepchild in ‘Latin’ America whose image was more ‘Spanish’ than ‘Portuguese’” (p. 93), he claims the MERCOSUR turns to Brazil as a leading force, who “remained until now the younger brother of the family, albeit a quite large and very rich little brother” (p. 159). The Brazilian environmental movement emerged 80s, like in the U.S., simultaneous with the rise of democracy after 20 years of a military dictatorship that censored free speech, threatened personal safety, and placed national “development” above anything else (Wolford, 2008). The concept of environmental justice only appeared in Brazilian academic text, however, in the late 1990s (Porto, 2012), and in 2001 the first International Colloquium on Environmental Justice, Labor, and Citizenship was held in Niterói, Rio de Janeiro. During this event, the Declaration of Principles of Environmental Justice in Brazil was drafted, based on the 17 Principles of Environmental Justice proposed in Summit I (1991) (Porto, 2012). In 2002, the Rede Brasileira de Justiça Ambiental (Brazilian Network of Environmental Justice [RBJA]) was founded in Rio de Janeiro, to address the environmental inequalities in Brazil that were caused by a model of development that concentrated economic and political power, producing social and territorial exclusion (Porto, 2012).

Brazil has a long history of exploitation of natural resources. The first lucrative commodities to be produced/exported were, in the early 1500s, at the start of the Portuguese colonization: sugarcane, *pau-brasil* (wood), coffee, rubber, cacao, cotton, and more. Differences especially in patterns of colonization, language, and sheer size make

Brazilian identities stand out in the Latin American context. In contrast with the U.S. American environmental justice movement, that grew out of issues related to urban industrial development, Brazilian environmental injustices were more prevalent in rural areas. Welford (2008) argues that while environmental justice in the US tends to come through in local, community-oriented projects; such initiatives in the Global South are more broadly conceptualized and connected to colonial and postcolonial unequal distributions of land.

Beyond that, Porto (2012) explains that, while in the US the movement was mostly organized locally, in Brazil the conversation has always had an international dimension, within the context of international trade. Native, Indigenous, and *quilombola* (maroon) communities were significantly exploited and disrupted by powerful groups in agribusiness, mining, and by the construction of dams. Therefore, patterns of inequality in Brazil are inherently correlated with logics of production and trade within a global economy paradigm, and the unequal land distribution for the production of export monocultures (Porto, 2012). Urban Brazilian residents are not free of environmental inequalities either. A large part of the population that has been historically marginalized (i.e., descendants of slaves, members of displaced rural communities, and more) lives in *favelas*, or slums, with no basic infrastructure; in areas of recurrent flooding, improper waste disposal, industrial pollution, and so on (Porto, 2012).

Among Brazil's five biomes—The Amazon, the Pantanal, the Caatinga, the Cerrado, and the Atlantic Forest—the Cerrado and the Atlantic Forest are considered biodiversity hotspots (Vikou et al., 2017). Brazil is the most biodiverse country in the world (Butler, 2021), hosting about 20 percent of global total biodiversity (UN

Environment Programme, 2019), and the Atlantic Forest covers almost 15% of Brazil and has been considered one of the world's most critically endangered biomes (Coordenadoria de Educação Ambiental Paraná, 2018; Hancock, 2020). Even though 60% of Brazilians depend on it for their water supply, less than 12% of the original forest remains intact (Hancock, 2020). The largest remaining stretch of the Atlantic Forest is located in Paraná (Agência de Notícias do Paraná, 2020).

The Coast of Paraná

Over 80% of the Paraná coast is environmentally protected by either state or federal government (Pierri et al, 2006) and, like so much of Brazil, the Paraná coast is a land marked by contrasting exuberance and scarcity on almost every aspect of its existence (Estades, 2003). The region that centuries ago was once the most developed in the state (Azevedo, 2016) is exceptionally rich in cultural and ecological diversity, also teeming in socioeconomic promise, given the variety of industries that can thrive in the area. Yet, it is also stricken with poverty, lacking infrastructure, environmental and cultural degradation, and inadequate political management (Hering, 2024; Muniz, 2017; Azevedo, 2016; Estades, 2003). As summarized by Estades (2003):

Vast areas of conservation, sparsely populated, coexist with a large port city and urban beaches that grow at dizzying rates. The regional dynamic, that attracts growing populations from other regions of the state and neighboring states, has shown itself insufficient to overcome the poverty. At the same time, the multiple laws to protect nature are ineffective in avoiding growing environmental impact. (Estades, 2003; translation by the author)

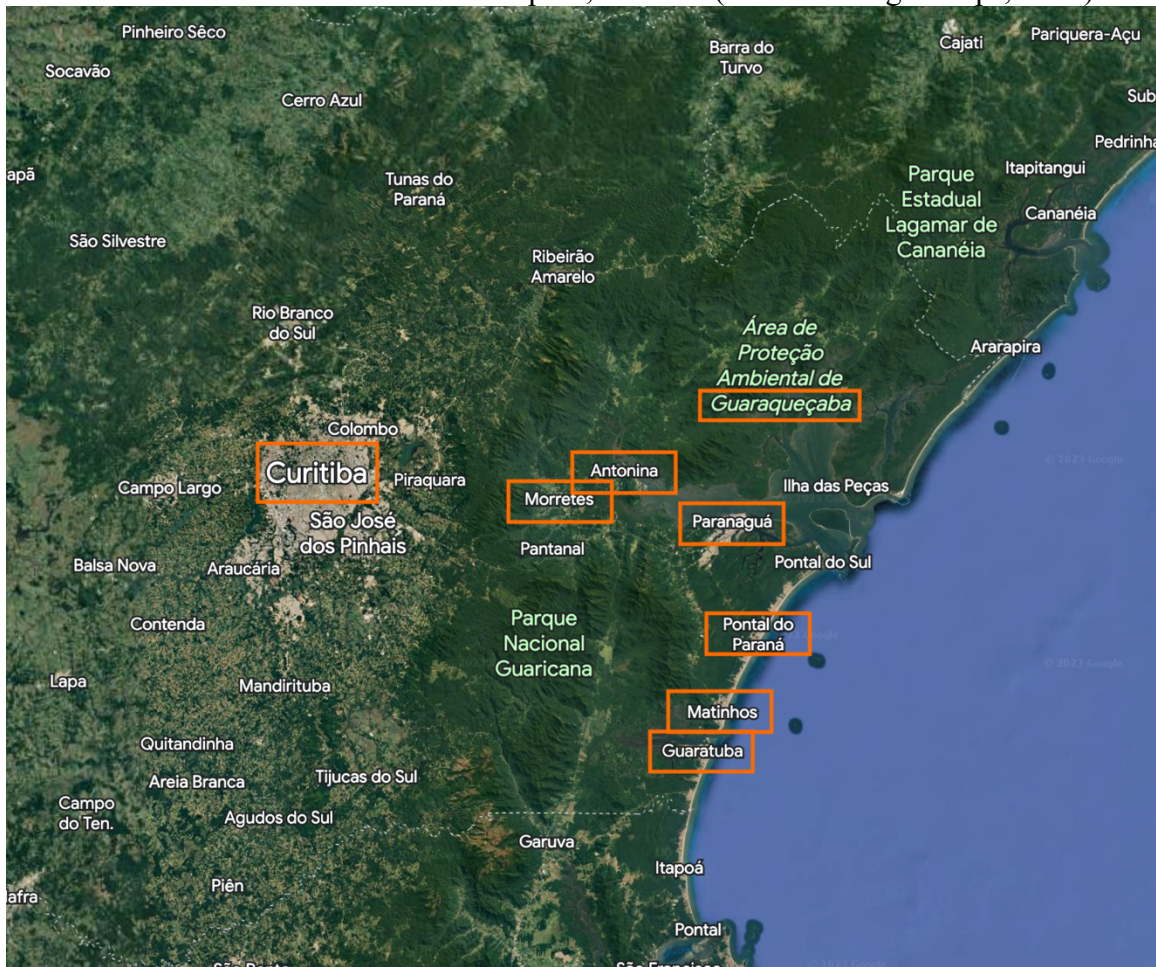
The coast of Paraná (see Figure 11 for map) is home to just over 300 thousand people, spread across the seven municipalities that lie between the Serra do Mar mountain range and the Atlantic Ocean: Antonina (18.091), Guaraqueçaba (7.430), Guaratuba (42.062), Matinhos (39.259), Morretes (18.309), Paranaguá (145.829), and

Pontal do Paraná (30.425) (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [IBGE], 2022).

In the 30 years that passed between 1970 and 2000 population in the area doubled with the growth of urban centers and the sharp decline in rural populations (Pierri et al., 2006).

Figure 11

The towns of the Paraná coast and the capital, Curitiba (Source: Google Maps, 2025).



Still, each town has its own rural and urban sector, although the size of each sector can vary greatly between towns. It is in the rural areas of the coast that the most environmentally vulnerable communities reside, often relying on agriculture, fishing (see Figure 12), and adjacent activities as their primary sources of income (Azevedo, 2016). Rural areas are also home to Indigenous communities of mostly Guarani Mbyá descent, but also the Kaingangue, and Xetá peoples and maroon communities, including the Rio

Verde and Batuva *quilombos* (Alves et al., 2022; Funai, 2021; de Oliveira Vieira et al., 2019; Azevedo, 2016).

Figure 12

Local fishermen pulling a returning fishing boat to shore in Superagui (Photo by: Karl Michel Koerich, 2025).



The urbanized areas of the coast attracts crowds of tourists during summers and holidays, mainly looking to experience the seemingly abundant and pristine natural landscapes; the many cultural and religious celebrations hosted by each of the towns; surfing and other water sports; the historical landmarks that stand since colonial times; and the traditional cuisine that features locally sourced ingredients, including a wide array of fish, shrimp, crab, oysters, cassava, heart of palm, ginger, banana, and *cataia*—a local kind of *cachaça*, which is a distilled spirit made of sugar cane juice (Matoso et al., 2024). During the Summer months, local government partners with the state government to offer tourists a full schedule of entertainment in an initiative called Verão Maior, or

Bigger Summer, in which they offer a variety of leisure, cultural, and sports activities mostly in the towns of Guaratuba, Matinhos, and Pontal do Paraná. Along with the drastic increase in population during high season, one can easily notice the increase in police officers on streets, lifeguards on the beaches, and local media attention. Some television stations based in Curitiba will often have one or more reporters exclusively dedicated to covering Verão Maior during its duration. It is estimated that almost two million people visited the coast between December 2024 and March 2025 most of them in the towns of Matinhos, Pontal do Paraná, and Guaratuba, whereas, during the rest of the year, the populations of each town fall between 30 to 40 thousand residents (Paraná, 2025; IBGE, 2022).

The Brazilian process of urbanization was characterized by a rural exodus of millions from the countryside to urban and industrial centers, leaving a mass of unemployed citizens all over the country to irregularly settle in peripheral areas, many times amid conservation sites that posited varying degrees of environmental and health hazards (Birckolz et al., 2012). A similar process has been observed in the urbanization of the Paraná coast. Scholars have documented, in the past decades, an influx of in-state migrants relocating permanently to the coast in search of a better quality of life. Many of these migrants are middle-class, retired, and looking for a quiet place to settle, but most of them are low-income workers looking to insert themselves in the job market (Azevedo, 2016; Estades, 2003). Many were drawn to the area during the 20th century, with the establishments of large ports in the towns of Paranaguá and Antonina, as well as a thriving agricultural and fishing industry in towns such as Morretes and Guaraqueçaba. Populations grew faster than the infrastructure that was needed to support them, in an

inordinate and capital-centered process of expansion in which local authorities gravely failed in preserving and protecting its environment and the local communities that had called it home for centuries (Vikou et al., 2017). Today, the coast is not generally considered a hotspot for employment, with some exceptions such as the Paranaguá Port, that grew to be the largest bulk port in Latin America. Still, many continue to venture out after struggling with a lack of opportunity in Curitiba, the state's capital, and other towns in Paraná (Azevedo, 2016).

Beyond the agricultural, fishing, and port industries, the haphazard and explosive growth of the tourism industry in the mid- to late-20th century decidedly transformed natural and cultural landscapes as well as the lives of permanent residents of the coast. Both residents and the environments of the more tourism-dependent towns, such as Guaratuba, Matinhos, Pontal do Paraná, and some parts of Paranaguá, such as the Ilha do Mel island—known as Honey Island to English-speaking tourists—are extremely vulnerable to issues of seasonality (Corbari et al., 2021; Scheuer & Bahl, 2011), or high fluctuation of residents throughout the year. The areas of these towns that are closest to the beaches, that are better maintained by local governments and enjoy the highest levels of basic infrastructure are populated by second homes of vacationers that generally only occupy these homes during a few weeks a year during high season (Corbari & Azevedo, 2023; Azevedo, 2016).

During high season—especially during its biggest peaks: New Year's Eve and Carnaval—one observes the boosting the local economy and a pressuring of all public infrastructure, often to its breaking point. It is not uncommon, during these months, for residents and visitors to have their water supplies interrupted, their local beaches

contaminated due to the overloading of the town's sewage system, and increased prices for basic supplies at grocery stores. In Brazilian Portuguese, the term *veranista* is used to describe this group of occasional residents and second-home owners—mostly middle- to high-class citizens—which informally translates to “summerites” or “summer-ers”. Meanwhile, the socioeconomically vulnerable residents can be found in more isolated parts of town, often with restricted access to basic sanitation, water, and energy systems (Azevedo, 2016). In the following quote, Estades (2003) argues that investment put in to support the most critical economic pillars of the coast—the Paranaguá Port and tourism—do not find their way back into the communities that live there:

Its logic answers to and benefits sectors that are external to the region: in the case of the port, the producers, exporters, and all of the adjacent sectors, and in the case of tourism, beyond the economic sectors that operate on the local level, the principal beneficiaries are tourists, who belong to the middle and high classes, fundamentally from Curitiba. In this sense, the permanent population lives in the expectation of what comes from outside, rather than what they themselves can generate, which in great measure makes them powerless in searching paths to better conditions. (p. 38; translation by the author)

The consequences of these processes of “socio-spatial segregation and differentiation” (Azevedo, 2016; translation by the author) have led to the creation of several grassroots movements that support and advocate for community-based tourism which aims to raise awareness on responsible use of the land and sea and highlight Native knowledges and cultures (Betti & Denardin, 2019). One example of this is the “Rede Anfitriões do Litoral do Paraná”, or “Network of Hosts on the Paraná Coast”, a project created by the Federal University of Paraná to organize and promote local businesses that are owned by native residents (Cabral & Junior, 2020).

In her analysis of the Paraná coast, Estades (2003) bases herself on the economies of each town to divide them into three groups: the *port* towns of Paranaguá and Antonina,

the *rural* towns of Morretes and Guaraqueçaba, and the *beach-touristic* towns of Guaratuba, Matinhos, and Pontal do Paraná. The author makes sure to warn the reader that this is mostly based on economic factors and does not negate the possibility of grouping the towns differently based on other characteristics. Further research would be needed to investigate what changes might be necessary to this categorization, over 20 years after its conception. The Antonina Port, for example, might no longer be considered a deciding factor since the deactivation of one of its terminals in 2006 (Azevedo, 2016). Still, Estades (2003) grouping maintains its relevance, and it is useful to introduce this region to those unfamiliar with it. Fishing, agriculture, tourism, conservation, and port activity are at the core of the Paraná coast's collective identity, and it is crucial for any communicator reporting on environmental news in the area to understand how these fundamental pillars reveal themselves both within the boundaries of each of the seven towns, and in the larger universe of the coast altogether. As Estades (2003) states:

Therefore, to better address the population/environment relationship and capture the origin of environmental problems, it is recommended to not address the population as a homogenous whole but discriminate between segments and sectors with significantly different conditions, and examine how they place themselves and act, considering specific ecological characteristics. Then, it will be possible to prove that the true causes of environmental problems, many times attributed to demographic growth and/or migration movements, are, rather, in socioeconomic problems, at times structural, at times conjectural, reinforced by errors or the absence of public policy (HOGAN, 1997, p. 378-381; FOLADORI, 2001b, p. 123-126). (p. 34; translation by the author)

In the pages that follow, I will briefly describe each of the seven municipalities that compose the Paraná coast one by one, in an attempt to highlight some essential aspects of each one. These descriptions are by no means comprehensive or final, and the characteristics listed for each town are not mutually exclusive. For more detailed

accounts of each town, especially in relation to its socioenvironmental history, I emphatically suggest consulting each of the cited works in the following subsections.

Paranaguá

The city of Paranaguá is considered the first to be founded in the state, although this is often the subject of heated debate between residents of other towns, such as Antonina and Guaraqueçaba, that also find evidence to claim the title. Aside from its historical significance, Paranaguá is mostly known for being home to the Paranaguá Port. Inaugurated in 1935, the Paranaguá Port has shaped the town's identity as the economic center of the coast. The construction of the Port continues to fundamentally shape the town's landscape, simultaneously driving away and bringing in residents, dissolving entire neighborhoods, and greatly impacting local ecosystems. Beyond that, the implementation of the port is directly connected to the growth of short-stay and second-home tourism in all of the Paraná coast, since it prompted the construction of new roads from Curitiba to the coast and other basic infrastructural systems.

The port area is also known as a stage for international drug trafficking and gang disputes (Jacarandá, 2024), and, in 2023, Paranaguá ranked 34 among the 50 most violent cities in Brazil (Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública [FBSP], 2023). The presence of the port in Paranaguá has also brought upon its neighboring communities a range of environmental threats that have severely impacted their daily lives; from chemical leaks and explosions (Figueira, 2004) to the washing up of international trash from the ships to their shores (Fontana, 2016), and the worsening of air and water quality, which impacts the fishing industry (Smanioto, 2024). Brazil is often referred to as “*o país dos contrastes*”, or “the country of contrasts”, which is evident in Paranaguá. This is a space shared by social subjects on both ends of a highly polarized socioeconomic spectrum.

Still on contrasts, the grayness and griminess that can feel so prevalent in continental Paranaguá (Figure 13) are quickly forgotten when one disembarks at Ilha do Mel, one of Paraná's most sought out touristic locations—second only to the Iguazu Falls, the world's largest waterfall system. Located in the Paranaguá Bay, Ilha do Mel is often referred to as a tropical paradise (Figures 14 and 15). One can only explore the island on foot or biking, as there are no paved roads or motorized vehicles allowed. Only five thousand people are allowed on the island at once, and the only way in is via boat: either a one-and-a-half-hour trip from Paranaguá, or a shorter, thirty-minute trip from Pontal do Paraná (Instituto Água e Terra, 2024). The island's total area amounts to just over 2700 hectares, with over 93% of them being legally environmentally protected through the establishment of two conservation units, while portions of the remaining 7% are occupied by bed & breakfasts, camping sites, restaurants, and other amenities for tourists (Gonzaga et al., 2014).

Figure 13

Paranaguá Port (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2025).



Figure 14

Ilha do Mel (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2025).



Figure 15

Ilha do Mel (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2021).



The 1980s marked the boom of the tourism industry in the Paraná coast and especially in Ilha do Mel, when it saw the arrival of electricity and a regularly scheduled ferry system (Pierri et al., 2006) and its conservations units were established in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Native residents of Ilha do Mel were displaced from their homes within lands that became part of the conservation units. Many of these residents were dependent on the land and sea for income and food. In certain areas of the island, during the right times of the year, one can easily feel like the only person in what seems to be an untouched world. But in places such as the Encantadas beach, during all times of year, that illusion is shattered by the sight of a long line of intercontinental ships awaiting their turn to dock nearby at the Paranaguá Port.

Guaraqueçaba

When Portuguese colonizers first stepped foot in Paraná, in the early to mid-1500s, they were arriving in Guaraqueçaba (Muniz, 2017). The area is still mostly inhabited by the descendants of Indigenous, European, and enslaved Black communities—the mixture that characterizes the *caiçara* population, which will be described in more detail later in this chapter. Furthermore, Guaraqueçaba is also home to Indigenous Guarani Mbyá communities, specifically the Tekoá Kuaray Guata Porã and the Tekoá Kuaray Hacha groups, as well as communities that descend from *quilombola* communities, such as Rio Verde and Batuva (Muniz, 2017). The small town is an emblematic example of the socioenvironmental conflicts that arose from the implementation strict environmental regulation. While the town is the most environmentally well-conserved in the state, its Human Development Index (HDI) is of 0.587, which is lower than countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (0.587) and Honduras (0.606) (Betti & Denardin, 2019), and ranks 386 out of the 399

towns that comprise the state of Paraná (Muniz, 2017). For comparison, the HDI of the rest of the state is 0.749, and the HDIs of the other towns on the coast range between 0.686 (Morretes) and 0.750 (Paranaguá). Dumora (2006) describes this phenomenon:

Understanding and recognizing this paradox—the exaltation of ‘traditional’ communities and the repression of the activities that constitute the bases of material and social reproduction of resident populations in the APA [*Área de Proteção Ambiental*, or Environmental Protection Area]—does not mean in any way that the co-habitation of these populations with the forest is not susceptible to problems that can be observed from an environmental point of view. (p. 57; translation by the author)

Up until the 1930s, agricultural and fishing activity in Guaraqueçaba thrived. However, a series of factors have severely hindered communities’ abilities to continue with their production, aggressively limiting their source of income, food, and the ways they interacted with their land. Today, over 46% of the population lives in a condition of poverty (Muniz, 2017), and 98% of its rural population is in areas of very high social vulnerability (Azevedo, 2016). Historically, Guaraqueçaba families who still rely only on the extraction and management of natural resources as their main source of income are the ones in situations of greater fragility (Dumora, 2006). As Azevedo (2016) explains:

(...) a historical process of land concentration, resultant from public policy that fiscally incentivized agroforestry activities in the 1970s, environmental restrictions due to conservation units, geographic isolation, and a lack of roads for production outflow, a lack of economic resources and of public policy to maintain an agriculture that could be inserted into the market, among others. The result is the semi-proletarianization and the impoverishment of the population. (p. 108; translation by the author)

Residents of Guaraqueçaba found themselves unsupported in the transition into becoming a protected area, with some even resorting to clandestine ways of working the land for their own survival (Dumora, 2006). Even so, Guaraqueçaba residents have found ways to resist further marginalization and to keep *caiçara* culture, knowledge, and history

alive. In 2012, for example, the Fandango Caiçara—which is a traditional cultural expression of the *caiçara* people that includes music, dance, and the transference of traditional knowledge and values—was granted the title of Brazilian Immaterial Cultural Heritage by Brazil’s National Institute for Historic and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN, 2013; see Figure 16), after several years of community efforts to have their tradition federally recognized and legally protected (Muniz, 2017).

Figure 16

Photo taken at the Museu Vivo do Fandango, or Living Fandango Museum, also known as Akdov Bar, in Superagui (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2025).



More recently, scholars have documented the success of community-based tourism initiatives in the area as well. Betti and Denardin (2019) described the work of a group of twelve women in the Vila das Peças village that organized themselves into a non-profit association and opened the first and only bakery in the village. Even though the authors found that the initiative benefitted the community financially, professionally, and psychologically, they found some level of resentment in their interviews with the women of the non-profit toward tourists who stop by have little to no interaction with them, and improperly dispose of their trash.

Pontal do Paraná

Pontal do Paraná has been at the forefront of socioenvironmental conflict for decades, as it occupies an interesting position because of its history with both the tourism and the port industry. Real estate speculation in Pontal do Paraná dates back to the 1920s but found strength in the early 1950s with government-backed efforts to transform the area into what Corbari et al. (2021) describe as a “pleasure periphery” (Turner & Ash, 1991; translation by Corbari et al., 2021): a space that may be lacking in touristic infrastructure yet is sought out by high- and middle-class visitors interested in either building second homes for private vacation use, or to rent out to tourists. This is made possible through a process of government and industry actors working together and displacing local communities—often illegally—in favor of real estate development (Corbari & Azevedo, 2023; Corbari et al., 2021).

Much like in the rest of the Paraná coast, the urbanization and general growth of the area occurred in a drastically inordinate manner, dictated by economic interests of government and industry alike, pushing traditional communities into marginalization and pressuring local ecosystems. As explained by Corbari and Azevedo (2023): “(...) tourism

appropriates itself of natural and cultural elements to grow” (p. 371; translation by the author) and greatly shape power relations in that space. Today, most tourists in Pontal do Paraná are second-home owners, who generally contribute significantly less to the local economy in comparison to short-stay tourists, who spend on lodging, restaurants, local businesses, etc. (Corbari et al., 2021).

Partly because of this unstable flow of income that plagues the touristic towns of the coast, Pontal do Paraná has also been targeted by the port industry since the 1970s (Onofre et al., 2018). Some defend that becoming an industrial and port hub would solve Pontal do Paraná’s seasonality problems by bringing in a constant flow of visitors year-round, and that the environmental characteristics of its location render it a prime spot for the construction of a new port (Corbari & Azevedo, 2023). An area known as Ponta do Poço is relatively close to the city, and offers a naturally deep ship draft, making it a coveted spot specifically by the private company Porto Pontal (Corbari et al., 2021). This territory, however, has been inhabited by the Maciel community, a fishing village, for at least 300 years (Onofre et al., 2018).

The development of this project that began to intensify in 2008, with the launching of the corporate bidding process, and later again in 2016 when the federal government authorized, via decree, the construction of the port (Corbari et al., 2021; Correio do Litoral, 2016), sparked outrage and nation-wide movements against it by environmental activists, academics, artists, politicians, and more. One well-known example is the *Salve a Ilha do Mel*, or *Save Honey Island*, movement, which became prominent in 2018 with the release of an original song and music video interpreted by local activists and artists (Observatório de Justiça e Conservação, 2018). The construction

of the port would inflict, among other consequences, significant socioenvironmental impact on the tourist-favorite island.

It is crucial to highlight that the actors spearheading these movements were not members of traditional communities or grassroots social movements, but rather academics and environmentalists (Corbari et al., 2021). Many locals still avidly support the initiative, mainly due to the adjacent undertaking that would necessarily occur in the area surrounding the port, called Faixa de Infraestrutura, or Infrastructure Strip, which would include the revitalization of roads and new networks of electricity, water supply, and sanitation (Corbari et al., 2021).

Guaratuba

Like Pontal do Paraná, Guaratuba is attractive to those looking for what Brazilian scholars describe as “*turismo de sol e praia*”, or “sun-and-beach tourism”: highly seasonal tourism in mostly urbanized areas that provide ample access to several beaches, as well as basic infrastructure and entertainment, including concerts, bars, street fairs, sporting events, restaurants, chain grocery stores, pharmacies, churches, and more (Prado et al., 2012; Scheuer & Bahl, 2011). The town has its own yacht club, and most of the beach-front and neighboring properties are owned by socioeconomic elites, who reside and work in the state’s capital of Curitiba and are generally in town during high season (Azevedo, 2016). An intense flow of tourists during summer months pushes the town’s infrastructure to its limits, much like the other tourism-dependent towns in the area. The environmental impact of mass tourism is most striking in the days surrounding events such as New Year’s Eve and Carnaval, when residents and visitors alike struggle with water shortages, the overloading of the sewage system and consequent contamination of

local sea water, insufficient waste management, and a rise in cases of dengue and stomach viruses.

Beyond the Summer months, the only other moment in the year in which Guaratuba sees significant numbers of tourists coming in is in July, when they host the Festa do Divino—a 10-day long Catholic celebration that, traditionally, takes place 50 days after Easter. Residents will take advantage of the economic boost that comes with millions of tourists in the high season but can dramatically struggle during the other eight months of the year. According to Scheuer & Bahl (2011):

(...) there is a great increase in unemployment; the revenue of business drops sharply; there is a decline in services offered and idleness; a rise in criminality, due to the scarcity of jobs and income. During this time, people see their self-esteem drop, and one of the consequences is the accumulation of debt within the population. (p. 312; translation by the author)

At the same time, Guaratuba is home to the largest conservation unit (UC) in the region, which comprises 98.5% of its territory (Pierri, 2006), and, along with the Paranaguá Estuarine Complex, the Guaratuba Bay hosts most of the rural *caiçara* and fishing communities on the coast (Azevedo, 2016). Agriculture is another economic pillar in Guaratuba mostly focused on the cultivation of bananas, cassava, and rice (Fernandes et al., 2017; Azevedo, 2016), as well as extraction of heart-of-palm, *xaxim* trees, and bromeliads (Fernandes et al., 2017). Most of the agricultural activities within the UC are family-based (Fernandes et al., 2017), yet commercial and industrial-scale fishing are also present in the city (Andriguetto-Filho et al., 2006). Some of the more isolated communities in the environmentally protected areas still await to be connected to water, electricity, and sanitation systems (Fernandes et al., 2017).

Matinhos

Matinhos is the smallest town in coastal Paraná in terms of size and consolidated its status as a vacation spot in the 1930s, supporting itself to this day with a mainly tourism- and fishing-based economy (Vikou et al., 2017; Andreoli, 2007). Like Guaratuba and Pontal do Paraná, Matinhos is also a site of sun-and-beach tourism. It has a well-established surfing scene, the most expensive and beach-front sections of town are also the less populated—indicating that most are owned by non-residents—and the lives of those who are residents are deeply affected by seasonality and mass tourism (Stellfeld & Passos, 2018). In one acute example, occasional-use homes make up 86% of Caiobá, one of Matinhos' most famous beaches (Neves et al., 2020). In their interview study, Neves and Filippim (2020) sought out to document the perspectives of city councilors on matters of tourism in Matinhos. They found that while city council considers tourism as a vital activity, they had superficial perceptions of the current infrastructural systems in place, and mostly cursory suggestions on how to better support the number of tourists that visit during summer months, and on how to keep that number growing (Neves and Filippim, 2020). This lack of experience in public policy and management is a central aspect of why the Paraná coast grew so quickly and inordinately (Neves et al., 2020; Stefanello & Silveira, 2005). As Birckolz et al. (2012) points out about the growth of Matinhos:

In the formation of this town, one can observe, as in other areas of the country, the bewilderment with models of progress and modernization, many times crooked, that pushed a large part of the population into, among other things, irregularity, illegality, and poverty, in a way exposing them to social exclusion, pushing the less fortunate to devalued areas that often offer risks to their health and wellbeing. (p. 1; translation by the author)

Real estate interest has played a vital role in how different neighborhoods in Matinhos and towns alike are more or less vulnerable to environmental threats, including extreme weather and its consequences. Stellfeld & Passos (2018) reflect on how the southern section of the Brava Beach in Matinhos is well-maintained and valued by local government and the real estate sector, even though most of the town's population does not reside there, and high rates of erosion are not observed. Meanwhile, the heavily eroded areas that are home to most permanent residents are seldom a focus point to decision and policy makers (Stellfeld & Passos, 2018). As a result, residents of these areas become exceedingly vulnerable to increasingly frequent and violent episodes of extreme weather, mainly extreme heat, heavy storms, and flooding (Stefanello & Silveira, 2005).

Morretes

Morretes agricultural industry was once one of the most important economic drivers of the state, but in the 1950s, agricultural activities in the mountains of Morretes were largely abandoned and farmers moves to humid plain areas and invested in livestock and other crops, including cassava and banana (Pierri et al., 2006). Morretes faced another crisis in the 1980s, losing space in the market to the town of Guaratuba, as well as towns in the neighboring states of São Paulo and Santa Catarina. This led to yet another transformation in the local agricultural landscape, as Morretes transitioned to more technologically sophisticated systems for growing ginger and various vegetables (Azevedo, 2016).

The town has a historically preserved downtown area, where tourists can eat, walk along the Nhundiaquara River, and purchase a variety of local artwork and delicacies (Figure 17). In Morretes, tourists find one of Paraná's most famous dishes called

barreado (Figure 18), which is a beef stew cooked in a clay pot for at least twelve hours with bay leaves, cumin, and other spices, served with local cassava flour and bananas. Traditionally, the stew in the clay pot would be buried and left to cook underground overnight. In 2022, the *barreado* was granted a geographical indication (GI) status, which reaffirms the exclusivity of this dish to the Paraná coast (similar to champagne that can only be found in the Champagne region of France, while sparkling wines made in other areas carry the “champagne” title) and serves as a tool to acclaim local products and strengthen their relation to place (da Rocha et al., 2024). Another important point of touristic attention is the Serra Verde Express, a world-renowned scenic and historic train ride that rides from Curitiba directly to Morretes and Antonina through the Serra do Mar mountain range, in the Atlantic Forest. Morretes has found great success in marketing itself as a historical and culinary must-see in Paraná (Perri et al., 2006) and as an eco-tourism destination, offering several guided hikes to nearby waterfalls and mountains.

Figure 17

Downtown Morretes (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2024).



Figure 18

Barreado in Morretes (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2021).



Antonina

Similarly, the neighboring town of Antonina is sought out by eco-tourists, especially since it is home to the highest mountain in Southern Brazil, the Pico Paraná, which has an elevation of almost 1880 meters, or around 6,150 feet. The towns of Antonina and Morretes share many similarities, mainly in the kinds of experiences they offer to visitors: historical, artistic, culinary, and of the outdoors. But Antonina is not as sought out by visitors as Morretes partially since it is more difficult to access (Azevedo, 2016). Morretes, for comparison, can be a stop on one's way to or from the coast and Curitiba. A trip to Antonina requires a detour. But one aspect of Antonina has set it apart from its neighboring towns: its famous banana candy—the Bala de Banana de Antonina—that was also granted a GI status just two years after the *barreado*, adding to its potential as a touristic destination. Aside from tourism, one other feature that Morretes and Antonina share is that, in March of 2011, both towns were severely affected by one of the most catastrophic extreme weather events in the history of the Paraná coast: intense rainfall caused landslides that left four dead and over 30 thousand displaced (Picanço & Nunes, 2013). Antonina is largely regarded as a town that has stopped in time or where time itself stops. As said by Pereira (2018): “At first sight, it is easy to determine that Antonina's present is its past” (p. 14; translation by the author). While in the past Antonina was a busy port city that was central to the export of *erva mate*, a local kind of herb and important agricultural product of the region (Pereira, 2018), today, many seek it out for calm and quiet.

***Caiçara* Communities**

But the coast of Paraná has not always been a tourism hub. Originally inhabited and managed by various Indigenous groups, the area was transformed into what it is

today by the arrival of European colonizers, settlers, and enslaved Africans between the 16th and 19th centuries (Bazzo, 2011). While there are still Native communities along the Paraná coast, mostly members of the Guarani, Kaingangue, and Xetá peoples (Alves et al., 2022), those who descend from the mixture of these groups are referred to as *caiçaras*, although concrete definitions for the term have been disputed for decades. The term has its origins in the Indigenous Guarani language; the word *caá-içara* was used to describe a type of fence commonly used in their tribes, yet, with time, began to be used to name refer to coastal residents in Paraná and other neighboring states (Anacleto et al., 2007). Some employ it to describe anyone who is a resident of the coast, while others understand that *caiçaras* are those dependent on the sea and the land (Diegues, 2004; Hering 2024; Diegues, 1999). These communities are characterized by subsistence and artisanal farming and fishing, often cultivating bananas, pineapple, rice, coffee, sugarcane, cassava, as well as handcrafting of work instruments and cultural expressions such as the Fandango Caiçara (Hering, 2024; Muniz, 2017; Anacleto et al., 2016)

Historically, the term has carried some negative connotation, having been associated with ideas of laziness, backwardness, and isolation from modern society and its civilized values (Hering, 2024). At the same time, *caiçara* communities are often understood as examples of the “noble savage” trope, living primitively yet harmoniously within nature (Adams, 2000; Hering, 2024). The *caiçaras*, collectively, are a considered one of 28 federally recognized traditional peoples and communities in Brazil, which the Brazilian Ministry for the Environment and Climate Change defines as:

Culturally differentiated and recognize themselves as such. They have their own models of social organization, occupy and use territories and natural resources as a condition for their cultural, social, religious, ancestral, and economic reproduction. They employ knowledge, innovation, and practices generated and

transmitted from generation to generation. Their ways of life may find in hunting, fishing, and the extraction of plants and other resources sources of food and income. They contribute, simultaneously, to the conservation of Brazilian biodiversity, the biggest on the planet. (Brasil, n.d, para. 2 and 3; translation by the author)

Despite the title and status, they are often in conditions of socioeconomic and political vulnerability. Onofre, Antiquera, and Quadros (2018) state that: even though “traditional peoples and communities have a legal apparatus provided for in laws, international treaties and conventions (...) situations of illegality become recurrent when it comes to neo-developmental interests seeking unprecedented profit.” (p. 6; translation by the author). One of the dimensions of *caiçara* culture that is directly threatened by that is fishing, which has been pushed to its limits by restrictive environmental regulation, real estate speculation, globalization of culture and food consumption habits, modernization, disappearing of wildlife, and more (Hering, 2024; Andriguetto-Filho et al., 2022). According to the 1988 Brazilian Constitution, the professional fishing industry is organized in several levels, from the National Confederation of Fishermen to regional Fishing Colonies, which have previously been equated to labor unions (Façanha & Da Silva, 2017). Fishing in the Paraná coast is considered small scale, and Mendonça et al. (2017) estimate that the community is of about 5752 people, most of them registered with the appropriate authorities. Fishing has been a central pillar of *caiçara* communities in the region long before the arrival of Portuguese colonizers searching for gold in the 16th century and, between the 18th to mid 19th centuries, fishing was one of the most important economic drivers in the country (Anacleto et al., 2017; Andreoli, 2007). Fishing activities in the towns of Guaratuba, Matinhos, and Pontal do Paraná occur mainly in open sea

waters, while fishing in Guaraqueçaba, Antonina, and Paranaguá are mostly estuarine (Andriguetto-Filho et al., 2006).

The high quality of locally sourced seafood, including fish, shrimp, crab, and some of the “best oysters in the world” (Prefeitura de Guaratuba, 2023; translation by the author), is often highlighted in marketing efforts that sell coastal Paraná as a prime vacation spot. What is not highlighted, however, is the socioeconomic fragility of the fishing communities that have managed the area for centuries (Anacleto et al., 2024), and how they continue to work without basic adequate infrastructure, relying on rudimentary technology in every step of the process—fishing, cleaning, selling, and distributing—with little government support, in competition with industrial fishing companies, and restricted access to their places due to environmental regulations (Anacleto et al., 2017; de Azevedo & Pierri, 2014; Pierri et al., 2006). Furthermore, scholars and community members have pointed out that large-scale, industrial fishing vessels often do not respect the very restrictions that are enforced upon *caiçara* communities—at times, violently—further endangering the practice of artisanal fishing and significantly damaging local ecosystems (Hering, 2024; Andreoli, 2007).

The ecological exuberance of the Atlantic Forest characterizes it as a hotspot for industries, conservationists, and researchers from around the world. With exceptions, this led to the building of well-known tensions between locals and outsiders—both those interested in preserving the Atlantic Forest, and those seeking to extract from it. One example encapsulates this paradoxical dynamic. In the early to mid 1980s, residents of Barra de Ararapira, a subsistence fishing and farming village that was home to just over 130 inhabitants in the Superagui Island (according to data from 2009 in Bazzo, 2011),

which is part of Guaraqueçaba, fought against a private company that had covertly negotiated with local government their plans to deforest the area, displace its residents by introducing herds of buffalo to the region, and, eventually, develop a housing complex amid the “pristine” natural landscape (Bazzo, 2011; Muniz, 2008; Von Behr, 1991). Residents organized to demarcate their lands, confront the company’s foremen, and file formal complaints with the appropriate authorities alongside groups of environmentalists who long advocated for the protection of the area (Bazzo, 2011). Their efforts finally resulted in the state prohibiting the company to move forward with their project, and, eventually, in the creation of the Superagui National Park. The area was now considered a conservation unit, being granted full environmental protection by state government.

What Bazzo (2011) reports, however, is that residents were never consulted in the process of creating and expanding the park. The author describes the clash that resulted from this lack of conversation between local communities and conservationists: “on one side, a group with strong ties to its place thanks to a constant exercise of memory; on the other, public policy in which national parks are spaces of integral protection, where human action is vetoed to ensure the planet’s future” (p. 65; translation by the author).

Suddenly, the ways of living in this land were no longer acceptable. In other words,

Bazzo (2011) argues:

It is noticeable, in this historical account, the configuration of a ‘double bind’ (Ramos, 1998, p. 289): natives that risked their lives in defending territory, that were key players in the discovery of a new species, supporting, indirectly, the environmentalist cause, have their space become a conservation unit based on a norm that considers their presence there illegal. (p. 68; translation by the author)

This dynamic is not exclusive to Barra de Ararapira and has been threatening traditional communities across the coast. In another example, Gonzaga, Denkwicz, and

Prado (2014) detail the displacement of the Ponta Oeste fishing community, located in Ilha do Mel. Ponta Oeste was home to the first school in Ilha do Mel, inaugurated in 1985, and to the only voting zone in the island. But, according to the authors, the pressures brought on by the establishment of conservation units in the 1990s fractured the community of over 200 residents, almost 40% of which were children. The school and voting site were shut down by state government, and local fishermen and women struggled as the quantity and quality of sea creatures declined, which the authors attributed to the impact of the Paranaguá Port (Gonzaga et al., 2014). The authors also reported that around 50 residents remained in Ponta Oeste, living in precarious conditions, while other authors have considered the fishing village extinct (Silva et al., 2019; Fuzetti & Corrêa, 2009).

Beyond colonization, modernization, real estate development, and ill-conceived environmental regulations, these communities have also been transformed by the expansion of Protestant religions that prohibited the practice of traditional cultural expressions. In summing up this phenomenon, Hering (2024) states:

Real estate speculation, restrictive environmental legislation, religious pressure, the opening of roads, the urbanization of the coast, the proletarianization of the *caiçara* population, and social inequalities (Adams, 2000; Diegues, 2004; Martins, 2018; Muniz, 2017), have negatively impacted the *caiçara*'s traditional ways of living, threatening both the survival of their way of life, their use of land and their territorial rights, as well as the coastal ecosystem that is the Atlantic Forest, that is a source of resources for the *caiçaras* and of great importance to biodiversity (Adams, 2000; Diegues, 2004), *transforming this cultural landscape in a territory of a people that does not own land, and finds itself as endangered as the biome they inhabit.* (p. 24; translation by the author; highlight by the author)

The socioeconomic shifts of the late 20th century caused profound anxiety to the residents that had been there prior, and a great deal of tension that persists between such communities, tourists, the promise of “progress” and “development” by politicians and

related industries, and environmentalist movements (Pigosso et al., 2018). Gonzaga, Denkewicz, and Prado (2014) argue that:

The importance of Conservation Units (UCs) grows concomitantly to the discrepancies between the needs for economic growth and sustainability in using the planet's natural resources. However, this does not protect the establishment of UCs from the opposition of a significant portion of communities affected by them. Therefore, the task of managing Conservation Units becomes more political than technical, although it is much easier to protect and conserve the environment through a technical standpoint than a social and political one. Because of this, the solutions to the problems involving multiple social interests require an approach that is sensitive to the cultural and environmental diversity in question. (p. 62; translation by the author)

As stated by Pigosso, Moscal, and Goldbach (2018): "It is noticeable that conflicts occur both between populations and the activities that cause environmental impact and between them and consequences of environmental norms" (p. 122; translation by the author). Pierri's (2006) argument supports this:

The issue with UCs is not just their creation, localization, extension, and adequate definition of its regime. They have a double challenge of accomplishing the will to protect dictated by society in the moment of its creation, but also to attend to the sustainability of the human population that inhabits them. The implementation and authoritarian management of UCs, alienated in naturalism, has shown itself to be doubly inefficient in relation to both goals, therefore the issue must go through strategies that render the local population the principal beneficiaries of possible economic activities, which will make them the best guardians of the resources they are dependent on. (p. 152; translation by the author)

Regulation, research, development, industry, and policy that are blind to how different communities that occupy the coast of Paraná relate to place continue to obstruct and endanger the transmission of knowledge through generations of the traditional peoples in the Atlantic Forest (Hering, 2024). While there has been some improvement in the dialogues between decisionmakers and community members, this dynamic continues to permeate the relationships between residents and their places of work, leisure, cultural expression, tradition, religion, and survival. Beyond that, it directly informs their

perceptions of pro-environmental action in the area, as well as their positions before opinion leaders, such as policymakers, non-profit organizations, industry leaders, academic researchers, and media outlets. Therefore, understanding the history, discourse, and power imbalances that create such nuance in how environmental policy affects those who reside in protected spaces is crucial in any investigation of environmental media and communication.

CHAPTER IV

“THERE’S A LOT MORE IDENTITY HIDDEN THERE TO BE DUG OUT AND SHOWN”: DECODING SENSE OF SELF-IN-PLACE

P8 was a fisherman in his 70s. After our hour-long Zoom interview, I asked if I could meet him in person next time I was in Paranaguá—where he was born, raised, and where he began to fish with his father at the age of five. He enthusiastically answered yes. A few months later, I was there. I had two interviews scheduled that day—one in a different town—then the hour-and-a-half drive back home to Curitiba. I explained to him why I was in a rush, and that I could stop by for a quick “hello” on my way to the next interview in Antonina. My mother and unofficial research assistant/driver decided to wait outside, in the car, after I assured her that I would not be long. Warm greetings were exchanged as he told me to take a seat, and I apologized for being in a bit of a hurry. He took a deep breath, and said: “So, Beatriz, when I was five years old...” I made myself comfortable, I felt a little sorry for my mother, and I listened. I had already heard everything he was sharing with me in our interview, but I listened again. When I got up to leave, a while later, he made sure to walk me to the car and meet my mother. He shook her hand with a polite excitement. “She said she was going to come visit us,” he told her. “And she did!” He was surprised. As I got in the car, he said: “Don’t forget us!” What I saw in him was something I saw in all community member participants I interviewed: looked at constantly, but rarely seen. And they want to be.

While feeling high levels of distrust and disappointment towards institutions such as local and state government, industries, and, at times, local media, participants emphatically agreed that environmental journalism plays an essential role in supporting

their grassroots initiatives, despite their overall disappointment at how little they see themselves and their preservation efforts contemplated in local environmental coverage. Most participants construct negotiated readings of local environmental coverage, followed closely by oppositional readings, and, scarcely, preferred readings. The majority of participants—including residents and journalists—characterized their current environmental coverage as falling into a tourism-or-catastrophe binary, meaning that the coast rarely gets much media attention outside of the high season, summer months, and environmental disasters. While many residents agreed that such topics are worthy of increased media attention, all reported that an environmental coverage that is limited to these two aspects of their experience is wildly insufficient.

Place is inherent aspect of who these residents are. It is a vital part of their identity. And, as stated by P0: “There’s a lot more identity hidden there to be dug out and shown.” Several residents reported feeling the devastation of their environments on a personal level. As put by P2: “This is so part of me (...) I feel pain every time I see (...) something that hurts the environment as a whole, I suffer. I suffer with anxiety. There were times where I cried of anger, seeing things that appalled me.” But, overall, participants did not feel represented or even addressed in the current coverage. P30, a capital-based journalist, encapsulated this sentiment by stating that, in his view, current environmental coverage of the Paraná coast is focused on “tourism for those who want to be a tourist, and not tourism for the ones who want to offer tourism.” Even though P30’s remarks were in relation to tourism, specifically, the idea that current coverage fails to speak with local audiences—at least, in their point of view—can be applied to several other environmental topics, even when the coverage is made by and targeted towards locals.

This miscommunication is what Hall (2007) defines as a “distortion”, a common misunderstanding that can occur when there is some level of asymmetry between the encoder and decoder. The distortions identified in the experiences of participants that lead them to having mostly negotiated or oppositional readings of environmental coverage are undoubtedly connected to the three subthemes described in this chapter, that begin to describe participants’ senses of self-in-place.

This chapter describes the mechanisms behind residents’ decoding processes through one main theme, *Decoding Sense of Self-in-Place*, in reference to Cantrill & Senecah (2001), and three subthemes: *Mixed Relationships with Place*; *Overburdened, Overlooked*; and *Strength in Care and Community*. The main theme and subthemes tell the story of how community members’ senses of self-in-place shape and are shaped by their decoding of local environmental coverage. Generally, they have negotiated readings of the environmental content they consume, which can be explained by the intricacy of their relationships with their places, people, and environment—both in the literal sense and as a concept and institution that is teeming with contradictory meanings and connotations constructed over centuries of colonization, exploitation, resistance, and connection. The interviews also revealed contradictory relationships of trust between community members and coast-based media. While many reported having high levels of distrust for coast-based media, attributed to their awareness that local outlets are often funded by local governments and corporations, many also reported being more trusting of coast-based—as opposed to capital-based—journalists, suggesting a disconnect between participants’ understandings of “the media” on a structural level, and their perceptions of local journalists on an interpersonal level, who most see as fellow community members.

Mixed Relationships with Place

In conversation with communication scholars Tema Milstein and José Castro-Sotomayor (2020), cultural ecologist and geophilosopher David Abram explained place as: “a dimension filled with specificity and uniqueness, wherein each point in the terrain is richly different from any other point. Why? Because of the way things happen there! Because of the rhythm, the complex dynamism of each place” (p. 15). Even though the residents of the Paraná coast share a relatively small space compared to the coastal areas of other Brazilian states, the meanings attributed to their places are widely varied, which directly inform their senses of self-in-place (Cantrill & Senecah, 2001) and shape the mechanisms through which any kind of environmental messaging is decoded.

The topic of extreme weather is quite present in current discourse around the environment on the Paraná coast, given the intensity of recent storm and flooding events, mainly the 2022 landslide that killed two, and closed off the main roads that connect the coast to the rest of the state (Luc, 2022). P4 is a resident of Antonina, the town that saw the coast’s most catastrophic and deadly landslide in 2011. She was not in town when it happened and remembers losing all contact with her family members—only being able to find out if they were safe at the end of the day. She says she lives in “a town that is surrounded by nature and environmental threats. At any moment it can happen—there can be a landslide (...) every summer, it’s in god’s hands.” A rainy day alone, according to P4, is enough to trigger the town’s collective trauma, which has grown, given the increasing number of extreme weather events on the coast.

Still, to some, living this close to such natural exuberance is a privilege. P7, a Guaratuba resident, states that his is “a town that has been very, very blessed by the

riches that the sea has given us (...) We're talking about an environmental wealth that is very, very abundant." Many described it as a paradise, as refuge—even those living in situations of extreme socioeconomic and environmental vulnerability. For members of traditional communities, to whom nature is a means for work and income, these vulnerabilities became more pronounced with the implementation of restrictive environmental policy. Locals' relationships with their places are layered and deeply nuanced. Place can represent their sustenance, income, their homes, their spaces of leisure, and their history with environmentalisms that have completely altered their relationships with the land. P5, an artisanal fisherman, has been in the modest home his grandfather built, steps away from the ocean, for fishing, for three generations. Today, his presence is considered irregular. This is made clear to anyone who approaches the wooden house, via a sign placed by state authorities (See Figure 19).

Figure 19

Sign on P5's house that reads: "Irregular Occupation. Construction Forbidden." (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2025).



To fisherfolk, nature is often cause for fear. As P5 puts it:

[Living] here—it's a privilege. Few have this privilege, of living in front of a setting like this, that supports our family. There's the dangerous part too, of the big tides rising. We think about that, right? Global warming these days.

Similarly, P8 said: "Us, fishers, when we leave for the sea, we don't know if we're coming back." Some, including P8, have lost loved ones in the environment they still care to protect, whether for the environment's sake, or their own. In some parts of the coast, such as the Ilha de Superagui most residents are completely dependent on fishing. P14 is in her 60s and was born and raised in Superagui—an island of approximately 1000 residents in Guaraqueçaba that only gained access to electricity in the late 1990s. According to her, the mayor has just recently assigned a doctor to the island, but only two days a week. Now, they are advocating for a police station. One amongst eleven siblings, all supported by her father's fishing, P14 left school after the first grade without ever learning to read. She got married and pregnant before turning 18, and, like the generations that came before her, built a life through fishing and farming.

During my time with her, she introduced me to several members of her family. She referred to almost every fellow islander as either a cousin, or someone married to one of her cousins. Like most families in Superagui, the men fish and the women clean what they bring back before selling it to the mainland. Like many others reporting a steady decline in the local fish population and struggling with rigorous environmental restrictions that prohibit many of the land- and sea-based activities they once relied on for work and sustenance, P14's family have turned to the tourism industry to supplement their waning income. They have a small bed & breakfast (see Figure 20) and restaurant and offer to take visitors on day trips to neighboring islands, hikes, and waterfalls.

Figure 20

Room in P14's bed & breakfast (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2025).



But Superagui's overall lack of infrastructure hinders its touristic potential, and P14 reported hosting few guests over a one-, two- at best, month period. Still, P14 sees tourism as an opportunity for more "dignified" work and a better life. She remembers the impact the implementation of environmental restrictions had on the island:

It was very bad. Very. Because no one was used to this. Everyone lived... All the time, whenever you could go fishing, you'd go (...) I get really sad. Because they want to do some things that you can't do. Before, here we grew cassava, which helped us a lot. We grew cassava, we made flour (...) We grew fruits, grew vegetables. Now we can't, because if you farm anything, god forbid, they'll fine you and you don't have the money to pay the fine.

P6 who arrived at Ilha do Mel as an infant with his parents in the 1950s, remembers what it was like when the first environmental officers, whom he describes as “illiterate bureaucrats”, disembarked on the island:

(...) they marginalized the people. Everyone who lived on the island was an outlaw because they would find reasons to fine you or a reason to fight, to beat you up (...) He didn't come to talk to the people. He came to kill the people. The people might be ignorant in terms of schooling, but they're doctors in nature. Conductors of nature. And they were never respected (...) Although the thing is “more polite” these days. But there was a time, when I came here, it was just horse kicks (...) First they beat you up and then asked what your name was. But then you were already beaten up.

P21, from Guaraqueçaba, has similar memories from the early 1990s:

No one consulted anyone about the creation of anything. They just imposed it. Top-to-bottom imposition. During that time, I saw the early 1990s, when officers had much more funding... You don't see this today because the funding is probably depleted. It's not that it's changed. They're probably out of funding. But see, I saw this. For example, armed surveillance (...) 12-gauge for fishermen (...) Lots of cases like this. So, it brought on a huge problem for the continuity of that way of life (...) It didn't hear anyone, didn't consult anyone, it only restricted us and came to fine and arrest us.

P9, who leads one community organization in Guaratuba, questioned:

“Conservation units at a Brazil level were only established in the 90s, with the idea of Eco... Rio92 and all (...) But the question that remains is who preserved all of this that we're looking at until 92?” Today, he works on several environmental education initiatives, many of which financed with his own resources. He explains that his work is necessary because the preservation of his local environment helps to preserve the world, as a whole. “But what are we left with?” He asks. “We're left with the difficulty for my son to remain in this territory? You have to send him away because this isn't for him?” Similarly, P22, from Morretes, said he was lucky to be able to find employment and stay

in town, because the towns on the coast “around eighteen, nineteen, twenty, if not earlier sometimes, still, unfortunately, the towns... they start to push you out.”

Every participant interviewed in this study agreed on the importance of having strict systems in place to protect the Atlantic Forest. But, as victims of and witnesses to certain brands of environmentalism that made little effort to protect its people and culture—but that conveniently allowed for the advance of the port, real estate, and tourism industries—many participants had attributed negative connotations to the word “environment” or “environmentalist”, which have naturally shaped their readings of local environmental media coverage—or the lack thereof. Among many other participants, P19 expressed her frustration at the local government she described as “hypocritical”, that has “expelled *caiçaras* from their territory, from their places” in the name of environmental protection, yet residents in some areas still struggle to access basic sanitation systems and waste management, leading to the pollution of rivers and the ocean that they rely on for water, food, work, and leisure.

Beyond the impact of environmental restrictions and tourism on fishing, agriculture, and other activities that directly supported *caiçara* populations in Paraná and beyond, these processes have also had a direct impact on popular cultural expressions, such as the Fandango Caiçara. The case of the Fandango Caiçara is another emblematic example of outside pressures that have dampened local cultural identities. The Fandango is a form of *caiçara* cultural expression that can be found on the coast between the states of Santa Catarina and Rio de Janeiro, and it encompasses its own genre of music, dance, folklore, art, work, and more (Hering, 2024; Muniz, 2017; Figure 21). However, it is important to note that not every *caiçara* is considered a *fandangueiro*, just as not every

fandanguero consider themselves *caiçaras* (Hering, 2024). In line with Hall's (1990) conceptualization of cultural identity, the definitions and understandings of these terms are fluid, disputed, and charged with meaning that is attributed on the social and individual levels. Any attempt to constrict such terms into bounded categories would only perpetuate the marginalization of perspectives that dissent from hegemonic discourse.

Figure 21

Map of Brazil highlighting the states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Paraná, and Santa Catarina (Source: Google Maps, 2025).



There are several occasions where one would find Fandango groups playing to a dancing audience currently, including personal and cultural celebrations, religious

holidays, popular culture festivals, educational/awareness initiatives, and more (Hering, 2024; Muniz, 2017; Rodrigues, 2013; Martins, 2006). Yet there is one occasion worth highlighting in the context of this study, in which the Fandango has historically been present and that is currently fading: the *mutirões*, or task forces, assembled by community members to support a fellow community member in need of completing a specific task. This task could be anything a neighbor needed help with, mainly within the realm of local practices of agriculture, fishing, building, and so on. The hosts would then organize and provide the Fandango, once the task was complete, as payment to those who participated in the *mutirão*. The *fandangueiros* would play their instruments, sing, and stomp their *tamancos*, (a specific kind of footwear used to stomp on the ground, contributing to the beat of the song) and community members would drink, eat, and dance until the next morning (Hering, 2024; Muniz, 2017). The Fandango tradition showcases how values of communion, collaboration, and solidarity have been central in these communities (Diegues & Coelho, 2013).

But, today, the Fandango is commonly mistaken by those external to the *caiçara* universe as merely a “show” or “spectacle”, which negates the fact that the Fandango is often an essential aspect of the *caiçara* identity, as its practice is intrinsically related to their experience and knowledge of the natural environment (Hering, 2024; Muniz, 2017; Diegues & Coelho, 2013). Traditionally, the instruments used in the Fandango are handmade with locally sourced materials—such as the wood used in the confection of the *violas*, *rabecas*, and *tamancos*, and the leather needed for the *adufo* (Hering, 2024; Muniz, 2017). Access to such materials, however, has been limited by a series of factors, including environmental degradation, the spread of restrictive Protestant religious

systems, the interruption of generational knowledge transmission, and culturally blind environmental law that protects the resource yet not those who have managed it for centuries. As these communities have been pushed away from their social and physical spaces and into urban centers, the reality is that many *caiçaras* today struggle to access necessary resources to maintain the integrity of certain traditions, further muffling a historically marginalized identity, jeopardizing its survival amid threats of modernization, and continuously interrupting the flow of generational knowledge regarding how to responsibly source and work within this environment. De Carvalho (2012) underscored the profound connection between the maintenance of traditional culture and the environment itself, by pointing out that:

The path taken by popular cultures in the past century is, therefore, analogous to the history of all Brazilian biomes (...) one by one, our biomes have been preyed upon by the expansion of an unequal and excluding economic system that brands our society since 1500. (de Carvalho, 2012, p. 45; translation by the author)

His statement is echoed by P21:

There are impacts on several fronts; environmental being one that came to transform a lot in this way of life, right? Of sociability. The Fandango was nothing but a community party to play and to celebrate (...) You'll gather the community to celebrate what? If the parties were around pulling harvest? (...) You don't have anything to celebrate anymore, so you don't have the Fandango.

These transformations in the ways in which *caiçaras* interact with their land have been pivotal in the construction of the narratives told about them, and what they tell themselves. "There are people that look at the fisher as if they were a crawling snake," P12 said. P5 reflected on the reputation fishers have: "fishers drink, fishers smoke. I don't. I have a family (...) We have a life like the others, normal." Similarly, P8 provided a reminder: "we are not thugs." Many participants mentioned experiencing or observing a sense of shame around being considered *caiçara*. "We notice people that don't like being

called *caiçara*; or being *caiçara*” P3 said. Because the degree to which *caiçaras* were marginalized, as P13 pointed out, many locals will only reveal that they are locals to someone after a while of knowing them, once a sense of friendship is established.

Fisherwoman P12 explains:

It’s a constant fight. A constant fight and a will to live, to transform, to make a difference, to raise awareness and walk with their head up high (...) One day, at the school, a dad was saying ‘my kid is going to study in Curitiba, because there’s nothing here.’ He said, ‘my son is embarrassed to say I’m a fisherman.’

Another aspect brought up by participants that mediates their relationship with place is the proliferation of illnesses such dengue fever, and stomach bugs such as the norovirus, transmitted through contaminated water and food. Stomach bugs are common in the region, especially during the overcrowded summer months, when water treatment plants fail to handle the sharp increase in population. The Paraná coast saw, in the summer of 2024-2025, a violent norovirus outbreak, with an increase in cases of almost 287% in comparison to the previous year. Over ten thousand cases among residents and tourists were confirmed by local authorities (Ehlert, 2025). “There was nowhere left to put the sick people” P2 said, about the outbreak. She has contracted the disease five times since she returned to her hometown of Matinhos in 2023.

Dengue is an infection transmitted through a mosquito bite, and this mosquito breeds in sitting water held in containers, such as buckets, tires, bowls, vases, and so on, in warm environments. Therefore, it is crucial that locals stay vigilant of their lands and backyards, and not allow any water to sit in containers for long. In more mild-cases, the symptoms can be flu-like, greater in intensity. But dengue can progress to become a life-threatening condition. Between 2023 and 2024, the number of dengue-related deaths in the state of Paraná increased by 464%, killing 610 people (G1 PR, 2024) and the state

ranked third in the country for number of cases, which amounted to over 650 thousand (Laboissière, 2025). This rise in the number of cases has been attributed to higher temperatures linked to climate change and worsened by the El Niño phenomenon (G1 PR, 2024). When I attempted to visit one of the study participants I had previously interviewed on Zoom during my fieldwork, I was not able to because he was tending to his wife, treating a serious dengue case in a hospital in Curitiba. P28, a local journalist based in Pontal do Paraná, has contracted dengue twice in the past few years.

“Our history is one of aggression, right?”: Negative connotations associated with environmental media

Hall (2007) critiques the distinction between denotation and connotation commonly used in linguistic studies, affirming that such distinction can only be made at the analytic level, and that in the actual world there are generally no signs that can be understood completely literally, universally, devoid of any associative, or connotative, meaning attributed to them through social and historical processes. The processes of oppression and marginalization endured by traditional communities like the *caiçaras*—which P21 refers to in this section’s title—that have altered some of the ways in which they relate to their places and how they understand the words “environment” and “environmentalism”, have also influenced some participants’ understandings of their portrayals in local media. P18 and P6, both from Ilha do Mel, identified and criticized the romanization of their places by the media:

They have something distorted. It’s all distorted, because it has to be the way they want it to be, they have to romanticize it (...) It’s misrepresenting it, right? They want paradise and they’re not in paradise. (P6)

How it’s [the island] being shown to people? It’s being shown as a mega paradise, with all the infrastructure. It’s masked. There’s no infrastructure. (P18)

P5, a fisherman, expressed frustration at the common representations he sees of fishers as helpless victims:

He's [fisherman] not a poor loser. He's not. The one that is, doesn't know how to administer the money he gets from fishing. There are people here that get good money from fishing. If we didn't we wouldn't be here. Everything I have is first, thanks to god, and second, to the sea, to fishing. I raised my first daughter selling popsicles, and all the rest on fishing.

P21 is a community leader and an active member of a Fandango group. He has been interviewed multiple times about *caiçara* culture, both for journalistic and academic purposes. He had criticized the exotification of his community and traditions that he has witnessed over the past few decades:

I think it's a lot in that thing of the enchantment, the exotic. Of seeing it as something beautiful, marvelous, that resists and whatever. Sadly, it's still like this (...) The Fandango is still seen exactly in this realm of the exotic, that resisted. It's a bit of what we see with the Indigenous. They think they're all in the forest, with feathers and paint. But no. We changed, right? The Fandango, we changed and reconfigured it.

Specifically, he recalled one instance in which a film crew that he hosted in Guaraqueçaba requested that him and his group put on costumes, walk into their church, and reenact a local myth about a Carnaval curse:

This was in their script and we were supposed to do it. I refused. 'You're crazy [if you think] that I'm going to walk into church in a costume', 'No! But the myth is like this!', 'So we're changing this myth right now. You weren't there, you don't know what it was like. I'm not walking into my church, that is sacred, just so you can film it.' And it was a big problem. A big problem because they had to change the entire script. I know that we interrupted their filming and that I wasn't seen well in that situation (...) But there are just some things that... there's no way, you know?

Finally, P18 also recalled a frustrating—and dangerous—experience with a journalist that crossed several lines on their quest for “the” story. This was a well-known capital-based reporter at the time, who was staying at P18's bed & breakfast in Ilha do

Mel to film a travel segment in the region. P18's business partner was hired by crew to transport them to Guaraqueçaba and neighboring island Ilha das Peças. The captain warned the crew about a storm that was forming, and that it would not be safe to try and visit both locations in one day. The crew insisted on doing so and left in the early hours of the morning. When arriving at their first location, the captain warned them about the weather once more, suggesting that they return to Ilha do Mel as soon as possible. They demanded to stay and still reach their second location that day, claiming they had a driver scheduled to take them back to the capital that evening. P18 states that they took longer than planned in Guaraqueçaba—the first location—and the captain bought four buckets while he waited. Upon their return, they questioned the reasoning for the buckets: "Why? Because the storm is going to fall and you'll be the ones bailing the water out, or else we'll sink!" He said, suggesting that the group stay the night in Guaraqueçaba, and continue their trip the next morning, after the storm. They refused. "She gave him an ultimatum" P18 said. "I'm the big reporter here, I'm in charge, we're going, that's it, you just drive!"

The storm came down as predicted by the captain. The waves were too big, and boat began to flood. The captain instructed all passengers to get their buckets and bail the water out. There was no way of continuing their journey. The captain threw the boat against the mangrove, instructing the film crew to hold on to the tree trunks, where they would have to wait, until it was safe enough to find the nearest village. Crew members were having panic attacks. Those who stayed in Ilha do Mel were concerned, not knowing where the group was. Eventually, they were able to reach a village where a local fisherman took them in, gave them dry clothes, and made them soup. They slept in his

home and returned to Ilha do Mel the next morning. The film crew used the storm footage they were able to record in their story and, for a while after it came out, P18 noticed how tourists were afraid to take any day trips on boats to neighboring sites. These participants' experiences indicate that just any socioenvironmental media attention—however well intentioned— is not enough and can even have adverse effects, such as a decrease in tourism, when the coverage fails to account for the nuance locals' relationships with their places.

Overburdened, Overlooked

There are several attributes that community members have in common when describing their unanimously complex and contradictory relationships with their place and the environment. Most are highly protective of disappearing local identities and tradition, which are generally attributed to the impact of restrictive environmental policies with little alternatives provided by regulatory agencies; environmental threats either related to the nature of their line of work or instances of extreme weather and environmental degradation; and the current model of tourism that is both exploitative and insufficient to provide residents with year-round employment and a healthy living standard. To some, a possible solution to increase their quality of life is to do more. More tourism, more industry development, more jobs, more government attention.

The ports of Paranaguá and Antonina are—to varying degrees—the backbone of their local economies. The port industry is the Paraná coast's largest employer, and, to many participants, the coast's most pervasive environmental villain. Several participants who live in the surroundings of where ships from all over the world line up and wait for their turn to dock at the Paranaguá Port report finding trash, discarded from these ships,

on their beaches. P12, a Pontal do Paraná resident and fisherwoman, reported finding trash from Egypt when out working. Once out on a community beach cleanup event, P6 collected waste from 17 countries.

P0 says he was raised in Antonina to work in the town port, like many others who saw no option but to do so or find themselves having to leave in search for schooling or employment. P0 hasn't been employed by the Antonina port in years, which is why, he says, he feels the freedom to share some of the "several environmental crimes" he witnessed while on the job, mainly referring to trucks tipping over and contaminating the local environment with pollutants:

(...) I'd file the report, internally, of course, because I was an employee (...) You know, because they; the system itself, hid it. They hid it, right? I was one of the people that filed complaints. I never denounced it publicly because I depended on my job. It was my job. If I denounced it publicly, I'd be fired. But I denounced it through reports, through photos (...)

He even recalls sharing what he had seen with national environmental regulatory agencies, off the record, to no avail. P1, a resident of Ilha do Mel, is a vocal advocate against the highly publicized and controversial plans of building a port in nearby Pontal do Paraná. Some Pontal do Paraná residents, such as P23, are avid supporters. "It's the most anticipated endeavor in our population, the implementation of this port. Because it's year-round employment and a better quality of life for our residents," he says. "The son won't have to leave and live out of town; he'll be able to have his job in town." P1, on the other hand, fears the impact that yet another port would have on his community, especially considering how vulnerable they would be facing the transportation of toxic cargo so close to the shore. Attempts of dialogue between community members and the company responsible for the development of this project have not answered P1's

questions. Port companies in the region are legally obligated to propose compensatory measures to mitigate some of the impact they have on local environments and communities. To P1, their initiatives are superficial and insufficient. “We’re not asking for anything extraordinary. Only the preservation of our lives,” he said, when the company offered to renovate their community’s association headquarters and provide items of traditional clothing for their Fandango performances as compensation for the construction of the port.

These feelings of distrust, disappointment, and abandonment towards powerful institutions such as local government and big industry players are highly prevalent amongst coastal residents, who are often burdened with protecting their environments and communities with no external support. Furthermore, these feelings are also present in their relationships with the media. P1 moved to Ilha do Mel over fifty years ago, where he quickly became a teacher because he could read, write, and perform essential mathematical operations. He alphabetized the children on the island, and eventually came to occupy several positions in community organizations over the years, with his main role being the “translator” or “interpreter” of government correspondence delivered to community members in the mid-1980s, upon the arrival of electricity. He recalled hosting gatherings in his home when local authorities began the process of land regularization on the island, which meant the review and signing of several documents by locals who could not decode them on their own. These acts of service, he says, are what earned him the trust of native islanders over time. Today P1 owns a successful bed & breakfast in Ilha do Mel. As the tourism industry on the island continues to boom, P18, another local bed &

breakfast owner, fears that this “progress” has gone too far and is a serious threat to local cultural identities. To her:

The tourist needs to adapt to the island, not the island to the tourist. The tourist that comes here comes looking for tranquility. It’s distinctive. They want to be hugged (...) I saw it this week in the Facebook newspaper. That the governor is coming to apply ‘development’ to the island, modernize the island. We don’t want modernization, people (...) We want to continue to listen to the ocean, you know?

Coastal residents are clear in making the distinction between tourists and second-home owners who spend their summers mainly in the towns of Guaratuba, Matinhos, and Pontal do Paraná, which they refer to as “*veranistas*” or “summer-ers”. The behaviors of both kinds of tourists are generally described as disrespectful, though in different ways, despite participants’ awareness that the economy of their towns is largely dependent on tourism. Several participants said that tourists are entitled, loud, and unruly, and that their presence during high season puts pressure on the towns’ already lacking infrastructure, leading to overload—and, at times, the crashing—of local systems such as water distribution, waste management, and more. P2, a resident of Matinhos, which is home to Caiobá, one of the most sought out beaches on the coast, explains:

Here in Matinhos, because of Caiobá, we host a lot of people because of status, you know? (...) We have a lot of entitled tourists, uneducated. If I can define an age for these people, the average is those people over 30, 50 years old. This age group is so arrogant, I don’t know what happens. (...) It’s a lot of them thinking they’re coming down to the beach, so we owe them something, you know? In a way: ‘I’m here, I’m making your job move, your economy move, lie down for me to step on you’ you know? (...) It’s a level of ignorance and egotism that I can’t understand.

On a different scale, P15 expresses her frustration at the environmental impact the construction of a second-home had in her neighborhood in Guaratuba:

Look, I’ll tell you here. The rich, they... (laughs) Not every rich person... You’re going to have to cut this part (laughs)... Not every millionaire, billionaire, whatever, rich person, not all of them, I’m not generalizing (...) What is it with

them? The more money they have, they think they own everything? (...) He rerouted all of that water (...) And what happened to our street? It started flooding. We called the engineer because it started flooding. Six years there, and it never flooded (...) Last year a storm happened, and it flooded my entire street. I was travelling and my daughter sent me a photo ‘mom, the water... This never happened mom. The water is coming into our garage and all our neighbors.’

Participants’ perceptions of tourism varied greatly, which can be linked to several factors including whether the participant directly benefitted from the tourism industry, their town of residence, the length of residency in said town, and political leanings. However, participants unanimously resent the amount of attention they receive during the summer months—from the media, government, and visitors—because of the condition of abandonment they report being in during the other ten months of the year. P21, in one emblematic example, stated that once, during high season, he had to go to the emergency room and upon arrival, the doctor explained that he would have to wait until they examined a tourist that had just arrived behind him: “I remember the doctor explaining it to me. ‘Well, if you’re a resident you’ll have to wait, because he’s a visitor.’” While many acknowledged that tourism may lead to greater government investment in infrastructure—although that is not always the case—residents expressed a deep sense of disappointment in their local leaders, who seem to prioritize the experiences of outsiders rather than of their own community members. As stated by P9, the city must “first be good for the resident, then for the tourist.”

“The radio belongs to the politician, you see?”: Distrust for local media

Many residents highlighted their distrust for local media outlets as the reason why they avoid consuming local environmental coverage, or why they generally have oppositional readings of the content produced by local media. They generally described

smaller news outlets as sensational and mostly under the control of local government and corporate interests. The following excerpts illustrate their skepticism:

I don't feel like we have a good news channel here in Pontal. Looks like these sensationalist blogs, that will only tell you bad stuff if they don't like the mayor, and good stuff if they like the mayor. (P10)

The reporting is not complete (...) they only publish what will not offend the municipal government, state, federal... That doesn't attack the big businessmen (...) Environmental stories are seldom covered (...) Why? Because they privilege the high society. Normally, the ones behind the land invasions and deforestation and all are the people with a higher purchasing power. So, what does this journalism does? It doesn't say anything. (P13)

Here, so you understand: the radio belongs to the politician, you see? (...) Few said anything bad about him. Not even bad... Few questioned him. And the few that did didn't have a voice because the majority was suffocated. (P16)

P17 is a lifelong resident of Guaratuba, where for decades he has been a community leader and environmental advocate. In his experience, his connections with capital-based media have been much more fruitful than with local media, due to of local media's ties with the municipal government. He recalled instances in which he witnessed environmental crimes being committed by the local administration at the time, calling local news outlets to investigate and not receiving any attention.

I saw it. I felt it. I've been through this. I have a bit of anxiety. And if the paper starts to want to publish, the authorities—both city hall and the environmental part—sometimes will crack down. Say 'no, that you can't say, you have to say this, you have to say that.' So, I see it as corrupted. I didn't want to use that word, but that's what happens. I see that there's a lot that is not shown because it would be bad for the city hall's image (...) With the TV stations and other outlets in the capital, we had that strength, we had that support (...) We were heard. (P17)

Residents' suspicions regarding the editorial independence of local media have led some to consuming state media instead. P13, for example, stated she appreciates when journalists in larger news outlets position themselves in their stories and demand action from the authorities, something she does not see done in local media. Others

expressed feeling pleased with local environmental coverage, mainly because of its cultural proximity to their daily lives. Local journalists are community members too, and several participants reported noticing a difference in coverage when the reporter knows and is known by the community, as opposed to a capital-based reporter that often does not have the cultural competency to comprehend the complexities of local issues.

“They’ve never suffered a mosquito bite”: Cultural distance from state media

This “cultural incompetence”, alluded to by P6 in the quote above, takes several shapes. P11, for example, stated that she can tell the difference in the editing of TV stories: “Sometimes someone that is a complete outsider, doesn’t know anything, cuts something that is important and keeps something that is not as important (...) What is important to the coast? What can be cut, what can’t? I think the press fails a bit on this issue.” P12, a local community leader, felt frustrated at the fact she had been interviewed about her advocacy work by several local news outlets, but never a capital-based one. P26, a local Guaratuba-based journalist, said: “the small press has an esteem, like I do. And the big press doesn’t care.” In illustrative example, P18, a bed & breakfast owner in Ilha do Mel, recalled an incident in which a capital-based reporter misrepresented a common phenomenon that is typical during a short period of the year—the reproduction of a kind of mosquito known by locals as *butuca*, whose sting is painful and extremely irritating—as a newsworthy “invasion of *butucas*”:

At the time the reporter came talking about the *butucas*, right at the time that we had them. But listen, ask a native: ‘but don’t the *butucas* bother you?’ And the natives won’t even... They don’t even slap them off. We don’t even slap the *butucas* off. We’re used to the *butucas*. (...) The guy [reporter], looked like he was being possessed. He’d say, ‘oh my god!!’ No one came to Ilha do Mel that month. (...) It’s sad, isn’t it? No one explained it: ‘look, in the month of November... It lasts 30 days. They are born through the blooming of the *araçá* [a kind of fruit]. The *araçá* blooms in November and it attracts the *butucas*. Their lives last 30 days, then they leave, they die.

Participants were clear about how the stories that get the most positive reactions and engagement are the ones in which the reporter is immersed in the community's reality—but in a humble, respectful manner. Tourism-dependent residents are highly concerned with the ways in which their places are portrayed, given that state media coverage directly impacts tourists' interests in visiting coastal towns. Several participants pointed out that capital-based media does a great job in promoting tourism in the region, especially in more in-depth stories that feature the reporter actively participating and learning about local ways of being. Two separate participants mentioned the same TV story, produced by a capital-based outlet, as an example of success: one where the reporter had gone crabbing with locals, getting bit by a crab in the process. According to P8 and P30, a Paranaguá local and a capital-based journalist, respectively, this story—because of this moment—hit high levels of engagement and was very well received by the TV station's wide audience. Participants in such tourism-dependent communities often found themselves in a bind during our interviews: while they wish to see their environmental issues regularly and accurately portrayed by local media in order to garner attention from the authorities, they understand that they may lose visitors in the process.

Strength in Care and Community

Carnaval celebrations are some of the most important moments of the year for coastal residents, especially those in the most touristic towns—both as in an opportunity to come together as a community and showcase their popular culture while all eyes are on them—including those of local and state media (See Figure 22)—and as an opportunity to profit from the hundreds of thousands of visitors. I observed this myself in March of 2025, while conducting fieldwork and interviews in Guaratuba during the Carnaval. Over

six hundred thousand visitors flooded the town of forty thousand for four days of public parties on the streets. As I was walking towards the downtown area on the first day, I notice a beachfront empty lot, with a now-shapeless, abandoned house-like structure, next door to one of the most luxurious mansions on the shore. The golden light that emanated from the crystal chandelier that hung inside the mansion, right next to their pool overlooking the ocean, illuminated what was written on the wall of the seemingly abandoned lot: “*O mar é a continuação da minha casa*” (see Figure 23), which translates to “The sea is an extension of my home”. A man sat in a plastic chair right next to this wall observed the crowds walking by—dressed up, drenched in glitter, drinks in hand—to dance on the streets downtown. Outsiders observing the Carnaval from afar will easily miss the myriad of rituals and meanings veiled by the utter chaos that contains them.

Figure 22

Television reporter among the crowd during the 2025 Carnaval in Guaratuba (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2025).



Figure 23

Graffiti in Guaratuba that reads: “The sea is an extension of my home” (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2025).



The world-class Carnaval spectacles put on by cities like Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Salvador are quite far from the small-town Carnaval I grew up attending in Guaratuba in terms of size and production, yet the essential building blocks remain the same. One of these is the *bloco*. Put simply, *blocos* are street parties or parades that move through the city and are organized by community groups during the days of Carnaval. These groups may plan on having a specific theme, music genre, or a specific attire. Some of the most famous *blocos* in Brazil’s largest cities can attract up to millions at a time, often featuring live performances by famous artists. The *bloco* has recently been granted legal status of Brazilian cultural heritage, which guarantees their freedom to perform (Brasil, 2024). According to a statement published by the Brazilian federal government, the Carnaval is more than a simple party: “to culture makers, Carnaval is

synonymous with identity, creative economy, and the expression of popular Brazilian culture.” But *blocos*, specifically, have long been important places for community-based resistance and celebration, with powerful messages being conveyed through the exploration of traditional music, dance, fashion, and storytelling.

I was invited by P13, a retired schoolteacher that lives in Guaratuba, to join her *bloco* on the first day of Carnaval. She is part of a community organization aimed at protecting *caiçara* culture, which is the theme of their parade. I walk past all the many other *blocos* performing that day; I notice a few family *blocos*, and a retirement home *bloco*. It is also impossible to not notice the several news outlets—television mostly—that are there covering the evening. Immediately upon my arrival, P13 proceeded to let everyone know that their “international guest” had made it. I was met with excitement. They quickly handed me my *abadá* (the traditional shirt worn on such occasions that features a new design each year) a sign that highlighted the Fandango aspect of *caiçara* culture, and a piece of paper containing the printed lyrics of this years’ song. Signs referred to the *guará*, the species of bird that names the town, mangroves, the Guaratuba bay, and local folkloric characters such as the Boi de Mamão. We were in a group of just under twenty—most being retired local women who dedicate themselves to this cultural association—which was quite small in comparison to the other *blocos* present at the event, some parading with hundreds of members.

As we excitingly begin to parade down the avenue, several blocks away from the beach, where the parade ends, we soon notice that the car speakers we needed to play the *bloco*’s song were not working. Some of the organizers frantically attempt to mitigate the issue, while the others decide, mid-parade, on how to continue for the next several blocks

with no music. The answer was to sing as loud as we could. This small *bloco* bravely battled the exceedingly loud, top-40 music coming from surrounding tourist-packed bars, cars, and speakers. No outside noise could silence the pride in celebrating what was theirs. The group of twenty pushed through the crowds of thousands who were far from interested in the protection of *caiçara* people, practices, and places, singing “*viva a cultura da nossa gente*” (“long live the culture of our people”) at the top of their lungs. Cruel and poetic, as irony often is, this moment palpably displayed one crucial aspect of the local cultural dynamics that so directly informs community members’ decoding processes: the fight between tradition and modernity.

The next morning, the WhatsApp *bloco* group chat was flooded with photos and comments celebrating the evening. WhatsApp was cited by participants’ as their main form of communication across the coast, serving both as many participants’ primary source of environmental news, as well as a fertile breeding ground for community gossiping; an activity coastal residents take quite seriously. Storytelling is a key point in Paraná’s coastal communities’ cultural identities, which have historically been shaped by local folklore, superstition, and small-town gossip. The popular Brazilian expression “*história de pescador*”, or “fisherman’s story”, is employed when someone is telling a story that seems too absurd or fantastic to be true. The people’s love for stories—especially stories about themselves—translates to an overall culture of care for others in the community, as well as a protectiveness over local identities, that came through to varying degrees in all community interviews.

P11 grew up visiting Antonina and decided to move there permanently to start a new phase in her life. She recalled having to put in some work to be accepted into the

tight-knit community, showing that she was ready to be part of the collective. She said that Antonina is:

(...) still that town where your neighbor will cross the street to offer you... to gift you a snack they just made. They are caring, and I learned how to be caring. In that sense, I'm already an *Antoninense*. For example: my neighbor. If I don't open my window she worries because she thinks something's happened to me. And it has been the case that she asked. She's a widow, right? So now, when she keeps her window closed, I'm the one that worries. So, I text her too.

This care for one's neighbor can quickly turn into care for one's places. P16, a school principal in Guaratuba, makes sure to teach students about the importance of environmental preservation through the lens of care for all people and places:

What is your environment now? Your environment. Is it the classroom? Do you practice your environmental education in your classroom? 'I take care of the forest. But I throw away a piece of candy wrapper in my classroom.' What kind of environmental education is that? What environmental education are you practicing with the ones around you? Do you respect those around you? Do you listen to those around you? So, environmental education is much more than the plant, than the forest. Environmental education starts in our surroundings (...) You respect who is by your side.

Participants pride themselves in excelling as hosts and keepers of an environment that has so much to offer. Guaratuba participants 17 and 20 both recalled how, after the 2022 landslides that blocked the two main roads connecting the coast to the rest of the state, Guaratuba residents mobilized to offer stranded drivers food, coffee, water, and even lodging and bathrooms in their own homes while drivers waited over 15 hours until roads were clear again. I have experienced this form unconditional care many times while on the coast, but one recent experience stands out. When planning my first-ever trip to Superagui, in March 2025, I was instructed by the owner of the bed & breakfast I'd be staying in to contact a man who would take me to the bed & breakfast that was quite secluded and remote. Upon disembarking on the island with my partner, I was informed

that a fire nearby had affected cellphone towers, and that the entire island had completely lost access to their Wi-Fi connection. My service provider failed to provide any service on the island, and I was unable to contact the man who would take us to our lodging. Our boat driver suggested we go wait for the signal to be restored at a nearby restaurant, the only one that was open on the island. Three generations of women ran the establishment, one of them being P14. The youngest kindly routed her internet connection so I could try to reach my contact. Hours went by as we waited for his response, with no luck.

We then decided to stay in the village we had disembarked in, and asked the women at the restaurant if they knew of a place that had a room available for the night. They checked us in at their own bed & breakfast, which was by the restaurant and attached to their home, that was completely empty. I let the boat driver know that we had not been able to connect with our contact, and that we were staying in the village for the night. He immediately offered us a room in his family home, concerned with the extra money we would have to spend if staying at a bed & breakfast. He had known us for the entirety of an hour before opening up his home. Later that Friday night the Wi-Fi signal was restored, and we were finally able to connect with our contact, who informed us that we would not be able to pick us up at all that weekend. We asked P14 if she was able to host us until Sunday, to which she agreed, and invited us to join her and her family—a group of about 10—on a day trip to a nearby island for a Saturday barbecue. We accepted her invitation, but, between us, promised to not intrude on their meal and to only eat if they explicitly offered. We were afraid it would seem rude to eat the several dishes prepared by each family member when we had nothing to bring. Unsurprisingly, they made sure our plates were always full.

That evening, my partner and I were having dinner at one of P14's relatives' restaurant. We were eating a sandwich and some fish when the others we had met that day walked by us flaunting a large bag of local shrimp they were about to prepare and have for dinner. We made a comment on how large and beautiful the shrimp looked as they made their way to their table and wished them a good night. A few minutes later, they bring us a platter with some of the shrimp they were having for their family meal. The next day, we repeatedly had to ask the group how much we owed them for the day trip and barbecue and had to insist to P14 that we the paid full price for our stay, as she was adamant about giving us a substantial discount. Like P14, many remain eager for more community-centered models of sharing their natural and cultural riches with the world and see community-based tourism (CBT) as an alternative to the largely extractive models in place today. Grassroots organizations that aim to preserve local cultures and environments were especially enthusiastic about promoting CBT initiatives, as many see it as the only economically viable way to protect their people and places.

But almost all the participants who were active advocates for cultural and environmental preservation did it voluntarily, some in highly precarious conditions. P7, for example, who takes tourists on educational tours of the Guaratuba Bay for *guará* sightseeing, reported having to pay out of pocket for the costs of maintaining the boat and taking it out on tours. Most reported being moved by a strong sense of purpose and duty to their communities' wellbeing and to the protection of their environments, even those living in conditions of socioeconomic vulnerability. P21 stated: "I can't resist on my own. As a person, I have to be united with my group" and P20 said: "If you ask me what the great evil of the world is today? (...) It's this "me" thinking (...) There is no thinking of

the collective, of the other.” Coastal residents realize the strength they have in community organization, and the fact they receive little recognition for their effort, and that their initiatives are still underfunded and underpublicized is deeply frustrating to most, considering that the coast is heavily marketed by local and state governments for the culture and environment they fight to preserve with almost no support.

“Journalists give us strength”: Positive experiences with journalists were the norm

Despite their overall disappointment with environmental coverage, residents’ experiences being interviewed by journalists, both coast- and capital-based, were overwhelmingly positive. In fact, almost all participants were emphatic about wanting to foster closer relationships with local journalists, as they see, in the media, a potential powerful source of support that they believe they cannot find in other institutions. With some exceptions, participants reported that journalists were attentive, thoughtful, and professional. The very fact journalists demonstrated any interest in topics they were passionate about meant a great deal to participants. P4, in one humorous example, stated that locals are so excited when they have the opportunity to be on television that they will “celebrate” their TV feature even if their participation is in a homicide story. P12, who said the quote in this section’s title, stated that journalists have always listened and given her attention, always treated her with kindness and respect, “despite the fact” that she is a fisherwoman. P13 said journalists have been very open to what she had to say, and that their attention lifted the community’s spirits. P22 has had several encounters with both state and local media, and reported that both were always warm, welcoming, and sensitive. P8, a fisherman, talked about the fruitful relationships he has with several local outlets, which he describes as one of mutual respect and reliance:

I have a good partnership with radio, newspapers, television, be it municipal, state... There's a big partnership (...) I have a huge respect for the media, and they have [respect] for us. Huge respect for one another. Almost every week, they're calling me: 'can you give me an interview about this and that?' We're always at your disposal here. You're showing our hardships (...) I started valuing journalism more because we depend on them, and they depend on the news too... I think we should have a lot of respect for the media class.

Some participants were more critical in their evaluations, pointing out that they had largely or exclusively positive experiences interacting with journalists in the area, but attributed this to the fact that most, if not all experiences they were referring to, were positive tourism-related stories or the occasional highlight on community sociocultural/environmental advocacy. These positive experiences with journalists in the field rarely translated into audiences engaging in the preferred, dominant reading of local environmental coverage overall, with most still feeling under and misrepresented. This suggests that other aspects of the decoding process and some characteristics of the encoding process—mainly, those behind the scenes that take place in the newsroom—may be distorting the transmission of environmental messaging to a greater degree.

In this chapter, I explored the socioenvironmental histories that shape the decoding processes of coastal residents, as well as their perceptions on how their environmental stories have been and are currently being told by local and state news media. To many community members, their experiences with environmental injustice are at the center of their decoding processes, with some experiencing these injustices in very concrete ways currently, and others who continue to feel the colonial legacy of exploitation and abandonment in more subtle aspects of their lives. Despite having had mostly positive experiences with journalists, residents were unanimous in stating that the current coverage does not represent their environmental stories with enough depth, does

not offer solutions, and that the local press is only present in moments of tragedy or during the summer months. In other words, locals' mostly positive experiences with journalists as individuals, in moments where they were interviewed, did not translate to approval of environmental coverage of the coast as a whole. Some residents were critical of local news outlets' ties to local politicians, and skeptical of any imagined futures in which they can fully trust local media makers. Others were optimistic about the possibility of more critical and socially engaged local coverage, having already observed some improvement in the past several years. Capital-based news outlets were praised by some community members for the high quality of their entertainment productions on the coast, as they often highlight local stories and increase the visibility of businesses across the state, but several other community members reported having negative experiences with capital-based journalists who misrepresented and exoticized their realities and traditions. Overall, coastal community members described layered, at time paradoxical relationships with journalists. In the following chapter, I inspect local environmental coverage from the producers' perspectives, exposing how structural and editorial constraints affect the encoding processes of local journalists.

CHAPTER V

“WHY NOT HEAR THE STORIES OF THOSE WHO LIVE THERE YEAR-ROUND?”: ENCODING A “HOSTS, VICTIMS, VILLAINS” NARRATIVE

As I observe the newsroom of this coast-based TV station, I notice the only item hung on the walls: a small, glass board against the plain, white backdrop. That board lists the number of homicides registered that year in each coastal town in Paraná. As of mid-March 2025, there were four in Paranaguá, three in Matinhos, one in Guaratuba, and one in Pontal do Paraná. The board also shows the total amount of homicides per year on the coast since 2013. 2019 ranked last, with 81 cases. I notice a significant leap between 2019 and 2020, when the number of homicides grew to 140. 2021 was their worst year, according to these records, at 143 homicides. P29, the reporter I spent the day with, told me that local gangs had recently negotiated a truce because the killings had gotten out of hand. “They’re killing my job!” He jokes, also stating that things have been quite calm since the recent end of this year’s summer high season—one of the busiest the coast has ever seen, thanks to state governments’ investments in marketing and free entertainment to boost tourism. Millions crowded Paraná’s nicest beaches, and reporters were there to document it. “It was more of the same” he says, about the summer coverage, “but *much* more of the same.” P29 was describing what most participants in this study would agree is the way in which their home is represented in the news, especially when it comes to the environment: either tragically or touristically.

When describing the dominant-hegemonic position through which discourse is constructed and interpreted, Hall (2007) defines the *professional code* as the position “professional broadcasters assume when encoding a message which has already been

signified in a hegemonic manner” (p. 171). When media conform with the larger dominant discourse around the Paraná coast and the historical processes outlined in previous chapters, they tell the story of the coast as a narrative of tourism or catastrophe and, inevitably, portray its characters almost exclusively as hosts, victims, and villains. These common tropes were not only clearly identified by journalists’ themselves, in evaluations of their own experiences and the local environmental media they consume, but they are also consistent with the patterns identified in community members’ experiences as subjects and consumers of environmental coverage. This chapter explores journalists’ encoding processes through the main theme that names the chapter: *Encoding a ‘Hosts, Victims, Villains’ Narrative*, illustrated by P30’s quote in this chapter’s title, and three subthemes: *Place-based Advantages & Limitations*, *Conventions of Standard Journalistic Practice*, and *Situational Editorial Freedom*, which are defined and discussed in the following sections.

Place-Based Advantages & Limitations

Bourdieu (1996) stated that “‘the journalist’ is an abstract entity that doesn’t exist. What exists are journalists who differ by sex, age, level of education, affiliation, and ‘medium’” emphasizing the heterogeneity of the journalistic milieu. It was not a goal of mine, in this work, to describe the encoding processes of journalists telling environmental stories broadly. In fact, I was interested in how relatively small differences between the different kinds of journalists who cover environmental news in the study site might influence their encoding processes. In my analysis of the encoding process of environmental media on the coast, which is done both by local and state news outlets, I found how place-based aspects of the journalistic process impact coast- and capital-based

journalists differently, deeply shaping their encoding of news, placing coast-based journalists and capital-based journalists in distinct interpretive communities (Zelizer, 1993). Several of the well-known challenges previously identified in scholarship were reflected in participants' experiences. But the present findings indicate that some of these obstacles manifest themselves differently depending on the journalist's location, as journalists within the Curitiba and coastal spheres shared meanings and experiences that reinforced the boundaries of each interpretive community. As residents interact simultaneously with regional and state-wide news outlets, understanding how each of these journalistic communities' grapple with such challenges becomes essential in offering situated recommendations.

Scholars have highlighted how local news organizations benefit from their cultural and geographical proximity to their audiences (Gutsche & Shumow, 2019; Holody et al., 2013), but location did not always serve to the advantage of coastal outlets. To begin with, there are currently no journalism schools in coastal Paraná. Most coast-based journalists in this sample had no journalism degree, and reported learning all that they know about their craft through experience on the job. To receive journalism training, residents must either move out of town, or commute daily from Curitiba. The lack of subsequent opportunities for employment on the coast lead many to not return, but also, as explained by Bourdieu (1996), have profound effects on the autonomy of news outlets and journalists who do remain local. According to the author, an outlet's autonomy can be measured through "the percentage of income that it derives from advertising and state subsidiaries" directly or indirectly. But the individual journalists' autonomy, he adds, is dependent on "the degree to which press ownership is concentrated" (p. 69), given that

higher degrees of concentration can mean fewer potential employers, and therefore a higher degree of job insecurity that looms over journalists' everyday practice.

Two coast-based journalists had journalism degrees, but P29 is the only born-and-raised coast-based journalist that was living on the coast while attending a university in Curitiba (for contrast, all capital-based journalists had journalism degrees). To him, commuting meant at least three daily hours on the road—a 180 kilometer round-trip up and down the sea mountains (Figure 24)—in a van that transported him and other students back and forth from the capital. He also had jobs throughout his entire college career, including an internship at the TV station he currently works as a reporter. P29 described his routine as “hard” and “very exhausting”:

There were nights in which I slept two short hours, even less, just to rest a bit and the next day I'd be back at work. I'd leave at 7AM to go to work, I'd get to the TV, I'd only have time to change my shirt, right there, and get the van to school. Four years of this. I'd be back around 1AM, 1h30AM. Then, especially during the last year, the year of my capstone project, I'd stay up until 5AM, 6AM, studying. I'd take a nap and start it all over again the next day.

P29 knew that he could pursue his dreams of becoming a reporter without a college education, but, as he states, he was always “a big defender of the degree” because, in his view, one cannot be a “complete journalist” with only field experience or only classroom experience:

Of course, there are a lot of people that are excellent professionals that have never stepped foot in a classroom, and they do great work, but the degree is missing. There's a need for us to learn from professors, those who've had the experience from even before I got into college, knowing that I wouldn't necessarily need a degree. I've always been a defender of being in the classroom, learning about journalistic ethics, knowing the step-by-step, how the profession is actually made.

Figure 24

BR-277, road that connects Curitiba and the coast, during a storm (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2025).



P27, born and raised in Paranaguá, quickly corrected me when I asked: “how long have you been a journalist?” “Well, actually, today I am... For now, a reporter” he said, and added that he was looking forward to getting his professional registration as a journalist approved by the federal Ministry of Work and Employment within the next few days: “Thank god! It took a while, but it came.” Journalists who do not have a degree can obtain the registration by proving work experience through evidence of habitual and paid journalistic service, which can include contracts, paystubs, and published stories. P24 is among the majority of coast-based residents that could not afford to attend college in Curitiba. With the popularization of online education during the COVID-19 pandemic, he has been able to enroll in an online journalism program and is currently pursuing his degree, after thirteen years as a reporter.

I don't have a degree and I'm pursuing my education now. There's a lot of that 'you either work or study', and I had to work really early. My dad passed when I was sixteen, so I became the household income. I started working so I could help my mom (...) Learned everything by myself (...) I missed my opportunity. Jeez, I flew in time. I went back a few years ago and thought 'why didn't I do this sooner?' But there was no way. There was no way I could get a van, pay 1500 reais to study in Curitiba. Then I'd have 2, 3 hours to work... 4 hours. So, like, unfortunately, there was no way. But I'm trying to get the ball rolling today and see if there's still time.

But even the journalists that have degrees generally felt unprepared to tell environmental stories, partly because no participants in this sample had had any specialized environmental journalism training at all, with one exception, P28, that had some form of environmental communication training while previously employed as a communications officer in the petrol industry. P29, when asked if he had ever received any environmental journalism training, responded: "in life? Yes." But not in college. Access to higher education is one of several indicators of socioeconomic inequalities between the capital and the coast. Further, according to the most recent census data shown in Table 3 (IBGE, 2022), Curitiba has the highest medium income in the state for formally employed workers, which comprise almost 67% of its population. Meanwhile, formal employment on the coast varies from roughly 11.50% to just over 33%, with most towns ranking between 129 and 392 in the state (out of a 399 total number of municipalities). Paranaguá and Antonina rank in better positions, which can be attributed to the fact that they are both port towns. As shown in Table 4, Paranaguá has the sixth highest GDP per capita in the state, while Guaraqueçaba, located just a short speedboat ride away from Paranaguá, is the third-to-last poorest town in the state, one of the poorest in the country, ranking 397 in GDP per capita.

Table 3

Capital and Coastal Employment and Income (IBGE, 2022).

	Population formally employed	Medium income of formally employed in monthly minimum wage	Rank in state by medium income (total 399 towns)	Rank in country by medium income (total 5571 towns)
Curitiba	66.90%	x3.6	1	43
Paranaguá	33.28%	x3.0	6	142
Antonina	19.66%	x2.3	79	1019
Guaratuba	23.04%	x2.2	129	1359
Matinhos	24.37%	x2,0	255	2269
Pontal do Paraná	22.30%	x2.1	189	1755
Morretes	18.91%	x2.0	255	2269
Guaraqueçaba	11.47%	x1.6	392	4595

Table 4

Capital and Coastal GDP per Capita (IBGE, 2022).

	GDP per capita (R\$)	Rank in state by GDP per capita (total 399 towns)	Rank in country by GDP per capita (total 5571 towns)
Curitiba	49,907.02	108	958
Paranaguá	86,717.02	16	284
Antonina	37,048.49	214	1615
Guaratuba	25,866.35	346	2518
Matinhos	24,992.19	355	2620
Pontal do Paraná	22,903.26	369	2855
Morretes	23,612.37	367	2761
Guaraqueçaba	15,643.19	397	3688

But other indicators that reach beyond economics may offer further insight. The Social Progress Index (SPI) was created under the leadership of Harvard University's Dr. Michael Porter and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)'s Dr. Scott Stern to assess quality of life globally based factors beyond economics. Therefore, SPI relies solely on public data and is independent of economic data (such as GDP), focusing, instead, on indicators within three dimensions: Basic Needs, Foundations of Wellbeing, and Opportunity. These categories include, for example, access to basic and higher

education, freedoms of choice, personal safety, nutrition, housing, access to water and sanitation, access to information and communication technology, environmental wellbeing, and more. As shown in Table 5, despite having one of the highest GDPs in the country, Paranaguá has the lowest SPI score between the coastal towns and Curitiba, which is the highest-ranking capital in Brazil in the SPI (Índice de Progresso Social Brasil [IPS Brasil]). This may be related to the fact that Paranaguá’s personal safety score (determined based on recorded numbers of homicides, murder of women, murder of young people, and traffic accidents) is dramatically lower in comparison to the other observed municipalities. Guaraqueçaba, in another example, scores the lowest in every one of the listed indicators in tables 3, 4, and 5, yet has the best score of all in personal safety. It is imperative that this nuance is understood by local communicators as it reveals critical characteristics about their audiences and themselves—for those who are also community members—and the differences that exist between each coastal town.

Table 5

Capital and Coastal Social Progress Index and Selected Indicators (IPS Brasil, 2025).

	Social Progress Index (IPS)	Access to higher education	Housing	Personal safety	Water & Sanitation
Curitiba	69.89	74.16	89.94	66.48	93.61
Paranaguá	55.70	47.19	84.76	28.78	76.55
Antonina	57.78	24.25	85.96	52.11	74.84
Guaratuba	57.57	36.07	85.52	50.81	84.32
Matinhos	57.77	36.53	89.46	33.97	89.97
Pontal do Paraná	59.24	21.15	88.28	46.53	88.19
Morretes	59.36	36.8	89.44	62.39	72.90
Guaraqueçaba	56.11	20.62	81.28	69.54	43.11

While some—mainly older—participants reported feeling somewhat comfortable relying on their “journalistic instincts” (P23)—what Schultz (2007) defines as the

“journalistic ‘gut feeling’”—they have perfected over decades of local reporting experience, participants unanimously agreed that more opportunities for environmental journalism training are urgently needed, both in educational and professional settings. Echoing the experiences of many others, P25, a capital-based journalist, stated she often feels a “great deal of difficulty” when assigned a story on a topic she knows nothing about, which has often been her experience in the environmental beat: “The vocabulary is missing, as well as the understanding on how you’re going to address [the issue]. There are many assignments you get that you’re like ‘damn, I won’t say that.’ You know? Cause you have a lot of fear of saying the wrong thing.”

As is the case with environmental communicators around the world, journalists in this sample struggled with scientific and technical terms often. Challenges included having to study a specific aspect of local ecosystems in order to explain a certain phenomenon, which species are native and which are invasive, learning geography and which areas of the coast are protected under what legislation, and memorizing a seemingly endless and everchanging list of acronyms for the environmental agencies that act on local, state, and federal levels (and how to pronounce them). P27, a coast-based journalist, recalled one illustrative example in which he wanted to write about a proposed shopping mall that was going to be built in an area that was home to a certain species of frog that is unique to the Atlantic Forest. The construction of the mall, according to P27, was prohibited in protection of the frog, and, because he lacked knowledge about the ecological importance of this animal, he felt unable to counter the people’s protests in favor of the mall.

So, in the heads of many people, ‘well, a frog that only exists here? Kill it and it’s over. We need progress in the city. To prosper, to have movement. What will a

frog bring, in terms of benefits, to our lives?’ But there *is* a logic. That’s why it’s important to understand this feedback, have this knowledge, so we can transmit this to society. Because if that frog is there and it’s the only one, it’s serving some purpose.

P28, another coast-based journalist, touched on how difficult it is to stay up to date on environmental legislation:

I feel kind of prepared, but it’s like I told you. The environmental beat is a very complicated thing. You have to constantly be researching. And you have to stay up to date all the time, especially because things change a lot (...) These environmental treaties that they invent... Environmental stories are heavy because everything changes quickly. So, whenever I have to write about the environment I do a lot of research. It’s a topic that... that changes constantly.

Journalists overall have had good experiences with expert sources in translating and interpreting scientific, legal, and other technical information, with some, like P28, having developed fruitful and long-lasting relationships with faculty and researchers in local universities. He said that “the environment people, here, they respect us a lot, and they take us seriously because they know we’re sharing a work that’s very important to them (...) They respect our work, and we respect theirs too.” But he admitted having trouble connecting with experts and environmentalists in Curitiba, claiming that they are more closed off and hesitant to connect with journalists: “Now, when you leave Pontal, into Curitiba, everything changes (...) We’ve had a really hard time accessing information.”

At this point, it is important to note some infrastructural differences between the news outlets that journalist participants in this sample are a part of. All capital-based journalists are employed by local branches of the two of the largest media conglomerates in Brazil, that own multiple television and radio stations, web portals, and more. These capital-based journalists work alongside hundreds of other journalists and communicators

within the most powerful and wealthiest media enterprises in the state. On the other hand, several of the coast-based outlets contemplated in this sample were “newsrooms” of one, maybe two, no more than five. P28, for example, manages his news outlet completely on his own. The challenge in accessing college-level journalistic training and the small sizes of many coastal outlets may explain the observed overall lack of standardized and systematic protocols of journalistic production on the coast—at least, in comparison to the capital. While coastal journalists reported having much more flexibility in their encoding processes, capital-based journalists were instructed and expected to work under a more specific set of rules, especially since they felt they were under more public scrutiny for being associated with such big names in the media industry.

These differences in the “relations of production” and “technical infrastructure” (p. 165), as Hall (2007) states, deeply influence the encoding process. One illustrative example of this is related to the geographical distance between news outlets and the environmental stories they want to tell on the coast. Capital-based journalists are between one to four hours away from coastal towns; the closest being Morretes, and the furthest Guaraqueçaba. The news outlets they work for are, according to participants, strict on ensuring employees do not work overtime, as per Brazilian labor laws. Therefore, in-person fieldwork becomes nearly impossible depending on which town they are headed towards, without having reporters stay the night and incurring more costs to the network. In participants’ experiences, this limitation forced them into a few situations: either stay for longer than a day but return with several stories—P25 heard from her superiors that, if she was going to the coast, she’d have to “make it worth it” by coming back with at least three stories—, conduct fieldwork quickly, superficially, and prioritize towns that are

closer in order to make it out and back to Curitiba within the work day period, or, not even make the trip, and conduct most of the process from afar. P30 believes that this distance keeps him from building the closer relationships with coastal sources and audiences that are vital for the production of coverage that is more relevant to them, and P31 added that cultural differences—such as how often one checks their phone and is able to schedule interviews with weeks in advance—also complicated this process.

Coast-based journalists were, of course, closer to their stories, sources, audiences, and places in every way. I was able to observe coast- and capital-based journalists—P29 in Paranaguá and P25 in Curitiba, both television reporters—on the field and in the newsroom. Among the several striking differences was how P29 was treated like a celebrity, with endless “hellos”, car honks, waves, and shout-outs in the few hours we were on the street together. Conversely, I watched P25 going live on the morning news from inside a famous local bakery—on a channel with a much larger viewership—while patrons almost seemed annoyed at the fact that a television crew was interrupting their breakfasts. Both participants spoke about this, but P25 was able to reflect on the matter more deeply, given that prior to her current position in Curitiba, she was a television reporter on the coast and worked closely with P29:

One thing that P29 would always tell me was ‘P25, here we’re ‘P29 from [news station]’’. He would say that he didn’t come here [to Curitiba]—that he had offers—but that he didn’t come because he’d be ‘just another one’ (...) Here, you’re just one more in the middle of millions.

P29 enjoys being known in the community and connecting with fellow residents across town. He says there is a “closeness” to his relationship with the audience not only as a journalist, but as P29, the person, and he states that this closeness is essential to the quality of his work, granting him more access to local stories and a better reception from

audience members. P24, another born-and-raised coast-based journalist, echoed the same sentiment, and pointed out that television as a medium allows for that greater proximity with the community because audiences can recognize the reporter more easily than, for example, in radio or print. And, likely due to the feelings of abandonment brought on by centuries of abuse, some coastal audiences are especially eager to be featured on “the news”, especially when “the news” is television, which community member P21 also explicitly pointed out. When reflecting on the differences between her experience as a television reporter on the coast and in the capital, P25 explained that, in Curitiba people are not as “captivated” by interacting with a journalist as they are on the coast, which is also true, to a lesser degree, of journalists who are from the coast, as opposed to journalists from Curitiba simply reporting on the coast. P24 described the difference in treatment of local versus outsider reporters, and how their closeness with the audience directly impacts the ways in which their messages are both encoded and decoded:

Our community is very provincial. So, if you’re an outsider... A simple example: you mixed up a street name? You’re over. People will already start with: ‘This one doesn’t know anything! Doesn’t know here!’ So, there’s a difference. When a reporter comes here from somewhere else, they [locals] take a while to get to know them, to get used to them, and give them visibility (...) Other reporters are from here. So, because we live in this environment, we’re in their daily lives, they are able to consume our information with much more ease, even in creating that [sense of] credibility, because they know we’re speaking about something we’re living. Because there’s no use in talking about a reality that I don’t live, right? (...) They’re very provincial, they know the reality and we are able to talk to them on the same level, not using different words or complicated words. We speak like they speak, that’s why they absorb [us] more.

While conducting interviews on the coast, I was watching the morning news on the local television channel and was struck by a short segment conducted by the program’s anchor: in between news stories, he read comments left by viewers on their Facebook page during the broadcast, including his own mother, wishing him a day full of

blessings, and asking him to kiss her grandchildren for her. Later that day, the anchor of the evening news showed a surveillance camera video that caught two young men breaking into a car parked on the street. As the video played, he shamed the boys for their actions, boasted that they had been caught on film, and emphasized the embarrassment they would now feel as the audience would quickly recognize them and tell their mothers about what they did. P28, in a similar example of how coastal news often acts as a community poster board, said he regularly published stories for people who have “lost their dogs, lost their documents, lost their sunglasses, lost whatever” to mobilize the community in supporting each other. Actions like these are impossible for the journalist participants within the larger, capital-based news outlets, who struggled with fostering relationships with coastal audiences.

Conventions of Standard Journalistic Practice

But this distance from the coast and a lack of profound relationships within the coastal environment could also be beneficial to capital-based journalists, in some ways. Journalists in this sample agreed that television and social media are the main mediums through which environmental stories are told in the area, which is consistent with what community members reported being their main sources of environmental information. Social media, according to participants, is quick to produce, easy to share, and allows for opportunities such as livestreams, that attract many viewers. Radio, as some participants pointed out, is necessary for moments of extreme weather where immediacy is needed, especially when internet and phone lines are affected. Print newspapers were barely mentioned, with the exception of P23, that still prints out newspapers and distributes them for free in his town. But television, in the opinion of several participants, both in the

audience and in the newsroom, offers more credibility—that is, the medium itself does, regardless of the channel.

Bourdieu (1996) posits that printed news only achieves full legitimacy and political impact once it is picked up by television. In his critique of television as a medium, the author sheds light upon the several ways in which its content, especially that of journalistic nature, is often censored and manipulated in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. Specifically, Bourdieu inspects how certain conventions of journalistic practice allow for manipulation, and, at times, leave no other option to journalists rather than to self-censor. One of the most powerful tools of journalistic manipulation, according to Bourdieu, is the race between outlets for viewership, which he describes as: “(...) no two ways about it—censorship. This censorship is as effective—more even, because its principle remains invisible—as direct political intervention from a central administration” (p. 25). The author argues that this free-market dynamic of constant competition forces journalists to “know what everyone else had said” in order to know, themselves, what to say (p. 24), leading to a homogenization of journalistic products offered to different audiences. In other words, “competition tends to favor uniformity” (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 24). His perspective can help explain why community member participants rarely pointed out specific news outlets when asked about where they got their environmental information from, with most stating that they did through peers.

Journalists in this sample worked for news outlets that drastically differed in size, age, reach, and goals, which influenced the degree to which their encoding processes were shaped by audience ratings. P25 stated that viewership dictates most of what she pursues in her current job, given that they are up against several other state outlets.

Conversely, her experience on the coast was not as influenced by viewership numbers, which she attributes to the fact that there were far less news outlets in the area, therefore far less competition. Participants overall expressed a generally vague and/or overly broad definition of their target audiences, with most only referring to the publics they reach with their current content, as opposed to how their current content had been designed for a previously defined public. “Everyone”, said P26. “People over 40” was P23’s answer. P32 said “*paranaenses*” (people from Paraná) and P29 defined it “classes B, C, and D.” Coast-based journalists in smaller outlets, especially, defined their target audience after the fact, by citing numbers of clicks, views, followers, and metrics mostly related to age, gender, and social class. Still, journalists in coastal outlets are highly familiar with their audiences, in the sense that they personally know these people and places. Capital-based journalists, on the other hand, expressed the challenge of having to address a state-wide audience, which at times can inhibit them from creating more tailored, situated content.

The vagueness in their answers to my audience questions came in contrast to their certainty in answering what kinds of news stories their audiences are most interested in: tragedy. “Gossip, and tragedy” said P28, amid laughter. “They really like this kind of information. They’re horrified with the stuff that goes on here,” he said. P29 said that the “people really like to know who died and how it happened” which he attributes to the fact that, in these small towns, everyone knows everyone, and “everyone has a story about everyone.” Violence is a very present aspect of coastal communities’ everyday life, to different degrees, of course, but present nonetheless. P29, for example, stated that the environmental stories he works on can usually be “done today, but it can also be done next month. It won’t lose its value. Meanwhile, they just killed a guy around the corner,

so that becomes my priority. Meanwhile, there was an accident on the road, with a bunch of people hurt, that becomes my priority.” P28 credits the success of his news outlet, which he runs alone, to the fact that he has been highly active in covering such sensational stories live on social media. P23 and P26, on the other hand, do not run violent crime or catastrophe stories. Therefore, their audiences are mostly interested in tourism-related environmental content, especially the water quality for bathing at the most popular beaches during summer months—yet another representation of the tourism v. tragedy binary in local narratives.

But in environmental reporting, community-based tragedy is still the main selling point. Scholars like Mourão and Strum (2018) have found that journalists in Brazil tend to rely on official sources during moments of environmental disasters, which can be attributed to a variety of factors including basic news-making norms and routines. While I also found this to be true in this sample, participating journalists reported paying extra attention to community sources in news reports on disruptive extreme weather events and/or the displacement of residents of irregular areas. In the experiences of these journalists, moments of environmental devastation are when community members are most put in the spotlight, generally alongside local authorities with data on the disaster and any instructions to affected neighborhoods. Experts are scarcely interviewed on such occasions. P24 laid it out clearly:

Usually an official source, right? Depending on the topic. If it’s a flood, we’ll have an official source from the Civil Defense, secretary for constructions, or even the secretary for the environment. Whoever is available. There’s also always a person, either from the community or someone that’s a victim of that situation. We always report the problem and, in this case, show the lived experience of that person, that source that had their home flooded, and bring possible solutions. When there are solutions, right? Because a lot of the time it’s a poorly executed construction project, it’s a matter of high tide, we get a lot of that.

P29 reported doing his most to get as close as possible to affected areas when reporting on environmental disasters, to humanize the environmental impact:

... particularly when I'm doing this kind of coverage, I try to insert myself as much as possible in that. I'm not going to do a story on dry land, only showing what flooded several meters away. I put on boots, a rain jacket, and I go see what's going on. I go into people's houses; I talk to them. This is also a way to call authorities' attention to the pain of that population that is suffering because of that.

While there are arguments for the value in showing the impact of extreme weather on those who are most vulnerable to it, P25 reflected on how their selection of sources in such events may not always be guided by the purest of intentions. In her view, the line between humanizing the climate crisis and exploiting these communities' losses for audience gain is fine, and they thread it frequently. While there is an argument to be made about showing the realities of an at-risk community to ensure that they feel seen, heard, and even in facilitating the mobilization of resources and support, focusing the coverage on individual tragedy can also be used as a sensationalist tactic to attract viewers, and to limit the time spent on investigating the tragedy's causes and demanding solutions. According to P25, these stories often feature government sources and rarely feature expert sources that could hold responsible parties accountable for the devastation, by explaining, or, at least speculating, on the potential drivers of the extreme weather event in question. "Sensationalism attracts notice, but also diverts it (...) Television can hide by showing" said Bourdieu (1996, p. 19). The insistent focus on community members' personal tragedies in extreme weather coverage may as well be a tool—used knowingly or unknowingly—by journalists reporting on environmental issues without assigning any blame. In fact, at times it might be their only option. P25's remarks approximate the

Bourdieu's insights on such human-interest stories, which, in his view, "depoliticize and reduce what goes on in the world to the level of anecdote or scandal" (p. 51):

It's funny, because in moments of catastrophe, it's 'the community, the community' because that's what's appealing, right? (...) Take a flood story. How many flood stories have we seen lately that had a specialist speaking? At best there's a guy from Simepar [Sistema Meteorológico do Paraná, or Paraná Meteorological System] to say 'beware, the storm alert goes on for the next few days.' (...) Take the entire coverage of [P25's news outlet] this summer. I didn't see them interviewing one person that said 'look, in fact, after the construction that happened here, there were regions that were more affected, even with the culverts, micro and macro draining, it didn't work...' There's nothing! (...) But there's the person crying because they lost everything.

Bourdieu (1996) also makes the point that the many internal and external pressures that dictate norms in the field make journalists interested in "the exception, which means whatever is exceptional for them," including "fires, floods, or murders" (p. 20). This may explain the experiences reported by community members who have had negative experiences with (mostly capital-based) journalists in the past, who have exotified, sensationalized, or misinterpreted common aspects of their daily lives, including extreme weather, which often had significant negative impacts on tourism in the region. P25 also reflected on this aspect of her experience:

I'm thinking of my boss: 'P25, how are things in Matinhos, we heard that it's raining cats and dogs!' I said: 'it's raining cats and dogs, [Boss' name], but I'll be very honest with you, the streets are flooded and, as always, in one hour it'll go down.' (...) This flooding thing is funny because people here see it as the end of the world, and there they're used to it. It's not a positive thing, but they're used to it. (...) Then, the person [tourist] that will turn on the TV, they had the idea... They saw the flood... That the world was falling apart, thinking that they wouldn't be able to make it, and also seeing a homicide... The person had the feeling that the coast was unsafe.

Another issue described by Bourdieu and echoed by almost all journalist participants was the sheer speed in which they are expected to work in. P25 herself struggled with doing so in these extreme weather situations: "I'm not the kind of reporter

that'll get there and 'oh I'll interview this person that is suffering'. I can't be like that.”

P25's resistance to this kind of reporting reflects the ethic of care that is so present in some of these communities. She recalled having more time to spend with sources during her stint as a coast-based reporter than she does now, in the capital. Hard news journalists are especially spread thin between the several stories they must complete each day, which, in the interviewed sample, ranged from 3, at the lowest, mainly in television outlets, to a jarring twenty stories a day in smaller, online outlets. The smaller the outlet, the bigger the need for clicks. P26 does not have time to waste in this pursuit: “The process is fast. I don't call because I can't keep chatting. I'll send a Whats [WhatsApp message], and if the person doesn't answer me quickly, I don't read it. I wait half an hour. Or else the person will want to chat with me live.” Like others in this sample, P26 runs his online newspaper completely on his own, and is rarely able to leave his home to conduct in-person reporting in the field. He explained that, for his paper to be lucrative, he must “publish ten news stories per day. Five, at the minimum. If I don't go out, I can easily do ten. If I go out on the street, I'll do one.”

Maintaining a prolific news organization alone can complicate and restrict the reporting process and, while the pressures on these smaller news outlets are great, the impact they have on the encoding of environmental messaging is profound. Conversely, journalists in the larger, television newsrooms, both coast- and capital-based, felt different kinds of pressures small-outlet journalists did not know, related to poor or complicated relationships with others in the newsroom. P25, in one example, reported having to endure sexist comments when interacting with (male) sources during fieldwork, (male) audience members who have consistently sexually harassed her via social media,

and from her own (male) boss who made comments on her weight, making it clear that there was an expectation regarding her appearance if she wanted to succeed as a television reporter. In other examples, many reporters claimed to have experienced troubled relationships with producers, who have a great deal of decision-making power in a story's encoding process. Disconnects between the producer's expectations when preparing the assignment for the journalist from within the newsrooms were frequent, leaving reporters frustrated with what they characterized as poor planning, made by someone who does not know the experience of doing the fieldwork.

Still, journalists in this sample were all moved by a strong sense of purpose that pushed them to continue their work as if they were in pursuit of a vital mission. Capital-based journalists, P30, P31, and P32, respectively, stated that their main journalistic values were to do journalism for social transformation, to treat people's stories as the "rare gems" that they are, and tell them with care, time, honesty, and transparency. Overall, most journalists used the words "objectivity", "ethics", and commitment to the "truth" as the values that guide their work above all else. Many agreed that their role consisted of providing "impartial" reports to their audiences, leaving them to draw their own conclusions based on the pure, unaltered facts. But, despite participants' reports of performing their best efforts to remain committed to their journalistic values, none of them felt like they were doing the best job they could be doing in applying their principles to local environmental storytelling, partly because of the limitations described in this section, and largely because of deeply rooted—at times subtle, but often quite evident—sources of censorship and suppression. While this number may vary from region to region, the 2025 Edelman Trust Barometer showed that 70% of Brazilians believe that

“it is becoming harder to tell if news is from respected media or an individual trying to deceive people” (p. 51), as well as a global decline in trust in all sources of news—search engines, traditional media, owned media, and social media in comparison to 2024.

Situational Editorial Freedom

Brazil is one of the most dangerous places for environmentalists in the world (Lopes de Oliveira & Lewenstein, 2024). Reporting on environmental issues that can easily be connected to entities involved in deforestation, pollution, displacement of communities, and so on can put journalists in highly vulnerable positions, especially ones that are well-known in their communities. One participant who is not a journalist but has been a vocal environmental activist on the Paraná coast and in neighboring states, shared the most extreme story of intimidation out of all participants in this sample; about a local politician who lived next door to him, right across from the beach:

He was adamant about wanting four palm trees in front of his house. Those huge palm trees, you know? Already grown? So, with his political power, he managed to get 3 excavators from local government out on a Sunday, 8PM, to go into the *restinga* and dig holes to plant the palm trees. (...) I went out with my camera, recorded some moments, and ran off because they stopped the digging and started running after me. It was like a movie, I know. I sprinted out and didn't go straight to my house, because... Right? And later that night, around one in morning... My daughter who is 18 now, I think she was just one year old at the time, she was in the back room and a motorcycle stopped. I heard it breaking. It's one in the morning, I look out the window and the guy pulls out a gun and shoots at my house six times.

While he cannot say for sure that this was connected to him recording the environmental crime he witnessed, P16 affirmed that he stopped being so vocal about environmental issues after this situation. While journalists in this sample recognized how dangerous environmental reporting might be in the country, most stated that they did not know of any cases of violence or threats in their area specifically related to environmental

reporting. P24 and P29 were the only ones to share stories of intimidation. P24 recalled one occasion in which he was working on a story about a local politician that was involved in a land-grabbing scheme—a common practice in rural areas in Brazil. The subject had illegally taken and deforested protected lands, built precarious homes to rent out to local individuals mostly in highly vulnerable socioeconomic situations. P24 was at the site when he noticed what sounded like gunshots fired in the vicinity, which he identified as a scare tactic. P29 faced heated criticism when covering a fire in a waste dump located in one of the town's poorest neighborhoods. Residents yelled for the crew to leave, stating that they only showed up in this community to broadcast moments of tragedy. According to P26, an experienced coastal journalist, the coast is not as violent because “we won’t poke around in serious stuff. I haven’t. I don’t go out to do that. Like, I get the impression that it doesn’t happen because we lack... Because we don’t mess with the hornet’s nest.” Similarly, P27 said he had never seen any attacks, but he is also unaware of any specialized environmental journalists that investigate environmental crimes seriously and specifically.

But that is not to say that journalists are not subject to other forms of editorial constraints. When explaining the chokehold audience ratings have on hegemonic news outlets, Bourdieu (1996) does offer the disclaimer that:

The journalistic milieu cannot be represented as uniform. There are small fry, newcomers, subversives, pains-in-the-neck who struggle desperately to add some small difference to this enormous, homogenous mishmash imposed by the (vicious) circle of information circulating in a circle between people who—and this you can’t forget—are all subject to audience ratings. Even network executives are ultimately slaves to the ratings. (p. 26)

Vinelli (2017) makes a compelling argument for alternative organizations that move away from traditional journalistic practice to take ownership of their stories and tell

them in their own terms—and she is joined by many others who are skeptical of traditional media’s ability to ever provide audiences with a critical enough coverage. While this can—and has—certainly be fruitful path in some contexts, even the small, up-and-coming coastal outlets whose journalists believed in editorial independence, were deeply dependent on sources of funding that, in some cases, completely prevented them from addressing certain aspects of environmental issues, including holding responsible parties accountable for environmental crime and injustices. These sources of funding are, in participants’ experiences, mostly connected to governments and, in some cases, powerful businesses. Almost every participant who had experience as a reporter on the coast, whether in a small or large news outlet, had concrete examples of how funding dynamics have greatly limited their encoding processes, which, in turn, influenced audience members’ decoding processes, considering that most had high levels of distrust for local news outlets due to this exact reason:

When we talk about these subjects, we’re always facing the challenge of knowing what to say, you know? Not just referring to technical terms, but also how you’re dealing with the situation of, for example, a city hall that is a partner of the (...) communication outlet. You have to be careful. So, I think the difficulty today, for me, is knowing how to address it without suffering any retaliation (...) There are situations of flooding that we only mention it, but don’t dig deeper to not place any blame (...) It affects our work daily. Because a lot of the time it’s ‘well, why is it flooding? Because of X company.’ Then we have to frame it differently so we can escape... Cause if we lose their sponsorship... (P24)

We would even joke that the mayor was our boss (...) I’ll be very honest. When we I spoke about the [Paranaguá] Port, I spoke for the Port, practically. You know? Like marketing them a bit. (P25)

I get ads from Pontal’s city hall. Every year they advertise, they’re one of my sponsors. I take care to not fight them because if I lose their sponsorship I’m screwed. (P26)

We notice that when you have money, you can buy the press’ silence so that the matter is not taken further. (P27)

We have a lot of freedom, but, unfortunately, when it comes to politics we have to retreat a bit. You can talk about this guy, but that other one? Not so much. (P29)

P25 noted that the only instance they were encouraged to work on stories that reported on issues related to city hall, was when city hall was already aware of the story coming out beforehand, and already had plans to mitigate whatever issue the journalist was reporting on. This way, they sold a narrative that city hall was attentive and proactive. She equated her experience as a reporter on the coast as being a puppet. P25 now works as a journalist in the capital, where she reports being more—but not completely—free of political influence. One state outlet based in Curitiba, Rede Massa, is owned by a family that currently holds several positions of power in national and state politics, including state government. But in other outlets this may be more subtle. P25 says that, in her outlet, any political stories must be approved by the editor, while other stories do not.

Capital-based journalists have also seen how local coastal governments try to take control of their stories, to varying degrees. P32, a capital-based producer, recalled several occasions in which municipal coastal governments made attempts to control how local stories were told by state media, but that their size and status allowed them to push back. According to P32, city hall has often tried to have city officials accompany journalists during interviews; push for the featuring of certain people and not others; and even reaching out to subjects prior to their interviews to “prepare them”. P32 did state that when the crew is aware of such interventions, they are able to assert their control over the story. “The problem is when we’re not aware” P32 says. Overall, capital-based journalists did feel a greater sense of independence than coast-based journalists.

While it may be impossible to gauge the full extent of municipal governments' interference in the encoding process of capital-based journalists, who are culturally and geographically distant from anything that occurs behind the scenes prior to their arrival, one must remain vigilant considering how dependent state outlets are on local governments both as primary sources and as sources of support. P32 reported feeling high levels of insecurity when covering environmental stories on the coast due to her superficial knowledge of local environmental issues and legislation: "Not knowing if we're showing, we're supporting, some action that is bad for the environment." Her strategy to ensure that they are, in fact, reporting on pro-environmental actions is to connect with local authorities:

In a story, we never like to interview city hall itself, but we count a lot on their support (...) We trust the competent authorities. If they are in fact competent, and how competent they are, I don't know. So, it's like, we kind of trust the local administration and if anything goes wrong in the end [we say] 'the local administration informed us that this was good to show.'

P30, who is a capital-based journalist but did not grow up in Curitiba, stated that he never noticed any attempts of editorial control over the outlet he works in, but recognized that this may be due to his "political immaturity related to affairs in Paraná." Affairs he believes he does not yet "dominate", as opposed to his experience as a journalist in his hometown in a different state, in which he recalls that one "could not speak about city hall. Period. It was obvious. Obvious. Blatant. But that's because I was in that reality. I know that." The lack of contextualized environmental knowledge reported by capital-based journalists make them vulnerable not only to reporting on issues incorrectly, but also to disingenuous attempts of manipulation by stakeholders that have political and economic interests closely tied to state media's portrayals of the coast.

While state outlets may better serve the journalistic “watchdog” role given their size and financial independence, their reporting power may continue to be confined to the boundaries of their own ignorance regarding coastal contexts, with few expectations of capital-based reporters that have extensive coastal environmental reporting experience.

Reflecting on the Encoding of Coastal Environmental Stories

It should go without saying that to reveal the hidden constraints on journalists, which they in turn bring to bear on all cultural producers is not to denounce those in charge or to point a finger at the guilty parties. Rather, it is an attempt to offer to all sides a possibility of liberation, through a conscious effort, from the hold of these mechanisms, and to propose, perhaps, a program for concerted action by artists, writers, scholars, and journalists—that is, by the holders of the (quasi) monopoly of the instruments of diffusion. Only through such a collaboration will it be possible to work effectively to share the most universal achievements of research and to begin, in practical terms, to universalize the conditions of access to the universal. (Bourdieu, 1996, p 1)

One critique I—and many others—often make of research in the humanities and social sciences is the evident discrepancy between the amount of time we spend identifying the many flaws of many systems, carefully crafted into the “so what?” of our inquiries, and how little time we spend—or, to put it more accurately, how little time we *get* to spend—dedicating ourselves to a lesser known “then what?” question. My entire academic career taught me how to master the art of the “so what?” But it was my husband, on an uneventful Monday evening in the car, that uttered the words “then what” as we discussed the contents of this book’s chapters. Up until that point, I had never heard such a concise and simple way of expressing these common critiques of certain traditions in academia that generally prioritize the practice of revealing problems without offering concrete solutions. I realize that most of this chapter has been dedicated to pointing out the many shortcomings journalists in both interpretive communities face when encoding environmental news in the Paraná coast, and I trust that the “so what” question has been

answered in many ways throughout this book. I opened this section with the disclaimer Bourdieu (1996) used in the prologue of his analysis of journalistic practice, *On Television*, to affirm, in more than just my words, my commitment to the “then what?”

My intention with this work is to explore and map out the media dynamics that ultimately shape environmental narratives on and about this place and its people; a place that is endangered by much and treasured by many. In any attempt to holistically understand these journalists’ encoding processes—that is, to the extent that is possible in scholarly research—such limitations must be understood, so that pertinent recommendations can be made. As was with Bourdieu, my intent is not to place blame or to suggest that these journalists are inherently inadequate. As the author himself states, “a field is a structured social space” which contains “people who dominate and others who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space” (p. 40). But, identifying revealing the “hidden constraints” (as put by the author), that are so present in the encoding process of these participants—none of which are novel or exclusive to these interpretive communities—is essential in imagining any path forward. Before moving on to the next and final chapter, in which I explore the themes that may offer some guidance on the “then what?” question, I will use this section to reflect on the identified limitations found in these journalists’ encoding processes in relation to pertinent frameworks that will put this chapters’ themes into perspective, and to community members’ decoding processes and reported readings of environmental news.

Hall (2007) argues that “there is no degree zero in language” (p. 167). Or, in other words, all meaning is necessarily culturally constructed. However, some codes become naturalized to the point of achieving a status of “near-universality” (p. 167),

demonstrating a degree of reciprocity and equivalence between the encoders and decoders of a message. In the case of the study site, powerful stakeholders have attempted to naturalize the reductionist discourse around coastal communities by painting them as solely as hosts, victims, and villains of that environment. This is but one example of storytelling being used as a domination tactic, among other mechanisms, to take control of an ecological hotspot that is ripe with “potential”. This pervasive narrative has been instrumental in marginalizing entire communities, to the point where some members openly feel shame towards or negate their own identities. The same powers that for centuries have attempted to control the discourse have also attempted to control the journalistic class; some of the most powerful storytellers in these communities—and they have succeeded, to some degree, especially within the coastal environment itself, considering the many other fragilities it presents in comparison to the media landscape in the state’s capital.

Bourdieu (1996) states that “the journalistic field had one distinguishing characteristic: it is much more dependent on external forces than the other fields of cultural production (...)” (p. 53). In the experiences of interviewed journalists, these many external influences frequently dictate aspects of their encoding processes, at times leaving them little option but to resort to the effective, yet shallow, tourism/tragedy binary, further cementing the dominant “hosts, villains, and victims” identities that have been defined by centuries of cultural transformation and oppression. Hall (2007) explains that: “The domains of ‘preferred meanings’ have the whole social order embedded in them as a set of meanings, practices, and beliefs: the everyday knowledge of social structures, of ‘how things work for all practical purposes in this culture’” (p. 169). The

negotiation between external and internal pressures, journalists' individual set of professional values, and their experiences as both individuals and professionals that define journalists' encoding processes, help reinforce the boundaries of the two journalistic interpretive communities contemplated in this study (Zelizer, 1993), which, in turn, influence audiences' decoding processes as well, by shaping residents' perspectives on the quality of what their local media landscape has to offer.

But contrary to Bourdieu's remarks on how all discourse and action will only be publicly known after facing the "trial of journalistic selection" (p. 47), I found that, in these communities, environmental stories often travel through peers, who have been described by almost all participants as connoisseurs of a good *fofoca* (gossip), and *histórias de pescador* (fisherman's stories). The power of storytelling within these communities must not be underestimated. State media was mostly criticized for being absent, also consistent with the place-based and audience-related limitations described by capital-based journalists, while coast-based media are able to be consistently present. Here, perhaps, is an indication for opportunity. Coast-based journalists have unparalleled access to local environmental stories in communities that long to be heard, and have their stories documented and shared. Coastal journalists also possess the cultural competency to navigate these environments and interpret these stories, considering that most are community members themselves.

Most community participants meet local media with a fair degree of skepticism, considering how often interviewed coast-based journalists experienced some form of editorial obstruction, with some explicitly stating that they trust capital-based media more. It is true that journalists in the capital may be in a better—even if still feeble—

position to play the watchdog role, which may often provide the more sensational stories of government corruption or negligence, crime, and tragedy, meeting state outlets' expectations regarding audience ratings. This is not to say, however, that capital-based outlets cannot or should not also engage in solutions-focused, community-centered environmental messaging—especially television outlets, who have been named by participants as some of their main sources of environmental information. Their financial stability and technical infrastructure allow them produce longer-form journalistic pieces, with a greater emphasis on individual characters and cultural traditions, which has generally been well-received by community participants.

Schultz (2007) draws from Bourdieu to define the journalistic doxa as “a set of professional beliefs which tend to appear as evident, natural and self-explaining norms of journalistic practice” (p. 194) and Bourdieu himself explained it as “a specific doxa, a system of presuppositions inherent in membership in a field” (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 37). While this may be true of the most fundamental of journalistic assumptions—seeking and reporting the truth—we must not fail to recognize variations within these systems, considering the degree of heterogeneity in journalistic experiences even within a geographically small territory such as the study site. Some journalists in this sample did not even consider themselves members of the field, regardless of their knowledge of such “inherent presuppositions”, until they received some indication of official “confirmation” in the form of a diploma or a professional registration with the federal government. Observing journalistic practice through frameworks that account for cultural variances, such as Hall’s Encoding/Decoding and Zelizer’s interpretive communities, allows

scholars to take nuance into consideration especially within the realm of environmental journalism, a practice that is profoundly tied to place, culture, and history.

In this chapter, I addressed the encoding processes of capital- and coast-based journalists; what shapes them and how they differ between interpretive communities. Members across both communities agree that the current coverage perpetuates what I have defined as a “hosts, victims, villains” narrative, which reduces the environmental stories of the coast to either tourism or tragedy, but the reasons why that is vary between the different groups. Coast-based journalists have the geographical and cultural proximity needed to tell these stories in more nuanced ways but are limited by their restricted access to journalistic training—general and specialized—and the lack of funding renders them dependent of government and corporate sponsorships, which, in turn, profoundly affects their editorial independence. All capital-based journalists had received formal journalism training at the college level but emphasized the need for contextualized specialized environmental journalism training for the coast. While they had access to more funding and, therefore, some higher degree of editorial independence—but not total—capital-based journalists struggled with access to coastal communities, which they attributed both to the physical and cultural distance. The following chapter provides a deeper examination of possible paths forward by offering recommendations grounded in the experiences of each journalistic interpretive community, which fit within each of their doxas, attempt to satisfy the communicative needs of the audiences they reach, and, ultimately, seek to interrupt the longstanding tradition of discursive marginalization and typecasting of coastal environmental experiences.

CHAPTER VI

“IT’S ABOUT APPRECIATING ATTITUDES THAT BETTER OUR COLLECTIVE LIVES”: CALL FOR CULTURALLY RESONANT ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM

“Are you rich?” asked one of the about 15 children in the audience of an event I had no intentions of speaking in. Embarrassed, I laughed and tried to make light of their question. “I’m a student!” I said. “I’m not rich!” Just a few minutes before, I was asked by P12 to tell them about how staying in school had allowed me to travel the world. How does one explain, to group of fishers’ children, the duality of graduate student who, in fact, has been able to travel the world for conferences, while simultaneously lining up weekly at the local church to pick up free groceries from the Student Food Pantry? They insisted: “But *how* rich are you?” Other children, now riled up, asked the same. I said “well, I live abroad, and I get paid abroad so, it’s kind of complicated to explain the value of that money here.” I look around searching for a hand up so I can move on to the next, hopefully less loaded question. “But how much money is in your account, right now?” There was no answer that seemed appropriate for the situation.

P12 sat right next to me while I wiped my sweaty palms on my shorts facing this group of children she was hosting for a Saturday of activities in the fishers’ association she leads. The kids kept busy with arts and crafts lessons, an introductory English class in which they were taught the alphabet, a guitar lesson, a *capoeira* session, and a talk with a Ph.D. candidate—yours truly—about the importance of staying in school; a talk I learned I was giving the moment I walked into the event that was happening right across from the beach. Everything was free, and the lessons were either taught by P12 herself, her family

members, or community volunteers. Members of this fishing community, like most others in the region, live in socioeconomic vulnerability. P12 works tirelessly to teach the children in the community skills that may help supplement their income as they grow up, inspire them to dedicate themselves to their studies, and to keep them away from unsafe paths.

She invited me to attend their event, which would be the first time we met in person. I brought my unofficial research assistant/driver along—mom—and we watched as P12 feverishly paced around all afternoon, insistently preaching over loud laughter and chaos about the importance of education and respect for the peoples and places around us. Before the scheduled snack break P12 had prepared for the afternoon—popcorn and Guaraná, a typical Brazilian soda—she gathered all of us around the table and asked which kid would volunteer to lead an Our Father prayer to bless our meal. After a few long moments of complete silence while all of us held hands around the white, plastic table, one kid suggested that I’d lead it, in English. All the other kids cheered on, and I felt my palms sweaty again. Much to the dismay of my dutiful catholic grandparents, I cannot remember the words to Our Father to save my life. But my unofficial research assistant/driver and mother can. Knowing her daughter, and, in truly life-saving fashion, she intervened with a counteroffer: she’d recite the prayer in Portuguese, and I’d repeat in English after her. The group agreed. She prayed Our Father beautifully, while I thanked all the gods I was disappointing at that moment for the fact that no one in the group could tell that I was getting it all wrong.

This humorous moment of distortion in communication, translation, and meaning making is representative of how the encoding and decoding of environmental stories

often occur in the study site. Communicators that, for a wide variety of mostly external factors are underprepared to navigate situations in which they either lack the professional competency or cultural competency to encode environmental messaging in a way that resonates with their audiences. But, in this chapter, I address its main theme, *Call for Culturally Resonant Environmental Journalism*, which is defined by participants' across-the-board eagerness to reject the dominant discourse and tell these environmental stories in much more depth, through two subthemes: *Need for Contextualized Specialized Training* and *Hope in Environmental Journalism that Educates, Empowers, and Holds Accountable*. In this chapter, I offer situated recommendations that may be of use to practitioners in the study site, in each of their interpretive communities, based on their goals, strengths, and limitations, and I imagine a future in which the stories of the *paranaense* Atlantic Forest are told in situated ways that better serve local audiences.

Need for Contextualized Specialized Training

Journalists in this sample expressed their keen interest for training on many levels. While some had college level journalism training—mostly capital-based journalists—no participants in this sample had ever received any specialized environmental journalism training, much less environmental journalism training that is in any way place based. Considering the inexistence of journalism courses offered at the coast's universities, coast-based journalists especially advocated for basic professional education, even those who felt comfortable in their roles as reporters. Overall, all participants saw the benefit in having the chance to learn from those with more experience, so they could be better prepared and, importantly, feel more confident when entering the field. This lack of confidence may be suggestive of participating journalists'

appraisals on the legitimacy of different forms of training, which can reflect broader colonial structures that prioritize academic over empirical knowledge building. In the experience of the college-educated journalists, college-level training was far from enough to give them confidence when reporting on environmental matters. Many emphasized how their college courses did not cover the specifics of environmental journalism and agreed on the necessity of specialized training for this particular beat.

But, on a deeper level, journalists expressed a need for a degree of preparation that even specialized environmental journalism training would likely not cover. Their experiences of struggling to culturally and geographically navigate the coast suggests that they would benefit from more situated and place-based training, tailored to the distinct needs of each interpretive community, and grounded in frameworks such as Hall's Encoding/Decoding model, which recognize how the communication processes inherently shaped by context. Contextualized environmental journalism training would offer a chance for greater reflexivity among these journalists and would better prepare them to navigate this specific media landscape and beat, which, as discussed in previous chapters, presents a series of place-based challenges related to local authorities, industries, communities, and access to certain areas amid times of increasing extreme weather events. This would be especially helpful to capital-based journalists—although both interpretive communities would benefit from it—who noted that the geographical and cultural distance from the coast greatly limits their reporting abilities.

The Danger of the Noble Savage Trope

Those who have little background and/or training in environmental communication can often exotify coastal communities and encode their stories within the noble savage trope which, essentially, refers to the common Western narrative that

members of traditional and/or Indigenous communities are necessarily conscious environmentalists, and that their relationship with the natural world and the creatures that live in it is characterized by peaceful cooperation and inherent harmony (Ellingson, 2001; Sturgeon, 2009; Ingram, 2005). Finding the appropriate balance between being an ally to the *caíçaras*—highlighting their knowledge and connection to their lands—and not falling into the noble savage narrative may be challenging for journalists who have not been prepared to do so. P21 describes having dealt with this phenomenon clearly in the *Decoding* chapter and underscores the nuance that local environmental journalists must be able to grasp to tell full stories. Not all *caíçaras* have the relationship with the environment that some journalists P21 encountered expected:

Who is integrated with this environment is not only the animal, not only the forest, but the human being as well. I think we'll take a while to understand this, but I think it'll take even longer for the environmental journalist to understand this. I have to defend myself here so others can understand me. Is that [wildlife] important? Yes! I am too. I also want this. This is only here because of me, too. So, I think we're in a process of understanding ourselves and valuing our identity (...) We fall into, I think, a very romantic point of view to think that we [*caíçaras*] only protect [the environment]. And that's not true, because not everyone understands this culture the same. Generally, there are people that destroy. So, it's not correct to say 'because the *caíçara* defends...' No! *Some caíçaras* defend. So, the monitoring is necessary exactly to stop those who don't defend. The one that defends, the one that preserves, the one that is integrated [with the culture and the environment], this one needs their way of life to be integrated. But the one that doesn't, that one needs to be punished.

The limited amount of time capital-based journalists are able to spend producing their stories in person, on the coast, joins the lack of contextualized training in aggravating their susceptibility to defaulting to the noble savage trope. Increased opportunities for training alone would hardly suffice in the interruption of this cycle if not combined with increased and continuous institutional support for on-site reporting. This would require the proper allocation of funds, which, in some outlets more than others,

would certainly be tied to clicks and ratings. More meaningful relationships with reliable key community leaders and experts—both environmental and social scientists—would also be an essential resource for capital-based journalists to rely on in ensuring that their representations of coastal communities are nuanced and accurate. But communicating with scientists was also a challenge for several participants.

Making Sense of Science and Scientists

Community member P2 stated that communication outlets are mostly failing in translating scientific knowledge into a message that community members can decode, and several journalists would agree, considering the difficulties they face in starting and maintaining good relationships with experts. The relationship between locals and scientists can also be fraught especially in traditional communities on the coast, considering their history with exploitative research practices in the area and cases in which residents' cooperation with scientists led to the imposition of environmental restrictions that severely impacted their ways of living. Still, P28 and P29 did note that they had very fruitful relationships with local experts, but P28 pointed out that he had trouble getting responses from capital-based experts. Even so, he reports having to spend hours on end interviewing one specialist to fully understand the content of the conversation. Time is a luxury that very few journalists have, which directly impacts their preparation process prior to an interview, or how they conduct research on a certain topic they are writing about. P25 found trouble in accessing experts, in the sense that they were less than helpful in explaining the science to her, leaving her unable to make that content even more accessible to her audience: "We're lacking instruction, but specialists also need to be instructed. That's the importance of media training. Lots of people are good speakers, but they can't explain things in an easy way."

The observed disconnect between communicators and scientists has been described by scholars in a variety of contexts globally. While there certainly is space for scientists themselves to be better trained at making their work accessible, journalists can also adopt a series of behaviors that might make their collaborations with scientists more successful. First, whenever possible journalists should seek out local specialists that conduct place-based research, which they can find through contact with the nearest universities, or through targeted searches on academic search engines (Davis et al., 2025). Journalists must be clear on the topic they wish to address with the scientist and ensure that they are contacting someone whose area of expertise allows them to answer their questions properly. At this stage, it is also vital that journalists seek social scientists when reporting on issues related to policymaking or social causes, so they can better contextualize the scientific information acquired during the fieldwork process (Davis et al., 2025). Once in contact with the proper specialist, journalists may still have trouble in getting the information they need in the format they need it in. That is, in accessible and situated language that will make sense to them and their audiences.

Science communicators act as cultural brokers, of sorts, who facilitate the conversation between various groups: scientists, a lay audience, policymakers, etc. The Davis, Smith, Adlam, Berger, and Morrison “Stories of Fire Resource Guide” (2025) for journalists covering wildfires in Oregon offers suggestions of questions that journalists might ask when they feel the conversation is not rendering any useful material, including: “Do you have a story or specific example you can share?; For whom or what does this matter the most? Can you summarize what you just said in a one- or two-sentence take-home message?; Does the available science on this topic include studies based in the

ecosystem or community that I'm reporting on?" (p. 36). The authors of the guide also caution journalists to be prepared for a variety of responses when attempting to connect with specialists on a topic. Scientists have different comfort levels when engaging with the press, with some being well versed in the process and easy to interact with, others with little journalistic experience that may have unrealistic expectations regarding the journalistic process and deadlines, and others who may be resistant to building a relationship because of negative past experiences with the press.

Environmental Journalism for Coastal Communities

Bourdieu (1996) argues that "the television today becomes a sort of mirror for Narcissus, a space for narcissistic exhibitionism" (p. 14) for political pundits and academics. In other words, he notes that those featured in news coverage are often doing so out of selfish and egotistic motivations. While this may have made sense in the context of his writing, and it may very well apply to the political figures of coastal Paraná, this is not the case for most residents of these coastal towns, given that most community members' eagerness to engage with and be featured in the media can be traced back to places of yearning to be seen, a response to deep-rooted feelings of abandonment. This is one of many reasons why journalists and academics—especially those who are capital-based or from other parts of the country/world—must operate within these communities with a heightened sensibility. P21 recalled an instance that occurred not with a journalist, but with a researcher that he brought into his community that left a lasting impression on an older lady who volunteered to be a study participant:

Mrs. [name], I remember one time this guy was getting his Ph.D. in Spain in something, and it was right at the time when there was that terrorist attack in Spain. Look, I remember how hard it was for that woman. She saw it on TV, that there was an attack in Spain, and she couldn't sleep for a few days. She came to my house—this was a while ago—but she came to my house at least twice to ask me

if I had been in contact with him, because she knew he had gone to Spain. So, this is an example, like... Damn, the researcher had already forgotten her, right? He was past it, right? He documented it and turned the page. And she remembered him and missed him. She was worried about him.

P6 shared a situation he observed in his restaurant once that illustrates why environmental journalists must take extra steps to avoid distortions in the decoding of environmental messages by coastal communities:

It was a group of ladies sitting there, in the corner. And the Globo reporter said: 'Look at maritime conditions. Today, the Navy informed that there will be four-and-a-half meter waves.' And the lady asked me: 'what's the height in here?' [floor to ceiling]. '3,25'. 'Oh! We're leaving because look, 3,25; the water will cover all of this!' It's all a lack of understanding.

P6 continued to say that the media must consider more deeply "how to transmit this information (...) because it seems like they think everyone knows everything, right? Everyone understands everything already, but they don't." Bourdieu (1996) described this distortion in his reflection on the circulating of complex information within mass communication channels:

Sometimes I want to go back over *every* word the television news people use, often without thinking and with no idea of the difficulty and the seriousness of the subjects they are talking about or the responsibilities they assume by talking about them in front of the thousands of people who watch the news without understanding what they see and without understanding that they don't understand. Because these words do things, they make things—they create phantasms, fears, and phobias, or simple false representations. (p. 20)

The author's pertinent point can be interpreted in many ways in relation to this dataset. First, in the context of translating scientific or technical environmental information to a language that fits not only coastal audiences' knowledge of such topics, but also to ensure—that is, to the extent possible when encoding—that the message can be decoded by audiences within their own cultural contexts. In other words, encoders must not underestimate the importance of taking steps to make the detached, acontextual

knowledge they often get from expert or official sources, or reports, papers, and so on, resonate with their audiences' environmental experiences. Furthermore, as Bourdieu points out, words make things—including “phantasms, fears, and phobias” and as argued by Hall (2007): “Production and reception of the television message are not, therefore, identical, but they are related: they are differentiated moments within the totality formed by the social relations of the communicative process as a whole” (p. 165). My analysis of these participants' encoding and decoding processes indicates that the phantasms Bourdieu refers to derive from the common and, at times, deliberate misrepresentation of these communities and their places, and have long shaped the ways in which their environmental narratives are told and continue to directly influence local discourse. Notably, community members are not blind to this. On the contrary, when prompted to reflect on how their environmental stories are told, and how they wish their stories were told, participants widely agreed that the overbearing and reductionist focus on tragedy and tourism does very little to support them in their environmental struggles and to represent them as they are.

Hope in Environmental Journalism that Educates, Empowers, and Holds Accountable

But participants were far from defeated. In fact, it was quite the opposite. Many were eager to take part in a new model of local environmental journalism that is situated, frequent, contextually appropriate, and that consistently executes three functions: First, to educate the population both on the environmental issues and wealth they have as keepers of the Atlantic Forest. Second, to empower communities through positive examples of local environmental initiatives, such as stories of thriving businesses that have adopted

eco-friendly practices, activists that have obtained positive results in advocating for pro-environmental action, or simply a story about a neighbor who went out of their way to care for the environment surrounding them (See Figures 25, 26, and 27 for examples).

Figure 25

Handmade sign in a Pontal do Paraná beach that reads: “Peace, love, keep the beach clean.” Intercontinental ships are on the horizon behind it, on their way to the Paranaguá Port (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2025).



Figure 26

Handmade sign put up on Guaratuba beach by local resident. It reads: “One must salt the feet to sweeten the soul. Be conscious, don’t leave trash on the beach.” (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2024).



Figure 27

Handcrafted accessories made of discarded fish skin—bought from local fishers—that undergoes a tanning process and is transformed into leather. This is a community-centered project in Pontal do Paraná aimed at teaching local women this craft for supplemental income (Photo by: Beatriz Sprada Mira, 2024).



Participants across the sample emphasized the importance of prioritizing the coverage of positive, community-based examples, and of being able to see themselves, as whole, represented in the environmental narrative as powerful agents of change—as protagonists of the story. Finally, participants hope to see more independent media coverage, that is not tied to governments and environmentally depleting industries and that can hold responsible parties accountable for environmental injustices and related issues. These three functions are closely related and could not be performed separately, but I detail them individually in the following subsections.

Environmental Journalism that Educates

Bourdieu underscored the importance of journalists questioning: “Does the person who’s listening have the tools to decode what I’m saying?” (1996, p. 29) when encoding messages. This is a highly pertinent question within the universe of this study, considering that environmental education initiatives on the coast are extremely deficient, according to several participants, which also contributes to their feelings of abandonment and consequent resentment towards the several institutions that exploit and market them as an ecological tourist destination. To many, news media are the only sources of environmental information/education available (excluding, of course, community peers). I noticed this form of environmental ignorance myself on many occasions while on the coast, even amongst some of my own family members who are long-time coastal residents. In one case, while paying relatives a visit, I watched as the family’s patriarch, in his 80s, tossed a hearing-aid battery out in his front yard—steps away from the beach—much to the embarrassment of his sons, who reprimanded him immediately and profusely. He still seemed to not grasp what he had done wrong. Another example happened when I was on a speedboat on my way to one of the islands I visited during my

data collection. I observed as a young mother instructed her toddler, who was playing with an Amoeba-type slime, to discard the pieces of slime that she dropped on the boat's mucky floors overboard, into the Atlantic Ocean, meters away from the ecologically precious and endangered mangroves. These were not tourists. They were on that boat heading home to an island whose residents are completely dependent on fishing.

Aside from the fact that the State often fails to provide a high-quality environmental education within the public education system, events such as these can be highly nuanced. I have noticed that some of those who perpetuate these small environmental transgressions are often quite vocal about the importance of protecting the Atlantic Forest and their own personal connections to it. These acts may come from a place of innocence, ignorance, and, at times, even from places of frustration, apathy, and disdain for environmental authorities. Regardless of the psychological mechanisms behind such actions, participants in this sample unanimously agreed that the main role they expect of local environmental media is one of education. P19, for example, hopes for more "(...) stories that help people, that are actually educational, of environmental education. Because it's no use to... No one can take only sadness and tragedy on television, you understand?" Several participants expressed this, and some offered the reminder that people will only care for a place once they understand and feel connected to it, echoing Cox & Pezzullo's (2022) thoughts on the pragmatic and constitutive functions of environmental communication.

Instead of campaigns that encourage and educate, they [journalists] come here to say that the water is not... Is improper [for swimming] because of the sewage... Damn, everyone is well aware that irregularities exist. But then what? What are you doing to help? (P20)

I think what's missing is to increase the visibility of what is done there and how we can help. We have to have more kindness, care. That's exactly our role. I think we need to awaken... Make people, based on the stories of those who are there, have this care for that place, then, consequently, they'll take care of the place. (P32)

We have to learn to love what we have in our backyards, just a few meters away from our homes, we have to understand. We have to have this information to value it. (P29)

Furthermore, participants mainly in traditional communities spoke about how news media can also educate locals on the current state of environmental legislation, translating official information and informing rural and fishing communities of most recent restrictions and any potential changes. P22 also pointed out that media can help identify and offer alternatives to members of traditional communities whose livelihoods are in any way threatened by environmental restrictions, or to those that have not been too successful in the tourism industry. Finally, some participants, such as P20 and P22, mentioned that local media has a responsibility to educate residents and tourists on environmental matters that can directly impact their safety, such as ocean currents and other causes for frequent drownings on their beaches, information on hiking safety, and other aspects one may need to be careful with while experiencing the biome.

Environmental Journalism that Empowers

As I asked participants about what role they believed environmental journalism should have in their communities, many responded that the media had the opportunity to teach locals about the socioecological importance of the environment that surrounds them. Re-framing the Atlantic Forest as an asset within which coastal residents can find opportunity in—as opposed to the common discourse perpetuated by local governments that the environment is the reason why these towns are not “better developed”—participants believe, could lead to several positive consequences. Equipped with the

knowledge of just how dependent they are on the Atlantic Forest and how little of it is left, communities would be better placed to organize, advocate for themselves, and to adopt and support pro-environmental behaviors and attitudes. Participants hoped that local environmental coverage could also highlight the opportunities for socioeconomic growth that may come through environmental preservation and conscious management. P30, a capital-based journalist whose work on the coast has mostly been regarding tourism, would like to see “the environment as the protagonist of the story” and that this story can be of use not only to the tourist visiting the place, but also to allow coastal residents realize their backyards’ potential, and see in that story an opportunity for themselves. When describing her impressions of coastal communities’ perceptions on the state of their environment, P2 stated that:

(...) it seems like people don’t understand what is actually happening, you know? And you see... People see lots of wrong things but they’re thinking it’s all beautiful and nice (...) They don’t understand. They don’t understand the place that they live in.

P2 was referencing, specifically, the many tourism-driven initiatives that local governments were pursuing during summer months that, in her view, were dramatically and negatively impacting the environment and her quality of life as a resident, through the overcrowding of public transportation she takes back-and-forth from work, the crashing of basic city infrastructure due to overpopulation including water, waste, and sewage systems, leading to the spread of diseases such as norovirus and dengue fever. Meanwhile, the Paraná state government news agency published a report that was picked up by several news outlets across the state, stating that 92% of tourists were supportive of the state’s investment and execution of over 30 free concerts and other free entertainment activities on the coast (Paraná, 2025).

Several participants in this sample, like P2, were vocal environmentalists, and either had or were, at the time of the interviews, leaders in their communities, through groups such as fishers' or surfers' associations, pillars within local schools or universities, and so on. Here, I find it essential to provide the reminder that environmental issues mentioned by participants in the study site are completely and permanently intertwined with issues of socioeconomic vulnerability. Therefore, the residents that took on any environmental advocacy work were also inevitably advocating for, at times, the most basic of demands, such as access to a proper sewage system. Furthermore, the very community members that continue to dedicate significant portions of their time and effort to such causes are often in conditions of vulnerability themselves and continue to fight for the protection of their communities with little or virtually no support from other, more financially advantaged institutions. P9 described his community work as an "inglorious fight," as he faces financial and cultural barriers in "giving people what they need, and not what they want." These community members explained that the attention of media outlets, regardless of size, to their efforts had tremendous effects on their will to continue with their advocacy work, and in encouraging others to join in as well. P12's statement encapsulates this very well:

You have no idea of the repercussions this has for us, it's a huge help (...) The visibility of our work goes from 0 to 100% (...) It would be so great if they [the news] came every time (...) Cause then I can tell the community and that excites them to come. 'Oh, I'm going to be on TV!' Everyone wants their moment and all (...) So journalists give us strength. If they all had like, the stories would help us so much (...) Maybe we could get sponsors for our projects with the kids here (...) I can't afford to do any marketing. But the media is stronger than a flyer, a banner, a sign... When the media shows up, if a television shows up to a project, it's like a bomb. So, it's so important, even more so than the government. The journalist, your work, is fundamental to really change lots of peoples' lives. Transform lives. Appreciate people. You fuel us.

P17 was able to connect with sponsors and other figures who supported his organization through media attention from the capital, and P19 praised the way in which their organization was portrayed by the largest capital-based news outlet as protagonists of their own stories. P7 also found great relationships with this capital-based news outlet, in the creation of a special segment during the afternoon news about local wildlife. He reported finding his friends and neighbors taken aback by the variety of species their area was home to, which prompted in them an interest in learning more about the region. “The resident himself does not understand the touristic and environmental potential that this town has” he said. P8 built close relationships he often relies on with local media especially, citing the success of one story he worked on with local media and fishers to call the governments’ attention to the state of nearby mangroves.

Many of the most positive experiences community members had with journalists were with capital-based journalists working on tourism- or culture-focused stories for entertainment programs, usually aired on weekends, which allow for much more time for production and much longer stories—some even being 20 minutes long. P31 and P32 currently work in this line of journalism, with both having had experience with hard news journalism in the past. They believe they make more of a positive difference in the communities they visit now, as opposed to their prior experience with daily news, underscoring the many advantages and opportunities they saw in entertainment to better tell communities’ stories—time and resources to connect more deeply with community sources being the most important aspect. P32 stated:

You’re out of that quick 2–3-minute story. We get to go deeper and that allows us to have a closer gaze with the person that is speaking. I see that we have much more attention. We don’t forget the people we speak to. We create a connection.

So, I think a lot of it is about appreciation—appreciating the other and seeing the other like this. These are pillars that I consider very important.

P32 also called attention to the fact that she encounters “much less resistance” when seeking out community sources, and that she very often receives positive feedback from community members, especially in tourism-focused stories that lead to an increase in visitors after airing. She states that she always tries to conduct a “360° work” by following up with sources after the story airs, sharing the link to it, and seeking their opinions on the story itself and if/how it has impacted them and their communities. Usually, the response is overwhelmingly positive. While following up with sources is not required, P32 believes it is common practice in her work environment: “It’s good to know what we’re doing; if it’s influencing anything, generating anything positive or negative.” This kind of interaction is inconceivable to some coast-based journalists such as P27, who reported working on up to twenty news stories a day, mostly remotely, to ensure that they reach the necessary number of clicks to remain in business.

Some participants were less satisfied with how news outlets, both coast- and capital-based approach daily news. P20, for example, said: “when we do our Guaratuba Bay clean-up event, and the beach clean-ups, it’s a group of over 300 people, volunteers, right? Do you think any TV shows up? (...) No, no (...) Today we see a dark press, a press that only speaks of bad things because it works to their advantage.” P1 echoed P20’s thoughts, adding that this is not restricted to environmental issues: “It’s about appreciating attitudes that better our collective lives. This isn’t covered.” Even though many participants shared these feelings of frustration towards this observed conditional visibility, most community members and journalists alike were ultimately optimistic regarding what environmental news could do to support the protection and healthy

growth of the region, despite all the limitations both groups identified during these interviews. They believed especially in the potential of positive news stories that highlighted community successes, that educate the public on the Atlantic Forest biome and the importance of keeping it safe, and that offer practical pro-environmental solutions that the audience can adopt in their daily lives.

I would like to see projects... News about projects that worked. I would like to see news about something in the past that went wrong and that some change occurred through knowledge and education, changing the life of a community, changing people's lives. I'd like to see (...) good examples. (P11)

Let's talk about our riches. About the best of what we have. And let's talk about it in an educational way, about the educational processes that are happening. Because look, if they get good examples and good stories, not just the tragedies, of what's going on on the coast, I believe they'll have stories to cover every day. Or least once a week. (P20)

As stated by P2, that coastal communities must be able to “see themselves” in local environmental coverage, especially considering their higher levels of socioenvironmental vulnerability compared to other areas of the state. But what I found, through this analysis, is that an increase in community representation alone—meaning the more frequent use of community members as journalistic sources in environmental coverage—is insufficient. Journalists must take into careful consideration the nuance in their choices of *when* to include community members in environmental stories and make a conscious effort to substitute the current “hosts, victims, and villains” dominant narrative for one that shows coastal residents as agents of transformation, rightful keepers of the Atlantic Forest, with much to offer in terms of knowledge, tradition, and insight into potential paths ahead. This is not to say that journalists should cease to report on the many pressing environmental issues that currently plague coastal Paraná, or that no attention should be paid to the state's environmental history that led us to where we are.

Most participants expressed the need for more of that as well. They want the information, but not in the way that it has been presented to them.

Environmental Journalism that Holds Accountable

Several participants described the current environmental coverage they observe on the coast very similarly to what the literature on Brazilian environmental journalism states about the practice in the country: superficial, episodic, sensational, tragic, and too reliant on official sources. While participants mostly emphasized the need for a more complete coverage of relevant local issues, that illustrates just how vulnerable they are to environmental threats, they also pointed out two aspects of this kind of coverage that, currently, are almost non-existent in their opinions: placing blame and demanding concrete solutions. Holding responsible parties accountable for their roles as either the perpetrators or accomplices of environmental injustice is an essential feature that differentiates a critical, watchdog brand of environmental journalism—which several participants claimed to desperately need—from the shallow, sensational brand of environmental journalism that many in this sample have identified as predominant. The following statement by P9 illustrates the ideal coverage as described by several participants:

Man, I'd like to see, actually, a story that reported on our reality, the naked, raw truth about this process, this relationship between who lives here and how they live here. So, like, maybe what those who live here can contribute to those who come from outside, showing the cycles, showing the rhythms, showing this idea of how we treat... How we have this relationship with nature. And I don't see that. So, I would really like to see a story like this here, if we take into consideration this empiric knowledge people have. This relationship of the *caiçara*, this appreciation... It's a myth. People are scared to speak, scared to think. They feel shame because it [being *caiçara*] seems pejorative.

Many other participants echoed what P9 had to say:

The moment the press points at a problem, it should also go after those who have to power to solve it and bring them forward (...) We have to get people out of their comfort zone, or else it's too easy. (P11)

I think journalism is about questioning, about searching for answers. (P1)

I think the reporter that comes in to report on bad news, they are also welcome. Because sometimes it's through one of these news reports that lead to changes in the situation (...) We need (...) the needs of these towns, because even the Island is going through stuff and it's masked. It's being swept under the rug. I think good news is good. Bad news also has its positive points. (P18)

I think the coverage is shallow, you know? There's no depth. I think environmental journalism goes beyond covering the disaster. I think environmental journalism should go deep into how to prepare and how to avoid [disasters]. (P2)

P14 and P8, both dependent on fishing as their main source of income, underscored that they would like to see more stories about the hardship of fishing, especially considering that fresh local seafood is one of the key selling points of the coast to tourists:

I wish they showed more (...) of how the fisherman suffers, right? (...) Showed the reality, for real. How the fisherman suffers here. I wish they did this for television and showed fishing and interviewed fishermen here (...) That they came here to see where they fish, because it's so dangerous. (P14)

I think the media must show all of the hardship, both of the town and of the fisherman, so we can know what to do moving forward. Because if they don't show it, no one knows, right? (P8)

P28, a coastal journalist that runs a news portal on his own, has found some success in playing the watchdog role, especially when livestreaming on social media platforms. One livestream he conducted showing the abandoned state of a neighborhood square and playground went viral, which led to a prompt response from local authorities:

That touched city hall in a way that I had never seen before. A few hours later I already had over 20 thousand views (...) It was covered in broken glass bottles, the whole square, I was there at 10:30 in the morning. The trash all over, that stench. I showed everything, that Sunday morning. On Monday, a client of mine

that has a restaurant on the corner of [redacted] Avenue said ‘P28! Man, the business owners here at the square are idolizing you! City hall is here cleaning up, there are bout 40 guys here working. Fixing the benches, painting the curb, cleaning the trash cans, fixing the kids’ playground’ (...) And it shocked them because like... Then they told me that they were doing this in other squares that were even worse.

But seeing responsible parties brought to justice is hardly the norm. P16 drew parallels between their situation on the Paraná coast and one of the most deadly and catastrophic environmental tragedies in Brazil, that took place in the state of Minas Gerais, in his reflection on the media’s power in holding those responsible for environmental injustice accountable. In January of 2019, the collapse of a tailings dam at the Córrego do Feijão iron ore mine in the town of Brumadinho killed 270 people, left hundreds missing, wiped away entire villages, and caused the loss of over 125 soccer fields worth of forest (Zhu et al., 2024; WWF, 2019). The mudslide was not only destructive, but also filled with millions of cubic meters of mining waste that contaminated the area’s soil and river indefinitely. The company responsible for the mine and the maintenance of the dam, Vale S.A., and its German subsidiary, TÜV SÜD, are yet to be convicted for their crimes, even though investigations have already concluded that the dam’s high risk of rupture was documented and well known by high-ranking officials in the company (Albuquerque, 2024). P16 understands the risks attached to the production of environmental journalism that appoints guilty parties in Brazil but believes that this modality of journalism is necessary to keep communities from forgetting the abuses they endure at the hands of environmental criminals; like Brazilians collectively forgetting about Brumadinho. He said:

I think we have to put salt in the wound (...) We can’t keep these things quiet. Of course. We need to keep bringing it up, and bringing it up because the people

forget, you know? So, we have to keep bringing it up, up, up, so we never forget. It's that thing they say that a lie repeated many times becomes the truth.

With that said, most community participants expressed their desire for a completely politically neutral environmental coverage, which, in some ways, could be seen as a direct contradiction to their wishes for coverage that is more critical of the local powers at play. But what most participants were referring to in their expressed support for politically neutral media outlets was that they hoped to see a media landscape in which outlets are not used as pawns in local political disputes. P0, for example, explained: “Because what I see of communication channels here, at least the online ones, they’re all about these little fights (...) One comes up here to attack the municipal government, you know?” I was able to observe a situation of this kind myself while observing P29’s workday. The assignment was to investigate and produce a story about a possible environmental and public health emergency that was allegedly endangering children and public servants in one of the coastal towns. A producer had prepared a brief based on narratives that were circulating via social media platforms, but, when we arrived at the specified location, P29 found little evidence to back the claims that were being made. While he called the producer to sort out the facts, he said to me that it was probably “someone that doesn’t like the mayor” that had made the original post, suggesting that the event was either made up or blown out of proportion intentionally by someone attempting to damage that mayor’s image. If it was or was not, I cannot say. But the fact that P29 immediately defaulted to this explanation for the lack of evidence he encountered indicates that such occasions are not uncommon, and community members themselves clearly see how some of the media outlets they want to rely on for information are often used in petty political manipulations.

Some community members saw journalists' ability to remain (or at least appear to remain) politically neutral as a sign of professionalism, while other, fewer participants thought the contrary. There was no consensus on the matter among community members. P13 even contradicted herself on the issue of journalistic impartiality, stating she would like to see both good and bad news about their town being reported on, and that this coverage should be balanced and apolitical. Yet, later in the interview, P13 argued for the value in journalists positioning themselves and emitting their opinions on the discussed topic and guiding audiences' interpretations:

Something else we're noticing in the larger state and national networks is that journalists are already positioning themselves. They give the news, but they give their positions. I think this is very important because, unfortunately, we still have a large number of people that don't have the knowledge that is needed. If you just put the news out there, the person will reproduce it in a completely different way.

Most journalists, on the other hand, were proud to state their commitment to objectivity and neutrality as one of the most important values that guide their work. Only one journalist, P30, stated that his main goal as a journalist was to achieve social transformation, and that his political leanings were made somewhat explicit in the editorial choices he made as a reporter and producer. Capital-based journalists overall were less focused on impartiality than coast-based journalists. This may occur for several reasons. First, capital-based journalists have had significantly more access to journalistic training, resources, and even the company of a wider variety of journalists in the newsroom compared to coast-based journalists, meaning their own perceptions of "objectivity" and "impartiality" may be more developed than coast-based journalists' ideas, considering that most have not had the opportunity to discuss the theoretical underpinnings of such concepts. Capital-based journalists were also all young, urban, and

working mainly with entertainment news, as opposed to coast-based journalists who varied greatly in age and mostly reported on hard news. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, some coast-based journalists reported relying on impartiality to shield themselves from audience or sponsor retaliation. The very notion of journalistic objectivity is often reason for patronizing laughs or annoyed sighs among peers in critical-cultural scholarly circles, but, to some journalists in this sample, their best attempts at neutrality are what guarantee their safety and the maintenance of their livelihoods.

Concluding Remarks

Despite journalists' dedication to and care for the environmental beat, and due to a variety of external limitations imposed by place-based, structural, and editorial restrictions, local news media generally perpetuates a colonial environmental narrative that has deliberately been put in place through centuries of oppressing coastal cultures by those with vested interests in exploiting it. Journalists in this sample are mostly operating within what Hall describes as the professional code, conforming with the dominant discourse that portrays its characters almost exclusively as hosts, victims, and villains of their places. Ultimately, this narrative undermines the power of these communities and alienates them from environmental matters, potentially aggravating their existing negative connotations associated with environmentalism and further reinforcing the hegemonic message that they are not the protagonists of this movement. As explained by Bourdieu (1996) "words do things, they make things—they create phantasms, fears, and phobias, or simple false representations" (p. 20). The silencing of those who are the closest to the environmental emergency only facilitates the continuous abuse of their

lands, perpetuates the marginalization of their people, and the ultimate decimation of entire natural and cultural ecosystems. This silence, as I have shown through the present study, can come in many forms, and is frustrating to the journalists who are forced to conform. Some are clear as day, such as powerful stakeholders funding local news outlets to control the narrative about them and their actions. Others are less apparent, yet pervasive, and perhaps far more noxious, such as the near impossibility of access to journalistic education and specialized training in certain areas. Bourdieu argues that:

The goal of teaching is not only the reading, writing, and arithmetic needed to make a good worker; the goal of education is to offer the means of becoming a good citizen, of putting individuals in a position to understand the law, to understand and to defend their rights, to set up unions... We must work to universalize the conditions of access to the universal. (1996, p. 66)

Situated journalistic practices informed by culture-centered frameworks such as Hall's and Zelizer's are useful in finding ways forward to universalizing access to the universal, as they acknowledge the total and fundamental influence of contextual cues in the storytelling process, in distinct yet complementary ways. Hall's (2007)

Encoding/Decoding model explains the constitutive power of context on each of the key elements of communication, while Zelizer's (1993) journalistic interpretive communities' framework points to key contextual aspects such as the shared interpretation of an event, identity, and more, as boundary-markers of subsets of the wider journalistic class, which, in turn, also shapes their messaging. In this study, I have expanded the applications of these analytical frameworks by implementing both, in conversation, to address a scholarly gap within a cultural context that had not yet been studied through these lenses. In doing so, I have mapped out several characteristic features of the study site that shape

the ways in which environmental narratives influence environmental discourse in these communities.

However, “place” is not explicitly cited by Hall (2007) or Zelizer (1993) as a key contextual component of either of their frameworks. Even though one may infer its presence within each framework considering how intertwined ideas of identity, power, and meaning making are with place and one’s relationship to it, based on the findings in this study—that showed the blunt influence of place, not only as a cultural component but also in its most basic, geographical form—I argue that future studies must explicitly consider place as a key component in media-making and storytelling, especially in any environment-related enquiry. Guarani Mbyá scholar Takuá (2018) explains that, to the Guarani people of the Atlantic Forest:

(...) there is no *teko* [life, way of living] without *tekoá* [village, community]. In other words, there is no way of living without the place of living. Therefore, one needs land with forest, water, and all their life included to be able to live their culture and be *guarani*” (2018, p. 6, translation by the author).

Echoing this sentiment, Abram (2020) argues that “the renewal and replenishment of a deep sense of place is a necessary ingredient in finding our way to a livable future” (in Milstein & Castro-Sotomayor, p. 15), while Cantrill and Senecah argue that “cognitive representations of the self-in-place form the major link between how people appraise communication appeals and how they behave in the environment” (Cantrill & Senecah, 2001, 186). Yet, as put by Massey (2008), places do not have unique and easily distinguishable identities, but they are riddled with conflict and contradiction, and such complexity requires increased attention in any communication effort. In her seminal essay, the author challenges the “persistent identification of ‘place’ with ‘community’” (p. 153), explaining that communities can exist without being from the same place, based on

a variety of other networks of identity, and that even if there is such a place that houses a single, homogenous community, there would be no “single sense of place” to be found in it, “for people occupy different positions within any community” (p. 153). The author suggests that: “If places can be conceptualized in terms of the social interactions which they tie together, then it is also the case that these interactions themselves are not motionless things, frozen in time. They are processes” (p. 155).

Through the exploration of coastal residents’ diverse, conflicting, and nuanced senses of self-in-place in relation to the encoding and decoding of environmental media on the Paraná coast, and in the consolidation of the different interpretive communities at play, I have joined other scholars in arguing for place- and identity-based research and practice of environmental journalism (Gutsche, 2014; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Cox & Depoe, 2015) and offered situated recommendations for practitioners in the study site. After grounding this study theoretically and geographically in the introduction and chapters one and two, in chapter three, I explained how community members’ mixed relationships with place have been shaped through centuries of complex environmental histories that define how they decode environmental coast- and capital-based media. Despite having had mostly positive experiences with journalists in the past, community members do not approve the overall environmental coverage they observe coming from both coast-and capital-based outlets, suggesting that the shortcomings of current environmental coverage derive from structural factors rather than individual practice. This can also be inferred from the paradoxical relationship of trust community members report having with coast-based media (low trust in the institution) and local journalists (high trust in a fellow community member). Many feel overburdened with media

attention during the crowded summer months and when there is an environmental catastrophe to make headlines such as a deadly landslide or a destructive flood.

Environmental issues that are relevant to the community on a daily basis, according to these participants, are rarely contemplated. Still, coastal residents find strength in caring for their communities and places and remain eager to build better relationships with local media in hopes of seeing themselves, their struggles, and, most importantly, their triumphs accurately represented. Community members also expressed their desire to rely on local media for environmental education, empowerment, and surveillance.

In chapter four, I break down the coastal media landscape as described by its journalists and emphasize certain aspects of it that lead to the predominance of a “hosts, victims, and villains” narrative in local environmental coverage. Journalists in this sample were quick to acknowledge the many shortcomings of their environmental coverage, and to express their frustration with the structural restrictions they often work under. To them, coverage lacks context and depth, fails to hold those responsible for local environmental issues and injustices accountable, fails to emphasize community voices and experiences, and, finally, fails in offering solutions to the many issues they identify, but hardly ever investigate. This leaves them to perpetuate the “hosts, victims, villains” narrative which fits community members’ assessment that local environmental coverage almost exclusively falls into a tourism or tragedy binary. In this binary local residents are portrayed as either welcoming hosts for incoming visitors—a quality most community participants are proud to have highlighted—or as the victims or perpetrators of environmental ruin, which can often manifest in the form of exploiting locals’ environmental tragedy or misrepresenting traditional *caiçara* ways of life.

Participating journalists listed several reasons as to why they believe the environmental coverage on the coast is in this current state, three of which were mentioned the most: varying degrees of cultural and geographical access to coastal communities, situational editorial freedom, and lack of training. Importantly, each of these limitations manifested itself differently depending on each journalists' interpretive community. While coast-based journalists were community members themselves, capital-based journalists often felt limited by the distance to the coast and their own lack of cultural competency to navigate it when there. On the other hand, the smaller, coast-based journalists reported being highly dependent on local government and corporate sponsorships, while capital-based journalists had enough revenue to remain more independent from municipal governments, but some were still connected to state government. As explained by Gutsche (2014) "journalists work closely with other institutions in their local geographies that shape the purpose and meanings of news at a local level" (p. 493); such negotiations were evident in this case.

Recommendations for Practice

Finally, in chapter five I explore participants' thoughts on how environmental journalism in the study site can be better developed. In this section, I offer three succinct recommendations based on their perspectives that can support this process in the Paraná coast and can be adapted for application in similar places. First, the strengthening of relationships between coastal- and capital-based journalists could allow for the exchange of experiences and, ultimately, each journalistic community may find ways to fill in the areas that the other may be lacking. Coast-based journalists, for example, enjoy greater geographic and cultural access to communities, an area appointed by capital-based journalists as a limitation to their coverage. On the other hand, capital-based journalists

reported having more editorial independence from municipal coastal governments, something coast-based journalists struggle with. Greater knowledge of strengths and weaknesses of relevant media figures covering the coast can lead to collaborative and intentional journalistic practices aimed at providing audiences with the more comprehensive environmental coverage they seek. Second, independent investment to support independent reporting. Journalists across this sample reported being limited by their relationships to local stakeholders who finance their news operations mainly through advertising revenue. While I recognize that this model is deeply-rooted in the study site and in the general conventions of journalistic practice worldwide, which are unlikely to drastically change in a short period of time, there may be some opportunity—especially for the smaller, more independent news outlets on the coast—to apply for external funding agencies that support environmental storytelling through reporting grants and/or fellowships.

I offer this recommendation with recognition that it places the burden of profound transformation in the practice of environmental journalism on journalists as individuals, rather than on flawed systems designed to favor those in power. Further research must more deeply investigate the structural—especially the economic—pressures of newsroom practices in the study site to make situated, yet larger-scale recommendations and evaluate how feasible the application of alternative models of news media-making can be in this context. Inspiration and insight may be drawn from community-based and Indigenous media outlets, such as the Brazilian radio Rádio Yandê, created by Anápuaka Tupinambá, who also coined the term *etnomídia indígena*, or Indigenous ethnomedia (Moura, 2024; translated by the author). *Yandê*, in Tupi-Guarani language, translates to

“us” or “ours”, and the outlet was created by Tupinambá in an effort to appropriate mainstream communication channels to provide Indigenous communities a news space in which they are the protagonists (Moura, 2024).

Furthermore, to individually seek independent sources of funding the journalists in question would have to be attuned to the opportunities presented by such institutions and develop their grant-writing and funding-seeking skills—a significant ask considering the severe time constraints these journalists work under. Which brings me to my final, but perhaps most urgent, recommendation, as it is an essential step that must be taken if the other recommendations are to be followed: increased opportunity and incentive for training. All journalists in this study reported, to varying degrees, some level of insecurity derived from their lack of training either on the basic, college level or on the specialized level. While I agree that basic and specialized training would be beneficial to communicators in this study site, I argue that it would not be sufficient to achieve the critical, relevant, and educational coverage both journalists and community members hope to see. Beyond basic and specialized, this training must be contextualized and sensitive to the characteristics that define this unique media, social, and geographical landscape. In other words, the teaching of a craft that is inherently place-based must also be place-based.

All expressed keen interest in engaging with educational opportunities to improve their environmental reporting practices and to feel more confident in their work.

However, most journalists in this sample—like most journalists in the world—reported having to work incessantly to meet the number of clicks or viewers that allows them to stay in business. While many coast-based journalists still reported pursuing their college

degrees in the little spare time they have left, it is unreasonable to expect that they find the hours to attend longer-form courses and workshops. Therefore, in the following section, I explain how I have been collaborating with local journalists and community members to draw from this research's findings in the creation of a resource designed to support environmental communicators in coastal Paraná.

Contando Histórias de Pescador: Um Guia Para Jornalismo Ambiental no Litoral do Paraná (Telling Fisherman's Stories: A Guide for Environmental Journalism in Coastal Paraná)

It is our responsibility as scholars to universalize the knowledge we build through our investigations of communication and media processes, and there are several ways to do so. In "On Television" Bourdieu (1996) made sure to clarify that his goal for the book was not to place blame on the journalists he wrote about, but to describe a flawed system and to give journalists "instruments of freedom with which to master the mechanisms" (p. 55) he discusses. I am not able to make the same claim in my own work, as it would be fairly utopic for me to believe that what I wrote on these pages, in academic-style English, would ever make their way into the daily practices of the journalists I interacted with in this study. It would be entirely naïve of me to expect this kind of publication to take any significant strides outside the tall and wide walls of Western academia.

Therefore, I find myself committed to finding alternatives for this co-created knowledge to circulate among the communities that made this work possible. While I feel more skeptical than Bourdieu in his claim that he was convinced that "analyses like this can perhaps help to change things," I am far more in agreement with his statement that "social science has as much right to this aspiration as any other science" (p. 55). Which is why I am resorting to other, more contextually appropriate ways to disseminate this knowledge. I am drawing from this study's findings and theoretical underpinnings to

design a situated, best-practices environmental journalism guide for coastal Paraná in collaboration with a community advisory board of five local journalists and coastal residents.

I am inspired by many great resources available in English on communicating the environment, climate, extreme weather, and more, including Climate Outreach’s “Climate Visuals” (Corner et al., 2015) and “Principles for Effective Communication and Public Engagement on Climate Change” (Corner et al., 2018). Resources like these are harder to find in Portuguese, but some Brazilian scholars (Amaral et al., 2024) have worked on equivalent high-quality manuals that are available and designed for Brazilian journalists and journalism students working with the environment. Girardi’s (2020) “Minimanual Para a Cobertura de Mudanças Climáticas” (“Mini-Manual for Journalistic Coverage of Climate Change”) is domestically relevant and is an important source of inspiration and information for the current project. I have also been deeply inspired by Mônica Feilú-Mojer’s free online course entitled “How to Practice Culturally Relevant Science Communication,” offered both in English and Spanish, which is informed by her own experience growing up in rural Puerto Rico (Feilú-Mojer, 2023). It includes accessible definitions of culture, science, reflexivity, positionality, identity, and explains how all of these connect in the process of communicating science.

I named the guide “Telling Fisherman’s Stories” after the popular Brazilian saying I explained earlier in this book, about how when one hears a story that seems too fantastical to be true, they dismiss it as a “*história de pescador*”, or a “fisherman’s story”. I employ the expression both because of its popularity amongst the communities I hope to reach with this guide, and to encode—by way of these words, in this context—an

oppositional read of the expression that, even though is mostly used in good humor, in some ways can be used to dismiss the value of traditional communities' knowledge. The guide will contain sections that were explicitly requested by research participants, informed by my theory-based interpretation of their Encoding/Decoding experiences in relation to the latest scholarly recommendations in environmental journalism. The sections include a best practices overview, common scientific terms and legal glossary, a source list, maps of the region indicating important ecological hotspots and traditional and Indigenous communities, and reading and resource suggestions. Decisions on content, formatting, and distribution are being made in collaboration with the community advisory board. It is my hope that this guide may serve as a source of support to the dedicated journalists I got to know during this process, and to many of their peers and successors.

Limitations & Recommendations for Research

Hall (2007) proposes a model that breaks down the communication circuit into three key moments: encoding, text, and decoding (Worthington, 2008). Considering that most environmental journalism studies in Brazil focus on the text (Girardi et al., 2015) the news product itself, in this study, I focused on the encoding and decoding ends of this process. Further studies are needed to investigate the text itself, and to suggest possible connections to the ways in which it is encoded by producers and decoded by audiences. While Hall's Encoding/Decoding model was a useful framework to organize this preliminary investigation of environmental journalism in the study site, it fails to account for other ways I have found environmental news to travel in these community, aside from the direct journalist-audience channel. Further studies employing more comprehensive theoretical frameworks that contemplate the role of peer-to-peer information sharing are

needed. Beyond that, Hall's (2007) point on how audiences can have preferred, negotiated, and oppositional reads of a message is insufficient to explain some of the tensions and contradictions that were evident in participant testimonies, such as community members who, overall, reported being less trusting of local news media as independent and critical environmental watchdogs, while simultaneously more open to it in comparison to capital-based media, as coast-based journalists are recognized as community members themselves, while capital-based journalists are often seen as outsiders—and, therefore, less trustworthy. Future research is needed to further understand, make sense of, and account for such contradictions in the study site.

The small size of my sample is a limitation of this study, even if I did not seek out generalizable results. More environmental journalism studies that investigate all key moments of Hall's circuit are necessary in different parts of Brazil, so that situated recommendations in other contexts, and steps toward the popularization of contextualized environmental journalism training can be taken. This also goes to other communities around the globe, especially in the Global South, who may find themselves in similar situations of environmental, socioeconomic, and cultural vulnerability. It is no secret that journalists located in some of the world's most secluded or overlooked corners are the ones facing some of the greatest environmental communication challenges of our time. Many of these are under researched and under supported by Western academia.

Cox and Pezzullo (2022) characterize environmental communication as a discipline of crisis and care. Placing care and reciprocity as a priority in communication research design and development is essential in building decolonial scholarship, by giving back to the communities being studied and disrupting the colonial systems that

define most academic institutions (Todd, 2015). Research frameworks such as Raphael's (2019) engaged scholarship (ES) model, Dutta's (2018) culture-centered approach (CCA), or Liboiron's (2021) science & ceremony protocol at CLEAR labs promote restorative justice by deeply involving communities in the research process in several ways. Some of the practices suggested by the authors include having community members as co-researchers, which amplifies rigor and builds trust; communicating findings in community meetings and activities, fact sheets, policy briefings, workshops, and other ways that are accessible to the studied population; to approach theory-building from within the community and proposing solutions that are thought of with them; and increase opportunities for reflexivity and the general use of qualitative methods that aim for depth such as ethnographies, interviews, and focus groups (Dutta, 2018; Raphael, 2019).

The Paraná coast has been the site of a myriad of research studies and academic or non-profit interventions in the realm of environmental conservation, socioenvironmental conflict, anthropology, and related themes. The extractive and, at times, harmful research and regulation practices that scholars have observed all over the world has certainly been present on the Paraná coast and strained the relationships between coastal residents in Paraná and academics, researchers, and environmentalists (Hering, 2024; Muniz, 2017; Kasseboehmer & Sílvia, 2009). It is not uncommon for community members to feel distrust towards researchers, given their histories of being objects of study and not receiving anything in return (Kasseboehmer & Sílvia, 2009). As Hering (2024) points out: "Many *fandangueiros/caiçaras* understand these local authorities as imposers of limitations that complicate their traditional subsistence, without

even offering alternatives or any viable involvement in the decision-making process” (p. 194; translation by the author).

In their analysis of studies based in Guaraqueçaba between 1979 and 2005, in another example, Kasseboehmer and Sílvia (2009) found that out of the 109 items in their sample—including papers in scientific journals, master’s and doctoral theses, conference proceedings, and technical project reports—only two sought out to develop technologies that directly benefitted the region, and only one of the two could be applied by the population itself to their own benefit. Most studies focused on the state and management of natural resources, analyses of fauna and flora, and socioenvironmental and economic conflicts in the area. To conclude this book, I would like to highlight Eve Tuck’s (2009) open letter to academic communities on the effects of “damage-centered” scholarship. Tuck (2009) argues that this kind of research that focuses on documenting pain and holding those in power accountable:

(...) operates with a flawed theory of change: it is often used to leverage reparations or resources for marginalized communities yet simultaneously reinforces and reinscribes a one-dimensional notion of these people as depleted, ruined, and hopeless. (p. 409)

Marginalized communities often already have troubled relationships with research and researchers, as Tuck (2009) points out, which frequently make them feel “over researched, yet, ironically, made invisible” (p. 411). This paradigm represents community members as unidimensional in their pain, as damaged and powerless. In an alternative yet complementary paradigm, Tuck (2009) offers readers a “desire-based” framework, that does not deny the pain and trauma caused social injustices, but explores the complexity, contradiction, and self-determination of an individual, as well as the wisdom and hope that prevail in these communities. The author reiterates that “desire” is not an antonym to

“damage,” and that the two frameworks are not mutually exclusive. Tuck (2009) is simply calling for the recognition of complex personhood, acknowledging both the vulnerability and strength of study participants.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

(ENGLISH)

I. For Journalists

1. How long have you been a journalist?
2. How did you start your career?
3. What are some of the values that guide your work as a journalist?
4. Why do you think is it important that your audience consumes environmental news?
5. How do you perceive your role, as a journalist, in the context of the environmental issues your region struggles with?
6. How is the current local environmental news coverage successful, and how does it fail?
7. What kinds of environmental news stories would you like to produce?
 - a. What prevents you from producing these types of stories?
8. Have you received any specialized training in environmental journalism?
9. Do you feel comfortable covering local environmental issues?
10. What are the challenges you face when covering local environmental issues?
 - a. What are your strategies for dealing with them?
11. What are some important factors you consider when covering environmental issues?
12. Do you notice differences between the environmental coverage in your media outlet and others? (Differences between radio, TV, print, etc.)
13. Can you guide me through your process of producing an environmental news story?
 - a. How is the story pitched?
 - b. What types of sources are most commonly used?
 - c. How long does it take from start to finish?
14. Can you give me an example of an environmental story you've done that you consider successful, and explain why?

15. Who is your target audience?
16. What type of content is most sought after by your target audience?
17. How would you describe your relationship with the community?
18. How would you describe the cultural identities that exist along the coast of Paraná?
19. What would be useful to you in an environmental journalism manual?
20. How old are you?
21. How many stories do you produce per day?
22. What is your educational background?

II. For Community Members

1. How long have you lived on the coast?
2. Do you consider yourself well integrated into your community? Why or why not?
3. Can you tell me a little about the history of your community?
4. What are some characteristics your community shares with the rest of the Paraná coast?
5. How is your community different from the rest of the Paraná coast?
6. What are some values that are important to you?
7. What are some words you would use to describe your community?
8. What does the local nature mean to you?
9. What environmental issues bother you the most in your area?
 - a. Do you see these issues appearing in the media you consume?
10. What role does local media play in your community?
11. What role do you think the media should play in your community, especially regarding environmental issues?
12. What type of news do you look for the most?
13. Do you consume more regional media, state media, or national media?
 - a. Do you notice any differences in content between larger and smaller outlets?
14. How do you consume environmental news?
15. Why is it important that local media covers environmental news on the Paraná coast?

16. How is the current local environmental news coverage successful, and how does it fail?
17. How can local environmental coverage be more relevant to your daily life?
18. Have you ever had any experiences with a journalist in your area? If so, what was it like?
19. Do you see people like you represented in the environmental coverage you consume? Please explain your answer.
20. Do you believe that your city or community is well represented in the local media?
21. Can you describe an environmental story that you would like to see/read?
22. How old are you?
23. What is your occupation?
24. What is your educational background?

(PORTUGUESE)

I. Para jornalistas

- 1) Há quanto tempo você é jornalista?
- 2) Como você começou a sua carreira?
- 3) Quais são alguns dos valores que guiam o seu trabalho como jornalista?
- 4) Por que é importante que o seu público consuma notícias ambientais?
- 5) Como você percebe o seu papel, como jornalista, no contexto das questões ambientais que a região enfrenta?
- 6) Quando que a cobertura atual de notícias ambientais acerta, e quando que ela erra?
- 7) Que tipo de matéria ambiental você gostaria de produzir mais?
 - a. O que te impede de produzir este tipo de matéria?
- 8) Você já recebeu algum treinamento especializado em jornalismo ambiental?
- 9) Você se sente confortável quando cobre pautas ambientais localmente?
- 10) Quais são os desafios que você enfrenta ao cobrir pautas ambientais locais?
 - a. Quais são as suas estratégias para lidar com eles?

- 11) Quais são alguns fatores importantes que você considera ao cobrir pautas ambientais?
- 12) Você percebe diferenças entre a cobertura ambiental feita no seu meio de comunicação e outros? (Diferenças entre coberturas de rádio, TV, jornal impresso, etc.)
- 13) Você pode me guiar pelo seu processo de produção de uma matéria de notícia ambiental?
 - a. Como que a matéria é pautada?
 - b. Quais tipos de fontes são mais utilizadas?
 - c. Quanto tempo leva do começo ao fim?
- 14) Você pode me dar um exemplo de uma matéria ambiental que você fez que você considera bem-sucedida, e me explicar por quê?
- 15) Quem é o seu público-alvo?
- 16) Que tipo de conteúdo é mais procurado pelo seu público-alvo?
- 17) Como você descreve o seu relacionamento com a comunidade?
- 18) Como você descreve as identidades culturais que existem no litoral do Paraná?
- 19) O que você seria útil para você em um manual de jornalismo ambiental?
- 20) Qual a sua idade?
- 21) Quantas matérias você produz por dia?
- 22) Qual é a sua formação educacional?

II. Para membros da comunidade

- 1) Há quanto tempo você mora no litoral?
- 2) Você se considera bem inserido/a na sua comunidade? Por quê ou por que não?
- 3) Você pode me contar um pouco sobre a história da sua comunidade?
- 4) Se existirem, quais são algumas características que sua comunidade tem em comum com o resto do litoral paranaense?
- 5) E como a sua comunidade é diferente do resto do litoral paranaense?
- 6) Quais são alguns valores importantes para você?
- 7) Quais são algumas palavras que você pode usar para descrever a sua comunidade?
- 8) O que a natureza local significa para você?
- 9) Quais são as questões ambientais que mais te incomodam?

- a. Você vê essas questões aparecendo na mídia que você consome?
- 10) Qual é o papel da mídia na sua região?
- 11) Qual é o papel que você acha que a mídia deveria ter na sua região, especialmente em relação a questões ambientais?
- 12) Qual é o tipo de notícia que você mais procura?
- 13) Você consome mais mídia regional (TVCI, portais locais), estadual (RPC), ou nacional?
- a. Você percebe alguma diferença de conteúdo entre jornais maiores e menores?
- 14) Como que você consome notícias ambientais?
- 15) Quando que uma notícia ambiental é relevante para você?
- 16) Qual é a importância de cobrir notícias ambientais no litoral paranaense?
- 17) Quando que a cobertura atual de notícias ambientais acerta, e quando que ela erra?
- 18) Como que a cobertura ambiental local pode ser mais relevante para o seu dia a dia?
- 19) Você já teve alguma experiência com jornalista na região? Se sim, como foi?
- 20) Você vê pessoas como você representadas na cobertura ambiental que consome?
- Por favor, explique a sua resposta.
- 21) Você acredita que a sua cidade ou comunidade é bem representada na mídia local?
- 22) Você pode descrever uma matéria sobre meio ambiente que você gostaria de ver/ler?
- 23) Qual a sua idade?
- 24) Qual é a sua ocupação?
- 25) Qual é a sua formação educacional?

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT INVITES

(FOR JOURNALISTS - ENGLISH)

Dear [name], how are you?

My name is Beatriz Mira, I am a doctoral student in communication at the University of Oregon, in the United States, and I am doing research in partnership with PUC Paraná. You are being invited to participate in this research, in which I am the main researcher, on journalism and the environment on the coast of Paraná. The research seeks to better understand how environmental issues are covered in the region, both from the perspective of journalists and the audience.

You are being invited to participate in this research because you are a journalist and have experience covering environmental issues on the coast of Paraná. Your participation would be in the form of an interview, and, if you wish, you can also participate in the observation process. You can participate by agreeing to just do the interview. The interview lasts between half an hour and an hour, and can be done in person, over the phone, or via video call on a platform of your choice. I will ask questions about your professional practice, your experience covering environmental issues, and your relationship with the community.

In this email/message you will find an informed consent form attached with more information about this research. Please read it carefully. Your participation can only begin after this document is signed.

If you decide to participate in person, before the interview begins we will read this document together. After answering all your questions, we will sign two copies of it. You will keep one and I will keep the other. If you decide to do the interview by phone or video call, I will read the terms with you, answer any questions you may have, and I will ask you to express, out loud, your willingness to participate in the study. This moment will be recorded and I will send you a copy of this recording for you to keep.

The expected result of this project is a doctoral thesis, which will help researchers in the field of communication to better understand the practice of environmental journalism in Paraná and in general. I also hope to use these results to create an environmental journalism guide for journalists on the coast of Paraná, which highlights the voices of residents. This guide is not part of the research process and will only be done after we have the results.

If you decide to participate, please reply to this email/message with the days and times you have available, and how you prefer to be interviewed (in person, by phone, or by video call). If you do not wish to participate, you can let me know by replying to this

email/message and I will not contact you again. If I do not receive any response from you within the next 7 days, I will attempt a second and final contact.

Yours sincerely,
Beatriz Mira

(FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS – ENGLISH)

Dear [name], how are you?

My name is Beatriz Mira, I am a doctoral student in communication at the University of Oregon, in the United States, and I am doing research in partnership with PUC Paraná. You are being invited to participate in this research, in which I am the main researcher, on journalism and the environment on the coast of Paraná. The research seeks to better understand how journalists talk about the environment in the local media and what residents of the region think about this work.

You are being invited to participate in this research because you are a resident of the coast of Paraná. Your participation would be in the form of an interview, and, if you wish, you can also participate in the observation process. You can participate by agreeing to just do the interview. The interview lasts between half an hour and an hour, and can be done in person, over the phone, or via video call on a platform of your choice. I will ask questions about what it is like to live on the coast, about your community, about environmental problems you encounter in your region, and about your consumption of environmental news.

In this email/message you will find an informed consent form attached with more information about this research. Please read it carefully. Your participation can only begin after this document is signed.

If you decide to participate in person, before the interview begins we will read this document together. After answering all your questions, we will sign two copies of it. You will keep one and I will keep the other. If you decide to do the interview by phone or video call, I will read the terms with you, answer any questions you may have, and I will ask you to express, out loud, your willingness to participate in the study. This moment will be recorded and I will send you a copy of this recording for you to keep.

The expected result of this project is a doctoral thesis, which will help researchers in the field of communication to better understand the practice of environmental journalism in Paraná and in general. I also hope to use these results to create an environmental journalism guide for journalists on the coast of Paraná, which highlights the voices of coastal residents. This guide is not part of the research process and will only be done after we have the results.

If you decide to participate, please reply to this email/message with the days and times you have available, and how you prefer to be interviewed (in person, by phone, or by video call). If you do not wish to participate, you can let me know by replying to this email/message and I will not contact you again. If I do not receive any response from you within the next 7 days, I will attempt a second and final contact.

Sincerely,
Beatriz Mira

(FOR JOURNALISTS – PORTUGUESE)

Prezado/a, tudo bem?

Meu nome é Beatriz Mira. Faço doutorado em comunicação na Universidade de Oregon, nos Estados Unidos, e estou fazendo uma pesquisa em parceria com a PUC Paraná. Você está sendo convidado/a a participar desta pesquisa, em que eu sou a principal pesquisadora, sobre jornalismo e meio ambiente no litoral do Paraná. A pesquisa busca entender melhor como é feita a cobertura de pautas ambientais na região, tanto da perspectiva dos jornalistas quanto da audiência.

Você está sendo convidado/a para participar desta pesquisa porque você é jornalista e tem experiência cobrindo pautas ambientais no litoral do Paraná. A sua participação seria na forma de uma entrevista, e, se você quiser, no processo de observação. Você pode participar concordando em fazer apenas a entrevista. A entrevista dura entre meia hora e uma hora, e pode ser feita pessoalmente, por telefone, ou por chamada de vídeo numa plataforma de sua escolha. Farei perguntas sobre a sua prática profissional, sua experiência com pautas ambientais, e seu relacionamento com a comunidade.

Neste e-mail/mensagem você vai encontrar anexado um termo de consentimento livre e esclarecido com mais informações sobre essa pesquisa. Por favor, leia-o com cuidado. A sua participação só pode começar depois que este termo for assinado.

Se você decidir participar pessoalmente, antes da entrevista começar nós vamos ler este termo juntos/as. Depois de tirar todas as suas dúvidas, vamos assinar duas vias deste termo. Você ficará com uma via e eu com outra.

Se você decidir fazer a entrevista por telefone ou por chamada de vídeo, vou ler o termo com você, tirar todas as suas dúvidas, e vou pedir que você expresse, em voz alta, a sua vontade em participar do estudo. Este momento será gravado e eu te enviarei uma cópia desta gravação para você guardar.

O resultado esperado desse projeto é uma tese de doutorado, que vai ajudar pesquisadores na área de comunicação a entenderem melhor a prática do jornalismo ambiental no Paraná e de forma geral. Também espero utilizar esses resultados para criar um guia de jornalismo ambiental para jornalistas do litoral do Paraná, que coloque em foco as vozes

de moradores. Este guia não faz parte do processo de pesquisa e será feito só depois de termos os resultados.

Se você decidir participar, por favor, responda a este e-mail/mensagem com os dias e horários que você tem disponível, e como você prefere ser entrevistado/a (pessoalmente, por telefone, ou por chamada de vídeo). Se você não quiser participar, você pode me avisar respondendo este e-mail/mensagem e não entrarei em contato novamente. Se eu não receber nenhuma resposta sua nos próximos 7 dias, tentarei um segundo e último contato.

Atenciosamente,
Beatriz Mira

(FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS – PORTUGUESE)

Prezado/a, tudo bem?

Meu nome é Beatriz Mira. Faço doutorado em comunicação na Universidade de Oregon, nos Estados Unidos, e estou fazendo uma pesquisa em parceria com a PUC Paraná. Você está sendo convidado/a a participar desta pesquisa, em que eu sou a principal pesquisadora, sobre jornalismo e meio ambiente no litoral do Paraná. A pesquisa busca entender melhor como jornalistas falam sobre meio ambiente na mídia local e o que moradores da região pensam sobre esse trabalho.

Você está sendo convidado/a para participar desta pesquisa porque você é morador/a do litoral do Paraná. A sua participação seria na forma de uma entrevista, e, se você quiser, no processo de observação. Você pode participar concordando em fazer apenas a entrevista. A entrevista dura entre meia hora e uma hora, e pode ser feita pessoalmente, por telefone, ou por chamada de vídeo numa plataforma de sua escolha. A entrevista dura entre 30 minutos e uma hora, e pode ser feita pessoalmente, por telefone, ou por chamada de vídeo numa plataforma de sua escolha. Farei perguntas sobre como é morar no litoral, sobre a sua comunidade, sobre problemas de meio ambiente que você encontra na sua região, e sobre o seu consumo de notícias sobre meio ambiente.

Neste e-mail/mensagem você vai encontrar anexado um termo de consentimento livre e esclarecido com mais informações sobre essa pesquisa. Por favor, leia-o com cuidado. A sua participação só pode começar depois que este termo for assinado.

Se você decidir participar pessoalmente, antes da entrevista começar nós vamos ler este termo juntos/as. Depois de tirar todas as suas dúvidas, vamos assinar duas vias deste termo. Você ficará com uma via e eu com outra. Se você decidir fazer a entrevista por telefone ou por chamada de vídeo, vou ler o termo com você, tirar todas as suas dúvidas, e vou pedir que você expresse, em voz alta, a sua vontade em participar do estudo. Este momento será gravado e eu te enviarei uma cópia desta gravação para você guardar.

O resultado esperado desse projeto é uma tese de doutorado, que vai ajudar pesquisadores na área de comunicação a entenderem melhor a prática do jornalismo ambiental no Paraná e de forma geral. Também espero utilizar esses resultados para criar um guia de jornalismo ambiental para jornalistas do litoral do Paraná, que coloque em foco as vozes de moradores. Este guia não faz parte do processo de pesquisa e será feito só depois de termos os resultados.

Se você decidir participar, por favor, responda a este e-mail/mensagem com os dias e horários que você tem disponível, e como você prefere ser entrevistado/a (pessoalmente, por telefone, ou por chamada de vídeo). Se você não quiser participar, você pode me avisar respondendo este e-mail/mensagem e não entrarei em contato novamente. Se eu não receber nenhuma resposta sua nos próximos 7 dias, tentarei um segundo e último contato.

Atenciosamente,
Beatriz Mira

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

(FOR JOURNALISTS - ENGLISH)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM – ICF

() Participant Copy

() Researcher Copy

1. Starting the conversation

You are being invited to participate in a study called "Stories of Nature and Culture: Paths to Situated Practice of Environmental Journalism in Brazil." Before anything else, you should know that your participation is voluntary. This means you decide whether you want to participate or not. You can choose to not participate without any negative consequences to you. You can also choose to participate and change your mind later. In this case, you can contact the researcher, and your participation will be ended with no consequences to you. This means that the researcher will erase any material related to you (such as an interview, for example) and will not count you as a participant in this research.

It is important for you to clear up any doubts you have before signing this form, and you may discuss it with friends, family, professionals, or anyone you trust before making your decision.

If you decide to participate and sign this document, you will keep a copy for your records. The researcher is available to resolve any problems or doubts regarding your participation in the study at any time.

2. Why is this research being conducted?

The goal of this research is to understand how local journalists talk about environmental news in their region and to understand residents' opinions on how environmental issues appear in local media (such as radio, television, social media, etc.). This study will help researchers in Brazil and worldwide understand the challenges of communicating environmental issues in your area. Additionally,

this study will be used to create a guide for journalists on how to cover environmental issues in the region, with a focus on the voices coastal Paraná residents. This guide is not part of the research and will be created only after we have the results. However, it is important for you to know that this will be done, as it may affect your decision to participate or not. Your name will never be used in this guide.

The total number of participants, including you, is approximately 30 people. Everyone will receive this document and go through this process you are experiencing now. The total number of participants may change, as sometimes unexpected events happen in people's lives and that may cause participants to drop out at the last minute.

At this moment, it is important to remind you again that your participation is voluntary and that there will be no problem if you decide not to participate. You are not obliged to participate in this research, and you can decline the invitation at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you choose not to participate or discontinue participation.

3. Why am I being invited to participate?

You are being invited to participate in this research because you are a journalist with experience covering environmental issues on Paraná's coast.

4. What will happen if I decide to participate in this research?

If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed by the researcher who sent you this invitation. She will ask you questions about what it's like to live on the coast, about your environmental journalism practices, your daily routine and experience as a journalist, and your relationship with the local community. The interview can be conducted in the way you prefer: in person, via computer, or by phone. The interview will last between half an hour and one hour. You can skip any questions you don't want to answer or don't know the answer to. You are

under no obligation to answer any question. If you change your mind during or after the interview and decide that you no longer want to participate, the researcher will delete all the information you provided during the interview and will completely remove you from the study.

With your permission, the researcher will record the interview in audio format. This means that she will record only her voice and your voice during the interview. She does this so she can listen to the conversation afterward and remember what was said. Only the researcher will have access to this recording. If you prefer not to be recorded, you can still be interviewed. The researcher can simply take notes during the conversation.

You are also being invited to participate in an observation process. The observation consists of the researcher being present and taking notes during a typical activity in your life. For example, if you want to participate, she may accompany you for a few hours during a workday, either in the newsroom or when you're out doing fieldwork. She does this to better understand your daily work routine. The observation will only take place if you invite the researcher to observe an activity at a time, date, and location of your choosing. The researcher will only take notes during the observation if authorized by you, and she will not interfere with the activity you invite her to attend.

5. Does participating in this research put me at any risk?

By participating in this research, the risk you face is the loss of privacy and confidentiality regarding your data and opinions. In other words, the risk you face is that others may find out that you participated in this research and know what you said in the interview. However, the researcher will do her best to ensure that this does not happen. You may notice that the interview questions have been written in a way that avoids discomfort, embarrassment, or any feelings of shame. This research is part of the work the researcher is doing to complete her doctorate. She will use the information she gathers from you and other

participants to write her final doctoral thesis and articles that may be published in a journal. Your name will not appear in any of these cases. Your information collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

It is important for you to know that all data protection rules, including the General Data Protection Law (LGPD), will be followed to ensure that your personal information remains secure. The General Data Protection Law is a law that protects everyone's right to privacy. All participants' data will be stored on a password-protected computer that only the researcher and authorized individuals or organizations can access. Individuals and organizations that conduct or monitor this research may be permitted access to and inspect the research records. These individuals and organizations include: the University of Oregon IRB Office that reviewed this research. If something unexpected happens and these data are accessed by others, you will be notified, and next steps will be determined.

6. Is there any direct benefit for me if I participate in this research?

There is no direct or immediate benefit for you if you participate in this research. In other words, you will not receive anything for participating in this study. However, your participation will help researchers around the world understand how environmental communication works in a region that has not been widely studied.

7. What if I want to withdraw from the research after agreeing to participate?

If you decide that you want to withdraw from the research, you simply need to contact the researcher, and your request will be honored without any problems for you. You can withdraw from the research even after giving your interview or participating in the observation process.

If this research needs to be interrupted for any reason, it will only happen after the CEP/CONEP System is informed and approves the cessation of the study. The CEP/CONEP System is a group of people who oversee the ethics of research conducted in Brazil and protect the rights of research participants. If there is a data breach or violation, the research will be stopped immediately, even before informing the CEP/CONEP System.

In all cases, you will be notified by the researcher, and if there is any possibility of harm to you, constant monitoring will be implemented.

8. Who will know that I am participating in this research? What will they know about me?

The researcher will ensure the privacy of everyone participating in this research. As stated earlier, the interviews will be stored on a password-protected computer. Only the researcher knows the password. At no point will your name be used when the researcher is writing the results of this research. Instead of using names, the researcher will use numbers (such as Participant 1, Participant 2, and so on) to identify participants. The audio recordings of the interviews will be transcribed (i.e., everything in the audio recording will be written on paper), and all personal information (such as your name) will be removed from the document. Only the people conducting this research will have access to these documents.

9. Do I need to pay or will I receive a payment to participate in this research?

You will not pay anything and will not receive any payment for participating in the study. If you incur any expenses related to your participation in the study, you will be reimbursed for them.

10. What should I do if something happens to me during my participation in this study?

If any problem occurs during your participation, you should notify the research team as soon as possible. In such cases, you will receive assistance from the researchers for as long as you feel necessary. If you suffer any harm as a result of your participation in this study, you will be compensated by the researchers. To contact the principal researcher, you can use the following methods:

RESEARCHER'S NAME: Beatriz Sprada Mira

RESEARCHER'S PHONE (Mobile/WhatsApp): +55(41)99929-2555 or +55(41)99143-3032

RESEARCHER'S EMAIL: bmira@uoregon.edu

You can also file complaints, reports, or contact the PUCPR Research Ethics Committee. The ethics committee is an organization that protects research participants and can be contacted whenever necessary. To contact the CEP, you can use the following methods:

CEP NAME: PUCPR Research Ethics Committee

CEP PHONE/WHATSAPP: (41) 3271-2103

CEP ADDRESS: Ground floor of the PUCPR administrative building in Curitiba, PR.

CEP WORKING HOURS: Monday to Friday, from 08:00 to 17:24 (except holidays)

CEP EMAIL: nep@pucpr.br

An Institutional Review Board ("IRB") is overseeing this research at the University of Oregon (UO). An IRB is a group of people who perform independent review of research studies to ensure the rights and welfare of participants are protected. UO Research Compliance Services is the office that supports the IRB. If you have questions about your rights or wish to speak with someone other than the research team, you may contact:

Research Compliance Services
5237 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403-5237
+1 (541) 346-2510
ResearchCompliance@uoregon.edu

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

Participant Data	
Name:	
Phone:	
e-mail:	

Location, _____ of _____ of _____.

I, _____, have been informed about what the researcher intends to do and why my collaboration is needed, and I understand the explanation. Therefore, I agree to participate in the research, knowing that I will not receive any compensation and that I can withdraw at any time. This document is issued in two original copies, which will be signed by me and the researcher, and each of us will keep a copy.

INTERVIEW

I agree to participate in the observation component of this research.

Participant Signature

Researcher Signature

USE OF IMAGE AND/OR AUDIO

I authorize the use of the audio recording for this research, with its use being restricted to the collection and analysis of data. The audio recording will be discarded once the research is complete.

Participant Signature

Researcher Signature

OBSERVATION

I agree to participate in the observation component of this research.

Participant Signature

Researcher Signature

(FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS - ENGLISH)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM – ICF

() Participant Copy

() Researcher Copy

1. Starting the conversation

You are being invited to participate in a study called "Stories of Nature and Culture: Paths to Situated Practice of Environmental Journalism in Brazil." Before anything else, you should know that your participation is voluntary. This means you decide whether you want to participate or not. You can choose to not participate without any negative consequences to you. You can also choose to participate and change your mind later. In this case, you can contact the researcher, and your participation will be ended with no consequences to you. This means that the researcher will erase any material related to you (such as an interview, for example) and will not count you as a participant in this research.

It is important that you clarify any doubts before signing this form, and you may discuss it with friends, family, professionals, or anyone you trust before making your decision.

If you decide to participate and sign this document, you will keep a copy for your records. The researcher is available to resolve any problems or doubts regarding your participation in the study at any time.

2. Why is this research being conducted?

The purpose of this research is to understand how local journalists talk about environmental news in their region, and to understand residents' opinions on how these environmental issues appear in local newspapers (such as radio, television, social media, etc.). This study will help researchers in Brazil and around the world understand the challenges of communicating environmental issues in your region. Additionally, this study will be used to create a guide for journalists on how to cover the environment in the region, with a focus on the voices coastal Paraná residents. This guide is not part of the research and will only be made after the results are gathered. But it is necessary for you to know that this will happen, as it may affect your decision to participate or not. Your name will not be used in this guide.

The total number of participants, including you, is approximately 30 people. All will receive this document and go through the same process you are going through now. The total number of participants may change, as unexpected events may occur in people's lives, and participants may withdraw at the last minute.

At this moment, it is important to inform you again that your participation is voluntary, and there will be no problem if you choose not to participate. You are not obligated to take part in this research, and you can decline at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you choose not to participate or discontinue participation.

3. Why am I being invited to participate?

You are being invited to participate in this research because you are a resident of the Paraná coast.

4. What will happen to me if I decide to participate in this research?

If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed by the researcher who sent you this invitation. She will ask you questions about what it's like to live on the coast, about your community, and about environmental problems you encounter in your region. Environmental problems may include things like: trash on the beach, flooding, water shortages, death of local wildlife, and more. She will also discuss your media consumption (such as newspapers, television, radio). The interview can be done in the way you prefer: in person, online, or by phone. The interview lasts between half an hour and one hour. You can skip any question you don't want to answer or don't know the answer to. You are under no obligation to answer any question. If you change your mind during or after the interview and decide that you no longer want to participate, the researcher will delete all the information you provided during the interview and remove your participation from the study.

With your permission, the researcher will record the interview in audio format. This means she will record only her voice and your voice during the interview. She does this so she can listen to the conversation afterward and remember what was said. Only the researcher will have access to this recording. If you prefer not to be recorded, you can still be interviewed. The researcher may choose not to record the interview and simply take notes during the conversation.

You will also be invited to participate in the observation process. Observation is simply allowing the researcher to be present and take notes during an everyday activity of your life. For example, if you wish to participate, she may accompany you for a few hours during a workday or during leisure time, such as an event at church or a walk around your neighborhood. She does this to better understand what it's like to live on the coast. Observation will only take place if you invite the researcher to observe any activity on the day, time, and place of your choosing. The researcher will only take notes during the observation if you give her permission, and she will not interfere with any activity you invite her to observe.

5. Does participating in this research put me at any risk?

By participating in this research, the risk you face is the loss of privacy and confidentiality regarding your data and opinions. In other words, the risk you face is that others may find out that you participated in this research and know what you said in the interview. However, the researcher will do her best to ensure that this does not happen. You may notice that the interview questions have been written in a way that avoids discomfort, embarrassment, or any feelings of shame. This research is part of the work the researcher is doing to complete her doctorate. She will use the information she gathers from you and other participants to write her final doctoral thesis and articles that may be published in a journal. Your name will not appear in any of these cases. Your information collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

It is important for you to know that all data protection rules, including the General Data Protection Law (LGPD), will be followed to ensure that your personal information remains secure. The General Data Protection Law is a law that protects everyone's right to privacy. All participants' data will be stored on a password-protected computer that only the researcher and authorized individuals or organizations can access. Individuals and organizations that conduct or monitor this research may be permitted access to and inspect the research records. These individuals and organizations include the University of Oregon IRB Office that reviewed this research. If something unexpected happens and these data are accessed by others, you will be notified, and next steps will be determined.

6. Is there any direct benefit for me if I participate in this research?

There is no direct or immediate benefit for you if you participate in this research. In other words, you will not receive anything for participating in this research. However, your participation will help researchers around the world

understand how environmental communication works in a region that has not been widely studied.

7. What if I want to withdraw from the research after agreeing to participate?

If you decide that you want to withdraw from the research, you simply need to contact the researcher, and your request will be honored without any problems for you. You can withdraw from the research even after giving your interview or participating in the observation process.

If this research needs to be interrupted for any reason, it will only happen after the CEP/CONEP System is informed and approves the cessation of the study. The CEP/CONEP System is a group of people who oversee the ethics of research conducted in Brazil and protect the rights of research participants. If there is a data breach or violation, the research will be stopped immediately, even before informing the CEP/CONEP System.

In all cases, you will be notified by the researcher, and if there is any possibility of harm to you, constant monitoring will be implemented.

8. Who will know that I am participating in this research? What will they know about me?

The researcher will ensure the privacy of everyone participating in this research. As stated earlier, the interviews will be stored on a password-protected computer. Only the researcher knows the password. At no point will your name be used when the researcher is writing the results of this research. Instead of using names, the researcher will use numbers (such as Participant 1, Participant 2, and so on) to identify participants. The audio recordings of the interviews will be transcribed (i.e., everything in the audio recording will be written on paper), and all personal information (such as your name) will be removed from the document. Only the people conducting this research will have access to these documents.

9. Do I need to pay or will I receive payment for participating in this research?

You will not pay anything, and you will not receive any payment for participating in this study. If you incur any expenses related to your participation in the study, you will be reimbursed for them.

10. What should I do if something happens to me during my participation in this study?

If something goes wrong during your participation, you should notify the research team as soon as possible. In such cases, you will receive assistance from the researchers for as long as necessary. If you suffer any harm as a result of participating in this study, you will be compensated by the researchers. To contact the main researcher, you can use the following methods:

RESEARCHER'S NAME: Beatriz Sprada Mira

RESEARCHER'S CELL PHONE AND WHATSAPP: +55 (41) 99929-2555 or +55 (41) 99143-3032

RESEARCHER'S EMAIL: bmira@uoregon.edu

You can also file complaints, reports, or any other type of contact with the Research Ethics Committee at PUCPR. The ethics committee protects research participants and can be contacted whenever necessary. Contact with the CEP should be made through the following methods:

NAME OF CEP: Research Ethics Committee PUC-PR

CEP PHONE/WHATSAPP: (41) 3271-2103

CEP ADDRESS: Ground floor of the administrative building at PUC-PR, in Curitiba, PR.

CEP HOURS OF OPERATION: Monday to Friday, from 08:00 to 17:24 (except holidays)

An Institutional Review Board (“IRB”) is overseeing this research at the University of Oregon (UO). An IRB is a group of people who perform independent

review of research studies to ensure the rights and welfare of participants are protected. UO Research Compliance Services is the office that supports the IRB. If you have questions about your rights or wish to speak with someone other than the research team, you may contact:

Research Compliance Services
5237 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403-5237
+1 (541) 346-2510
ResearchCompliance@uoregon.edu

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

Participant Data	
Name:	
Phone:	
e-mail:	

Location, _____ of _____ of _____.

I, _____, have been informed about what the researcher intends to do and why my collaboration is needed, and I understand the explanation. Therefore, I agree to participate in the research, knowing that I will not receive any compensation and that I can withdraw at any time. This document is issued in two original copies, which will be signed by me and the researcher, and each of us will keep a copy.

INTERVIEW

I agree to participate in the observation component of this research.

Participant Signature

Researcher Signature

USE OF IMAGE AND/OR AUDIO

I authorize the use of the audio recording for this research, with its use being restricted to the collection and analysis of data. The audio recording will be discarded once the research is complete.

Participant Signature

Researcher Signature

OBSERVATION

I agree to participate in the observation component of this research.

Participant Signature

Researcher Signature

(FOR JOURNALISTS - PORTUGUESE)

TERMO DE CONSENTIMENTO LIVRE E ESCLARECIDO – TCLE

() Via participante () Via pesquisadora

1. Começando a conversa

Você está sendo convidado/a para participar de uma pesquisa chamada “Histórias de natureza e cultura: caminhos para a prática situada de jornalismo ambiental no Brasil”. Antes de qualquer coisa, você deve saber que a sua participação é voluntária. Ou seja, você decide se quer participar ou não. Você pode decidir não participar sem que isso cause nenhum problema para você. Você também pode decidir participar e mudar de ideia depois. Neste caso, você pode entrar em contato com a pesquisadora, e a sua participação será encerrada sem nenhum problema para você. Isso significa que a pesquisadora vai apagar qualquer material relacionado a você (como uma entrevista, por exemplo) e não contar você como participante nesta pesquisa.

É importante você tirar todas as suas dúvidas antes de assinar este termo, e você pode discutir com amigos, parentes, profissionais ou qualquer pessoa de sua confiança antes de decidir.

Se você decidir participar e assinar este documento, você ficará com uma cópia para guardar. Saiba que a pesquisadora está disponível para tentar resolver qualquer problema ou dúvida relacionada à sua participação no estudo, em qualquer momento.

2. Por que esta pesquisa está sendo feita?

O objetivo desta pesquisa é entender como jornalistas locais falam sobre notícias de meio ambiente na sua região, e entender as opiniões de moradores sobre como esses problemas ambientais aparecem em jornais locais (como rádio, televisão, redes sociais etc.). Este estudo vai ajudar pesquisadores do Brasil e do mundo a entenderem quais são os desafios de comunicar o meio ambiente na sua região. Além disso esse estudo será usado criação de um guia para jornalistas sobre como cobrir o meio ambiente na região, com um foco nas vozes de moradores do litoral paranaense. Este guia não faz parte da pesquisa e será feito só depois de termos os resultados. Mas é necessário que você saiba que isso será feito, pois pode mudar a sua decisão de participar ou não da pesquisa. Seu nome jamais será usado neste guia.

O número total de participantes, incluindo você, é de aproximadamente 30 pessoas. Todos vão receber este documento e passar por este processo que você está passando agora. O número total de participantes pode mudar, já que às vezes acontecem imprevistos nas vidas das pessoas, e participantes podem deixar de participar de última hora.

Neste momento é importante novamente informar a você que a sua participação é voluntária, e que não haverá problema algum caso você não deseje participar. Você não é obrigado/a a participar desta pesquisa, e pode recusar este convite a qualquer momento. Não haverá nenhuma penalidade ou perda de algum benefício que você tem direito se você decidir não participar ou deixar de participar dessa pesquisa.

3. Por que eu estou sendo convidado/a para participar?

Você está sendo convidado/a para participar desta pesquisa porque você é jornalista e tem experiência cobrindo pautas ambientais no litoral do Paraná.

4. O que vai acontecer comigo se eu decidir participar desta pesquisa?

Se você decidir participar você será entrevistado/a pela pesquisadora que te enviou este convite. Ela vai te fazer perguntas sobre como é morar no litoral, sobre suas práticas de produção de jornalismo ambiental, sobre sua rotina e experiência como jornalista, e sobre o seu relacionamento com a comunidade do litoral. A entrevista pode ser feita da forma que você preferir: pessoalmente, pelo computador, ou por telefone. A entrevista dura entre meia hora e uma hora. Você pode pular qualquer pergunta que você não quiser ou não souber responder. Você não tem obrigação nenhuma de responder nenhuma pergunta. Se você mudar de ideia durante ou depois da entrevista e decidir que não quer mais participar, a pesquisadora irá apagar todas as informações que você deu durante a entrevista e vai retirar totalmente a sua participação do estudo.

Com a sua permissão, a pesquisadora irá gravar a entrevista em áudio. Ou seja, ela vai gravar apenas a sua voz e a voz dela durante a entrevista. Ela faz essa gravação para que ela possa ouvir a conversa depois e se lembrar do que foi dito. Só a pesquisadora terá acesso à essa gravação. Se você preferir não ser gravado/a, você ainda pode ser entrevistado/a. A pesquisadora pode não gravar a entrevista, e só fazer anotações durante a conversa.

Você também será convidado/a para participar do processo de observação. A observação nada mais é do que a pesquisadora estar presente e tomando notas durante o seu dia de trabalho como jornalista no campo ou na redação. Ela faz isso para entender melhor a sua rotina como jornalista. A observação só será feita caso você convide a pesquisadora para observar alguma atividade no dia, horário, e local que você preferir. A pesquisadora só tomará notas durante a observação se autorizada por você, e ela não irá atrapalhar a atividade que você a convidar para assistir, caso você a faça um convite.

5. Eu corro algum risco participando desta pesquisa?

Ao participar desta pesquisa, o risco que você corre é de perda de privacidade e confidencialidade de seus dados e opiniões. Em outras palavras, o risco que você corre é que outros saibam que você participou desta pesquisa, e saibam o que você falou na sua entrevista. Mas a pesquisadora vai fazer o possível para que isso não aconteça. Você poderá notar que as perguntas da entrevista foram escritas de uma forma que evita desconforto, mal-estar ou alguma sensação de vergonha. Essa pesquisa faz parte do trabalho que a pesquisadora está fazendo para terminar o seu doutorado. Ela vai usar a informação que ela aprender com você e outros participantes para escrever o seu trabalho final no doutorado, e artigos que serão poderão ser publicados em uma revista. O seu nome não vai aparecer em nenhum desses casos. A informação coletada sobre você como parte dessa pesquisa, mesmo após a remoção do seu nome, não será usada ou distribuída em pesquisas futuras.

É importante que você saiba que todas as regras de proteção de dados, incluindo a Lei Geral de Proteção de Dados, vão ser seguidas para garantir que as suas informações pessoais fiquem seguras. A Lei Geral de Proteção de Dados é uma lei que protege o direito de todos à privacidade. Ninguém, fora a pesquisadora e instituições autorizadas a monitorar e, terá acesso às suas informações pessoais e opiniões. Essas instituições incluem a Universidade de Oregon. Todos os seus dados e dos demais participantes serão guardados em um computador protegido por senha que só a pesquisadora consegue acessar. Se acontecer algo inesperado e esses dados forem acessados por outras pessoas, você será avisado e próximos passos serão decididos.

6. Existe algum benefício direto para mim se eu participar desta pesquisa?

Não existe um benefício direto e imediato para você, se você participar dessa pesquisa. Ou seja, você não vai ganhar nada se participar dessa pesquisa. Mas a sua participação vai ajudar pesquisadores do mundo todo a entender como acontece a comunicação sobre o meio ambiente em uma região pouco estudada.

7. E se eu quiser desistir da pesquisa após aceitar participar?

Se você decidir que quer desistir da pesquisa, você só precisa entrar em contato com a pesquisadora e sua vontade será feita sem nenhum problema para você. Você pode desistir da pesquisa mesmo depois de já ter dado a sua entrevista ou participado no processo de observação.

Se esta pesquisa precisar parar de ser feita por algum motivo, isso só vai acontecer depois que o Sistema CEP/CONEP for informado e aprovar que a pesquisa pare. O Sistema CEP/CONEP é um grupo de pessoas que cuida da ética das pesquisas realizadas no Brasil e protege os direitos daqueles que participam em pesquisas como esta. Se houver algum vazamento ou violação de dados a pesquisa vai parar imediatamente, antes mesmo de informar ao Sistema CEP/CONEP.

Em todos os casos você será avisado pela pesquisadora e se houver qualquer possibilidade de dano a você, será realizado um acompanhamento constante.

8. Quem terá conhecimento de que estou participando nesta pesquisa? O que estas pessoas saberão sobre mim?

A pesquisadora vai garantir a privacidade de todos que participarem desta pesquisa. Como dissemos antes, as entrevistas serão guardadas em um computador protegido por senha. Só a pesquisadora tem essa senha. Em nenhum momento seu nome será usado quando a pesquisadora estiver escrevendo os resultados desta pesquisa. Ao invés de usar nomes, a pesquisadora vai usar números (como Participante 1, Participante 2, e por aí vai) para identificar participantes. As gravações de áudio das entrevistas serão transcritas (ou seja, tudo que estiver na gravação de áudio será escrito no papel), e todas as informações pessoais (como seu nome) serão apagados do documento. Somente as pessoas fazendo essa pesquisa terão acesso a esses documentos.

9. Preciso pagar ou vou receber pagamento em dinheiro para participar desta pesquisa?

Você não pagará nada e não receberá nada para participar do estudo. Se você tiver qualquer despesa associada à sua participação no estudo, você será receberá este dinheiro de volta.

10. O que devo fazer se algo aconteceu comigo durante a participação neste estudo?

Se algum problema acontecer com você durante sua participação, você deve avisar deve avisar a equipe de pesquisa o mais rapidamente possível. Nestes casos você receberá assistência dos pesquisadores pelo tempo que achar necessário. Se você sofrer qualquer dano como resultado da sua participação neste estudo, você será indenizado pelos pesquisadores. Para fazer contato com a pesquisadora principal, você pode usar os seguintes meios:

NOME DA PESQUISADORA: Beatriz Sprada Mira

TELEFONE CELULAR E WHATSAPP DA PESQUISADORA:
+55(41)99929-2555 ou +55 (41) 99143-3032

E-MAIL DA PESQUISADORA: bmira@uoregon.edu

Você também pode fazer reclamações, denúncias ou qualquer outro tipo de contato com o Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa da PUCPR. O comitê de ética em pesquisa é um órgão que serve para proteger os participantes de pesquisas e deste modo pode ser acionado sempre que houver necessidade. O contato com o CEP deve ser feito através dos seguintes meios:

NOME DO CEP: Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa PUC-PR

TELEFONE/WHATSAPP DO CEP: (41) 3271-2103

ENDEREÇO DO CEP: Térreo do prédio administrativo da PUC-PR, em Curitiba, PR.

HORÁRIO DE FUNCIONAMENTO DO CEP: Segunda à sexta, das
08:00 às 17:24 (exceto feriados)

E-MAIL DO CEP: nep@pucpr.br

Um Conselho de Revisão Institucional (“IRB”) está supervisionando esta pesquisa. Um IRB é um grupo de pessoas que realizam revisão independente de estudos de pesquisa para garantir que os direitos e o bem-estar dos participantes sejam protegidos. O *UO Research Compliance Services* é o escritório que dá suporte ao IRB. Se você tiver dúvidas ou desejar falar com alguém que não seja a equipe de pesquisa, entre em contato com:

Research Compliance Services
5237 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403-5237
+1 (541) 346-2510
ResearchCompliance@uoregon.edu

DECLARAÇÃO DE ACORDO

Dados do participante da pesquisa	
Nome:	
Telefone:	
e-mail:	

Local, ____ de _____ de ____.

Eu, _____, fui informado/a sobre o que a pesquisadora quer fazer e porque precisa da minha colaboração, e entendi a explicação.

Por isso, eu concordo em participar da pesquisa, sabendo que não vou ganhar nada e que posso sair quando quiser. Este documento é emitido em duas vias originais, as quais serão assinadas por mim e pelo/a pesquisador/a, ficando uma via com cada um de nós.

ENTREVISTA

Eu concordo em participar da fase de entrevista desta pesquisa.

Assinatura do participante da
pesquisa

Assinatura da pesquisadora

USO DE IMAGEM E/OU ÁUDIO

Autorizo o uso da gravação em áudio para essa pesquisa, sendo seu uso restrito a coleta e análise dos dados. A gravação em áudio será descartada depois que a pesquisa estiver completa.

Assinatura do participante da
pesquisa

Assinatura da pesquisadora

OBSERVAÇÃO

Eu concordo em participar da fase de observação desta pesquisa.

Assinatura do participante da
pesquisa

Assinatura da pesquisadora

(FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS - PORTUGUESE)

TERMO DE CONSENTIMENTO LIVRE E ESCLARECIDO – TCLE

() Via participante () Via pesquisadora

1. Começando a conversa

Você está sendo convidado/a para participar de uma pesquisa chamada “Histórias de natureza e cultura: caminhos para a prática situada de jornalismo ambiental no Brasil”. Antes de qualquer coisa, você deve saber que a sua

participação é voluntária. Ou seja, você decide se quer participar ou não. Você pode decidir não participar sem que isso cause nenhum problema para você. Você também pode decidir participar e mudar de ideia depois. Neste caso, você pode entrar em contato com a pesquisadora, e a sua participação será encerrada sem nenhum problema para você. Isso significa que a pesquisadora vai apagar qualquer material relacionado a você (como uma entrevista, por exemplo) e não contar você como participante nesta pesquisa.

É importante você tirar todas as suas dúvidas antes de assinar este termo, e você pode discutir com amigos, parentes, profissionais ou qualquer pessoa de sua confiança antes de decidir.

Se você decidir participar e assinar este documento, você ficará com uma cópia para guardar. Saiba que a pesquisadora está disponível para tentar resolver qualquer problema ou dúvida relacionada à sua participação no estudo, em qualquer momento.

2. Por que esta pesquisa está sendo feita?

O objetivo desta pesquisa é entender como jornalistas locais falam sobre notícias de meio ambiente na sua região, e entender as opiniões de moradores sobre como esses problemas ambientais aparecem em jornais locais (como rádio, televisão, redes sociais etc.). Este estudo vai ajudar pesquisadores do Brasil e do mundo a entenderem quais são os desafios de comunicar o meio ambiente na sua região. Além disso esse estudo será usado criação de um guia para jornalistas sobre como cobrir o meio ambiente na região, com um foco nas vozes de moradores do litoral paranaense. Este guia não faz parte da pesquisa e será feito só depois de termos os resultados. Mas é necessário que você saiba que isso será feito, pois pode mudar a sua decisão de participar ou não da pesquisa. Seu nome não será usado neste guia.

O número total de participantes, incluindo você, é de aproximadamente 30 pessoas. Todos vão receber este documento e passar por este processo que você está passando agora. O número total de participantes pode mudar, já que

às vezes acontecem imprevistos nas vidas das pessoas, e participantes podem deixar de participar de última hora.

Neste momento é importante novamente informar a você que a sua participação é voluntária, e que não haverá problema algum caso você não deseje participar. Você não é obrigado/a a participar desta pesquisa, e pode recusar este convite a qualquer momento. Não haverá nenhuma penalidade ou perda de algum benefício que você tem direito se você decidir não participar ou deixar de participar dessa pesquisa.

3. Por que eu estou sendo convidado/a para participar?

Você está sendo convidado/a para participar desta pesquisa porque você é morador/a do litoral do Paraná.

4. O que vai acontecer comigo se eu decidir participar desta pesquisa?

Se você decidir participar você será entrevistado/a pela pesquisadora que te enviou este convite. Ela vai te fazer perguntas sobre como é morar no litoral, sobre a sua comunidade, e sobre problemas de meio ambiente que você encontra na sua região. Problemas de meio ambiente podem ser coisas como: lixo na praia, enchentes, falta de água, morte de animais selvagens, e mais. Também vamos falar sobre o seu consumo de mídia (como jornal, televisão, rádio). A entrevista pode ser feita da forma que você preferir: pessoalmente, pelo computador, ou por telefone. A entrevista dura entre meia hora e uma hora. Você pode pular qualquer pergunta que você não quiser ou não souber responder. Você não tem obrigação nenhuma de responder nenhuma pergunta. Se você mudar de ideia durante ou depois da entrevista e decidir que não quer mais participar, a pesquisadora irá apagar todas as informações que você deu durante a entrevista e vai retirar totalmente a sua participação do estudo.

Com a sua permissão, a pesquisadora irá gravar a entrevista em áudio. Ou seja, ela vai gravar apenas a sua voz e a voz dela durante a entrevista. Ela faz essa gravação para que ela possa ouvir a conversa depois e se lembrar do que foi dito. Só a pesquisadora terá acesso à essa gravação. Se você preferir

não ser gravado/a, você ainda pode ser entrevistado/a. A pesquisadora pode não gravar a entrevista, e só fazer anotações durante a conversa.

Você também será convidado/a para participar do processo de observação. A observação nada mais é do que permitir que a pesquisadora esteja presente e tomando notas durante alguma atividade comum da sua vida. Por exemplo, se você quiser participar, ela pode te acompanhar por algumas horas durante um dia de trabalho, ou em algum momento de lazer, como um evento na igreja ou uma caminhada pelo seu bairro. Ela faz isso para que ela possa entender melhor como é a sua vida morando no litoral. A observação só será feita caso você convide a pesquisadora para observar alguma atividade no dia, horário, e local que você preferir. A pesquisadora só tomará notas durante a observação se autorizada por você, e ela não irá atrapalhar a atividade que você a convidar para assistir, caso você a faça um convite.

5. Eu corro algum risco participando desta pesquisa?

Ao participar desta pesquisa, o risco que você corre é de perda de privacidade e confidencialidade de seus dados e opiniões. Em outras palavras, o risco que você corre é que outros saibam que você participou desta pesquisa, e saibam o que você falou na sua entrevista. Mas a pesquisadora vai fazer o possível para que isso não aconteça. Você poderá notar que as perguntas da entrevista foram escritas de uma forma que evita desconforto, mal-estar ou alguma sensação de vergonha. Essa pesquisa faz parte do trabalho que a pesquisadora está fazendo para terminar o seu doutorado. Ela vai usar as entrevistas e observações em o seu trabalho final no doutorado, e em artigos que serão poderão ser publicados em uma revista. O seu nome não vai aparecer em nenhum desses casos. A informação coletada sobre você como parte dessa pesquisa, mesmo após a remoção do seu nome, não será usada ou distribuída em pesquisas futuras.

É importante que você saiba que todas as regras de proteção de dados, incluindo a Lei Geral de Proteção de Dados, vão ser seguidas para garantir que as suas informações pessoais fiquem seguras. A Lei Geral de Proteção de

Dados é uma lei que protege o direito de todos à privacidade. Ninguém, fora a pesquisadora e instituições autorizadas a monitorar e, terá acesso às suas informações pessoais e opiniões. Essas instituições incluem a Universidade de Oregon. Todos os seus dados e dos demais participantes serão guardados em um computador protegido por senha que só a pesquisadora consegue acessar. Se acontecer algo inesperado e esses dados forem acessados por outras pessoas, você será avisado/a e próximos passos serão decididos.

6. Vou ganhar alguma coisa se eu participar desta pesquisa?

Não existe um benefício direto e imediato para você, se você participar dessa pesquisa. Ou seja, você não vai ganhar nada se participar dessa pesquisa. Mas a sua participação vai ajudar pesquisadores do mundo todo a entender como acontece a comunicação sobre o meio ambiente em uma região pouco estudada.

7. E se eu quiser desistir da pesquisa após aceitar participar?

Se você decidir que quer desistir da pesquisa, você só precisa entrar em contato com a pesquisadora e sua vontade será feita sem nenhum problema para você. Você pode desistir da pesquisa mesmo depois de já ter dado a sua entrevista ou participado no processo de observação.

Se esta pesquisa precisar parar de ser feita por algum motivo, isso só vai acontecer depois que o Sistema CEP/CONEP for informado e aprovar que a pesquisa pare. O Sistema CEP/CONEP é um grupo de pessoas que cuida da ética das pesquisas realizadas no Brasil e protege os direitos daqueles que participam em pesquisas como esta. Se houver algum vazamento ou violação de dados a pesquisa vai parar imediatamente, antes mesmo de informar ao Sistema CEP/CONEP.

Em todos os casos você será avisado pela pesquisadora e se houver qualquer possibilidade de dano a você, será realizado um acompanhamento constante.

8. Quem terá conhecimento de que estou participando nesta pesquisa? O que estas pessoas saberão sobre mim?

A pesquisadora vai garantir a privacidade de todos que participarem desta pesquisa. Como dissemos antes, as entrevistas serão guardadas em um computador protegido por senha. Só a pesquisadora tem essa senha. Em nenhum momento seu nome será usado quando a pesquisadora estiver escrevendo os resultados desta pesquisa. Ao invés de usar nomes, a pesquisadora vai usar números (como Participante 1, Participante 2, e por aí vai) para identificar participantes. As gravações de áudio das entrevistas serão transcritas (ou seja, tudo que estiver na gravação de áudio será escrito no papel), e todas as informações pessoais (como seu nome) serão apagados do documento. Somente as pessoas fazendo essa pesquisa terão acesso a esses documentos.

9. Preciso pagar ou vou receber pagamento em dinheiro para participar desta pesquisa?

Você não pagará nada e não receberá nada para participar do estudo. Se você tiver qualquer despesa associada à sua participação no estudo, você será receberá este dinheiro de volta.

10. O que devo fazer se algo aconteceu comigo durante a participação neste estudo?

Se algum problema acontecer com você durante sua participação, você deve avisar a equipe de pesquisa o mais rapidamente possível. Nestes casos você receberá assistência dos pesquisadores pelo tempo que achar necessário. Se você sofrer qualquer dano como resultado da sua participação neste estudo, você será indenizado/a pelos pesquisadores. Para fazer contato com a pesquisadora principal, você pode usar os seguintes meios:

NOME DA PESQUISADORA: Beatriz Sprada Mira

TELEFONE CELULAR E WHATSAPP DA PESQUISADORA:

+55(41)99929-2555 ou +55 (41) 99143-3032

E-MAIL DA PESQUISADORA: bmira@uoregon.edu

Você também pode fazer reclamações, denúncias ou qualquer outro tipo de contato com o Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa da PUCPR. O comitê de ética em pesquisa é um órgão que serve para proteger os participantes de pesquisas e deste modo pode ser acionado sempre que houver necessidade. O contato com o CEP deve ser feito através dos seguintes meios:

NOME DO CEP: Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa PUC-PR

TELEFONE/WHATSAPP DO CEP: (41) 3271-2103

ENDEREÇO DO CEP: Térreo do prédio administrativo da PUC-PR, em Curitiba, PR.

HORÁRIO DE FUNCIONAMENTO DO CEP: Segunda à sexta, das 08:00 às 17:24 (exceto feriados)

E-MAIL DO CEP: nep@pucpr.br

Um Conselho de Revisão Institucional (“IRB”) está supervisionando esta pesquisa. Um IRB é um grupo de pessoas que realizam revisão independente de estudos de pesquisa para garantir que os direitos e o bem-estar dos participantes sejam protegidos. O *UO Research Compliance Services* é o escritório que dá suporte ao IRB. Se você tiver dúvidas ou desejar falar com alguém que não seja a equipe de pesquisa, entre em contato com:

Research Compliance Services

5237 University of Oregon

Eugene, OR 97403-5237

+1 (541) 346-2510

ResearchCompliance@uoregon.edu

DECLARAÇÃO DE ACORDO

Dados do participante da pesquisa	
Nome:	
Telefone:	

e-mail:	
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Local, _____ de _____ de _____.

Eu, _____, fui informado/a sobre o que a pesquisadora quer fazer e porque precisa da minha colaboração, e entendi a explicação.

Por isso, eu concordo em participar da pesquisa, sabendo que não vou ganhar nada e que posso sair quando quiser. Este documento é emitido em duas vias originais, as quais serão assinadas por mim e pelo/a pesquisador/a, ficando uma via com cada um de nós.

ENTREVISTA

Eu concordo em participar da fase de entrevista desta pesquisa.

_____ Assinatura do participante da pesquisa	_____ Assinatura da pesquisadora
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USO DE IMAGEM E/OU ÁUDIO

Autorizo o uso da gravação em áudio para essa pesquisa, sendo seu uso restrito a coleta e análise dos dados. A gravação em áudio será descartada depois que a pesquisa estiver completa.

_____ Assinatura do participante da pesquisa	_____ Assinatura da pesquisadora
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OBSERVAÇÃO

Eu concordo em participar da fase de observação desta pesquisa.

Assinatura do participante da
pesquisa

Assinatura da pesquisadora

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