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THE IMPACT OF PRESS FREEDOM ON ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION: AN ECONOMETRIC ANALYSIS FOR THE NORDIC-BALTIC EIGHT (NB-8)

BASIN ÖZGÜRLÜĞÜNÜN ÇEVRESEL BOZULMA ÜZERİNE ETKİSİ: NORDİK-BALTIK SEKİZLİSİ (NB-8) İÇİN EKONOMETRİK BİR ANALİZ

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ABSTRACT

As stated in the principles of post-normal science, environmental degradation impacts the entire globe and all living things as a global problem concerning everyone. The freedom of press has a vital function in preventing environmental degradation and improving environmental quality. A free press contributes to raising environmental awareness and ensures that action is taken on environmental issues. It is aimed in this study to investigate the impacts of freedom of press on environmental degradation in the Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB-8) countries. Panel data analysis was conducted out in accordance with the stated purpose, using data covering the period 2003-2018 belonging to the Nordic-Baltic Eight countries. The Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders was used as an indicator of press freedom, and carbon emissions (metric tons per capita) were used as an indicator of environmental degradation. The study also included control variables such as GDP per capita, renewable energy consumption, the share of the urban population in the total population and the trade openness ratio. It has been found as a result of the analysis that as the press freedom index value increases (as press freedom decreases) in the Nordic-Baltic Eight, environmental degradation increases.

Keywords: *Press Freedom, Environmental Degradation, Panel Data Analysis, Nordic-Baltic Eight.*

Jel Codes: *E02, Q53, C33, O52.*

ÖZ

Çevresel bozulma küresel bir sorun olarak tüm dünyayı ve canlıları etkilemekte ve post normal bilimin esaslarında da yer aldığı gibi herkesi ilgilendirmektedir. Çevresel bozulmanın önlenmesinde ve çevresel kalitenin iyileştirilmesinde basının özgür olmasının önemli bir işlevi bulunmaktadır. Özgür bir basın, çevresel farkındalığın artırılmasına katkıda bulunur ve çevresel konularda harekete geçilmesini sağlar. Bu çalışmada Nordik-Baltık Sekizlisi (NB-8) ülkelerinde basın özgürlüğünün çevresel bozulma üzerine etkilerinin araştırılması amaçlanmaktadır. Belirtilen amaç doğrultusunda Nordik-Baltık Sekizlisi ülkelerine ait 2003-2018 dönemini kapsayan veriler kullanılarak panel veri analizi yapılmıştır. Basın özgürlüğü göstergesi olarak Reporters Without Borders tarafından yayınlanan Basın Özgürlüğü Endeksi, çevresel bozulma göstergesi olarak ise karbon emisyonu (kişi başına metrik ton) kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca çalışmaya kişi başına düşen GSYİH, yenilenebilir enerji tüketimi, kentsel nüfusun toplam nüfus içindeki payı ve ticari açıklık oranı gibi kontrol değişkenleri dahil edilmiştir. Yapılan analiz neticesinde Nordik-Baltık Sekizlisinde basın özgürlüğü endeks değeri arttıkça (basın özgürlüğü azaldıkça) çevresel bozulmanın arttığı bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Basın Özgürlüğü, Çevresel Bozulma, Panel Veri Analizi, Nordik-Baltık Sekizlisi.*

Jel Kodları: *E02, Q53, C33, O52.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The environment performs four basic functions necessary for the survival of mankind and, likewise, for human well-being. The first of these is the provision of natural products such as air, solar energy, lakes, rivers, landscaping and wildlife. The second is the supply of natural resources, such as water, soil, minerals, and forests, which are used to create economic goods. The third is that it functions as a sink into which by-products of economic activities are thrown into. Its fourth function is to provide environmental services and amenities such as maintaining a livable biosphere, including the stratospheric ozone layer, climate stability, genetic diversity, and recreation (Singh, 2009).

Environmental degradation is an umbrella term that encompasses a variety of topics including pollution, deforestation, desertification, global warming, loss of biodiversity, animal extinction, and much more. The depletion of natural resources such as air, water, soil, the destruction of ecosystems and the extinction of wildlife are defined as environmental degradation. Undesirable changes and disturbances occurring in the environment are characterized as environmental degradation (Choudhary et al., 2015).

Along with industrialization and similar elements, unconscious and excessive consumption of natural resources has made environmental degradation become an important agenda item. The decrease in the quality of the environment has revealed an important problem such as the decrease in the areas where future generations can sustain their lives. Especially serious problematic issues such as global warming and climate change remain a cause for concern.

Environmental degradation occurs due to natural disasters and human activities. In the last few decades, the issue of environmental degradation has attracted attention by policy makers of development and environmental sciences (Audi and Ali, 2018). International cooperation is required for the solution of pollution problems that cross borders. Because many countries suffer from the effects of environmental degradation and no country has the opportunity to manage the problem unilaterally (Haas, 1992).

Freedom means the absence of control, interference or restrictions. Therefore, the term of freedom of press means the right to print and publish without the intervention of the state or any other public authority. The press plays an educational and mobilizing role in shaping public opinion and can be an intermediary for social changes. Because freedom of the press is considered the mother of all freedoms in democratic societies (Sehgal and Malik, 2018).

Freedom of the press is the building block of the concepts of human rights and democracy. An unrestricted press is not only an important economic actor, but also an effective force in the political process. The freedom of the press precedes the interests of governments in maintaining their own power and influence and prevents the authoritarianism of administrations (Lamer, 2018).

The fact that the press is free also ensures that different opinions can be expressed in society. It ensures the formation of a polyphonic environment in which opposing views can also be freely expressed, rather than monophonic ones. A non-free press negatively affects the freedom of communication of society. With the freedom of the press, society can access the right information. The press, which is censored or suppressed, cannot convey the correct information (Çoban, 2020).

The fact that the press is free is of great importance for environmental quality. Societies that do not have environmental awareness do not contribute to environmental sustainability. But the fact that the press accurately informs societies about environmental degradation without any restrictions and censorship will increase the environmental awareness of societies and help them achieve environmental sustainability.

In countries where the press is free, people become aware of environmental problems by accessing the right information through the press. Likewise, in countries where the press is free, citizens have freedoms that cause governments to change their policies. One of these freedoms is the freedom of association. In these countries, individuals can organize themselves on environmental issues, enabling governments to change their environmental policies, and thus environmental quality can improve.

Countries that have a culture of freedom of the press tend to be successful in terms of environmental performance, protecting both their ecosystems and human populations. Countries with a limited press do not have a good environmental performance. A free press is a prerequisite for a country to improve its environmental quality and protect its people (Ollerton et al., 2019).

It is aimed in this study to investigate the impacts of freedom of press on environmental degradation in the Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB-8) countries. Panel data analysis was conducted out in accordance with the stated purpose, using data covering the period 2003-2018 belonging to the Nordic-Baltic Eight countries. After the introduction section, there is a literature review section in the study, and after the literature review, the data set and method that will be used in the study have been introduced. After the data set and method section, there is an econometric analysis section. Finally, there is a conclusion section in the study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

When we look at the studies investigating the relationship between press freedom and environmental degradation variables, it is seen that these studies are almost decimated. In the literature, where the relationship between environmental degradation and variables such as institutional structure and democracy is investigated more, studies investigating the relationship between freedom of the press and environmental degradation are quite limited (Martinez-Zarzoso and Phillips, 2020; Riti et al, 2021; Uzar, 2021; Ike et al, 2022). Freedom of the press is also an important indicator for the development of the institutional structure, such as democratic governance and freedom of expression (Yeter et al., 2021). Since press freedom is an important indicator of institutional quality, studies that examine the relationship of civil liberties, democracy and institutional quality and similar variables with environmental degradation are also included in the literature (Barrett & Grady, 2000; Winslow, 2005; Li & Reuveny, 2006; Bernauer & Kobi, 2009; Romuald, 2011; Goel et al, 2013; Tiwari & Joshi, 2015; Topal & Hayaloğlu, 2017; Jesenko, 2018).

Barrett and Graddy (2000) investigated the relationship between freedoms and the environment. It has been found in the study that the increase in civil and political freedoms significantly improves environmental quality for some pollution variables. It has been emphasized that political reforms are as important as economic reforms in improving environmental quality worldwide.

Winslow (2005) analyzed the relationship between democracy and urban air pollution variables, which are an indicator of environmental quality. Urban air concentrations such as SO2, SPM and smoke were used as the three pollutants in the study. Freedom House Index and Polity III were preferred as democracy indicators. It has been found in the study that the level of environmental pollution decreases as the level of democracy increases.

Li and Reuveny (2006) examined the relationship between democracy and environmental degradation. Carbon dioxide emissions, nitrogen dioxide emissions, deforestation, land degradation and water pollution were included as environmental degradation indicators in the study, which focused on the impact of the type of political regime on human activities that directly harm the environment. As a result of the study, it has been concluded that democracy reduces all five types of environmental degradation.

Bernauer and Kobi (2009) examined the effect of political institutions on air quality. In the study, which used data for 107 cities from 42 countries between 1971 and 1996, existing theories on ensuring air quality were empirically tested using data on SO2 concentration. It has been found as a result of the empirical analyzes that the degree of democracy has a positive effect on air quality.

In his study, Romuald (2011) aimed to analyze the impact of democratic institutions on environmental quality and to determine the potential. In the study, in which 122 developing and developed countries were included in the analysis, data covering the period 1960-2008 belonging to these countries were used. It has been determined in the study, in which modern econometric methods are adopted, that democratic institutions have a direct positive effect on environmental quality.

Goel et al. (2013) analyzed the relationship between institutional quality and environmental pollution. In this study, which used data from more than 100 countries between 2004 and 2007, it was found that both the more corrupt nations and the nations with large shadow sectors had similar effects in providing less emissions, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Tiwari and Joshi (2015) examined the role of local and regional institutions in environmental governance in the Hindu Kush Himalaya. It has been concluded as a result of the research that institutions play an important role in the scope of environmental governance in the Hindu Kush Himalaya. However, it has also been emphasized that institutions lack articulation, access, social inclusion and equality. It has been stated that local institutions should be strengthened through capacity building.

Topal and Hayaloğlu (2017) examined the effect of corporate quality on environmental performance. Static and dynamic panel data analysis was carried out using data covering the period 2000-2014 for 124 countries. In this study, it has been proven that political stability, governance quality and democratic development have a positive effect on environmental performance. It has also been found that this positive effect does not depend on the stage of development of countries.

Jesenko (2018) has made evaluations related to freedom of expression in environmental cases before the European Court of Human Rights. In the study, which has emphasized that the use of human rights will support the creation of better environmental policy, it has been stated that the European Court of Human Rights has accepted the importance of freedom of expression in order to protect the environment.

Martinez-Zarzoso and Phillips (2020) examined the role of freedom of the press on setting environmental standards. Panel data analysis was carried out using data covering the period 1994-2015 for a sample of OECD and BRICS countries and a global sample of 82 countries. It has been found in the study that the lack of press freedom has a negative relationship with environmental rigidity.

Riti et al, (2021) analyzed the effects of freedom of the press on CO_2 emissions. Using the data covering the period 1993-2016 for 10 countries, analysis was made with the PMG technique. The results of the study have shown that freedom of the press has the capacity to reduce CO_2 emissions in most countries included in the analysis.

Uzar (2021) examined the relationship between press freedom and environmental quality. In the study in which E-7 countries were examined, data covering the period 1993-2016 belonging to these countries were used. In the study, in which the panel ARDL method was applied, it has been found that freedom of the press is effective in reducing CO_2 emissions in E-7 countries. Policymakers need to expand freedom of the press to reduce CO_2 emissions.

Ike et al. (2022) conducted an empirical analysis of the global environmental impact of press freedom. Panel data analysis was carried out in the study, in which data from 153 countries covering the period 2002-2016 were used. It has been found as a result of the study that a 1% increase in press freedom in 153 countries leads to a 0.022% decrease in CO_2 emissions.

3. DATA SET AND METHOD

In this study, balanced panel data analysis was conducted using data from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Norway, defined as the Nordic-Baltic Eight, covering the period 2003-2018. The fact that the data were available for all the variables in the study was effective in determining the data range in the study. Similar studies were used to select the variables.

The Nordic-Baltic Eight is an informal format of regional cooperation consisting of 5 Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) and 3 Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania). Annual meetings are held between both the prime ministers and foreign ministers of these eight countries. The first NB-8 meeting was held in 2014. NB-8 cooperation covers foreign policy, security and defense policy, as well as areas such as energy and transportation, financial issues, and homeland security and justice (Iso-Markku et al., 2018). The fact that NB-8 countries have developed within the scope of institutional quality and freedoms has been the reason for preference in using this country group in the study.

In the study, carbon emissions (metric tons per capita) were used as an indicator of environmental degradation. Carbon emission was also included as a dependent variable in the study. The Press Freedom Index published annually by Reporters Without Borders was used as an indicator of press freedom. While creating the Press Freedom Index values, categories such as pluralism, media independence, environment and self-censorship, legislative framework, transparency, infrastructure and abuses were used. In the Press Freedom Index, countries are given scores between 0 and 100. 0 represents the best score, while 100 represents the worst score. As the score of the countries approaches 100, the freedom of the press decreases in these countries, while the freedom of the press increases as it approaches 0.

GDP per capita, the share of the urban population in the total population, renewable energy consumption and the trade openness ratio were used in the study as control variables. The data of all these variables were obtained from the World Bank's database.

Detailed information about all variables is given in Table 1. The variables included in the study, the abbreviations of the variables and the expected effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable are observed in Table 1.

Table 1: Information about the Variables

Variable	**The Abbreviation of the Variable**	**Expected Effects on Carbon Emission**
Press Freedom Index	PFI	+
GDP per capita (Current US$)	GDPPC	+
Renewable Energy Consumption (% of Total Final Energy Consumption)	REN	-
Trade Openness Ratio	TRADE	+
Urban Population (% of total population)	URB	+
CO_2 Emissions (metric tons per capita)	CO2	

The estimated model within the scope of the study is as follows:

$$CO2_{it}=\alpha_0+\alpha_1 PFI_{it}+\alpha_2 GDPPC_{it}+\alpha_3 REN_{it}+\alpha_4 TRADE_{it}+\alpha_5 URB_{it}+\alpha_i+\lambda_t+\varepsilon_{it}$$

$CO2_{it}$ refers to the carbon emission level, PFI_{it} refers to the Press Freedom Index, $GDPPC_{it}$ refers to the GDP per capita, REN_{it} refers to the renewable energy consumption, $TRADE_{it}$ refers to the trade openness ratio, URB_{it} refers to the share of urban population in total population, α_0 refers to the fixed parameter, α_i refers to the unit effect, λ_t refers to the time effect and ε_{it} refers to the error term.

3. ECONOMETRIC ANALYSIS

In this section, descriptive statistics of the variables will be expressed first, and then specification tests will be performed. Once the specification tests are performed, the model will be estimated with the appropriate resistance estimator. The Stata 14 package program was used to perform all these analyses.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	**Number of Observations**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**
CO2	128	7.233434	3.197958	3.288228	14.80592
PFI	128	5.087969	7.299441	-10	22.89
LNGDPPC	128	41395.76	24854.32	5145.95	102913.5
REN	128	40.0426	17.5329	12.6992	78.2135
TRADE	128	99.95646	27.47793	66.55283	170.7599
URB	128	79.08217	9.536427	66.635	93.813

Descriptive statistics about the variables found in the model are presented in Table 2. Table 2 shows the number of observations, means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values of the variables.

Table 3: The Correlation Matrix

	PFI	LNGDPPC	REN	TRADE	URBAN
PFI	1.0000				
LNGDPPC	-0.2403	1.0000			
REN	-0.0022	0.5687	1.0000		
TRADE	0.3682	-0.6637	-0.5140	1.0000	
URBAN	-0.2676	0.8225	0.5976	-0.6662	1.0000

After the descriptive statistics of the variables were expressed, the connection between the independent variables was examined. Table 3 shows the correlation matrix. The correlation between each independent variable in the model and other independent variables is observed.

Table 4: VIF Values

Variable	**Tolerance**	**VIF Value**
PFI	0.800625	1.25
LNGDPPC	0.294837	3.39
REN	0.565758	1.77
TRADE	0.454484	2.20
URBAN	0.278324	3.59

One of the methods used to test whether a multi-linear connection problem exists is the VIF test. Table 4 shows the VIF values and tolerance values of the variables. The fact that the VIF values of the variables are greater than 10 and the tolerance values are less than 0.2 indicates the presence of a multiple linear connection problem. However, when Table 4 is examined, it is seen that the VIF values of the variables in the model are less than 10. Likewise, the tolerance values of these variables are also greater than 0.2. With all this, it is seen that there are no multiple linear connection problems in the model.

Table 5: Specification Tests (F Test, Hausman Test, Heteroskedasticity, Autocorrelation and Cross Sectional Dependence Tests)

F Test	
F Statistics	304.31
The Probability Value	0.0000
Hausman Test	
Chi-square Statistics	32.84
The Probability Value	0.0000
Modified Wald Test	
Chi-square Statistics	442.70
The Probability Value	0.0000
Bhargava, Franzini, and Narendranathan's Durbin Watson Test and Baltagi-Wu Locally Best Invariant Test	
Value of Durbin Watson Test Statistics by Bhargava, Franzini, and Narendranathan	1.1836368
The Value of the Baltagi-Wu Test Statistic	1.38765
Breusch-Pagan Lagrange Multiplier (LM) Test	
Chi-square Statistics	82.806
The Probability Value	0.0000

Table 5 shows the results obtained from the specification tests performed. As a result of the F test conducted to test whether the classical model is valid, it has been found that there are unit effects and it has been concluded that the classical model is not effective. The Hausman test was used to determine which of the fixed effects model and the random effects model were effective. As a result of the Hausman test, the information that the fixed effects model was found to be effective is given in Table 5. The Modified Wald test was applied to test whether there was heteroskedasticity in the model. As a result of the test, the finding of

heteroskedasticity in the model was reached. In order to test the existence of autocorrelation, Durbin Watson Test of Bhargava, Franzini and Narendranathan and Baltagi-Wu Locally Best Invariant Test were applied. As a result of the tests performed, it is seen that the values of both test statistics are less than 2 when looking at Table 5. This indicates that the autocorrelation is significant for the model and reveals that there is an autocorrelation problem. Finally, the assumption of non-correlation between units was examined with the Breusch-Pagan Lagrange Multiplier (LM) test. As a result of the Breusch-Pagan Lagrange Multiplier (LM) test, it was determined that there was a correlation between the units.

Table 6: Estimation Results

Independent Variables	**Coefficient**	**Driscoll/Kraay Standard Error**	**The Probability Value**
PFI	.0229354	.0056587	0.001***
LNGDPPC	.6419066	.1669628	0.002***
REN	-.1680092	.0127189	0.000***
TRADE	.0221573	.0046675	0.000***
URBAN	-.3604326	.0819521	0.001***
R^2= 0.6942			
***: 1% Significance Level **: 5% Significance Level *: 10% Significance Level			

Table 6 shows the estimation results for the model. Since both variance, autocorrelation and cross sectional dependence were found in the model, the model was predicted with the Driscoll Kraay robust estimator, which can be applied in the presence of these three statistical problems.

Table 6 shows that the value of R^2 is 0.6942. This also qualifies the power of the independent variables to explain the dependent variable. Likewise, the coefficients and the standard errors and probability values derived with the Driscoll Kraay estimator are observed through Table 6.

When the relationship between PFI and CO2 variables is examined through Table 6, it is seen that the relationship between these two variables is positive. In Nordic Baltic Eight countries, carbon emissions increase as press freedom index value increases (press freedom decreases). This finding is also statistically significant at the 1% significance level. Decreased level of press freedom in Nordic Baltic Eight countries increases environmental degradation. An expected finding has been reached for the Nordic Baltic Eight between these two variables.

When the relationship between GDP per capita and carbon emissions is analyzed, it is observed that the direction of the coefficient of GDP per capita is positive. As the GDP per capita increases in the Nordic-Baltic Eight, the level of carbon emissions also increases. This finding also indicates statistical significance at the 1% significance level.

When the relationship between REN and CO2 variables is examined, it is seen that the relationship between these two variables is negative. As renewable energy consumption increases in the Nordic-Baltic Eight, the level of carbon emissions decreases. This is an expected finding and is also statistically significant at the 1% significance level.

When the relationship between the trade openness ratio and environmental degradation is examined, it is seen that the relationship between the two variables is positive as expected. The increase in the trade openness ratio of the Nordic-Baltic Eight countries increases the

environmental degradation in these countries. This finding is also statistically significant at the 1% significance level.

When the findings regarding the relationship between URBAN and CO2 variables are examined, it will be seen that the direction of the relationship between the two variables is negative. As the urbanization rate increases in the Nordic-Baltic Eight, environmental degradation decreases. This finding is also statistically significant at the 1% significance level.

4. CONCLUSION

Environmental sustainability is under great threat with the effects of globalization. Increasing industrialization, unconscious and unplanned waste management, unconscious and excessive consumption of natural resources, material production and consumption, use of fossil fuels cause significant damage to the environment. Living species within ecosystems are threatened and biodiversity is put at risk. Largely as a result of human activities, the environment is moving away from being sustainable and environmental degradation is occurring. Issues such as climate change and global warming raise important concerns about the future of the world and its transmission to future generations.

In order to prevent environmental degradation, it is of great importance that people have the right information. In order for people to have the right information, they also need to have a free press. The fact that the press is not under the control of the government means that the information is not under any control. The fact that the press is free also indicates the presence of a strong corporate structure. Countries may ignore environmental sustainability for the sake of economic growth. This means that the transfer of natural resources to future generations is jeopardized for the economic growth of countries. In countries where the press is free, people have awareness about environmental issues. In countries with environmental awareness, society can influence the government's decision against environmental sustainability. And thus, the decisions taken by governments against environmental sustainability may be invalid. There is a high sensitivity to environmental issues in societies where the press is free and thus there is environmental awareness.

Within the scope of the study, the impacts of press freedom on environmental degradation in the Nordic-Baltic Eight countries were examined. Panel data analysis was carried out in the study, in which data from the Nordic-Baltic Eight countries covering the period 2003-2018 were used. In the study, carbon emissions (metric tons per capita) were used as the dependent variable and an indicator of environmental degradation. The Press Freedom Index published annually by Reporters Without Borders was used as an indicator of press freedom. Descriptive variables such as GDP per capita, trade openness, renewable energy consumption and the share of urban population in the total population are also included in the study.

When the findings are examined, it is observed that the results are consistent with the general view regarding the direction of the relationship between freedom of the press and environmental degradation. In the econometric analysis part of the study, when the results related to the model estimation are examined, it is seen that the direction of the relationship between freedom of the press and carbon emissions is positive. The result obtained is statistically significant at the 1% significance level. In Nordic Baltic Eight countries, carbon emissions increase as press freedom index value increases (press freedom decreases). This result is also consistent with the results obtained in other studies in the literature (Martinez-Zarzoso and Phillips, 2020; Riti et al, 2021; Uzar, 2021; Ike et al, 2022).

Considering the relationship between LNGDPPC and CO2, one of the control variables, it is concluded that carbon emissions will increase as per capita GDP increases in the Nordic-

Baltic Eight. The relationship between the two variables is positive as expected. This finding is also statistically significant at the 1% significance level. It is seen that the direction of the relationship between the REN and CO2 variables is positive as expected. As renewable energy consumption increases in the Nordic-Baltic Eight, the level of carbon emissions decreases. The result obtained is statistically significant at the 1% significance level. When the relationship between TRADE and CO2 variables is examined, it is found that carbon emissions will increase as the trade openness ratio increases in Nordic-Baltic Eight countries. This finding is also statistically significant at the 1% significance level. Considering the direction of the relationship between another control variable, URB and CO2, it is seen that it is negative. In the Nordic-Baltic Eight, the level of carbon emissions decreases as the share of the urban population in the total population increases.

Based on the findings of this study, which aims to examine the impacts of freedom of the press on environmental degradation for the Nordic-Baltic Eight, it can be said that freedom of the press is a very important element for the preservation and establishment of environmental sustainability and environmental quality. With the ability of the press to transmit accurate information to society without any censorship, decisions taken by governments against environmental sustainability on environmental issues can be eliminated. With the freedom of the press, people can organize on environmental issues and take action to prevent environmental degradation. With the freedom of the press, non-governmental organizations working to protect the environment can work more actively and freely. Likewise, the freedom of the press will also allow these non-governmental organizations to increase numerically. Decisions made with a focus on economic growth and ignoring environmental quality will lose their function with the freedom of the press. Freedom of the press will increase environmental awareness and reduce environmental degradation.

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