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“WHALES, GUNS, AND MONEY?”
HOW COMMERCIAL AND IDEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS INFLUENCED THE
***SEATTLE TIMES* PORTRAYAL OF THE MAKAH WHALE HUNT**

by

Richard William Gorman, Jr.

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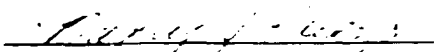
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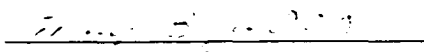
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to Mom, Dad, Amy, Norvin, and Tad. Words can not express what your constant love, support, and encouragement has meant to me. I am definitely the luckiest person in the world.

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ABSTRACT

The Makah whale hunt was one of the most heavily covered mainstream media events involving Native Americans in the 1990s. This event was characterized by active protests from environmental and animal rights organizations. The *Seattle Times* coverage presented the issues, conflicts, and controversies in a manner that supported the Makah tribe's efforts. Given the often deplorable history of Native Americans and the mainstream news media, this may seem to suggest a positive development for Native American tribes. However, it is necessary to ask what factors influenced the *Seattle Times* decision to portray the event from a pro-Makah angle. Analyzing this coverage provides an understanding of how ideological and commercial considerations influence the news media. This thesis examines how the presentation of the legal and technical issues as well as the character and personalities of the participants was influenced by the news media's commercial and ideological priorities.

Introduction

On May 17, 1999 the Makah tribe of Washington conducted its first gray whale hunt in over 70 years. Makah Tribal officials first publicly stated their desire to conduct the hunt in May of 1995, soon after the National Marine Fisheries Service removed the gray whale from the endangered species list. This petition, which was supported by the federal government, drew immediate condemnation from environmental and animal rights organizations around the world. The condemnation spawned protests that eventually escalated into an open conflict on the Makah Reservation and in Neah Bay, where the hunt was conducted. The controversy and the issues surrounding it drew interest from news media from around the world. It became one of the most heavily covered mainstream media events involving Native Americans in the 1990s.

The news media in the United States is extremely powerful and influential. By dictating and defining the information we receive they have the power to shape our perceptions of reality. According to Rojecki, "news stories are not so much reported as made, the world not chronicled but selectively constructed from facts and interpretations" (Rojecki 1999, p.16). The news media power rests on its claims of objectivity. However, many studies have found this to be untrue (see Rojecki 1999; Gitlin 1980; Gans 1978; Tuchman 1972). Ideological concerns and economic considerations are two of the highest priorities of news agencies. These priorities dictate the internal policies of news organizations and influence the way an event or conflict is conveyed to the general public.

Journalists use "frames" to present stories that are easily comprehensible to the reader. Through the process of framing, events and situations are interpreted and repackaged by the reporter. Framing requires the journalist to act as a filter, deciding

which information to include and exclude. This decision making process is influenced by cultural biases, journalistic routine, and the policies of news organizations.

News coverage of the Makah controversy was continuous from May of 1995 through February of 2000. The *Seattle Times*, the region's largest newspaper, provided the most in-depth coverage of the conflict. I argue that the *Seattle Times* used two separate framing devices to shape the story: "Personality" frames and "issue" frames. Personality frames presented the character, motivations, and personalities of the groups and individuals involved in the conflict. Issue frames focused on the technical and legal issues. The use of these two framing devices provided opportunities for reporters to adhere to ideological and economic obligations.

The core issues of the Makah whale hunt are treaty rights, gray whale population numbers, and the cultural/subsistence needs of the Makah tribe. The media's ideological priorities influenced the *Seattle Times* issue framing. The issue frames appear to be in favor of the Makah's right to conduct the whale hunt. These frames remain consistent throughout the five years of coverage.

Personality framing is used by journalists to reinforce and legitimize a newspaper's positions on the issues. The personality frames also gives journalists the opportunity to capture the reader's attention by presenting an interesting story, in this case one of intrigue and conflict. This was accomplished by marginalizing the anti-whaling protest groups as radicals with a reputation for conducting violent demonstrations. These characterizations allowed the reporters to marginalize the protesters' positions on the issues by discrediting them based on their character. This enabled the *Seattle Times* to maintain an institutional and ideological bias of support for the federal, local, and tribal governments while simultaneously meeting their own economic and financial needs.

Literature Review

Todd Gitlin, in *The Whole World is Watching* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) analyzed the press coverage of the Students for a Democratic Society, an influential protest movement established in the 1960s. Gitlin argued that media organizations, motivated by their own economic and political self-interests, presented a biased view of reality. He demonstrated how this bias is presented and how it alienates social opposition movements. Groups or movements that pose a challenge to the core values of the capitalist-democratic institutions in the United States are typically delegitimized as radicals and extremists.

Andrew Rojecki's *Silencing the Opposition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999) demonstrates how social movements rely on the news media. Rojecki argues that social movements constantly battle to be portrayed favorably in the media. A favorable portrayal can legitimize the movement and potentially attract new members. Reliance on the press, however, places social movements at the mercy of the news organizations. Native tribes and animal-rights groups often find themselves in this delicate position, marginalized by the media as radical outsiders.

The power of the news media rests on its claim that it is, above all else, dedicated to providing an objective analysis of events. But studies have repeatedly cited the news industry's failure to live up to these expectations (Rojecki 1999; Gitlin 1980; Gans 1980; Tuchman 1972). American news organizations are, above all else, businesses. They are ideological allies of capitalist-democratic institutions in the United States. The most obvious and powerful institution is the United States government. This alliance influences the way news organizations are managed and, in turn, affects the editorial process. The news media's tendency to legitimize the status quo is one way that this influence is manifested.

It is in the best interest of news organizations to serve the elites of the capitalist-democratic power structure in the United States. They achieve this goal by shaping and defining notions of acceptability within the mainstream society. Serious threats to this paradigm, usually in the form of social opposition movements, are traditionally ignored or marginalized by the press. They are commonly depicted as radicals, fueled by narrow self-interests that lie outside the mainstream, who utilize severe and bizarre tactics to achieve their goal regardless of the cost to others.

Todd Gitlin found that the media gives serious attention only to the more “moderate” movements that call for incremental change. Gitlin’s finding reinforces the Gramscian notion of hegemony, which “is the name given to a ruling class’s domination through ideology” (Gitlin 1980, p. 9). A threat to the power structure “serves the interests of the elites as long as it is ‘relative,’ as long as it does not violate core hegemonic values or contribute too heavily to radical critique or social unrest” (Gitlin 1980, p.12). The process of media delegitimization also applies to groups who live by different social and cultural values, namely religious organizations or small ethnic communities. Native American tribes and environmental organizations have each found themselves marginalized.

How does the economic and political elite exert such influence in an industry that supposedly prides itself on independence and objectivity? The media is not usually controlled through overt intimidation, although this does happen. For example, on several occasions during the Vietnam War President Lyndon Johnson silenced opposition to the war for “national security” reasons. He also threatened news organizations with imposed FCC regulations if they failed to comply (Woodward, 1999). Usually the influence is less overt.

The owners and managers of news organizations, as business people, are directly allied with the corporate economy. However, reporters and editors are also tied to the system. The influence of a news organization's owner and management can be found "in the process of recruitment and promotion, through policy, reward, and the sort of social osmosis. . . The editors and reporters they hire are generally upper-middle class in origin. . . they tend to share the *core* hegemonic assumptions of their class" (Gitlin 1980, p.260). Reporter bias is usually not purposeful. Bias is cultural and class-oriented and, regardless of attempts to remain objective, the subconscious adheres to the upper-middle class value system. This ideological alliance influences the way stories are reported. However, influence can also be imposed through negative sanctions. Reporters who get "out of line" and challenge the system can find themselves reassigned to undesirable agency divisions or they can find themselves out of a job.

Framing

Reporters are able to marginalize, delegitimize or legitimize groups through the process of "framing." Frames "organize the world both for journalists who report it and . . . for those of us who rely on their reports" (Gitlin, 1980 p 7) Framing is essentially a process of selection. A journalist "necessarily selects facts that support a particular view of the world; that is, it provides us with a (perhaps unconscious) bounded view of the world, a "frame" (Rojecki, 1999 p. 16). Frames provide a means for the reporter to relay complex information to the reader in an efficient and manageable way. Framing also gives the reader an opportunity to understand, to a certain degree, the situation or event. This selection process is influenced by the journalist's allegiances, personal opinions, and cultural biases. For example, American reporters have typically portrayed the customs and traditions of a Native American tribes as savage, exotic, or as primitive superstitions rather than presenting them as legitimate and viable (see Weston 1996).

Leaders of social movements often find themselves in a precarious situation in regards to framing because they rely on the press to get their message out. Many social leaders believe that favorable frames will enhance their public appeal and increase their numbers. “[T]he two most important dimensions of the problem all political movements face [is] finding a place on the media agenda and filling it with a credible and persuasive image” (Rojecki 1999, p.18). Social movements usually face a difficult uphill battle. In order to merit press coverage, many groups must resort to behavior that is easily characterized in the media as outlandish or radical. Simultaneously, social movements must prove to the public that they and their goals are legitimate. Movement leaders can emphasize their technical expertise or moral authority. In addition they must project a united front, emphasizing strength and unity within their own ranks and hope for small victories along the way that will prove to the public that their cause is winnable (Rojecki, 1999).

The press can easily thwart these goals. To begin with, many of the tactics used to gain attention can be depicted as “extreme” in news accounts. Arrests are easily painted as deviant and conflict is easily portrayed simply as nothing more than an act of violence. Stories that emphasize conflict or deviance obscure the opposition’s message by focusing on the event as a unique incident. “[N]ews concerns the event, not the underlying condition; the person, not the group; *conflict*, not consensus. . .the archetypal news story is a crime story, and an opposition movement is ordinarily, routinely, and unthinkingly treated as some sort of crime” (Gitlin, 1980 p. 28).

The press relies heavily on individual spokespersons to symbolize a movement. The expertise or moral standing of the individual, once questioned or proven false, can destroy a movement’s goals. “If we judge a messenger as naive, reckless, or unrepresentative of mainstream thinking, we will tend to discount the message” (Rojecki

1999, p. 25). Personality framing is crucial in helping to sway the public opinion of movements or individuals that challenge the status quo.

Native Americans and the Press

Native American tribes rely on the media to portray a realistic and credible image, free of distortion or sensationalism. Groups that mobilize and challenge the status quo, such as the American Indian Movement, can find themselves in a difficult situation. Marginalization in the media is nothing new for Native tribes. Since the time of European contact, Native Americans have found themselves on the receiving end of frames that intentionally or unintentionally marginalized them.

Benjamin Harris was the first independent newspaper publisher in the colonies. His newspaper, *Publick Occurrences, Both Foreign and Domestic*, was published in Boston in 1690. Only one issue was published. In it, Harris presented two types of Indians: "Good" Christian converts and degraded bloodthirsty marauders. There was no middle ground. Both of these stereotypic images depicted Native Americans as "outsiders," with the brutal savage posing an overt challenge to the colonists' cultural, economic, and social norms. Native tribes and their cultural value systems were interpreted, repackaged and sold to the public through this personality framing. This practice reflected and reinforced a myriad of stereotypes that proved devastating to tribes. Harris' "us versus them" ideology. . . began a pattern of positive and negative stereotypes of Native Americans that continued well into the twentieth century" (Coward and Weston 1996, p.25). From the time of Harris' publication, newspaper reporting involving Native Americans has been rife with inconsistencies, inaccuracies, sensationalism and, many times, outright lies and fabrications.

John Coward found that newspaper reporting during the eras of the 1800s had particular biases. The majority of 19th century American journalists subscribed fully to

the doctrine of western cultural superiority, Manifest Destiny, and the inevitable and necessary extermination of tribal societies. Like today, journalists were allied ideologically with the Eastern political and economic establishment. Coward claims that "Sensationalism furthered the ideology of civilization, making it plain to expansion-minded Americans that Indians had to be exterminated or removed for the task of nation-building to continue" (Coward 1996, p. 29).

Many journalists saw themselves as active participants contributing to the realization of Manifest Destiny. They captivated readers with reports of violence, treachery and mystery. Reporters shaped public sentiment and often created a war frenzy. They also influenced troop deployments and the distribution of goods from Eastern factories and the War Department. Local store owners and traders would reward reporters for increasing the deployment of troops in their area.

For many reporters their "imagination was often more important than [their] accuracy" (Coward 1996, p.132). The journalist's own heroism as well as his or her witnessing of heroic acts by troops or settlers could bring instant fame. Reports of this nature were often totally fictional and provided the foundation for the western penny novels that became popular in the later 19th Century. Sensationalized accounts were encouraged by editors because they boosted sales.

Tribes were declining by the late 1870s. With the overt threat to western expansion diminished, news accounts began to change. Native Americans who adopted white ways or religion were lauded. Conversions were framed as reaffirmations of the cultural superiority of white America. In Nebraska, press coverage of the Ponca Removal "foreshadowed an important break in anti-Indian ideology. . .the Poncas soon became idealized Indians, identified as progressive people on the path from savagery to civilization" (Coward and Weston 1998, p. 31).

When tribes were perceived as threatening, the tone and framing of reporting became negative. For example, the “progressive Indian” personality frames were replaced by the brutal savage stereotypes for reporting of the Ghost Dance, which spread in the 1890s. Eastern journalists “traveled to the reservations in search of war. When no war was forthcoming, they filled their columns with speculation and the promise of Indian violence” (Coward and Weston 1996, p.32). Once again, sales skyrocketed when these reports hit Eastern newsstands.

Little has changed in 20th century reporting. Mary Weston, in *Native Americans in the News*, found that marginalized framing and stereotyping remains a major factor of reporting when it comes to Native Americans. Tribes have been in a nearly constant state of flux throughout the 20th Century. Federal policy underwent drastic overhaul on three separate occasions (Reorganization in the 1930s, termination in the 1950s, and self-determination beginning in the late 1960s). Each time, press coverage shifted with the Federal government’s policy objectives, repackaging and reshaping tribal concerns in ways that did not reflect reality. These issue frames created, reaffirmed and perpetuated stereotypes of Native Americans

Press coverage still reflects and shapes mainstream public sentiment. “Indians have been patronized, romanticized, stereotyped, and ignored by most of the mainstream America. The twentieth century press has been complicit in this. . .” (Weston 1998, p.163). Mary Weston found that, in the last 25 years, more subtle methods of framing and stereotyping have surfaced.

Stereotyping does not depend solely on the use of crude language or factual inaccuracies. It also comes from the choice of stories to report, the way stories are organized and written, the phrases used in headlines. . . Often [journalists] failed to add the layers of historical and cultural context that would truly explain the meanings

of events (Weston 1996, p.163).

Although she concludes that the situation has improved, stereotyping is still rampant in press coverage.

Contemporary Native American Framing

Many subtle devices are used to frame stories, including the language and tone of a story, where it is placed, the sources used, the number of quotes and where they are placed.

The content and frame of a story depends largely on the story type. Articles are framed according to two different types of stories: "Hard news" or "Human Interest." The former is usually found in the front or "A" section of the newspaper. "Hard News" stories generally emphasize conflict, violence, and events or situations considered most important to the target reading public. "Human interest" stories usually appears in the "Arts," "Living," or "Culture" sections of the newspaper. These articles focus on cultural, art, travel, and information that, by virtue of its novelty, is considered to be generally interesting to readers.

Gail Landsman conducted a study that addressed the significance of story type in the coverage of a Native American tribe. Landsman analyzed the media coverage of a protracted land rights conflict involving Mohawk tribal members and the surrounding white community in upstate New York. The tribe exercised treaty rights by claiming land. This action challenged the authority of the local and state governments and the existing power structure in the surrounding community. The tribe was unable to legitimize their position, in part because they were ignored by the press for over a year. The conflict first gained media attention when a violent encounter resulted in one death. "The shootings at Ganienkah, and not the community itself (or the reasons for its founding), are the story. . .the story is not about political conflict but about crime"

(Landsman 1987, p.103). These “hard news” stories, placed on or near the front pages, focused on crime and deviance. The articles depicted the Native community as violent and its members as irrational.

Eventually the violence subsided and the press coverage decreased, but the conflict was not resolved. Landsman discovered that subsequent coverage presented the conflict from a tribal point of view. “The image of the aggressor has shifted to the white population. . .The Indians had now become the romantic underdogs” (ibid., 105). These new stories appeared in the “human interest” sections and “portray[ed] the Indians as harmless, doing their spring planting and celebrating ‘a festival of seeds’” (ibid., 108). This is in marked contrast to the earlier conflict-oriented coverage that portrayed the Mohawk as aggressors. This transition emphasizes the ability of the press to swiftly change the complexion of a story by altering simple framing techniques and story-type.

Another study conducted in 1997 found that language plays a major role in framing and stereotyping. Cynthia Lou Coleman researched the press coverage of a conflict in Wisconsin involving the Lac Court Oreilles band of the Chippewa Nation and a mining company proposing to mine in an area protected by treaty rights. She discovered that coverage of the conflict was replete with “warlike metaphors.” She claims that “by framing the mining issue in battle terms, a powerful metaphor emerged: That of historic wars between Indians and the U.S. Government” (Coleman 1998, p.184). By using language selectively to frame the story, the press “delegitimized the mining opponents, painting them as irrational outsiders” (ibid., p.181). Language frames distort, trivialize and fictionalize the issue and/or the participants. In this case, the press used language to emphasize the past and ignore contemporary realities.

Language bias also exists in the way the words or quotes are presented. The use of quotation marks around a word or italicizing a key phrase or concept trivializes the

issue and raises questions regarding its validity. During the 1960's anti-war movement, Todd Gitlin found that press organizations often marginalized the anti-war movement through the "delegitimizing use of quotation marks around terms like *peace march*" (Gitlin 1980, p.28). Italics and quotation marks rhetorically question the legitimacy or truth of the claim or issue.

The way a story is read and interpreted can largely depend on the authority of sources and quotes and how they are used. This is especially true in conflict reporting. An over-reliance on sources from one side destroys objectivity. Herbert Gans found that source choice is the most significant factor shaping news coverage. Sources and journalists are interdependent, each seeking access to the other. Journalists rely on sources that have proven to be efficient and reliable. "Reporters who have only a short time to gather information must therefore attempt to obtain the most suitable news from the fewest number of sources as quickly as possible, and with the least strain on the organization's budget" (Gans 1978, p.128). The demand to reach deadlines often forces journalists to rely on a single source. Therefore, journalists must choose their sources carefully.

Gans found that journalists favor sources who are in positions of authority, most notably officials in government agencies or elected officials. "They are assumed to be more trustworthy, if only because they can't afford to lie openly; they are also more persuasive because their facts and opinions are official" (ibid., 130). Reliance on elected officials occurs because they carry the weight of authority and the legitimacy of position. This presumption of legitimacy places anti-establishment political movements at an immediate disadvantage. Not only must they prove that they and their arguments are credible, they must also disprove the credibility of government sources. This

disadvantage also applies to Native American tribes or interest groups that often find themselves at odds with federal, local, and state governments.

Cynthia Lou Coleman found that source considerations severely hampered the efforts of the Lac Court Oreilles officials and tribal members to oppose the government and mining interests. In this coverage, government sources “constituted roughly one-half of all sources quoted. . . mining officials made up 16 percent. . . whereas Indians accounted for only 9 percent” (Coleman 1996, p.184) of all sources quoted.

Marginalizing and stereotype creation and perpetuation in the news media has resulted in tragic consequences for Native tribes in the United States. As tribes challenge the government and other groups for treaty rights, the power of the press to define an issue and shape the outcomes increases. Since the new era of self-determination dawned in the 1960s, many tribes have become more vigilant in pursuing the legal recognition of their treaty rights. Inevitably tribes have found themselves at odds with state, local and federal governments and a myriad of special interest groups, from property rights activists to rock-climbing enthusiasts.

The Whale Hunt

The whale hunt conducted by the Makah tribe was passionately protested by animal-rights and environmental activist organizations. This presents an unique conflict. Both Natives and environmentalists are usually considered to lie outside of mainstream society. Tribes often find themselves at odds with government officials over treaty rights, and environmental protesters often protest government action or inaction in regards to the environment. The prevalence of this assumed alliance in mainstream popular culture are included in two works: Phil Deloria’s *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) and Shepard Krech’s *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999).

Environmentalists and animal rights activists have adopted or created slogans, positions, and rhetoric that relies heavily on Native Americans as symbols of innate spiritual purity and environmental wisdom. Public relations campaigns sponsored by environmental groups tend to carry a heavy dose of Native American imagery. The prevalence of these images and the popularity of the environmental movement lead many to believe that environmentalists and Native tribes are natural allies. The “Pollution: It’s a Crying Shame” campaign, sponsored by Keep America Beautiful, Inc., became popular in the 1970s. These advertisements are among the most famous examples of Native American stereotyping in an environmental ad campaign. Native cultures are often redefined and stereotyped based on the perception that Native Americans inherently adhere to the goals and rhetoric of the environmental movement. Krech claims that tribes, when acting contrary to this image, have “been eagerly condemned, accused of not acting as Indians should” (Krech 1999, p.224).

The Makah whale hunt places environmentalists and animal rights activists at odds with the Makah tribe’s desire to revive their traditional culture. The tribe’s proposal to resume whaling drew immediate condemnation which led to protests and violent conflict. This controversy contradicts many popular perceptions of Native Americans. The news media often emphasizes contradictions in order to present a new and interesting story that will attract readers. News coverage of the Makah whale hunt emphasizes these perceived contradictions.

Makah History

In order to understand the nature of the conflict, it is necessary to understand the importance of whaling to Makah history and culture. The Makah reservation was created in 1855 with the signing of the Treaty of Neah Bay. It is located in a remote area on the extreme Northwestern coast of Washington. The Makah tribe was first recognized as a single unified tribe, both internally and externally, with the signing of the Treaty of Neah Bay in 1855. The tribe originally consisted of a loose system of five separate winter villages (Ba'ada, Dia, Tseuss, Wyacht, and Ozette). Ceremonies, mostly potlatch, give-aways, and social festivals characterized life during the winter. Seasonal migrations dictated life in the villages. In the fall, the tribe moved to the interior, lived in many small fishing camps and concentrated on salmon runs. In the spring and summer, the inhabitants of the five winter villages moved to three fishing villages along the coast to fish for halibut and, most importantly, hunt gray and humpback whales.

For centuries the tribe relied almost solely on the marine economy for survival. Whaling figured most prominently. Oral tradition states that the Makah were created when a star fell from the sky and united with animals already inhabiting the area. The first hunter was a Thunderbird who, following creation of Makah:

Descended from the Olympic Mountains and grasped in its mighty talons an enormous whale, which it lifted bodily from the ocean. On wings so powerful they produced "peals of thunder," the eaglelike creature carried its prey back to the highest peak and devoured its flesh. In this way, the Thunderbird showed the Makah that they could capture whales for their use. (Collins 1996, p.180).

Tradition calls for the hunt to be led by a "household chief" aided by a team of eight men, each selected to perform a specific task. Each hunter "went through the ritual search for power and were taught the requisite prayers and techniques by older relatives. .

.whalers prepared for the hunt by seeking a guardian spirit through an ordeal of fasting, bathing in hidden spots, and roaming through the woods sleepless for many days and nights” (Colson 1953, p.175-176).

The first hunt of the year called for special ceremonies. The hunt was intense, dangerous and required extensive training and knowledge.

The whaling canoe had to be paddled alongside the whale so that, just as the whale submerged, the whaler could thrust the heavy harpoon deep in behind its flipper. . .As the whale resurfaced, other canoes could move in to implant additional harpoon lines and floats. Finally, when the whale could no longer escape by diving, it was dispatched with a long lance and towed to shore...(McMillan 1999, p.18).

Whaling provided up to 85% of the total annual food supply in some villages (ibid., 137). Whaling also had great social meaning and value. It allowed the hunter to provide for his family and relatives with supplies of meat, oil, and blubber. The excess he was able to trade with other tribes or redistribute in winter give-aways and potlatch ceremonies. For the hunter, redistribution “was regarded as proof that he had acquired a powerful guardian spirit. . .and he was therefore endowed with supernatural power as well as material possessions” (Colson 1953, p.5).

The Makah villages were arguably the most powerful group in a coastal trading economy. Trading within the tribe was common and was sometimes accompanied by tension and conflict. The signing of the Treaty of Neah Bay in 1855 opened the area to white settlement. The subsequent flood of settlers brought many new challenges to the tribe. At first, the Makah were able to take advantage of their expertise by expanding their trading base and reaping the economic benefits. Soon they found their monopoly on the marine economy challenged by the growing white population aided by western technology. White whalers, seal hunters, and fishermen, aided by western technology,

poured into the area. Tribal whaling was hit particularly hard. "After 1850 the number of whales inhabiting pacific waters diminished and, by 1870 that resource was of only a minor significance" (Collins, p.180).

The demise of whaling forced the Makah to rely on other resources. Following the demise of whaling, the tribe turned to seal hunting and, aided by new technologies, soon reaped the benefits of their expertise. "In March 1894, an Indian inspector considered it "doubtful whether a given number of whites can be found who earn a better living" (ibid., 185). The affluence of the Makah drew more white seal hunters in search of a comparable income, resulting in severe over-hunting. The federal government, fearing the extinction of the area's seal species, took steps to restrict sealing. "[T]he federal government banned the killing, capturing, or hunting of pelagic seals by all U.S. citizens except native hunters using traditional weapons" (ibid., 187). The requirement to use strictly traditional methods forced the Makah to abandon the technology they had adopted. Many Makah sealers had their vessels and hunting tools confiscated by government officials.

The Makah turned to another portion of their traditional marine economy: halibut. Unfortunately for the tribe, white fishermen once again followed their lead. Like whaling and seal hunting, the boom of the halibut industry resulted in a near extinction of the species. Once again the Federal government stepped in and, in 1933, set severe restrictions on fishing. The enforcement of the new regulations were extremely biased against the tribe. "American fishermen from Puget Sound who possessed large boats navigable in inclement weather often exhausted the quota established for Cape Flattery before Makah fishermen, in their smaller craft, got out of the harbor" (Collins, p.190). The halibut industry was tapped out by the 1950s.

From that time until the present, the Makah have diversified their economy where possible. The salmon industry, including canneries, took much of the slack left by the demise of the traditional economy. The tribe utilizes the marketing of traditional arts and crafts, jobs provided by the federal government, and seasonal agricultural harvests in the interior of the state. Forestry has provided yet another outlet for the tribe, but the timber companies are owned by non-native corporations. "Once the timber is cut, they will be left without the supplementary wages upon which most families in the tribe depend for their living throughout the winter months" (Colson 1953, p.34).

The economic shock from the loss of whaling was significant. More devastating, however, were the psychological effects from the loss of culture. The loss was so severe that, "[t]hose born since 1910 have never seen any part of the whaling complex. It was then the Makah saw their old life vanishing and turned towards the white man's life under the pressure of edicts from their agents and the necessity of discovering new ways of making a living after the ban on fur sealing and the disappearance of the whale" (ibid., 176).

Things have started to change. Efforts to restore cultural pride and heritage in Native communities took root on a national level in the 1960's. This movement did not miss Makah. For the tribe, "[t]raditional culture patterns, such as relearning Makah language and culture, ritual bathing, [were embodied in] activities such as the Makah program for the revitalization of the traditional culture and language, Makah Day, and community support for the tourist industry" (ibid., p.424).

A major step along the road to reclaiming and restoring cultural heritage was realized when a winter storm exposed the remains an ancient settlement at Ozette in 1970. The tribe moved to preserve the site when it became evident that hikers and

tourists were taking remains for souvenirs. "Ozette had become a highly charged site of memory because of its historic association with a particular aspect of Makah experience with colonization" (McMillan 1999, p.118) The tribe, with help from archeologists from Washington State University, embarked on an extensive excavation and preservation. The archeological value of the excavation was unparalleled in the area. It came to be known as "The Pompeii of the Northwest Coast".

The site was measured in other ways by the tribe. The discovery led to a massive cultural preservation project in 1979. This project eventually evolved into what is now known as the Makah Cultural and Research Center (MCRC). It is "reputed to be one of the finest tribal museums/cultural centers in the U.S. and normally hosts between 15 to 22 million visitors to the reservation each year" (Erickson 1999, p.561). The center is involved in an active preservation and cultural reinvigoration programs to make the culture applicable to modern life. The MCRC "collects oral history and material remains of the past, and it also serves as a tool for encouraging remembering and encouraging the continuation of culturally significant practices" (ibid., 573-574).

Efforts to restore cultural pride and heritage have begun to reverse the trends of low self-esteem among individuals and the community as a whole. This is due in large part to the feeling among tribal members that, for the first time in over a century, the tribe owns and is able to shape their own history and culture. The resurgence in cultural pride has "provided a reassurance of Makah separateness from whites and solidarity as Indian people. . .renewed interest in the group's history expresses a motivation to restore and maintain community and self-cohesion" (Fleischer 1996, p.426). The tribe saw a chance to put this knowledge to use when the Gray Whale was removed from the endangered species list in 1994. The species had experienced an astounding rebound in

population numbers since the 1920s, causing many environmentalists to view it as a perfect example of success through ecological revitalization.

The Sea-Shepherd Conservation Society, a pro-active animal rights and staunch anti-whaling activist organization took the lead in protesting the hunt. Sea Shepherd is a private non-profit non-governmental organization based in Marina Del-Rey, California. Sea Shepherd is almost fully member-supported and staffed by volunteers. They have a five member board of directors, with Canadian author Farley Mowatt acting as “honorary chairperson.”

Sea Shepherd was founded in 1977 by Paul Watson. Captain Watson was one of the original founders of Greenpeace, which was initiated in 1971. He formed Sea Shepherd because he felt that “the original goals of the organization [Greenpeace] were being compromised” (www.seashepherd.org). While affiliated with Greenpeace, Watson led some of the most confrontational and revolutionary campaigns against whaling ships to date. His tactics involved placing small craft between whaling ships and whales, and sabotaging whaling vessels. He carried this form of activism with him to Sea Shepherd. Members have disabled and sunk whaling ships by ramming and have also foiled many hunts in Japan, Iceland, and Norway.

The Sea Shepherd fleet, which its members refer to as “Neptune’s Navy,” consists of three major vessels and a number of other small craft, namely Zodiac inflatables, jet-ski’s and “Sea-Doo’s”. Sea Shepherd used two of their ships in the Makah Campaign. The most notable was *The Sirenian*, a 1955 U.S. Coast Guard patrol boat. With a top speed of 28 knots, it is small enough to patrol smaller bays, such as Neah Bay. The other vessel was *The Mirage*, a two-person submarine built in England in 1988 for the Norwegian Navy. The submarine specializes in the surveillance of small ports. It was built in England for the Norwegian Navy. Sea Shepherd painted the sub in the pattern of

an orca whale for the Makah campaign in the hopes that it would scare away the migrating gray whales.

Members of Sea Shepherd are quick to point out that they only seek to interfere in illegal whaling. Any whaling venture not sanctioned by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) is considered illegal. Sea Shepherd claims legal authority to actively enforce the IWC ban on whaling by virtue of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 37/7 drafted in 1982. This resolution, also known as the "World Charter for Nature," calls for groups and individuals to "ensure that the objectives and requirements of the present charter are met" (UN Res 37/7). It states that groups can legally become "involved in enforcement of international laws, regulations, and treaties when there is no enforcement by national governments or international regulatory organizations due to absence of jurisdiction or lack of political will" (UN Res 37/7). The international whaling ban can be exempted if groups can show adequate cultural and/or subsistence needs. Sea Shepherd claims that Makah tribal officials failed to prove this need. Protesters also contend the resolution passed by the IWC did not specifically permit Makah tribal officials to conduct the whale hunt. Based on these conclusions, they view Makah whaling as an illegal action.

Sea Shepherd has been joined by a number of other organizations, most notably Progressive Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) and the Humane Society of North America. PAWS is a non-profit animal advocacy organization based in Lynwood, Washington. They run an animal shelter which promotes adoption of abandoned animals and a wildlife center, which rehabilitates wounded and sick animals and prepares them for release back into the wild. They also have an advocacy department that specializes in public education and awareness. They typically are pro-active in animal-rights through

demonstrations, letter writing campaigns, and phone banks. They also have resorted to legal action in pursuit of animal-rights.

Noticeably absent from the protests have been two of the largest environmental organizations, the Sierra Club and Greenpeace. Both groups remain neutral throughout the conflict, preferring to focus their anti-whaling efforts on commercial ventures in Japan, Norway, and Iceland.

The IWC held its annual meeting on June 24, 1996 in Aberdeen, Scotland. As expected Makah tribal officials, backed by the Clinton Administration, submitted a petition of exemption from the global whaling ban. The tribe faced opposition from member delegations of the IWC and various animal-rights and environmental organizations. Two tribal elders who opposed the hunt were also present and testified against the tribal government. They claimed the tribal vote, which passed by a 76-28 count, was unconstitutional because it was not open to all tribal members. Under pressure of the opposition, the United States delegation withdrew the petition, but planned on submitting it again the following year.

The Clinton Administration supported the Makah whaling efforts. However, the administration's support was subject to congressional opposition led by congressman Jack Metcalf, a Republican from Washington. Metcalf allied himself with Sea Shepherd and other groups opposing the hunt. The Metcalf alliance with these organizations is considered odd because he is a staunch conservative who usually finds himself at odds with environmental groups. Metcalf claims that his interest in the issue is rooted in his affinity for whales, which was cultivated in his youth in the Puget Sound area.

Metcalf testified against tribal officials at the 1996 IWC meeting in Aberdeen and personally delivered a letter opposing the hunt, signed by 50 members of congress, to the 1997 IWC meeting in Monaco. The letter was intended to influence the IWC and

prevent the organization from granting the Makah tribe permission to hunt whales. The letter and Metcalf's personal appearance failed to influence IWC delegations to oppose the Makah whale hunt. On October 23, 1997 the IWC passed a resolution allowing the Makah tribe to conduct limited subsistence hunting of gray whales. The tribe was limited to hunting four whales annually over a period of five years.

Jack Metcalf also attempt to prevent the hunt through legal measures. Metcalf, along with Makah tribal elder and anti-whaling protester Alberta Thompson, and various environmental organizations, including Sea Shepherd, filed a lawsuit in U.S. District court. The lawsuit charged that the United States Government, namely the National Marine Fisheries Service, failed to conduct an accurate environmental assessment report. The lawsuit was eventually dismissed by the U.S. District Court.

From October of 1997 through May of 1999, the Makah tribe prepared to conduct the whale hunt. They were reintroduced to the technical aspects of whale hunting by members of Alaskan whaling tribes. They also prepared culturally by resurrecting long-dormant whaling prayers and songs. The whaling crew also held practice sessions in Neah Bay. All of this was conducted in the midst of protesters who made their presence known by patrolling Neah Bay in large and small ships and

Table I: Timeline of Important Events

- 1993.....Makah Tribe begins hunting pelagic seals, for the first time in decades, effectively reasserting mammal hunting treaty rights.
- 1994.....Gray Whale is removed from endangered species list
- May 1995.....Makah Tribal Officials submit request to U.S State Department, asking permission to reinstate hunting of gray whales. Clinton Administration eventually agrees to support tribal request.
- June 24-28, 1996.....Annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission is held in Aberdeen, Scotland. The U.S. delegation submits Makah request. Tribal and U.S. officials decide to withdraw request in the wake of international criticism. Washington Congressman Jack Metcalf testifies against tribe.
- October 18, 1997.....U.S. Rep. Jack Metcalf (R-Wash.) files a lawsuit in U.S. District court to prevent Makah whale hunt.
- October 20-24, 1997....Annual meeting of International Whaling Commission is held in Monaco. The U.S. delegation resubmits the Makah request. The IWC narrowly passes a resolution allowing the tribe to conduct gray whale hunting based on subsistence and cultural needs. They are allowed to kill four whales a year. Tribe begins preparations for hunt in the midst of condemnation and protests from local and international animal rights, environmental and anti-whaling organizations..
- August, 1998.....Tribal officials fear that the annual Makah Days festival, a cultural celebration, will be disrupted by violent anti-whaling protests. This fear prompts Washington Governor Gary Locke to activate the National Guard. The festival carries on without incident.

- October 2, 1998.....Tribal officials sign tribal whaling permit, signifying the beginning of the first “official” Makah whaling season in over 70 years.
- October 31, 1998.....Open confrontation between tribal members and anti-whaling protesters leads to arrest of four anti-whaling protesters by Makah Tribal Police Department. A Zodiac inflatable belonging to the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society is confiscated.
- Spring, 1999.....Gray whale southward migration begins
- May 17, 1999.....Makah whalers successfully conduct the first tribal whale hunt in over 70 years.

Methodology

In order to provide the necessary evidence to support my arguments, I have conducted a content analysis of stories dealing with the Makah whale hunt. The *Seattle Times* was chosen because it is one of the largest newspapers in the northwestern United States and it carried the most extensive in-depth coverage of the Makah whale hunt. The *Seattle Times* is distributed in the state of Washington and the surrounding areas. It is distributed nationally in select venues and can be found daily on the Internet (www.seattletimes.com).

All articles published from May of 1995 through December 31, 1999 are included in this study. In all, there are 101 articles critiqued. The majority of articles were obtained via the Internet through Lexus-Nexus Academic Universe. I traveled to Seattle in order to critique the placement and presentation of the articles. This portion of research was conducted at the newspaper holdings department of the University of Washington Suzzalo Library.

I have divided the coverage into five chronological phases. Each phase contains a specific event or events and has a distinct pattern of reporting. The phases have been chosen based on four events that caused coverage to increase significantly. Dividing the conflict into phases allows me to isolate the differences and similarities in framing and demonstrate how framing changed over time. These phases also make the material more manageable and allow me to present the findings more efficiently and effectively.

The first phase begins with the first article published on May 25, 1995. This phase ends at the close of the first IWC conference on June 27, 1996. The second phase ends with the IWC's October 24, 1997 decision to draft a resolution granting permission for the Makah tribe to conduct the whale hunt. The third phase is characterized by escalating tensions leading up to the annual Makah Days festival. The tensions

culminated in Governor Gary Locke's decision to activate the Washington National Guard. This phase ran from October 25, 1997 through September 6, 1998. The fourth phase covers the first "official" modern whaling season, which began on October 2, 1998. The season ended unsuccessfully for tribal hunters on December 24, 1998. The next phase covers the six months leading up to the successful hunt, the whaling crew's successful kill, and the protester and community reaction following the hunt. This phase covers all of 1999.

The articles are critiqued according to two prevailing framing devices: "Personality" frames and "issue" frames. The "issue" frames are devices by which the issues are presented. I have defined three main issues or criteria that conditioned the IWC permission resolution:

1. The Makah treaty rights as defined in the Treaty of Neah Bay. The tribe signed the treaty with representatives of the United States Government in 1855. In article four the treaty states:
2. Gray whale population estimates. The estimates range from 19,000 to 23,000. The International Whaling Commission posit that limited hunting by the Makah tribe would not endanger the population numbers.
3. Cultural/subsistence requirement. The IWC allows limited whale hunting based on a significant cultural and/or subsistence need of indigenous groups. Siberian and Alaskan tribes are permitted to hunt whales based on this requirement.

The tribe and the anti-whaling protesters held opposing views on these issues. I have stated the positions of both sides in order to demonstrate the biases of the *Seattle Times* in framing the issues.

The personality frames are devices by which the character, personality, or nature of a group or individual are portrayed. Personality frames highlight motivation, morality,

and rationale of the group or individual's decisions. The three personality frames that were constant throughout the five years of coverage are:

Marginalization: It is necessary for a group or an argument to be considered rational, legitimate, and representative of a significant number of the population. The easiest way to discredit a message is to discredit the messenger. This is usually accomplished by portraying a group as violent, radical, illogical and having narrow goals.

Factionalism: In order for a group to be considered legitimate it must demonstrate that it is united in its cause. A display of internal dissent can be perceived as a definite weakness and serve to delegitimize a group or its positions.

Victimization: Portraying one group as a victim can potentially generate sympathy. This applies to victimization by a specific group or groups or systemic and historic victimization.

I have stated the positions and beliefs of each side in order to present the widest possible scope of arguments. This paradigm serves as a gauge that allows me to judge the biases of article framing. The positions of each side have been gathered from Internet web sites and partisan publications. The Makah tribal viewpoints have been gathered from the tribal web site (www.Makah.com) and other Native American publications. These include *Native Americas*, *News From Indian Country*, and *Indian Country Today*. The Protester point of view is gathered from the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society web site (www.seashepherd.org); Environmental News Service (www.ens.com), the anti-whaling web page www.stopwhalekill.org and journals *Earth First' Journal*, *Mother Earth News*, *Satya*, *Animal Alert News*, and *Ocean Realm Magazine*

Chapter 1

In this chapter I present the pro and anti-whaling positions and identify the core issues around which the controversy revolved. This will establish criterion to judge the degree of bias in the *Seattle Times* framing of the issues.

The Makah tribe started reclaiming their mammal-hunting treaty rights in 1993, two years prior to the whaling request. Tribal officials, citing the fourth clause of the Treaty of Neah Bay, claimed the tribe reserved the right to reinstate seal hunting. Tribal officials invoked the same clause in the whaling request. There were no protests by environmental organizations at this time. Even though the essential issues, namely treaty rights and cultural/subsistence needs, were no different than those voiced during the whaling controversy, press coverage was non-existent when the tribe petitioned to resume seal hunting. This contrasts with the intensity of the coverage surrounding the Makah whale hunt two years later.

The lack of coverage suggests that issues, such as treaty rights and sovereignty as well as bureaucratic and legal battles, are unlikely to garner press coverage. Conversely, the Makah whale hunt immediately gained press attention because of the reaction it generated and its potential for conflict. The *Seattle Times* used the reaction to frame the personalities of the groups involved.

The 1997 IWC resolution permitting the tribe to hunt was granted based on three considerations: Treaty rights, gray whale population numbers and the cultural/subsistence need of the tribe. Clinton Administration officials cited these issues as the determining factors in the administration's decision to support Makah whaling. These issues remain central in news articles throughout the five year period of coverage. The *Seattle Times* consistently presents these considerations in a way that supports the

Makah whaling venture. Analysis of later phases of coverage will show that this pro-Makah framing remains throughout the duration of the conflict.

The actors, personalities, and the conflict were used as the central focus of most articles in order to gain and maintain the interest of the readers. Unlike the issue frames, these personality frames shifted over the five-year period. The *Seattle Times* defined their “issue” and “personality” frames in the early phases.

I will turn first to the issues since they are stable and definable. The personality frames are presented in the following chapter.

Issue No. 1: Treaty Rights-

Makah Argument-

The tribe argues that they were guaranteed the right to resume whaling in the 1855 Treaty of Neah Bay. This guarantee is supported by the Clinton Administration. According to tribal officials, they were not required to seek the permission of the United States Government or the IWC. Once the gray whale was removed from the endangered species list they could legally resume whaling. Tribal officials chose to ask permission and navigate the proper legal and bureaucratic channels as a courtesy to the United States government and the International whaling bureaucracy.

Anti-Whaling Counter-Argument:

The groups opposing the hunt do not refute the Makah’s claim that the Treaty of Neah Bay was valid and binding. Protesters claim the tribal hunt is illegal because the tribe failed to show a “legitimate” cultural and/or subsistence need. Protesters also claim the tribe plans to sell the products of the whale hunt, thus designating the hunt “commercial.” The IWC has outlawed all commercial whaling. They believe that the IWC treaties are more legitimate than the Neah Bay treaty because they are more recent

and apply globally instead of between two nations, as is the case with the Treaty of Neah Bay.

The demonstrators believe they are legally sanctioned to prevent the whale hunt by virtue of United Nations Resolution 37/7. The resolution gives independent organizations the legal authority to forcefully prevent illegal whaling ventures. Morally, many of the protesters claim that whales, as sentient beings, constitute an official “nation” and should be afforded the same protection as human beings.

Issue No. II: Gray Whale Population Recovery

Makah Position:

Tribal and U.S. Government officials often repeat the fact that the gray whale population, once on the brink of extinction, has fully recovered. Estimates range from 19,000 to 23,000. They claim that the tribe’s desire to hunt up to four whales per year does not endanger the growing gray whale population. To reinforce this point, tribal officials often point out the fact that Alaskan and Russian tribal hunts usually range in the hundreds.

Anti-Whaling Counter-Argument:

Groups opposing the hunt did not dispute the fact that four whales would not endanger the gray whale population. They restated their position that allowing the Makah tribe to resume hunting would open the door to other countries with commercial whaling interests. This would endanger other fragile whale populations. Protesters claim that these countries, namely Japan, Iceland, and Norway, have an equal claim to cultural needs and could easily make the argument that commercial whaling is a cultural practice. A revival of commercial hunting would threaten other whale populations that, unlike the gray whale, remain endangered. Protesters also worried that the United States, typically

a strong voice in the IWC against whaling countries, would be weakened and could no longer legitimately argue against these claims.

Issue No. III: Cultural/Subsistence Needs

Makah argument:

Makah tribal officials claimed their legitimacy was based on the fact that, in addition to treaty rights, they had a compelling cultural/subsistence need. They claimed that years of isolation and colonialization had left the tribe in dire straits economically, morally, and culturally. Unemployment levels and poverty rates towered above the national median and alcoholism and drug abuse was a growing problem on the reservation. The reinstatement of the traditional culture would, they argued, go a long way in fostering cultural self-esteem and cultural awareness. Most importantly, cultural awareness and self-esteem would give the youth on the reservation hope and, even if it did not solve any of the problems facing the Makah community, “there are things it could teach: Discipline. Cooperation. Spiritual things” (*Seattle Times’ Pacific Magazine* November 26, 1995, p.10).

Anti-Whaling Counter-Argument:

Cultural needs are legitimate, according to many protesters, but they claimed that the tribe secretly had plans to become involved in a commercial whaling venture. Protesters cited supposed meetings and negotiations held in early 1995 between Makah tribal officials and representatives from commercial whaling countries. Proof of such meetings never materialized, but protesters maintained that this was the goal of the tribal officials. By selling the whales to Japan or Norway protesters argued that the tribe could reap an economic windfall. According to protesters, this was not a traditional practice. Implementing commercial intent would render the whale hunt modern and commercial, thus negating the tribal officials’ claims of cultural/subsistence needs.

Protesters also argued that the practice of whaling was no longer valid. A whale hunt had not been conducted in over 70 years and no one on the reservation knew how to hunt and prepare whale. They attempted to legitimize this claim by pointing out the fact that Alaskan whaling tribes were needed to show the Makah how to hunt a whale. In addition, they speculated that most tribal members would not like the taste of whale meat.

The anti-whaling coalition also claimed that the tribe was not hunting the whale in a traditional manner. They were planning to use speed-boats and a high-powered rifle, not the traditional harpoons and seal-skin floats. The introduction of these implements and other similar tools proved to protesters that this was not a traditional hunt. Protesters attempted to legitimize these claims in the press by relying on tribal elders who opposed the hunt to make these arguments.

Framing Method For Issues

A key to balanced press coverage lies in presenting the positions of all parties involved. One of the methods by which the *Seattle Times* marginalizes the anti-whaling "issue" positions is what I call "position" or "statement" framing. This method presents one party's position or belief with no counter-argument from the opposing side. The protest movement is subjected to this method of framing throughout the five-year conflict.

Chapter 2

Defining the Issue and Personality Frames

Press Coverage-Phase I

May 25, 1995-June 23, 1996

This chapter focuses on the first phase of news coverage. This phase is extremely important because the *Seattle Times* creates the “issue” and “personality” frames that defined subsequent coverage for much of the five-year conflict. The news media is more capable of controlling information when it creates the paradigms on which it reports (Gitlin 1980, p.141). The *Seattle Times* uses these early articles to define the issues surrounding the conflict and the personalities of the groups involved, thus successfully creating a paradigm that will define coverage in subsequent phases.

The first phase of *Seattle Times* coverage spans 13 months. It began with the Makah tribe’s stated intent to resume whaling. The first feature appears on May 25, 1995. The first phase concluded with the Makah decision to withdraw their request from the IWC meeting on June 26, 1996. There were only four feature stories in this phase: One “hard news” story, two editorials and one “human interest” story (see Table I). The articles mostly focus on the personalities of the tribe and the anti-whaling organizations.

The first feature was an editorial published on May 25, 1995. The article delegitimizes the protesters as radicals who possess a narrow agenda. The second feature, a “human interest” story, appeared in the *Seattle Times*’ Sunday magazine *Pacific*. It characterized the personality, history, and goals of the Makah tribe. Together, the two articles created the three personality frames that became standard rhetorical technique used throughout the five year period: Marginalizing, victimization, and factionalism framing.

Marginalizing Frames:

The articles in phase I portray the protesters as a radical and sometimes violent fringe movement determined to prevent the revival of a culture. Conversely, the Makah tribe is presented as reasoned and legitimate with their claims supported by scientific fact. This portrayal is further legitimized by the Clinton Administration's support for the whale hunt. The protest movement is portrayed as a radical and sometimes violent fringe movement that is bent on preventing the revival of a culture.

The articles in this phase implicitly criticized the reaction of animal-rights and environmental organizations. One article claimed the protest was simply a "knee-jerk reaction. . . based more on emotion than reason" (*Seattle Times*, May 25, 1995, p. B-14). This characterization of instability and lack of control implies that the nature and opinions of the groups opposing the whale hunt were irrational and reactionary. The articles also discredit the appearance of widespread support for the anti-whaling organizations. The appearance of popular support is delegitimized as nothing more than the mainstream public's surface recognition of popular buzzwords and catch-phrases such as "Save the Whales." This discredits the appearance of widespread popular support as nothing more than shallow popularity.

Reports also marginalized the protesters by focusing on the violent history of Sea Shepherd while ignoring other participant groups widely viewed as more moderate. These groups include Progressive Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) and the Humane Society of North America. Sea Shepherd leader Paul Watson is the only protester quoted. He is portrayed as confrontational and threatening, claiming that boycotts and other means of protest are inevitable. He also predicts that "people would be aghast. . . and could punish the state for letting it [whale hunt] happen here" (*Seattle Times* June 27 1996, p.A-12).

The articles further marginalized the protesters by pointing out the fact that two of the most well known mainstream environmental organizations, Greenpeace and Sierra Club, refuse to oppose the whale hunt. The manner in which this fact is presented depicts the protesters as radicals that lack the support of mainstream environmentalists. One article states that “Greenpeace tentatively agrees not to interfere” but then adds that “[o]ther groups promise to raise a stink” (*Seattle Times Magazine Pacific*, November 26, 1995, p.12). This portrayal is particularly interesting because, in past mainstream news coverage, Greenpeace and Sierra Club have both been depicted as violent and radical. The *Seattle Times* compares Greenpeace and Sierra Club, both of which are now presented as more acceptable, to the violent and radical nature of Sea Shepherd. This contrast, which presents Sea Shepherd and the other active anti-Makah whaling groups as more radical and violent than Greenpeace and Sierra Club reinforces the radical nature of the organizations actively protesting the Makah hunt.

The marginalizing frames portray the radical actions of the protesters as responsible for preventing the revival and salvation of a culture. For example, the first “hard news” article, which addressed the Makah decision to withdraw the permission request at the IWC meeting, portrayed this decision as a result of the intervention of protesters. The protesters were portrayed as causing “international chaos” through the use of “misinformation” (*Seattle Times* June 27, 1996, p.A12). The article also states the reasons for the tribe’s desire to renew whaling, namely to restore culture, but does not balance this claim with a counter-argument from the anti-whaling point of view. This makes their actions appear illegal or unethical and makes the organizations appear unreasonable, anti-native, and racist.

By discrediting the messenger, marginalizing frames effectively dismiss the protest movement’s message. This method of delegitimizing is a standard technique used

by mainstream news organizations to discredit groups or individuals that challenge the status quo by threatening legitimate government authority. This framing device became standard in the five-year coverage. It permits the *Seattle Times* to delegitimize and marginalize the anti-whaling organizations and their positions by portraying them as irrational people not worth listening to.

Victimization Frames:

This framing technique portrays the tribe as victims of centuries of oppression. The hunt is depicted as a way to ameliorate past atrocities, save the tribe from economic and social woes, save the culture for the youth as well as save the youth themselves by instilling cultural pride. Presentation of the Makah tribe as victims of cultural holocaust and systemic oppression legitimizes tribal officials' claims that economic and social problems facing the tribe would be relieved by reinstating whaling. This frame is potentially effective at generating sympathy among readers. Allowing the tribe to resume hunting presents a definitive solution to social problems and also potentially relieves guilt with little cost to taxpayers.

One article that portrays the tribe as victims of centuries of hardship at the hands of non-natives suggests that the tribe has endured and suffered and, because of this, deserves the right to conduct a whale hunt unmolested. The author includes the personal experiences of tribal members to reinforce this idea: "Greg Colfax, the sculptor, remembered the time federal agents raided his house while he was eating dinner with his children" (*Seattle Times* November 26, 1995, p.12). The agents were searching for proof of illegal whale and seal hunts. Other personal accounts that reinforce the victimization of tribal members are also included in the article.

The same article draws distinctions between aboriginal cultures of the past and modern American society. The traditional native society is portrayed as pure and simple.

The Makah tribe's attempt to revive their culture is portrayed as a way to save the tribe from the ravages of modern western society. The article claims that "American culture [is] Disney's Pocohontas, Sen. Slade Gorton's budget cuts, car air freshners, commodity cheese, HUD housing, microwave ovens-this is all part of contemporary reservation life, but it does not define what it is to be Makah" (ibid., p.12). This establishes the contention based on an assumption that tradition is correct and change and modernity are responsible for all social and economic problems on the Makah Reservation. According to this contention, the Makah tribe's true goal is to escape the empty materialism of modern mainstream culture. The protesters are depicted as oppressors determined to prevent this escape back to nature.

A return to whaling is portrayed as saving the traditional culture for younger generations who are on the brink of losing their identity. According to the article, "hip-hop fashion and rap music are in" (ibid., p.14). Peterson claims that drug abuse and alcoholism are on the rise and there is little hope left on the reservation. The implication is that whaling is the only hope for eradicating these social problems. The tribe also appears resilient and resourceful, taking the initiative to save themselves instead of waiting for social welfare to rescue them.

Factionalism frames:

Tribal factionalism is a major issue throughout the five years of press coverage. The presentation of this issue is crucial because it could potentially undermine positive press coverage. The ability to portray and maintain an impression of unity is an important factor in legitimizing a group or an argument (see Gitlin, 1980; Rojecki, 1999). Unity signifies strength and determination. Phase I begins the portrayal of the tribe as united behind its right to revive whaling. Dissent within the tribe is presented as based on minor technicalities, such as the use of modern implements or coming from a fringe

minority within the tribe. The tribe as a whole is supposedly in favor of the right to whale. One article reinforces this idea by quoting one tribal elder who is opposed to the hunt: “[S]he [Hildred Ides] believes in the tribe’s right to whale, but she thinks a hunt would be odd in these modern times” (ibid., p.13). Establishing the impression that the tribe is united makes it easier for future articles to downplay tribal factionalism and marginalize internal dissenters as a very small minority.

Counter Arguments to Press Framing

Protesters are not given the opportunity to defend themselves or explain their positions. The protester’s counter-arguments to the Makah positions are usually not included in the articles. The key to balanced coverage lies in presenting the positions of both sides. I present the counter-arguments or positions of the anti-whaling organizations in order to demonstrate the degree of bias in the *Seattle Times* coverage. These include:

1) Counter-Arguments for Marginalizing Frames- The articles seldom if ever include the protest movement’s claims that they, and particularly the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, only disrupt illegal whaling operations. The coverage also fails to include protesters claims that Greenpeace and Sierra Club have become commercialized, causing them to lose touch with the original vision of the environmental movement. Sea Shepherd and other anti-whaling groups believe that they, by protesting the Makah hunt, they are adhering to the original tenets of the environmental movement.

2). Counter-Arguments for Factionalism Framing- The protesters’ opinions that tribal factionalism is silenced by tribal officials is also seldom if ever mentioned in the coverage. The Anti-whaling organizations posit that tribal members who publicly oppose the whale hunt are threatened into compliance. This position becomes a major issue in subsequent phases, but it is usually dismissed by reporters in articles that carry the idea that tribes are “naturally” homogenous.

3). Counter-Arguments for Victimization Framing- Protesters agree the tribe are victims of centuries of oppression, but they argue that a whale hunt will not save the tribe. Whale-watching tourism would be more economical and logical and would spare the tribe controversy. Many protesters even argue that whales, as a higher form of sentient being, should be considered a nation to themselves and protected. Hunting animals that possess acute intelligence and, furthermore, have become tame over years of protection is claimed to be akin to atrocities suffered by humans.

Discussion

The press is more capable of controlling information when it creates the paradigms on which it reports. The personality framing techniques that define much of the five-year coverage are created in the first phase of coverage. The Makah tribe is defined as a group that desires to ameliorate centuries of hardship by reviving their traditional culture. Support from the federal government legitimizes the Makah pro-whaling position. The tribe is presented as united in favor of treaty rights and cultural preservation.

In contrast, the anti-whaling organizations are portrayed as reactionary and fringe. According to the articles, the opposition aims to prevent cultural revitalization, economic renewal and social improvement. This selective focus implies that the goals of the protest movement include an attempt to perpetuate oppression. Protesters are portrayed as trying to prevent cultural improvement instead of trying to save whales.

Chapter 3

Press Coverage-Phase II

June 24, 1996-October 27, 1997

The “second phase” of press coverage spans a 16 month period, from June 24, 1996 through October 27, 1997. This period begins following the Makah decision to withdraw their request to resume whaling at the IWC meeting in Aberdeen, Scotland. It ends with the IWC decision to grant the Makah tribe permission to conduct the hunt following the 1997 annual meeting held in Monaco.

Following the first IWC meeting, the tribe decided to carry on with preparations for the whale hunt. The tribe did this in order to signify its sovereign right to conduct the whale hunt even though they had withdrawn the IWC application. These preparations were accompanied by an increased activity of the protest movement to prevent the hunt.

The increased intensity of the protests, the potential for conflict, and the heated rhetorical debate prompted an increase in press coverage in the *Seattle Times*. Eleven articles addressing the whale hunt appear in the *Seattle Times* during the second phase. In all, there were seven “hard news” stories, three “human interest” stories, and one feature editorial.

The three personality frames are used throughout this phase of coverage. The cultural/subsistence need argument is the main focus of the issue framing. A new development prompted the use of a new personality frame in the second phase. Representative Jack Metcalf (R-WA) attempted to prevent the Makah whale hunt by filing a lawsuit along with a coalition of environmentalists and a Makah tribal elder. This undertaking, which challenged the authority of the Clinton Administration and scientific experts, was discounted through marginalization framing. I explain this new personality frame in detail later in this chapter.

An interesting development in this phase of press coverage develops as three articles were published that presented the issues and personalities from the anti-whaling point of view. I analyze these articles in-depth and argue that these points of view were presented as extremely opinionated and biased whereas the other frames present the issues and personalities as fact. Presenting the pro-activist views in this manner failed to threaten the existing personality and issue frames.

Developments in Phase II Personality Framing

Marginalization Framing

The tendency for the *Seattle Times* to marginalize the protest movement as radical was carried over from the first phase and was reinforced through repetition in phase II. The articles concentrate solely on The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and exclude the other environmental organizations opposing the hunt. This was not necessarily a surprising development because Sea Shepherd dedicated extensive resources to the protests. But Sea Shepherd was not alone in active opposition to the hunt. Other moderate groups, such as PAWS and the Humane Society of North America were also involved, but they were seldom if ever mentioned. The presentation of Sea Shepherd as spokesperson and representative for all groups opposing the hunt suggests to readers that all of the groups are radical fringe organizations, unrepresentative of the larger and more moderate environmental and animal-rights organizations. The lack of variety allows reporters to easily dismiss anti-whaling positions.

Victimization

The victimization frame was also used in phase II coverage, but it was presented differently than in phase one. In phase one the tribe was depicted as suffering historic and systemic oppression. In second phase coverage, this oppression was paradoxically linked to the environmental movement because various environmental organizations` had

succeeded in their attempts to reintroduce sea otters to the area. The Makah harvest of sea urchins, described in the *Seattle Times* as “once lucrative work” (October 14, 1997, p.A1) was now portrayed as declining due to the success of these efforts. The reintroduction of otters, which feast on sea urchins, was accompanied by environmental regulations that outlawed attempts to curtail or limit the otter population. The Makah tribe is unable to protect themselves from this diminishing aspect of their economy due to these regulations. The *Seattle Times* reports that “what many consider a great local environmental success story” (ibid., A1) is responsible for destroying a major part of the Makah economy. According to one tribal member, “[the harvest] is what we count on to pay our bills through January” (ibid., p.A1).

Likewise, the controversy over whaling is presented as preventing the tribe from taking legal action to remedy the situation. “They’ll put that battle aside for now. The tribe already is weathering protests from around the globe because it proposes to resume hunting whales for the first time in 70 years” (ibid., p.A8). Depicting the tribe as suffering from environmental activism expands upon the victimization frames introduced in Phase I coverage. This framing device implicitly links past hardships to the current economic problems suffered by the Makah tribe. This allows the environmentalist organizations, which are responsible for these hardships, to be placed in the same category as those responsible for historic oppression.

Tribal Factionalism

Protesters continued to argue that, despite appearances, the tribe was not united in its efforts to resume whaling. The protesters believed the Makah tribal council was coercing tribal members into compliance with their wishes. This argument is turned against the protesters in the second phase of coverage. The articles framed the issue as if the protest movement was infiltrating the tribe and fomenting dissent. Articles suggested

that Makah tribal officials were acting legally, ethically, and in a culturally appropriate way in implementing measures to assure cohesion. One article even claimed that coercion “may sound draconian to non-natives” (October 13, 1996, p.A-15). Another article defended the need for tribal unity: “Alaska’s Inupiat Eskimos say the Makah must do whatever it takes to present a united front to the world. . .[and] prevent outside whaling groups from gaining any foothold of dissent” (October 13, 1996, p.A-1).

Issue Framing

All three issue frames were present in the third phase of coverage, however the cultural/subsistence argument was most prominent. The treaty rights claim and the gray whale population estimates, when presented, were stated as fact with no counter-argument to balance the opinion.

Cultural/Subsistence Need Framing

The tribe’s decision to employ modern mechanized tools, namely a .50 caliber rifle and speed tow-boats, became one of the most contentious “issue” debates in the press. Many protesters claimed that the tribe’s use of modern tools was not traditional and therefore negated the “cultural” designation in the IWC resolution. The tribe claimed that there was no contradiction in the use of modern implements. They, as a tribe, possessed the right to decide what is considered “traditional.”

The *Seattle Times* frames this aspect of the debate in the second phase of reporting. Articles portrayed the use of modern implements as a logical and humane method of conducting the whale hunt. It was stated that, by using a gun, it would only take 10 to 15 minutes for the whale to die. This scenario was contrasted to “the old days” when “it could take days to die.” Allen Ingling, the veterinarian who helped the tribe design the gun to be used in the whale hunt is quoted: “The powerful rifle is ‘definitely overkill, . . . but we wanted to assure it is a very rapid death” (September 12,

1997, p.A1). The tribe's willingness to employ a veterinarian expert displays their willingness to accommodate modern humanitarian sensibilities.

Protesters again claimed the tribe was planning on allying itself with commercial whaling nations. This action would, according to the protesters, void the legality of the IWC resolution and pose an imminent threat to the international commercial whaling ban. The *Seattle Times* diffused the anti-whaling position by comparing the Makah situation to the Nuu-Chah-Nulth, a Canadian tribe in British Columbia that planned to conduct a whale hunt with the help of commercial whaling countries, namely Japan and Norway. The Nuu-Chah-Nulth, inspired by the Makah hunt, decided to enlist the aid of the World Council of Whalers (WCW). The WCW is comprised of representatives from commercial whaling countries. The purpose of the organization is to aid subsistence whaling in tribal communities by offering technical and financial assistance. One article stated that the WCW offered assistance to the Makah tribal council, but it was refused. Makah Whaling Commission president Ben Johnson was quoted: "Japan wanted to give us money, to help buy boats, to show us how to kill the whales, everything. . .we said no" (April 13, 1997, p.A1). By reporting on the Makah's refusal to enlist the aid of the WCW, reporters show that the protester's claim was unsubstantiated.

The Makah position that a return to whaling would save the tribe from social ills was reinforced in three articles. In one article, the *Seattle Times* compared the Makah efforts to the Inupiat, a whaling tribe in Alaska. Whaling was portrayed as shielding the tribe from the ills of modern society by providing a continuance of a simpler, more natural culture and sense of community. One article claimed that, for the Inupiat, "the epic hunt keeps the community whole against the ravages of drugs and alcohol, staves off the seductive power of western values on TV. . .the crime rate drops. . .kids do better in school" (October 13, 1996, p.A1). Tribal members claimed that "nothing would

devastate this town as thoroughly as the end of whaling” (ibid., p.A1). The reporter rhetorically asks if the Makah tribe would experience the same healing effect. “The Eskimos think so. They can’t imagine where their own kids would be without the whale.”

New Developments

Jack Metcalf Lawsuit

The need for groups to portray a sense of unity and cohesion also applies to the federal government. Representative Jack Metcalf’s efforts to prevent the hunt challenge the legitimacy and authority of the National Marine Fisheries Service’s (NMFS) environmental and scientific experts that support Makah whaling. The NMFS was required to conduct an environmental risk assessment gauging the possible threat that limited subsistence hunting might pose to the gray whale population. The NMFS found that limited subsistence-based hunting posed no threat to the gray whale population. The Clinton Administration agreed to support the hunt based on this assessment. The lawsuit claimed that the NMFS rushed through the procedures and failed to conduct a reliable and accurate environmental assessment. This, along with Metcalf’s testimony at the 1996 IWC meeting, presented a very real threat to tribal efforts.

Like Sea Shepherd and other protesters, Metcalf is delegitimized in the *Seattle Times* coverage. Articles suggest that Metcalf, who “has always been against Indians,” (October 10, 1997, p.B1) was a maverick politician motivated by a racist agenda. His “personal crusade” (June 30, 1996, p.B2) is depicted in contrast to his environmental voting record, which one article claimed was “among the least green in congress.” This marginalization and dismissal allowed the *Seattle Times* to discredit the message by marginalizing the messenger.

Anti-whaling articles

Balanced press coverage requires reporters to present the viewpoints of all parties involved. However, the *Seattle Times* usually presented only a pro-whaling view. Nevertheless, three articles appeared in the second phase that presented the opposing anti-whaling views. The three articles were lengthy features that emphasized the personalities and questioned the motivations of the Makah tribal council and pro-whaling factions. While most articles were written to discredit the protest movement's positions by marginalizing its members and organizations, these articles attempted to discredit the Makah tribe and its pro-whaling positions.

The first article was written by Native author Linda Hogan. It was printed on December 15, 1996. In this article, Hogan focused on issues of tribal unity and cohesion. She also questions the legitimacy of the claims that the hunt is to be conducted in a traditional manner. She also presented a different view of standard victimization frames. The second article in the series was written by Seattle author Brenda Peterson. Peterson reinforced Hogan's claims regarding tribal factionalism by presenting the testimony of tribal elders, who claim that they have been subjected to coercion and silenced. The third article, also authored by Peterson, reinforces these claims. I now turn to each article and explain the framing of the issues and personalities in detail.

Hogan portrayed the tribe as disunited in its efforts to resume whaling. She stated that "despite how hired public relations experts have presented the problem, there is conflict within the tribe itself" (December 15, 1996, p.B9). She claimed that these divisions were rampant on the reservation. She claims that the factionalism is dividing the tribe between elders who were never consulted regarding the hunt and "a young educated faction that is in breach of tradition." The tribal council is depicted as a corrupt body governing through the use of coercion and fear. The bureaucracy is

portrayed as motivated by the possibility of their own financial gain. She states that the whale hunt “is a story of secret meetings with corporations and nations. . .gatherings illegal according to tribal by-laws.” It is, by implication, not traditional and therefore not legitimate.

Hogan introduces readers to a group of female tribal elders who are desperately attempting to defend Makah culture from exploitation. These women fear for their safety because there is “intimidation and harassment of the old women who, in earlier times, would have been the respected voice of their people.” The tribal elders cited are Alberta Thompson and Dotti Chamblin. Thompson and Chamblin are apparently being ostracized and condemned for their efforts in opposing the hunt. They believed that the tribe had lost its whaling culture years ago and believed that the revival of the practice was a commercial venture, which they claimed was the true agenda of the tribal council, and an insult to the culture and ancestors. The two ladies actively opposed the hunt. Their efforts included testifying against the tribal council at the 1996 IWC meeting in Aberdeen. Thompson eventually became the symbol of tribal disunity and the focus of much heated debate in *Seattle Times*’ articles.

Peterson’s article, published on December 22, 1996, continued to portray the tribal council as corrupt with hidden motives. In this article Thompson promises to adopt the Sea Shepherd organization’s tactics and defend the whales by placing herself between the whale and the whaling crew. Peterson states that the potential of Makah fighting Makah on the waters of Neah Bay would be a “nightmare” (December 22, 1996, p.B7) for the tribe. The tribal council, she suggests, are the only ones who can prevent this from occurring, the implication being that they must cease their efforts to revive whale hunting.

Peterson also questions the legitimacy of the gray whale population numbers. She argues that some scientists do not agree with the estimates, but she fails to provide any substantial proof for this claim, nor does she name the scientists. The scientists are also supposedly concerned about pollution and its effect on what she refers to as “our mammal kin.” She also restates the anti-whaling argument that Makah whaling would weaken the international ban on commercial whaling, resulting in a “domino effect,” with the “great sovereign nation of whales” as the victim. She attempts to disprove the tribal council’s claims that they do not intend to hunt commercially. Peterson claims that the Japanese and other whaling countries are helping the Makah tribe in the hopes that subsistence whaling will weaken international restrictions. Again, she provides no substantial proof for this claim.

Peterson also voices a new argument. She claims that treaty rights are secondary to “the connections we make between ourselves, other species, and our living world.” She also argues that the tribe can exercise treaty rights, honor tradition, revive the culture, and respect the rights of “our mammal kin” by conducting mock whale hunts. She employs many generic stereotypes of Native Americans as historic noble savages as her “proof” that this type of hunting would be culturally appropriate. She compares the mock whale hunt to “the ancient Native American practice of counting coup,” thereby misinterpreting the whaling traditions as well as the customs of various Plains tribes. She suggests the tribe can also benefit economically by establishing eco-tourism, enhancing this venture by staging “living history” performances of mock whale hunts.

The third article, also authored by Brenda Peterson, was published on the eve of the IWC annual meeting in Monaco. She reiterated many of her previous arguments, namely the lack of tribal unity and the possibility for a mock whale hunt or whale watching tours.

Alberta Thompson was again a central focus in this article. Peterson used a whale-watching trip with Thompson and two of Thompson's grandchildren to argue that a return to whaling would instill violence, not respect, in the culture. Whaling was permissible in ancient times because the tribe was "an isolated society" (October 19 1997, p.B5). In today's world, Peterson claimed that whaling would "bring dishonor to this ancient tribe" and the youth would feel shame. Closing the article, she posited that "[t]his is not about treat rights, it is about doing the right thing for the tribe, the next generation, and the whale."

In these features, the tribe is portrayed as divided and in turmoil. There is no mention of divisions within the environmental movement which, by implication, became unified and reasonable. Treaty rights are disputed on legal, ethical, and moral grounds. The victimization frame for the Makah tribe is present, but the tribal council is portrayed as the oppressor instead of the protesters. Almost all of the positions and arguments were presented with no balancing counter-arguments.

The final article in the second phase addressed the IWC's decision to permit the Makah whaling venture. The article, published on October 23, 1997, presented the Makah tribe as "ecstatic" (p.A1) about their victory, with one tribal member claiming that it is "a good day to be a Makah" (ibid., p.A1). The four whales granted to the tribe are contrasted with the 124 total allowed by the IWC, thus making the Makah's hunt seem insignificant by comparison. The reporter also pointed out that the overall number of whales granted decreased, from 140 to 124.

Discussion

The second phase of reporting reinforces most of the frames introduced in the first phase. Two major developments in the coverage reflected new developments and

their activities. The delegitimization of Metcalf as a racist and the three opposite-frame articles by Linda Hogan and Brenda Peterson require further commentary.

It is crucial for special interest groups to display unity and cohesion in order to be portrayed as legitimate. Protest movements, special-interest groups, and even federal government agencies attempted to project this image in order to maintain and/or gain legitimacy. Jack Metcalf's legal arguments challenged the legitimacy of the federal government's position as stated by officials of the Clinton Administration and the authority of scientific experts that support Makah whaling. Depicting Metcalf as motivated by a racist agenda dismissed his views as illegitimate, thereby marginalizing his legal claims and diffusing the potential threat he posed to the tribe and the federal government.

Therefore, the *Seattle Times*, by virtue of inherent institutional considerations and economic interests, is allied with Federal government ideals and positions. A challenge to the federal government or to the authorities on which the government bases its position can be considered a challenge to the interests of the *Seattle Times*. The fact that the newspaper has already defined its own position in favor of the tribe in phase I provides a suggestion as to why the *Seattle Times* reacted so swiftly and absolutely in condemning Metcalf.

Casting Metcalf as a racist and maverick presents him as unrepresentative of the U.S. Government's "official" position as stated by officials of the Clinton Administration. I argue that the *Seattle Times*, in defending the federal government, defended itself and its interests by marginalizing the messenger which, in the process, discredits the message.

The articles by Hogan and Peterson allow the anti-whaling positions and a negative characterization of the tribal council to be introduced. However, the

anti-whaling positions are presented as beliefs and opinions. The issue and personality frames commonly found in the coverage legitimize the pro-whaling positions as fact. It can be argued that the articles by Hogan and Peterson are possibly designed to elicit an emotional response from those already sympathetic to the Makah cause. The articles do not hide bias, which makes them easily dismissable as opinion.

These articles allow the *Seattle Times* to fulfill its economic obligations by capturing the readers' attention. In doing so, the articles also potentially stir sentiment, thereby increasing tensions and the likelihood of conflict. The extreme portrayal of the characters and positions and the presentation of the issues as beliefs and opinions allow this to be achieved without violating the core issue frames, which present the pro-whaling viewpoint as fact.

Chapter 4

Press Coverage-Phase III

October 25, 1997-October 2, 1998

Phase III of *Seattle Times* press coverage begins with the IWC approval of the Makah request, which occurred on October 25, 1997. This phase concludes with the beginning of the first whaling season, which began on October 2, 1998. The *Seattle Times* published 18 articles on the Makah whale hunt during the third phase. There were 15 “hard news” stories published along with two editorials and one “human interest” story.

This phase was characterized by the tribe’s preparation for the hunt. These preparations included the reintroduction of traditional whaling songs and prayers to tribal life and the Makah whaling crew’s technical training. The Makah’s technical training was aided by members of whaling crews from Alaskan whaling tribes. These preparations took place in the midst of increasing activity among anti-whaling protesters. This increased activity included the establishment of active patrolling of Neah Bay by small and large vessels owned and operated by Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. The efforts of the Makah tribe and the protesters exacerbated tensions which, in turn, sharpened the rhetoric in the press coverage.

The most significant event during this period revolved around the Makah Days festival. The Makah Days festival is a cultural celebration held annually in late August. Tribal officials feared the protesters would use the opportunity to stage a large and possibly violent demonstration. The tribe coordinated with local and state law enforcement agencies to prevent the possibility of violence. The fear of possible violence spread through the Makah community, prompting Washington Governor Gary

Locke to place the Washington National Guard on alert. Ten of the eighteen articles published in the *Seattle Times* during this phase deal with this issue.

The issue frames presented in the first two phases are maintained in the third phase. The reporters' dismissal of the protesters claims that tribal officials planned to engage in commercial whaling, which is an important cultural/subsistence frame in phases I and II, is potentially threatened in phase III when tribal officials meet with a delegation of representatives from commercial whaling countries. The reporters frame the threat in a manner that actually reinforces the existing frame. This is achieved by allowing the officials from the Makah tribal council to explain the motivations for their meeting as cultural. They also maintained that they had no intention of engaging in commercial hunting.

The other issue frames are carried over from phases I and II as the tribe's treaty rights and the gray whale population estimates are presented almost exclusively as fact with little or no counter-argument.

The personality frames also remain largely intact. However, they are expanded upon in order to accommodate for changes in the conflict and to maintain the interest of readers by presenting interesting and novel variations on existing themes. The most significant shifts in phase III personality framing occurs when the protest movement supposedly threatens to interrupt the Makah Days festival with violent protests. Although the threats are never substantiated, they are constantly reinforced through repetition. This method of framing portrays the possibility of violence as inevitable, thus giving readers a compelling reason to focus on the press coverage.

Personality Frames

Marginalization Framing

Sea Shepherd continues to be marginalized as a rogue organization known for violence. Other organizations, such as PAWS and the Humane Society remain cast in relative obscurity, allowing for easy stereotyping and marginalizing.

Sea Shepherd leader Paul Watson is featured more prominently in the third phase than in other phases of coverage. By focusing almost exclusively on Watson, reporters suggest that he is the spokesperson for the entire anti-whaling protest movement. Reporters also assume that Watson and his organization will resort to the violent and confrontational tactics for which they are famous. This is done through a selective use of quotes. In one article Watson defiantly claims that “we didn’t travel 7,000 miles to sit on the sidelines” (July 24, 1998, p.B1).

Although articles in the third phase coverage remain focused mostly on Paul Watson and the Sea Shepherd organization, the motives of other groups involved in the protests are questioned. For example, the Humane Society of North America is one of the organizations whose protest of the whale hunt is framed as contradictory. One story states that the Humane Society is “a place where hundreds of cats and dogs, supposedly man’s best friends, are quietly killed and disposed of every year-without a whimper from anybody” (September 20, 1998, p.A1). This frame appears in a “page 1” story.

The strength and unity of the international save the whales movement is also questioned by reporters. One article claims that the anti-whaling movement “failed to rally opposition” to the Makah proposal at the IWC meeting. This failure has left the movement “licking their wounds and wondering what had slipped in the once formidable save-the-whales movement” (October 24, 1997, p.A1). Broad-based popular support is framed as shallow. One article posits that “[m]any Americans will follow the story simply because the quarry is a whale” (September 20, 1998, p.A1).

The protest movement, responsible for creating “chaos,” is presented as a group of fanatics who would possibly resort to drastic measures to prevent the hunt. According to the *Seattle Times*' reporters, the results of this pressure are counter-productive to the goals of the protest movement. The protesters, according to some articles, were actually ensuring that the hunt would be conducted because “if they [the Makah] don't [hunt] they will view themselves as defeated by outsiders” (September 20, 1998, p.A1). This frame portrays the protest movement's supposedly misguided tactics as ensuring the action they are trying to prevent. In other words, they are their own worst enemy. Rojecki defines this method of framing as a “perversity” counter-position. This frame predicts that “the action will result in an outcome precisely opposite to the intended one” (Rojecki 1999, p. 21).

Victimization Framing

The victimization frames established in phases I and II are continued in the third phase of coverage. The tribe is repeatedly framed as poor and desperate, “languish[ing] for most of this century in a sleepy, oceanic poverty” (September 20, 1998 p.A1). The revival of whaling is again portrayed as a way to ameliorate the social and economic problems faced by the Makah.

The actions and positions of the protest movement continue to be framed in historical terms, with protesters being responsible for perpetuating this oppression. Tribal Chair Wayne Johnson exclaims at one point: “them being here is like bringing in a blanket of smallpox” (July 24, 1998, p.B1).

Factionalization Framing

Frames that reinforced the appearance of tribal unity continue in the third phase. Alberta Thompson is once again marginalized as a troublemaker. One article states: “What many don't know is that Thompson was resented even before the whaling issue. .

.a gadfly who routinely opposes tribal plans” (September 20, 1998, p.A1). Thompson was fired from her tribal job at one point during the third phase. The protesters and Thompson claim that this occurred solely because of her opposition to the tribal council. This dismissal was, according to protesters, illegal harassment and discrimination. However, the only mention of Thompson’s firing in third phase coverage appears in the final paragraph of an August 29th article. This supports the theory that bias in press coverage is prevalent in what is included as well as what is excluded. By failing to include this vital information, the *Seattle Times* paints an incomplete picture of the controversy.

Subsistence/Culture Issue Framing

The subsistence/culture issue frame that defends the tribal council’s claims that they do not intend to whale commercially, is threatened in phase III. This frame was established in phase II. During the second phase, a meeting between a Canadian tribe, the Nuu-Chah-Nulth, and the World Council of Whalers (WCW) was framed in a manner that allowed the Makah tribal council to refute claims that they are interested in commercial whaling. However, during the third phase, the Makah tribal council, like the Nuu-Chah-Nulth, met with the member delegations of the WCW. The protest movement argued this was proof of commercial intent. The articles framed the tribal council as obligated to greet the visiting delegation out of tradition and that tribal officials still hold no intent to whale commercially. John McCarty, Makah Whaling Commission Chairman is quoted: “Hospitality is our way. . .but we didn’t invite them. We’ve been told not to get involved in any way with these guys” (March 13, 1998, p.B1).

New Frames

Congressman Metcalf’s lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court on May 21, 1998. The lawsuit contended that the U.S. Government and tribal officials had failed to conduct

an unbiased environmental assessment report. The lawsuit was first covered as an "issue" article, with little or no critique of the personalities involved. The article listed each contention made in the lawsuit. These points were each followed by a counter-argument. The article is the most non-biased article to appear thus far.

The lawsuit was again covered in September when Metcalf asked the judge to "speed up" the process. The *Seattle Times* refers to the lawsuit as Metcalf's "last-ditch effort to stop" (September 18, 1998, p.B1) the whale hunt. The article defends the tribe's claim that a symbolic hunt or any other options would be unacceptable. The article quotes tribal attorney John Arum: "A hunt without a whale. . . would be like going to church and not eating the wafer" (ibid).

Makah Days Festival Coverage

Tensions between the tribe and protesters were expected to peak at the Makah Days festival. Makah Days, an annual cultural and heritage festival, was scheduled for the last week of August, 1998. The fear that Sea Shepherd would attempt to engage in violent protest at the festival became more prominent in the *Seattle Times* as the festival neared. Relying on "rumors," the *Seattle Times* claims that "as many as 20,000 demonstrators may descend on this tiny fishing village" (August 11, 1998, p.B1). These types of predictions and speculations became common as Makah Days approached.

Unlike previous personality frames that emphasize the strengths of the Makah tribe, the Makah Days coverage portrays the tribe as an extremely vulnerable and small, remote, peaceful community unable to defend themselves from the attacks led by the protesters. By contrast, Sea Shepherd is portrayed as "an international organization" unified in its mission to destroy tribal hopes at reviving their culture. This contradicts prior frames that emphasized Sea Shepherd's weaknesses, namely the lack of support among mainstream environmental organizations and the general public. Articles use

language such as “tiny” and “overwhelmed” in referring to the tribe to reinforce these frames. By contrast, Sea Shepherd is now depicted as “commanding” a “fleet of ocean-going vessels.” These reports led to speculation and fear within the Makah community.

The fear generated by these reports reached the state capitol. Governor Gary Locke contemplated placing the Washington National Guard on alert. The *Seattle Times* framed this possibility as the state rushing to defend the tribe from a foreign military force. The *Seattle Times* fueled speculation on the number of troops to be deployed, the duration of the deployment, and how much it would cost taxpayers. Framing the issue as a defense measure placed the blame for the cost and inconvenience on the protest movement.

As tensions increased, reports began to emerge regarding anonymous threats made by mail and telephone to tribal members. One report claimed that “one tribal member would be killed for every whale that is slain” (September 21, 1998, p.B1). These claims were never substantiated.

The speculation, prediction and expectation of violence was reported even though protesters claimed they had no intention of disrupting the event. These claims were often included in the articles, but they were usually placed at the very end of the article or framed as unreliable. Reporters implicitly questioned the trustworthiness and legitimacy of the Protesters by prefacing their claims with phrases such as “rumor has it,” “reports indicate,” anti-whaling leaders “know of no protests” or “most” of the groups have not planned protests.

Even though the *Seattle Times* hyped the conflict as inevitable, the festival was celebrated without incident. The *Seattle Times* portrays the event as a peaceful family-oriented gathering: “[The festival] has been about people coming home to eat fry

bread, watch canoe races, and see if they could find features in a newborn's face that betrayed a family legacy" (September 6, 1998, p.B1). The *Seattle Times* claims this was "surprising," "the expected throng of anti-whaling protesters never showed up" (August 30 1998, p.B1). The articles fail to include the protesters' claims that they never intended to protest.

The lack of protest is portrayed as a result of prevention and deterrence provided by the presence of the National Guard units. Governor Gary Locke is given credit for enlisting the aid of the National Guard. Their presence, according to reporters, prevented the protest movement from descending upon the event in record numbers. One tribal member stated that "if nothing happens, it's because the National Guard did their job" (August 30 1998, p.B1). There was no counter-position supporting the anti-whaling view presented in these articles.

It is impossible to gauge the level of actual threat in comparison to the reported threats. This makes it unclear whether or not this was an instance where the *Seattle Times*, Makah tribal officials or other pro-whaling organizations created news or fueled speculation. Newspapers have been found guilty of manufacturing news in other studies (see Gitlin, 1980; Tuchman, 1978). It is possible, but impossible to prove, that the manufacturing of news did occur in this instance.

Discussion

The lawsuit filed by Congressman Metcalf is presented as an issue with little reference to personalities or opinions. The result is a neutral portrayal that presents the merits of the lawsuit and contrasts them with counter-arguments. The focus on issues instead of personalities presents a more fair and balanced news piece. However, it is less exciting and is likely to get a low response among readers. The fact that this is the only fair and balanced issue piece in 101 articles leads me to conclude that this is an anomaly.

However, this article supports my argument that focusing on the personalities instead of the issues allows the press to define the issues, marginalizing positions based on the portrayal of the characters involved.

The increase in articles in this period can be attributed to the potential conflict surrounding the Makah Days festival. Ten of the eighteen articles published during the third phase address the Makah Days festival, the possibility for violent conflict, and the need for the National Guard's presence.

The Makah Days coverage featured the Makah tribe as a "tiny" tribe attempting to enjoy a cultural festival. The protest movement was, by contrast, portrayed as a unified international force bent on crushing the festival. The tribe was forced to rely on the help of the National Guard to defend it from the "20,000 or more" protesters who were expected to be "descending on the tribe" to inflict violence.

The protest movement was continually depicted as violent and radical. However, they were also portrayed in earlier phases as a small fringe movement that is weak because they are unrepresentative of the environmental movement as a whole. Now they were painted as a unified force commanding a fleet of ships. In other words, they were portrayed as an environmental army. The claims of Watson and others that they have no such plans were delegitimized as unreliable, further reinforcing the impression that the protesters were untrustworthy.

This portrayal reinforced the need for the National Guard to defend the tribe against the alien force. In painting the protest movement as a unified international force, the possibility of violence was all the more likely. Conflict and violence make a better story. In suggesting the violence is imminent, the public is more likely to pay attention to the story. They are also more likely to pay for newspapers. These frames were reinforced through repetition even though the protest movement stated repeatedly they had no intent

to interfere in the festival. This framing device, which presented the possible conflict as inevitable and violent, will likely attract readers to the conflict thus allowing the *Seattle Times* to realize its commercial interests.

Chapter 5

Phase IV Press Coverage

October 2, 1998-December 24, 1998

The fourth phase features the Makah tribe's first official whaling season in over 70 years, which officially began on October 2, 1998. This period covers a time span of 11 weeks. Phase IV concludes with the acknowledgment among tribal leaders that the northward migration of the gray whales was over and the tribe would have to wait until the spring to conduct the whale hunt. The final article in phase IV appears on December 24, 1998. The number of articles increased during this period to 27: 21 "hard news" stories, two editorials, and one human interest story.

This period was characterized by an increase in tensions between protesters and the tribe. The tension eventually erupted in open conflict on the shores of Neah Bay on October 31, 1998, resulting in the arrest of four protesters. The violence was followed by discussions between tribal officials and protest leaders. The dialogue temporarily calmed tensions, but there was no resolution to the conflict.

The whale hunt had originally been scheduled to commence near the first week in October. The hunt was repeatedly delayed due to distractions caused by internal divisions and protest demonstrations. The first whaling season ended unsuccessfully for Makah hunters.

The issue frames from the first three phases were continued in the fourth phase. The treaty rights and population numbers arguments were framed from the Makah point of view. Frames that portray the protesters as radicals remain prevalent. The popular

and financial support for the protest movement is also portrayed as dwindling. As in the other three phases, the cultural/subsistence frame is the most prevalent issue frame in the fourth phase of coverage.

Issue Frames

Cultural/Subsistence Framing

The use of modern implements to conduct the hunt remained featured. Protesters continued to argue that the use of modern implements, namely the rifle, was inconsistent with tribal traditions. The frames that defined this issue in previous phases remain. The *Seattle Times* posited that the Makah tribe was being forced to use the gun and tow boats to accommodate for “modern cultural norms.” This accommodation was portrayed as a major inconvenience for the Makah whaling crew.

Personality Framing

Marginalizing Frames

While the issue framing remains consistent, the fourth phase of articles presents a radical departure in personality framing. The tribe, once portrayed as unified and focused on the revival of their culture is now portrayed as distracted, their focus turning to the conflict with the protesters, thus causing them to lose sight of the original cultural and traditional goals of the hunt. The tribe was now presented as more interested in defeating the protest movement than reviving traditional culture.

The protest movement was portrayed in a more humanizing way in phase IV than in previous phases. The frames that marginalized the protesters as a violent fringe were not as prevalent in phase IV articles. Groups and individuals who opposed the hunt began to be portrayed with more depth and fairness. Sea Shepherd leader Paul Watson had been portrayed as a violent radical in the first three phases of coverage. The fourth phase presented Watson in a different light. An article published the day before the

whaling crew was expected to conduct their first whale hunt depicted Watson as an intelligent, thoughtful and quiet leader. The accusation that he is a racist was refuted: “Watson is an equal opportunity activist, going to war against whalers and fishers of all races” (November 1, 1998, p.B1). This characterization presented him as “a lifelong advocate of Native American Rights” (ibid). This claim was reinforced by mention of his work with the American Indian Movement during the 1973 siege at Wounded Knee.

This article legitimized what was once depicted as his radical and violent tactics. A person familiar with Watson was quoted: “He is a man of many contradictions. . . he is soft-spoken, doesn’t like personal confrontations, but on the other hand, he certainly confronts people by ramming their boats” (ibid). The article concluded that Watson is “the underdog” in this confrontation because “the U.S. Government has sided with the Makah” (ibid). This portrayal contradicts earlier frames that Watson is a reckless individual. These frames implied that Watson’s fight merited public sympathy.

Previous framing in phases I, II, and III suggested that the protest movement was forcing the tribe to conduct the hunt in order to prove their strength and determination. This depiction was contradicted by a new frame that introduced some tribal members who preferred the tribe conduct a symbolic mock-whaling venture. This option, previously suggested by members of the protest movement, had been depicted by reporters as a utopian alternative dreamed up by protesters, but had virtually no support among tribal members. This new depiction provided the tribe with a supposedly legitimate alternative. The tribal council’s refusal to consider alternatives may be interpreted by readers as narrow-minded, stubborn, and unreasonable.

This option was restated in an editorial authored by Brenda Peterson. Peterson claimed that the majority of the people involved, from both sides, are moderates, not the radical extremists featured in the press. Peterson argued that a compromise can be

reached between the two parties through a “peace-seeking dialogue” (October 2, 1998, p. B5). Peterson then proposed an alternative to the traditional hunt. This option again included a mock-whaling ceremony. “Instead of a deadly harpoon, an indelible ink mark” (ibid). will signify a symbolic kill. Peterson stated that tribal whaling crew member Micah McCarty agreed to this: “I have had this vision, too” (ibid) he was quoted. The purpose of this article was to show that realistic alternatives to a whale hunt exist. It contradicted prior frames presented in phases II and III that portrayed the tribe as having their backs against the wall and forced to conduct a hunt.

Factionalism Framing

Frames that presented the tribe as less united in their efforts, a depiction first presented as biased opinion in phase II, began to reappear in phase IV. This time it is presented as fact in “hard news” articles. Prior phases presented the tribe as united behind whaling or treaty rights, with a fringe minority responsible for internal dissent. The complaints of tribal members, mostly elders, who oppose the hunt were now legitimized. One article claimed that “On the eve of the disputed hunt. . . They [dissenters] say there is no need to return to old hunting traditions to be fully Makah” (October 30, 1998, p.A1).

Possible coercion by the tribal officials, a claim that lacked credibility in previous phases, was given more legitimacy as well. Tribal members all say they support their legal treaty right to hunt. . . [but] those who speak out are criticized for airing the tribe’s dirty laundry to the outside world” (ibid). Prior to this period, the tribal members opposing the hunt, namely Alberta Thompson, were portrayed as outcasts and radicals. These frames present a different reality. Moderate factions within the tribe, as Peterson presented in her feature editorial, were now portrayed as more prevalent than previously presented in phases I, II, and III.

The *Seattle Times* utilized well-established stereotypes in recasting the personality of the tribe at the beginning of the whaling season. The tribe was suddenly portrayed as possessing a somewhat mystical sense of time and patience. “Things take their own time here and so do the Makah. Time is both very slow and very full here. It is kept not only in minutes, but in seasons, tides, cycles of storms and migrations of wild creatures” (October 2, 1998, p. B1). This supposed innate trait, handed down from Makah ancestors, was presented as the main weapon the tribe would use to defeat the protest movement. This portrayal demonstrates how the *Seattle Times* reporters were willing to resort to using well-worn stereotypes in order to present a more interesting story to readers.

Confrontation Coverage

Tensions escalated to open conflict on the weekend of October 31, 1998. The confrontation occurred when Sea Shepherd members, invited ashore by Alberta Thompson, arrived at the Neah Bay docks in a Zodiac inflatable raft. Sea Shepherd members were met by a group of Makah residents. According to the *Seattle Times*, a “melee ensued”. Four protesters were arrested and Alberta Thompson was charged with inciting a riot. A Sea Shepherd Zodiac was also seized while one of the Sea Shepherd patrol boats was damaged by rocks and other debris hurled from the shore.

Personality frames shifted once again during the coverage of the conflict. This coverage presented the tribe as the aggressor, not as defenders protecting their land. Conversely, the protesters were portrayed as legally exercising their first amendment rights. Tribal members, hurling rocks, fireworks, and other debris, were portrayed as an out-of-control mob. Tribal police officers, present during the conflict, were depicted as unwilling to prevent violence. One article claims that tribal officers “eventually asked them [tribal members] to stop throwing rocks” (November 2, 1998, p.B1).

The arrest of the protesters and the seizure of their boat were presented as legally questionable. One article claimed that “the legality of handcuffing protesters and leading them away is under investigation” (ibid). The arresting officers were also portrayed as using unnecessary force to apprehend the protesters: “Blood streamed from Nichols [a protester] forehead where it hit the boatramp. . . . An investigation is under way. . . .to determine if the detention of protesters by tribal police was legal, if their civil rights were violated and whether the boat was legally confiscated or stolen” (ibid). This point was reinforced through repetition. Another article claimed that “tribal police blood[ied] the head of one protester as they handcuffed him face down on a concrete dock” (November 3, 1998, p.B1).

Alberta Thompson’s claim that tribal officials and members were persecuting her for her outspoken opposition to the whale hunt was given more legitimacy during the conflict coverage. An article that explains why she felt threatened on the Makah Reservation stated that “She already lost her tribal job. . . .her dog was killed because of her outspoken opposition to the hunt” (ibid). Tribal police chief Adhunko was quoted as blaming Thompson for the violence, telling her “you are that stupid” (ibid). The *Seattle Times* claimed that, due to this persecution Thompson “fled” the reservation. Thompson’s persecution and position were presented with no counter-position from tribal officials.

Thompson also claimed that “[m]y Christian faith had kept me going”(ibid). Thompson’s reference to Christianity may influence readers to view the internal tribal conflict as pagan vs. Christian. Framing the conflict in this way suggests that Thompson was being subjected to persecution because of her faith. This frame was likely to generate sympathy for Thompson among the general public, many of whom are likely to be Christian.

Several articles attempted to account for the tribe's delay in conducting the hunt. "Instead of engaging in its first whale hunt in 70 years, the tribe has only tangled with its whaling opponents and the press. Instead of answering questions about its hunt, the tribe is being grilled about arrests by tribal police of whaling protesters November 1st. Tribal members are being asked why their youngsters threw rocks at nonviolent whaling protesters" (November 9, 1998, p.B1). The tribe is portrayed as being more concerned with defeating the protest movement. Reporters implied that this focus led to delays, inner-tribal squabbling, and incompetence on the part of tribal officials.

Re-focus on Cultural Intent of Whale Hunt

As the tribe was becoming enveloped in this controversy, a wealthy Seattle businessman, Craig McCaw, offered them economic incentives to cancel the hunt. Tribal officials did not accept the offers. In an article published on November 12, 1998, the *Seattle Times* framed the offer as an attempt to "buy off" Makah culture. The tribe's refusal to "sell their culture" reintroduced the cultural revival frames prevalent in phases I, II and III. The *Seattle Times* used this framing to once again draw readers' attention to the traditional aspects of the hunt.

The delays, once framed as the result of tribal confusion and incompetence are now reframed as deliberate and cultural. The portrayal of the tribe's mystical relationship with time was once again reintroduced: "The process shifted to Indian time. The hunt will happen when it happens-perhaps in a week, perhaps in a year. . . The tribe has suspended two of America's most overriding values: Time and money" (November 22, 1998, p.B1).

Meetings between tribal officials and protest leaders were convened in November to ease tensions. No agreements were reached between the two parties. Both sides were evenly portrayed as possessing a "passionate righteousness" (November 20, 1998, p.B1).

that prevented such a compromise. The first gray whale hunting season ended unsuccessfully for the Makah whaling crew. The migrating gray whales passed undetected. By late December it was clear that the tribe would have to wait until the following spring to conduct the hunt.

Discussion

The fourth phase of press coverage presented many changes and shifts in the personality frames while the issue frames remained unchanged. All issues regarding treaty rights, gray whale population numbers, and the position of the U.S. Government are legitimized.

The personality frames shifted significantly. The protest movement and the Makah tribe were both presented with more depth and variety. The tribe's supposed unity is questioned by the presentation of legitimate internal tribal opposition. Claims of coercion, once framed only as charges levied by radical opposition, were also given more legitimacy. Alberta Thompson's claims that she is the target of tribal hostilities was also given more credence. This legitimacy is achieved by presenting the anti-whaling point of view with no balancing counter-arguments from other tribal members or tribal officials.

The protest movement was portrayed more legitimately in the fourth phase. Articles focused on individual members and their lives, allowing the movement to be humanized. These frames allow the protesters to explain their own motivations and convictions. Prior framing suggested a radical and illogical reasoning for protester actions. The most striking shift is the reframing of Sea Shepherd leader Paul Watson, who was suddenly presented as an intelligent, compassionate, and highly complicated person.

These new frames provided depth and variety. This presented a more complicated and "messy" situation, but it is also likely a more realistic representation of

the situation. Presenting variety on both sides likely made it more difficult for stereotypes to form or remain.

The Makah tribe is portrayed in a variety of different ways in phase IV. The fourth phase began with the tribe fueled, motivated, and driven by the need to revive their traditional culture. Reporters implied that this focus on tradition allowed the tribe to rely on an innate sense of stoic patience to defeat the protesters. As the delays and frustrations mounted, eventually leading to open conflict, the tribe was increasingly portrayed as losing focus and preoccupied with defeating the protest movement, not reviving the culture. The offers to “buy off” the tribe supposedly refocus the tribe. Delays were once again depicted as cultural and necessary. As one article suggests, the tribe has returned to “Indian time” (November 22, 1998, p.B1).

These shifts are testament to the amount of control the press wields in framing the presentation of a conflict. It is highly unlikely that the situation and personalities actually changed to the degree implied in the articles. With the issue framing firmly imbedded in previous articles, the *Seattle Times* was able to leave the issue frames intact while shifting the personality frames. This was accomplished by focusing solely on the personalities involved in the conflict while ignoring the issues.

The timing of the shifts reinforces this position. With the whale hunt approaching, a conflict was imminent. It is in the best interests financially for the press to present the personalities of the players in a more even manner when true conflict is deemed inevitable by reporters. This places the opposing sides on a level-playing field for confrontation. In other terms, this is similar to the way a promoter of heavyweight prize fights is likely to “hype” the fight as a confrontation between two evenly matched individuals. This “hype” causes speculation and draws public interest because the outcome is unclear. An even match creates the belief that the public will likely get their

money's worth. A good fight is an even fight. This same principal applies to the press coverage leading up to the whale hunt. In order to reinforce public attention, it was necessary to recast the players on a more level playing field, locked in a battle that had an undetermined outcome.

The three main issue frames; treaty rights, gray whale population estimates, and the cultural/subsistence needs of the tribe, remain unchanged in phase IV. However, a new "issue" frame was introduced in the fourth phase. In arresting protesters, the Makah tribal police department exercised a sovereign right. Native American tribes have long been at odds with Federal, state, and local authorities on issues pertaining to sovereignty. This incident was the strongest assertion of sovereign rights in the five-year conflict. The whaling venture was carried out with the permission and support of the federal, state, and local governments. Arresting protesters, possibly violating their first amendment rights, potentially challenged the assumption of federal authority, leading to a possible conflict of interest in the press. This forced the press to choose sides between the Federal and Tribal governments. It is no surprise that the *Seattle Times* sided with what it considers to be the more "legitimate" government.

Casting the issue as a misuse of force and possible illegal seizure of property calls into question the ability and legitimacy of the tribe to carry out those sovereign rights. Reminding readers that the situation "is now under investigation by federal authorities" (November 3, 1998, p.B1) reasserted the legitimacy of federal authority.

Chapter 6

Phase V Press Coverage

December 25, 1998-December 31, 1999

The fifth and final phase of press coverage began with the conclusion of the first whaling season and ended with the final news article of the year, printed on November 11, 1999. The articles printed during this phase relied almost solely on personality frames.

The fifth phase of reporting was concentrated on two major events: Coverage of the successful hunt and kill of a gray whale by Makah whalers and the reaction by environmental groups and the surrounding communities. The fifth phase features 43 articles: 32 “hard news” stories, three editorials, and two “human interest” stories. The increase in coverage can be attributed to the success of the Makah whalers and the intensity of the backlash following the whale hunt.

The Makah’s claims regarding treaty rights and gray whale population numbers are reinforced in the fifth phase. Framing of the protest movement as a radical fringe was less prevalent in this phase. They were often portrayed as the underdog, nobly fighting for what they believed in. “Outnumbered, outgunned, and, in some cases, just about out of patience, some protesters of the Makah whale hunt are wondering how long they’ll be here. . . . Just a handful of true believers—a dozen or so—returned this spring to their informal headquarters in Sekiu” (May 12, 1999, p.A1). On the other hand, the *Seattle Times* managed to delegitimize the anti-whaling positions by framing the arguments in terms of internal contradictions, emphasizing the willingness of the protest

movement to defend four gray whales, while other whale population were supposedly in more immediate danger.

As in phase IV, the protest movement and the Makah are both portrayed as possessing religious-like convictions in this phase. These beliefs led to what the newspaper termed “convictions without compromise” (May 20, 1999, p.A1). Frames such as this equalize both sides. They became more prevalent as conflict approached.

As the hunt approached, *Seattle Times* reporters focused more intently on cultural components of the hunt. This focus reinforced the Makah’s claim that cultural revival is the main reason for pursuing the whale hunt. An article on May 11 featured excerpts from two white pioneers’ diaries. The excerpts quoted the men as being “in awe” of the skill, process, and ceremony of Makah whale hunting. A May 14 article featured the ceremonial preparations of the tribe and reinforces the notion of a cultural rebirth and another article published on May 16 links the whaling crews’ first hunting attempt with tribal history and legend. The hunt was not a success, but the article ends positively: “Their whaling culture lived yesterday, not only in their museum, but also at sea” (May 16 1999, p.A1).

The protest movement was hampered by the 500 yard buffer zone enforced by the U.S. Coast Guard. The need for a buffer zone to protect the whaling crew was established in negotiations between Makah and federal officials soon after the tribe received IWC approval in 1997. The buffer zone succeeded in foiling the protester’s attempts to intervene in the whale hunt. Four boats used by the demonstrators were seized by the U.S. Coast Guard. The protesters violated the Marine Mammals Protection Act when they attempted to place their boats between the whaling crew and the whales. The third and successful hunt was conducted with no interference. However, the *Seattle*

Times seemed to applaud the protesters efforts as noble but futile when stating that “The demonstrators put up a spirited fight” (May 18, 1999, p.A1).

The whaling crew was successful on their third attempt on May 17. The May 18th *Seattle Times* contained six articles on the hunt, the celebration, and the backlash. Three of the articles addressed the reactions of the protest movement and the surrounding community. The tribe was portrayed as successfully reviving the whaling culture and a renewed sense of community strength. The article proclaimed that the tribe “took on the opposition of much of the world” and “this tiny tribe. . . was true to its word that one day it would hunt whales again” (May 18, 1999, p.A1).

The *Seattle Times* published five articles in the fifth phase featuring the whale hunt celebrations and potlatch ceremony. All portrayed a sense of unity, cohesion, success, and pictures of serene spiritual renewal: “A column of blue alder smoke lighted by the sun rose from a 55-gallon drum fitted with a barbecue grate as eagles flew overhead” (May 23, 1999, p.A1).

Other articles featured the condemnation of the protesters and surrounding community. This reaction was presented as swift and overwhelming. “The Seattle Times received almost 400 phone calls and e-mails yesterday [May 17] running about 10-to1 against the hunt.” The reactions were described as “varied” (May 18, 1999, p.B1), ranging from disagreement in hunting methods to blatant vituperative racism and threats of violence against the tribe.

Two of the four May 18th “reaction” articles simply listed samples of the reactions. The samples presented all sides equally. The *Seattle Times* claimed that the reactions, though varied, were not surprising. Reporters also suggested that the intensity and scope of the backlash was caused by television coverage of the hunt. One informant claimed that “[t]he pictures are brutal.” The “public relations difficulties” caused by the

hunt may now “grow into what some experts call a full-blown PR problem” (May 18, 1999, p.B1).

From May 19th through December 31st, the *Seattle Times* published 19 articles dealing with the whale hunt. Ten of these articles featured the reaction of the protesters and the surrounding community. The initial “varied” presentation of the reaction was not reinforced, and the *Seattle Times* immediately shifted the focus to the most extreme reactions. All reactions were then framed as extreme, violent, and/or racist. There was no mention of moderate reactions, such as disagreements with the methods of the hunt, in any of these articles.

The *Seattle Times* published reports of a bomb threat at a Puyallup school (May 19, 1999, p. A-18), discrimination in a nearby town (May 20, 1999, p.A20), death threats (May 23, 1999, p.A1), and Internet “terrorism” targeting the tribe (May 22, 1999, p. A1). The tribe, “inundated with death threats [are] in a state of wartime alert.” (May 23, 1999, p.A1). One article pointed out that these types of racist and hate-filled responses are “the kind seldom printed, partly because of an assumption they don’t represent a large number of people. That assumption, many would argue, is wrong.” (May 23, 1999; p. A1). This statement suggests that racism and violent intentions of those opposing the hunt are more prevalent than many believe or wish to admit and are, therefore, worthy of press coverage.

Summary

The *Seattle Times* coverage during this phase focused on the whale hunt, the Makah celebrations, and the reactions of the anti-whaling groups and the surrounding community. Personality framing is more prominent than issue framing in fifth phase coverage.

The framing of the whale hunt presented a fairly balanced accounting of events. The Makah were portrayed as successfully reviving their culture. The protest movement, their boats seized for violating a mammal protection law is portrayed as falling victim to a great irony. They are also framed as fighting nobly for a cause. Likewise, the celebrations are framed as the successful realization of cultural revival. The articles focused on family and a sense of rebirth and renewal for the tribe.

The most biased framing appeared in presenting the negative backlash following the whale hunt. The reaction of the protesters and surrounding community was initially presented in a balanced way. The published reactions ranged from congratulatory to vituperative and racist. Following this initial balanced portrayal, the moderate and positive responses disappear. The racist, threatening, and vituperative reactions are the only ones published.

Discussion

The balanced portrayal of the whale hunt reflects the fact that the protesters were unable to instigate a conflict. The fact that the boats were seized presented an amazing irony. The situation itself could evoke sympathy for the protest movement which, in the end, is portrayed as a group of noble foes fighting for what they believed in.

The celebrations, framed in the spirit of the successful revival of culture, should be no surprise. The majority of articles over the five-year period of coverage has framed the hunt as an attempt to revive traditional culture and strengthen the sense of community on the reservation. The articles emphasized the tribe's effort and persistence over the decades. The successful completion of the hunt provided great material for the human-interest stories that featured the celebrations.

The presentation of the post-hunt response, which emphasized extremes, suggested a possibility of future confrontation and violence. Regardless of the situation,

newspaper articles commonly present the extremes of an issue or conflict. The polarized presentation heightens tensions, thus further increasing the likelihood of future violence. All of these depictions are likely to attract the attention of readers, thus reassuring that the news organization realizes its commercial goals.

Chapter 7- Conclusion

The Makah proposal to resume whaling drew immediate reactions from anti-whaling organizations and concerned citizens around the world. The reaction and the tribe's subsequent plans to resume whaling in the face of immense controversy has been the subject of the most intense media event involving Native Americans in the 1990s.

It should be no great wonder why the Makah whale hunt drew intense press coverage. The situation is intriguing for many reasons. The Makah proposed to conduct the first whale hunt from the United States coast in 70 years. The environmental movement's reaction caused conflict and potential confrontation. Conflict has always played a significant role in press coverage. Finally, environmentalists and Native American tribes are commonly perceived by many Americans as natural allies. (Krech, 1999; P. Deloria, 1998). The portrayal of these two supposed allies locked in conflict and confrontation presents an interesting situation likely to merit the attention of many readers.

The news media is supposedly governed by a duty to provide an informed and enlightened citizenry. This principle, one of the major tenets of democratic theory, is based on the assumption that the press will present information free of bias. This supposed dedication to objectivity legitimizes press reports as truth for many Americans. Unfortunately, this adherence to objectivity is often fictional.

Newspapers are a business. As such they are guided by two overriding principles: Money and power. The press assures money by providing a product that sells. They obtain and retain power based on their alliances with the elite members of the

capitalist-democratic institutions in the United States. This alliance is usually embodied in an ideological sense. The most powerful and persuasive institution in the United States is, arguably, the federal government. Based on ideological and practical economic interests, the news press finds itself portraying reality in conjunction with the hegemonic framework defined by the capitalist-democratic society in the United States.

The press, when presented with a scenario to include in their coverage, must consider both its economic and ideological self-interest. These considerations are institutionalized in the media's hierarchy, policies, and decision-making processes. In other words, they are almost automatic. As a result, the press is able to manipulate reality in a manner that serves its own needs through the process of framing.

Framing is a process that reinterprets and presents reality in a way that makes sense to the reader. "Media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual" (Gitlin, 1980 p. 7).

The coverage of the Makah whale hunt provides a rich example of press framing that allows a newspaper, in this case the *Seattle Times*, to fulfill its economic and ideological obligations. The federal, state, and local governments' willingness to support the Makah in their venture obligated the *Seattle Times* to present the situation with a pro-whaling bias. The *Seattle Times*' economic needs required the paper to present an interesting scenario likely to captivate its readers.

Two framing devices emerged in the *Seattle Times* coverage: "Issue" framing and "personality" framing. The newspaper was able to fulfill the ideological obligations by manipulation of the issues through framing. Economic considerations were realized by shaping the characters, actors, and personalities involved in the conflict. This allowed the

Seattle Times to present an interesting, if not at times sensational, story that conspired to captivate the attention of its readers.

The *Seattle Times* was prompted to cover the story based on the public reaction to the Makah proposal. The issues are initially secondary. This claim is supported by the fact that, two years prior to the whaling request, Makah tribal officials publicly stated their desire to resume seal hunting. Their tribal council's position on the overriding issues, treaty rights, species population numbers, and definition of culture, are identical to the whaling proposal. However, there was no public reaction to the seal hunting request. There was also no coverage of the hunting or the issues.

The *Seattle Times* begins its coverage of the whale hunt by defining the personalities of the parties involved. The protest movement is marginalized as reactionary and illogical. This frame marginalizes the individuals involved as well as the personalities, character, and overriding nature of the anti-whaling organizations. The Makah tribe is centralized and defined as a group unified in its desire to resume whaling. The hunt is portrayed as an attempt to save an ancient way of life that has been stripped away from the tribe through decades of hardship and turmoil. The hunt will supposedly ameliorate the years of hardships suffered by the tribe and save the culture for generations to come.

This portrayal provides a dual framework that will permit future articles to define the issues based on the personalities and character of the tribe and the protesters. This enables reporters to marginalize the protest movement, thus discrediting their positions on the issues. The portrayal of the tribe and the whale hunt as a noble effort to restore dormant cultural traditions allows the tribe and their positions, which are supported by the U.S. Government, to be legitimized.

The issue frames are continuously reinforced throughout much of the five year period. Representative Jack Metcalf defended the anti-whaling positions during the “second phase.” This introduced a possible challenge to the legitimacy of the federal government’s positions and raised potential questions regarding the appearance of strength and unity within the federal government. The *Seattle Times* focused on Metcalf’s character and motivations. Articles framed him as a maverick politician motivated by a racist agenda. These frames are designed to delegitimize his positions. The practice of destroying the message by destroying the messenger is prevalent throughout the five-years of coverage.

The positions and character of the anti-whaling groups are legitimized in three articles published during the second phase. The articles are “human interest” stories. The tribal council is portrayed as a corrupt body intent on meeting its own financial interests at the expense of culture, tradition, and other tribal members. Tribal officials are accused of resorting to coercive tactics to silence tribal opposition to whaling. The position that whaling is simply too brutal for modern times is presented. The author proposes a mock-whaling hunt. This would allow “our elders,” or the whales, to thrive amongst a culture that prides itself on maintaining, not killing a species.

These articles present the extreme opposite of the pro-whaling arguments. Publishing them serves two purposes. First, it introduces the anti-whaling positions as beliefs. The pro-whaling positions are usually referred to as fact. This reinforces the impression created in the first article that the anti-whaling movement is motivated by emotion instead of logic or legality. The characterizations of the tribal council are presented as biased. The articles are “human interest” stories, which frees them from the analytic structure of “hard news” articles. These stories address what the anti-whaling

position is or believes. The “hard news” articles frame the issues and personalities as fact.

The manner in which the anti-whaling positions are presented is designed to elicit a response. The extreme nature of the accusations as well as the references to whales as a nation to themselves, “our ancient kin,” and “our wise elders” will most likely stir sentiments in those already sympathetic with the anti-whaling position. The sentiments can be easily transformed into passion, thus heightening the emotions, tensions, and possibility for conflict. This presentation fulfills the economic interests of the newspaper by possibly stirring sentiment. However, the extreme presentation of the issues as beliefs rather than facts does not violate the core issue frames because they are easily dismissable as the opinion of a biased author.

One of the most efficient ways to marginalize a group or organization is to create a stereotype. A group’s opinions, beliefs, and personalities, typically complex and diverse, are categorized as a single entity and easily dismissed or marginalized. The *Seattle Times* does not represent variety within the protest movement. The articles portray the most radical organization involved in the anti-whaling protests, the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, as representative of all groups involved. This ‘guilt by association’ framing provides a tool to dismiss all personalities and positions within the anti-whaling movement as radical and violent.

The fourth phase of coverage introduces the first radical departure from the personality frames. As tensions increase, the *Seattle Times* presents the protest movement and the Makah tribe in a more realistic manner. Tribal unity is questioned and the protest movement is portrayed with more depth and variety. The most striking reframing is the presentation of Sea Shepherd leader Paul Watson as a complex and compassionate individual.

Conversely, the Makah are stereotyped. The tribe is portrayed as possessing a seemingly innate stoic patience. It is claimed that this characteristic is the most important tool the Makah possess. Patience, and a sense of “Indian time” will allow the tribe to persevere through the obstacles created by the protest movement.

This frame shifts when the tribe becomes entangled in open confrontation with protesters. The delays and other problems are presented as a result of the tribe’s losing sight of its goal to revive traditional culture. The tribe is portrayed as internally divided, weak and, in some frames, incompetent. The frames shift back to their original form following an offer by a Seattle millionaire to “buy off” the hunt. The delays and problems are painted as cultural. The tribe is once again playing by “Indian time.”

Presenting new frames allows a story to remain fresh. New framing devices keep the story novel and interesting and maintain the public’s attention. Journalism historian Mitchell Stephens argues that “[a]ll journalists are comrades in the battle against dullness” (Stephens, 1997, p.106). The ability to shift frames without violating the core issues involved in the conflict is an important weapon in this battle.

The shifts in personality framing take place while the issue frames remain unchanged. This allows the reporters to maintain an allegiance to ideological and economic considerations. The separation of the personality and issue frames allows journalists to creatively frame the personalities as long as the issue frames are not violated.

The personality frames justify and reinforce the issue frames until reinforcement is no longer needed. This shift suggests that the *Seattle Times* feels the issue frames are secure in the minds of the reading public and no longer require reinforcement by personality frames. The *Seattle Times* resorted to the well-worn “mystical stoic” Native

American stereotype (see Deloria, P., 1998 and Krech, S., 1999 for analysis of these stereotypes).

The issue frames were greatly diminished in the fifth phase of coverage. The press reports feature three events: The whale hunt, the subsequent cultural celebrations and the reactions of the protest movement. The “issue” frames are replaced by “personality” frames. The hunt is portrayed as a successful revival of culture. The U.S. Coast Guard prevents the protest movement from interfering. Their presence in the press reports is minimal. The celebrations and ceremonies following the whale hunt are also portrayed as the successful revival of culture. The sense of hope for the future predicted in previous frames is portrayed as a realization.

The *Seattle Times* focuses on the most extreme and most threatening reactions. This presentation is not surprising. Deviance and the threat of violence are two of the most enduring values in journalism. “Social disorder news deals with activities which disturb the public peace and may involve violence or the threat of violence . . . American news media have always emphasized stories of social disorder” (Gans, 1979, p. 53).

The absence of issue frames is caused by two factors: First, the whale hunt provides a sensational action story. The personality framing enhances the action. I argue that issue frames are no longer necessary because the hunt is a reality. Issue frames are more prevalent when the hunt is a possibility. The debate over the issues is finished. This explains the lack of issue frames in the coverage of the reactions. Essentially, there was no issue to cover. The reporters are free to frame the story as they wish. Institutional and professional factors shape the reaction frames. Institutionalized news values and notions of newsworthiness define the coverage.

The Makah whale hunt provides an example of the factors that shape how Native Tribes are presented in the media. Support from the U.S. Government is the most

important factor in this situation. The *Seattle Times* defended the Makah's right to whale based on the fact that the U.S. Government supported the hunt. It was deemed legal by virtue of treaty rights. The hunt posed no threat to the gray whale population. Therefore, it was deemed ethical. The issue frames are chosen based on these ideological considerations.

The personality frames are an effective legitimization tool. The easiest way to destroy a message is to marginalize the messenger. The tribe was largely portrayed based on victimization frames. They are presented as suffering decades of intense hardship at the hands of the surrounding white community. No doubt this is true. The whale hunt is portrayed as a way to revive the ancient culture and ameliorate the hardships and oppression. Any attempt to prevent the revitalization of traditional culture is easily cast as an attempt to perpetuate oppression. Presenting the protest movement in this manner further delegitimizes them and, as a result, their positions.

This situation suggests that tribes are extremely vulnerable when it comes to their portrayal in the mainstream press. In the Makah coverage, the frames favored the tribe and the tribe realized its' desires. However, the tribe was defined by two factors largely out of its control: First, the issue frames were dictated by the decision of the U.S. Government to support whaling. This causes one to wonder what might happen should the U.S. Government oppose the tribe. The personality frames are created based on the personality and nature of the opposition. In this case, I argue the personality frames are more concerned with marginalizing the protesters. The tribe's personality is presented based on the easiest way to marginalize the protesters and delegitimize their positions.

The gains made by tribes over the past 30 years have been nothing short of remarkable. Tribes are asserting themselves economically, politically and socially in the United States. The gains already made as well as future gains in sovereignty and

self-determination are influenced by the court of public opinion. This domain is ruled by the news media. It is imperative that Native Tribes find a way to portray their desires, goals, and personalities free of distortion and manipulation.

In recent years, Native American run newspapers have started to play a more definitive role in presenting conflicts, situations and personalities from a tribal point of view. The presence of these publications serves to provide variety and adds to the democratization of information. An increased number of perspectives and views presented to the public enhances the likelihood that a more balanced and realistic version of the story is being told. Aiding Native journalists and newspapers whenever possible is vital to ensure this possibility is realized.

Postscript

On May 17, 1999 the Makah tribe brought to a conclusion the most heavily covered media event involving Native Americans in the 1990s. The tribe first petitioned the U.S. Government for permission to resume whaling in May of 1995. The five years between the initial petition and the successful completion of that goal witnessed a tribe attempting to revive its traditional culture in order to save it from passing into obscurity. The five years also witnessed a group of environmentalists attempting to save the international ban on commercial whaling and, in the process, save a species for generations to come.

The situation is complex. Legal, ethical, and moral dilemmas along with logical reactions can be overcome by a passionate zest to defend what one thinks is pure and true. The immediate conflict involved the Makah tribe and the anti-whaling protesters. By virtue of press coverage, we were allowed to take part, albeit in a passive way. We chose sides, formed opinions, and argued with our friends and colleagues based on our impressions of the events, issues and personalities. The beliefs that we hold on Makah whaling have largely been shaped by media presentation and portrayal. This begs us to question the legitimacy of the opinions we hold, especially on matters in which we are not immediately involved. The news media has a grave responsibility to present situations and events as free of bias as possible. Unfortunately the press often serves its own self-interest instead of the public good. Until the press reaches a point that it portrays events, situations, and issues without regard to its own leanings, it will be our duty to stay aware and alert every time we see the public good sacrificed for the almighty dollar.

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