

**VOICES ON THE SEAL HUNT:
COMMUNICATING OUR VIEWS OF ANIMALS
AND OURSELVES**

by

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ABSTRACT

The controversy over the killing of seals on the ice floes off of Atlantic Canada continues to be a very heated, socio-political and moral debate. Sealers' activities first came under intense public scrutiny in the early 1960s with the broadcast of a television documentary showing graphic footage of seals being clubbed. Since that time, the "seal war" has become an emotional war of words and images fought primarily via media outlets. This paper focuses on analyzing the content of public opinions as published in Canadian news sources. The aim was to elucidate the relevant arguments and delineate the major concerns of each "side" to the conflict. The language used was closely examined. Through this type of inquiry, it is hoped that underlying causes of the disagreement and apparent impasse may be discovered so that a more informed, respectful, and meaningful discourse may someday take place. The results showed that improved communication will be critically important if we are ever to change the status quo which is endless protest, endless backlash, and endless sealing.

The paper is divided into three general sections. Section I gives important background information, without which the issue cannot be adequately understood. A synopsis of the pertinent legal and policy framework is also included. Section II establishes theories and perspectives on the human treatment of non-human animals, explores how our conceptions are conditioned both socially and through the very language we employ, and sets the tone for further inquiry by relating these ideas to the Canadian seal hunt. Section III uses content analysis to explore seal hunt opinion. One interpretation regarding the root of this controversy is offered. The central thesis is that human beings ultimately accept varying treatments of "others" in direct relation to how they perceive themselves and their own status in the world around them.

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Finally, I wish to thank my Mom and Dad & all of my family for their love and encouragement. You must all be seal 'experts' by now! My love and respect for animals comes directly from theirs and from the wonderful experience of knowing all the animals that have touched our lives – most especially my Larry and Billy. I miss you both so much! XOXOXO

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PREFACE

Animals are responsible for the most joyful experiences that I have known in life. They give and receive affection with an honesty that few humans can match. And when they hurt, it is without intention. This is not to say that they do not deliberate – they simply take no pleasure in injury. My early childhood memories are happily filled with animals. I came to know cats and dogs early on, but many other animals followed. Each individual has his or her own unique personality and every one has taught me something about kindness and love.

Nearly four years ago, I lost my best friend. I spent twelve and a half years of my early adulthood with my ‘babies’, Larry and Billy. Billy is living a long, contented life. But Larry was always a bit restless. He needed me around more and I wasn’t always there. When he became sick and no one knew why, I blamed myself. Maybe I didn’t pay enough attention to prevent it or work hard enough to make it better. He wasted away before my very eyes and nothing I did helped him at all. Eventually, I made a decision that ended his life. I will never know if it was the right decision. I will never know if it was a selfish decision. And I can’t seem to forgive myself. I held his head in my hand as he slipped away and emptiness filled the eyes that had seen and trusted me a moment before. Which moment was it? I didn’t get to say goodbye. Words cannot describe the depth of my loss and I miss him every day. And so, this project is dedicated first to his memory.

I first became interested in seals around 1988 when I purchased a striking poster of a whitecoat harp seal. I hadn’t heard much about the seal hunt prior to that and I remember being alarmed at the image it conjured in my mind. How could anyone do that? But the caption beneath the photograph proclaimed an end to the hunt. It was a victory message of sorts and I was glad of that. Shortly after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, the sea lions invaded the west docks at Pier 39 and their barking became the soundtrack to my life there. Weekend excursions to Monterey introduced me to the sea otter and I was hooked. There was just something about all of these animals that was very special. And so, I dedicate this project to each and every pinniped (or fissioned as the case may be) who has ever met with an unfriendly human hand, and to all of the ice seals who are yet to come.

This paper is confined to the annual east coast hunt for harp seals and other seals in Canada. It is constrained by its function as a Master’s Project for a specific academic program and by the research methods used, but many of the comments herein are broadly applicable to other instances where human actions are in conflict with animal welfare. People have asked many questions about the seal hunt. Is it ‘sustainable’? Is it ‘well-managed’? Are the killing methods ‘humane’? But it is important to remember that no questions were ever asked until the day that someone (*Dr. Harry Lillie, 1949*) opened Pandora’s box by daring to ponder – Is it cruel?

Terra Magdalen Sturn,
May 01, 2006

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SECTION I: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The commercial hunt for harp seals (*Phoca groenlandica*; a/k/a *Pagophilus groenlandica*) in Canada officially takes place on an annual basis from November 15th through May 15th. The greatest coordinated efforts occur each spring, generally beginning the second week of March and continuing through the end of April. Seals are killed within two main regions during this time – “The Front” and “The Gulf” – respectively referring to vast areas of ice floes situated north of Newfoundland off of the Labrador coast, and to smaller areas in the Gulf of St. Lawrence near the Magdalen Islands. These locations surround the whelping areas – places where adult females have come to give birth and nurse their pups. Females fastidiously nurse their pups on the ice and wean them within two weeks of birth, leaving them to fend for themselves.

The hunt today primarily targets these young harp seals (14 days to 1 year old), known as “beaters”, who have moulted the white coats they bear at birth for a silvery-grey, spotted coat. While the pups have been weaned and abandoned by their mothers, they are just learning how to survive in their environment and may be somewhat reliant upon each other to this end. Hooded seals (*Crystophora cristata*) over one year old are hunted as well, but to a lesser extent. Other seals – including grey seals, ringed seals, harbour seals, and adult harp and hooded seals – comprise the smallest percentage of animals killed.

Young seals can be readily approached on the ice by the sealers who use traditional Norwegian hakapiks (or clubs containing a sharp metal spike at the tip) to deliver a blow to the animal's skull. This is the most common method used by sealers in 'The Gulf' where the ice conditions allow for walking amongst the seals. Rifles are used to shoot seals from aboard vessels at the 'Front' and the animals are collected aboard using boat hooks. Long-line vessels (35'-65' in length) as well as smaller boats are used to transport sealers to the hunting grounds where sealers may hunt on foot or use snowmobiles. Collector vessels in excess of 65' may be used to collect and process the pelts or carcasses, although the latter are collected less frequently. (ASHMP, 2003-2005)

Subsistence and 'personal use' are components of the overall hunt. However, for the purposes of this discussion and because it represents by far the greatest amount of activity and is the greatest source of contention, I will focus my attention on the commercial hunt only.

1.2 "OF SEALS AND MEN"

Sealing has long been a traditional means of supporting local communities in what is today, eastern Canada. Here, men (of European heritage) have been going out for the harp and other seals since the late 16th century, though Native peoples had been hunting seals long before that time (Candow, 1989). There is a cultural dimension to sealing that runs deep for many local people and it is often romanticized through storytelling, sea songs, literature, and art (Mowat, 1973; Busch, 1985). This sense of cultural identity and feelings of intense pride that accompany sealing (or 'swiling' as it was called) have been particularly strong for Newfoundlanders. Farley Mowat offers a

glimpse into the mind of a sealer as personal histories were recounted to him. “My people were sea-hunters and the two great quarries of these cold northern seas were the cod and the seal, so they became cod fishers and sealers, and proud of the calling. My grandfather ... was a man who knew the stuff of which our pride was made.” (Mowat, 1973: 7)

The seal hunt today is often misleadingly diminished in importance by referring to it as an “off-season activity” or supplemental income for the sealers, which it is. But it is equally clear that the activity holds a central place in the collective mindset of the people who are involved. Entire communities grew up around the industry, especially along the Northeastern shores of Newfoundland (Candow, 1989). Men, women, and even children became involved in various levels of the ‘swiling game’ (Mowat, 1973).

The economic importance of the sealing industry to 19th century Newfoundlanders cannot be denied. Although its importance has flagged since the early 20th century, it continues to have limited regional importance (Candow, 1989). Sealing approaches and methods themselves changed over the course of history as the hunt transitioned (through the 1700s) from being a primarily land-based, winter activity to a sea-based activity as men began setting out in schooners headed for the ‘spring ice’. (Candow, 1989). This was effectively the birth of the ‘commercial seal hunt’.

Sealing was a dangerous occupation and the life was brutal for sealers and seals alike. “The swiling frenzy (in the 1800s) seemed to mount with each succeeding year – bringing with it appalling losses of ships and men ... Although nobody bothered to keep account of how many men were lost, there must have been well over a thousand

drowned, crushed, or frozen to death. They did not die alone. Between 1838 and 1870, the sealing fleet brought in more than twelve million sculps!”¹ (Mowat, 1973: 30)

By the second half of the 19th century, seal populations were depleted as evidenced from low ‘catch’ numbers. Candow describes the exploitation of the seals themselves as the ‘second great theme of the Newfoundland seal hunt’. Social relations between sealers and merchants/owners in Newfoundland became strained during this same era as the result of changing controls over the industry. Social structures shifted accordingly and sealers often complained of the inequity. “If the voyage fails, the owner still has his ship ... but the poor man returns ... penniless ... insurance relieves the merchant, but if thirty lives are lost, then thirty widows and perhaps a hundred orphans shriek their curses on a fishery that gave them no compensation and was the grave of all their hopes ...” (Mowat: 31-32). Mowat characterizes the seal hunt during this time as “the organized exploitation of both men and seals”.

1.3 THE RISE OF CONTROVERSY

Up until the middle twentieth century, sealers activities were not interfered with in any significant manner. However, with modernization came an interest in managing the ocean’s resources by government, as well as an interest on the part of sealers to take advantage of new technologies, increase their economic benefit, and improve their safety conditions. Intense sealing efforts post World War II led to concern over the survival of seal populations. In response, the Canadian government began to regulate the hunt and implemented catch quotas by the 1960s (Candow, 1989).

¹ A sculp is a seal pelt with a layer of fat still attached.

Advances in communications and technologies around the world had the effect of exposing the sealers to an unprecedented international scrutiny. In 1964, Artek films of Montreal produced a documentary on Canadian sealing as part of a promotional series on Canada's industries (Davies, 1970; Lee, 1989; Candow, 1989). The film was released and segments of it aired on television. A Montreal newspaper printed an article called "Murder Island" by one reporter who viewed the film. Protests were immediately received by the Canadian government and the "seal hunt controversy" swiftly ensued. Soon after, the film was broadcast in its entirety due to the level of public interest. The seal hunt was perceived to be cruel and barbaric by many people from around the world and both sealers and government officials were put on the defensive as public outcry became widespread.

By the late 1960s, protests accompanied the opening of the sealing season as a matter of course (Lee, 1989). The '60s and '70s saw dramatic shifts in social consciousness in the western world including changes in public attitudes regarding civil rights, women's rights, environmental degradation, and animal rights and welfare. Campaigns against the seal hunt became stronger, more organized, and better funded. Celebrities who opposed the hunt (such as actress, Bridget Bardot and fashion model, Celia Hammond²) began to speak out in defense of the seals and they drew media attention by going out onto the ice floes themselves. Many protestors followed suit and ugly confrontations occurred.

Opposition to the seal hunt mounted, eventually having significant economic consequences. In the 1980s, the European Economic Community instituted a ban

² Celia Hammond subsequently gave up her career to join the 'Save the Seals' efforts and today is the owner/operator of an animal sanctuary. She had been a top fur model in Great Britain.

prohibiting the importation of ‘whitecoat’ and ‘blueback’ pelts³ which effectively choked the market. The effect was felt not only by the commercial sealers, but by Northern Inuit communities (who hunted only adult seals), as well. (Wenzel, 1991; Dakers, 1988) The Canadian government shut the hunt down completely in 1988 and subsequently illegalized the killing of the whitecoats and bluebacks. The latter action was in conjunction with directives from the Royal Commission Report on Seals and Sealing in Canada. (Malouf, 1986)

1.4 “CULTURES OF DISCONTENT”

Most Newfoundland sealers had been fishers of Atlantic cod (*Gadus morhua*) as their primary source of income. Cod populations were observed at low levels for some time (Neis & Williams, 1997). But the early 1990s experienced a precipitous decline in Atlantic cod stocks. The Newfoundland cod fishery collapsed and in 1992 a moratorium was placed on commercial fishing for cod inside Canada’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) along the Grand Banks. The cod stocks are still in trouble and the moratorium remains in effect nearly fourteen years later.

Overfishing is widely acknowledged as a primary cause of this decline, however there are probably contributing factors. Fishing of the resource by foreign fleets is one factor – seals are thought to be another. While there is general agreement within the scientific community that trophic dynamics in the Northwest Atlantic are complex and that the cause(s) of the cod decline remain uncertain, the harp seal consumes cod opportunistically as part of its overall prey consumption and has often been seen as a

³ Whitecoats are newborn to 2 week old harp seals that have not yet moulted their coats. Bluebacks are hooded seals up to two years old that possess a sleek blue/grey or slate colored coat on the dorsal side.

damaging influence on cod and other fish (such as capelin) by fishers and government officials alike. Hence, removing seals is sometimes perceived to be a benefit to the fishery. The *Sou'wester*, a trade paper and the self-proclaimed 'Voice of Atlantic Canada's Commercial Fishing Industry', attests to this as it is regularly filled with articles and comments describing such a "benefit" and discussing "the seal problem".

The fall of the cod fishery had profound effects on rural people of the Maritime provinces. Dona Davis, a feminist researcher and anthropologist at University of South Dakota and University of Tromsø, Norway, describes the emergence of a "culture of discontent" in Newfoundland. "Once thriving fishing communities of successful primary producers and processors had become unemployment insurance and welfare economies." (Davis, 2000) She documents a crisis of escalating violence within the communities and a level of social conflict which has left people demoralized and socially displaced as a 'new elite' class of the permanently employed took shape. Former fishers are left struggling with 'make work projects' and many have faced the difficult decision of having to leave altogether, though there is staunch resistance to that. Davis sheds light on a commonly shared sense of resentment and pervasive bitterness that local fisheries have been sold out to the interests of others. The implications that these feelings and all of the above circumstances may have for the management of the harp seal hunt are equally profound.

1.5 RECENT SEALING POLICY

The federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans has responsibility for and oversight of all matters pertaining to seals and sealing in Canada. The main body of law

that governs sealing activities is the Marine Mammal Regulations (MMRs) which came into force in 1993 (under authority of the Canadian Fisheries Act of 1985, section 43a) and which supplanted the earlier ‘Seal Protection Regulations’. The MMRs were amended in 2003. Significant changes included new licensing requirements, provisions for improving the assessment of seal mortality, and stipulations for greater use of the animal. The amendments specify that:

- Sealers must obtain separate licenses for commercial hunting vs. personal use hunting.
- A license is required for the lethal removal of “nuisance” seals that have not been deterred through other actions.
- Collector vessels may exceed 65’ feet in length and may be used to collect and process pelts/carcasses from the smaller boats and may also serve as a safe haven for sealers during inclement weather.
- Sealers must administer a “blinking reflex test” to determine whether or not a seal is dead before moving on to another animal.
- Sealers must take the pelt OR the carcass (i.e. it is unlawful to take only organs or appendages).
- Existing gear restrictions are retained (e.g. nets may not be used to collect seals).

The above points, taken with the original MMRs, encapsulate virtually all rules governing sealing⁴. The MMRs do not apply to aboriginal taking of seals for subsistence or cultural uses. No license is required for these purposes. Additionally, any coastal residents above 53 degrees North latitude who wish to hunt seals for personal use do not need to obtain a license to do so.

Annual seal hunt management plans were developed for 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002. The 13th report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (or the 1999 “Seal Report”) recommended that a special panel be formed to assess the “current state of

⁴ The original MMRs prohibit the taking of whitecoat harps and blueback hoods.

scientific knowledge” in order to direct future management of the seal resource. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans appointed six members (three Canadians and three from outside Canada) to the Eminent Panel on Seal Management. Their final report was released in late 2001 and it served as the basis for discussion at the 2002 Seal Forum in St. John’s, Newfoundland. The Eminent Panel Report, along with comments from discussions at the Seal Forum, was used to inform the development of the 2003-2005 Atlantic Seal Hunt Management Plan (ASHMP).

The plans from 1999 through 2002 each loosely declared their management goals to be: a) long-term sustainable use of a fishery resource; b) a market driven commercial hunt with conservation parameters; c) full use of the animal encouraged; and d) humane hunting practices. Each relied upon designating a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) by species and strove for an equitable allocation of TAC amongst participants. The TAC took into account the “replacement yield” estimate or the projected number of animals which can be taken in a given year without reducing the total population in the next year. The overall management strategy did not significantly change with the 2003-2005 plan except that the terminology is a bit different. The most significant changes were in accordance with the 2003 amendments that pertained to licensing and vessel restrictions, as well as the mandate to perform a check for death.

The current plan uses an Objective-Based Fisheries Management (OBFM) model. Conservation reference points and control rules are established to guide management decisions. Reference points are considered to be “pre-established population levels that trigger specific management actions when they are reached”. Control rules are the “specific, pre-established actions that should be taken at certain reference points”.

Reference points were set at 70%, 50%, and 30% of the “Maximum Observed Population Size”. Examples of control rule actions would be adjusting TAC to a lower level, adjusting season length, or implementing area closures. This model apparently only applies to the harp seal populations and not to the other species hunted. Other species are considered “data poor” and are managed “more conservatively”. The maximum observed population size of harp seals is estimated at 5.5 million animals. There is no indication of whether this estimate includes the entire North Atlantic population or if the estimate is specific to areas within Canadian jurisdiction. It likely includes the entire stock which is also hunted by Greenland. Greenland’s total removal of seals from the population is not accounted for in deriving Canada’s TAC. In this plan, the DFO states its objectives as the following:

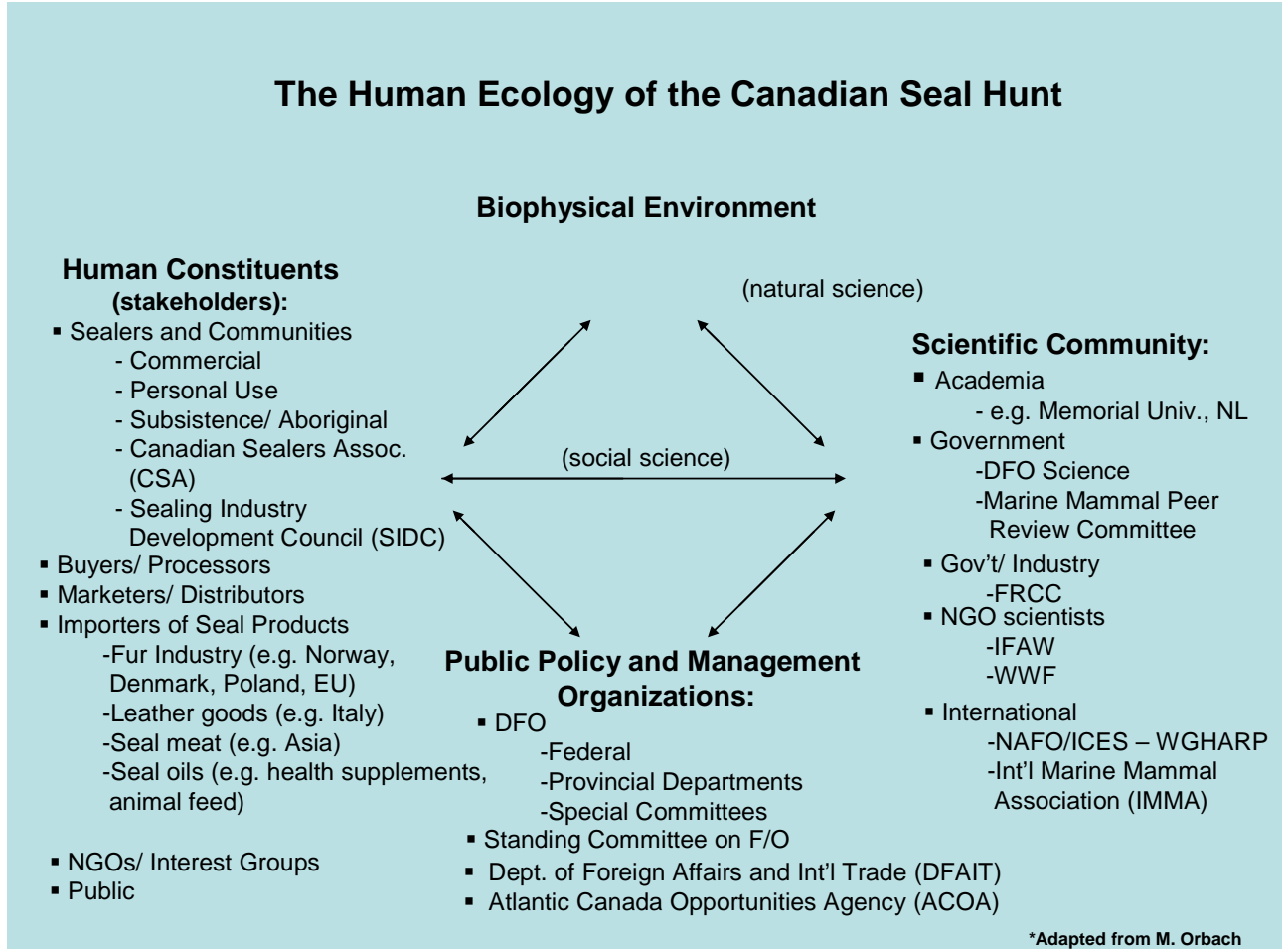
- a) To maintain the population above the 70% reference point (3.85 million)
- b) At and above the 70% reference point, to manage the resource based on ecosystem and socio-economic considerations.
- c) When the resource is abundant, OBFM will facilitate a market-driven hunt, maximizing benefits to sealers without compromising conservation.

The TAC for harp seals is set at 975,000 over the three year time span with an annual limit up to 350,000 for any two years. TAC for hooded seals is 10,000 per year. An unspecified “small” number is allowed for grey seals and no TACs apply to other species. TAC is now allocated across the various license or use types and the vessel types. The next plan is being developed pending the results of a report on pup production and population estimates which was due at the end of December 2005. [*See Appendix for further comments on policy.*]

1.6 HUMAN ECOLOGY

The seal hunt draws the interest and involvement of diverse players whose priorities and concerns are often in direct conflict. Human ecology is a way of describing relationships and the ways in which various groups of people interact to shape the world in which they live. Decisions that influence the biophysical world (i.e. seals and the marine environment) are guided by scientists who have a role informing policymakers and their human constituents. Policymakers are responsible to these constituents who, in turn, use and impact the biophysical world and who have both vested interests and concerns related to the health of this realm. The figure below highlights some of the major players acting on the seal hunt in recent years and illustrates the relationships between them.

[Figure 1.1 – Human Ecology of the Canadian Seal Hunt]



Important to Note:

- The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) provides funding for projects undertaken by the Sealing Industry Development Council (SIDC).
- The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) is an intergovernmental science and management organization to which Canada is a party. NAFO manages several specific fish stocks in the Northwest Atlantic, including Atlantic cod. Together with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), NAFO established the Working Group on Harp and Hooded Seals (WGHARP) which seeks to research seal predation on cod and quantify their dietary components.
- The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) is involved in negotiations to remove or weaken trade barriers with the United States and other countries.

SECTION II: THE CONTEMPORARY SEAL HUNT DEBATE

2.1 “THE SEAL WARS”

Several authors have regarded the controversy as the “seal wars” (e.g. Busch; Watson; Henke; Lee). The difficulty with the seal debate lies in the fact that it is a moral topic. Some would argue that it is not. In fact it is often presented as merely a question of practicality by proponents of the seal hunt and by policymakers. With the seal debate, one side either explicitly identifies the seal hunt as a moral question or implicitly does so through consideration of cruelty vs. humane treatment, while the other side does *not* see it as a *moral* question at all. This is precisely what sets it apart from other moral issues.

For example, abortion and the cloning of human embryos are contemporary moral topics. They can be directly compared to the seal hunt debate in that the arguments are ongoing, emotionally-charged, and often lead to violent confrontations between groups of people. Finding workable solutions to the problems is significantly obstructed *because of* the deeply held and opposing beliefs of the arguers. In each case, however, both sets of arguers generally recognize that they are arguing a moral topic. This is where the seal debate (and I would say most animal welfare/animal rights issues) departs. So what is it that makes us recognize moral obligation? I will explore this question further on.

John Lee, a University of Toronto researcher studying moral communications, says that “the seal war was from the beginning a moral conflict”. He further describes it as “a hearts and minds battle of words” between ‘moral contestants’. Moral contestants

are “sides” to a conflict and each side attempts to win supporters for an opposing view of reality. Morality is seen as a way of talking about a topic (Lee, 1989). Indeed the seal hunt (or any moral topic) can be talked about in other, more detached, pseudo-objective or ‘scientific’ ways. But the seal debate has certainly not been limited to this type of talk. In almost every discussion of the seal hunt, ‘moral claims’ are made – whether they are in the interest of protecting seals (the ‘rights’ of an animal) or in the interest of maintaining a way of life (the ‘right’ of a human). This clearly indicates that certain matters of importance exist which cannot be adequately assessed using empirical methods alone.

2.2 ‘VOICES’ OF INFLUENCE

The term ‘voice’, used throughout this paper, is considered to be the speaker of a moral topic (Lee, 1989). For example, the ‘protestor voice’, the ‘sealer voice’, the ‘media voice’, the ‘government voice’, and so on⁵. The media both reflects public sentiment and potentially influences it as well by focusing more or less time and space on certain subjects or points-of-view, by inclusion/exclusion of material, and by page placement within a paper/ position of a story within a broadcast/ use of graphics, photos, and captions/ and by editorial comments and behavior of news anchors. All of these choices can influence how the public perceives the seal hunt.

Other influential ‘voices’ are those of special interest groups including advocates for animal welfare or animal rights, hunting rights, industry or trade groups, universities, and scientific advisory or management councils. While the news media, at least in theory, strives to be impartial in its presentation of news stories, the above groups have

⁵ Lee’s paper conducts a content analysis of newspaper articles on the seal hunt and analyzes them according to the ‘voices’ that are used in communicating the topic. [These were general news articles and not letters from the public as my study investigates in Section III.]

no such principle guiding their decisions or determining what material they distribute. (Universities and scientific bodies may be somewhat of an exception.) They actively seek to promote their points-of-view and use content (which they produce) to accomplish that goal. Because of this, they can be aligned on one side or the other. Celebrities may also wield considerable influence.

Government is a special case. The general public, in our systems, gives “authority” to the government. Therefore, what the government says carries a certain weight and importance regardless of whether or not it receives criticism. People may tend to perceive statements issued by government officials or found on government websites to be unbiased or accurate representations of the whole truth. With respect to the seal hunt, the government is sometimes seen as a 3rd party (Lee; various letters). Further, they are seen as an expert third party.

The implication that the Canadian government is somehow outside of the seal hunt debate is misleading and erroneous. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans staunchly supports the seal hunt and explicitly states this on their website and in planning documents, correspondence, public statements in the media, and on television. The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) are actively involved in developing the sealing industry. Almost all of the text found on the Canadian Sealer’s Association website is written by the DFO and used with permission. That government has significant resources at its disposal and practical expertise in fisheries management or access to ‘experts’ in various fields is beyond question. The point is, government has the capacity for tremendous influence on public opinion and it is not a 3rd party in this issue.

2.3 PUBLIC OPINION

A number of attempts have been made to quantify public attitudes toward the Canadian seal hunt. Surveys and polls are the most common methods. The following list is a sampling of these efforts within the past fifteen years:

- (2005) Ipsos-Reid Express poll. Financed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), Canada. Telephone interviews of 1,000 Canadians across all provinces, 2 questions, seal hunt specific.
- (2005) Environics Research poll. Financed by International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). Surveys of 1,000 Canadians, 7 questions, seal hunt specific.
- (2005) Opinion Business Research (ORB) poll. Financed by Respect for Animals.
- (2003) Market and Opinion Research International (MORI) poll. Financed by International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). Telephone interviews of 2,003 adults from 4 European countries (France, Germany, Great Britain, and The Netherlands).
- (2002) Penn, Schoen, and Berland Associates poll.
- (1991) Surveys by Kellert, Gibbs, and Wohlgenant. Financed by the International Marine Mammal Association (IMMA). 1,200 mail surveys across 6 focal provinces, 125 questions on a range of commercial fisheries and marine mammal issues.

While most of these techniques yield important information for decision makers and can be useful for characterizing public sentiment, they primarily capture who, what, where, and when, and infrequently statements of how people would like to see things done. They are limited in their ability to capture the ‘*whys*’. The question is rarely even asked. The DFO commissioned poll is problematic in that the second question posed to respondents states that the hunt under current management is unequivocally humane. On the basis of a biased question, the results from this poll should be discarded. The Kellert study is a comprehensive investigation of Canadian attitudes on commercial fisheries

management and marine mammal conservation. His results on the seal hunt were comparable to my own. (see Kellert, 1995)

2.4 CONCEIVING OF ANIMALS

Philosophical thought concerning the place of non-human animals in this world with respect to human beings is a rich, diverse field that is well beyond the scope of this paper. However, this body of knowledge and inquiry encompasses many ideas which are crucial to understanding the seal debate.

Volumes have been written about what may endow a being with moral standing or entitlement, what characteristics are morally relevant or irrelevant, what determines who is accepted into the “moral club”, so to speak (Rowlands, 2002). Rowlands theorizes that animals (or at least certain animals) are shown to be *in* the moral club because we accept that they deserve some form of consideration⁶. Sentience and/or consciousness seem to be the prerequisites for our acceptance. While we accord animals moral consideration, they are curiously relegated to being “second class members” of the moral club. Rowlands maintains that this second class status is morally unacceptable because it is inconsistent.

I agree with the above statements, but I am interested to know what causes this ‘differential moral entitlement’. It cannot be based upon the condition of being a non-human because human history is replete with examples of inconsistent and differential treatment of other humans (e.g. discrepancies between the rights of owners and slaves,

⁶ Rowlands provides evidence using examples from human behavior and from animal cruelty law. I would add that this consideration may be absent in some non-Western cultures.

men and women, rich and poor, or adults and children). If not being human was the deciding factor, these examples would not exist.

Some people perceive a moral evolution taking place as we progress along a continuum through time or suggest ever-widening circles of empathy. To quote one philosopher, “The social history of the last two centuries can be seen as a continuing struggle to enlarge the boundaries of the moral community ... A case can now be made for making animals a part of the moral community.” (Miller, 1983: 5) Though there have always been people who demonstrated concern for the treatment of animals and well-established positions on the topic have evolved since the time of the early Greek philosophers, widespread interest in the welfare of non-humans is a fairly recent development (Miller, 1983: 4). The interest manifests to varying degrees among individuals and within specific cultural settings.

How we perceive and value animals is also directly communicated through the specific language we employ when talking about them or describing their use. Through language we share and teach our cultural values and socially construct the world around us ... including our concepts of animals (Smith-Harris, 2004). Language can foster societal permissiveness toward animals and allows us to normalize our control over them as well as our treatment of them. Phrases and metaphors that imply cruelty or violence toward animals or indicate human superiority litter our daily conversations even though the origins of these conventions may have been forgotten.

Word choices can gloss over violent acts. For example, when speaking about the killing of wildlife we could choose from a number of terms. The pervasively misapplied and euphemistic ‘harvest’ comes to mind. This word is only accurately applied to the

collection of crops, but has become the word of choice for scientists and wildlife managers with regard to the hunting or strategic removal of animals. The act of killing is thereby depicted as quite benign.

“It is not uncommon to lose sight of the animal when it comes to animal use industries.” (Smith-Harris: 14) The individualized animal disappears completely in scientific, agricultural, wildlife management, and policy arenas. We talk instead of populations, herds, or (my favorite) ‘resources’. Animals become mere objects or tools that exist for the benefit of humans and require ‘management’ or ‘control’. In sum, the terms we choose both reflect and condition our concepts of animals and simultaneously speak volumes on how we view ourselves.

SECTION III: CAPTURING THE DEBATE – A CONTENT ANALYSIS

3.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

My primary goal was to capture a “snapshot” of the current public discourse on the seal hunt. My purposes in doing so were:

- 1) to delineate the major concerns held by each “side”
- 2) to determine views or values of animals, wherever this was possible.

3.2 INTRODUCTION

The seal hunt controversy has been intense and ongoing. While more than forty years have transpired since the seal hunt first came to widespread public attention (some would say notoriety), there has been no inherent change in the fundamental arguments posed nor has there been much change in the way the debate plays out. There does not seem to be a solution at hand that will satisfy both “sides”. A solution, in fact, has not been sought. Instead, the debate rages on with both sides resolute in their positions.

Understanding the complex web of circumstances and values which drive both the hunt itself and the controversy surrounding it are essential if one is to understand the impasse. Many of these drivers are well acknowledged. However, I believe that some very critical ones remain suppressed and come out only infrequently or indirectly. Other drivers may be acknowledged but are chronically misunderstood and misinterpreted. My research endeavors to illuminate some of these underlying details in the hope that a path

may be established toward greater mutual understanding. Such understanding is critical if any progress is to be made.

3.3 METHODS

3.3.1 – Letters of Opinion (LOOPS):

A timely public discourse on the seal hunt was readily available in the form of opinion letters published in Canadian newspapers. Letters of opinion (or LOOPS), for this analysis, were defined as any body of text or message written by a member of the ‘general public’ which appears in a publicly circulated newspaper and contains ‘seal hunt content’. ‘Seal hunt content’ is any message content which describes, offers comment on, or expresses opinions regarding the seal hunt. The general public is considered to be any person who does not belong to the media [i.e. staff editorialists, freelance contributors, tv/radio personalities, etc.] and is not any of the following: government official, representative or employee of an advocacy group (e.g. animal welfare organization, hunting rights lobby), representative or employee of a commercial interest group (e.g. fur industry, fishermen’s or sealer’s association, etc.).

Each letter or message represents a piece of the total discourse (i.e. the continuous seal hunt “conversation”) and most will offer a valuable window into a particular side of the debate – for or against the seal hunt⁷. Since it may never be assumed that a particular sentiment expressed by any letter writer (on either side) is shared by every member of his/her constituency, a systematic and quantitative method is required to determine, as objectively as possible, which views are commonly held.

⁷ These types of letters are the only mechanism available to the general public for commenting on this issue in a public forum. Hence, they offer the only way to assess public sentiment without conducting a survey or opinion poll.

3.3.2 – Content Analysis and Qualitative Data Analysis:

The method of content analysis served my objectives quite well. Content analysis can be seen as the classic technique for analyzing printed ‘talk’ (Lee 1989) and it is frequently employed in communications research. Krippendorf (1980) describes it as “potentially, one of the most important research techniques in the social sciences”. Strictly defined, it is the “systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics” or “a systematic process for analyzing and classifying text content”. The method is fundamentally empirical in orientation (Krippendorf, 1980), allowing the researcher to make quantitative statements about a particular body of text. Thus it can help to limit researcher bias (Lee, 1989). In practice, however, there are multifarious approaches to content analysis – some of which integrate quantitative and qualitative techniques.

Qualitative interpretation of communications, not merely quantitative description of them, is often the practical goal of many social science studies. Content analysis can be valuable as an unobtrusive tool for identifying (and make inferences about) the intentions and characteristics of communicators (Berelson, 1952). “The use of content analysis can be extended to investigations of the relationship existing between two groups of communicators.” The ‘communicators’ are regarded as ‘producers of content’. Berelson further describes the analysis of such communication (in the form of correspondence) as constituting “a major use of content analysis”⁸. It can also be

⁸ For example, in the early 1900s, the AFL-CIO conflict was investigated using correspondence in labor newspapers with the goals of determining the “official attitude of the National Union”, classifying various positions, and drawing conclusions based on the findings. Another example is governmental analyses during WWII of classified correspondence between Berlin and Rome to uncover “attitudes toward Stalin” and to detect collaboration between German and Italian propaganda ministries. (Berelson, 1952)

valuable for describing trends, reflecting cultural patterns, determining psychological states, and for monitoring public opinion.

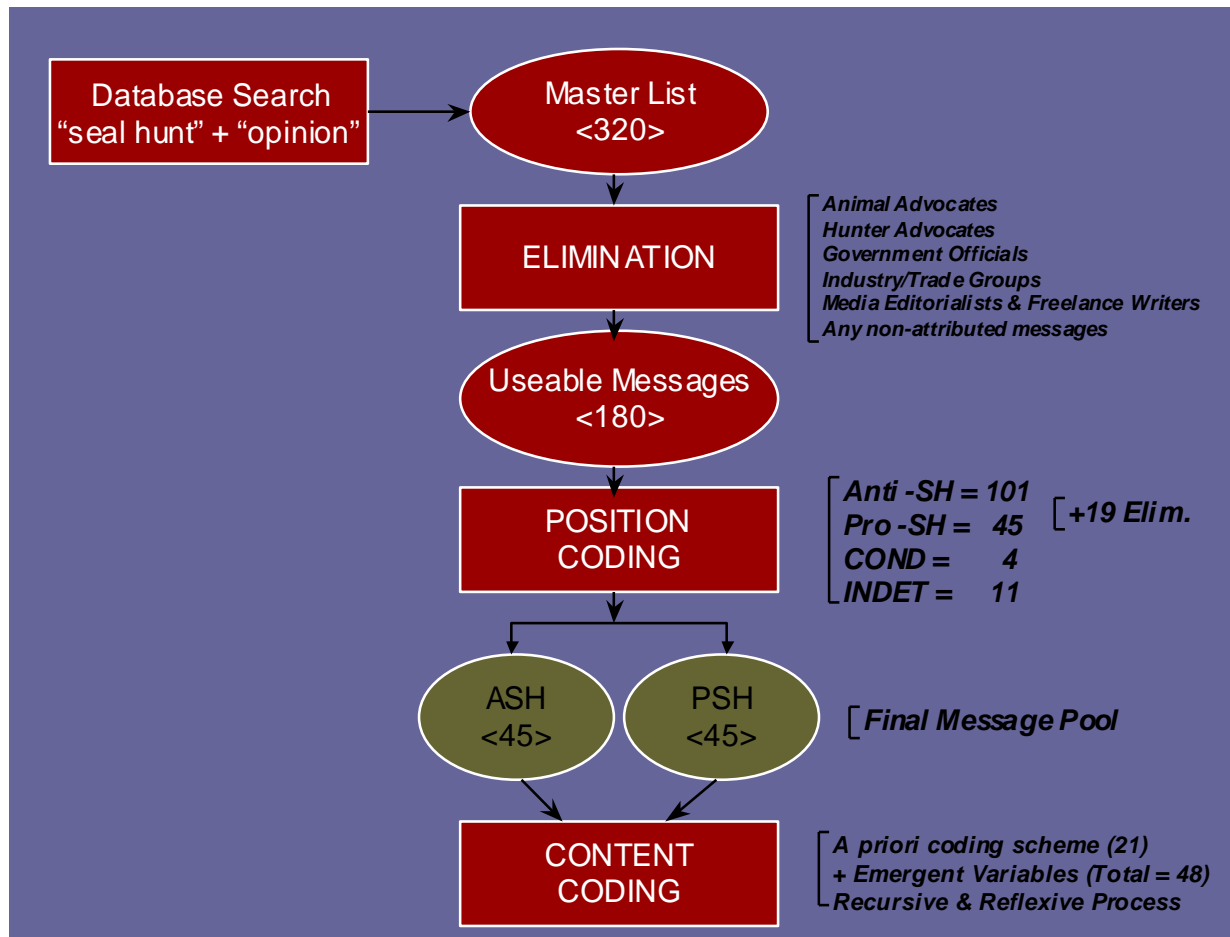
Lee (1989) cites the importance of interpretive studies of moral communications as part of the larger study of social conflicts. The correspondence (or LOOPs) on the seal hunt represents a body of opinion content in which the authors are the producers. It also comprises a body of moral communication [*see Section 2.1*] and is a valid representation of a particular social conflict – the seal hunt debate. For my analysis of this problem, I used a framework which allowed me to approach the data systematically and summarize my findings quantitatively, but that also gave me some flexibility to address new or unexpected information. Coding the data was therefore a cyclical, recursive process which also served as a built-in check for accuracy (through sheer repetition). In sum, though I imposed certain theories on the data initially, the results are largely derived directly from or are grounded in the data itself.

3.3.3 – Data Collection & Selection of Appropriate Material:

I began with a database search for opinion letters using Lexis-Nexis. I used the search string [“seal hunt” + “opinion”] to search the ‘World News’ category in all available North American news sources. This returned a list of hits for a 5-year period, given in reverse chronological order. I opened and viewed over forty of the letters to verify that my search string captured exactly what I had intended. I then printed this list and manually eliminated any obvious duplicates. I also eliminated any item falling outside of the desired time frame, which I set at 3 years to correspond with the most recent seal hunt management plan. The specific time frame of data analyzed was therefore limited to letters published between March 1, 2003 and March 15, 2006. This

effectively captured data covering the past four seal hunt “seasons”. This list of 320 items became my ‘Master List’ for further analysis. A summary of the entire process is shown in the figure below.

[Figure 3.1 – Methods Summary]



The master list items represented a broad base of Canadian national and regional news sources. Two items were from the same U.S. source, the Boston Globe, and one item was from a Mexican paper, El Universal. These three were eliminated as I was interested only in the Canadian discourse. This is not to suggest that foreign opinions were not present. A small number of letters submitted to Canadian papers by foreign

nationals and Canadians living abroad were included in the analysis as they are, through publication, part of the discourse in Canada and are representative of the debate.

Using the master list entries (which generally included the editor assigned headline, the paper and date of publication, section, page, word count, and byline) as a reference, I proceeded through a process of elimination – opening and viewing each document in succession in order to discard any items not containing “seal hunt content” and those with “inappropriate authorship”. These latter included letters written by the following persons: representatives or employees of advocacy groups (on either side of the issue); representatives of industry or trade groups with a vested interest in sealing or commercial fishing; government officials; members of fisheries management organizations or councils; and members of the media (including any staff editorialists, freelance contributors, and local television or radio personalities).

Most often, an affiliation with any of these groups was readily acknowledged as a means of lending support or credibility to one’s argument. However, a few items were suspect based on their dissimilarity from the general public messages and/or inordinate length. In these cases, I researched the name on the internet until I could place the name with an organization. If nothing was found, I retained the message. Comments from veterinarians and scientists were retained as long as they were personal in nature and were not submitted in association with any larger body. Repeat authors were treated as a single letter. Additionally, anything lacking author attribution was eliminated. I was left with a useable message pool of only those items composed by the general public.

3.3.4 – Position Coding

I copied and pasted the full text and detail from each useable message (180 items) into a word processing document separating each with the symbol ‘##’ and taking care to preserve the chronology. This was done to facilitate printing and hand mark-up of the copy. From this point, I read through every letter in its entirety (one at a time) and was able to make a position determination for each.

A simple set of criteria were used as a guide in making the determination. It was assumed that an explicit statement of position – for or against the seal hunt – was sufficient to determine position so long as the full context supported that conclusion. Where no explicit statement was made, I relied upon descriptive terms and phrases used to portray the seal hunt or sealing activities. Whether these terms were positive (favorable) or negative (unfavorable) throughout the text determined the position. In cases where the author only described people or parties to the debate (in positive or negative terms), it was considered a qualified determination. This was also true when the language was indirect or the author used literary devices in such a way that the position was clear from tone and context, but neither explicit nor descriptive terms could be coded. Some items were not determinable and a few authors gave conditions for their positionality. In sum, the available choices for designating position are:

ASH = Anti-Seal Hunt
PSH = Pro-Seal Hunt
QD-P = Pro-Seal Hunt (qualified determination)
QD-A = Anti-Seal Hunt (qualified determination)
COND = Conditional
ID = Indeterminate

All coding was done manually. Explicit statements were highlighted and descriptive terms were underlined, with arrows and circles used to reference the thing(s)

being described. All other notations were made in the margins in pencil. Once every letter was coded, I entered the results into a computer codeform (as an Excel spreadsheet) and assigned a unique ‘Letter ID’ to each to facilitate tracking. Further elimination was necessary at this stage, as well. The descriptive content necessarily *had* to address the seal hunt or parties to the debate in some significant way. Certain letters were removed based upon factors such as going off on a tangent subject or launching a personal attack on a specific person, etc. Basic information on each letter was also directly recorded into Excel at this point, such as date, newspaper, author’s gender, province of residence, etc.

Finally, I created two “books” of letters for analysis – a Pro-seal hunt book and an Anti-seal hunt book – using the word processor to cut/paste as above. (QD-Ps and QD-As were subsumed into the appropriate category.) The result consisted of 45 pro-seal hunt to 101 anti-seal hunt messages.

3.3.5 – Content Coding

While I had originally intended to code all of the letters, this quickly became an unwieldy task for one person. So, I included *every one* of the pro-seal hunt messages and matched them with a sub-sample of the 45 most recent anti-seal hunt messages. This became the final message pool, represented by the olive circles in Figure 3.1 (above). I then implemented an a priori coding scheme of 21 variables looking for descriptive terms or phrases on each and began to manually code the text. The coding scheme eventually grew to include 48 unique variables as new ones became apparent. A complete listing is shown in Table 3.3.5.

Although I coded a single letter at a time, the process was extremely recursive as I was forced to go back and code previous material for the emergent variables. Ultimately,

the complete text of each letter had to be read many multiple times in order to pull out this level of detail. It was not uncommon to find a new variable of interest even after several readings of the same text. For the sake of simplicity (and ergonomics), I found it easier to print a paper copy of my spreadsheet codeform and fill it in by hand after each letter or addition, rather than having to scroll repeatedly through my form on the computer. I entered the totals in Excel once all work was complete. By the time I had coded around twenty letters, it became clear that certain variables were of greater importance to my inquiry while others were interesting but not pertinent. For example, many of the variables under ‘style’ and ‘other devices’ became inconsequential.

[Table 3.3.5 – List of Content Variables]

	<i>Variable</i>	<i>Explanation</i> (~ self explanatory)
<i>Descriptive term or phrase on ...</i>	‘the seal hunt’	[as in the event, per se]
	‘sealing’	[the profession or activity of]
	‘the action on the seal’	[the physical act/ result of that act]
	‘sealers’	[the people incurring action on seal]
	‘seals’	[the animals themselves]
	‘environment’	[the seal’s surroundings]
	‘animals’	[animals in general]
	‘fishermen’	[commercial fishers in Canada]
	‘seal fishery’	[the commercial resource in seals]
	‘protestors’	[anyone on the anti-seal hunt side]
	‘supporters’	[anyone on the pro-seal hunt side]
	‘government’	[government; dept. of ; or gov’t official]
	‘Canadians’	~
	‘non-Canadians’	~
	‘media’	~
<i>Expression of ...</i>	‘personal feelings’	[own feelings regarding some aspect of the seal hunt or parties to the debate]
<i>Positive/Negative</i>	‘celebrities’	[celebrities speaking on seal hunt]
	‘seal/fisheries’	[relationship of seals to the fishery]
	‘economics’	[seal hunt impact to Canada’s economy]
<i>Mentions</i>	‘cod’	[any mention of cod or cod decline]
	‘boycott’	[any reference to boycotts by ASH side]
	‘urban/rural’	[cites urban/rural cultural differences]
	‘science’	[science supports their view]
<i>Level of Concern</i>	‘individual/population’	[talks primarily about individual animals vs. population or species level language]
<i>Attitude Toward Animals/Use of</i>	‘moralistic/humanistic/ ecologicistic/utilitarian/ and/or anthropocentric’	[*See typology of attitudes, Table 3.3.6, for definitions and explanation.]
<i>Central Issues</i>	‘xxx’ ...	[specific issues of concern]
<i>Style</i>	‘places blame’	~

	'defends'	~
	'criticizes'	~
	'admonishes'	~
	'justifies'	~
	'concludes'	~
	'resolves'	~
	'mandates'	~
	'urges'	~
	'pleas'	~
	'claims authority'	~
	'cites studies/figures'	~
Fallacies	'red herring'	~
	'ad hominem'	~
Other Devices	'rhetorical questions'	~
	'sarcasm'	~
	'humor'	~
	'tongue-in-cheek'	~
	'metaphor'	~
	'irony'	~
	'simile'	~
	'analogy'	~

The ‘vocabularies’ (see Results, section 3.4.2) were derived directly from the fifteen *descriptive* variables in Table 3.3.5. In each case I collected occurrences of individual words (and groupings of very similar words) in order to determine which ideas occurred with the greatest frequency – for each position and for each variable. Both manifest content and latent content were captured. Where it was necessary to paraphrase, I enclosed the term(s) in brackets to indicate that. Some words were considered neutral based on pervasive usage common to both sides of the debate and/or not possessing any particular “moral sting⁹” (Lee, 1989).

‘Emotions’ (see Results, section 3.4.4) were derived from the combination of vocabulary on the variable ‘personal feelings’ and on the overall tone of the letter. There were no neutral words in this category. Given the nature of expressing emotions in writing, it was no surprise that it most frequently appeared as latent content. In these cases, I paraphrased what was expressed and noted to whom or what it was directed.

⁹ Words which arouse moral sensitivity can be said to have a ‘moral sting’.

Other variables were coded based on presence/absence of a topic, positive or negative description of a topic, or the manner in which an idea was presented or argument was posed. Importantly, the central issues or concerns that were presented by each letter writer were paraphrased and recorded. Each and every instance was noted.

3.3.6 – Classifying Attitudes

One of my principal variables was ‘Attitude’ meaning attitude toward animals and animal use¹⁰. I utilized a modified typology based on the work of Dr. Stephen R. Kellert, a social science researcher at Yale University, in analyzing the text for this aspect¹¹. Dr. Kellert’s typology includes several parameters which were not widely applicable to this data and which I consequently omitted. I included an additional parameter that does not appear in the original typology – ‘anthropocentric’. My classification is shown in Table 3.3.6, below.

¹⁰ ‘Attitudes’ are defined as “learned predispositions to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner” (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975).

¹¹ Dr. Kellert’s typology was developed to support social science surveys of human attitudes toward wildlife that he and others have conducted since the 1970s. His classification characterizes a diversity of attitudes (or values) held by individuals and society at large (Lavigne, Sheffer, and Kellert, 1999).

[Table 3.3.6 – Modified Typology of Attitudes <on Kellert, S.>]

MORALISTIC	Concern for treatment of animals; Strong opposition to exploitation or cruelty toward animals.
HUMANISTIC	Affection for individual animals; Emotional attachment.
ECOLOGISTIC	Concern for interrelationships b/t wildlife species and natural habitats
UTILITARIAN	Practical and material exploitation of natural resources including animals and their habitats.
ANTHROPO-CENTRIC	Concerned with human beings as superior to animals; Human needs are more important or take priority.

Each letter was coded according to this typology. Every instance of attitude expression was recorded, meaning that more than a single type could be present and accounted for within a single message. Where there was no discernible expression of ‘attitude’, the message was categorized as ‘indeterminate’.

3.3.7 – Limitations and Advantages

There are several limitations involved with the methods that I have outlined. Coder fatigue is the most significant drawback. The process was extremely time and labor intensive, necessitating numerous breaks and days away from the process altogether. Opinion letters of this type tend to be relatively short – the average here was 168 words. However, the sheer number of variables that I was coding combined with the needs for accuracy & consistency presented a formidable challenge. I conservatively estimate that I spent approximately 12-15 minutes coding each letter with numerous “re-visits” of about 2-3 minutes each. That comes out to 27+ hours of coding. Ideally, the process should be streamlined significantly. Fewer variables should be considered at one

time and additional coders should be employed. In the end, my basic questions were answered using far less detail than I captured overall.

Additional coders would also enhance the process by providing a check for reliability of the coding scheme(s) and by providing a control to ensure maximum objectivity in coding. While I have made every effort to accurately and objectively code the material, I do hold my own position on the subject matter – as would most any other coder. This is because immersion in the subject matter is necessary for a solid understanding of the data being coded, but familiarity also leads to the formation of opinions. Given the intensity and complexity of this debate, I don't think it is possible to employ unbiased coders. Therefore, I would suggest a panel of at least four well-trained coders each with stated views and equally distributed by position (i.e. 2 ASH coders and 2 PSH coders). These might be tested against a similar panel for assessing reliability.

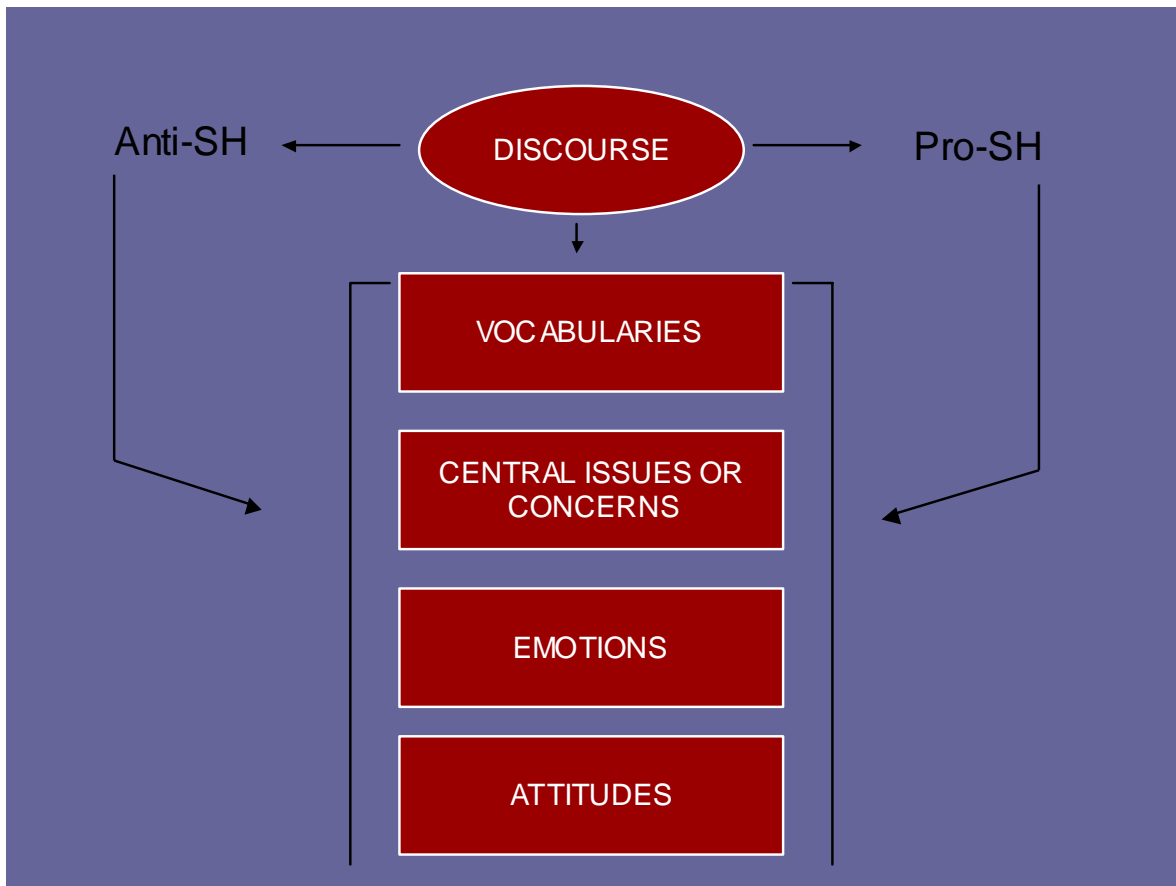
With the above caveats, the methods offer the advantage of being adaptable for future inquiries. This type of investigation, to my knowledge, has not been done before with respect to the seal hunt. It was a learning process and with some refinement of the methods and a somewhat less ambitious approach, I think it could prove useful for answering additional questions on the subject and for reinforcing the ones presented.

3.4 RESULTS

3.4.1 – Summary of Results

My study yielded four main categories of interest under each position – 1) Vocabularies; 2) Central Issues/Concerns; 3) Emotions; and 4) Attitudes Toward Animals and Animal Use.

[Figure 3.2 – Results Summary]



For visualization purposes, consider each of the four areas to be comprised of two circles – one ASH circle and one PSH circle. That is, under each area of interest, certain items belong to the anti-seal hunt set and certain items belong to the pro-seal hunt set. The sets may or may not intersect (as a Venn diagram). I will refer to this idea throughout this section.

3.4.2 – *Vocabularies*

Two distinctive vocabularies describing identical phenomena emerged. Certain variables (e.g. ‘seal hunt’; ‘action on the seal’) produced long lists of unique expressions

while others appeared only infrequently (e.g. ‘non-Canadians’; ‘media’). The two vocabularies intersected only very slightly. The overlap was due to the use of “neutral” words that were common to both sides (s/a ‘hunt’, ‘kill’, ‘club’, ‘seal hunt’ or ‘seals’). Otherwise, the vocabularies are mutually exclusive. Table 3.4.2 shows a summarization of the most frequently occurring words on selected variables. Neutral words were omitted except in the case of “action on the seal” in which they were found on only one side of the argument. Brackets indicate paraphrasing. [See Appendix for detail.]

[Table 3.4.2 – Summary of Most Frequent Vocabulary]

Variable:	Anti-Seal Hunt	Pro-Seal Hunt
“ <i>seal hunt</i> ”	slaughter	necessary ...
	cruel or act of cruelty	an economic benefit ...
	inhumane	responsible/ well-managed
	shame/disgrace/embarrassment/stain	tradition/way of life/respectable
	barbaric	is humane/not cruel
“ <i>sealers/sealing</i> ”	[brutes]	earn living/support families/economic hardships
	[insensitive]	[cultural identity]
	[greedy]	rugged/hard life/hard work
		heroes/courage/pride
		[victims or targets]
“ <i>action on seal</i> ”	[suffering/pain/fear]	*neutral words prevalent [harvest/kill/clubbing/hunting]
	skinned alive	properly done/humane
		[illusion of cruelty]
“ <i>seals</i> ”	defenseless/gentle/trusting	[bad for the fishery]
	individuals	[a resource or commodity]
	[great numbers killed]	species/populations/herds
	[suffering]	
“ <i>protestors</i> ”	[fighting the good fight]	rich/wealthy/powerful
	[excluded]	misinformed or ignorant
		[unrealistic/ insensible]
		lie/mislead/distort
		[outsiders]

Overwhelmingly, the anti-seal hunt side employed negative expressions when describing the ‘seal hunt’, ‘sealing’, ‘sealers’, ‘action on the seal’, and ‘government’. ‘Protestors’ were described in primarily positive terms (though not always). There were

mixed descriptions of ‘Canadians’ (by mostly Canadians). ‘Seals’ were viewed entirely in positive terms except when they were described in their condition following ‘the action on the seal’. The latter descriptions were entirely negative.

The pro-seal hunt side employed negative expressions when describing ‘protestors’ (inclusive of ‘celebrities’), the ‘seals’ themselves, and ‘media’. They used primarily positive terms when describing the ‘seal hunt’ (though not always). ‘Sealing’, ‘sealers’, and ‘government’ were regarded exclusively in positive terms.

3.4.3 – Central Issues/Concerns

The most frequent concerns of the anti-seal hunt side related to “inhumaneness” or “cruelty” of the hunt while the pro-side primarily voiced economic concerns. The perceived negative impact of seals on cod or other fish stocks was raised as a primary economic concern. Further, the anti-side was highly critical of the Canadian government and many saw the hunt as embarrassing for themselves (as Canadians) and for the country as a whole. Many opponents also regarded the seal hunt as an economic liability for Canada. The pro-side was highly critical of the anti-side. They perceived the ‘protestors’ as misinformed and as outsiders who should not comment. Many also saw them as being unrealistic and not having their priorities in order. Others felt that ‘protestors’ deliberately mislead the public. Cultural differences were frequently cited as the root of disagreement and the anti-sealers were commonly perceived to be well-off urbanites as compared to poor rural fishers. [*See Appendix for detail.*]

3.4.4 – Emotions

Emotive content was high on both sides of the debate and the concerns were mutually exclusive. The anti-side expressed emotions most often relating to the direct

experience of the seals (i.e. related to the seals’ lived experience of the seal hunt). These were feelings such as horror, shock, pity, anger, and sadness, etc. Many times, in conjunction with these terms, were modifiers indicating a great amount of the feeling (e.g. indicating the depth of one’s sadness). Secondly, seal hunt opponents expressed shame or embarrassment by the hunt and frequently shame “to be Canadian”.

The pro-side expressed emotions in response to the actions of protestors (largely toward celebrities and animal advocacy groups), media, and comments received from other letter writers. These were overwhelmingly expressions of anger. Secondly, they expressed gratitude toward government officials. A very small percentage expressed feelings about seals as lowly or insignificant.

[Table 3.4.4 – Emotive Content]

	Emotions / Personal Feelings Expressed	Focus of the emotion
ASH	in 60% of all messages	81% Concern for lived experience of the seal
		19% Feelings of embarrassment/ shame
PSH	in 82% of all messages	87% Anger toward people speaking against the hunt
		8% Feelings of gratitude toward government
		5% Related to ‘lowness’ of the seal

3.4.5 – Attitudes

The attitudes toward animals and animal use expressed by each side were mutually exclusive categories. Seal hunt opponents held values of animals that were largely moralistic and humanistic. Prevalent values among seal hunt proponents were utilitarian and anthropocentric¹².

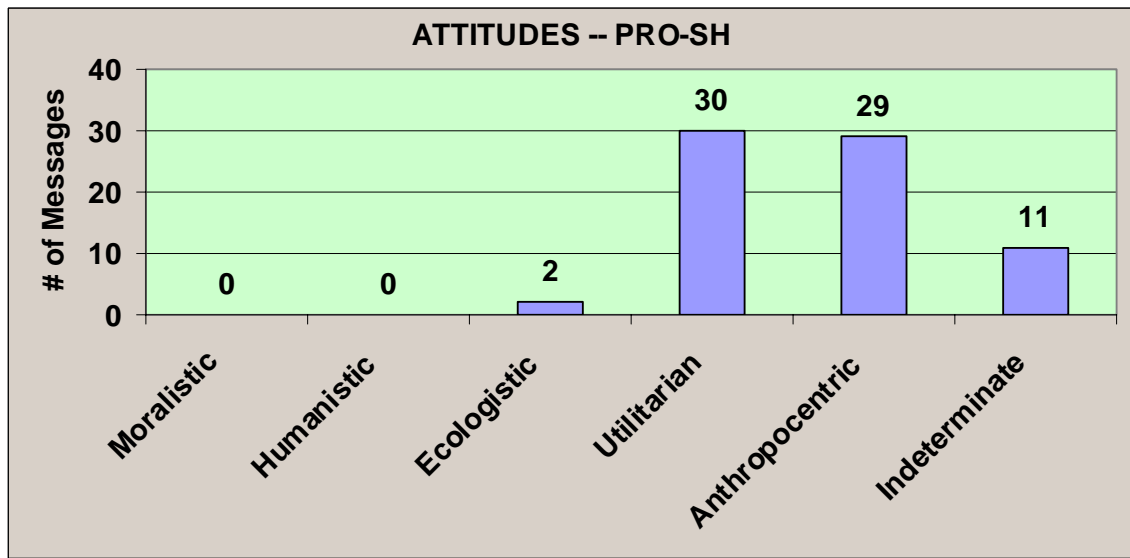
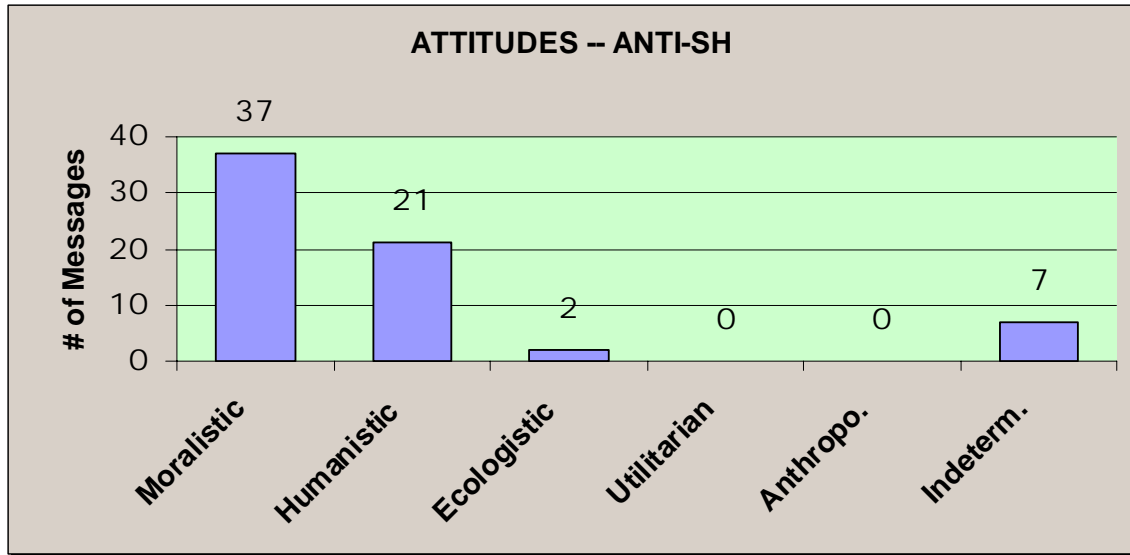
¹² In much of the wildlife and environmental literature, the terms attitudes and values are often used as synonyms (Lavigne, Sheffer, and Kellert, 1999).

[Table 3.4.5 – Prevalent Attitudes]

ATTITUDE	ANTI-SH	PRO-SH
Moralistic/ Humanistic	84%	0%
Utilitarian/ Anthropocentric	0%	76%
Indeterminate	16%	24%

The following figure illustrates the actual breakdown of attitudes by position and the number of messages expressing each.

[Figure 3.3 – Breakdown of “Attitudes” by Position]



There was an extremely high correlation between the dual views expressed on each side (i.e. moralistic tended to coincide with humanistic, though not always, and utilitarian coincided with anthropocentric in the vast majority of instances). The

ecologicistic view was expressed only twice for each position and, in every case, occurred alongside the prevalent views.

3.4.6 – Other Results

- Forty-four percent of the pro-seal hunt letters used red herring diversions and/or ad hominem attacks in making their arguments. These devices/ logical fallacies were completely absent in letters by seal hunt opponents.
- Of the anti-seal hunt letters for which ‘level of concern’ could be determined, 91% were concerned with individuals. Of the determinable pro-seal hunt letters, 86% were concerned with populations or species.
- 31% of all pro-seal hunt letters regarded seals to have negative impacts on fisheries. Of these, 71% specified impacts to cod.
- 40% of all pro-seal hunt letters made negative comments about celebrity protestors.
- 67% of all anti-seal hunt letters made negative statements about the Canadian government.
- Objections to the “action on the seal” consisted of concern for suffering or pain in 85% of the expressions. Of those, 23% mentioned seals being skinned alive.
- 11% of all letters mentioned various boycotts. In addition, 6% of letter writers threatened personal boycotts.

3.5 DISCUSSION

My work illustrates that the general public holds very separate and opposing views of a single reality – the annual seal hunt. It also highlights important, underlying predispositions toward animals which, I believe, are responsible for the apparently unreconcilable divergence and, consequently, the ongoing controversy.

There is an actual dichotomy present in the respective valuations of animals by each side of the debate. Utilitarian/anthropocentric views do not address the concerns of those subscribing to moralistic/humanistic views and vice versa. While this may seem

obvious, it is a critical point that is often overlooked. In reading the opinion letters, there was commonly a detectable sense of urgency and almost bewilderment on the part of the authors that the “other side” did not share their point-of-view. That the conflict wasn’t instantly repairable based upon pointing out some piece of fact or sharing insight into a life circumstance or personally held belief, seemed to leave everyone scratching their heads. This only fosters an “us & them” mentality which has been inhibiting progress on this issue for over forty years. Without some common ground, how can we hope to have any meaningful discussion?

Emotions ran very high on both sides of the debate, which is a clear indication that continued conflict is imminent. (The political problem has not ever completely gone away since the 1960’s, though it has been through periods of “remission”.) It is interesting that the actual emotive content in the opinion letters (as measured herein) was greater on the pro-seal hunt side with 82% of all messages expressing emotions and personal feelings related to the subject matter. One frequent criticism of the anti-sealers is that they base their opinions on emotions rather than facts. It would seem that both parties to the debate have strong feelings about the subject and to some degree they are using these emotions to guide their judgements of both the hunt and the “other side”. The degrees to which they are doing this cannot be assessed from the data and probably varies greatly from individual to individual. There is also some evidence that people feel a pressure to *not* be emotional and perceive emotionalism as a negative. The fact that it is used as a criticism bears this out. Additionally, some letter-writers against the seal hunt even apologized for it before proceeding with their argument while others defended it as a necessary component of human decision-making. Proponents of the hunt were quite

emotional as well, but I came across no instance in which this was self-acknowledged in any way.

Outlining the “vocabularies” used in the seal hunt discourse, together with pulling out the central issues that people tended to focus their comments on, enabled me to get a clear sense of what bothers people on each side; what is most important to them; what they would like to see happen; what they see as obstacles standing in their way; and, oftentimes, why they feel the way they do. Also, it was educational in piecing together the level of information (or misinformation) that the general population possesses on the seal hunt. [This latter aspect could serve as the basis for a very useful study in its own right.] Using the vocabularies and central issues as my guide, I will attempt to generalize on the seal hunt debate from each point-of-view.

There is growing frustration on the part of the anti-seal hunt constituency. They feel utterly powerless to do anything that will impact the current state of affairs. (Bear in mind I am referring to “the general public” when delineating the two sides.) For many people, it is a very deep frustration that causes them actual emotional pain. They are faced with a situation in which they have no directly effective means to impact on policies which disturb them so much. Their only options are to write letters, join in demonstrations, or send money to groups who can fight the seal hunt on a higher level.

Canadians against the seal hunt are demoralized by the non-responsiveness of their government to their concerns and values. They generally perceive the attitude of the government to be aloof, arrogant, and bent on promoting the seal hunt without regard to any information outside of their own. They are also angry about the media ban from the hunt, the treatment of protesters on the ice, and the lack of enforcement against sealer

violations. Moreover, there is a feeling of being ignored and excluded from the political process¹³.

There is growing resentment on the pro-seal hunt side. They repeatedly indicate feeling “singled-out” by the anti-sealers. Newfoundlanders in particular felt that their province was unfairly targeted by the anti-seal hunt movement. Several letters by high school age islanders demonstrated this quite well. They talked of pride and regarded the sealers as heroes. A letter by the adult son of a former sealer maintained that outsiders do not understand their culture. Many people cited these cultural differences as the root of conflict. Letters included strong statements on sealing as a cultural tradition and way of life. Proponents of the seal hunt largely perceived the “protestors” to be rich or well-off urbanites who have unrealistic views and lofty goals. One writer regarded anti-sealers to hold “comfortable, privileged views of how people should interact with animals.”

With the high international profile and negative attention that the seal hunt continues to receive, in addition to economic pressure felt due to recent boycotts on Canadian seafood products, the animosities only grow. The fire is fueled periodically by celebrity appearances denouncing the hunt publicly and bringing cameras out onto the ice, showing the “cute” seals to the world. Many Maritimers indicated being unfairly depicted as primitive brutes and as misunderstood by urban Canadians. Several angry letters suggested that people who are not locals have no right to comment on what goes on there. I should also point out that the letters written by Maritimers (i.e. those residing in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland-Labrador, and Prince Edward Island)

¹³ Although I refer to the two “sides”, this is not to infer that everyone in Canada belongs to one side or the other. There are many people who do not particularly care about the seal hunt or may be undecided or may hold specific conditions that will sway their support in either direction.

were equally split – pro-seal hunt to anti-seal hunt – providing evidence that the Maritime ‘vote’, so to speak, on the seal hunt may not be entirely favorable. One woman from Newfoundland expressed concern that some islanders may actually be afraid to speak against it.

Anti-sealers have often been called misinformed. Based only on the knowledge that I have personally accumulated in researching this topic over the past year, I found that the letter writers were no more or less misinformed from one side of the debate to the other. What I *did* find, is that there is a problem of “under-information” common to both. That is, we are not all on the same page. The issue is continually argued using only randomly selected pieces of the overall puzzle. There is a pervasive lack of awareness of various basic facts about the seals, about policy history, about sealing activities, about the money that supports the animal advocacy groups, about how the hunt is/ is not supported, and about which parts of the seals are actually used and sold in today’s markets. Instead of acknowledgement regarding that which is uncertain (e.g. seal impacts on cod stocks; numbers of animals skinned alive; humaneness of clubbing vs. other methods) there are grand assumptions being made – by almost everyone.

False assumptions about homogeneous groups of people also prevailed. I was necessarily limited in this project to pooling the messages according to position “for” or “against” the hunt. However, this tends to give the impression that there are simply these two arch-enemy type groups battling one another to the death. The truth of the matter is that each group comprises 45 representations of very unique individuals. The letters do not usually give in-depth background into a person’s life, nor do they give exhaustive demographic data. However, even with this limited information it was possible to see

that each “side” was made up of a diversity of human beings. As mentioned above, even letters from the less populated (and presumably pro-seal hunt) areas of the Maritime provinces exhibited a 50/50 split on position. Each gender was well-represented on each side and there were letters from school children, professors, doctors, scientists, fishermen, college students, housewives, and many others.

But within the context of the messages themselves, people generally regarded the “other side” as if it was made up of all the same types of people – and (to their minds) they had them “pegged”. The sealers were primitive, brutal, barbarians who would sell their souls to make a buck and the activists were wealthy, sanctimonious, do-gooders who never worked a day in their lives. I exaggerate to make my point – but just barely. Certain others tried to be very sensitive to feelings on the “other side”, but this was usually done from the anti-sealing point-of-view. Even so, there was still a sense that everyone on “that side” is the same.

The net result of all this is that there is a lot of wasted energy. We have hit a brick wall and need to figure out a way to bring everyone to the same table to identify any common ground that we can possibly work with. This will be extraordinarily difficult given the extreme separation of views on animals and animal use. But it *must* be done if we ever expect to get beyond the status quo which is endless protest, endless backlash, and endless sealing.

3.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

First and foremost there needs to be improved communication and a greater availability of avenues for public input. Significant progress will require a cooperative,

long term commitment from various parties which presently do not get along. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is the primary body with inroads into the sealing/fishing communities and has authority in all matters pertaining to their activities. This makes DFO participation in the process absolutely critical. Garnering political will to change and/or minimize the seal hunt is admittedly a Herculean task. But my goal here is to shine light on the path to ending the controversy, so I will continue with this train of thought.

The seal hunt is an issue that has far reaching implications for all of Canada, not only the eastern fishing economies. The boycotts against Canadian seafood espoused by the Humane Society of the United States and other groups have shown this, as have the earlier bans by the European Commission on importation of certain sealskins which had effects on Inuit trading. Individuals have threatened personal boycotts on all Canadian products and travel within Canada. As the 2006 winter Olympic games drew to a close in Torino, Italy, all eyes were on Canada as the host country for the games in 2010. There have already been suggestions for mass boycotts of these games. Now would be the ideal time for the Canadian government to rise to the occasion and try to work with its own citizens and the internationally attentive community to achieve a more amenable solution on sealing. It will not be possible to satisfy everyone, but some progressive action should be taken.

To this end, the government needs to actively engage people throughout the country in the discussion. Sealers, fishers, and rural residents must be an integral part of the policy-making but they must also be expected to realize that business as usual may not be what most Canadians want. The government should uphold this expectation in

their duty to all of Canada. Furthermore, actively seeking a solution that sufficiently addresses all concerns will only serve to benefit the image of Canada around the world. It would effectively communicate “we care, we’re listening, and we intend to do something about it”.

With this kind of commitment in place, the animal advocacy groups would have to back off with the boycotts and campaigning. At this point, it would be incumbent upon groups traditionally opposed to the seal hunt to show that *they* are listening too. It becomes imperative to open the dialog in a forum where people with all points-of-view can speak freely. Given the current state of “under-information” on the seal hunt, everyone who truly cares one way or the other will have to educate themselves in order to participate in a meaningful way.

Importantly, the DFO should endeavor to present *all* viewpoints in their seals and sealing website and emphasize those things which are uncertain. For instance, the fact that the trophic relationships in the North Atlantic marine ecosystems are too complex to determine whether or not large populations of seals are having a significant negative impact on the fisheries should be brought to the forefront. It is there – but is difficult to find. The fact that long term effects of the present level of sealing on the various seal populations is virtually unknown should be emphasized, as well as acknowledging that present study data¹⁴ are insufficient to determine humaneness of sealing methods and have no real bearing on the actual hunt when there is sparse observer coverage and minimal enforcement.

¹⁴ A 2002 report summarizing a controversial and limited study conducted by the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association is commonly cited by the DFO as “proof” that the hunt is humane. The DFO claims, however, are frequently flawed by errors of omission with regard to the actual results of that report.

Existing “humane regulations” need to be upgraded immediately and widely enforced¹⁵. This includes employing more observers and logging more total hours. It also means developing a structure for prioritizing the goals of the observers. Observers should be from diverse backgrounds – not only DFO staff. Violations should be swiftly punished and a sealer should permanently lose his license for a second violation. All so-called ‘humane regulations’ should be completely revised, reviewed, and improved in coordination with animal advocates, veterinarians, human medical doctors/ neurologists, and concerned citizens from across the country. Any such improvements should then be promptly signed into law as part of the Marine Mammal Regulations. Indeed, this body of planning on “humane practices” should take a position of utmost importance in any future seal hunt or seal hunt management plan. *Only* in this way (and with proper enforcement) can it be shown that the “humane” issue is being taken seriously.

Additionally, there should never be any media ban from the hunt. Coast Guard and RCMP should be advised not to harass peaceful protestors or film crews documenting the hunt. In fact, activities should be widely documented in order to encourage compliance with the existing regulations. There should be independent (non-governmental) review of sealing practices and levels of sealing conducted by a panel with diverse backgrounds and possessing knowledge on various aspects of the seal hunt. [I envision an advisory body akin to the Pew Oceans Commission in the United States.]

Wasteful practices should be abated and seal hunt management plans should be revised to disallow the pervasive waste of seal meat that presently occurs. Presently, the full use of the animal is merely “encouraged”. Section 6.3 of the ASHMP consists of a single line stating this encouragement – and that’s it! It should be illegal to waste the seal

¹⁵ See Canadian Marine Mammal Regulations – [SOR 2003-103].

meat. Full information on all seals taken (including # of pelts taken compared to # of actual carcasses) should be made available to the public at the end of each seal hunt season as well as annual reports containing figures on revenue for both meat and pelt sales. This information should be closely monitored to ensure that the number of animals killed closely corresponds to the number of pelts/meat and other products actually sold. If it does not (i.e. if animals are found to be killed in excess of economic benefit), then quotas should be reduced accordingly. If killing of seals then becomes a question of “population control” or “culling”, then I would submit that an entirely separate plan should be required, explicitly stating such a purpose.

3.7 CONCLUSION

The seal hunt controversy is driven by the fundamentally different attitudes that we humans have toward non-human animals. The most significant objection to the seal hunt is that it is cruel or inhumane. Some would go further and suggest that it is also inherently, morally wrong. The problems that this poses for policymakers on the seal hunt, assuming that the political will exists to address these concerns, is formidable. There is no scientific way to measure “humaneness”. Therefore, we must rely on our own perceptions of it and our degree of empathy with the subject in determining what is acceptable. Put another way, deciding what is humane vs. inhumane, or cruel vs. not cruel requires a value judgement. It is subjective in that our assessment will always depend upon our valuation of the subject, in this case – the seal. Human views are vastly diverse even among similar groups of people. In the end, how we treat animals – and

what we are willing to accept for economic gain – is a reflection of how we view ourselves and our own place in the world at large.

... A PERSONAL PLEA

In the time that has transpired since I began writing for this project, hundreds of thousands of seals have been killed. The human voices rise in response to this reality. “Facts” are very slippery things and there are realities that exist whether or not humans ever care to observe, perceive, or understand them at all. No matter what your personal interpretation of the seal hunt, the lived experience of each and every seal is yet another view of reality. These are the true “stakeholders”. That their collective “voice” remains unspoken is not a sufficient criterion to ignore it.

AFTERWORD

I was told early on that this Master's Project was no place to be an advocate. Why? The Nicholas School of the Environment was supposed to be a place where we could exchange ideas on important issues and develop our skills with the goal of creating a better world for us all. Instead, what I have found is a place where people subscribe to a set of very fashionable environmental ideas. Many of these ideas work very well and are important in protecting our environment. However, I feel that the view is too narrow. Sustainability sounds very nice, but does it really work? Does it always work? Is it *all* that matters? I don't think so.

Like it or not, animals figure in to the "better world" vision of many people. This is evidenced not only by the presence of animal protective organizations but by a growing body of academic literature, the appearance of professional programs on animals and society, and by the increasing numbers of students pursuing animal rights law. Our day to day lives are lived with greater compassion for animals and a regard for them that reaches beyond "pet" or "resource". But it's a big world and not everyone holds the same views. Some cultures may reject these ideas altogether. This is understandable, but what is not understandable is the effective rejection of these ideas within a community that actually shares in many of them. Why is it still taboo to venture too far down this road?

I have watched people shift uncomfortably as I broach the seal hunt subject and have watched them dismiss it quickly. I was told several times that I should not include graphic images of the seal hunt in my presentation. This is very curious to me. No one else, to my knowledge, was advised against actually *showing* the very real activities that occur under their topic of discussion. We have all been allowed to see the stranded whale carcasses, nets with by-caught turtles, tunas being hauled aboard, or researchers tagging dolphins. Why would it be unfairly imposing my views to show a picture of what a field of seal carcasses looks like after the seals have been skinned – or even worse, to show just one "face" in this condition?

I think there is a strong interest in animal issues among the students (and potential students) of the Nicholas School. My project was partially financed by Ms. Sarah Luick who generously offered grants last year to Nicholas students interested in pursuing animal welfare topics. Animal issues are inextricable from natural resource management, conservation, and environmental concerns and they will likely become more prominent in the coming decades. Given that the interest is here, financial backing is entirely feasible, and that there are now recognized academic and professional bases for exploring 'animals and society' as a discipline, shouldn't the Nicholas School be leading the way? I truly hope to see this happen within the next ten years. In the meantime, please fully encourage these topics and offer some moral support and direction to those students who would like to pursue them.

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APPENDIX A1 – RESULTS DETAIL: Anti-Seal Hunt (ASH)

VARIABLES:	TERMS	TOTALS
(ASH)/ (mp = 101)		
SEAL HUNT		
	act of cruelty or cruel	12
	bad publicity (for Canada)	5
	stain (on image of Canada; NL; character)	4
	barbaric	6
	slaughter	18
	inhumane/inhumane act/inhumanity	11
	(confounded by) rhetoric	1
	trauma	1
	massacre	4
	hunt or seal hunt	19
	harvest or seal harvest	2
	"harvest"	1
	killing or seal killing	4
	creates suffering	1
	our mistake (Canada's)	1
	embarrassment (Canadian)	4
	[politically driven/ for politics]	2
	condemned (by public)	1
	shame or annual shame (Canada's)	3
	[not ecologically/environmentally sound/not good science]	2
	[unjustifiable]	2
	international problem/opposition	4
	outrage	2
	murder	1
	[for fur/ i.e. not food]	2
	[for fur and penises/ i.e. for vanity]	3
	[all in the name of profit/ human greed]	3
	[for "lifestyle"]	1
	not a "hunt"	2
	event	2
	horrendous/ horrific/ horrible/ horror	4
	brutal	2
	disgrace or national disgrace	1
	exploitation	4
	subsistence	1
	controversy	1
	spectacle	2
	carnage	4
	Annual Great Canadian Baby Seal Bash & Slash'	1
	"not pretty" is understatement	1
	absurd amount of killing/ [great number/ largest slaughter]	4
	nothing to be proud of	1
	"tradition"	2
	disdainful	1
	discrimination	1
	act of evil	1

	[tiresome]	1
	urgent	1
	important or serious	1
	senseless	1
	despicable	1
	atrocious	1
	abhorred	1
	[does not represent native values]	1
	not a management tool	1
	misery	1
	useless	1
	bloody	1
	unspeakable	1
	grisly	1
	a wrong	1
	unacceptable	1
	apparent excess	1
	massive	1
	cull	1
	unnecessary	1
	expense	1
	not clear thinking	1
	not common sense	1
	madness	1
	vicious	1
	abuse	1
	grave	1
	situation	1
	violence	2
	harmful	1
	disgusting	1
	injustice	1
	agony	1
SEALING	brutal	1
	inhumane	1
	disgraceful	1
	un-Canadian	1
	not respectable	1
	pathetic (way to make a buck)	1
	butcher's work	1
SEAL FISHERY	euphemism	1
	slaughterhouse	2
SEALERS	hunters or seal hunters	5
	seal killers	1
	Newfoundlanders	1
	(a few hundred) Maritimers	1
	"need to kill seals"/ insatiable desire to kill	2
	(even they) say that the hunt is brutal/ cruel	1

[do it] so they can keep unemployment coming in	1
kill without fear	1
crave to do damage	1
"grown men"	1
needlessly slaughter	1
Neanderthal	1
(exert) brute force	1
[something wrong with them]	1
barbaric (behaviour)	1
violent ways	1
armed	1
destroy nature	2
don't follow regs.	1
[value time over humaneness]	1
kicking (seal) in face	1
laughing	1
[making small talk while killing]	1
desensitized	1
attacking observers	1
not charged for violations	1
a few hundred/ handful [small # ref.]	2
make a fast buck/ side money	2
fishermen	1
perpetrators	1
Fishers/ Atlantic Canada	
politically powerful	1
vested interest	1
barely get by	1
poor	1
prosperous / [not poor]	1
PROTESTERS (ASH)	
heartfelt/sincere/genuine	2
have moral high ground	1
compassionate	1
committed	1
(self as) proud Canadian	1
[not ill-informed]	1
[not used (by AW groups)]	1
[not troublemakers]	1
peace-loving	1
getting rich	1
to be commended	1
fighting just cause	1
(self as) proud supporter (of animal org.)	1
collect money	1
efficient	1
active	1
tightly regulated	1
charged	1
convicted	1

	fined	1
	jailed/ possible jail	1
	[wrongly] accused	2
	not breaking laws	1
	excluded / prevented from observing	1
	caring/ care enough to do something	1
	brave	1
	honest	1
	exposing	2
	loud/ clear	1
	illogical tactic (boycott)	1
	pressure tactic (boycott)	1
	unjust (toward seafood industry)	1
	[I support/join/commend]	2
*feelings toward	grateful (toward protestors/celebs/ASH orgs)	1
	God bless	1
SUPPORTERS (PSH)	(arguments) miss the point	5
	[amused by seal's plight]	1
	should be ashamed	1
	heartless	1
	bash (An. Orgs)	1
*feelings toward		
ACTION ON SEAL	not humane/ inhumane	2
	bashing	3
	clubbed/ clubbing	6
	being clubbed to death	3
	misery	1
	slaying	1
	brutal	2
	instills fear	1
	blatant disregard for life	1
	shot/ shooting	3
	killed/ killing	4
	murder	1
	smashing	1
	slashing	1
	bludgeon	1
	stun	1
	dismember	1
	slaughtering	2
	causing suffering	1
	vicious	1
	skin	2
	hit	1
	grotesque treatment	1
	stabbing	1
	dragging	1
	gutted	1

	torment	1
ENVIRONMENT		
	pristine	1
	white	2
	desecrated	1
	blood on the ice/ ref. to blood	2
	marine nursery/ nursery	2
	ice floes/ ice/ ice holes/snow	4
	ashore/ shores	2
	quiet	1
	safe	1
	barren, but lovely landscape	1
	clean/ crisp	1
	red or blood-stained [after]	2
	stench-filled [after]	1
	carcass-rotting [after]	1
	screams or sounds	2
PERSONAL FEELINGS		
	amazed (that hunt continues)	1
	[frustration]	3
	embarrassed	1
	ashamed (to be Canadian or Islander)	4
	sorrow/ sad	1
	[disbelief]	2
	disheartened/ disappointed	2
	cannot be proud/ not proud	2
	[wishes situation would change/had power to change]	2
	horrified	1
	disgusted	3
	deplore	1
	upset	1
	[don't/ can't understand it]	2
	[powerless]	1
	[anger]	3
SEAL(S)		
	seal(s)	16
	baby or baby seal	6
	powerless	1
	witness	1
	mother(s)	4
	young	4
	pups or seal pups	5
	[cites age ~ e.g. 'x' days to weeks old]	2
	(desperate) cries	1
	bloodied	1
	corpses	2
	weak	1

needy	1
vulnerable	1
docile/ gentle	2
trusting	1
mammalian (babies)	1
mammals or marine mammals	3
skinned alive	10
able to feel pain	1
conscious	5
beautiful	2
creatures	4
sentient beings	1
[not just a "natural resource"]	1
harp seal(s)	3
hooded seal(s)	1
[cites great # of] / e.g. 'hundreds of thousands']	9
herd	1
running to its death	1
defenseless/ helpless/ can't fight back	6
animal(s)	7
(they are) not fish	1
(they are) not insignificant	1
fending for themselves	1
carcasses/ bodies left to rot	2
wriggle away/ slip away wounded	2
uncounted [unaccounted for]	1
unused/ wasted	1
destroyed	1
trying to drag themselves	1
live	2
harmless	1
not killed	1
breathtaking	1
develops	1
heavenly or spectacular event (give birth)	2
once beautiful	1
fluffy or white fur	1
nothing but bones and eyeballs	1
poor animal	1
to be protected	1
beaten	1
drowning in own blood	1
eyes dripping	1
like ours	1
gurgling	1
loud screams	1
adorable	1
face	1
[meet] a cruel fate	1
[don't deserve this treatment]	1

	not needed for survival	1
	[existence potentially threatened]	2
	endure	1
	murdered	1
	left to suffer	1
ANIMAL(S)	have to eat	1
	indifference/ disregard	1
*human treatment of	reflection of our ethical fiber	1
	[human/animal fates intertwined]	1
INDIV. vs. POP.	individual level	21
	population/species level	2
	[indeterminable]	24
ATTITUDE	moralistic	37
	humanistic	21
	ecologistic	2
	utilitarian	0
	anthropocentric	0
	[indeterminable]	7
<hr/>		
GOVERNMENT/CANADA	sad state of affairs	1
	allows/ continues to allow/sanctions	4
	disregard for humane practices	2
	disregard for environmental consequences	1
	[not good conservation/ not sound science]	2
	abuses science for political purposes	1
	no political incentive to change policy	1
	hypocritical	1
	[guilty of] inaction	4
	[tries to hide/conceal activities/keep out of public eye]	2
	unfairly penalizes protestors	1
	subsidizes hunt	1
	[misleads/propaganda poll]	1
	mismanagement (fishery)	1
GOV. OFFICIAL:	embarrassed or made fool of (Canada)	2
	appalling (interview)	1
	clueless	1
	lame defences/ [makes excuses]	3
MEDIA		1
CELEBRITIES	positive	5
	negative	
	[not an issue]	1
NON-CANADIANS		
CANADIANS	[lack awareness]	2
[Note: Most all by Can.]	smug	1

	holier-than-thou attitudes	1
	love to point fingers (at U.S.)	1
	boastful	1
	brutal	1
	ignore seal hunt/ pretend/ in denial	2
	tolerate seal hunt	1
	left to wonder what's going on	1
	[complacent]	0
	majority disapprove	2
	peaceful	1
	loving	1
	compassionate	1
	polite	1
	value life	1
	(NL) afraid to speak out against	1
	love this country	1
	should be grateful (for seal birth)	1
SEAL/FISHERIES REL.	[seals not responsible for cod decline]	3
	[seals eat predators of cod]	2
COD	[mentions cod issue]	4
	decline caused by overfishing	5
	overfishing/ foreign	1
	[decline does not justify or have bearing on seal hunt]	1
SCIENCE	[supports my view]	1
	[misused/ abused by government]	3
	[does not justify]	1
ECONOMICS	[hunt benefits Canada economically]	0
	[economic benefit to Canada/ NL is small/ insignificant]	2
	[hunt is damaging to Canada economically]	6
	[would be greater benefit from ending hunt]	1
	[tax burden/costly]	1
	[do not justify the hunt]	2
BOYCOTT	[mentions]	8
	[threatens personal boycott]	4
URBAN/RURAL	[cites differences]	
PLACES BLAME	Canadian Humane Society	1
	Canada [nation itself]	5
	Canadians / Can. Public	5
	government	16
	humans	3
	Newfoundland	2
	hunters	3
	those who buy/ wear fur	1
	self	1
DEFENDS	protestors/ animal orgs.	7

CRITICIZES (person)	cartoonist	3
	government official	5
	government	4
	all parties [pro/anti/gov.]	1
	sealers	3
	media	3
	specific argument of PSH	1
ADMONISHES		1
JUSTIFIES (End Hunt)	cruel/ brutal	2
	rest of world has moral high ground/ morally wrong	3
	Canadians will be better off/ Improve national image	3
	Canadians will be better off/ Economically	1
	little demand for seal meat	2
	hunt for fur etc. is frivolous	3
	there are other options	2
	not many eat the meat	1
	no good reason for the hunt	1
OFFERS SOLUTION or ALTERNATIVE	eco-tourism/ seal-watching	4
	cull adults only, humanely, use whole animal	1
	license buybacks/ compensate for lost income	1
	lifestyle changes/ non-consumption of animals	1
	ban seal products/discontinue economic incentives	1
	re-educate hunters for other work/education/jobs	2
CONCLUDES	should shut the hunt down	1
	need better animal protection laws	1
	only relevant issue is humaneness	1
	should be reconsidered	1
	I want it stopped	1
	It will end someday	1
	gov. needs to reassess	1
RESOLVES	will not vacation/ spend money in Newfoundland	1
MANDATES	if we are humane, we must ban the hunt now	1
	massacre must stop	1
	hunt must be stopped	2
	must scale down w/view to eliminating hunt	1
URGES	immediate action/ speak out	2
PLEA	please help stop	1
CLAIMS AUTHORITY		
CITES STUDIES/ Figures		6
<hr style="border: 2px solid red;"/>		
CENTRAL ISSUES	inhumaneness/ cruelty	32
	not using whole animal	2
	embarrassing/ bad for Canada's image	15
	pain	4
	lack of respect for life/ or nature	9

morally wrong	9
ethically wrong	1
hunt costly/ money could be put to better use	5
economic unsound/ boycott	3
other options/ unnecessary	3
compassion/ empathy/ extending circle	2
interrelation/interdependence among humans/animals	1
[not ecologically/environmentally sound/not sound science]	2
no one is policing/ [lack enforcement]	3
public condemnation	1
income does not justify	3
lifestyle or tradition does not justify	1
antiquated tradition/ no place in 21st century	3
animal is defenseless	2
fur, etc. (frivolous) /not a food kill	9
Canadians bad attitude/ ignore the hunt/ blame others/ indignant	5
hunt is politically driven	3
science is abused to justify hunt	1
lack of communication	1
conflicting polls	1
gov. criminalizing protestors	1
gov. inaction/ non-responsive	4
government makes excuses/ lame defences	3
government misleads public/ or lies	3
government/ taxpayer subsidy	2
animals have right to life	1
animals are not subjects of humans	1
gov. conceal from public/media ban/lack coverage	4
inappropriate terminology to describe "the hunt"	1
most Canadians oppose	3
a common argument is bogus	1
feel powerless to change	1
protestors do care about other issues	1
not native values	1
seals are scapegoats for cod decline	3

FALLACY (type) (specify)	red herring:	0
ANALOGY	ad hominem:	0
	buffalo/gorillas (for hands) /elephant (for tusks)	1
	dope dealers ("a living")/ racist (discrim.)	1
	lobster	1
RHETORICAL Qs		11
SARCASM		2
HUMOR		
TIC		1
Metaphor	canadian flag (pride)	1
Irony	flag at Olympic ceremony	1
Simile		2

APPENDIX A2 – RESULTS DETAIL: Pro-Seal Hunt (PSH)

VARIABLES:	TERMS	TOTALS
(PSH)/ (mp = 45)		
SEAL HUNT	hunt or seal hunt	37
	harvest or seal harvest	5
	annual/ East Coast seal hunt/ Canadian [gives title to]	4
	humane/ [not inhumane]	5
	[not cruel]	1
	necessary [to control/ reduce pop.]	4
	necessary [for rural, maritime lifestyle]	1
	necessary [for income to sealers]	4
	necessary [because fish are gone]	3
	[not a stain on Canada]	2
	[overdue]/ its about time	1
	a good thing/ should continue no matter what/ [right]	2
	our history/ heritage	3
	our culture/ way of life	3
	our tradition	1
	the practice (of hunting seals)	2
	our livelihood	1
	responsible/ responsibly managed/ well-regulated/ controlled	5
	ecologically sound	1
	[unimportant]/ annual international whine (over seal hunt)	1
	legal	1
	tiresome/ played	2
	exists because of market/ viable	1
	produces marketable products	1
	a chance to save the fishery/ helps rebuild fish stocks	2
	valuable	1
	[not just in Canada]	1
	[realistic]	1
	[exists because world is not perfect/ not Utopia]	2
	has an element of horror/ ["not pretty"]/ public scrutiny	2
	a pursuit	1
	controversial	1
	nothing wrong with it/ [not wrong]	1
	successful	1
	sustainable	1
	cull	2
SEALING	[not cruel or unusual]	1
	tradition/ traditional occupation	2
	high-risk occupation/ dangerous	2
	rural occupation	1
	sustainable	1
	industry	1
	commercial industry	1
	supports communities	1
	provides opportunities	1

viable industry	2
difficult/ hard	1
labor	1
trying circumstances	1
requires great skill	1
[not brutal]	1
bloody	1
source of income/ significant income	2
good hunting practices	1
respectable	1
sealing	1

SEALERS

sealers	7
people who hunt seals or hunters	2
harvesters or seal harvesters	1
make or earn a living/ livelihood	6
have families to support	2
survive/ get by/ eke out a living	4
experience hardships	2
unemployed	2
working abattoir	1
ordinary	1
sell fur	1
[not barbarians]	1
coastal communities	1
Maritimers	2
men	1
indulge in overkill (said as a 'positive' thing)	1
"culprits"	1
our people	2
Quebecers	2
Newfoundlanders	7
Nova Scotians	1
Labradorians	1
Prince Edward Islanders	1
scapegoats	1
wrath is heaped upon them/ targets/ easy targets	2
[injured party]	2
[hardworking/ have hard life]	2
[hearty/ resilient/ tough/ rugged]	1
scores of/ [many]	1
fishermen	7
frustrated	1
disappointed	1
honest	1
unemployed/ on welfare/ need work	2
poor/ live in scenic welfare ghettos	4
courageous/ daring	2
are being sacrificed for good of urban Canada	1
rural men	2

	need (the seal hunt)/ need income or work	6
	their incomes are taxable/ benefit Canada	1
	pride is being ripped away	1
	heroes	1
	skilled	1
	at risk	1
	under scrutiny	1
	struggling	1
PROTESTERS (ASH)		
	ill-informed/ unknowledgeable	5
	misinformed	2
	erroneous assumptions	1
	dubious assertions	1
	rude/ behave badly	1
	condescending/ recoil at working man/ [elitist]	4
	[lack understanding/ ignorant/don't have the facts]	10
	comic	1
	self-righteous	1
	concerned/ [well-meaning]	1
	[don't see big picture]	2
	numerous [ganging up]	1
	anti-seal hunt babble/ [nonsense]	1
	[anti-poor]	1
	having negative effect on Canada/ rural Canada	1
	[judgemental]	1
	[influenced by TV]	1
	spoiled	1
	rich/ wealthy (person)	7
	rich/ wealthy (group)/ make millions, etc.	6
	[us/them]/ [outsiders]/ don't understand our culture	8
	[not fishermen]	1
	biased	1
	<implies> hypocrites	2
	hypocrites, 1	1
	urbanites	1
	shrink-wrapped sensibilities/ [narrow view]	1
	ludicrous	1
	priorities aren't straight	2
	object because seal hunt not hidden from view or "not pretty"	1
	embarrass or insult Canada/ Canadians	1
	[focus on 'wrong' issues/ single out sealers, seal hunt, or Canada]	8
	mislead/ propaganda/ disgusting propaganda/ distort/ con/ rhetoric	11
	lies or falsify [footage, etc.]	4
	[they don't know seals]	1
	stage protests/ phony/ [insincere]	5
	break the law/ criminal acts	2
	not charged for violations	1
	disturb/ pester/ pet/ interfere with animal, etc.	2
	inflict undue stress on animal/ put at risk	2
	condemn the seal hunt	1

condemn any sort of hunting	1
tampering with livelihoods/ [taking food out of mouths]	3
have already destroyed economies/ destroyed industries	2
[impose their views]/ shove vegetarianism down people's throats	1
protest anything/ whole life is protesting	1
ride on the backs of hunters/ [take advantage]	1
[greedy]/ money-grubbing	3
should be kept in check	1
zealots	1
illogical/ bad reasoning	1
agendas	1
not authorities	1
not credible/ lack credibility/ credibility gap	2
crusade/ grandiose crusade	2
powerful	1
ineffective	2
have had effect	1
pressure	1
unjust	1
[care because of] 'cuteness factor'	2
re-hash campaign	1
[not important]	1
[not a real problem]	1
[don't care about people]	3
[don't care about Maritimers/ disregard]	2
presumptuous	1
insensitive	1
stupid	2
make bizarre statements	1
[insincere]	1
should be stopped	1
anti-everything people	1
[bandwagon mentality]	2
celebrities don't think for themselves/ are used	3
purpose is for fundraising/ donations/ protest industry	3
use wrong pictures	1
animal rights orgs./ sects/ activists	6
fundamentalists	1
environmentalists	1
comfortable urban views of human/animal relationships	1
live in idealized or fantasy world	2
ignore good science	1
threaten/ [issue threats]	1
rely on gore & emotionalism	1
sensationalize	1
emotional/ [not reasonable]	3
[cowards]	1
bash (the seal hunt)	1
chronically/ constantly (campaigning)	2
only believe what they want to believe	1

	humanize animals	1
	ignorant	1
	intolerant	1
	offensive	1
	demanding	1
	complaining	1
	busybodies	1
	activists/ these activists	2
	alienate	1
	whine	1
	[want to 'get rid of' sealers/ cultural extermination]	1
*feelings toward	should keep mouths shut/ mind own business/ not interfere	3
	[have no right to protest]	3
	no one should give money	1
SUPPORTERS (PSH)		
*feelings toward		
ACTION ON SEAL	harvest(ing)	4
	indignity	1
	clubbing	3
	seems distasteful	1
	culling	1
	hunting	3
	killing	7
	[not cruel]	1
	necessary	2
	humanely done	1
	controlling	1
	consumed	1
	slaughtering	2
	pulping (an already crushed skull)	1
	perceived barbarism	1
	properly done	2
	optics	1
	skinning	1
	[not bludgeoning]	1
ENVIRONMENT	the ice	4
	white ice and snow	1
	whelping area	1
	not pristine	1
	stinking mess	1
	covered in excrement and placentas	1
PERSONAL FEELINGS		
	sick and tired	1
	[anger toward anti-seal hunt letter writer]	4
	[anger toward Canadians who oppose seal hunt]	2
	[anger toward celebrity protester]/ boils my blood	2

	[anger toward animal welfare groups]	1
	amazed (at protesters)	1
	sad (that seals get news coverage)	1
	dismay (that someone would be ashamed b/c of seal hunt)	1
	[threatened]	1
	gratitude [toward government official]	1
	gladness [for seal hunt]	2
		TOTALS
SEAL(S)	seal(s)	17
	seal population(s)	8
	beaters	1
	herd	3
	species	3
	[consumers]/ consume great quantities of fish	6
	predator	4
	competitor	1
	lethal	1
	pup(s) or seal pup(s)	3
	baby or baby seal	3
	"baby"	1
	mother	2
	animal(s)	2
	whitecoat(s)	4
	white/ white fur	2
	harp seal(s)	3
	hooded seal(s)	2
	newborn	1
	adolescent	1
	a marine problem	1
	damage fishing gear	1
	wiping out the fishery/ [damage the groundfishery]	9
	cost us money	2
	"defenseless"/ [not defenseless]/ defending itself (against McCartney)	2
	snapping/ biting	2
	marine mammal(s)	1
	"fuzzy little seals"	1
	get their heads bashed in/ skulls crushed	2
	die in masses	1
	can sustain	1
	[they are not humans/ don't compare to humans]	3
	just like [other animals ... that we eat/ use]	4
	a fishery/ fishery resource/ the seal fishery	4
	renewable/ sustainable resource	2
	seal flipper pie/ [food source]	3
	should be used/ managed	1
	little	1
	useful/ products/ coats	4
	things	1
	eats or eats cod	8
	eating themselves to extinction/ [voracious appetites]	1

	seals follow boats waiting for easy meal/ [nuisance/ opportunistic]	1
	valuable	1
	resource to be used for benefit (by people)	2
	not conscious (of the pain)	1
	move because nerve signals short-circuit	1
	[have nerve signals]	1
	struggling	1
	immobilized	1
	skinned after immobilized	1
	(the seals) never know the difference	1
	carcass	1
	"the precious seals"	1
	"cute"	1
	cute	3
	cuddly	1
	round eyes	1
	red blood	1
	creatures	2
	must be controlled	4
	problem of epic proportions	1
	abundant/ many/ [great numbers]/ healthy population	7
	[destroy]/ attack/ trample	1
	not endangered/ hardly endangered	2
	growing population/ [too many seals]/ something must be done	6
	rape the fishing grounds	1
	flopping	1
	twitching	1
ANIMAL(S)	nuisance	1
	not a priority	1
*human treatment of	human intervention or control is necessary	2
INDIV. vs. POP.	individual level	3
	population/species level	19
	[indeterminable]	23
ATTITUDE	moralistic	0
	humanistic	0
	ecologistic	2
	utilitarian	30
	anthropocentric	29
	[humans more important ...inherent inequality]	12
	[livelihood/ economics more important ...]	16
	[resources for us ...]	13
	["managerial"]	10
	[indeterminable]	11
	negativistic	1
	sadistic	1

		TOTALS
GOVERNMENT/ CAN.	[failing to charge celebrities for violations of MMRs]	1
	does not subsidize the hunt	1
	successfully manages	1
	restored seal population	1
Gov. Official	emissary	1
	valiant	1
	defended (Newfoundland)	1
	showed strength	1
	absolutely right	1
	reasoned argument	1
	a saint	1
	tells it like it is	1
	we're proud of him	1
	[commendable]/ tip my hat to him	1
	[should not worry]	1
	using common sense	2
	don't care about us (people)	1
MEDIA	too much attention to seal issue	1
	too much space to animal groups	1
	crisis of integrity	1
	don't care about us (people)	1
CELEBRITIES	positive	0
	negative	18
NON-CANADIANS	positive	
	negative	
CANADIANS	peaceful	1
	hospitable	1
	targets	1
SEAL/FISHERIES	positive	
	negative	14
	uncertain	
COD	[mentions cod issue]	10
	decline caused by overfishing	
	overfishing/ foreign	
	[decline does not justify or have bearing on seal hunt]	
	decline caused by seals	8
SCIENCE	[supports my view]	
	[misused/ abused by government]	
ECONOMICS	[hunt benefits Canada economically]	8
	[economic benefit to Canada/ NL is great]	1
BOYCOTT	[mentions]	3
	[threatens personal boycott]	1
URBAN/RURAL	[cites cultural differences]	13
		TOTALS

PLACES BLAME	on the seal(s)/ cod decline	9
	on the seal(s)/ failure of fisheries	13
	celebrities	5
	on anti-sealers/ destroyed the economy	1
	on seal(s)/ damage gear/ "steal" fish	2
	animal activists/ welfare groups	14
	media	2
DEFENDS	fishermen/ sealers/ sealing industry	11
	rural lifestyles	5
	government/ resource managers	5
PRAISES or Congrat.	government	2
	gov. official	4
CRITICIZES (person)	George W. Bush	1
	Americans	1
	media	2
	celebrities	8
	self-promoting/ photo-op/etc.	6
JUSTIFIES (the hunt)	it's not a perfect world	2
	seals are damaging to livelihoods/ economic loss	2
	people are hungry and have families to support	2
	not worse than other "pursuits"	1
	fishermen are unemployed	1
OFFERS SOLUTION or ALTERNATIVE	<give protesters what they want>	1
	<boycott the protesters/ reverse the pressure>	1
	<animal orgs. should create havens for animals>	1
	<Canada should promote sealing/ [fight back]>	1
CONCLUDES	[ending hunt would have negative eco. repercussions/consequences]	
RESOLVES		
MANDATES		
CLAIMS		
AUTHORITY	conservation/ wildlife mgmt./ student	1
	son of sealer	1
	have done research	1
	retired wildlife technician	1
	Native Card	1
CITES STUDIES/ "expert"		3
Self-ID as NFL or Fisher/ Family		6
ADMONISHES		
<hr/>		
CENTRAL ISSUES	hunt is humane/ not inhumane	8
	hunt is necessary to control pop.	10
	seals responsible for cod decline	9
	seals negatively impact the fisheries/groundfisheries (gen'l)	13
	seals are a nuisance or damage gear	3
	seals are resources to be used and managed	10
	protesters/ celebrities should mind own business/ [sh none of their	6
	TOTALS	

business]	
celebrities are insincere/ self-promoting	7
protesters/ celebrities break the law/ bother seals	3
protesters don't care about people	4
"not pretty" factor	2
"cuteness" factor	4
banning hunt is unrealistic	1
seal hunt is not a real issue/ problem	5
seal hunt is for meat/ necessary for food	4
doesn't make Canada look bad	3
media gives too much attention to seal debate	2
commercially viable industry	7
sustainable industry	3
responsibly managed/ regulated hunt	7
ecologically sound hunt	4
Red Herring	14
Ad Hominem	6
[whitecoat/blueback] pup hunt ended in the '80s	6
not possible to skin while animal conscious	1
anti-sealers reasoning is bad/ illogical	2
anti-sealers are misinformed/ uninformed/ ignorant of facts	10
animal groups just need something to protest/ own agendas	1
media lacks integrity	1
government possibly needs to enforce	1
anti-sealers are unrealistic	3
anti-sealers mislead	8
protesters are outsiders/ no right to protest	5
protesters 'single out' the sealers/sh/Canada	6
Newfoundland unfairly singled out	3
hunt is an economic benefit to Canada	11
government does not subsidize	1
human needs/issues are more important	9
humans are more important [outright]	5
protesters are embarrassing/ misrepresenting Canadians	1
rich/ powerful orgs./ protesters have destroyed the economy	7
urban/ rural differences/ culture wars	13
poor fisherfolk/ rural lifestyle/ tradition	14
hunt is necessary for income/ livelihood	19

TOTALS

FALLACY (type)

red herring:

<Americans do worse ... Bush ...>	1
<There are hungry children in the world ...People problems supercede>	2
<Oscars are an extravagant waste of money ...>	1
<Animals kill each other ...>	1
<Issues/ problems in other countries are bad or worse/ wrong issues ...>	2
<Grizzly bear to be delisted ...>	1
<DFO efforts to conserve endangered right whale ...>	1
<We eat meat so ...Other animals killed ...>	4
<Slaughterhouses aren't pretty either ...>	1

(specify)

ad hominem:

<Do you eat meat? ...wear leather? ..., etc.>

<Orgs. don't get involved with right whale conservation, etc.>

<Animal orgs. are bad/ have agendas ...>

4

1

1

ANALOGY

RHETORICAL Qs

SARCASM

HUMOR

TIC

10

6

2

***Appendix B1 – Summary of Issues/Concerns Raised by Seal Hunt Opponents (ASH)**

<u>CENTRAL ISSUES:</u>	[of 45]
On Moral Themes -->	
inhumaneness/ cruelty	36
<i>[non-justifiable purpose:]</i>	13
fur, etc. (frivolous) /not a food kill	9
income does not justify	3
lifestyle or tradition does not justify	1
morally/ ethically wrong	10
lack of respect for life/ or nature	9
compassion/ empathy/ extending circle	2
animal is defenseless	2
waste/ not using whole animal	2
interrelation/interdependence among humans/animals	1
animals have right to life	1
animals are not subjects of humans	1
On Embarrassment -->	
embarrassing/ national shame/ bad for Canada's image	15
On Government -->	
<i>[gov. inaction:]</i>	7
non-responsive to protests	4
no one is policing/ [lack enforcement]	3
<i>[gov. deceptive/unfair:]</i>	9
gov. conceals hunt from public/media ban	4
government misleads public/ or lies	3
science is abused to justify hunt	1
gov. criminalizes protestors	1
hunt is politically driven	3
gov. makes excuses/ lame defences	3
government should not subsidize	2
On Economics -->	
hunt costly/ money could be put to better use	5
economic unsound due to boycott	3
there are other options/ unnecessary	3
On Canadians -->	
bad attitudes/ ignore hunt/ blame others/ indignant	5
most Canadians oppose the hunt	4
Other -->	
seals are scapegoats for cod decline	3
antiquated tradition/ no place in 21st century	3
not ecologically/environmentally sound/not sound science	2
does not reflect native values	2
protestors do care about people	1
inappropriate terminology to describe "the hunt"	1
lack of communication	1
conflicting polls	1
a common argument is bogus	1
powerless to change	1

***Appendix B2 – Summary of Issues/Concerns Raised by Seal Hunt Proponents (PSH)**

<u>CENTRAL ISSUES:</u>	[of 45]
On Economics -->	
hunt is necessary for income/ livelihood	19
hunt is an economic benefit to Canada	11
commercially viable/ sustainable industry	10
<i>[seal/ fisheries:]</i>	
seals negatively impact the fisheries/groundfisheries	13
seals are directly responsible for cod decline	9
seals are a nuisance or damage gear	3
On Protestors -->	
anti-sealers are misinformed/ uninformed/ ignorant of facts	16
anti-sealers deceive/ mislead	8
rich/ powerful orgs./ protesters have destroyed the economy	7
celebrities are insincere/ self-promoting	7
protesters 'single out' the sealers/ the hunt/ Canada	6
anti-sealers are unrealistic/ unrealistic goals	6
should mind their own business	6
protesters are outsiders/ no right to protest	6
protesters don't care about people	4
"cuteness" factor/ [care because seals are cute]	4
protesters/ celebrities break the law	3
Newfoundland unfairly singled out	3
anti-sealers reasoning is bad/ illogical	2
"not pretty" factor/ [object because hunt is bloody]	2
protesters are embarrassing/ misrepresenting Canadians	1
animal groups just need something to protest/ own agendas	1
On Way of Life -->	
poor fisherfolk/ rural lifestyle/ tradition	14
On Anthro./ Utilit. Themes -->	
seals are resources to be used and managed	10
human needs/issues are more important	9
humans are more important [outright]	5
On Management of the Hunt -->	
hunt is humane/ not inhumane	9
responsibly managed/ regulated hunt	7
ecologically sound hunt	2
Other -->	
hunt is necessary to control seal population	10
[whitecoat/blueback] pup hunt ended in the '80s	6
seal hunt is not a real issue/ problem	5
seal hunt is for meat/ necessary for food	4
doesn't make Canada look bad	3
media gives too much attention to seal debate	2
media lacks integrity	1
government possibly needs to enforce	1
government does not subsidize	1

APPENDIX C – COMMENTS ON CURRENT MANAGEMENT & POLICY

Present management plans do not use an ecosystem-based approach. They manage on a single species basis and allocate TAC based on a poorly defined “maximum observed population size”. They do so in advance of having sufficient information on long term impacts to the various populations of seals and the consequent effects on other species. Because young, non-reproductive animals are being killed, the impacts of the intense hunting efforts that took place from the late 90’s through the most recent years may just be beginning to manifest. DFO maintains that the plan is a conservative and precautionary approach and that it is based on “solid science”. In the face of uncertainty about impacts to the population and uncertainty about the impact of seals on other organisms, particularly cod and other predators of cod, DFO has gone ahead with a plan that is only designed to remove as many animals as possible (as market conditions will support it) and after the fact “see what happens” to the population. It is reactionary in nature.

The management regime directly contradicts the Canada Ocean’s Act of 1996 which formalizes Canada’s commitment to taking an ecosystem approach to the management of its ocean resources. Further, it does not acknowledge Recommendation No. 3 of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans in the 1999 “Seal Report” which states that DFO “must define all seal populations ... so that the Department can give responsible support to Canada’s vital sealing industry, while protecting seal populations and the integrity of the ecosystems in which they live”. The 2001 Eminent Panel report recommended that the DFO develop a “generic set of reference points and control rules”.

There is insufficient information as to where this came from or where it may have been used before. OBFM, as far as I am aware, was invented by the DFO scientists. Also, the control rules or “specific actions to be taken once a reference point is reached” are vague and there is no protocol for invoking them. There remains the problem of time lag in receiving the necessary data.

The DFO stated (in a March 2005 technical briefing) that “Our goal is simple: to maintain a healthy, strong, sustainable population for years to come.” There are however, no *seal* management plans. That is, there is no specific management directed toward accomplishing the goals set out in the above statement (for harp seals or any other seal population). There are only seal *hunt* management plans that explicitly set socio-economic factors above conservation interests. If there is truly an interest in maintaining the seals in a ‘sustainable’ way, it would make sense to have a plan to this effect. In addition, if this is in any way a wildlife management plan, I believe it is a flawed one. What other wildlife plan recommends the removal of hundreds of thousands of the youngest individuals (and on an ongoing basis) as a means of promoting the long-term health and sustainability of that population? Where is the ‘sound science’ that would support this?

The DFO, in the “Myths and Realities” link on its website, assures the public that the seal hunt is not a “cull”. Each plan since 1999 has stated that it is not a cull. However, the 2001 Eminent Panel report includes management scenarios that explore instituting a *cull* on harp seals. It *is* being explored as an option and there were many proponents of this idea from inside industry and government at the 2002 Seal Forum. The management, as outlined above, is based solely on the removal of large numbers of animals – appearing

to be a cull. Peter Stoffer, a member of the New Democratic Party to the Seal Report, filed a dissenting opinion regarding that report. In his statement he elucidates many contradictory statements made by the DFO regarding the function of the hunt as a cull. These contradictions are illustrative of a significant problem underlying this issue. That is the problem of transparency of goals.

There are also extreme views in two directions which tend to go unspoken. One is the desire on the part of many animal advocates to completely stop the hunt. The other is the desire on the part of some people in industry and government to seriously limit seal numbers for the perceived benefit to the commercial fishing industry. The former view, I believe, is admitted to more frequently than the latter. You do not have to look far to find evidence of this sentiment. John Efford, former Newfoundland Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, in a now infamous quote pronounced that “I would like to see the six million seals, or whatever number is out there, killed and sold or destroyed and burned. I do not care what happens to them ... the more they kill, the better I will love it”. This statement is not only undiplomatic, it illustrates a blatant disregard toward some of the “resources” for which he has responsibility and shows a lack of knowledge regarding them. I add the following point as a matter of curiosity. The Newfoundland government has special laws that allow for the designation of certain species of animals as “Heritage Animals” and provide some measure of protection for them. It is interesting that seals are not among them given their importance to the local culture, economy, and history. In fact, the Newfoundland-Labrador webpage, in the section on their wildlife, lists three general groups of animals – mammals (land mammals), birds, and fish. Marine mammals are not recognized.

Finally, while the Marine Mammal Regulations have mandated that sealers perform a test to check for death, the level of enforcement is not clear. Observers from within DFO are sent out on some vessels during the hunt and part of their job is to monitor for humane hunting practices. DFO reports that during the last hunting season (2005) over 8,600 hours were logged by DFO observers. There is no further description or detail. As the areas needing coverage are extensive and the season is lengthy, these hours may represent just a handful of observers.