

Title of Proposal:

Enviroculturalism: Savage Disobedience on the High Seas

Researcher:

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Is this proposal related to a sponsored project?

No

Objective:

To study and document the narrative discourse surrounding the contemporary whaling debate by interviewing multiple individuals in different cultural groups, including scientists, researchers, religious and spiritual leaders, environmentalists, and others associated with contemporary whaling.

Methods:

There are two broad categories of human subjects in this work.v

- A. Targeted Interview Subjects
- B. Interview Subjects recruited through snowball sampling

Targeted Interview subjects will be identified based on leadership or administrative positions they hold, or roles they play which are determined to be relevant by the researcher. For example, the members of the Makah Whaling Commission are have been identified as essential interviewees.

The other group of subjects will be recruited through snowball sampling. Here, relationships that the researcher has developed with individuals actively involved in the whaling debate will be utilized in order to recruit future subjects amongst these informants' acquaintances.

All interviews will be semi-structured. Some of the interviews may be recorded as an aid in documenting the entirety of the conversation. Where such recordings are made they will be undertaken with the permission of the subject being recorded.

Image Recordings are digital still pictures taken with a digital camera or digitized with the aid of a scanner. These recordings will be used to document images of as well as relevant cultural artifacts, such as ceremonial regalia, hunting tools and weapons.

Effects on Subjects:

All subjects will be at a minimal risk.

Measures to Minimize Risk:

During both data collection and analysis, anonymity of subjects will be preserved, except in cases where the subject is in a decision making capacity and does not wish or require anonymity. Audio recordings made off of the Makah Reservation will be destroyed as soon as transcription is completed. Recordings made on the Makah Reservation are required by the Makah Cultural and Research Center (MCRC) to be copied and archived at the MCRC, although said recordings will be made anonymously if so requested by the interviewee. Identifying codes will be used in place of names in the transcripts of all interview conversations. The table linking real names with code names will be destroyed at the end of the research process rendering all interview subjects anonymous.

Image recordings will only be taken with express permission of the subjects and individuals will be given the option of remaining anonymous in any image recordings taken.

Likelihood of Harm:

Minimal. Although subjects will be answering questions orientated around culturally sensitive material, interviewees and image recordings will be documented as anonymous unless the subject expressly wishes otherwise.

Documentation of Risks:

While the researcher will strive to ensure anonymity, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that an informant sharing information or opinions that go against cultural norms might come under scrutiny by their community. However, all informants are aware of this risk and anonymization of interviews and the ability to decline being pictures in any image recordings should protect interviewees concerned by this possibility. Furthermore, the researcher has undertaken to implement all the risk minimizing measures outlined in this proposal, further reducing the possibility of such an occurrence.

Benefits to Participants:

All participants will have the opportunity to share their history, perceptions and observations with the researcher and an avenue to tell their stories. Policy recommendations resulting from this study could potentially benefit all participants.

Alternate Method Not Using Human Subjects:

None exist. The study is framed around understanding and documenting the processes through which humans make sense of the relationships between nature, environment and culture, thus making it impossible to conduct the study without human subjects. Archival research can supplement interviews, but the interviews themselves are essential to the project.

Qualifications of Researcher:

The researcher has been trained in social science research methods during coursework at Rensselaer and New York University and holds masters' in Social Thought and Humanities, as well as a bachelors' in Science Technology and Society. Additionally, the researcher has several personal relationships with individuals currently involved in the whaling debate.

Recruiting Subjects:

As explained above, some subjects will be initially recruited through the researcher's social network and they then would introduce the researcher to members of their own social networks, and thus, the trend continues. Other subjects have been pre-identified as interesting and relevant interview subjects because they occupy strategic positions in the organizations being studied, or because they possess knowledge about the whaling industry/debate by virtue of social positions, or the mere fact that they are members of a whaling culture. These subjects will be approached directly and interviews requested.

The majority of interviews will be conducted in English, the first language of the most individuals being interviewed. However, for those whom Japanese is a first language, consent forms will be translated into Japanese and interviews will be conducted through a translator if the interviewee requests so.

Confidentiality:

For interview subjects that prefer anonymity, the entire interview will be conducted with the aid of pseudonyms. Their real names will never enter into the record. The interview list which would show the mapping of real names to pseudonyms will be destroyed (paper copy) and the file (digital copy) erased at the end of the research process, unless the interviewee expresses otherwise. At all times, full and total confidentiality will be the watchword.

Data Storage:

Any notes made during interviews will be stored in the researcher's journal. Those notes along with any audio recordings will be used to generate a transcript of the interview. All audio recordings, notes and files relating to the interview will be stored on researcher's PC in files which are only accessible by the researcher. The PC is password protected and will always be in the researcher's personal possession. The journal likewise will be kept in a secure location at all times.

Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research Course 1. Basic Course	Passed 03/01/10
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Students - Class projects, Basic Course	Passed 03/02/10
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List of Possible Interview Questions for the Semi-Structured Interview (subject to change as questions are adapted based on duties and responsibilities of the interviewee)

Group A - Makah Nation

1. Which individuals participated in the construction of documents submitted to the IWC ?
2. What is the relationship between the Makah and the whale, both past and present?
3. What justification have members of the Makah Nation given for the use of modern weapons in a traditional hunt?

4. What has been the reaction to the “savage disobedience” incident of 1997?
5. What actions have those who disagree with the tribal council taken on their own accord, if any?
6. How has your group been impacted by the press?
7. What workshops, activities, methods of communication, etc. do you think can be used to overcome communication impediments?

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Group B - Institute of Cetacean Research

1. What is the relationship between your society and the whale, both past and present?
2. How have you addressed traditional cultural issues surrounding the whale in their research – if at all?
3. Have any researchers at the ICR left dissatisfied or withdrawn their support?
4. What actions have dissonants taken on their own accord, if any?
5. How has your group been impacted by the press?
6. Why do you think there has been so much opposition within both the scientific community to your projects?
7. What workshops, activities, methods of communication, etc. do you think can be used to overcome communication impediments?

Group C - Sea Shepherd Conservation Society

1. The members of your group are from all over the world. On which issues do you think they are fairly unified, and which issues might they have different opinions?
22. Environmentalists often express admiration for traditional native American cultures as examples of sustainable societies. How do you think about that in relation to your stance on the Makah?
33. What motivated you to join Sea Shepherd?
44. How has your group been impacted by the press?
55. What workshops, activities, methods of communication, etc. do you think can be used to overcome communication impediments?
66. Is there any difference between indigenous whaling and scientific whaling in your view?
77. How do you respond to accusations of violence?