

**Marine conservation in nonprofits:
An analysis of advocacy and outreach
campaigns.**

by

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B.Sc. (Hons), McMaster University, 2011

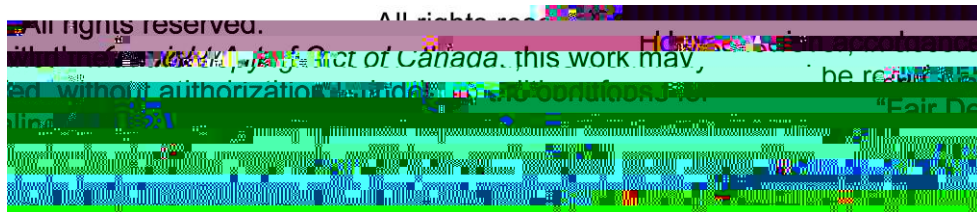
Thesis Submitted In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Resource Management

Report No. 581

in the

School of Resource and Environmental Management
Faculty of Environment

**Kyle Bruce Empringham 2013
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Fall 2013**



Approval

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Degree: Master of Resource Management
Report No. 581
Title of Thesis: *Marine conservation in nonprofits: An analysis of advocacy and outreach campaigns.*
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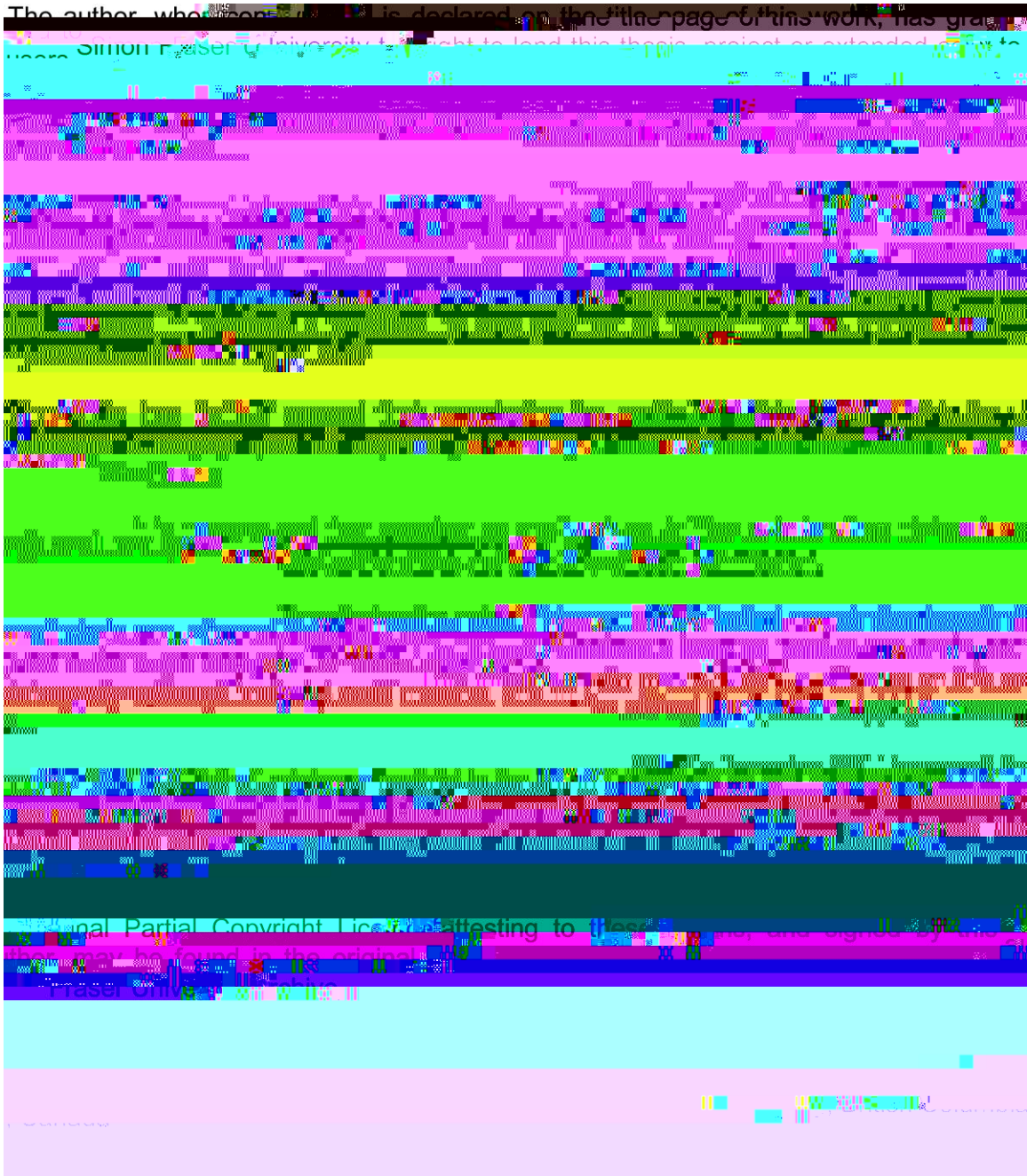


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1. Introduction

Despite the vast amount of human activity that has altered marine ecosystems (Halpern et al., 2007; Halpern et al., 2008;; Harvey et al., 2013 Stojanovic & Farmer, 2013),

Advocacy campaigns are a multi-faceted approach to that surround an issue and are organized into specific, tactical actions designed to achieve defined goals. As defined by Cox (2006), environmental campaigns normally have six primary attributes. First, campaigns are purposeful and tactful, involving strategy and defining an ideal outcome. Second, campaigns are aimed at large audiences and not the networks of a small group of people. Third, campaigns have specifically defined time limits, and after that time has elapsed, the 'window of opportunity' for action has closed. Fourth, campaigns are

audiences, but can leverage constituencies and mobilize support for the proposed change (Cox, 2006). Identifying these primary and secondary audiences is similar to a 'power mapping' approach used by some campaigners, where the key influencers and constituencies are charted out to determine the best approach for a campaign (e.g. Berman, 2011).

Other theories have been proposed that can assist in defining audiences in relevance to campaign objectives. Manheim (2011) notes that campaigns that define themselves as

Audiences and messaging are inherently important, but must be targeted while determining how feedback can be iteratively implemented into a campaign. 'Audiences' might imply one-way communication: that there is a messenger (campaigners) and a receiver (audiences). This is not the intent behind our use of the terminology. Campaigners should understand how the message is being received (through connecting with the audience – focus groups, surveys, etc.) and understand how that might change their current work. Environmental campaigner and communications consultant Chris Rose (2010) notes that “campaigners that focus on ‘sending messages’ will never succeed: they will persuade no one but themselves. Successful communication needs to be two-way: more telephone than megaphone, with the active involvement of both parties.”

Despite vast bodies of literature on environmental campaigning (Rogers & Storey, 1987; Cox, 2006; Crompton, 2010; Rose, 2010; Manheim, 2011), very little research has been done to assess the elements of conservation campaigning specifically aimed at the marine environment. Here, we addressed this research gap by analyzing how marine conservation campaigns are designed, delivered, and assessed within nonprofit organizations. We examined both internal (i.e., campaign development) and external (i.e., communications outputs) aspects of campaigns by investigating the key characteristics of marine conservation campaigns and how they differ among campaigns. We investigated how marine conservation groups strategize/plan their campaigns, and the extent to which a campaign's communications strategy match its pre-determined goals. We also determined how the current state of funding impacts conservation campaigning. Finally, we provide recommendations to improve the likelihood of success of conservation campaigns.

2.2. External Campaign Cluster Analysis

To determine both similar and distinguishing characteristics of marine conservation campaigns, 54 campaigns were analyzed using printed and online materials (e.g. flyers,

2.3. Semi-Directed Interviews

To obtain qualitative information regarding campaign development, we used semi-structured interviews with 22 marine conservation campaign and program managers in Canada and the United States of America between 22 March 2013 and 30 May 2013. To select informants, contact information from campaigns in section 2.1 was used, if available. When given, referrals to other potential informants were also used. Although informants were not necessarily linked to campaigns in the cluster analysis, 10 were responsible for one (or multiple) campaigns listed in section 2.1. Campaigners were requested to partake in a semi-directed interview after completing the Q activity (see section 2.3).

This interviewing method was used to gather rich data about the planning, designing, and implementation process within campaigns (Huntington, 2000). An assortment of 16 prompting questions were asked to each informant (Table B). These questions were selected and refined through an iterative process with former campaign managers and were selected to start conversations about the informants experiences on goal definition, funding development, and the overall barriers and catalysts to campaign success and failure respectively. Each informant were given the flexibility to elaborate on any questions, or to provide additional, relevant thoughts of their choosing. No time limits were set on interviews (duration ranged from 15 to 50 minutes) and were either conducted in person or through a phone conversation. Interviews were transcribed and coded for analysis. Informants who did not provide enough qualitative data to analyze were eliminated from the study (n=1).

2.4. Q Methodology

To identify unique and common viewpoints of campaign and program managers on how marine conservation campaigns were designed, produced, and completed, The Q Method (Stephenson, 1953), often shortened to Q, was used on 25 marine conservation campaign and program managers (22 of the 25 respondents were the informants in section 2.2). Q is a technique that applies both qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Brown, 1996) to allow subjective views of respondents into the analysis.

In this sense, Q is most beneficial when aiming to question informants about personal experiences (McKeown & Thomas, 1988), taste, values, and beliefs (Stainton Rogers, 1995). Q has been used in a variety of contentious environmental management issues, including sustainable forestry (Sweeden, 2006), large carnivore reintroductions (Mattson et al., 2006), fisheries (Fairweather et al., 2006) and ocean policy (Wilson, 2007; Haggan, 2012). Q has also been widely used in the political sciences (Brown, 1974; 1980; 1982; 1989; 1994; Carlson, Dolan & McKeown, 1988; Dryzek, 1994; Peng, 1998), a field not too far from the subject of environmental campaign development. It thus seems appropriate to use Q to discuss the debated methods used to mobilize the public.

This methodology is best described through four steps. First, a discourse regarding environmental campaign development was created by sorting through various texts and medias and searching for quotes that describe varying viewpoints. From there, a set of 16 statements was selected that describe the current array of views on campaign development (see Table C1 and Appendix D). Second, the sample of respondents was selected through the same avenue as 2.2. Campaigners were requested to partake in the Q sort activity, followed by a semi-directed interview. If the invitee declined to participate due to time constraints, they were asked to complete the Q sort only (n=4). Third, the respondents would rank the statements on a Likert scale that followed a quasi-normal distribution (see Figure C), allowing few responses in highly agree/disagree areas and many responses in the more neutr

("the normalized weighted average statement score (Z-score) of respondents that define that factor" (van Exel & de Graaf, 2005)) were then calculated. The significance of these loadings determined which statements were variates (usually $p > 0.01$), difference scores ("the magnitude of difference between a statement's score on any two factors that is required for it to be statistically significant" (van Exel & de Graaf, 2005)), distinguishing statements (difference scores that are exceeded by a statement's score on two factors) or consensus statements (statements that do are not distinguishing between identified factors). Interpretation of clusters from the Q sort were led by distinguishing statements, followed by other less significant but intriguing results found both in the quantitative data and the post-sort interviews.

Interviews and the Q survey were approved by the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board; study number 2013s0044.

3. Results

3.1. External Campaign Analysis

A three-cluster scenario received the most support from the hierarchical clustering analysis of the 54 campaigns we surveyed ($R^2 = 0.158$; see Figure A1 for best-fit model and Figure A2 for clustering). Broadly, campaigns were distinguished based on values-based attributes, data-driven attributes and a generalist approach (see Table 6). The

Most campaign and program managers defined their goals as oriented towards awareness and education (8/20 responses) or policy (8/20 responses). Informants identified either 'government' (8/19), 'industry' (5/19) or 'the public' (5/19) as their target audience. The majority of campaign and program managers called their campaigns a 'success', as defined by their own goals and objectives. Eight informants identified their campaign as a success, four informants stated that their campaign was 'not a success or incomplete', and three informants noted that their campaign had 'varying degrees of success'. Reasons for successes included the ability for their targets to make small changes and not rely on the government for change (4/20), the campaign's convincing rallying point (4/20), or the campaign's strongly motivational message (4/20).

Two barriers that impeded the attainment of campaign goals and objectives were identified by a majority of informants. Obtaining funding was the largest identified barrier (8/18). Funding-related responses included difficulty in obtaining finances for research and developing campaigns, compromised objectives from collaborating with specific funders, and seeking funding from a wide variety of sources, resulting in extra time spent on soliciting and adapting campaign strategies to the funder. Despite identifying funding as a barrier, a handful of informants also noted that campaign goals and objectives were aligned well with the funder's mission (4/17) and that funders did not place regulations on their campaigns (7/17). The second-most identified barrier was competition in a noisy media environment (4/18). Campaign managers expressed the difficulty of spreading messages to their target audiences due to large advertising costs and the sheer amount of media that people are exposed to on a daily basis.

Most informants identified two ways of obtaining feedback: meetings with stakeholders (8/20) or "word of mouth" (4/20). The latter referred to either the campaign team's social networks that relayed advice to the team, or feedback obtained from their target audience when asked to take action for the campaign's cause. No explicit framework was established for obtaining feedback in either case. However, the majority of informants noted that goals and objectives were modified or changed within the duration of the campaign. Changes were spurred by expansion based on external factors, the formation of coalitions with other nonprofits, and compromises with stakeholders.

3.3. Q Sort Activity

Q results

found to have no variation amongst any pair of clusters All factors scored this statement neutral (Q = 0 or -1 for all factors), contrasting interview results in section 2.2.

4. Discussion

Broadly, we found inconsistencies between what the environmental communications theory we have described recommends as good campaigning practices and how campaigners conduct work. Specific audiences are not being defined during campaign development and deployment, which may be a result of various identified barriers. Secondly, approaches to environmental campaigning can be differentiated into values-based or information-based campaigns, resulting in many groups not consciously adopting non-science values into their campaigns. Thirdly, our study found conflicting discussions on funding challenges.

4.1. Defining Audiences & Consultative Campaigning

Many campaigners are not using a primary/secondary audience approach as defined by Cox (2006). No clusters in the campaign analysis showed significance for defining target audiences (Table A1) and interview respondents did not show consistency in identifying targets. Cox (2006) suggests primary and secondary audiences as an organizational method that can assist campaigners in determining who are the decision-makers and which constituencies can be leveraged to hold those decision-makers accountable. Without defining these audiences (or completing a similar approach), it is difficult to create a targeted message that can meet the goals and objectives of the campaign. It is possible that campaigners are not defining their audiences when goals are most related to 'awareness'. For examples, one informant that self-identified their campaign as an 'awareness campaign' described about 8 different secondary audiences, no primary audiences, and was asking each of the secondary audiences to complete the same action without targeted messaging to each group (Respondent 03, March 27 2013). Although the overarching concept of awareness campaigns is quite vague and has limited benefits as an advocacy strategy, Manheim (2011) suggests focusing on "swing" voters and not explicitly defining targets in these cases. This strategy was not mentioned

explicitly during interviews or surveys and is a possibility for future studies. One factor in Q also strongly disagreed with defining a target audience (Random Communicators; see Table 6), but since this factor had only two respondents, it is not a representative viewpoint amongst campaigners in this study.

Interestingly, many respondents showed they do not see the will to consult with all players to work out solutions (Independent Campaigners; see Table 2). This finding suggests that campaigners make a conscious decision to determine who to talk ‘at’ versus who to talk ‘with’. This dichotomy seems quite understandable after investigating the strategies of many groups, as there are some campaigns that use a more integrated approach, whereas others use a more confrontational, non-violent approach. The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) (www.cpaws.org) is an excellent example of talking ‘with’ groups to come to a solution. Their glass sponge reefs campaign uses a combination of petitions, public events, and stakeholder meetings with government decision-makers to involve all parties. Conversely, Greenpeace campaigns have been historically noted to talk ‘at’ stakeholders in their initial stages. Berman (2011) defines one of her first strategies as a Greenpeace campaigner as: “That sounds like a great idea. They’ll hate that!” She later notes the importance of talking ‘with’ stakeholders on both sides, which came with a loss of respect from some of her original supporters (Berman, 2011). Moore (2010) mentions similar laments as a ‘Greenpeace dropout’.

Table 2. Ranking of statements regarding audience definition and consultative campaigning.

STATEMENT	FACTOR SCORE				
	SCM	SS	IC	V	RC
□					-2
□ □ □ □			-3		

The feedback attribute in our campaign analysis showed little strength in any of the three clusters (Table A1), and interview respondents mentioned few sources for obtaining

4.2. Information-based versus values-based campaigning

Apparent divisions exist between campaigns; either data is utilized as a rallying point, or they employ emotional values to ask for action from their targets (See values-based and data-based clusters in Figure A2). Although data may be convincing to some audiences, most contemporary studies believe that values and evoking deep frames are one of the most important parts of communications, especially in campaigns that are publicly oriented (Lakoff, 2004; Crompton, 2010). Thus, values-based campaigns (when properly employed) are most likely to create desired changes in publicly oriented campaigns.

Thirteen of the campaigns clustered into the 'other' group in our cluster analysis (see Figure A2). These campaigns often sit in the middle of the values and data based campaigns, employing attributes that fit into parts of the other clusters (see previous CPAWS example re: glass sponge reefs campaign). Although this is a good compromise between values and data, these campaigns may do best when evoking more attributes that are more values-based. Using more relatable techniques (spokespeople and flagship species, as noted in the campaign analysis) may assist in creating desired changes within campaigns.

Feedback, as mentioned in the above section, is also important in any campaign. A perfect values-based campaign would incorporate feedback into a malleable strategy during the course of the campaign (which should include data and facts by understanding which information resonates best with their audience). 'Consultative campaigning' does not mean that the groups obtain feedback from both primary and secondary audiences. Rather, it means the feedback obtained and utilized might be selective based on the stakeholder (i.e., government feedback might be deemed more valuable to the campaign than public feedback). This is a large mistake for a civil society campaign that aims to accurately represent target audiences. We suggest groups that believe they might fall into this category aim to include a multi-dimensional feedback strategy to avoid this pitfall.

4.3. Campaign Funding

Our research found conflicting views on the current state of funding for conservation campaigns. Informants often noted funding as a barrier to campaign success during interviews.

“Processes can be slow because of bureaucracy, obviously, or just the lack of funding, which is a huge problem now in the environmental world, especially in fisheries... A lack of resources, I would say, was one of the biggest problems. If we had lots of money for everything, we'd have things done a lot quicker.” – Respondent 08, April 12 2013

However, 4/17 respondents mentioned that their goals and objectives were well aligned with funders and 7/17 respondents mentioned that their funders never placed regulations on their campaigns. We believe these findings can be rationalized by identifying the *obtainment* of funding as a barrier. The process of securing grants and other funds for campaigns was repeatedly described as a difficult process for campaign managers:

“We always go through a strategic planning process when we set out to start a campaign. We write up a plan, and then we go and we start hunting for funding, but every funder has a different format that they look at. You adapt that plan to fit into that format, and then another funder - adapt the plan to their format. You farm it out to maybe ten different funders and some of them might give you funding and others don't, and then depending on what funding you receive, it's going to shape the form that the final strategy has to take.” – Respondent 10, April 15 2013

As mentioned in the above quote, funding proposals are often tailored to those who are

Through this process, funders are not placing regulations on campaigns; rather, they are

1. Campaigns should ensure proper definition of target audiences (i.e., dividing by primary and secondary audiences) and define objectives that can engage both groups differently. As a part of civil society campaigning, this strategy is important for two reasons. First, dividing tactics into separate audiences allows campaigners to see the interactions between each group and how to mobilize those groups in the most effective ways possible. Secondly, having a strong following of public support on an issue (via secondary audiences) can validate the necessity of the campaign. If the group aims to represent a larger picture, targeting groups and providing evidence of support for the project (and not solely using 'consultative campaigning') is morally crucial.

Importantly, defining audiences cannot be done without having a clear, measurable

2. More campaigners should aim to drive values-based messaging into their work.

It can be challenging for science-based organizations to translate research into public campaigns designed to stimulate both behavioural and political change. However, changes that campaigners aim to create cannot be completed without finding a persuasive message for target audiences to comprehend. It is imperative for these messages to invoke values by choosing the appropriate syntax that can evoke the desired emotion (Crompton, 2010; Olson, 2009). For science-based organizations, there are numerous bodies of work recently published that provide assistance in communicating technical information to non-technical audiences (Centre for Research in Environmental Decisions, 2009; Olson, 2009; Baron, 2011).

Importantly, increasing values-based messaging does not need to include an abandonment of scientific or technical rigor within a campaign. CPAWS' glass sponge reefs campaign uses spokespeople, narratives, and use values of the environment while also having technical, scientific values that are accessible to those groups that have interest in them. All CPAWS campaigns scored in the "Other" section of the cluster analysis, where campaigns averaged between values-based and data-based attributes. These campaigns serve as a model for how to work both concepts into one campaign strategy that, like the Visionaries from our Q results, paints a vision of the world one wants to create.

Huntington, (2000). Using traditional ecological knowledge in science: Methods and applications. *Ecological Applications*, 10, 1270-1274.

Jessen, S. (2011). A review of Canada's implementation of the Oceans Act since 1997 - From leader to follower? *Coastal Management*, 39, 20-56.

Lakoff, G. (2004). *think of an elephant! Know your values and frame the debate*. Chelsea Green Publishing Company: White River Junction.

McKeown B & Thomas D (1988). *Q methodology*. Sage, Newbury Park, CA.

Maechler, M.

Rose, C. (2010). *How to win campaigns: Communications for change*. Washington: Earthscan.

Schmolck, P. (2013).

Appendices

Appendix A. Cluster Analysis

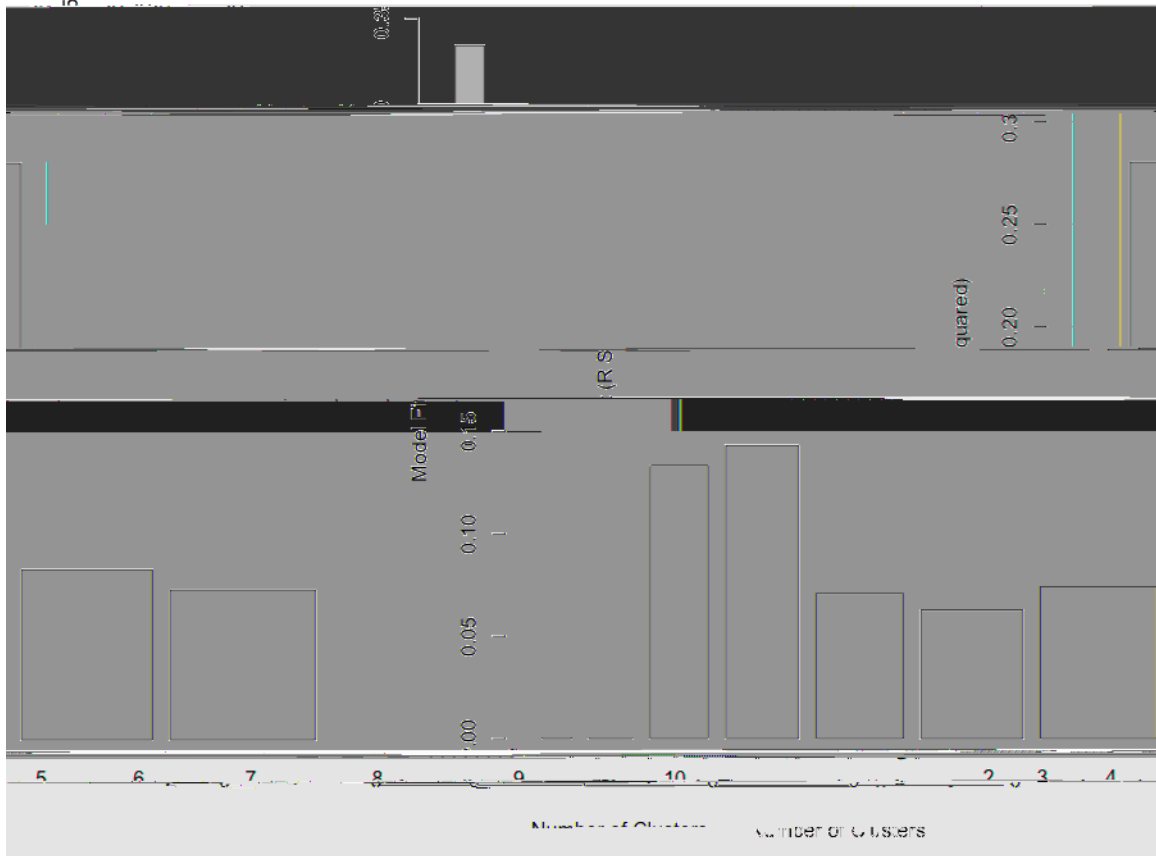


Figure A1. Hierarchical cluster analysis best-fit models for marine conservation campaign clusters. Nine scenarios (2 to 10 clusters) were compared with model 3 showing the highest support via an elbow test. R^2 for 3-cluster model = 0.158.

Table A1. Mean Euclidean distances, standard deviation, and sum of squares results for each attribute per cluster. Attribute names shortened. ** = $P < 0.001$, * = $P < 0.0001$.**

Attribute	Mean	St	Sum of Squares	Significance
Goal	1.263	0	0.1	***
Obj	0.947	0	3.0	***
Goa	0.737	0	14.4	***
Obj	0.053	0	9.6	
Tar	0.789	0	11	
Aud	1.316	0	10	
Spot	0.4	0	3.5	
Flac	0.895	0	0.6	**
User	0.632	0	1.2	***
Eco	0.105	0	0.1	***
St	1.000	0	7.5	***
Nat	1.526	0	0.5	***
Firs	0.737	0	1.6	**
Gov	1.684	0	10	
Rov	1.737	0	22	
Soc	0.263	0	25	
Mor	0.789	0	4.1	**
Nur	0.789	0	0.5	
Prin	1.579	0		
Peti				
Feer				
Voll				

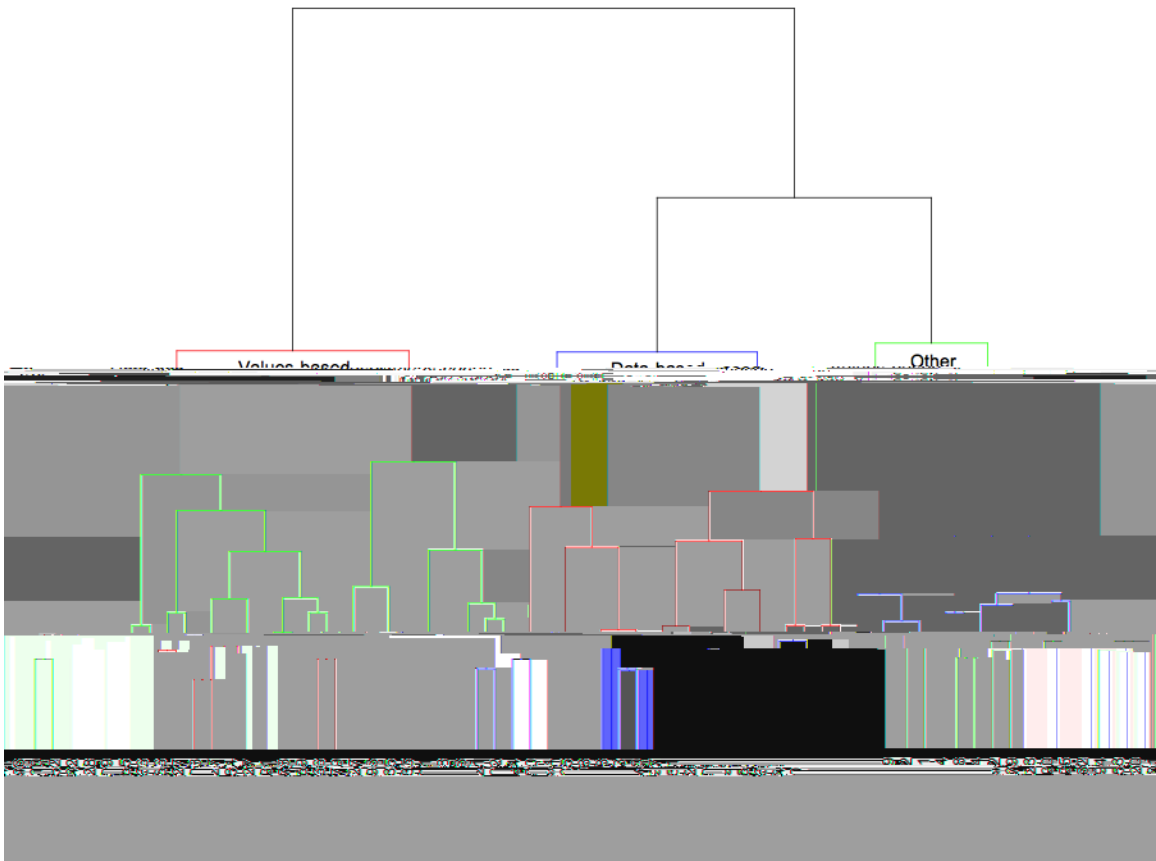
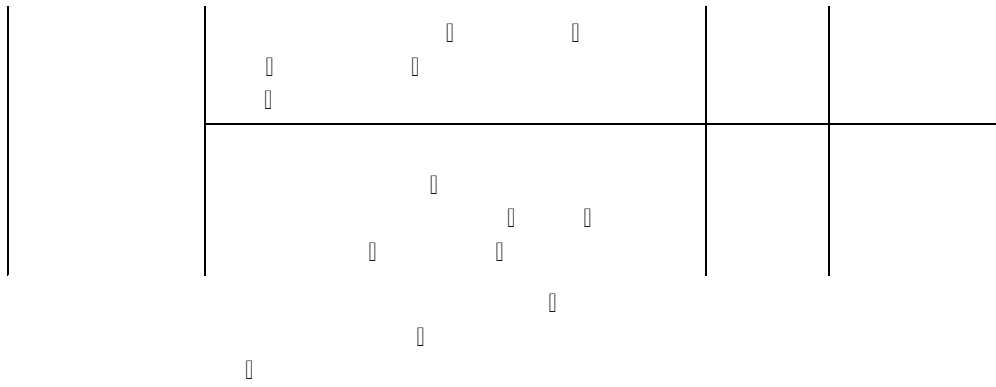


Figure A2. Hierarchical cluster analysis of marine conservation campaigns in Canada and the United States of America. Numbers correspond to individual campaigns assigned identification codes from 1 to 54. A three-cluster scenario received the strongest support (see Figure A1).

Table C2. Distinguishing statements for each factor, Z Score (normalized weighted average statement score) and Q Sort Value (represents how a hypothetical respondent with 100% loading on a factor would place the statement). All listed statements have a P value < .05; * = P < .01.

Factor	Distinguishing Statements	Z Score	Q Score Value



#10 Successful campaigns paint a vision of the world they want to create (Berman, 2011).