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Framing of Issues Across Actors: Exploring Competing Discourses in Digital Arenas

Structured Abstract

Purpose: To show how the strategic selection of discursive and interactive strategies generates specific framings of an issue to advocate opposite positions, embodying a struggle of power between parties with their own agendas.

Design/methodology/approach: Drawing on literature within framing, digital issue arenas and critical discourse, this study is based upon detailed explorations of qualitative hypermodal data retrieved from two websites, *Protect Mauna Kea* and *Maunakea and TMT*, which frame from alternative perspectives the internationally renowned Thirty Meter Telescope's construction on Mauna Kea Mountain in Hawaii.

Findings: On each website, frame articulation attempts to connect the event to specific concerns, values and beliefs in order to construct alternative versions of reality which can possibly fit with those of supporters. Simultaneously, this is reinforced by frame amplification concretised in selected discursive and interactive strategies that highlight or downplay the issue from particular perspectives.

Originality/value: The study offers a deep insight into the complexity and dynamic nature of framing, in particular into how framing can vary and compete across actors. It also responds to “the need for critical awareness of discourse in contemporary society” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 554) by revealing how the power positions of “challengers and powerholders” (Steinberg, 1998, p. 846) are discursively reproduced and reinforced through distinctive discursive and interactive strategies. Finally, this study adopts a critical approach to hypermodal discourse analysis, employed in digital arenas where both organisations and activists are seen as frame strategists.

Article classification: Research paper

Keywords: digital issue arenas, discursive and interactive strategies, strategic issue framing, multimodal discourse analysis

Introduction

In July 2009, the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) Board of Directors selected Mauna Kea, on the island of Hawaii, as the preferred site for building on its top a ground-based, large segmented mirror reflecting telescope to be completed by 2024. This was followed in 2010 by the formal approval of the project by both the State of Hawaii Governor and the University of Hawaii Board of Regents. Local resistance to the project began shortly after the announcement of Mauna Kea as the chosen site, since it is considered by native Hawaiians as the most sacred mountain of the local religion. A movement of “protectors” formed locally to voice concerns and disagreement over the proliferation of telescopes on the mountain, with activists raising dissent in particular over the impact on Mauna Kea’s environment, protected species, groundwater aquifers and, above all, their cultural and spiritual rights. The protest started to attract considerable international coverage and attention (Sinco Kelleher, 2014; Fox, 2015) at the beginning of April 2015 after the arrest of 31 people who had blocked the roadway to impede the construction crews to reach the summit of Mauna Kea (“Big Island Video News”, 2015). The global protest rapidly grew through the Web, with the proliferation of dedicated websites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages. This controversy between science and sacred land echoes similar cases, like the one illustrated by Endres (2012) regarding the Yucca Mountain and the incommensurability of values between American Indians and the federal government.

The Mauna Kea dispute well illustrates the interplay between activists’ and organisations’ strategies (Smith and Ferguson, 2010) including advocacy through the media and in particular digital media, which facilitate publics’ participation and mobilization (Hon, 2015). In this dialectical struggle activists are to be seen as communicators themselves, strategically engaging in public relations strategies that frame and advocate their position (Hon, 2015). According to Heath, “many have never doubted the role of public relations in business, but others see it as being very much alive in the planning and executions of nonprofits, NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), even activists (and terrorists), and governmental agencies” (2006, p. 94). Frame construction is “forged in the interaction between challengers and powerholders” (Steinberg, 1998, p. 846) and in particular is revealed through the discursive and interactive strategies adopted by organisations and other actors, as “the strategic use of discourse is central to public relations practice and solicitation of public consent to pursue an organizational mission” (Motion and Weaver, 2005, p. 63).

The purpose of this study is to show how the strategic selection of specific discursive and interactive strategies contributes to the framing of the telescope construction from two alternative perspectives in order to advocate opposite positions in the new context of digital issue arenas. The study provides empirical evidence from two websites, *Protect Mauna Kea* and *Maunakea and TMT*, and focuses on detailed analyses of qualitative data. Such an approach addresses other communicative aspects than the quantitative content analyses performed in similar studies (e.g., Reber and Berger, 2005; Zoch *et al.*, 2008).

The paper is structured as follows. First, the main theoretical perspectives that have inspired this research study are presented by relating research on framing, digital issue arenas and critical discourse. Second, the methodological framework based on the discursive construction of legitimation, and the data collection and data analysis procedures are illustrated. Main findings from the two websites are then exemplified, to finally get to discussion and concluding remarks offering avenues for future research.

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1. Framing of Issues in Digital Arenas

Framing theory has received increasing attention over the past three decades from scholars across the social sciences and humanities (Entman, 1993; Benford and Snow, 2000; Hallahan,

2005) including psychology, sociology, media studies and political communication. More recently, it has taken root in public relations and communication literature (Johansson, 2007; Lim and Jones, 2010) where a framing approach has been indicated as a potentially useful paradigm for investigating the strategic creation of messages and the interpretation processes by audiences (Hallahan, 1999). Frames are reality constructions expressed in discourse (Johansson, 2007) and their function is to limit or define a message's meaning by shaping the inferences that people make about it (Hallahan, 1999). As Entman (1993, p. 52) points out, "Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation* for the item described". The verb framing denotes "an active, processual phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction" (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 614).

Framing of issues allows for understanding the different interpretations of social reality and uncovering how social problems and disputes are constructed in alternative or opposite terms by the different parties involved, who compete for making their preferred definition of a problem or situation prevail (Hallahan, 1999). Competing discourses meet in what Luoma-aho and Vos conceptualize as "issue arena", a place where the public debate about an issue is conducted via traditional or digital media: "Similar to an economic market arena where buyers and suppliers meet, a social issue arena is a place for interaction about ideas" (2010, p. 319). The arena is dynamic and characterized by a struggle of power between players with their own agendas and strategies, where the organisation is only one player among others who vie for public attention. In particular, digital media facilitate polyphony or "discursive diversity" (Trittin and Schoenborn, 2015) and create opportunities for new and different campaign dynamics of "digital social advocacy" (Hon, 2015). Digital arenas also change the power balance (Zoch *et al.*, 2008) in favour of activist groups (Coombs, 1998) in terms of greater visibility and influence on mediators (Luoma-aho and Vos, 2010).

Researchers concerned with social movement organisations have studied considerably the framing of issues and how "frames get made" (Hart, 1996, p. 95). In particular, Snow and associates' work has been central in exploring framing as a device to mobilize consensus and action, starting in the mid-1980s with their core and extensively cited articles (Snow *et al.*, 1986; Snow and Benford, 1988; Benford and Snow 2000). In particular, Benford and Snow's research (2000) has been influential in showing how frames are developed via specific dynamics and overlapping processes, among which the articulation and amplification processes generated through discourse play a significant role. According to them, frame articulation consists in discursively assembling and connecting events and experiences so that these elements combine and acquire sense in a cohesive and captivating manner. The novelty of the resulting frame derives from the new angle of vision or interpretation provided. Frame amplification instead involves discursively highlighting some issues, beliefs or events as punctuated elements being more salient than others.

Taken together, the present study builds on the framing paradigm with the aim to uncover the complexity and interactive nature of discursive strategies, which can take diverse forms according to the understanding and agenda of those who develop and employ them. According to the issue arena concept (Luoma-aho and Vos, 2010) here endorsed, not only organisations and their public relations professionals are "frame strategists", but also other actors involved in articulating and disseminating competing frames of the same issue: "most of the research on advocacy has been examined from the perspective of organizations, not how activist publics use public relations to achieve their goals" (Hon, 2015, p. 302). Linked to this, this research study takes on the call for additional research in terms of scrutinizing "competing frames" (Lim and Jones, 2010, p. 296) and the "dynamic nature of framing"

(Hallahan, 1999, p. 229) by looking in particular at frame variation across actors (Snow and Byrd, 2007) and adopting a critical perspective on discourse, as elaborated in the following.

1.2. Discursive strategies from a critical perspective

By calling public relations practitioners “discourse technologists” (1996, p. 298), Motion and Leitch acknowledge the strategic discursive expertise that these practitioners are supposed to possess in order to articulate a specific worldview. The fundamental role of this expertise is pointed out by Motion and Weaver who explain that in this context “discourse strategies are deployed to circulate ideas, establish advantageous relationships, and privilege certain truths and interests” (2005, p. 53). Consequently, from this perspective, they argue that it is relevant “to investigate how public relations practice uses particular discursive strategies to advance the hegemonic power of particular groups and to examine how these groups attempt to gain public consent to pursue their organizational mission” (Motion and Weaver, 2005, p. 50).

This perspective is based upon a specific approach to discourse that stems from Foucault’s work: “Foucault (1972/1980) saw individuals and organizations as deploying various discourse strategies to conform with, circumvent, or contest existing power relations” (Motion and Weaver, 2005, p. 50). The Foucauldian perspective on discourse has influenced - across disciplines - a range of critical discourse researchers who have tried to address the ways in which this perspective can be applied in critical discourse analyses. For example, Fairclough (1992, 1995 and 2010) has been influential in showing how Foucault’s notions of “the orders of discourse” (Foucault, 1971) and “the tactical polyvalence of discourse” (Foucault, 1978, p. 100) provide the means to highlight the way in which dynamic clusters of discourses and discursive practices can be strategically employed and controlled in various social contexts. Fairclough appropriates Foucault’s concept of order of discourse while redefining it: “An order of discourse can more specifically be seen as a particular combination of different discourses, different genres and different styles, which are articulated together in a distinctive way” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 358).

The identification and examination of such strategic articulations enable researchers to explore the dynamic character of discursive practices and the meaning-making role they have in reinventing social realities because, as Fairclough claims, discourse is “a practice, not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world in meaning” (1992, p. 64). Also from a Foucauldian perspective, van Leeuwen focuses on the transformative power of discourses and defines discourse as “a socially constructed knowledge of some social practice” (2008, p. 6). Following Foucault who maintains that discourses involve “the definition of a legitimate perspective” (1977, p. 135), van Leeuwen explains that discourses “not only represent what is going on, they also evaluate, ascribe purposes to it, justify it, and so on, and in many texts these aspects of representation become far more important than the representation of the social practice itself” (2008, p. 6).

A critical perspective is particularly fitting this study as it allows digging into framing processes generated through discourse as defined by Benford and Snow (2000) and exploring the dynamic character of discursive practices and their role in reinventing social realities. In addition, although it is clear that framing occurs through language and narrative practices, there has been little examination of its discursive foundation and processes (Steinberg, 1998; Benford and Snow, 2000), a deficiency that this study intends to address.

2. Methodology and Data

In the light of this understanding of the inextricable links between framing of issues and discursive construction of versions of reality, the present methodological framework has been

designed in order to account for the existence of such links and their consequences in digital arenas. More specifically, this study investigates the following research questions:

- a) How is the TMT's construction framed through specific discursive and interactive strategies on *Protect Mauna Kea* website?
- b) How is the TMT's construction framed through specific discursive and interactive strategies on *Maunakea and TMT* website?
- c) How does the strategic selection of these strategies contribute to framing of the telescope construction from two alternative perspectives in order to advocate opposite positions?

Motion and Weaver maintain that “discourse analysis offers critical scholars a mode for researching and theorizing public relations practices that structure societal systems of knowledge and beliefs” (2005, p. 64). This perspective upon discourse analysis has primarily contributed to the selection of the methodological tools employed in this study. Adopting Benford and Snow's understanding of framing generated through discourse (2000), the present discourse analyses employ van Leeuwen's concepts of discursive representations of social practices (2007, 2008, 2009) in order to reveal how the socially constructed knowledge about the telescope issue and its impact on the Hawaiian people's lives takes various forms according to the interests of those who construct it or those who are against its construction. Among other researchers, Vaara and Tienari (2008), Erkama and Vaara (2010), Vaara *et al.* (2010) and Mackay (2015), have also been inspired by the same critical approach to discursive legitimation and applied it to various situations and types of data, from business news to videos and interviews.

Due to the limited length of this article, the chosen level of analytical delicacy, and the specificity of the selected data, the main focus will be placed on the discursive construction of legitimation in the context of two websites, which will be presented below. According to van Leeuwen, legitimations are “reasons that either the whole of a social practice or some part of it must take place, or must take place in the way that it does” (2008, p. 20). Van Leeuwen's typological framework (2007, 2008, 2009) comprises several categories of legitimations that can occur both separately or in combination. Therefore, firstly, the discursive construction of legitimation in this study is explored by employing van Leeuwen's (2008, p. 105-106) three categories of legitimations: *authorization* (“legitimation by reference to the authority of tradition, custom, law and/or persons in whom institutional authority of some kind is vested”), *moral evaluation* (“legitimation by (often very oblique) reference to value systems”), and *rationalization* (“legitimation by reference to the goals and uses of institutionalized social action”). All these categories of legitimations can be employed to legitimise or to delegitimise social practices and institutions in various types of texts. Table 1 presents the chosen categories and subcategories of legitimations that ensure the discursive construction of legitimation.

Discursive legitimation strategies		
Categories	Subcategories	
Authorization	Custom	Conformity
		Tradition
	Authority	Personal authority
		Impersonal authority
	Recommendation	Expert authority
		Role model authority
Moral evaluation	Evaluation	Evaluative words
		Evaluative images
	Abstraction	

	Comparison	
Rationalization	Instrumental	Goal orientation
		Effect orientation
		Means orientation
	Theoretical	Experiential
		Scientific
		Definition
		Explanation
		Prediction

Table 1. Categories and subcategories of discursive legitimation strategies (after van Leeuwen).

Vaara and Tienari have employed the same categories of legitimations when exploring “how a controversial action and its consequences are legitimated by subtle textual strategies” (2008, p. 988). In this study, the textual approach is extended to a hypermodal one. As founding fathers of multimodality, Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) stress that communication is and has always been multimodal, meaning that several semiotic modes and their interplay are means of making meaning in any communication process. So, multimodality is “the normal state of human communication” (Kress, 2010, p. 1). In connection with the discursive construction of legitimation, van Leeuwen also highlights the fact that “though language plays the central role in legitimation, some forms of legitimation can also be expressed visually (...) And moral evaluations can be connoted visually or represented by visual symbols” (2008, p. 120). Consequently, the following analyses of legitimation strategies are conducted at the level of two semiotic modes (written texts and still images) and at the level of their interplay. Additionally, evaluation is analysed at the same level with legitimation as a discursive strategy in its own right and not as a subcategory, due to its heavy representation on both websites.

Also, in this study, the exploration of legitimation and evaluation strategies is conducted in a hypermodal context and therefore the methodological framework of this study is also coloured by a hypermodal perspective. Hypermodality indicates “the new interactions of word-, image-, and sound-based meanings in hypermedia” and represents “the conflation of multimodality and hypertextuality” (Lemke, 2002, p. 300). Lemke suggests that in a hypermodal context, “both verbal text and visual images can be built to be more constraining of the meanings a reader makes or more enabling of the reader as a co-conspirator” (2002, p. 299). The hypermodal perspective is relevant here because it allows us to address not only discursive strategies, but interactive ones too, namely the ways in which links are offered on both websites in order to involve the reader/viewer in framing the issues and thus advocating specific positions.

Finally, the discursive and interactive strategies are integrated in secondary and primary frames. In this study, secondary frames are defined as being the frames which emanate from connecting recurrent discursive and interactive strategies, and which are dynamically amplified and articulated at a higher level of abstraction generating the primary frames.

Concerning data, in order to investigate the dispute over Mauna Kea and the discursive construction of legitimation by the parties involved, two websites which function as hypermodal issue arenas were analysed: first, the *Protect Mauna Kea* website, created by Ho‘opae Pono Peace Project, an affiliate of Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples, in order to promote Mauna Kea as a sacred place and sustain the campaign against the construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope (<http://www.protectmaunakea.org/>); second, an

informational microsite created by the TMT Observatory Corporation, *Maunakea and TMT*, revolving around the core belief that “spirituality and science can harmoniously coexist on Mauna Kea” (<http://maunakeaandtmt.org/>).

The main website of TMT Observatory Corporation (<http://www.tmt.org/>) was taken into consideration only as a point of departure in selecting the data sources for this study. In particular, in its “News Center” section, a featured story dated 13 April 2015 announced the launch of a TMT informational microsite, whose declared aim is to provide additional background on the project, answers to the most frequently asked questions, and a listing of some balanced news stories (<http://ec2-52-8-144-112.us-west-1.compute.amazonaws.com/news-center/tmt-background-get-facts>). This microsite was created right after the arrest of the 31 people and the global protest that followed. In light of this, *Maunakea and TMT* website and *Protect Mauna Kea* website were chosen as primary data sources for this study. Accordingly, data from these two websites were gathered starting from April 13 (the date when the TMT informational microsite was created as a response to the protest spreading globally) until September 11, 2015. The websites were downloaded in all their parts, reproducing offline the original structure and layout and including all kinds of content (i.e. texts, downloadable documents, videos and images). This study reports on the analysis of the texts and still images of the two websites, excluding downloadable documents and external pages or websites to which some sections linked. A visual mapping of the content structure of the two websites, with their main sections, subsections, content areas and internal links are reported in Figure 1.

Figure 1. A visual representation of “Protect Mauna Kea” and “Maunakea and TMT” websites.

In the process of coding the qualitative data from both websites, the selected a-priori codes have been van Leeuwen's types and subtypes of legitimations and evaluations that have been mentioned above. The other codes (namely the secondary and primary frames) emerged from the data when meaning-making patterns started to appear in and across the selected hypermodal material. The transcription procedure for both websites was based upon using a Word table with vertical columns related to types, subtypes and examples of discursive strategies found in each of the selected hypermodal texts at the level of each webpage. Then, when moving to a more analytical coding work, two new columns have been added to the tables for secondary and then primary frames and, for the purposes of this study, the types, subtypes and examples of legitimations and evaluations were correlated with these frames. The correlations were done by taking into consideration the meaning-making patterns that appeared in the usage of specific legitimations and evaluations, namely by distinguishing how these were related to each other as parts in some larger wholes, namely secondary and primary frames. The interpretation of these patterned relations from each website was afterwards performed in order to reveal how, through different strategies, two alternative perspectives were discursively constructed in order to advocate opposite positions towards the telescope construction. The accuracy of data coding, transcription procedure and the consistency of the interpretation were ensured by having two researchers who performed these activities in parallel. Table 2 illustrates a sample of hypermodal transcription and coding.

Discursive strategies		Interactive strategies	Frames	
Legitimations	Evaluations		Secondary	Primary
Theoretical rationalization, expert and role model authority: <i>A sacred place is Mauna Kea "Mauna Kea holds a special place on Earth, as it stands as a place of peace and Aloha, not just for Hawaii but for the world" Kealoha Pisciotta (Read More) ("Home" page)</i>	Verbal: <i>special place, a place of peace and Aloha, sacred places</i> Visual: large image of the mountain (white snow and blue sky) as background for text ("Home" page)	Link to the whole text of Kealoha Pisciotta, president of a spiritual organisation and former worker at the observatory: <i>Read more</i> ("Home" page)	Sacredness of Mauna Kea Local and global significance of Mauna Kea	Sacredness and Protection

Table 2. Sample of hypermodal transcription and coding.

3. Main Results

In what follows, we explain how specific frames are represented on the two websites by employing specific discursive processes of frame articulation and frame amplification. Interactive strategies are also included. The discussion of main aspects of discursive strategies and of related interactive strategies is structured according to the primary and secondary frames that have been identified on the two websites. The primary frames are: the sacredness and protection frame on *Protect Mauna Kea* website and the harmony and future frame on *Maunakea & TMT* website.

Table 3 visually summarizes main discursive strategies and frames found on the two websites.

Websites	Framing processes		Discursive strategies	
	Primary frame	Secondary frames	Legitimations types	Evaluations types
Protect Mauna Kea	Sacredness and protection	Sacredness of Mauna Kea	Theoretical rationalization Impersonal authorization Tradition authorization	(Clusters of) verbal intensifiers Abstractions Long shots of the mountain Close-up and long shots of protectors (when protesting or worshipping)
		Mauna Kea's both local and global significance	Theoretical rationalization Expert authorization Role model authorization	
		Necessity of both local and global involvement in protecting Mauna Kea	Goal-oriented instrumental rationalization Effect-oriented instrumental rationalization Personal authorization Impersonal authorization	
Maunakea and TMT	Harmony and future	Harmony between Hawaii and science advancement (embodied by TMT)	Theoretical rationalization Expert authorization Effect-oriented instrumental rationalization	(Clusters of) verbal intensifiers Abstractions Long shots of the mountain Close-up and long shots of students involved in various experiments
		Necessity of science advancement (embodied by TMT) for both local and global future	Means-oriented instrumental rationalization Goal-oriented instrumental rationalization Expert authorization	

Table 3. Summary of main discursive strategies and framing processes on the two websites.

3.1. Articulation and Amplification of the Sacredness and Protection Frame on Protect Mauna Kea Website

The primary frame of sacredness and protection is articulated through a cluster of discursive strategies at the level of three overlapping secondary frames:

- sacredness of Mauna Kea;
- local and global significance of Mauna Kea;
- necessity of local and global involvement in protecting Mauna Kea.

The legitimation and evaluation strategies employed on this website contribute to the overall discursive articulation of the sacredness and protection frame by connecting sacred

places of the world with the healing of humanity. In this way, the stringent necessity to protect these sacred places (including Mauna Kea) becomes obvious and undeniable.

The amplification of this primary frame is realized verbally by highlighting Mauna Kea as a unique and sacred place immersed in the history, culture and spirituality of the Hawaiian people. For example, on the “Questions & Answers” page, it is verbally intensified through *evaluation* “Mauna Kea is very sacred in Hawaiian tradition. Hawaiians have been caring for the mountain, and conducting ceremonies and burials there, for thousands of years”. The *impersonal authorization* manifested in the verbal presentation of the protocols for Kapu Aloha (spiritual restraint and compassion) is also meant to have a similar effect. The photos posted on the “Online march” page function as visual *evaluative legitimations* of this close connection between Mauna Kea and the Hawaiian people. In these photos, individuals and groups hold banners on which the words “We are Mauna Kea” are written in various colours. Additionally, in several photos, the same words are written on the Hawaiians’ clothes or even their bodies (for example, on their hands, chests or backs). A collective identity is thus created.

This amplification is discursively enhanced through highlighting how Mauna Kea, as a unique and sacred place, is also significant for the whole world as a “great magnifier/amplifier” (“A Sacred Place is Mauna Kea”). *Tradition authorization* is employed to legitimate this connection once again on the same page: “Many sacred places of the world hold ancient wisdom bound in ritual and ceremony for this time in our history, to help us all heal ourselves and the world. Mauna Kea is one of those places”.

Through the usage of *theoretical rationalizations*, this connection is repeatedly made explicit and emphasized, as for example in the “Questions & Answers” page where it is stated once again that “Mauna Kea is sacred to people from all around the world”. The same legitimization strategy is used in the following excerpt quoted from Keoloha Pisciotto’s text, “A Sacred Place is Mauna Kea”: “Mauna Kea holds a special place on earth, as it stands as a place of peace and Aloha, not just for Hawai’i but for the world” (“Home”). Here the legitimating strategy is enhanced through an *expert and role model authorization*, as Keoloha Pisciotto is the president of the spiritual organisation Mauna Kea Anaina Hou, and a practitioner of traditional and customary cultural and religious practices relating to Mauna Kea. The fact that this quotation is superimposed on a big image of the mountain covered by snow on the background of a blue sky enhances multimodally the effect of these legitimations. Furthermore, this multimodal discursive strategy is combined with an interactive one as the readers/viewers are encouraged to use the provided link: “Read more”.

This kind of legitimization strategy is also manifested in connection with *goal-oriented instrumental rationalizations* in order to link the uniqueness and sacredness of Mauna Kea to the fundamental reason for which everyone should become involved in its protection: “Protection of sacred places is something that is a part of all human cultures” (“Questions & Answers”). Furthermore, such goal-oriented legitimations of the spiritual involvement are accompanied by legitimations of practical involvement encouraged by the local Mauna Kea Protection Fund “To raise funds for general organizing, web presence, travel and other expenses relating to the protection of Mauna Kea” (“Donate”). The necessity of this local involvement is visually legitimated through *personal and conformity authorizations* in the image of a smiling group of people holding a banner and having eye contact with the reader/viewer (“Sign the petition”). Evaluative legitimations of practical involvement are also *effect-oriented*: “The overwhelming outpouring of aloha and support for Mauna Kea has resulted in many fundraising efforts” (“Donate”). The intense emotional involvement of the Hawaiians is legitimated through clusters of *evaluations*: “We are deeply saddened, our hearts become heavy with anger and resentment, and defensive feelings come to the front of

our being. This is justified, understandable and reasonable” (“A Sacred Place is Mauna Kea”).

In legitimating the justified necessity of any kind of involvement in the protection of Mauna Kea, the employment of *impersonal authorization* is also manifested by linking local and universal laws: “No matter if you are following the laws of the occupier (US) or the laws of the Kingdom of Hawai`i, all laws are a construct of civilization (made by man) for the purpose of helping us live in peace and harmony” (“A Sacred Place”). These discursive strategies are accompanied by a series of interactive ones as the readers/viewers are encouraged to make use of a series of links through which their involvement can become a concrete one by donating, signing a petition and/or participating in the online photo march with their own photos.

The amplification of this sacredness and protection primary frame is also discursively achieved through *goal-oriented instrumental rationalizations* which link Mauna Kea to the fate of the whole humanity while raising the protectors to the rank of world saviours due to their stand against the telescope construction: “The Protectors are taking a stand specifically against scientific practices that do a lot of damage -- to our planet, to traditional native cultures, and to public health and safety. They are challenging science to do better” (“Questions & Answers”).

3.2. Articulation and Amplification of the Harmony and Future Frame on Maunakea & TMT Website

As movements can be “stigmatized because their beliefs and/or values contradict the dominant culture’s core values” (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 624), the new informational microsite *Maunakea and TMT* uses hypermodal discursive strategies in order to reframe the telescope construction as to come closer to the protesters’ primary frame articulation and amplification, namely to attain a sort of “cultural resonance” (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 622) through extending the frame of *TMT Observatory Corporation* website.

The primary frame of harmony and future that characterizes the *Maunakea and TMT* website is articulated through a cluster of discursive strategies at the level of two overlapping secondary frames:

- harmony between Hawaii and science advancement (embodied by TMT);
- necessity of science advancement (embodied by TMT) for local and global future.

The legitimation and evaluation strategies employed on this website contribute to the overall discursive articulation of the harmony and future frame by connecting the telescope construction with a harmonious and secure future of the Hawaiian people and of the whole humanity. In this way, the stringent necessity to construct the telescope becomes obvious and undeniable.

The amplification of the primary frame is thus ensured first of all by declaring a strong commitment to the future preservation of the harmony between Hawaiian spirituality, culture and environment, and science advancement embodied by the telescope project. It is realized verbally by evaluatively repeating, with the same words, both on “Investing in the future” and on “Balancing science and culture” pages their fundamental belief, namely that “spirituality and science can harmoniously coexist on Maunakea”. Based on this belief, the initiatives related to the telescope construction are repeatedly related to this overarching harmony through *evaluative theoretical explanations*. For example, on “Balancing Science and Culture”, where the respected harmony between spirituality and science is evaluatively extended to culture and environment too: “Out of respect for Hawaiian culture and for the protection of Maunakea’s natural resources, we have taken great care to select a site that has no endangered flora or fauna and no known archaeological shrines or burial sites”. Through the usage of *abstraction*, this harmonious connection is emphasized by placing it into a vague

past: “It is no coincidence that the ideal location on Earth in which to peer into the heavens is here in Hawaii, a place where science and spirituality have long been woven into the fabric of everyday culture” (“Balancing Science and Culture”). The references to (an undetermined) past, at the level of this secondary frame, are accompanied by legitimising references to future initiatives which highlight continuously the commitment to preserve this harmony. *Expert authority legitimations* are used for discursively drawing attention to this commitment: “Cultural and archaeological monitors and experts will be onsite during construction and will have the authority to stop work if cultural finds are made” (“Balancing Science and Culture”). Furthermore, the commitment to the preservation of this harmony is legitimated through *instrumental effect-oriented rationalizations* by its future embodiment in the actual construction: “The TMT Observatory and headquarters will be furnished with décor, displays and items that reflect the cultural and spiritual qualities of Maunakea” (“Balancing Science and Culture”). However, imprecise *evaluation* strategies weaken the legitimization of this commitment to harmony preservation; for example, when stating that the telescope “is only vaguely visible” and “will not substantially affect scenic vistas and viewplanes” (“Protecting the environment”).

Precision is what characterizes more legitimating discursive strategies used for the amplification of the primary frame at the level of the other secondary frame. The necessity of the telescope construction is primarily legitimised through impersonal authority legitimations as the page contains a series of links to official documents as “Board of Land and Natural Resources (BNLR) Final Decision” and “Third Court Final Decision” (“Protecting the Environment”). The legitimization and evaluation of educational, workforce and scientific implications of the telescope construction are the main discourse strategies, which are employed to advocate for this necessity.

The legitimization of the educational implications is ensured by a series of *means-oriented rationalizations* which provide precise information about sums of money and other parties involved in the project: “With lead funding of \$200,000 from TMT along with \$300,000 from other funders, 23 organizations received at total of \$500,000 in grants through the THINK Fund at Hawaii Community Foundation’s STEM Learning Grants Program” (“THINK Fund programs”). This legitimising discursive strategy is strengthened by an interactive one as the words “Hawaii Community Foundation” represent a link where further information is provided. The means-oriented rationalizations are also strengthened by *predictions* that link this secondary frame to the one presented above. For example: “We envision a future for Hawaii in which educational excellence supports innovation, investment and opportunity in a diversity of fields from traditional ones such as organic farming and sustainable fishing to energy, information technology, and scientific research, development and discovery” (“Investing in Hawaii’s future”). The verbal discursive strategies are accompanied by visual ones as close-up and long shots of students involved in various experiments are the predominant images on this website, apart from the mountain images which can also be encountered on the other website.

The legitimization of workforce implications is achieved in connection with the legitimization of the educational ones and through *evaluative goal-oriented rationalizations*. On “Investing in Hawaii’s future”, concrete initiatives are presented: “In 2014, we launched The Hawaii Island New Knowledge (THINK) Fund to better prepare Hawaii Island students to master STEM and to become the workforce for higher paying science and technology jobs in Hawaii’s 21st century economy”. On the same page, the *expert authority legitimization* is enhanced: “In conjunction with the University of Hawaii at Hilo (UHH), Hawai‘i Community College (HCC) and the Department of Education, TMT will form and sustain a Workforce Pipeline Program that will lead to a highly qualified pool of local workers”.

The scientific implications are legitimated through clusters of evaluative words related to TMT's uniqueness: "the most environmental sensitive telescope" ("Protecting the environment"), "the largest existing visible-light telescope in the world" ("Balancing science and culture"), "TMT will be 200 times more sensitive, up to 200 times faster or able to detect objects 200 times fainter" ("The science behind"). A series of interactive strategies give access to more specialized knowledge. For example, the link to "learn more about the science behind the TMT" or to "what makes TMT unique" ("Balancing science and culture"). The discursive legitimation of the construction's overall significance is also raised at a global level through an *abstraction* as Mauna Kea is considered "a celestial gateway" for the whole humanity: "Maunakea is a symbol of that spirit – a celestial gateway that beckons the scientist and explorer in all of us, inspiring us to reach back through time to discover our shared, universal ancestry" ("Balancing Science and Culture").

4. Discussion and Conclusions

As the empirical evidence reported above shows, the discursive strategies of legitimation and evaluation together with the interactive strategies contribute to the articulation and amplification of dynamic, overlapping, parallel if not opposing framings on the two websites where the involved parties advocate different positions towards the Thirty Meter Telescope construction in order to guide the readers/viewers in adopting the respective perspectives.

On the *Protect Mauna Kea* website, the strategies employed contribute to the articulation and amplification of the primary frame of sacredness and protection by continuously shifting the focus in the secondary frames: from the concrete Hawaiian mountain as a sacred place, to all sacred places of the world; from the particular significance of this space for the Hawaiian people, to its significance for the whole humanity; from the necessity of spiritual involvement, to the necessity of practical involvement; from the necessity of local involvement, to the necessity of global involvement in the salvation and protection of Mauna Kea. Although the event in question is the telescope construction and the protectors intend to prevent it, it is the mountain and not the telescope that occupies a central place in the discursive strategies employed by the "challengers" (Steinberg, 1998).

On the *Maunakea and TMT* website, the strategies employed contribute to the articulation and amplification of the primary frame of harmony and future by continuously shifting the focus in the secondary frames: from the perennial harmony between Hawaii and science, to the organisation's commitment to this harmony's preservation; from the local educational and workforce implications, to the global scientific ones.

If the framing on the *Protect Mauna Kea* website constructs Mauna Kea as a sacred place whose local and global significance calls for local and global protection, the framing on the *Maunakea and TMT* website, while accepting the local significance of Mauna Kea in the context of Hawaiian culture, constructs the global significance of the mountain in relation to science advancement. Furthermore, through repeated discursive and interactive strategies, this website places the telescope at the core of their issue framing by reiterating the positive implications of its construction.

These findings reveal how, on each website, frame articulation processes attempt to connect the issue to specific concerns, values and beliefs in ways that construct alternative versions of reality and competing positions. Simultaneously, on each website, frame amplification processes concretized in selected discursive and interactive strategies highlight or downplay the issue and the particular values, concerns and beliefs that resonate with existing and potential supporters. In particular, the TMT informational microsite appears as an effort to come closer to the protesters' issue framing, but at the same time hypermodal discursive strategies are used strategically to draw attention to the main corporate website and the organisation's issue framing.

Taken together, this study contributes to the understanding of the complexity and interactive nature of discursive strategies, while also addressing current research needs. First, this research allowed to get a deeper insight into the dynamic nature of framing, and in particular into how framing can vary and compete across actors (Snow and Byrd, 2007; Cornelissen and Werner, 2014). This also responds to “the need for critical awareness of discourse in contemporary society” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 554) because it reveals how the power positions of “challengers and powerholders” (Steinberg, 1998, p. 846) are discursively reproduced and reinforced when communicated through distinctive discursive strategies. On a more methodological level, this study tackles one of the main unresolved issue in framing research which concerns “methodologies for investigating framing processes” (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 633) able to go beyond thematic content analysis and get “a bit closer to discourse in frame analysis” by looking at “framing as dynamic processes of meaning construction” (Cornelissen and Werner, 2014, p. 220). Thus this study proposed to adopt a critical approach to hypermodal discourse, which was employed here in a new context too, namely in the hypermodal digital space of “issues arenas” (Luoma-aho and Vos, 2010), and considered the perspectives of both organisations and activists as frame strategists engaging in issue framing (Hon, 2015). The replicability of this approach and the explanatory work done for the systematic understanding of specific discursive and interactive strategies can also be of practical value to corporate and non-corporate practitioners (Heath, 2006) in their endeavours to establish effective communication strategies by framing various issues strategically in discussion arenas.

As this research work is in its incipient stage, it is also necessary to acknowledge limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, future researchers may integrate the present results by considering other traditional and digital arenas where the same issue is discussed, and more players involved such as traditional media and regulators. In addition, a future study of this same case could investigate not only discursive, but also strategic and contested processes (Benford and Snow, 2000). Strategic processes may be explored through a comparison of the main website of the TMT Observatory Corporation with *Maunakea and TMT* in order to discern the organisation’s multiple strategies (Luoma-aho and Vos, 2010) and more thoroughly study frame extension, which involves expanding a frame beyond its primary focus to include issues and concerns relevant to other potential adherents. Contested processes may be investigated through an analysis of temporal developments revealing the dialectic between framing and events. Finally, the present hypermodal analysis may be strengthened by including additional material such as videos, documents, and external pages and websites linked to the two websites analysed, and these results triangulated through additional data collected, for example, in the form of interviews with the parties involved.

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