



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts
Danielle Chipman

Will defend her thesis

Fisheries in the News: How the Media Sets the Agenda for Seafood Sustainability in the United States

Abstract

The media is a powerful force in shaping public discussions about marine issues. Many people lack first-hand experiences and direct sources of information about fisheries topics, so they rely heavily on the information presented to them in the news. Thus, the media has the potential to influence public agendas based on their selective coverage of topics, which primes people to take certain information into account when making decisions. This study examines the contents of 412 newspaper articles from five national newspapers to determine which topics are receiving the most coverage and how they are being communicated to the public. The analysis considers fisheries and seafood discussions overall, as well as focusing on the three most commonly consumed seafood items in the United States: salmon, shrimp, and tuna. Systematic coding of newspaper articles shows that economic and social fisheries concerns are emphasized more than environmental concerns. Additionally, fisheries articles tend to emphasize the importance of fishermen's livelihoods, the dangers of international seafood trade, the economic utility of fish, and a consumer's right to make informed decisions about seafood. Overall, there are a number of conflicts and weaknesses in the media's coverage of fisheries, which would likely make it challenging for Americans to make informed, sustainability-minded decisions about seafood purchases and fisheries policies.

Tuesday, May 3, 2016
11:00am – 12:30pm
Wrigley 401

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Kelli Larson, Chair
Dr. Sonja Klinsky, Member
Dr. Dave White, Member