



Discursive Framing & Community Mobilization: Stopping the Melancthon Mega Quarry

Rebecca McEvoy and John Devlin

School of Environmental Design and Rural Development

University of Guelph

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What is 'Framing'?

- In any contentious situation, there are different stakeholders involved holding different values and perspectives.
- Meaning is constructed as these different events, experiences, facts, and values are emphasized or downplayed.
- Framing is crucial for a movement to develop a following;
- Framing encompasses both the internal processes of how issues are understood and the overt strategy for the presentation of an issue to other stakeholders.
- Framing is the process of identifying, interpreting, and expressing grievances and opportunities.

Framing and the Media

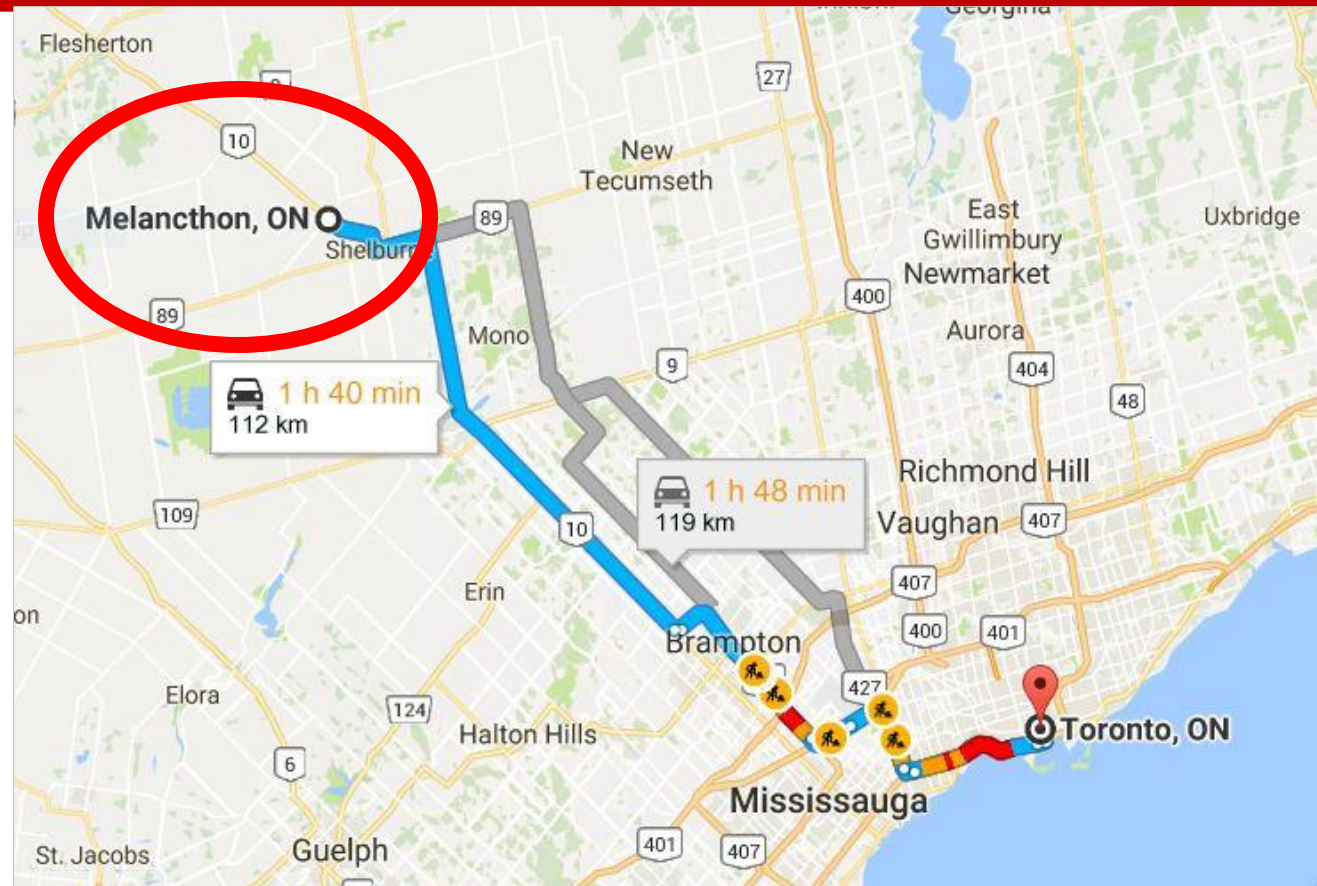
- Mass media plays an invaluable role in amplifying frames and shaping new ones because of its wide audience;
- Almost everyone consumes mass media in some shape or form and as such, its messages are hard to ignore
- Having standing with the media gives a social movement greater power and influence; it allows the movement to amplify its chosen frames.

Who Should be Engaged in Framing?

- We argue that it is not enough to protest. Most protests lose.
- To stop projects it is necessary to engage in “discursive contention”
- This means to challenge the frames of project proponents, and
- To offer counter frames.
- To do this effectively it is necessary to mobilize technical expertise.
- We think the mega quarry mobilization also demonstrates the contribution of cultural expertise.

The Melancthon Story: 2004-2012

- Small township located northwest of Toronto
- Population of 2,800
- Potato farming, tourism are economic drivers
- Many Torontonians have purchased weekend homes

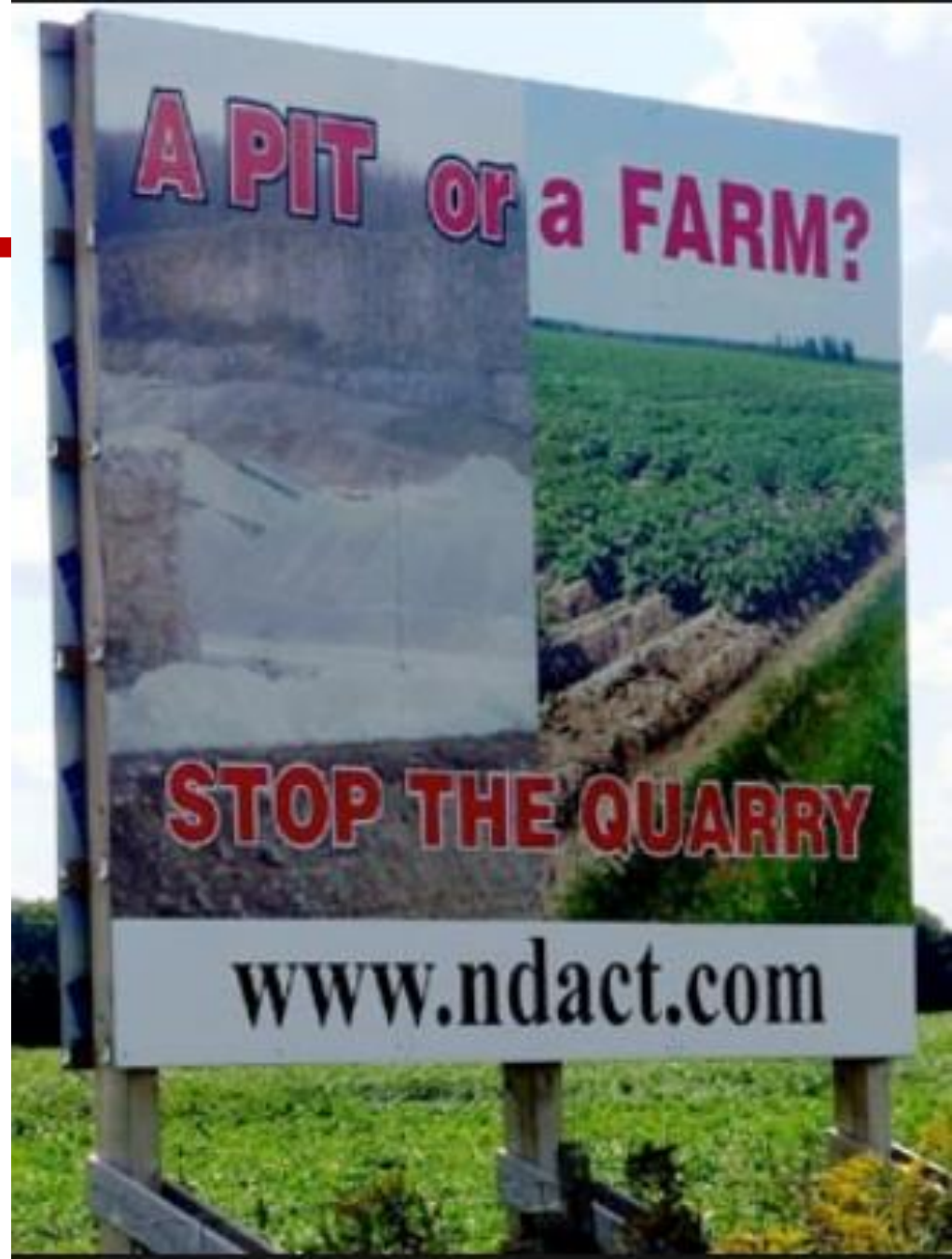


The Beginning

- 2004 The Highland Companies begin purchasing farmland and aggregating lots under numbered companies
- In 2008, local landowners, farmers and concerned citizens began meeting in small groups to discuss the rising suspicions that The Highland Companies had plans for the land beyond farming it.
- Unconventional activities had been seen taking place on the property such as well testing and drilling, archaeological studies, and demolishing farm buildings
- in January 2009 the first local meeting takes place at the arena in nearby Honeywood to discuss the intentions of this new landowner.

NDACT

- It was at the same meeting in 2009 that the North Dufferin Agricultural and Community Taskforce (NDACT) was formed. This group would become the most prominent opponent of The Highland Companies' proposed mega quarry



The Application

- By 2011, The Highland Companies had accumulated approximately 3,400 hectares of prime agricultural land and were operating a large potato farming operation (Bell, et al., 2012).
- April 2011 application for an aggregate license submitted to the MNR by The Highland Companies.
- The application proposed the development of a 2,316 acre (937 hectare) open-pit quarry for mining amabel dolostone bedrock (Shuff, 2011).
- Proposed quarry would cover of Class 1 farmland
- One third the size of downtown Toronto
- Second largest quarry on the continent

The Quarry

- The Highland Companies proposed the development of a quarry for which the rock reserve was 1 billion tonnes (Shuff, 2011).
- The quarry was to reach a depth of 200 feet below the water table;
- The development would impact two of the major watersheds and require that 600 million litres of water be pumped each day in perpetuity to prevent the quarry from flooding (Shuff, 2011).

The 2011 March

- May 2011 Shortly after the application for a license was submitted, a collective of farmers, ranchers, and First Nations leaders organized a 120 kilometre protest march from Queens Park in downtown Toronto to the quarry site in Melancthon Township.
- Over the course of the next five days, over one thousand people got involved in the march and the story was picked up by CBC, CTV, A Channel in Barrie, 680 NEWS, APTN, The Toronto Star, and Hamilton Press.



The Public Response



- Between April and September 2011, the Minister of the Environment received more than seven hundred letters requesting that the proposed mega-quarry be subject to an environmental assessment

The Call for an EA



- September 2011 Provincial government announces that an Environmental Assessment will be required .
- But this is only an opportunity to extend the contention it is not a decision to stop development.



FOODSTOCK

SAVE THE LAND THAT FEEDS US.
STOP THE MEGA QUARRY!

Join Chef Michael Stadtländer and 70 of Canada's best chefs as they cook with the produce of Melancthon Township in an outdoor, pay-as-much-as-you-can*, public food event in solidarity with the movement to Stop The Mega Quarry.

All funds raised will be used in the fight against the proposed destruction of thousands of acres of Ontario farmland.

OCTOBER 16, 2011
HONEYWOOD, ONTARIO
11AM-5PM

Rain or Shine! Rubber boots recommended!
Please BYO plate, cutlery, napkin and water cup!



Presented by
CANADIAN CHEFS' CONGRESS
CONGRES DES CHEFS DE CUISINE CANADIENS

For more info or to register:

www.canadianchefscongress.com

* pay-as-much-as-you-can, suggested minimum donation of \$10

Foodstock

- In October of 2011 NDACT, the Canadian Chefs' Congress, and a number of other partners in the quarry opposition effort hosted 'Foodstock'.
- The event gathered local chefs, famous musicians, and over 28,000 people on the fields surrounding the proposed quarry footprint

But Highland Companies Continues development activities

- March 2012 - NDACT reports that company employees were clearing grasslands and brush from lands not suited for potato farming, clearing lands on road allowances, mulching areas known to be too wet for farming, cutting swales and ditches, altering the watercourse and demolishing heritage buildings



Soupstock

- Six months later
October 2012
Soupstock is held
in Toronto
- One year after
Foodstock



SOUPSTOCK - October 2012



Finally the application is withdrawn

November 21, 2012, the application for license was withdrawn.

A spokesperson states that the company realizes that “the application does not have sufficient support from the community and government to justify proceeding with the approval process”

Technical Expertise Mobilized

MEGA QUARRY MAYHEM

THE HIGHLAND COM

A limestone quarry the size of 2000 football pitches is proposed. If the proposal goes forward, this Quarry will have significant consequences for the health, environment and economy. An assessment to measure potential impacts is being carried out.

BYE BYE POTATOES & FORESTRY

50% of the potatoes eaten in the GTA come from land where the Quarry is slated to be dug. Highland will not only upturn the land, but it will wipe out all of the trees and homes in its way.



Mel...
some d...
the farm...
makes...
which is...



SOURCES AND GREAT READS

Please visit <http://stopthemelancthonquarry.ca/> for great information about the fight against the quarry along with the latest Twitter & Facebook posts, news, & information on the battle.

Sources used: <http://www.nowtoronto.com/>
<http://railroadedby.com/>

- Materials and analysis were provided to NDACT by:
 - Law students and lawyers
 - Engineers
 - Hydrological modelling experts
 - Land-use planners
 - GIS technicians
 - Business professors
 - Economists
 - Conservationists
 - Soil health scientists

Cultural Expertise Mobilized

- Journalists
- Musicians
- Chefs



Conclusion



- The sustained criticism of the mega quarry and the demonstrated environmental impacts made it unlikely that the proposal would pass an environmental assessment.
- But this did not appear convincing to The Highland Companies until more than one year after the EA had been required by the government.
- Such a sustained mobilization is difficult to generate and the Stop the Quarry Movement was an exceptional effort bringing together a wide spectrum of skills.





Enjoy local food, music
and art!

Free wagon rides or
bring your own bike to
see the farmland saved
from the Highland
mega quarry!

Be enviro-
friendly.
Bring your
own plate and
fork!



FOOD & WATER FIRST

Thanks

Contact:

jdevlin@uoguelph.ca

www.uoguelph.ca/sedrd/

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