

Stronger Together: The Cross-Cultural Coalition to Stop a Fossil Fuel Export Terminal in the  
Salish Sea

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**Abstract**

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Indigenous and non-indigenous coalitions have the potential to both empower communities and affect the policy agenda. These relationships, however, are often complicated by differing worldviews and varying levels of power in legal, social, and political matters. As a case study, this thesis analyzes the coalition and advocacy alliances formed to stop the Gateway Pacific Terminal, a proposed coal export facility at Cherry Point, Washington, near the indigenous Lummi Nation. Interviews provide insight into the various environmental and faith-based actors that formed a relationship with the Lummi Nation. The results of these interviews show the Lummi Nation's desire for community capacity building against potential exploitation and colonialism. Applying the Advocacy Coalition Framework to this case study demonstrates: 1) how this alliance has formed, 2) how it is affecting policy, and 3) what power imbalances may exist. Further analysis of this qualitative data provides guidance to indigenous groups and potential advocates on gathering their resources and uniting their core beliefs to successfully form future coalitions. On May 9, 2016, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers denied the construction commencement permit of the Gateway Pacific Terminal project. This was the result of the Lummi Nation's legal right to access their fishing grounds; however, the advocacy of the coalition brought additional pressure and influenced the permit process. This successful coalition

highlights the ability of advocacy groups and indigenous communities to strengthen relationships and impact the policy process.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Indigenous-environmental coalitions have the potential to reshape the environmental movement and create “history and possibility of a new world” (Clark 2002). Even though power imbalances and colonialism can still exist in these coalitions, they can also create an opportunity for indigenous groups to voice their political opinions, share their resources, and strengthen their self-determination (Davis et al. 2010). Common environmental concerns and similar identities can bring people from different cultures or races together (Kamata 2004). Despite the potential for these alliances, research of these relationships remains understudied (Davis et al. 2010). This is especially true regarding the issue of fossil fuel export projects in the Pacific Northwest, which this thesis explores as a case study.

This case study focuses on the successful coalition that formed to oppose the Gateway Pacific Terminal (GPT) near Bellingham, Washington. This coalition is made up of various actors, including the indigenous Lummi Nation, faith-based groups, and environmental organizations, which all had a shared interest in opposing the GPT. The Lummi Nation are active, powerful players in this fight because of their legal power to sue the Army Corps due to a potential violation in their treaty rights to fish. Environmental and faith-based groups offer additional resources and knowledge, as they unite with the Lummi Nation to stop the coal terminal. This case study is similar to many other large-scale development projects worldwide where indigenous, rural communities, who view similar proposals as a threat to their well-being, the environment, and the local economy.

This thesis explores how the coalition to oppose the GPT formed, the differences of the groups’ goals, and how the organizations use their different levels of power to affect the policy process. Further analysis of this coalition ultimately provides important information and insight

into how tribal and non-tribal organizations unite and can improve the quality and diversity of policy discourse. Potentially, this case study can open up space in dominant discourse for marginalized communities that are threatened by fossil fuel projects near their communities.

By adding to the existing literature by examining an indigenous-environmental alliance under the Advocacy Coalition Framework, this thesis furthers knowledge on environmental justice issues in coalitions and fossil fuel export projects. The personal accounts of Lummi community members, environmental activists, and faith-based leaders increased the mobilization potential of other communities fighting fossil fuel terminals in the Pacific Northwest. Their interviews narrate a community's desire for capacity building against a history of exploitation and colonialism in a globalized political economy (Ishiyama 2003).

While power imbalances and colonialism can still exist in coalitions that are perceived as an equal partnership (Fitzmaurice 2010), "the coalitions can offer a good chance for indigenous people to achieve their goal by enlarging and strengthening the pool of political voices, resources, and energies" (Davis et al. 2010:334). In sum, these coalitions are all extremely complex and unique, but the Advocacy Coalition Framework can help actors within the coalitions better understand the social practices and the process taken to affect change and achieve long-lasting, equal relationships (Davis et al. 2010).

## **CHAPTER 1: FOSSIL FUEL EXPORTS IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST**

Since 2012, the Pacific Northwest (PNW), i.e.: British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon, has faced 28 new active proposals for terminals that would export fossil fuels to Asia. These have included “four new coal terminals, three expansions of existing terminals, two oil pipelines, eleven oil-by-rail facilities, and six new natural gas pipelines” (De Place 2014). The planned terminals depend on the BNSF Railway, an advocate for coal exports (Corvin 2012), to ship their products: 48 million tons of coal a year from the Powder River Basin in Montana and Wyoming, the natural gas from British Columbia and the American Southwest, and the oil from the Alberta Tar Sands and the Bakken oil fields (Roach 2014). Eight oil refineries are already receiving shipments from the Bakken shale in this region.

Regulatory agencies have since denied all but two of these projects: the oil port Tesoro Savage Vancouver Energy Distribution Terminal and the coal port, the Millennium Bulk Terminal in Longview (Figure 1). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers rejected the GPT on May 9<sup>th</sup>, citing that it would impact the Lummi’s ability to access their Usual and Accustomed (U&A) fishing grounds. The Army Corps has the capability to reject the other two terminals as well, if they consider any social or environmental impacts more than minimal (McKay 2015).

**Figure 1: Coal Export Route in 2014 (Peeples 2014)**



Opponents to the fossil fuel projects claim that that they threaten the ecosystem’s natural resources and communities’ well-being (Gaydos et al. 2015). In response, Power Past Coal, an alliance of a variety of health, environmental, businesses, clean-energy, faith, and community groups that are opposed to coal exports off the U.S. West Coast, formed in 2010. There are over 100 organizations in the coalition, such as health, environmental, political, and faith-based organizations. Although most of the organizations are based in Oregon or Washington, there are organizations in the South and the Inter-Mountain West involved, as well as national organizations (Powerpastcoal.org 2016, *see* Appendix A). In addition, many Coast Salish Peoples, who have lived in this area since time immemorial (Gaydos et al. 2015), are attempting to halt coal and oil export terminals citing that the shipping of fossil fuels threatens their treaty rights to fish.

For example, in April 2015, the Swinomish Tribe sued BNSF in federal court in order to stop the transportation of coal train through their lands to the Tesoro refinery in Anacortes, WA. The

tribe claimed that the railroad was violating a 1991 agreement between BNSF and the Swinomish that settled a lawsuit. This agreement required BNSF to not come through with more than one 25-car train in each direction a day. This agreement also necessitated that BNSF had to tell the tribe what type of cargo the trains were carrying. The Swinomish stated that they were against the Bakken crude oil train coming through their land, and that BSNF was transporting this oil on six trains, 100-cars long, each week (Kuest 2015).

Another example is the Quinault Indian Nation (QIN) that opposed the expansion to the Grays Harbor Terminal in 2013, which aimed to ship more crude oil across the Pacific Ocean. The QIN signed petitions with the Sierra Club and the Surfrider Foundation to oppose the proposed project. The QIN claimed that there was not a proper evaluation of the risk of oil spills, and that the developments would violate tribal fishing rights and harm commercial and recreational shellfishing and fishing. In November 2013, the WA Shorelines Hearings Board reversed the permits in Grays Harbor for failure to address significant public safety and environmental issues (Boyles 2013). In 2014, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process began, and the company hopes to begin construction sometime in 2016. However, the QIN has hired lawyers to oppose the project, and they are continuing to receive support from environmental and public interest groups. The QIN is also opposing the Imperium Bulk Liquid Terminal Facility in Hoquiam, WA, which is also undergoing the EIS process (De Place and Gruen 2015).

Because of these multiple risks facing indigenous communities in the PNW, many of them are partnering together to protect the Salish Sea from threats. For example, the Gathering of Coast Salish Peoples brings together Washington State Tribal Leaders, BC First Nation Chiefs, and US and Canadian regulatory agencies. This Gathering helps highlight environmental issues

to the government and communicates indigenous traditions and knowledge to the policy level. Overall, researchers and many of these communities strongly believe that these projects will negatively affect the livelihoods of indigenous peoples that live near these proposals (Gaydos et al. 2015).

Globally, indigenous people are resisting many different types of natural resource extraction projects by asserting their rights and demanding recognition for their roles as stewards of the land and water. Many activists are recognizing indigenous peoples as active organizers of social movements that are fighting the exploitation of natural resources (Crist 2012). For example, environmental groups, faith-based organizations, and the Lummi Nation are part of a coalition fighting the GPT, a proposed coal export terminal outside Bellingham, Washington. The Lummi claimed that the GPT would violate the Treaty of Point Elliot of 1855 and the Boldt Decision of 1974, which re-asserted their right to fish in their usual and accustomed (U&A) fishing grounds around Cherry Point, WA.

### **The Gateway Pacific Terminal (GPT): An Overview**

This thesis examines the GPT that would ship coal across the Salish Sea, a transboundary of 16,925 km<sup>2</sup> inland saltwater, which includes the Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan De Fuca, the San Juan Islands, and British Colombia's Gulf Islands and the Strait of Georgia. If completed, the GPT would become a "multimodal, deep-water terminal that would provide storage and handling for the export of 54 million metric tons of dry bulk commodities a year, such as petroleum coke, potash, low-sulfur, low-ash coal, and other coal products brought in by rail" (Gaydos et al. 2015, *see* Figure 2 below). The terminal would encompass 334 acres, with the

total project stretching out to 1,200 acres, making it the largest coal-export terminal on the West Coast (Mapes 2016, Lvdersen 2013, Gaydos et al. 2015). Coal producer Cloud Peak Energy purchased a 49% stake in the GPT and planned to ship 17.6 million tons of coal per year out of the terminal on a total of 487 vessels and 169 larger capsized vessels a year, extracting the fossil fuel resource from the Powder River Basin 1300 miles away (Schwartz 2015). This would require an additional 18 round trips of trains a day from the Powder River Basin to Cherry Point (BIAWC 2011). Comparatively, North America’s largest current coal terminal, Westshore Terminals in Vancouver, covers 133 acres and shipped 3.3 million tons of coal in 2010 (Westshore Terminals 2016, Fugleberg 2011).



**Figure 2: Proposed Coal Shipping Terminal maps/diagrams at Cherry Point (Mapes 2016, Initial source: Department of Ecology)**

The company SSA Marine proposed to build GPT at Cherry Point, which contains ecologically important habitat for birds, marine invertebrates, marine mammals, and many

species of fish, including a genetically distinct species of herring. This Pacific herring, *clupea pallasi*, has declined 92% in population since the 1970s, possibly due to changing ocean conditions and viral diseases triggered by pollution from Cherry Point's industries. However, scientists are still researching the source of this decline, calling it the "Cherry Point Pacific Herring Syndrome" (Stiffler 2013). Despite this population decline, the species still contributes \$3 million a year to the Lummi Nation fishery (James 2013). To protect this species, and other species the local ecosystem, Cherry Point was declared an aquatic reserve under the Washington State Department of Natural Resources in 2000 (Hayes et al. 2004). Although this designation does not affect private land ownership, opponents to the GPT often cite herring and other ecosystem components in the environmental assessments (Burgesser et al. 2011, DNR 2016). To further understand the GPT, a timeline from its conception to May 2016, is provided below.

#### **Timeline of the Gateway Pacific Terminal**

- June 18, 1992: Pacific International Terminals (PIT), a venture/partnership between SSA Marine and Westshore Terminals, asked the Army Corps of Engineers for permission to build a pier that would ship bulk goods, with "some petroleum products", out of Cherry Point (McGee et al. 2014).
- February 1997: Lummi Nation voiced concerns about the GPT due to its impact on historic site and fishing grounds, worsening of water quality, and its violation of the Lummi Nation's water rights
- May 1997: The Whatcom County Council approved GPT's application from five years prior, allowing for a shoreline and a development permit (Bellingham Herald 2016).

- June 1997: The Washington Department of Ecology (DOE), the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the “Washington Environmental Council, the North Cascades Audubon Society, People for Puget Sound, the League of Women Voters of Bellingham, and the Ocean Advocates [appealed the] Whatcom Council’s EIS to the Washington’s Shoreline Hearings Board” (McGee et al. 2014).
- August 1999: Parties reached settlement, resulting in halting of port development on Cherry point. PIT was required to conduct salmon and herring studies, a vessel traffic study, and many environmental assessments.
- 2010: SSA Marine once again announced plans to build the GPT. In response, the Lummi Nation created a multidisciplinary team to handle the decision-making process, getting input from tribal members and studying ecological and economic impacts.
- 2011: PIT once again submitted a project permit to build the GPT, this time with a much larger facility that would include the export of coal. When Whatcom County inspected the future site, they found illegal land clearing and major damage to wetlands. The Bellingham environmental nonprofit, RE Sources for Sustainable Communities, sued PIT for filling wetlands without a permit (Bellingham Herald 2016). SSA Marine gave the Lummi a \$400,000 check that would help it with their technical review of the proposal, but this only furthered the Lummi’s opposition to the project (Mapes 2016). In response, members of the tribe symbolically burned a “fake check given to them by SSA Marine” in 2012 to imply that no amount of money would convince them to allow the building of the coal terminal (Greene 2015).
- 2012: The 120 day scoping period for the environmental impact assessment (EIS) began. Scoping meetings occurred over the region, with opponents and supporters in attendance.

- January 2013: Scoping period closed, with over 125,000 comments submitted. State and county officials said that they would conduct an environmental review of the GPT that would incorporate human health impacts, train and vessel traffic, and carbon emissions.
- October 1, 2013: Settlement was reached between RE Sources for Sustainable Communities and PIT from 2011. PIT paid \$1.6 million (Bellingham Herald 2016).
- 2014: the EIS process for the GPT began. Because the Army Corps recommended that SSA Marine present an alternative plan to mitigate wetland damage by 50% (Schwartz 2014), PIT turned in a plan for a smaller terminal that would not contribute as much damage to the wetlands. The Washington Department of Ecology released the vessel traffic study.
- June 2014: The Lummi Nation hosted a “Sacred Summit”, which discussed the impacts of the GPT on indigenous lands and waters and its impact on fisheries for both Native and non-Native fishermen. Numerous environmental non-profit organizations (NGOs), Lummi tribal elders, the indigenous Tsleil-Waututh Nation from Vancouver, and other concerned Bellingham citizens attended (James 2013).
- January 5, 2015: The Lummi Nation wrote an open letter to the Army Corps of Engineers stating that the GPT must be rejected because it would impact their treaty rights to fish (Bellingham Herald 2016). This causes the Corps to extend the deadline for SSA Marine to reply to the EIS process by an additional 90 days (Quirke 2015).
- May 2015: Nine indigenous communities gathered in Seattle to convince the Army Corps to disallow development (Quirke 2015).
- August 2015: In a further open letter to the Army Corps of Engineers, the Lummi Nation cited a study performed by SSA Marine which stated that the GPT would discharge approximately 3.7 billion gallons of polluted water into the Salish Sea (Ballew 2015).

- November 2015: Tribal leaders convened at the White House Tribal Nations Summit to pressure Congress to recognize their treaty rights (Toohey 2015), which, according to Article IV of the Constitution recognizes treaties as the supreme law of the land (Walker 2015). The Lummi Nation again referenced the 1855 Treaty of Point Elliot. The Tulalip, Swimomish, Quinault, Lower Elwha Klallam, Yakama, Hoopa Valley, Nooksack, and Spokane Nations attend (Toohey 2015).
- April 1, 2016: The EIS process of the GPT was suspended because SSA Marine decide to first await the Army Corps of Engineers decision regarding impacts of “any significance more than minimal” to the Lummi Nation’s right to fish; per the Treaty of Point Elliot’s legal mandate (McKay 2016).
- May 9, 2016: Although SSA Marine had paid more than \$11 million towards the Army Corp’s review (Schwartz 2015), the Corps denied SSA Marine’s permit for the GPT. They cited that the terminal would impact Lummi’s treaty right to fish. This may stop the terminal from being built at all and will likely result in a lawsuit from SSA Marine against the Army Corps (Lutey 2016, Wohlfeil 2016).
- October 2016: The Washington Department of Ecology and Whatcom County are expected to produce a more comprehensive Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). There will be a 45-day period for hearings and comments (Gruen and de Place 2016). This review will incorporate requirements from the Clean Water Act, the Rivers and Harbors Act, and an EIS review performed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Washington’s State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Whatcom County also requires SSA Marine to protect commercial shellfish beds, wildlife populations, and other fisheries (McGee et al. 2014).

## **Opposing Sides**

During the environmental review and the Army Corp's decision-making process, the Lummi Nation and many environmental groups stated their concerns that the GPT would increase underwater vessel noise, vessel collisions and oil spills, and vessel collisions with wildlife. They also believed the GPT would block access to fishing and harvest of wildlife, and negative health impacts would arise from coal-associated contaminants. For instance, un-burnt coal can "transport arsenic into soil, which could impact marine organisms and/or contaminate shellfish/finfish" (Gaydos et al. 2015:14) Coal also generates more carbon dioxide emissions than any other fossil fuel (Mapes 2016). The ballast water discharges from GPT-related vessels are estimated to be about 13,900,000 cubic meters per year when it operates at full capacity. This will triple the total 2013 ballast water discharges throughout all of the Puget Sound (The Glosten Associates Inc. 2014). This increase in ballast water discharge would greatly increase the risk of invasive species in the Salish Sea and pollute the water with unwanted chemicals (Burgesser et al. 2011).

Despite the many concerns held by indigenous communities and environmental groups, some organizations do support the GPT. For example, the Alliance for Northwest Jobs and Exports is a non-profit trade organization that calls for the creation of the export projects in Oregon and Washington. This alliance claimed that the three proposed export terminals would provide \$282.3-348.7 million in wages (Alliance for NW Jobs and Export 2016). They cited that the GPT would introduce 863 total jobs to the Whatcom County economy during the first phase of the terminal's development and 430 direct jobs once the GPT is complete. "Direct jobs" refers to jobs that are directly created due to the terminal. Indirect jobs are jobs that will be created

because workers at the terminal will spend their earnings on local goods and services. The figure below also shows that once the GPT is complete, the terminal would support 430 direct jobs. The project is expected to create 1,229 direct, induced, and indirect jobs in Whatcom County annually. Total annual personal wage is projected to be \$126.3 million annually. The GPT will generate \$17.1 million of local purchases in Whatcom County each year (Figure 3). The terminal would also contribute \$8.1 million in state and local tax revenue annually (Martin Associates 2011). The “Northwest Jobs Alliance” (NWJA), a Whatcom County nonprofit organization with a mission to promote “the growth of family-wage jobs in the context of sound environmental practice” also wanted the Army Corps to approve the GPT (NWJA 2016). The alliance supported “economic vitality and growth” around the Cherry Point industrial area. To do so, they encouraged people to engage in public dialogue with interest groups, political and civil leaders, and the general public. They advocated for industrial jobs at public forums and before government bodies (NWJA 2016).

	Phase I	Full-Build Out
<b>Jobs</b>		
Direct	294	430
Induced	453	634
Indirect	<u>116</u>	<u>165</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>863</b>	<b>1,229</b>
<b>Personal Income (millions)</b>		
Direct	\$29.5	\$40.8
Re-Spending and Local Consumption	\$56.5	\$78.2
Indirect	<u>\$5.1</u>	<u>\$7.3</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$91.1</b>	<b>\$126.3</b>
<b>Business Revenue (millions)</b>	<b>\$666.6</b>	<b>\$1,437.8</b>
<b>Local Purchases (millions)</b>	<b>\$12.0</b>	<b>\$17.1</b>
<b>State and Local Taxes (millions)</b>	<b>\$8.1</b>	<b>\$11.2</b>

**Figure 3: Annual Economic Impact of Bulk Exports of the GPT (Martin Associates 2011:5)**

The NWJA also tried to shape the policy narrative by writing a letter to the Army Corps that the Lummi are attempting a “land-grab”. They said that those who want to de-industrialize Cherry Point is a “radical notion [that] would not serve the public interest” (Schwartz 2015). In general, proponents believed that this project would help keep children in the county instead of going elsewhere to look for jobs (Mapes 2016). The Crow Nation in Montana also supported the GPT because 9 million tons of coal lies beneath their land (Peeples 2014). Therefore, the coal extraction would aid their local economy. They also owned part of the GPT project, with the potential of earning \$10 million over the first five years of the project (Mapes 2016).

## **Market Trouble for the Coal Industry**

Even though the Corps denied the project, SSA Marine may follow up with a lawsuit or counter proposal because of their desire to build the coal terminal. However, the future for the GPT and other coal export terminal are uncertain. International coal prices have fallen drastically in 2015/2016, and are currently forecasted to be approximately \$60/ton until 2021 (Williams-Derry 2015). The demand for US coal in China is also decreasing, since U.S. coal producers cannot compete with Indonesian producers. For example, exporting Powder River Basin coal requires inland railroad transport, either 2,000 km to the Pacific Northwest or 1,5000 km to the Mississippi River (Roberts 2016). US coal production is expected to drop by 17% in 2016 (EIA 2016). Imports in China dropped 41.5% in the beginning of 2015, and Cloud Peak lost \$35 million in exports in 2015 (Williams-Derry 2015). In addition, policy and regulation are becoming more supportive of non-coal alternatives, including hydraulic-fracking, wind farming, and solar energy, which further threatens the future of coal in the U.S. (Peeples 2014, Roberts 2016).

In January 2016, the second largest coal supplier in the U.S., Arch Coal, Inc., filed for bankruptcy. This company planned to ship their coal through Millennium Terminals, located in Longview, Washington, but their plans were put on hold due to the declining lucrativeness of domestic coal manufacture. The company had acquired over \$5 billion in long-term debt and had lost \$500 million over the past year (Power Past Coal 2016). In another blow to the coal industry, the Obama Administration announced on January 15, 2016 that it would prevent new coal leases on federal lands. About 40% of the coal mined in the US comes from federal land in Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, Utah, and New Mexico (Volcovici 2016). In March 2016, Arch Coal pulled

out of a mining project in Otter Creek, Montana, which pleased ranchers, environmentalists, and the Northern Cheyenne Tribe (Ochenski 2016).

Because of the Army Corp's rejection and a coal depressed market, SSA Marine may still want to build a terminal that does not ship coal at Cherry Point. The Whatcom County Council is consistently holding hearings for their update to the County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan. There are citizens from both sides of the issue with an opinion on whether to deindustrialize Cherry Point and prevent further growth or to continue to build on the area (Jensen 2016).

### **Research Questions**

Although there are over 100 organizations involved in the Power Past Coal Coalition, this thesis focuses in on those groups that specifically fought against the GPT. In 2010, the Lummi Nation partnered up with local environmental groups, faith-based organizations, and other tribal nations from both Canada and the U.S to oppose the GPT. These key groups include: Climate Solutions, RE Sources for Sustainable Communities, Earth Ministry, the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship, and the Sierra Club. This unique partnership has been successful in uniting various groups, indigenous, faith-based, and environmental, that would not otherwise interact, due to their shared belief that the GPT should not be built and export coal. Together, using their different sources of power and resources, they formed a coalition to take on the coal industry and block the development for the GPT. Focusing on this unique and powerful partnership, research questions include:

- How do coalitions such as this form?
- How do the goals and desired outcomes differ between the coalition groups?

- How can the coalition's policy tools and resources assist the Lummi Nation to improve their access to resources and self-determination, while also successfully blocking the GPT?
- What are the different levels of social, political, and legal power between the coalition groups; and how does this affect their relationships and the policy process?

By answering these questions under the Advocacy Coalition Framework, this thesis provides insight into the existing literature by analyzing a political alliance in the U.S. West Coast and an environmental justice social coalition. This will be more discussed further in the following sections.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE LUMMI NATION**

### **The History of Fishing by the Lummi Nation**

To understand why most members of the Lummi Nation oppose the GPT, it is important to understand their history. The Lummi Nation is known as the *Lhaq-temish*, or the People of the Sea, and they depend on fisheries for their livelihood (Walker 2014). Prior to European contact, the Lummi's most common economic activity was reef netting, an activity that could intercept 3000 fish during a single tide run. They also gathered shellfish, fished for salmon and other species, gathered plant foods, and hunted water birds, marine mammals, and land mammals (Boxberger 1989).

In 1855, the Lummi Nation signed the Treaty of Point Elliot with the U.S. government (Boxberger 1989). This treaty stated that the "right of taking fish at usual and accustomed grounds and stations is further secured to said Indians in common with all citizens of the Territory" (Treaty of Point Elliot 1855: Article 5). Although it gave a large portion of Western Washington for non-tribal settlement, it also assured land and fishing rights to the Lummi Nation and other Coast Salish Tribes (Walker 2014). However, the Lummi Nation were still left out of the political and economic decisions of Washington State fisheries up until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Boxberger 1989).

In the 1960s, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife excluded most of the state's indigenous groups from accessing their accustomed fishing grounds because the department claimed the Salish Nations had the same ability to harvest fisheries as their non-indigenous counterparts, even if they did not have the same technology or social capital (Anderson 1987). The exclusion was purportedly for conservation reasons, but was in effect a social exclusion and was consistent with a long tradition of racism against indigenous peoples and perceptions that

tribal fishing caused salmon decline (Breslow 2013). In retaliation, the Salish Nations began to form pan-Indian movements to protect their fishing rights and focused on their self-determination, citing the treaties to assert their rights (Anderson 1987). Their distinct position in the federal system allowed them to claim semi-sovereign status (Boxberger 1989).

The Boldt Decision of 1974 (named after district court judge George Boldt) furthered the Washington tribes' self-determination and upheld their right to fish. The State Supreme Court awarded the Lummi Nation, as well as all twenty other Washington indigenous nations, 50% of the state's catchable fish (Anderson 1987). This court decision affirmed the tribal sovereignty of the Lummi Nation and assured access to their traditional and accustomed fishing grounds around Cherry Point.

Today, the Lummi Nation is situated on 21,000 acres, which includes uplands, tidelands, and influence all the way to the San Juan Islands. The Nation consists of 5,000 citizens, with 78% of citizens living on or close to the reservation. With the biggest native fishing fleet on the West Coast (Mapes 2016), the Lummi Nation harvests a wide variety of species, such as sockeye, pink, Chinook, Coho, chum, steelhead, crab, shrimp, halibut, clams, oysters, sea cucumbers, sea urchins, and geoducks. Although the Lummi Peoples also fish for subsistence purposes, 90% of their fisheries are run commercially. The Lummi Peoples primarily fish for salmon, the largest part of their harvest, by using drift gillnet, set gillnet, and seine. They also still use a reef net for subsistence and commercial uses.

Cherry Point is one of the most common fishing areas for Lummi Peoples to use, particularly for salmon and Dungeness crab (The Glostén Associates 2014). To them, fishing is more than just an economic driver; it provides “a sense of place, a sense of belonging and a culture of the water, the air, the plants, the fish, and how you conduct your relationships” (Mapes

2016). They are an active canoe culture, and every year since 1946, the Lummi have hosted a canoe race every year at the Stommish Water Festival and Canoe Races, which recognizes returning veterans. With a diverse economy and strong marine culture, the Lummi Nation have been fighting for their rights under the Treaty of Point Elliot since 1855, and they are determined to sustain their culture and their natural way of life (Walker 2014).

### **The Lummi Nation and the GPT**

Originally, Cherry Point was the site of Xwe'chi'eXen, an important village site for the ancestors of the Lummi Peoples, who traveled by canoe to visit their relatives' villages to the north on the British Columbia mainland and to the west on Vancouver Island. There are nine Lummi kinship groups affiliated with Cherry Point, and their ancestry goes back 175 generations, or 3,500 years (James 2013). The Lummi Peoples used to fish, hunt, and make reef nets there, and it is the most studied archeological site in Whatcom County (Ahearn 2013). There are still more than 150 boxes of unearthed archeological artifacts in the area (Mapes 2016). This is vital to know because tribal well-being depends on access to ancestral lands and traditional resources, as well as the ability to participate in traditional community activities (Burger et al. 2010).

However, the Lummi Nation lost ownership of this land in 1872, when a Presidential Executive Order allowed the Bureau of Indian Affairs to illegally sell the property to non-indigenous squatters (Taber 2013). Now it is an industrialized landscape, hosting two oil refineries and an aluminum smelter (Hayes et al. 2004). In 2013, SSA Marine damaged wetlands and destroyed 3,000-year-old Lummi ancestral sites, resulting in a \$1.6 million penalty for unlawfully filling 1.2 acres of wetlands (Walker 2015, Ahearn 2013).

The Lummi Nation claimed the GPT would impact their ability to access their treaty-protected tribal fishing grounds (Jefferson 2011). Specifically, the GPT would impact 300 species that are vital to the Lummi Nation (Gaydos et al. 2015). The Vessel Traffic and Risk Assessment Study, required as part of the commencement permit process for the GPT, estimated “that GPT would increase the Lummi fishing disruption by 76% in the Cherry Point subarea” or 15 crab pots per Lummi fisherman per year (The Glosten Associates 2014, *see* xlix). Further, many of the threatened or endangered salmon of the Pacific Northwest “could be further spoiled by air and water pollution from mining and transporting the coal, and its burning overseas” (Peeples 2014). Additionally, gale-force winds occur at Cherry Point every winter, some of the fiercest in Washington State, which also bring excessive coal dust to the area that would pose public health risks and harm the local ecosystem (Riordan 2015). These facts are relevant to the Lummi Nation because access to this seafood is essential for the livelihoods for the Lummi Nation, and degraded water quality or oil spills in the marine waters would further exacerbate issues of food security (Donatuto et al. 2011).

SSA Marine reported that it is taking its relationship with the Lummi Nation very seriously, and further claimed to be working with them in order to respect their rights, cultural values, and fishing rights. They said they would provide the Lummi Peoples with jobs and attempt to avoid impacts to fishing by restricting public access and working with governmental departments to reduce the negative effects (Watters 2012).

### **CHAPTER 3: THE COALITION AGAINST THE GPT**

This chapter delves into the coalition of organizations that united to oppose the GPT. It introduces the key policy actors that are working to block the development, providing a background of the actors for the following sections. The following chapter will introduce the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) that provides a lens with which to analyze the coalition actors. The Findings chapter will explain more in detail about the tools, resources, and impact of the coalition.

Miriam-Webster defines a coalition as a “group of people, groups, or countries who have joined together for a common purpose” (Mirriam-Webster 2016). The coalition that formed around stopping the GPT is composed of different groups of various cultures, agendas, and levels of power and resources. The prevailing academic literature in this field shows that coalitions can be the most productive way to achieve a policy goal (Avner 2010, Fyall 2016). A coalition of different members of society often attracts greater media coverage, while pooling resources and skills to improve organization and advocacy for a bill, and building awareness of the issue (Avner 2010). Coalitions also create the “perception that their advocacy is motivated by societal benefit rather than organizational survival” (Fyall 2016). Coalition building can help reach out to certain groups that would otherwise be ignored in the policy process, inviting a more well-rounded view of the issue (Frumkin 2002). Coalitions that consist of organizations with similar values are likely to continue advocating for social change past a short-term issue (Gregorio 2012).

## **The Lummi Nation-Led Coalition**

The Lummi Nation received support to block the GPT from local environmental groups, non-tribal commercial fishermen, faith-based groups, and other tribal nations from both Canada and the U.S. The Lummi Nation cited the Boldt Decision and the Treaty of Point Elliot in claiming that the development would violate their fishing rights. The Lummi Nation's direct authority and treaty with the federal government allowed them to assert their sovereignty and establish a leadership position amongst non-tribal communities (Grossman 2014). The Lummi Nation primarily asserted this influence when working with the various organizations of the umbrella group Power Past Coal, which encouraged its members to "stand with the Lummi against Big Coal" (Power Past Coal 2016).

The Power Past Coal umbrella group is made up of numerous environmental groups, and this thesis examines the smaller subset of these groups that united against the GPT, alongside other nonaffiliated groups and the Lummi Nation. As described in detail below, this study focuses on the most vocal and involved actors attempting to stop the GPT.

- Three environmental actors affiliated with the Power Past Coal umbrella group:
  - RE Sources for Sustainable Communities,
  - The Sierra Club,
  - and Climate Solutions.
- One faith-based nonprofit actor, also affiliated with Power Past Coal umbrella group:
  - Earth Ministry.
- Finally, two actors not affiliated with the Power Past Coal umbrella group:
  - The Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship,

- and The Lummi Nation.

These actors were selected based on their prominence in shaping the policy agenda, as observed by a key informant representing the Lummi Nation.

### **Other Actors Involved in the Coalition**

- 1) *Climate Solutions*, a Northwest based nonprofit dedicated to clean energy solutions, does not want the GPT to exist, citing the downsides of huge air pollution, the equity issues, climate change, and fishing job losses (Interview 2015).
- 2) *The Sierra Club*, although this is the largest national environmental organization in the country, it has a Washington State Chapter and also runs the Beyond Coal Campaign (Sierraclub.org). These two parts of the Sierra Club were most involved in this coalition. The Sierra Club became involved with the coalition to stop the GPT because of their concerns about climate change and environmental protection, while also supporting the Lummi People's treaty rights to fish (Interview 2015).
- 3) *RE Sources for Sustainable Communities* is a nonprofit in Bellingham whose mission it is to “promote sustainable communities and protect the health of northwestern Washington people and ecosystems through application of science, education, advocacy, and action” (Re-resources.org). Because their organization is community-based, they opposed the GPT due to negative economic impacts, including property value loss, business isolation, public spending, and job losses; environmental impacts, such as coal dust, wetland and wildlife loss, mercury

pollution, and geologic concerns; cultural impacts, like the Lummi's ancestral burial and historical site and treaty fishing rights; social and health impacts, such as air and water pollution from increased vessel traffic, health and property safety from trains, and a negative image of Bellingham; and finally, national and global issues, such as U.S. job loss, climate change, and energy security (Resources.org).

- 4) *Earth Ministry*, a Seattle-based nonprofit that involves the religious community in environmental advocacy (Earthministry.org), wanted to protect Lummi's treaty rights and the environment (Interview 2016). Their website claims they are concerned about global warming, pollution, environmental justice, and human health (Earthministry.org)
- 5) *Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship* is a Unitarian Universalist Church in Bellingham that is an ally to the Lummi Nation. Although not an actor of the Power Past Coal umbrella group, they are a key contributor to this coalition. They connected with this cause because they feel they have a responsibility to the tribes to support them and their treaty rights. Many members were also concerned due to environmental reasons, specifically within the Unitarian Universalist's (UU) Green Sanctuaries Program. These members were concerned about environmental justice, the aquatic reserve, and climate change. Overall, the UU Congregation came together through the human rights aspect of the issue: the ancestral burial grounds, the treaty rights, and social justice (Interviews 2016).

## **CHAPTER 4: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - THE ADVOCACY COALITION**

### **FRAMEWORK**

Paul Sabatier developed the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) in the 1980s, and it describes how like-minded people or organizations come together to form a group in order to achieve a common goal. According to the ACF, coalitions are formed when members share the same policy beliefs with an aim of achieving a particular goal. Even if these people have different interests, they are united and conflicts are mediated by their similar overall belief. These coalitions help gain the attention of policymakers because the members often come up with effective strategies to engage other stakeholders (Birkland 2011).

The ACF states that generally people are motivated by their “deep core” beliefs and their “policy core” beliefs. Deep core beliefs, such as religious beliefs, represent a person’s or an organization’s “normative/fundamental beliefs that span multiple subsystems and are very resistant to change” (Weible 2006:99). An individual’s or an organization’s primary policy core beliefs, such as a belief on education policy, are specific and are also hard to change, but they are the beliefs that ultimately unite allies and form coalitions (Elgin and Weible 2013). Policy core beliefs can be someone’s perceptions on the severity of a problem, causes of an issue, effectiveness of a policy tool, or the appropriate relationship between the economy and the government. Finally, secondary beliefs are the easiest to change, such as through news articles and events (Weible 2006). Secondary beliefs involve thoughts on a subcomponent of policy subsystems, such as how the government should reach their goals (Weible and Sabatier 2007).

According to ACF, coalitions have five kinds of resources: 1) finances, 2) leadership ability, 3) access to authority, 4) access to scientific information, and 5) ability of members to mobilize.

These resources vary across the different groups within the coalition, but they can still engage with each other to achieve the overall goal (Elgin and Weible 2013).

More *finances* can result in additional resources. Finances can also help organizations contact political leaders, conduct research, influence public opinion, and host events that will assemble supporters. Greater *leadership ability* leads to a greater chance to affect the policy process (Klingdon 1994). Leaders can bring in more resources and competently describe clear policy core beliefs for other members (Minstrom and Vergari 1996). *Access to authority* refers to the ability for members of the coalition to influence those who have the power to create and impose the rules. In a collaborative coalition, authority is split across policy subsystems, and members share access to authority (Weible et al. 2010). This thesis mainly focuses on the broader term “power” within this resource group in order to answer who has the strongest ability to impact the decision amongst the various groups. Having *access to more scientific information* forces opponents to gain more knowledge and attract more resources to challenge the coalition’s scientific facts. With more scientific information, the coalition can use the new information to its own advantage (Sabatier and Weible 2005). Finally, coalitions with *mobilizable members* have a better chance at impacting the policy outcome (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). The members or “troops” can engage in letter-writing, fundraising, activities, public protests, and others. Mobilizable troops are more likely in a coalition with finances (Kingdon 1994).

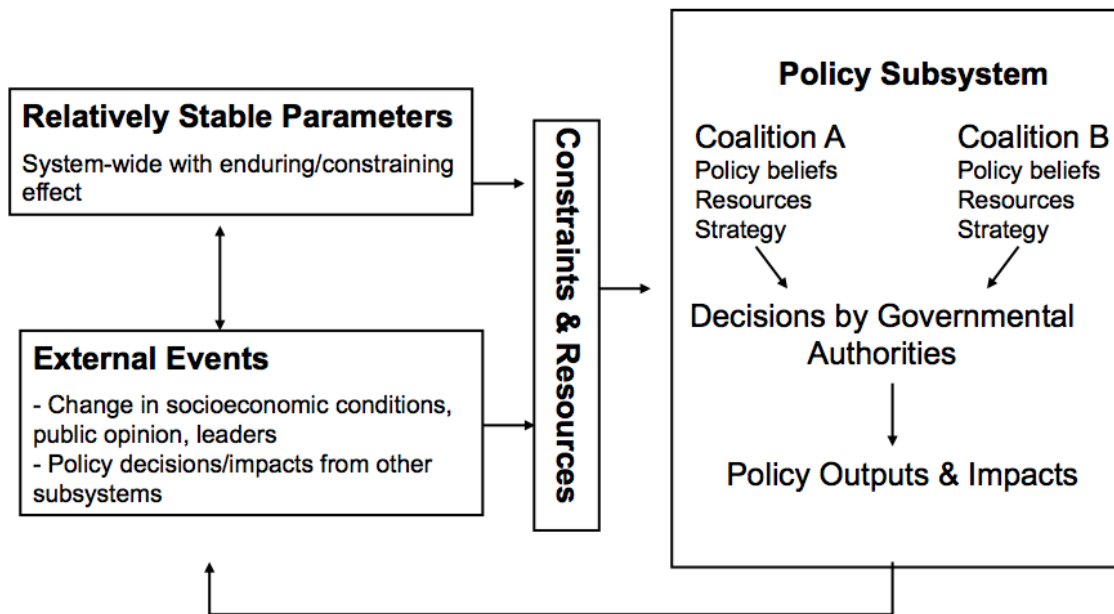
Once these coalitions form upon learning about a certain issue, five elements can assist in moving the issue along the policy track:

- 1) *Precipitating events*: Something sudden and rare happens that can harm a certain area and affect the public and policymakers (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999). These events can greatly influence the formal agenda for decision makers because the status

quo is suddenly less appealing to existing interests. It can also highlight legal uncertainties or shortcomings of existing management frameworks and greatly influence the formal agenda (Smith 2009).

- 2) *Agenda setting*: most of the public is now aware of the issue, and the advocates are now trying to get the issue to the formal agenda. This generally requires quick government action and serious considerations from decision-makers
- 3) *Policy brokers*: a citizen who helps present, interprets, and propose new ideas through the policy process
- 4) *Joint learning*: happens when all parties can agree on the visible evidence, ultimately creating policy change (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999, Birkland 2011).
- 5) *Change in Institutional Arrangements*: Policy learning can ultimately impact the final decision around a specific issue and create institutional change (Smith 2009). These external factors affect the constraints and resources of a coalition. External events can be elections, legislation change, or shift in public opinion. These can influence if an issue is put on the agenda and are necessary to change policy. Policy actors don't have a lot of control over what Sabatier calls "relatively stable parameters", such as property rights or the constitutional structure (Breton et al. 2008) (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: The Advocacy Coalition Framework (Breton et al. 2008:1681)**



The above figure explains the ACF and how stable parameters and external events affect the constraints and resources of a policy subsystem. The policy subsystem is made up of actors involved in various coalitions that group up based on shared core beliefs or values. A coalition’s resources and strategies can affect the decision-making, which could result to certain impacts and policy outputs (Breton et al. 2008). This figure also lists two coalitions. Although there are “pro” coal terminal coalitions, this thesis only specifically analyzes the anti-coal terminal coalition.

### **Tribal/Non-Tribal Coalitions**

In the ACF literature, there is insufficient information discussing indigenous-environmentalist coalitions. Therefore, additional research was needed to understand how such

coalitions could lead to successful campaigns to benefit indigenous communities. A more comprehensive literature review highlighted that indigenous-environmentalist coalitions have the capacity to empower the indigenous communities involved, allowing them to join the conversation on environmental issues on their own terms. Some of these alliances have generated worldwide media attention, often occurring despite nonindigenous environmentalists communicating the environmental justice issues affecting indigenous communities. These coalitions could help indigenous communities reframe what environmentalism means and who has the power to be involved in the decision-making process. They could provide indigenous groups with hard data and the confidence to make legal appeals when appropriate (Willow 2012).

More broadly, nonprofits as a whole can provide technical expertise and political empowerment, while indigenous groups provide traditional ecological knowledge (Salim 2010). According to Conklin and Graham (1995): “There is a symbolic value of partnership with indigenous peoples as a way to communicate with and mobilize supporters. Indians provide environmentalists with local knowledge and a human face” (701). These coalitions can help start a conversation and highlight the advantages of a united, diverse group of people that could come from various socioeconomic or cultural backgrounds (Crist 2012). Native Americans also have a specific relationship with the federal government and can use their treaties to protect the environment, which many environmental organizations see as beneficial for their causes (Clark 2002).

This relationship, however, can be complicated, since there are many different worldviews and levels of power at play. Environmental organizations do not always act in the best interest of indigenous groups (Toohey 2012), and distrust and issues of control are often

present. Conklin and Graham (1995) also point out: “There is an inherent asymmetry at the core of the eco-Indian alliance. Indians’ eco-political value is...the product of a historical moment that seized on Indians in general, and certain Indians in particular, as natural symbols of ecologically harmonious lifeways” (706). Grossman (2001) says that, although indigenous tribes can often be seen as having the power to protect the environment because of their relationship with federal agencies and their legal power, nonindigenous persons can still use this for their own gains.

Successful indigenous-nonindigenous alliances entail an equal sharing of power and decision-making between the groups involved. The nonindigenous organizations should ideally aid in strengthening the political power of the indigenous groups involved and share their resources (Crist 2012). Knowing which resources are available increases the likelihood that they are used efficiently to keep the coalition afloat (Taylor 2000). Indigenous groups and local organizations can increase their political power, knowledge, and popularity if they address their different values, goals, and environmental concerns (Willow 2012, Crist 2012). Therefore, it is vital to build coalitions based on consensus and solid negotiation skills between the groups to account for these differences (Toohey 2012).

A shared sense of place is important for indigenous-nonindigenous coalitions, which could be considered a “core belief” under the ACF (Crist 2012). Not only does this include a common geographical area, but also a shared, often sacred, connection to the landscape. Common political adversaries and a sense of common understanding, a common agenda, and identity allow for a smoother negotiation of group differences (Kamata 2004). If indigenous and nonindigenous groups come together around a specific agenda to accomplish a certain set of

goals (Davis 2010), this may help the coalition better deal with unequal power imbalances that may harm indigenous people (Toohey 2012).

### **How these bodies of literature inform research**

This literature review allows for greater understanding of the coalition that attempted to stop the GPT. The literature illuminates which policy tools and resources the coalition used to their advantage, the likely values held by each group, and the associated impacts of the coalition. Since ACF is poorly supported when examining the power and cross-cultural values within a coalition, focus was given to this area. The following chapter provides information on the research methodology structured on this literature review.

## **CHAPTER 5: METHODS**

### **Research Goals for the case study**

The Lummi Nation and environmental group's opposition to the GPT and the effects the proposal would have on their fishing rights has not been adequately studied in the academic world. An understudied topic, according to Dexter (2006), has a "much better chance of being welcomed and appreciated by informants and interviewees" (113). The goal of this research is to understand and ultimately provide important information about how environmental and indigenous coalitions form, thereby empowering indigenous communities while also improving the quality of policy discourse.

The research methods involved primary data collection by conducting and analyzing interviews and engaging in participant observation. Through secondary data collection, news articles and various reports were researched. Goals of the qualitative data collection were to discover what motivated people to become involved in the coalition and to understand which strategies groups used to affect the policy process. A further goal was to understand which types of power asymmetries existed in the coalition, given the typically unequal historical relations between tribal and non-tribal groups.

Research methods were structured on the ACF and other general questions concerning the coalition's actions in a policy process. The coalition had many different organizations with various beliefs, so interview data needed to be collected from people from the Lummi Nation, faith-based groups, and environmental groups.

## **Qualitative Research Methods**

### *Interviewing*

For this case study, an interview is defined as “a formal technique whereby a researcher solicits verbal evidence or data from a knowledgeable informant” (Remenyi 2011:1). An interview is a common tool applied in qualitative methods and is arranged by both the researcher and participant (Brayboy et al. 2011). An interview should be viewed like other kinds of social interactions and situations, in that “the researcher must also consider how this situation may influence the expression of sentiments and the reporting of events” (Dexter 2006:108). Interviews have the opportunity to offer a unique perspective and provide original knowledge about the complications of humanity (Hodge and Lester 2006).

The interviews for this case study were semi-structured, meaning that they were conducted with a partially open set of questions that allowed for a more conversational and less intrusive dialogue. The interviews started with a set of planned, general questions, but as the interview moved further along, the conversation could veer away from the originally planned course (Case 1990).

### *Selection of coalition members for interviews*

First, permission from the Northwest Indian College and the Lummi Fisheries Commission was granted to interview Lummi members on this issue. From there, semi-structured, reflexive interviews with members of the Lummi Nation, environmental, and faith-based groups were conducted. The aim of these interviews was to understand the relationships, steps, and policy tools used by the coalition and the various groups within it. A snowball sample was used based on the participants’ availability and desired locations. This is where research starts with one

contact in a community and then receives the contact information of another person, and so on (Cohen and Arieli 2011). Although snowball sampling will generally result in knowledgeable participants and therefore solid qualitative data, it is also dependent on the participants' eagerness to engage and respond (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981).

Initial contact was made with a key activist in the coalition to stop the GPT. This key activist provided insight into the Lummi Nation and introduced other coalition leaders. These primary contacts were key informants, who are people who are well connected to the community of interest and can put the researcher in touch with many different people. They have a particular expertise of the issue and can help the researcher work through problems and achieve solutions (Marshall 1996). A key informant advised that researching the coalition against the GPT would be a legally safe and academically effective approach. His contacts with the Lummi Nation, environmental, and faith-based groups created the starting point for the snowball sample. After initial contact, these prospective contacts were either interviewed in person or over the phone. The interviews were conducted in 2015 and 2016, with four Lummi members, three faith leaders, four environmental organization representatives, one scientist, and one, unrecorded conversation with a key informant from the Lummi Nation.

Interviews with the Lummi members were in person and "reflexive," meaning that questions flowed like a conversation (Brayboy et al. 2000). This type of interviewing approach is more like a shared conversation that involves "in-depth, detailed studies of place and of individual narratives of stories" (Putt 2015:2). This approach uses language in a way that unites people, creates empowering texts, and recognizes that words matter (Denzin 2011). In broad terms, Lummi fishermen were asked: what Cherry Point means to them; what currently threatens their fishing practices; how they perceive the GPT will impact their fishing; and what they currently

do to oppose this development. Further, specific questions regarding the coalition opposing the GPT were asked, including:

1. How did your relationships with environmental and faith-based groups start?
2. What are you doing to stop the terminal together?
3. How do you see these relationships going forward after this campaign?

The phone interviews with environmental or faith-based groups were more structured.

Interview questions with these coalition members included:

1. How did you start your relationship with the Lummi Tribe?
2. What are some key differences between you groups? Where do you find yourself agreeing over common ground?
3. What does Lummi Nation bring to the advocacy coalition that your group does not and vice versa?
4. What are your main policy goals and preferred outcomes, and how do you plan to advocate for these goals and outcomes?

### *Participant Observation*

Participant observation is a way for researchers to witness behaviors and practices of groups that they are studying. Researchers can record verbal or physical behavior of individuals, and/or they can observe and actively listen while being completely absorbed in the group (Dahlke et al. 2015). By participating as an audience member, this research was unable to change the behavior of those engaged in coalition building and advocacy tools. This impartial scrutiny allowed the observation data to be collected in a “more natural, opened way,” allowing the analysis of this observational data to “emerge later in the research, during the analysis, rather than imposed from

the start” (Punch 2005:179). Attending events aids in fostering a more respectful, equal relationship with the groups involved with a coalition (Crist 2012). Additionally, these events provided opportunities to interview or liaise with key players in the coalition.

This method is an aspect of Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR), which attempts to rebalance research power by lowering the import of traditional academic research methods. The aim of this method is to create cooperative procedures that “prioritize the voices and actions of those marginalized from power and resources...that contribute to knowledge construction and material social change” (Lykes et al. 2011:24). This type of research works well with “reflexive interviewing”, which was used while interviewing Lummi members (Putt 2015).

A number of events were chosen for observation and selected based on practicality and location. Coalition events located in Bellingham and Seattle were prioritized, while Lummi Nation sponsored events, such as the Totem Pole Journey, were attended on the Tulalip Reservation. Specifically, seven events were attended:

1. Indigenous Climate Justice Symposium at Evergreen State College, attended remotely (November 2015)
2. Totem Pole Journey Planning and Reflections, Bellingham Unitarian Universalist Church (January 2016)
3. Totem Pole Journey, stop at Tulalip Reservation (August 2015)
4. Celebrating and Protecting the Salish Sea, Golden Gardens, Seattle (May 2015)
5. Advocacy Training for Export Terminals, Seattle University (May 2015)
6. Bellingham Human Rights Festival (February 2015).
7. Tribal Water Security Colloquium: Coal Trains and Coastal Waterways by Jewell James, University of Washington (March 2016)

8. Indigenous Day of Action, March Point, Anacortes, WA, attended remotely (May 2016)

### *Media Review*

Further information pertaining to the public reception and potential policy outcomes of the GPT, and the Lummi Nation led coalition opposing it, were gathered by conducting a media review of various relevant news articles. All forms of media can help spread a coalition's message, and, therefore, coalitions often press for more disruptive tactics like protesting, since this draws additional media attention (Almeida and Stearns 1998). In this case study, the Totem Pole Journey and other symbolic events have attracted additional of media attention to the coalition and its cause. This is discussed further in Chapter 6: Findings. The media review was conducted using a comprehensive key word search. The majority of these articles were listed in *The Bellingham Herald*, *The Seattle Times*, or other regional and national newspapers.

### **Ethical Considerations**

To undertake this research, greater understanding the cultural differences between indigenous and non-indigenous communities was required. According to indigenous scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012), research is “embedded in imperial expansionism and colonization and institutionalized in academic disciplines” (x) and is “probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world’s vocabulary” (xi). Even non-Indigenous academics agree that former research within Indigenous communities has been discriminatory and disempowering (Putt 2015). Therefore, the most important question to ask when conducting interviews is: whose research is it? If the research is only meeting the priorities of the researcher, it may not only harm the indigenous community, but the research also may ultimately fail (Hodge and Lester 2006).

Community based action research helps “people in extending their understanding of their situation, thus in resolving problems that confronts them” (Stringer 1999:10). Therefore, in this case study, the Lummi Nation provided significant research direction, instead of the researcher imposing arbitrary research standards on the tribe and the issue. Additionally, key informant and other organizations in the coalition stated that they were most interested in identify how coalitions form and how these coalitions function despite different points of view. Several leaders in the Lummi Nation community were consulted regarding: research proposals, strategies for interviewee recruitment, research timelines, and budgets in order to allow for the additional research flexibility that best suited members of the Lummi Nation (Meadows et al. 2003). Most importantly, the researcher worked to build trust and understand the indigenous community’s priorities (Meadows et al. 2003, Putt 2015). Complete confidentiality for the participants and the communities was insured, allowing participants to remain anonymous and their opinions to be were kept confidential. In addition to oral consent, the option of a written consent form was offered at the beginning of each interview.

### **Data Analysis**

Once the interviews were complete and transcribed verbatim, they and the aforementioned events were manually coded to collect keywords and themes. Coding is “the process of transforming raw data into a standardized form” (Babbie 2010:338). This phase allowed themes inherently emergent in the data to be identified. The degree to which these keywords and themes matched ACF theory was then compared in an iterative way and the gaps between it and the obtained qualitative data were identified and addressed. The resulting findings are discussed in Chapter 6: Findings.

### **The Strengths and Limitations of this Research**

Collecting qualitative data from a small number of individuals, who have specific agendas and beliefs, could result in biased information or one-sided reporting, and it is important to recognize these limitations (Appendix B). Due to the research goals of this thesis, only people who opposed the GPT were interviewed, creating the potential for bias. Consideration was given to the pro GPT groups and coalitions that formed around this issue. ACF theory is often applied to more than one coalition; however, this requires years of research and a larger budget to fully apply (Weible and Sabatier 2007). Data that showed support for the GPT were reviewed in the interest of impartial observation. The sources of this data included online public hearings, associated comments, and news articles.

Contacting participants and waiting for responses required patience and a willingness to be flexible. Some potential interviewees were non-responsive and, as such, data collection and research was conducted around this. An openness and willingness to change research methods based on the advice of key Lummi members was often needed. Nevertheless, all participants and informants were extremely friendly, helpful, and passionate about the issue. In the end, enlightening interviews were conducted and necessary data was collected successfully.

## **CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS**

This research examined the coalition to stop the GPT at Cherry Point by employing the ACF theory and qualitative methods for data collection. This chapter discusses the findings resulting from data collected on this coalition. These findings can be categorized into three major categories: 1) The coalition's timeline, goals, and tools, 2) policy belief themes, and 3) aspects of the coalition, specifically on access to authority or power. Throughout this chapter there are narrative excerpts from the interviewed members of the alliance. The interviews provide significant insight into the coalition, which could not have been achieved simply through the media review or attending coalition events.

### **Timeline of the coalition against the GPT**

#### *Environmental groups*

The main environmental groups' relationship with the Lummi Nation generally began in 2010, when many of them met to discuss how to stop the coal terminal. For example, the Lummi Nation informed the Sierra Club that they needed a better way to communicate their concerns, so the nonprofit helped them develop materials to adequately narrate the impacts that the GPT would have on their way of life (Interview 2015). Things started to move forward between RE Sources and the Lummi Nation when, in 2013, the nonprofit settled the Clean Water Act lawsuit against SSA Marine. Members of the Lummi Nation, mainly those involved in the fishing industry, asked for documents resulting from the lawsuit, and became interested in creating a partnership (Interview 2016). When members of the Lummi Nation symbolically burned a fake SSA Marine check in 2012, many environmental organizations and members of the press came

out to witness the event (Interview 2016). Since then, many of the groups, especially RE Sources, have worked closely with Lummi Nation, particularly the Treaty Protection Office, and they have continued to be invited to events (Interview 2016).

On the other hand, some members of the Lummi Nation are still hesitant to work closely with the environmental organizations, given value differences over marine protected areas or debates over water rights (Interview 2016). Nevertheless, the GPT was seen as such a huge threat that these past antagonisms were set-aside in the meantime.

### *Faith-based groups*

The Lummi Nation's relationship with churches is so long and complex that additional bodies of research could be conducted on these connections. Christianity has had a large, mostly negative effect on the indigenous nations of the USA. Colonizers of the Americas "expressed a Christian zeal that justified colonialism" (Dunbar-Ortiz 2015:32). So in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many Christian groups began to apologize for the past actions of their organizations, including colonization and assimilation (Throckmorton 2015). In the context of this case study, nine Christian congregations wrote an Apology Letter to the Northwest Nations in 1987. These churches were specifically apologizing for "their long-standing participation in the destruction of traditional Native American spiritual practices" and promised to help recognize and maintain their way of lives and sacred places from now on (Blevins et al. 1987). Since then, specific individuals within the churches have worked with activist Jewell James on various tribal rights issues.

In 2007, Beth Brownfield of the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship assisted the Lummi Nation with their Global Canoe Journey with "whatever they needed," including acknowledging

them as the original inhabitants of these land and waters. In 2012, the UU Association officially stated that they were standing with Lummi Nation against the GPT. They contacted 90 religious leaders and 50 different organizations to come speak on the issue in 2013, and that helped the Lummi Nation connect with the Sierra Club, RE Sources, legal women voters, college youth groups, and others. From then on, the UU Congregation and the Lummi Nation worked together on most events related to the coal terminal. For example, for the 2015 UU General Assembly, a representative of the Lummi Nation spoke at the event about climate justice and partnerships (Interview 2016). Earth Ministry has also been involved for a number of years, assisting with the Totem Pole Journeys and hosting events for the community (Interview 2016).

### **Policy goals**

For the Lummi, this issue was more than about fishing; it is their way of life and is called *schelangen* in their local language. The concern was also to protect the ancestors buried at Cherry Point (Mapes 2016). Ultimately, their goal was not just for the Army Corps to completely reject the coal terminal, but to disallow the development of any bulk export terminal located there.

Traditionally, environmental organizations are usually more concerned with preservation of the wild than social justice issues. For this campaign, however, the issue of climate change seemed to bring all groups together, and many of the members of the environmental organizations were concerned with upholding treaty rights and protecting indigenous communities against industrialization and capitalism (Interview 2015). Both the environmental and faith-based groups have the same policy goal as the Lummi Nation: to prevent the construction of a coal terminal at Cherry Point, WA. Many of the nonprofits and faith-based

groups wish to continue their partnership with the Lummi Nation on other similar issues to influence more of these partnerships between indigenous and faith-based groups (Interviews 2016).

### **Policy Tools**

The Lummi Nation's most efficient tools were their sovereign rights and treaties that legally protected their sacred space and fishing grounds from a common outsider enemy (Willow 2012). Environmental organizations used a variety of policy tools such as: hosting forums and workshops for writing comments for the EIS scoping process, writing letters to Congress and the Army Corps, coordinating events, and generally providing a "grassroots push." For example, Climate Solutions connected the community to the problem by emphasizing local impacts such as noise pollution, health detriments, and train traffic (Interview 2015). The Sierra Club also helped with advertising through banners and stickers around the Totem Pole Journey. They hosted movie showings, displayed murals, and hosted a silent auction. Because the Sierra Club is a national organization with an office in Washington D.C., they were able to put political pressure on the Army Corps to recognize that the coal exports threaten the Lummi's fishing rights (Interview 2015). Additional insider information is needed to confirm if this political pressure truly did influence the Army Corp's decision.

Faith-based organizations used their political influence, their communication skills, and their organizing ability to affect change. For example, the UU Congregation encouraged its members to write letters to the Army Corps and electives supporting treaty rights. They provided space for the Lummi Nation to outreach to other social justice networks, such as through film festivals, workshops, and other church events. Similar to the environmental organizations, the

religious organizations also hosted workshop comment sections and helped people mobilize against the GPT. They connected other faith communities around the nation to host similar events where similar projects are threatening indigenous land.

## Identified Themes

### *Policy Beliefs*

As stated previously, the ACF hypothesizes that members within coalitions are bound together by *policy core* beliefs; however, their *deep core* beliefs also explain why a group may join the coalition. Therefore, it was necessary to identify the organizations' *policy core* and *deep core* beliefs to understand what united the coalition and could have divided these differing groups. These beliefs were determined through the interviews, observations at events, and researching the nonprofit groups' mission statements and other aspects of the organizations written online. This analysis, summarized in the table below, discusses the groups' *deep core* beliefs and *policy core* beliefs due to the importance of these two types of beliefs to both the ACF and the coalition. Further research is needed to understand the groups' secondary beliefs.

**Table 1: Core Beliefs**

<i>Beliefs</i>	<i>Lummi Nation</i>	<i>Faith-based groups</i>	<i>Environmental groups</i>
<i>Deep Core</i>	Sacredness of land and fishing, commitment to honor the treaties	Importance of spirituality for human well- being	Environmentalism (ecosystem preservation)
<i>Policy Core</i>	Climate change and	Environmental justice	Environmental justice

	community well-being	and human rights	
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As seen in the table above, these three groups united around their strong desire to stop the coal terminal because of their policy core beliefs on environmental justice and climate change action. Both deep core beliefs and policy beliefs impacted these three different groups’ actions to stop the GPT. Their multi-dimensional policy core beliefs built a stronger coalition because they were able to reach diverse groups.

1) *The Lummi Nation* were heavily committed in upholding their treaty rights, but they were also concerned about climate change impacts to their community and the impact to their ancestral site. A Lummi Nation fisherman, who identified as an “environmentalist by nature”, discussed how he is already seeing impacts of climate change on his crab fishery and believed that the terminal would make the loss of fishing grounds worse (Interview 2015). In a speech at the Indigenous Justice Climate Symposium in November 2015, Lummi Nation activist Jay Julius said that the species of the Earth are gifts from the Creator, and he emphasized the seriousness of climate change: “We have to do something about it. I take myself back in time based on stories of my great-great grandfather that instilled within us the importance of maintaining our gratefulness to this gift and standing up...to future generations” (Julius 2015). In an interview, an environmental activist emphasized the Lummi Nation’s different perspective because they have been on this land for 10,000 years, so they care deeply about environmental protection and climate change (Interview 2016).

Climate change is linked to the Lummi Nation’s deep core belief, which centers on the sacredness of the land and their commitment to honor the treaties of the past. Julius stated that the Treaty of Point Elliot was “pounded into our souls and what it meant as a sacrifice to our

people...[it] provides hope, and it is important to honor that treaty, not just for us, but for all” (Julius 2015). Another Lummi fisherman referenced the treaty in an interview: “If we don’t do something, we’re disrespecting those people who signed the treaty in 1855 who guaranteed our right to fish” (Interview 2015). A Lummi Nation activist agreed that the community looked to the past for inspiration: “The past is superior to the future...environmental groups think the future is superior to the past” (Interview 2016). An ally of the Lummi Nation confirmed this:

“This tribe is the most past-oriented...so with working with faith-based communities, the churches have a very strong past orientation, so there is a linkage beneath the issue between two orientations that you don’t find in environmental organizations, governments, or businesses...So on issues like Cherry Point, they sort of get it” (Interview 2016).

2) *The faith-based groups* believe spirituality is essential for human well-being and perceived the GPT as a human rights issue. Some directly referenced the issue of environmental justice; others said that there was a moral and ethical obligation to reject the terminal. The Lummi Nation attempted to focus more heavily on the “cemetery” aspect of the Cherry Point site when discussing it with the faith-based groups. They did this instead of asking them to come out against coal “because there may be someone on the congregation who is a part of a union with the coal port, so we talk about the cemetery” (Interview 2016). However, members of the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship and Earth Ministry specifically mentioned environmental downsides of the terminal, including that it would be an environmental injustice (Interviews 2015-16).

3) *Environmental groups*, particularly the Sierra Club, are more traditionally concerned with ecosystem depletion, because the nonprofit’s original mission was to protect the U.S.A.’s

wilderness (sierraclub.org). Although the organization's main concerns are still environmental conservation and climate change, its "members are also concerned with upholding treaty rights and not trampling over Native Americans in the name of industrialization and the almighty dollar" (Interview 2016). This is reflected in Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign, and other regional chapters and issues. Therefore, environmental justice is a key policy concern of the Sierra Club. An activist that works with the Lummi Nation says that environmental groups and the Lummi Nation have an "intersection of interest at Cherry Point. I get into debates with them about water rights and some wonder how we can trust them...it's a risk, but we are just now beginning to explore after Cherry Point how we can keep the coalition going on broad issues like water rights, hatcheries, treaty risks" (Interview 2016).

### **Resources of the coalition**

As stated previously, Sabatier notes five main aspects of a coalition with the ACF: 1) Finances, 2) Leadership ability, 3) Access to authority, 4) Access to scientific information, and 5) Members that are able to mobilize. Further knowledge of these resources can increase the understanding of the effectiveness of the coalition and the power asymmetries.

1) *Financial*: There is insufficient data to accurately state which group had the largest financial resources to impact the policy decision. It is known, however, that each group used their financial resources to enhance the effectiveness of the coalition. For example, faith-based groups used their financial gain to provide spaces and convince their members to donate to the cause. Some of the environmental groups, especially the Sierra Club, have large national total revenue, but it was unclear how much of that revenue is allotted to this campaign. They used some of this money to create pamphlets and host events. Additional funds were also spent on

outreach of the issue both regional and in Washington D.C. The coalition mostly received money for their Totem Pole Journey; \$12,789 was donated for the 2015 journey. Most of this money came from individual donations from members within both the churches and the environmental groups (Lummi Nation and Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship 2015).

In addition, environmental organizations tried to change the institutional arrangements of the political system when they contributed to the Whatcom County 2015 election. RE Sources gave \$52,738, while Sierra Club donated \$33,000 to a new ballot committee, Fair and Equal Whatcom. Washington Conservation Voters donated \$10,000, and Seattle-based environmentalists donated \$7,000 to that committee as well. On the other end, SSA Marine donated \$58,545 to their committee, the Clear Ballot Choices, and \$42,545 to the Republican Party (Schwartz 2015).

2) *Leadership ability*: Each group brought something unique to the coalition in terms of leadership ability. According to a Lummi activist, the indigenous nation has been forming alliances for hundreds of years when they inter-married to form reef-netting alliances with “the people of the Fraser River valley all the way down to the SE Coast of Vancouver Island” (Interview 2016). The Lummi nation was also one of eight tribes who formed the Inter-Tribal Environmental Council; they are also part of the NW Inter-Tribal Court System and the Small Tribe Organizations of Western Washington. Their Natural Resources Department advocates for alternative energy sources, and they are activists at a national and international level regarding climate change and fisheries issues (Walker 2014).

A “precipitating event” occurred in 2014 when Goldman Sachs, who had a 49% share in SSA Marine, decided the GPT was a bad investment and pulled out (Interview 2016). They sold their share because they were concerned about 1) environmental regulations, 2) competition from

natural gas, and 3) less demand for electricity due to increased energy efficiency (Connelly 2014). This made it clear to the coalition that it was possible the terminal may not be built. In addition, even though the company claimed market forces convinced them to back out, Lummi activists were able to talk to the CEO of Goldman Sachs at their annual shareholder meeting before they backed out. Jay Julius told the CEO in three minutes that the terminal would be on top of a graveyard. A Lummi Nation activist said that the CEO did not want to “risk a bad investment on top of that. And they let us know on no uncertain terms that those three minutes were crucial” (Interview 2016).

In addition, environmental organizations consist of leaders within the organizations that have professional skills or expertise that help keep the coalition going. Since 2010, many of the environmental groups had already been working within Power Past Coal against coal and oil export terminals along the West Coast, such as against the Longview, WA proposal (Interview 2016). This existing coalition allowed for more available scientific information and pre-formed alliances/relationships.

3) *Ability to mobilize*: That being said, the environmental organizations have the strongest ability to mobilize due to the nature of their organizations and, for some, such as the Sierra Club, their ability to reach a wide range of people. They helped by providing that additional “grassroots push” (Interview 2016). RE Sources helped mobilize other groups, such as Western Washington University students and labor unions, to help define an alternative that would benefit the community (Interview 2016).

Faith-based groups brought together different members of the communities that the other groups could not reach, by preaching that “it’s not just an environmental issue; it’s a human rights and spiritual issue...there are impacts beyond economics and environmental, but in the

human rights and spiritual level” (Interview 2016). For example, in 2012, the Bellingham UU and Earth Ministry hosted a large event where tribal leaders in Bellingham spoke to the faith community and environmental organizations. Activists trained faith leaders and educated the community on tribal fishing rights. This also connected the tribe to the environmental organizations: “it was the first time that the Lummi had asked for help, the first time they had asked for a platform to address the wider community on an issue that concerned them” (Interview 2016).

The Lummi Nation also mobilized for key protest events, such as with the Totem Pole Journey. During the summers of 2014 and 2015, these Journeys brought together indigenous tribes from the Midwest to the Pacific Northwest, with an aim of sparking awareness and dialogue about the environmental and cultural impacts of the terminal. The totem pole, which traveled from South Dakota to the Salish Sea to Alberta, Canada, was around 20 feet tall, and was used as a symbol to unite communities whose lives intersect with the coal exports and the tar sands (Kemnick 2015, James 2013). The Journey will happen again in summer 2016.

By symbolically burning SSA’s Marine fake check in 2012, the Lummi Nation made it obvious that they had decided that “this was a moral line in the sand and [about] more than just coal” (Interview 2016). This event showed that the Lummi Nation was actively protesting the coal terminal (Interview 2016). Lummi Nation “policy brokers” have worked to mobilize members within the coalition. For example, a prominent Lummi Nation activist, who spoke at many public events on this issue, “believes that partnerships are the only way to keep promises, and Indians can’t do it on their own.” He persuaded “the tribe to go into a firm ‘no’ position...and... blow this thing wide open with partnerships, and that’s exactly what happened” (Interview 2016).

4) *Access to scientific information*: The environmental groups and the Lummi Nation have access to scientific information. Environmental groups claimed they can “mount a big argument about how it will damage the fisheries and how it will disrupt traffic” (Interview 2016). For example, Michael Riordan, a physicist who published a study on wind at Cherry Point in *Whatcom Watch*, communicated with RE Sources and the Lummi Nation about the impact of coal dust coming off the train into the water. Communication with scientists helped the Lummi “build a second line of defense” beyond the fishing access argument (Interview 2016).

In addition, RE Sources gained additional information after they sued SSA Marine for damaging wetlands and destroying 3,000-year-old Lummi ancestral sites (Walker 2015, Ahearn 2013). When RE Sources settled, they disclosed the facts they discovered in the lawsuit to the public and to the Lummi Nation (Interview 2016). The Lummi Nation also had access to scientific information through these partnerships and through their own Natural Resources Department.

Expert-based information helped strengthen the coalition and debates with opponents (Sabatier 1987). The groups agreed that science claimed adverse impacts on the ecosystems from the export terminal. They disagreed with SSA Marine’s statements that the public health, social, and environmental impacts were minimal. The Power Past Coal Coalition and actors that opposed the GPT have used science to raise anxiety and frustration from the public during events. Although scientific information was not the reason the Army Corps denied the permit, many actors believed that it did aid in the policy process (Interviews 2016).

5) *Access to Authority*: The main aspect of the coalition worth noting here is “access to authority”, or which groups have the most access to “power.” This case study is unique because of the Lummi Nation’s legal power due to the Treaty of Point Elliot and the Boldt Decision; this

gave them the most power and direct aspect to authority within the coalition. The faith-based groups largely contributed political power, and the environmental groups contributed significant organizing and people power, with some political influence. For example, Sierra Club helped send out over 25,000 personal letters to Congress asking for rejection of the coal terminal. They tried to convince state senators to put adequate pressure on the Army Corps of Engineers to review with thoughtful eyes this idea that coal exports threaten fishing rights (Interview 2016). Although the environmental groups could reach the largest amount of people, they could not defend their ideas in court, so they had more “limited capabilities” (Interview 2016).

A faith-based leader cited that the churches carried a lot of political power, and there was a large community involved: “We have the people, and the shifting of some of the Catholics...it’s moving forward slowly” (Interview 2016). According to an activist who worked with the church groups, “faith is present in every single Congressional district in the U.S” (Interview 2016). Because 92% of the members of the current Congress identifies as Christian (Pew 2015), Christian groups potentially have more power to influence certain political leaders that may have supported the coal terminal but ignored indigenous groups or environmental organizations (Interview 2016).

Above all, the tribes’ treaties, sovereignty, and history were the main reason the Army Corps denied the GPT’s permit (Wohlfeil 2016). According to a Lummi Nation activist, “tribes...have treaty rights...the Supreme Law of the Land, and that confirms the Supreme Court to treaty rights” (Interview 2016). An environmental activist stated, before the decision was made: “the Lummi can kill this project if the treaty rights are enforced and mean what I think they mean...they have a legal claim that is much stronger than anything we can do” (Interview 2016).

The Lummi people were also the powerful symbol of the fight, as shown through such events as the Totem Pole Journey. Some organizations saw the Lummi Nation as a “powerful fighter for the protection of the Earth” (Interview 2015). For example, a religious leader claimed that the Lummi Nation have a spiritual and cultural connection to salmon, whereas the nontribal community does not “have the connection they do that sustains who they are as a people” (Interview 2016).

Because each group had different ways to affect policy with varying resources, most members within the coalition believed that it was important to work together because it brought a united voice to the issue (Interview 2016). Another activist believed that this coalition was successful because it is specifically aimed at Cherry Point. What it requires, he stated, “is people with a creative meeting of minds with a common idea” (Interview 2016). An environmental activist agreed: “We need each other—the tribes lead the way, and we support them; they can’t make it without us, but we can’t make it without them. The more organizations and communities we bind together we will have a big impact” (Interview 2016). In conclusion, by pooling the groups’ different levels of power and resources, the coalition was able to achieve policy change and form lasting alliances.

## **CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION**

### **The Effectiveness of the Coalition**

#### *The Media*

The Lummi Nation and the other groups gained broad media attention. For example, environmental magazine *Grist* covered the story extensively in 2014 (Cortes 2014). *The New York Times*, the *Huffington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times* wrote articles about the issue, not to mention the dozen regional and local articles from *The Seattle Times* and *The Bellingham Herald*, including a comic in the *Seattle Weekly*.

The media informed many people about the issue and events, especially the Totem Pole Journey, which connected local people who were concerned about the Lummi Nation or the fossil fuel industry. The media attention and coalition building has even extended to the international stage, when, at the COP-21 in Paris, the Kiwcha from Ecuador and Lummi Nation youth joined together to speak out against fossil fuel development on their lands, participating in a Sunrise Ceremony called the “Arrival of Canoe of Life” (Miller 2015).

#### *Uniting Groups*

This coalition was successful at developing strong relationships between the Lummi Nation, environmental organizations, and the faith-based community. Throughout the interviews and events, members of all three groups stated the importance and optimism in the alliance. Another promised: “we will continue to stand with you long after these projects and share harmony with each other and that Sacred Earth”, and he said that it is “not about coal...it’s about people coming together...the people gathering creates the sacred movement” (James 2016).

After the Army Corps denied the permit, the Executive Director of RE Sources for Sustainable Communities sent an open letter to the Lummi Nation, thanking them for protecting Cherry Point and for the strengthened alliance:

*“Not only am I thankful for your act of leadership, but I am also thankful for the personal opportunity to learn more about the Lummi Nation, to build friendships with your tribal members, and for the first time, to truly understand the importance of the rights in the Point Elliott Treaty. Rights that are not for sale. Rights that are binding, and not negotiable. Rights that do, and always will, take precedent over all state and federal laws” (Hoyer 2016).*

The Totem Pole Journeys, in particular, were key at bringing various groups together. At a related event in January 2016 at the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship, a Lummi Nation activist stated, “it takes a community and...we couldn’t do this without you” (Lane 2016). Others agreed that these events specifically started a trend that recognized the importance of these types of campaigns and the necessity of creating alliances to achieve change and gain followers. One activist stated that “this is a unique opportunity for three groups to work together and stand together, and this has been the greatest gift of this collaboration. We’ve made amazing progress” (Interview 2016).

#### *Denying the permit to build the GPT*

Many stated from the beginning that they believed that the coalition is a more effective way to impact the policy process. Indeed, on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016, the Army Corps of Engineers halted the

GPT permitting process, citing the impacts to the Lummi Nation's U&A fishing rights. Many opponents believed this decision was due to the constant pressure on the Army Corps of Engineers to acknowledge this (Wohlfeil 2016). On May 14, 2016, Jewell James spoke at the Indigenous Day of Action in Anacortes, WA, part of the Break Free PNW event that called for a transition to 100% renewable energy. He recognized the coalition's importance in stopping the coal terminal: "We're glad that the citizen groups, the nongovernmental organizations, environmental groups...and the churches have all come together...United we can continue to work and win" (James 2016). Lummi Chairman Tim Ballew II also believed that, because the community groups stood together, they were able to send "a strong message to the federal government that a terminal at Cherry Point is unacceptable" (Ballew 2016).

By pooling together their resources, the groups recognized that they needed each other to achieve this goal. As an environmental activist explains, "we need each other—the tribes lead the way and we support them; they can't make it without us, but we can't make it without them" (Interview 2016). A key player in this coalition believed that the Army Corps of Engineers would have approved the project if it were not for the constant advocacy from the alliance (Interview 2016). Many activists stated that the alliances can overall help "undo colonial historical trauma" (Interview 2016) and "persuade governments" (James 2016) to continue to reject fossil fuel projects and protect ecosystems and treaty rights.

### **The Importance of this Case Study**

The actors involved in the coalition against the GPT shared two main policy core beliefs: concerns over environmental justice and climate change. This case study showed that these two concerns united historically opposing groups and to form a successful coalition. Further, this

case study and the Army Corp's decision showed that a tribe's legal treaty rights allowed them to level past power imbalances and affect the policy agenda. This thesis also demonstrated the various steps taken to gain momentum and mobilization over a widespread and ongoing social issue. This can enhance research on policy core beliefs within and amongst cross-cultural coalitions against fossil fuel export and development.

This thesis argues for a greater look at power asymmetries, potential historical antagonism, and environmental justice issues, such as self-determination and environmental health (Willow 2012), in the ACF. Using the ACF framework, analysts and advocates can gain a deeper understanding of a coalition's beliefs, resources, actors, and policy process steps (Weible 2006). This thesis can instruct advocates within this coalition and in similar alliances how groups work together. It can advise the coalition and others how to continue to gather their resources and shared beliefs to successfully run future campaigns. Even as tensions still arise between tribal and non-tribal groups (Tanner Jr. 2016), this and similar coalitions have the potential to help resolve conflicts over tribal fishing rights and create a more equitable, environmentally sustainable society.

## **CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION**

This case study is the epitome of how coalitions can help improve the relationship between the environmental and indigenous rights movement and work in solidarity towards ecological sustainability (Vernon 2010). The many different worldviews and levels of power at play, however, can complicate these relationships. To properly address these issues of power imbalance and environmental injustice, coalitions should promote political actions that highlight indigenous rights, and equitable environmental management. These political actions require that indigenous groups, managers, and policymakers are well educated about the cultural, social, and historical dynamics of the managed resources (Richmond 2013).

To further understand these coalitions, this thesis explored the organizations that worked to halt the Gateway Pacific Terminal near the Lummi Nation. The Advocacy Coalition Framework adequately explained how the alliance members attempted to affect policy with their various resources, their common policy beliefs, and how power was balanced amongst the groups of the coalition. Data gathered from qualitative interviews, public events, and a media review highlighted a community's desire for capacity building against a history of exploitation and colonialism. This case study showed that coalitions are able to strengthen relationships while working towards both indigenous self-determination and ecological sustainability.

This thesis can guide advocates to a better understanding of the varying resources and beliefs that can shape the policy process, such as the coalition to halt the Gateway Pacific Terminal at Cherry Point. Overall, these environmental campaigns around the globe have the potential to empower indigenous communities and help their allies focus on justice-oriented solutions. Advocates within this coalition and in similar alliances can use this work to understand how groups work together. The coalition and others can increase their knowledge on their various

resources and shared beliefs in order to successfully affect the policy process now and in the future.

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## APPENDICES

### **Appendix A—List of Power Past Coal organizations**

- 1) 350
- 2) 350PDX
- 3) Audubon Washington
- 4) Beyond Toxics
- 5) Big Blackfoot Riverkeeper
- 6) Biscayne Bay Waterkeeper
- 7) Blue Skies
- 8) Cascadia Wildlands
- 9) Center for Biological Diversity
- 10) Chinook Trails Association
- 11) Chuckanut Conservancy
- 12) Chuckanut Transition
- 13) Citizens for a Clean Harbor
- 14) Climate Parents
- 15) **Climate Solutions**
- 16) Climb against coal
- 17) Coalition for a Livable Future
- 18) Columbia Gorge Kiteboarding Association
- 19) Columbia Gorge Windsurfing Association
- 20) Columbia Riverkeeper
- 21) Conservation Northwest
- 22) Cook Inletkeeper
- 23) CoolMom
- 24) Coos Bay Waterkeeper
- 25) CREDO Action
- 26) Dakota Resource Council
- 27) Douglas County Global Warming Coalition
- 28) **Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power and Light**
- 29) EarthJustice
- 30) Environment America
- 31) Environment Oregon
- 32) Environment Washington
- 33) Faith Action Network
- 34) French Broad Riverkeeper
- 35) Friends of Grays Harbor
- 36) Friends of Skagit County
- 37) Friends of the Columbia Gorge
- 38) Friends of the Earth
- 39) Friends of the San Juans
- 40) Fuse
- 41) Futurewise
- 42) Global Community Monitor
- 43) Grays Harbor Audubon Society

- 44) Green Party of Skagit County
- 45) Greenpeace
- 46) Guemes Island Property Owners Association
- 47) Hood River Valley Residents Committee
- 48) Idaho Conservation League
- 49) Interfaith Power and Light
- 50) Irthlngz Arts-Based Environmental Education
- 51) Kootenai Environmental Alliance
- 52) Lake Pend Oreille Waterkeeper
- 53) Landowners and Citizens for a Safe Community
- 54) League of Conservation Voters
- 55) League of Women Voters of Bellingham/Whatcom County
- 56) League of Women Voters of Washington
- 57) Milwaukie Coal Task Force
- 58) Montana Elders for a Livable Tomorrow
- 59) Montana Environmental Information Center
- 60) National Wildlife Federation
- 61) Native Fish Society
- 62) Natural Resources Defense Council
- 63) North Cascades Audubon Society
- 64) North Sound Baykeeper
- 65) Northern Plains Resource Council
- 66) Northwest Energy Coalition
- 67) Ogeechee Riverkeeper
- 68) Orca Network
- 69) Oregon Environmental Council
- 70) Oregon Interfaith Power and Light and Project of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
- 71) Oregon League of Conservation Voters
- 72) Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility
- 73) Oregon Rural Action
- 74) Peace and Justice Action League
- 75) People for Puget Sound
- 76) Power Past Coal Skagit
- 77) Progressive Democrats of America—Spokane and WA 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District chapters
- 78) Puget Soundkeeper
- 79) Protect our Winters
- 80) Rachel's Friends Breast Cancer Coalition
- 81) Rainforest Action Network
- 82) **RE Sources for Sustainable Communities**
- 83) REAP—The Renewable Energy Accountability Project
- 84) Restoring Eden
- 85) Safeguard the South Fork
- 86) San Francisco Baykeeper
- 87) Satilla Riverkeeper

- 88) Shoreline Solar
- 89) **Sierra Club**
- 90) Sightline
- 91) **Surfrider Foundation**
- 92) Sustainable Ballard
- 93) Sustainable West Seattle
- 94) The Lands Council
- 95) The Washington Association of Naturopathic Physicians
- 96) Transition Fidalgo and Friends
- 97) Transition Port Gardner
- 98) Upstream Public Health
- 99) Washington Conservation Voters
- 100) Washington Environmental Council
- 101) Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility
- 102) Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee
- 103) Washington Toxics Coalition
- 104) Washington Wildlife Federation
- 105) Western Action Coalition
- 106) Western Organization of Resource Councils
- 107) Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation
- 108) Whatcom Action Coalition
- 109) Whatcom Conservation Voters
- 110) Wilderness Committee
- 111) Willapa Hills Audubon
- 112) WWU Action Coalition
- 113) Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council

## **Appendix B—Author’s Note**

First, although I conducted an academic analysis of a coalition, I approached this project with a biased agenda: to help the Lummi Nation oppose this project. I am against the GPT and, in general, fossil fuel export projects in the Northwest. However, this paper factually and neutrally examines how members of the coalition worked together with their various resources and beliefs and attempted to affect policy. My main point was to also understand the role an indigenous nation can play in the context of natural resource extraction and how they can use the coalition to achieve environmental justice. Therefore, my biases did not affect my overall research goal or results.

In addition, it is important to note that this is a timely issue, and it is likely that many of the findings in this thesis will change after submission. For example, during the rough draft edits of my thesis, the Army Corps of Engineers rejected the permit to build the GPT. This resulted in major edits to my thesis draft. When reading this, please read about this issue as it stands currently to understand what has changed since this thesis was completed in May 2016.

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