

# ENGO framing of Vietnam's responsibility in the illegal rhino horn trade

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## Abstract

The world's largest population of rhinos in South Africa are being poached at over 1000 a year to supply a market for rhino horn in Vietnam. Can the media play a role in saving the rhino? This paper draws on and further develops a Master of Arts thesis on the press release framing of rhino horn demand reduction campaigns in Vietnam by Environmental Non-Government Organisations (ENGOS). The paper reviews the literature and addresses three key research questions from the original thesis about the identity of the frames, the cultural and other factors that influence the production of the frames and the efficacy of the frames used in the campaigns of ENGOS. In addition, the paper explores the potential ethical issues at the intersection of baseline or scholarly research of the illegal practice of using rhino horn and the use of collected data in the media. It uses a mixed method approach of framing analysis of ENGO press releases and semi-structured interviews with ENGO personnel to address the research questions. By investigating the source strategies and cultural and external factors influencing ENGO framing of Vietnam's responsibility for rhino poaching in Africa, this study illuminates challenges facing ENGOS to make the rhino crisis in Africa pertinent to the Vietnamese public, suggesting the benefits of including statistical evidence of rhino horn trade and consumption in Vietnam in ENGO press releases and other ways of framing to achieve improved outcomes combatting worldwide illegal trade in wildlife.

## Introduction

There has been 13 years straight of illegal trade in rhino horn from South Africa to Vietnam. Supply out of Africa is currently 30 times more than in the early 2000s with more than 1000 rhinos poached per year. The poaching is threatening the survival of rhino species worldwide and the way that poachers remove the horns from live wounded animals can be unspeakably cruel (Smith, 2015b). Vietnam is the key market, but the market in China has become an increasing factor in the illegal trade in rhino horn. To prevent illegal poaching of rhino in Africa, government, intergovernmental organisations and conservation groups' efforts are focused to stop the poaching in the range nations and to reduce demand in the end-market nations. Demand reduction efforts in end market nations such as Vietnam target consumers through behavior change campaigns and societal control and enforcement. The focus of this paper is on the "Responsibility" frame employed by ENGOS in their press releases aimed to reduce the demand for rhino horn in Vietnam.

## Literature Review

News framing research concerns how texts are presented in the media and understood by audiences (Scheufele, 1999). A frame is a central organizing idea for news content that suggests what the issue is (Tankard, Hendrikson, Silberman, Bliss & Ghanem, 1991). Todd Gitlin (1980, p.7) in his study of the

framing of the anti-Vietnam War movement in the US argued that media frames are “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation of selection, emphasis and exclusion by which symbol handlers routinely organise discourse, whether verbal or visual.” After the Vietnam War at the same time that Gitlin’s seminal book on news framing was published, a newly united North and South Vietnam was rebuilding under a socialist/communist government, with a state-controlled civil society and media. Since 1986 with *Doi Moi* (Renovation) there has been greater economic and political openness (Dinh, 2000) with Vietnam opening its doors to international NGOs and allowing local ENGOs to form (Wells-Dang, 2012; Mol, 2009). The media, however, has continued to be closely monitored and restricted and tends to reflect government views (Pham et al, 2017).

Along with increasing government transparency, after Vietnam joined the World Trade Organisation and advances in technology and the internet, the environmental movement has grown in Vietnam (Wells-Dang, 2012; Mol, 2009) as it has in China (Yang & Calhoun, 2013). It is plausible that the “emerging green public sphere” is the key driver of the environmental discourse in Vietnam, as Yang and Calhoun (2013) argue it is in China.

Vietnam is the key market nation for rhino horn, which is driving the high levels of illegal rhino poaching in Africa (Milliken, 2014). Demand and consumption in Vietnam is driven by two main cultural reasons: firstly rhino horn has supposed medical properties and is an ingredient in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) (Milliken & Shaw, 2012; Smith, 2015a, 2017, 2018a, 2018b) and secondly Vietnam has a wildlife eating and drinking culture (Song, 2008) that places prestige on the consumption of rare wildlife (Drury, 2009) such as rhinos. Currently emotional use of rhino horn as a means of communicating social status and use for supposed medical properties are the main drivers of demand (Truong et al, 2016).

ENGOs in Vietnam are working to address the problem facing endangered rhinos in Africa (Smith, 2017). The media outputs of the ENGOs in Vietnam, which aim to reduce demand for rhino horn, are a critical form of environmental communication to research. This is illustrated by Cox and Pezzullo’s (2016, p. 16) definition of environmental communication as “... the symbolic medium that we use in constructing environmental problems and in negotiating society’s different responses to them.” Entman’s definition of news framing reflects how framing research can address the important problem and response aspects of environmental communication:

“To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described”

Hence news frames indicate what is at stake in an issue. They are enacted by framing devices in news or in this case press releases by framing devices such as words, metaphors, exemplars, catch phrases, depictions and visual images (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Framing devices are most effective when they appear in framing focal points such as headlines, photos, leads, statistics and charts (Tankard, 2001).

Entman (1993) argued that frames appear in four key sites in society: the text, the communicator, the audience and the culture. These sites are relevant in terms of the framing of the rhino horn trade in the media outputs of ENGOs in Vietnam, as Lakoff (2010) argues that environmental frames need to resonate with audience frames to be effective. In terms of communicator frames, Scheufele (1999) argued there are five factors that influence how journalists or in this case ENGOs frame issues: social norms and values; organisational pressures and constraints; pressures of interest groups; journalistic

routines; and ideological or political orientations of journalists. The findings of this research showed these influences can be both positive and negative.

Hansen (2011) argued news framing research is an immensely productive method of analyzing environmental communication, leading to better understanding of public and political opinion and deliberation of environmental issues. Hansen (2011) noted insufficient attention has been given to research in the source strategies area of environmental communication. Important contributions to source strategies include Anderson (1991, 1997), Lester (2001, 2007), Deluca (2009) and Lin (2012). Studies of how the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) is framed by ENGOs include Jeffreys (2016) and Smith (2017; 2018a; 2018b). Jeffreys (2016) referred to celebrities' appeal to the younger generation in WildAid's shark fin campaign in China, but questioned celebrities' appeal to the older actual consumers of shark fin, arguing instead that business men are more successful messengers. Large gaps exist in research around the framing of IWT in key Asian market countries with key debates around framing in different cultural and political settings.

As IWT is a transnational environmental conflict, international ENGOs (IENGOs) work in a cross-cultural context alongside local ENGOs in Vietnam, sometimes partnering and sharing ideas. Framing scholars agree that culture is a significant aspect of framing environmental communication. Anderson (1997, p. 9) emphasises the importance of "local culture in framing public understandings of environmental issues". Cox and Pezzullo (2016, p. 138) referred to research that shows how culture influences people's interpretations of information and sensitivity to environmental risks. Lin's (2012) study of cross cultural framing by an elephant ENGO in Thailand argued for the use of gentle culturally sensitive frames.

Benford and Snow (2000) argued framing has a motivational function for social movements. Using pertinent issues as a way of connecting with rhino horn consumers and motivating behaviour change was a feature of the "Responsibility" frame. Maibach et al (2010) found that reframing environmental issues as issues pertinent to the public can have positive effects when they suggested reframing climate change as a health issue has implications for public perceptions.

The ENGOs raised several issues or negative consequences of rhino horn IWT as sub-themes of the "Responsibility" frame that are pertinent to the public. Cox (2010) takes pertinence further, suggesting better environmental outcomes would result from leveraging on contentious sites.

Anderson (1991) and Hansen (1993, p. 175) argued that ENGOs were tied to using scientific evidence to gain legitimacy. Amongst the movement to reduce IWT, there is an official push for evidence-based campaigns (Burgess 2016) to reduce demand for illegally traded wildlife. Hence this paper will argue that ENGOs could have increased the pertinence of the rhino horn trade issue in Vietnam by including statistical evidence of Vietnamese consumption and trade in their press releases.

## Methodology

The Master of Arts Research project, which this paper draws on, employed a mixed method approach to answer three research questions in the context of the ENGO campaigns to reduce demand for rhino horn in Vietnam.

RQ1: What are the key frames relayed via ENGO media releases?

RQ2: What cultural and other factors are relevant in their production?

RQ3: How effective are the selected ENGOs' communication strategies in relaying those messages and frames in the eyes of experts in the field?

A qualitative framing analysis was conducted of the relevant press releases in English. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with ENGO staff who were involved with the production of media releases. Semi-structured interviews with experts were carried out to provide expert views of the efficacy of media outputs of the ENGOs. deVreese (2005) states that the study of framing building processes needs grounding in a measure of their effectiveness at gaining media exposure, so newspaper journalists and editors as experts were interviewed about the efficacy of ENGO media relations and news framing. This methodological framework provided a rich description of the frames used in the ENGOs' efforts to reduce rhino horn consumption and trade, while also providing critical insights into factors affecting how and why those frames were produced.

The central methodology for the study was a framing analysis of press releases in English by the seven key ENGOs that produce press releases about the illegal trade in rhino horn in Vietnam. Three of the ENGOs were local while four were international, all working in Vietnam to reduce demand for rhino horn. The ENGOs in the sample met three criteria: they were prominent, having attended the 2016 Hanoi International IWT Conference, they had an office or a partner with an office in Vietnam, and they produced media outputs to address the rhino horn trade which were archived on their website.

The selection criteria for the press releases in the sample were:

- they were from ENGOs in the sample,
- they were archived on the ENGOs' websites in the media or news section,
- they had strong relevance to the illegal rhino horn trade in Vietnam which was signified by the prominent use of words such as "rhino" and "Vietnam" in key "focal points" of the document (Tankard, 2001), and
- they were published between January 2014 and December 2016.

Press releases were sourced from each ENGO's press release archive on their website. The number of press releases matching the criteria was 76 in total.

<b>ENGO</b>	<b>Website</b>	<b>Number of press releases in sample</b>
Change	<a href="http://www.changevn.org/">http://www.changevn.org/</a>	10
ENV	<a href="http://www.envietnam.org/">http://www.envietnam.org/</a>	13
WildAct	<a href="http://www.wildact-vn.org/">http://www.wildact-vn.org/</a>	11

WildAid	<a href="http://www.wildaid.org/tags/vietnam">http://www.wildaid.org/tags/vietnam</a> <a href="http://www.wildaid.org/">http://www.wildaid.org/</a>	14
Traffic	<a href="http://www.traffic.org/home">http://www.traffic.org/home</a>	14
WWF	<a href="http://vietnam.panda.org/en/">http://vietnam.panda.org/en/</a>	10
WCS	<a href="https://programs.wcs.org/vietnam/Wildlife-Trade/Wildlife-trade-news.aspx">https://programs.wcs.org/vietnam/Wildlife-Trade/Wildlife-trade-news.aspx</a> <a href="https://www.wcs.org/">https://www.wcs.org/</a>	4

Consulting with my supervisors to ensure representational validity (Capella & Jamieson, 1997) a framing analysis was conducted on each press release to find the central organizing idea that suggested what the issue was. During this analysis of hard copy press releases, selection, emphasis and exclusion of information was noted, framing devices such as words and images (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989) were highlighted as identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics (Capella & Jamieson, 1997). To identify dominant and competing frames, attention was paid to whether framing devices were emphasised by their placement in framing focal points (Tankard, 2001).

To answer RQ2 and triangulate the data to answer RQ1, interviewees for the semi-structured interviews with key personnel were selected on the criteria that they worked for an ENGO working to reduce demand for rhino horn in Vietnam and had knowledge of the campaign. To conduct the interviews, I attended the 2016 Hanoi International IWT conference and employed a snowball approach to gain interviews. In addition to interviews, I recorded speakers at the TRAFFIC presentation that I recorded making a total of 11 transcripts for analysis.

To answer RQ3 to provide expert views of the efficacy of the ENGOs frames a sample of experts was interviewed. The sample selection was based on meeting one of three criteria: their expert experience of ENGOs operating to reduce demand for illegal wildlife products in Vietnam; their knowledge of the media in Vietnam; or their knowledge of the public relations sector in Vietnam. Nine experts were interviewed.

All the interviews were transcribed, then coded and analysed deductively and inductively using the qualitative analysis program NVivo.

## Findings

The key frames that were identified in the ENGO's press releases were: "Responsibility", "Lip Service", "Empower" and "Voodoo Wildlife Parts" (Smith, 2017). Three of these frames fitted generic framing categories that have broader applications in environmental communication such as in climate change communication (Nisbet, 2009). For example, "Voodoo Wildlife Parts" was a "Science" frame that discussed rhino horn's medical efficacy (Smith, 2017). The frames often appeared in conjunction with each other.

The “Responsibility” frame, which is the focus of this paper, was represented in the press releases concerning the illegal trade in rhino horn by of ENGOs in Vietnam. It appeared more than other frames in both dominant and competing forms. It appeared in a total of 52 press releases out of the total sample of 76. In 22 press releases it was dominant and in 30 press releases it was competing. It was the only frame that all the ENGOs employed, in at least one press release.

The “Responsibility” frame can be classified as a generic “attribution of responsibility” frame (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000; Dirikx and Gelders, 2009). I argue that the frame is used by the ENGOs to convey Vietnam’s responsibility for the poaching crisis in South Africa. The representations of the consequences of IWT in the press releases correspond with Dirikx and Gelders’ (2009) findings that responsibility and consequence frames often worked together in European newspaper coverage of climate change. This tendency for combination supports my decision to group the consequence and responsibility themes in the press releases into the one frame.

The “Responsibility” frame was expressed by the sample ENGOs through seven sub-themes: crisis, brutality, corporate social responsibility (CSR), national responsibility, spiritual responsibility, health and family values. Framing devices that enacted the frame included a range of words and phrases often used in association. The words “rare”, “crisis”, “threatened”, “endangered”, “precious” and “extinction” enacted the crisis sub-theme. “Massacre”, “suffering”, “horrific” and “brutality” enacted the brutality sub-theme. “Businessman”, “business community” and “CSR” enacted the CSR sub-theme. “Embarrass” and “shame” enacted the national reputation sub-theme.

The press releases also featured visual images as framing devices (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989) including: photos, graphics and charts about poaching figures (WildAid 2015, 22 September; WildAid 2015, 22 January) enacted the crisis sub-theme; graphic photos of rhino injuries (WildAct 2015, 9 June) and dead rhinos (ENV 2014, 13, 18, September; 5 November) enacted the brutality sub-theme; photos of mother and baby rhinos together (WildAid 2015 February 5) enacted the family values sub-theme; and monks and images of Buddha alongside images of rhinos (WildAid 2016, 22 September) enacted the spiritual sub-theme.

The “Responsibility” frame was enacted when the press releases referred to consequences to rhino of the illegal trade, such as the potential crisis for rhino species in Africa and the brutality of rhino poaching, in association with depictions of demand in Vietnam. There is a glaring omission in the press releases of statistics, which Tankard (2001) argues are focal points for frames, of consumption, seizures or arrests that prove that demand in Vietnam is linked to the high level of rhino poaching in South Africa. The statistics the ENGOs present are mainly poaching statistics in South Africa. A significant finding of the framing analysis was that apart from two press releases (WCS 2014, 3 November; WildAct 2016, 17 November) of the 52 that enacted the “Responsibility” frame, there was an exclusion of statistical evidence of trade and consumption of rhino horn in Vietnam present in the press releases.

Instead of evidence, responsibility was conveyed by imposing a causal theme using rhetorical structures or causal statements (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Rhetorical structures included ENGOs communicating that Vietnam’s own Javan Rhino species was recently made extinct as a result of poaching for rhino horn in 2010: “The countries (sic) last Javan rhino was killed for its horn in 2010” (ENV 2015, para 4). Examples of causal statements include: “Demand for rhino horn in Asia including Vietnam is the main driver of the rhino poaching crisis in South Africa” (Traffic 2015, 15 June, para 7)

and “Last month because of its role as the main destination country for trafficked rhino horn...” (WWF 2016, 18 November, para 5).

I argue the exclusion of evidence is a shortcoming of this frame. As ENGOs make themselves useful to government actors by doing valuable research and supplying it, offering to other actors “what those actors can’t do for themselves” (Princen, 1994, p. 37) the finding is puzzling. It is even more puzzling as the ENGOs have conducted or commissioned research that provides strong evidence of Vietnam as the key market nation. (Milliken, 2014; Truong, 2016). The excerpt below is one of the only two examples of some evidence being presented in an ENGO press release:

WildAct conducted their survey focusing on Facebook during a 6 month period from October 2015 to April 2016. Almost 2000 adverts and 3000 comments were analysed... 38% of all advertisements found were elephant ivory products, whereas one out of every four accounts created primarily to sell elephant ivory were also selling rhino horn. (WildAct 2016 paras. 3, 4)

The table below outlines the seven “Responsibility” frame sub-themes. Crisis and brutality were strongly represented, despite possible cultural problems that this paper will later outline. The CSR sub-theme was a key sub-theme of the ENGO TRAFFIC campaign Sub-themes that were less common in the sample are significant to mention in terms of how and why ENGOs employed them to leverage on different aspects of Vietnamese society and culture.

<b>Responsibility frame sub-themes</b>	<b>Meaning of sub-theme</b>	<b>Examples of text or photos from press releases</b>
Crisis: Personal responsibility for crisis	By buying rhino horn individuals could contribute to the extinction of the species.	“If the killing of rhinos is not urgently stopped, rhino populations all over the world will be pushed to extinction within the next couple of years, following in the path of Vietnam’s own rhinos, lost forever in 2010” (ENV 2014, para 2).
Brutality: Personal responsibility for brutality	By buying rhino horn buyers are contributing to great animal suffering.	“...where they might encounter poachers or come upon the grisly scene of a recently killed rhino” (ENV 2014, para 4).
CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility	International reputation of corporations is important in Vietnam’s World Trade Organisation membership context.	“VCCI and Traffic... today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) supporting the roll out of best practices in corporate ethics and consumer behaviour change, as well as a zero-

		tolerance approach toward wildlife consumption, through CSR” (Traffic 2015, para 1).
National responsibility	By being the world’s biggest consumer nation Vietnam’s reputation internationally will suffer	“Vietnam is the largest rhino consumption nation! I feel really embarrassing, extremely embarrassing (sic). Vietnamese seems to be too ignorance (sic)” (WildAct 2014, para 8).
Spiritual responsibility	Karmic impact of using rhino horn might be negative	“WildAid Vietnam organises a recent event at a Buddhist pagoda in Vietnam where dharma talks encouraged Buddhist followers to protect the rhino” (WildAid 2016, photo caption).
Family values: Responsibility for families	By buying rhino horn buyers are orphaning baby rhinos	Photos of family groups or rhinos with baby rhinos.
Health: Responsibility for health	By buying rhino horn buyers risk health problems from zoonotic diseases or poisoned horns	“The doctor said they [zoonotic diseases] are diseases that can be transmitted from wild animals to humans (WildAct 2016).

As discussed in the introduction, an important finding of the research was the absence of evidence in the ENGOs press releases that Vietnam is a major market for rhino horn. The rhino horn trade is clearly recognised in Vietnam, but there is a view among Vietnamese media personnel and potentially the government that most of the evidence only points to rhino horn being transported through the country. Newspaper Editor A said he did not believe Vietnam was responsible. Rather, he said he believed it was a transit nation, not a consumer nation. He said China was the biggest consumer:

We don’t know exactly how much Vietnamese is [sic] consuming rhino horns because most of the time when illegal shipment of rhino horns were caught in the country they come from South Africa, maybe because Vietnam is a trans-shipment point in Asia and you know China is the biggest consumer of rhino horns because traditional medicine is a very strong sector in China but in Vietnam is not a strong one... We get some information from official sources from the government (Newspaper Editor A 2016, pers comm, 22 November).



Statistical evidence exists of Vietnamese nationals' involvement in smuggling rhino horn in Vietnam and internationally (Milliken, 2014; EIA, 2016, [https://eia-international.org/wp-content/uploads/eia\\_iwtp-report-vietnam.pdf](https://eia-international.org/wp-content/uploads/eia_iwtp-report-vietnam.pdf)), as well as evidence that proves rhino horn is widely bought and consumed in Vietnam (TRAFFIC, 2013, Truong et al, 2016). The research which presents these statistics was done by or commissioned by ENGOs in Vietnam. EIA (2016) research revealed three statistics that link Vietnam to the trade: parts and products from up 579 rhinos were observed in a Vietnamese village that is a hub for IWT; 1069 kg of rhino horn has been seized in or linked to Vietnam from 2010-2015 and; Vietnamese nationals have been arrested in relation to the rhino horn trade in 10 countries. In Truong et al's (2016) survey of men in 90 well off areas in Vietnam's two biggest cities, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, they found of "the 608 respondent's 287 (47.2%) reported having consumed rhino horn prior to the survey". Hence the statistics present clear evidence of Vietnam's as a key market.

The literature on the consumption of wildlife in Vietnam (Drury, 2009, Broad et al, 2003, Sumrall, 2009) widely agrees that rarity is a motivation in Vietnam for consumption of wild animal parts. Drury (2009) found that the consumption of rare wildlife was an important signifier of status in Vietnam. The culture of consumption of rare wildlife suggests the "crisis" sub-theme that appeared in the sample press releases was problematic. The ENGO personnel who were interviewed agreed.

The interview with Le Thi Trang of Green Viet shows that ENGOs in the sample are aware of the cultural belief that makes the Vietnamese desire rarity: "They want to keep it because they are thinking they are keeping something very rare" (T Le 2016, pers comm, November 17).

Both IENGOs and local ENGOs employ locally based Vietnamese people to work on campaigns. Miss Hong from WCS illustrated that local practitioners are more likely than foreigners to be aware of cultural nuances such as the Vietnamese fondness for consuming rare wildlife:

You always need to have the local people to check to see it fits with the cultures...Of course the first is the office. We are the local people. We understand the messages and then our friends and families (VH Duong 2016, pers comm, 18 November).

As a result of local understanding of the Vietnamese culture for eating and drinking rare wildlife, she explained that ENGOs aim to exclude information about rarity and crisis from their media outputs: "I tend not to use crisis [in press releases] a lot because it might have a counter effect. Because if it's going to be extinct, someone said it's going to be extinct need to catch it now" (VH Duong 2016, pers comm, 18 November).

However, the crisis sub-theme present in the press releases indicates that while some ENGOs believed that "crisis" connotes rarity in the eyes of the audience, some ENGOs used the crisis sub-theme of the "Responsibility" frame, assumedly because media logic dictates that using newsworthy statistics of rhino poaching levels in South Africa is an ENGO routine. Representative A's statement also indicates the ENGO's ideological or cultural orientation that supposes that awareness of a crisis will motivate users not to use it could be a factor when selecting poaching statistics to include in the press releases:

Pretty much every year now the South African government announces the number of rhino that were poached and it's increasing... So the numbers are jumping every year and it's a real crisis so I think we've been trying to highlight that internationally (Representative A, 2016, pers comm, 18 November).

In line with other ENGO personnels' comments, Representative B's comments suggest that in terms of the environment, Vietnamese people in general are more concerned with their immediate personal

situation and local environmental issues such as pollution, than the future or what is happening to rhinos in faraway places such as Africa:

Messages talking about the future, messages talking about the environment, you are damaging the environment, you are breaking the ecosystem, blah blah blah, People don't really care about it - because it not really affecting them and the Vietnamese people are very much short sighted, they care about what they get today (Representative B 2016, pers comm, 17 November).

Comparing this comment from Representative B with the following comment from Miss Hong of Change demonstrates that the ENGOs believe that Vietnamese audience frames regarding global biodiversity issues vary according to their education or worldliness. (It is important to note that the current demand for rhino horn is driven mainly by educated middle-aged wealthy men, so not just education but age and where and when a person was educated that are important factors):

[At] international school we talk about biodiversity because they are intellectual... We do some crisis with elites and intellectual classes of grownups like ones who are more civilised (H Hoang 2016, pers comm, November 20).

News articles about the trade in rhino horn have often focused on it as more expensive than gold or cocaine (For example see Harper, 2015). It is important to note that none of the ENGO press releases contained information about the high price. Miss Hong from WCS said high price connotes the horn's rarity and "preciousness", so WCS avoids communicating the high price as it could motivate demand (H Duong 2016, pers comm, 18 November).

In previous WildAid campaigns in China to reduce demand for ivory and shark fin, WildAid's John Baker said that consumers were unaware that animals were dying to supply the products, a view based on WildAid's baseline research. Thus, he argued that WildAid made that information public through a WildAid campaign with WildAid's key conservation message, "When the buying stops, the killing can too". In Vietnam, WildAid did baseline research that supported the existence of a similar mindset to China, then applied the same message aiming to reduce demand for rhino horn in Vietnam. Along with the influencing factor of the baseline research, it could be argued that Baker had an ideological perspective (Scheufele, 1999) of compassion towards animals that he believed was shared by Vietnamese. Thus, he believed this message would work, however, some argue that the Vietnamese have a utilitarian view of wildlife:

Most of the people think you can cut a fin and it can grow back, same with ivory, you know. Maybe 30 percent knew it came from poached elephants, but most thought it came from a farm, it came from natural mortality, it came from, you could cut it the tusk, and it would grow back. No one knew the elephant was dying to get that. You explain, you inform them of that stuff and their attitude would instantly change to 'oh I would never buy that if I knew it's killing an animal... Most people already have that innate conservation attitude. (J Baker 2016, pers comm, 17 November).

Change, WildAid's Vietnamese partner, appeared to have followed WildAid's lead with the brutality sub-theme by using the same message, but Change's media relations officer said it wasn't culturally suited because of utilitarian views:

The second [message] is rhino would be killed for his horn... We want to focus on the emotion. We want the public to see that when the rhino is poached it makes them feel bad about this. When they buy rhino horn, when they buy just a piece of rhino horn, and just ask

them - it will link to a death of a rhino... I think it not have a good response from the public about this message, yeah, because the death of rhino is just like a death of a chicken (T Tran 2016, pers comm, July 2).

The comment from Miss Dung, from ENV, below suggests however the brutality sub-theme may be effective with young people:

It's [graphic photographs] more about the young people. It's more about the welfare issue. Because it is so graphic, people think it is horrible. As a human being, you stop doing that to the rhino (D Nguyen 2016, pers comm, 18 November).

Newspaper Editor A's comment seemed to support ENV's decision to publish graphic images. The editor said that most Vietnamese had not yet seen the brutality of rhino poaching, suggesting that graphic images of rhino poaching haven't been tried much in Vietnam: "We Vietnamese have never seen, eye witnessed that scene, so cruelty is still taking a back seat at the moment" (Newspaper Editor A 2016, pers comm, 22 November).

Hence there is debate whether the crisis and brutality sub-themes are pertinent in Vietnam. Of the remaining five sub-themes, I will discuss CSR as it features strongly in TRAFFIC's campaign and is arguably very pertinent to a key rhino horn consumer group, wealthy businessmen. The ENGO TRAFFIC enacted the "Responsibility" frame by introducing demand reduction strategies for rhino horn, in the form of zero tolerance of IWT, as a Corporate Social Responsibility policy for Vietnamese corporations. McWilliams (2000) defined CSR as "Abstract actions of firms that contribute to social welfare, beyond what is required for profit maximization." CSR represents corporations' duty to protect society (Holme and Watts, 1999).

In TRAFFIC's presentation at the 2016 Hanoi IWT Conference they discussed how they linked their campaign to the emerging area of CSR for Vietnamese companies through partnering and running workshops with the Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI). TRAFFIC produced press releases about the workshops which highlighted the potential international reputational and legal risk to any company linked to IWT. This is a leveraging strategy that Cox (2010) argued went beyond framing environmental communication, as it formed a bridge from merely raising awareness to motivating a change in behaviour.

TRAFFIC partnered with VCCI before they decided on using CSR as the site to leverage the "Chi" Campaign, which communicates that success comes from within not from rhino horn. VCCI's Miss Thuy (TTT Le 2016, pers comm, 17 November) suggested brainstorming with partner organisations was an ENGO routine (Scheufele, 1999) that influences the production of frames. It is also significant that both people who took part in the brainstorming, Miss Thuy and Miss Trinh were Vietnamese, as Lin (2012) found that using local staff helped an elephant ENGO in Thailand provide communication strategies to tackle culturally sensitive issues. Miss Thuy explained how TRAFFIC increased the leverage at the CSR site of the "Responsibility" frame by bringing legal risks of IWT into the frame:

The key motivation for business to tackle wildlife crime is to avoid risk. Adopting zero tolerance against wildlife can help a business mitigate legal and reputational risk. Employees are learning about the more stringent law and harsher punishment of wildlife crime that will come into effect in 2017 under the penal code, under this code it is illegal to consume, keep, buy, sell or trade protected wildlife. So, the best way to avoid becoming a wildlife criminal is to adopt zero tolerance of illegal wildlife consumption in your public and private life. (TTT Le 2016, pers comm, 17 November)

Hence the “CSR” sub-theme of the “Responsibility” frame appears to have been created to leverage on issues (Cox, 2010; Maibach et al, 2010), such as legal and reputational risk that are more pertinent to the audience than the central environmental issues (Maibach et al, 2010).

## Discussion

The seven sub-themes that comprise the “Responsibility” frame can be classified based on how pertinent they are to the audience (Cox, 2010; Maibach et al, 2010). I argue that the pressing issues at stake with reducing demand in Vietnam are the crisis and brutality facing rhinos in Africa, but there are problems making the key issues pertinent in Vietnam. By using the concepts of communicator and audience frames (Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999) I will argue, there is a tendency for ENGOs to frame responsibility in a way that is pertinent to them rather than to the Vietnamese, but through adopting various routines ENGOs are engaged in “organisational learning” (Princen, 1994b, p. 150) in their framing and re-framing processes. Firstly, I will argue that evidence is important for ENGOs to include in the “Responsibility” frame to make the issue of rhino poaching in South Africa pertinent to the Vietnamese media and government.

To effectively reduce demand for IWT, behaviour change campaigns need to be evidence-based (Burgess, 2016). ENGOs are tied to evidence (Anderson, 1991; Hansen, 1993). In 50 of the 52 press releases which featured the “Responsibility” frame, the ENGOs framed Vietnam as responsible by ambiguously associating the consequences of poaching to demand and consumption in Vietnam, placing and associating the two concepts together symbolically (Entman, 1993; Blood et al, 2002). The ENGOs imposed causal themes, statements and rhetorical structures (Pan & Kosicki, 1993) without evidence. Nevertheless, they fulfilled a key function of framing, “causal interpretation” (Entman, 1993), but it could be argued they excluded available evidence at the expense of the legitimacy of their campaign (Anderson, 1991; Hansen, 1993).

The importance of including evidence of consumption and trade in Vietnam in the form of statistics, which are a key focal point of framing (Tankard, 2001), was highlighted when Newspaper Editor A indicated that there was little evidence that Vietnam was the key consumer nation. He believed that the evidence pointed to Vietnam as a transit nation and China as the key consumer, saying the information was from “official sources from the government”. As all media in socialist/communist Vietnam is government owned (Pham et al, 2017), the editor’s views may be influenced by his ideological and political orientations and the organisational pressures and constraints (Schuefele, 1999). Pham et al (2017) argued that the Vietnamese media reflects the government frame. The editor’s audience frame is also potentially supported by Vietnam’s long history of trading wildlife to China (Van Song, 2008). Providing statistical evidence of high levels of consumption and illegal trade in Vietnam in press releases to editors and journalists may help change the editor’s view.

Gitlin (1980) argued that framing is achieved through persistent patterns of selection, emphasis and exclusion. I argue that rather than actively excluding the evidence, the ENGOs did not select it because, as Gitlin (1980) argued, exclusion is often related to routine. I argue that it is plausible that referring to evidence was not part of the ENGOs’ routine in preparing press releases. In their routines, which Scheufele (1999) argues are influencing factors of frames, the ENGOs made moral evaluations and causal themes instead. In attempts to address the challenge of making rhino poaching in Africa pertinent to the Vietnamese public, these “moral evaluations” and “causal interpretations”, which

Entman (1993) theorised are a key function of framing, dominated the seven sub-themes of the “Responsibility” frame.

If ENGOs were to include evidence that exists of the extent of rhino horn consumption in Vietnam in their press releases, it may pose interesting ethical research questions. Truong et al (2016) notes in the Research Methods section of a paper on rhino consumer behaviour in Vietnam, “Given that rhino horn consumption is illegal, some of these men were not comfortable participating in the survey. They were however more willing to complete the questionnaire after the survey team had assured that the survey would be used for research purposes only... and assured of the confidentiality of their identity...” With nearly half of the men surveyed having consumed rhino horn (287 out of 608), Truong et al’s (2016) research made the point there is a lot of illegal rhino horn consumption going on in middle class areas of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City among men in positions of wealth and power. If TRAFFIC, the ENGO that sponsored the research, was considering including the statistics in their press releases, then should the survey team state for research purposes only? The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018, <file:///C:/Users/user/AppData/Local/Temp/The-australian-code-for-the-responsible-conduct-of-research-2018.pdf>) states in Principle 1: “Honesty in the development, undertaking and reporting of research. Present information truthfully and accurately in proposing, conducting and reporting research”. An important question is what kind of information can you share in the informed consent process before you scare off your self-reporting rhino horn users. We must look at the counterpoint: Why do we do research? Once we have found out, don’t we have a moral duty to let people know? One hope of researchers is that the research will be picked up by the media and press releases are just one way of doing that.

Framing scholars agree that culture is a significant aspect of framing environmental communication (Anderson, 1997; Cox and Pezzullo, 2016). Because of the Vietnamese cultural aspects of consuming rare wildlife and the utilitarian view of wild animals, the crisis and brutality sub-themes of the “Responsibility” frame illustrate the challenges of cross-cultural framing for ENGOs in Vietnam.

Cross cultural framing challenges arose with the crisis and brutality sub-themes because of cross cultural differences and ENGOs not always being aware or considering that they have different ideological orientations (Schuefele, 1999) and cultural frames (Entman, 1993) from the Vietnamese public. Hence there is a risk that crisis sub-theme could backfire by making rhino horn more desirable to a people who have a culture of consuming rare wildlife and the brutality sub-theme might not have the intended effect because Vietnamese people see killing a rhino as the same as killing a chicken. However, the ENGOs said the graphic images of the brutal poaching methods had the intended shock effect on younger audiences.

Other potential problems included: employing media logic (Castells, 2009; Lowe & Morrison, 1984) of publicising statistics of poaching crisis in Africa; and ENGO routines (Scheufele, 1999) such as importing campaigns from other countries.

ENGOs dealt with cultural challenges and the tendency to be self-centric through a variety of strategies representing ENGO “organisational learning” (Princen, 1994). They consulted local staff, family and friends on cultural issues, as Lin (2012) found an elephant ENGO did in Thailand to develop cross cultural framing. Lakoff (2010) argues there is a need to build environmental background frames. This is happening with students in Vietnam who are currently learning about conservation at schools and universities, so whereas ENGOs identified problems with the crisis and brutality sub-themes with rhino horn consumers and the general public, they indicated greater success with students. The ENGOs

viewed educated young Vietnamese people as an ideological bridge in Vietnamese society. As Scheufele (1999) would note, the ENGOs tended to be able to focus less on their own views and more on the Vietnamese public and what drives rhino horn consumers because of effective routines, such as employing local staff, seeking local feedback, conducting social research, holding workshops and partnering with local ENGOs and business groups.

The other five “Responsibility” sub-themes of CSR, national reputation, health, family values and spiritual responsibility were re-framings, because framing the key environmental issues at stake was problematic. They seem to have been developed with clearer ideas of what is pertinent about this environmental issue (Maibach et al, 2010) to Vietnamese people with cultural and other values in mind.

## Conclusion

The challenge that ENGOs face in Vietnam to reduce the demand for rhino horn revolves around making the conservation and brutality crisis facing rhinos in Africa pertinent to the Vietnamese public. There are problems making the two key issues for rhinos pertinent in Vietnam so ENGOs have reframed the issue in ways that they have found are pertinent. The use of statistical evidence in press releases is an important framing focal point to make the issue more pertinent to the media and government. To make the issue pertinent to the target audience and the Vietnamese public, ENGOs have needed to consider educational, ideological and cultural differences between ENGOs and the Vietnamese public in their framing of press releases.

Despite an international focus on evidence-based measures to combat IWT, in the press releases of ENGOs working to reduce IWT in Vietnam, evidence that Vietnam is the key market for rhino horn is almost completely lacking. Inclusion of statistical evidence may help dispel a view apparently held by members of the media and government that Vietnam is primarily a transit country rather than an end market nation. In addition to statistical evidence existing of Vietnamese nationals’ involvement in smuggling rhino horn in Vietnam and internationally, evidence that proves rhino horn is widely bought and consumed in Vietnam has already been revealed in research by or commissioned by ENGOs in Vietnam.

Because of the illegal nature of consuming rhino horn, it is difficult for researchers to recruit consumers to participate in studies of consumer behaviour as they are reluctant to self-report. If potential participants were aware that de-identified data that was collected from them may be used in press releases instead of “for research purposes only” they may be even more reluctant to recruit. Whether this is an ethical concern is an interesting question to consider when researchers are composing informed consent forms.

The data suggests that the threat to rhinos is already pertinent to young educated Vietnamese, because their education has equipped them with background environmental frames. Hence, they are more concerned than older generations about the ENGO messages that Vietnam is responsible for the high level and brutal practices of rhino poaching in Africa. Importantly they are also ready to act to resolve the problem. Graphic images of brutality to rhinos that ENGOs have publicised to reduce demand have received positive feedback from young educated Vietnamese.

There are debates within the ENGO community about whether economic factors and cultural frames in Vietnam relating to consuming rare wildlife and Vietnamese people’s utilitarian view of wildlife are impeding attempts to make the crisis and brutality facing rhinos in Africa pertinent to the Vietnamese.

However, there is general consensus among ENGOs that other sub-themes belonging to the “Responsibility” frame are pertinent to the Vietnamese for cultural and other reasons. The CSR sub-theme, strongly leverages on reputational and legal risk to companies, to make the ENGO message of “zero tolerance for IWT” pertinent to a key consumer group of wealthy businessmen.

ENGOs press releases lack statistical evidence of Vietnam as the key market for rhino horn. Increasingly however, through ENGO routines of consulting with local people about cultural issues and brainstorming with business people, ENGOs are learning to develop effective frames in their press releases.

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