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## Bdote and Fort Snelling: A Place of Frame Disputes and Contested Meanings

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BDOTE AND FORT SNELLING:  
A PLACE OF FRAME DISPUTES AND CONTESTED MEANINGS

By

Jason D. Mack

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

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In

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Mankato, Minnesota

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Bdote and Fort Snelling: A Place of Frame Disputes and Contested Meanings.  
Jason D. Mack

This thesis has been examined and approved by the following members of the student's committee.

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**Bdote and Fort Snelling: A Place of Frame Disputes and Contested Meanings.**

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The area where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet is a place of multiple and contested meanings for different groups of people. For the state of Minnesota, it is the location of the Historic Fort Snelling and Fort Snelling State Park. For the Dakota Nation, it is the site of their genesis story as well as a site of genocide and forced removal from their homelands. The present study describes what meanings this area has for these groups and defines the dimensions of the dispute over this place.

A purposive sample, consisting of both spoken and written discourse documents, was used for this study. These discourse documents were subjected to a frame analysis in order to discover what frames and framing processes were present regarding this place.

Three master frames of the area were identified: 1) a historical site master frame; 2) a Dakota place master frame; 3) a state park master frame. Each master frame was found to be composed of various sub-frames, diagnostic and prognostic frames, and identity frames. Finally, various levels of frames disputes were identified both between and within these master frames. In describing the dominant discourses of the area compared with Indigenous voices, the study is indicative of how historical inequality is perpetuated and reproduced by the framing of place throughout time.

## Chapter I

### What Is The Meaning Of This Place?

In 2008, the State of Minnesota is celebrating 150 years of statehood. Parades, festivities, and much whoopla are accompanying this important anniversary in Minnesota history. The state government, institutions, and appointed Sesquicentennial Commission are asking all of us to reflect on what Minnesotans have *gained* in the last century and a half as well as what *progress* Minnesotans have achieved. Minnesota's original inhabitants, the Dakota Oyate (Nation), have a different perspective on those 150 years. Rather than measuring the years by what we have gained, Dakota people more often measure what we have *lost* [Emphasis in original].

- Waziyatawin (2008:3)

The recent celebrations of Minnesota's statehood have carried many meanings. As Angela Waziyatawin Wilson's quote relates, there is a great divergence between the meanings supported by greater Minnesotans and those of the Dakota people. As with any conflict that is rooted in a painful history, the situation in Minnesota is complex and dynamic. It has multiple facets and a great many more perspectives that could be elicited. However, one key dimension of this dispute over meaning has to do with a specific place itself. In particular, the area where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers converge represents a very significant place that is filled with meaning(s). For the state of Minnesota, this place is commonly known as Fort Snelling and represents a major site of American expansion and Minnesota statehood (Wingerd 2010:82-83). Yet, for many Dakota people, the area is known as Bdote and represents a place of genesis and genocide (Waziyatawin 2008). The reality of this place as one that is replete with contested meanings reveals its potential for sociological analysis.



The current study explores the dimensions of this conflict which hinges on a dispute of how meaning is negotiated and which meaning is held salient among social actors. This research is grounded in multiple sociological ideas. First, I have approached the topic according to the basic notion that meaning is socially constructed via the interactions of people. Hence, the overarching perspective is the pragmatic tradition of symbolic interaction. The research also draws on framing theory as a way to develop a conceptual framework by which to describe the dynamics of the situation. This study seeks to describe, in sociological terms, what is taking place in Minnesota.

To begin, a brief contextualization of the historical relationship that Dakota people have with the area currently known as Fort Snelling will be provided. Although it is important to understand the state of Minnesota's relation to the area, it is critical to outline the Dakota people's perspectives given their subjugated status in the state (Wazyatawin 2008; Westerman and White 2012; Wilson 2005). This discussion will help to qualify the overall context in which this research takes place.

#### *Fort Snelling and Dakota People*

When it comes to the construction of meaning, place is one of the most salient factors in the Indigenous worldview. The area commonly known as Fort Snelling holds a plethora of significant meanings for many Dakota people of Minnesota. Gwen Westerman and Bruce White state in *Mni Sota Makoce* that for the Dakota people, "the power of place is undeniable" (222). In order to understand Dakota people's relationship to the place where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet, it is necessary to introduce key historical aspects of their relationship to the area.

According to accounts given in the landmark text by Westerman and White (2012), the Dakota originated from the area where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet. The traditional Dakota creation story tells of the creation of the universe and earth. In this creation story, the Dakota people came from the stars along the Milky Way to Bdote, the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers. The Dakota belief is that Bdote, the place of their genesis, is the center of the earth. Because of their genesis in that place, the Dakota consider themselves as the original inhabitants of this part of the earth from the beginning of time (Westerman and White 2012:16-29; Wilson 2005:32). As the Dakota people flourished in this land given to them by their Creator, they diversified into different larger bands that were connected by their responsibility to take care of this place they called Maka Ina<sup>1</sup> (Westerman and White 2012:13). Dakota culture and worldviews connected them deeply to the place known today as Minnesota, and particularly to Bdote, the place of their creation story.

Bdote represents a significant place for many Dakota people for more reasons than the fact that it is the place of their genesis (Bdote Memory Map 2007b, 2007c; Westerman and White 2012:211-222; Waziyatawin 2008:17-20; Wilson 2005:32, 96). In terms of a meaningful landscape, Bdote is also a place for sacred ceremonies such as the Medicine Dance, and it is also an ancient burial site (Westerman and White 2012:16-29, 211-222; Wilson 2005:31-32). Additionally, Bdote is the place where two Dakota leaders signed the pivotal treaty of 1805 with Lieutenant Zebulon Pike. It was this treaty that effectively gave permission for the U. S. to build a military post directly on Bdote (Westerman and White 2012:140-148; Wingerd 2010:82-83). The area represents the beginning of major treaty negotiations which eventually took away most Dakota lands.

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<sup>1</sup> Translates as Mother Earth.

Lastly, it was this military post known as Fort Snelling that was used as a concentration camp for Dakota people preceding their forced exile from Minnesota in 1862-63 (Bdote Memory Map 2007c; Westerman and White 2012; Waziyatawin 2008; Wilson 2005).

Therefore, the area commonly known as Fort Snelling is a place that is overflowing with meanings for many Dakota people as well as the state of Minnesota.

Due to the significant meanings that this place holds, one contemporary issue with Bdote/Fort Snelling is who controls the story of this land, which is inevitably connected to who controls the land itself. This issue is highlighted by Westerman and White (2012) and Waziyatawin (2008). Most of the land that makes up the area called Bdote by Dakota people has been preserved due to the fact that the Historic Fort Snelling and Fort Snelling State Park are on the land. The Historic Fort Snelling became protected in the 1950's and Fort Snelling State Park was created in 1962 (Westerman and White 2012:211). The preservation of the area because of these institutions has certainly helped to save the landscape from further development. However, it is problematic because it represents the way in which the Euro-American story of the land has come to dominate both the discourse of the area and the actual physical space. The power over the area is largely held by both Fort Snelling State Park and Historic Fort Snelling. In fact, Dakota people who hold the land as a sacred space had little to do with the land's preservation (Westerman and White 2012:211-222; Waziyatawin 2008).

There are multiple disputes over how various Dakota meanings are overlooked. For one, the Historic Fort Snelling is preserved from the 1820's perspective, thus, most exhibits completely overlook the way it was used as a concentration camp for Dakota people in 1862-63 (Bdote Memory Map 2007c, 2007d; Waziyatawin 2008). The way this

excludes Dakota perspectives is problematic because it devalues Dakota ways of understanding the landscape and is directly connected to the taking of Dakota lands, Dakota imprisonment, and their eventual exile in the 1860's (Waziyatawin 2008). In this way, Dakota people have not only been removed from their lands, but they have also had their power to define the area of Bdote as sacred and culturally important disregarded.

Because the United States government has been skeptical and resistant to defining the area of Bdote as culturally important, the views of various Dakota people on how to make use of this land have not been valued (Westerman and White 2012:211-222; Waziyatawin 2008). According to Dakota elder and scholar, Chris Mato Nunpa, PhD., Bdote represents a place of genesis and genocide to the Dakota Oyate (Bdote Memory Map 2007c). The placement of Fort Snelling on the land and the way that the historical site celebrates the American meta-narrative is far from the way that various Dakota people would like to see the land used (Bdote Memory Map 2007b, 2007c, 2007d; Waziyatawin 2008). Instead of listening to Dakota people's pleas, the Historic Fort Snelling site celebrates the importance of Fort Snelling in American expansionism while glazing over U.S. - Dakota relations in the area (Westerman and White 2012, Waziyatawin 2008). This has been a significant point of protest for numerous Dakota people, which has been all but ignored (Bdote Memory Map 2007c; Waziyatawin 2008). The present research analyzes this contemporary dispute over the representation of meanings and what those meanings imply with a sociological lens in order to empirically describe the dimensions of what is taking place.

## Chapter II

### **The Construction Of Meaning And Framing: People And Place.**

#### *Symbolic Interaction and the Construction of Meaning*

Symbolic interaction and framing are the theoretical traditions that informed this study. The foundations of the research rest in notions from the interactionist tradition. Symbolic interaction provides a number of insights into the various ways that people create meaning in their daily lives. The three core premises of the interactionist tradition are important to the foundation of this study.

The first premise is that meaning is central in the social world (Blumer 1969). This premise relies heavily on the notion that reality and its meanings are socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann 1966). It also serves to reveal the important idea that meanings are critical in understanding the social world. The second premise states that “the meaning of things arises out of the social interaction one has with one’s fellows” (Blumer 1969:2), revealing the source of meaning in the social world as arising out of interactions between people. Third, meanings are negotiated through communicative processes both between people by way of interaction and within oneself via self-talk (Blumer 1969:5). These core premises provided a basis for the present research and have informed the exploration of the nuances involved in defining place.

#### *The Construction of Meaning and Framing Theory*

Building on the foundations of interactionism, framing theory stands as the primary theoretical underpinning of the present study. Framing theory came to provide a useful language for understanding the construction and dispute over meanings in this

research. Although much conceptual development of framing theory has taken place in the empirical study of social movements (Buechler 2011:141-156), the basic ideas lend themselves directly to any study of framing processes in general. Based on framing's theoretical roots in ideas about micromobilization which applies to general group dynamics (Klandermans 1984; Snow, Rochford Jr., Worden and Benford 1986), it has great utility in its applications beyond social movements. Specifically, these conceptual tools have provided an analytical understanding of how places are meaningfully framed. Several framing concepts have informed the present study and helped to develop the research questions.

In order to explain how framing theory provided a beneficial language to analyze the dimensions of interpretive frames of place, I will discuss several factors. It is necessary to begin by noting the early work of Erving Goffman (1974) followed by a discussion of some of the most useful framing theory works that arose thereafter. This explanation reveals how meanings, place, and the disputes over those meanings can be understood as frames, framing dynamics, and frame disputes.

The idea of frames became more widely known after Erving Goffman published *Frame Analysis* (1974). Goffman drew on various theorists in his analysis of how meaning was attributed to the world, although, he notes that it was a paper by Gregory Bateson (1955) that originally used the word "frame" in the way that Goffman did (1974:7). Accordingly, a frame or "primary framework", is meant to refer to a "schemata of interpretation" which allows individuals "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" situations and occurrences in their lives (Goffman 1974:21). A frame allows for the rendering of "what would otherwise be a meaningless aspect of the scene into something

that is meaningful” (Goffman 1974:21). From the start, it is clear that this notion has great utility in attempting to understand the ways that people negotiate meanings in regard to place. The meanings people use to define places are frames, or mental schemas of interpretation, which shape the ways that people relate to such places. To fully appreciate such an application, it is vital to consult further works that significantly developed Goffman’s (1974) original work.

Multiple articles by Robert D. Benford, David A. Snow and several others laid out the core theoretical concepts of the framing theoretical perspective (Benford and Snow 2000) based on Goffman’s *Frame Analysis* (1974). In the first wave, Snow et al. (1986) laid out an argument for the core concepts of what they proclaimed to be a micro level theory of social movements which revolved around the idea of frames. Although the focus of this approach came to be on social movements, the processes themselves are essentially used to illuminate general group mobilization dynamics in relation to shared meanings or frames. Thus, the concepts they developed have utility in providing a language for the present research.

Based on Goffman’s (1974) understanding of frames, Snow et al. (1986) rely on the philosophical underpinning that people act towards objects on the basis of their meaning, which arises not objectively but interactionally between social actors (Blumer 1969). They argued that this idea had important implications for the study of social movements. However, I argue that Snow et al.’s (1986) concepts also have important applicability to the construction and maintenance of meaning among groups of social actors in regard to place.

Snow et al. (1986) developed several core concepts which they referred to as “frame alignment processes” (467). These concepts relate to social actor’s strategic attempts within social movements to link individual meanings with the overall objectives and meanings of a social movement. A slight extension of this concept provides insight into the defining of place and the ways that actors attempt to align themselves with the overall frames of any given group’s definition of a place. This strategic process results in a variety of tactics that have informed the research questions for this study.

One key strategic process of framing is “frame bridging” (Snow et al. 1986:467). This refers to the attempt to recruit individuals or groups within a society that already agree with a particular framing of a situation (Benford 2013; Benford and Snow 2000; Buechler 2011; Snow et al 1986). This attempt at frame alignment works to strategically mobilize those who agree but remain unmobilized (Snow et al. 1986). This concept extends beyond social movements to groups of social actors that are taking part in similar processes of negotiating meaning. Frame bridging (Snow et al. 1986) illuminates the dynamics taking place in the public definition of the area of Bdote/Fort Snelling and the ways that certain groups attempt to bridge given meanings with others outside of their respective groups.

Additionally, “frame amplification” is a way of clarifying the overall interpretive frame being used by a social movement in such a way as to connect to the value sets of potential participants (Snow et al. 1986:469). This technique is used to connect with underlying values or beliefs in order to accomplish the goal of frame alignment (Benford and Snow 2000; Buechler 2011:146). By amplifying shared values and beliefs with the greater culture, social movements can align their interpretive frame and mobilize support



from the public (Benford 2013:139-155; Benford and Snow 2000; Buechler 2011:146; Snow et al. 1986). These concepts were valuable to keep in mind when forming the questions for the present study.

The next critical process is “frame extension” (Snow et al. 1986:472) which is used when a social movements interpretive frame does not have a clean fit with existing interpretive schemata among those that movement actors wish to mobilize (Buechler 2011; Snow et al. 1986). In this situation, movement actors attempt to extend the current interpretive framework in order to include the interests of other potential participants (Benford and Snow 2000; Buechler 2011; Snow et al. 1986). This allows people to expand the boundaries of their interests in order to garner greater support (Benford 2013:139-155).

A final alignment strategy is “frame transformation” (Snow et al. 1986:475), which is understood as the most extensive strategy for frame alignment (Benford 2013:139-155; Buechler 2011:147). The concept refers to a social movement’s attempt to actually transform the primary framework of its audience (Benford 2013:139-155; Benford and Snow 2000; Snow et al. 1986). This includes an attempt at total redefinition of a situation in order to change the interpretive frame by which people understand the meaning of a situation (Snow et al. 1986). This notion comes from the idea of “keying” in which a “schemata of interpretation” or frame is “systematically transformed” (Goffman 1974:45).

In addition to these frame alignment strategies, other framing theory ideas have been pivotal in the present research. Various concepts relating to framing tasks have been an important part of the analysis. “Diagnostic framing”, which allows movements to

define a social problem (Snow and Benford 1988:200), has come to play a direct role in the framing activities in Minnesota. This is likely due to diagnostic framing being a key step in negotiating a shared interpretive frame of a situation because in reality, an objective consensus on the exact nature of any problem is not a given (Benford 1993a; Buechler 2011:148; Snow and Benford 1988). This task often requires a great deal of rhetoric in order to reach agreement on the nature of a social problem, due to the fact that such problems are socially constructed (Best 1987). The present research reveals a plethora of diagnostic frames that exist around the disputed meanings of the area outlined.

Once consensus on the nature of the problem is reached, there are two other core framing tasks that must take place. First comes “prognostic framing”, referring to a group’s definition of alternatives or solutions to the problems outlined (Snow and Benford 1988:201). Prognostic framing not only provides an interpretation of the solutions to a problem, but it also outlines the ways in which those solutions are to be achieved (Buechler 2011:148; Snow and Benford 1988). As might be expected, this represents another critical ground of potential disagreement among social actors (Benford 1993a). Despite the apparent lack of a solid consensus within any one perspective on the area of the present study, prognostic framing still plays a vital role in individual’s and group’s meaning construction.

The final task is “motivational framing”, which is an attempt to “call to action” potential movement participants (Snow and Benford 1988:201). This framing task allows actors to offer a rationale behind their particular framing of a situation (Buechler 2011:148; Snow and Benford 1988). Hence, it provides motivation to accept the overall

interpretive frame being offered. Each of these three core framing tasks are for the purpose of reaching “consensus mobilization” (Klandermans 1984:586) or the ability of a movement to reach agreement on the way that it views or interprets the situation (Benford 1993a; Snow and Benford 1988).

Another vital concept that played a key role in this study was the notion of “master frames” (Snow and Benford 1992:138). A master frame is a useful concept to understand as it represents a much larger inter-movement type of frame while it operates like an ordinary frame (Benford and Snow 2000; Buechler 2011:149; Snow and Benford 1992). Master frames are paradigmatic in nature and represent a larger interpretive frame of reference for social actors (Snow and Benford 1992). Although there were no master frames in the social movement sense, the present research did find a variety of master frames that are used as paradigmatic conceptualizations of what the exact meaning of the area where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet is.

Given that key dimensions of the framing process include defining problems and solutions, then it follows that other social actors will be given a specific role in an interpretive frame (Snow et al. 1986). This is the argument behind Benford and Hunt’s (1992) work that outlines the roles of “antagonists”, “protagonists”, “victims”, “supporting cast members” and “audiences” (Benford and Hunt 1992:38-39). According to Benford and Hunt, the antagonists are the actors who are blamed for issues and the victims are the ones who suffer. The protagonists are those who can help fix the situation and the supporting casts are those who can help this process. The audience are those who will hopefully be swayed by the interpretive frame being presented (1992). These

concepts help to identify the roles of various groups within the broader master frames of the area in the study.

One final set of concepts played a key role in the analysis of the dynamics found in Minnesota at Bdote/Fort Snelling. The first idea is that of “frame contests” (Ryan 1991:75) referring to situations when a specific group and its detractors clash over the appropriate interpretive frame (Boykoff 1999; Ryan 1991). In addition to framing contests, there is the notion of counterframing which arises when a group’s frame is being contested or counterframed, often by another group with greater social dominance or power (Benford and Hunt 1992; Zuo and Benford 1995). Last, the idea of frame disputes which means an open disagreement on “how to define what has been or is happening” (Goffman 1974:322). More recent works refer to frame disputes as consisting primarily of intramovement contests over diagnostic and prognostic frames being used within a certain group (Benford 1993a; Benford and Snow 2000). However, each approach to the idea is important in the analysis done through this study.

The framing approach to social movements is a unique perspective that provides insight into how individual social actors frame or negotiate interpretive meanings of situations. The key theoretical concepts that arise out of the framing literature allow for various lines of inquiring that do not need to be limited to social movements alone. The concepts also apply to other non-movement groups which is the reason for their use in the present research.

### *Meaning and Place for Indigenous Peoples*

Now that an understanding of how meanings are framed has been achieved, a qualification of place needs to be discussed. Place, in general, is a salient factor in the

human experience. Keith Basso (1996) speaks of the ancient connection between peoples and places, revealing the complexly interwoven nature of places and human culture. He also relays the deep human investments of thoughts, values and “collective sensibilities” (Basso 1996: xiii), which are invested in places. The value of place for human beings is undeniable. Places are wrought with human culture and ways of living. The following ideas are useful in understanding the unique relationship between Indigenous peoples of North America and place.

First, the idea of “place-making” (Basso 1996:5) is very suitable to the present analysis. Place-making is a process of imbuing places with meaning through the use of human mental schemata which take into consideration the history of a given place and hence, radically transform the place altogether (Basso 1996). Place-making, or infusing place with significant meaning that alters our understanding of the place and ourselves, is a natural human activity. In fact, “we are, in a sense, the place-worlds we imagine” (Basso 1996:7).

From society all the way down to the mind and the self, these processes are most pragmatically understood as activities that we do rather than things that we have (Waskul 2008). This is the implication behind the idea that human interaction is the basis of all meaning in the world (Blumer 1969). In the same manner, a place’s meaning does not exist objectively but is negotiated through interpretive frames and framing activities within the realm of human action. Clearly stated, a place is “a framed space that is meaningful to a person or group over time” (Thornton 2008:10). Further, places must be understood as “human constructions and relational fields, not just geographic determinants” (Thornton 2008:6). Hence, places are crafted through place-making (Basso

1996) activities of human cultures. Examining the difference between how the state of Minnesota frames place compared to that of the Dakota people is central to the present analysis. In order to do justice to this type of analysis, it is imperative to discuss key aspects of a uniquely Indigenous' perspective on place.

An extraordinarily salient factor to consider for understanding Indigenous people is their relationship to place. An Indigenous perspective of place is decidedly unique (Basso 1996; Deloria 1973) for various reasons. As Dakota author Vine Deloria Jr. (1973) suggests, the Indigenous understanding of land and place is paradigmatically different from that of European cultures. As he states, "American Indians hold their lands – places – as having the highest possible meaning, and all their statements are made with this reference point in mind" (Deloria 1973:61). Rather than the European tendency to hold oneself as the primary subject within the frame of reference, Indigenous cultures often hold place and one's relationships to everything as the primary frame of reference (Deloria 1973). The centrality of place is a unique view that is widely held among Indigenous peoples of North America. This perspective has rich implications for an Indigenous worldview.

From the view of many American Indian peoples, human beings are literally relatives to all that lives in the natural world (LaDuke 1999; White Hat Sr. 2012). In other words, the kinship understanding that is held among various Indigenous peoples often expands beyond human relationships into relationships with the natural world or non-human beings. This conception results from North American Indigenous peoples' understanding and unique connection to land and place (Deloria 1973; LaDuke 1999). Further, this spiritual understanding has cultural and philosophical roots going back

thousands of years within Indigenous cultures (Deloria 1973). This type of understanding of place often results in much more than simple respect or admiration for the natural world. In many cases, places are so meaningful that they are considered sacred (LaDuke 2005). Again, this is because Indigenous ways of living were and are entirely bound with the land and a relationship to it through the conception of place (Nabokov 2006). This is true all over the United States with a plethora of oral stories telling of sacred connections between Indigenous peoples and the land within every state (Nabokov 2006). In fact, most Indigenous communities of North America have creation stories that tell of their genesis in various places across the continent (Deloria 1973).

Because of the sacred and all-encompassing relationship between Indigenous peoples and land, “knowledge of places” is “closely linked to knowledge of the self” (Basso 1996:34). Therefore, the Indigenous understanding of place not only informs one’s relationship to the natural world; it also informs one of who they are and their place in the world (Basso 1996). Culturally, Indigenous North Americans share the centrality of the Earth and a sense of place. Scott Momaday (1994) speaks of this connection for Indigenous peoples quite poignantly. “The sense of place is paramount. Only in reference to the earth can he persist in his identity” (1994:1). The life of Indigenous people is inherently connected to the life of the land and despite the vast changes that have happened to both over the past centuries, an Indigenous perspective holds that the land itself remembers (Tayac 2008). This is a key aspect to highlight; for if the land itself is seen as a being that remembers, then it is implied that the land holds a story of what a given place means. The question then becomes, what is that story. Hence, it is deeply important for Indigenous peoples to maintain their connections to place for their own, as

well as, the natural world's vitality (LaDuke 1999; Tayac 2008). The loss of land in combination with the loss of power to tell the story of the land has been devastating for Indigenous peoples in North America for many reasons.

For Indigenous peoples in the United States, the struggle for land and/or place has always been a key aspect of their struggle for sovereignty (Dalby 2002). In the current era, this struggle has come to be tightly bound with the loss of Indigenous peoples' ability to have their understanding of sacred places respected (LaDuke 2005; Nabokov 2006; Waziyatawin 2008). Hence, as Simon Dalby suggests, Indigenous resistance must include a confrontation with the current ideas of geopolitical reasoning (2002). Land, land reclamation, and the protection of sacred places have become paramount to national Indigenous struggles (LaDuke 1999, 2005; Waziyatawin 2008). Often times, the Indigenous view on the way that places have been established based on European colonialism in the United States is overlooked (LaDuke 2005; Smith 2012; Waziyatawin 2008). This intentional overlooking of Indigenous perspectives continues the age old colonization of the Americas (Waziyatawin 2008) while it leaves out the story of place that is unique to Indigenous peoples. It is precisely this contest between colonized and Indigenous stories of place that this study seeks to describe.

As Kristin T. Ruppel states in a discussion on how American Indians are often left out of the story of place: "Only in the legal realm is ignorance no excuse. Elsewhere it seems to serve quite well as a defense against the unknown and the hard to handle" (2008:151). These words imply that leaving Indigenous peoples out of the story of place serves to protect imperialist culture from facing the painful truths of what was done to Native peoples throughout the country. Here in Minnesota, Dakota people have faced



challenges similar to that of numerous Indigenous peoples' of the continent in trying to define Bdote as a place of sacred cultural importance. As a result, their ability to be part of the decision making process when it comes to preserving this sacred site has been severely limited (Westerman and White 2012:211-222). These factors make the area a symbol of relations between the United States and the Dakota people since the 1800's (Bdote Memory Map 2007c). For these reasons, the present research was initiated in order to provide an empirical description of what is happening today surrounding Fort Snelling/Bdote.

On the basis of a simple understanding of the historical situation regarding the place where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet, it appears that a frame dispute is taking place. However, researchers in the field have not conducted a sociological analysis of the dynamics and processes taking place in this area. In fact, social science researchers have done little work applying framing theory and its core concepts to describing the dynamics of situations where Indigenous people are struggling for sovereignty in ownership of the interpretive frame of their homelands. Clearly, the situation in Minnesota in which the Indigenous Dakota people are struggling to have their understanding of a particular place that is culturally significant to them included and respected is a rich source of sociological inquiry. As the study will reveal, there are also other dynamics to the dispute, particularly over what an appropriate solution might look like. The fact that this is a contemporary and unresolved issue in the state of Minnesota makes it not only rich, but relevant.

### *Research Questions*

Based on the application of framing theory concepts to the negotiation of place, and particularly the Dakota people's struggle to get their perspective included regarding the place where the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers meet, several research questions were developed. In order to apply a sociological analysis to this situation, these questions were asked with respect to both Dakota people and the state of Minnesota, which was most fittingly represented by Fort Snelling State Park and the Historic Fort Snelling site.

The research questions were as follows. First, what are the interpretive frames for the area where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet on the part of the state of Minnesota and the Dakota people? Secondly, are there any core strategic (diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational) frames being used? What, if any, elements of the frame alignment processes (frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension, and frame transformation) are taking place? If present, do these factors help to describe the elements composing this dispute? Lastly, is there a frame dispute taking place? If so, what are the dimensions of the frame dispute in terms of framing contests and counterframings? What are the implications of these frames for the identity of those involved in terms of the concepts of protagonists, antagonists, victims, supporting cast, and audiences?

This chapter summarized key ideas of symbolic interactionism and framing theory, suggested their utility for analyzing disputed meanings over place between Dakota people and the state of Minnesota, and derived research questions that guide the present study. The next chapter describes the methodological approach that was followed to answer these questions, while subsequent chapters report the findings of the study.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodological Issues**

While symbolic interaction and framing theory helped to shape the questions for this research, frame analysis and micro discourse analysis were the methods used to answer them. These methods were intended to uncover the basic interpretive frames being used to describe a particular place. The purpose is to understand what types of frames and framing dynamics are used by people in their understanding of the place where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet. Based on historical information, this area represents a contested place with various interpretations of what the area means competing for salience (Westerman and White 2012; Waziyatawin 2008; Wingerd 2010). As the researcher, I sought to describe the various interpretive frames of the area and the strategies used to articulate them that are negotiated by Dakota people and those by greater Minnesota via information from Fort Snelling State Park and the Historic Fort Snelling site. Finally, I also sought to illuminate the nuances of any frame disputes or contests that were taking place during the course of the study.

In the present study, it is the deeper meanings, or interpretive frames that are of interest. There seems to be a clear disagreement over how and what meanings are being represented in this area. Additionally, there is a dominant discourse that is portrayed by the public institutions of the Historic Fort Snelling and Fort Snelling State Park. In comparison, Dakota people's perspectives occupy a subordinated position which is a large part of the overall dispute. Based on the nature of the dispute over the most salient meanings taking place between groups with varying levels of power in Minnesota,

framing theory from social movement literature is a useful guide. Given that framing theory informs the present study's research questions, a systematic analysis that allows for the identification of frames, or a frame analysis, was the most appropriate method for this study.

### *Frame Analysis and the Role of Discourse*

Based on the understanding of a frame as a mental "schemata of interpretation" (Goffman 1974:21), it was important to use an appropriate methodology to look for interpretive frames. Given the vast challenges that social scientists have in empirically studying mental phenomena, commonly known as the black box of the mind, this was no light task. However, social movement literature once again offered insight into this challenging matter. According to strands of social movement literature, one way that interpretive frames are communicated is through discourse (Johnston 1995). Therefore, the possibility of performing a systematic and empirically grounded frame analysis arises through the study of a particular group's discourse.

The idea of discourse contains various key elements that are necessary to understand in order to justify the methods of the present study. Discourse is conceptualized as containing two distinct elements (Johnston 1995). First, it refers to written or constructed materials representative of a certain period, specific place or group of people including but not limited to "manifestos... newspaper articles... posters... and pamphlets" (Sewell 1980:8-9). Generally speaking, this can be any type of document produced by any type of group. The second and more contemporary aspect of discourse is spoken words or interactions that can be properly observed and documented in some format (Johnston 1995). These types of discourse are thought to be external

representations of mental schemata (Johnston 1995). Thus, discourse simply understood as “spoken and written texts” (Johnston 1995:218) provides a way to systematically analyze interpretive frames. The rationale is that by analyzing both spoken and written texts, it becomes possible to systematically “reconstruct a schema” (Johnston 1995:220) or frame of which such discourse is representative. This particular type of frame analysis is referred to as “micro-discourse analysis” (Johnston 1995:219).

Based on the relationship between interpretive frames and discourse, it is clear that a frame analysis of each respective group’s discourse on the area was an appropriate methodology to uncover the interpretive frames and framing processes being used. In order to explain more precisely how this was used in the present study, it is necessary to spell out the processes by which the analysis was conducted.

#### *Relationality and Indigenous Research Methods*

Relationality refers to the centrality of relationships in Indigenous worldviews (Wilson 2008). Often times, relationships are the basis of Indigenous mental schemas encompassing an individual’s relation to others, the natural world and the entire cosmos. In each instance, the relationship is the central subject. Because it is so central to Indigenous worldviews and this study deals directly with an Indigenous group, it is necessary to explain the role relationality has come to play in both the topic selection and analysis portions of this research.

Based on the notion of relationality, it is important for me as the researcher to locate myself within the broader context of the research and relationships that I have to it. First and foremost, it should be mentioned that I have lived in Minnesota all of my life. I

spent my youth growing up along the Minnesota River valley. This has affected both my relationship to the land and the people that live on it.

I have developed my relationship to the land through years of living close to it. This relationship was initially contextualized through a mental framework commonly held by a family of farmers and hunters. The land was a source of nutriment. It was also a source of solace and beauty. My relationship to the land began to change in my late teen years when I met an Indigenous family that lived a traditional lifestyle of Wolakota. In other words, they followed Lakota ceremonies and lived Lakota values. These experiences came to change my relationship to the land in significant ways.

Similar to other Indigenous perspectives, Lakota people's traditions hold relationality as central to their worldview. A key element of Lakota people's traditions and values are human beings relationship to the natural world. The natural world is understood as a composition of living beings that one has relationships with, rather than an objective thing to be used for instrumental purposes. In order to understand one's self, one must understand their position in the web of relationships that compose one's existence. For Lakota people, the land, or place, is the foundation of such relationships. Everything is based on place and one's relationship to it. Lakota ceremonies are a way to teach people of their relationship to other people as well as to the earth and cosmos. Taking part in Lakota ceremonies changed my perspective of the natural world and made my relationships with it, which include responsibilities like any other relationship, more salient. My perspective changed from the one I was taught to one that is in closer alignment with the Lakota philosophy described here. Hence, my relationship to place

became a critical part of my everyday life, which in turn led to a more thoughtful examination of my relationship to the land we call Minnesota.

In terms of my relationship to the people that live on this land, I am a descendant of settlers to this area. My great grandfather five times removed was a German immigrant to the Minnesota River valley in the 1850's. He built a homestead near the Milford Township very close to the Lower Sioux Indian Reservation. He was friends with a local Dakota family and was given warning by them to flee during the start of the U.S. – Dakota War of 1862. He also helped to defend the city of New Ulm during the war. Growing up, I knew only of this war and the history of the area from the popularized perspective of German immigrants in the city of New Ulm. Hence, I was taught a common narrative of how rugged settlers fought off the angry “Indians” who violently attacked innocent white people in 1862. In the public schools, we were told that the “Indians” were mad because a local trader had told them to go eat grass and these remarks resulted in a group of warriors led by Little Crow violently attacking innocent white people. This was the extent of the broader context we were given. Needless to say, my understandings began to change upon meeting and befriending various Indigenous peoples. Over the years, I have become Hunka<sup>2</sup> or relatives with two families.

The process of becoming relatives with two Indigenous families, one Pascua Yaqui and the other Hunkpapa Lakota, has further served to alter my perspective on land and history. Similar to my change in relationality with the natural world, I have also begun to entertain a more critical perspective on both historical and present day events.

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<sup>2</sup> Hunka refers to a Lakota ceremony for making or becoming relatives (White Hat 2012). By becoming relatives, one is considered part of the extended family the same as if the ties were by blood. Therefore, a Hunka relative is expected to fulfill the responsibilities related to their position within the overall extended family.

This tendency to think critically has also been enhanced by my training in sociology.<sup>3</sup> Far from the ethnocentric views I was socialized to see, I strive to take multiple perspectives when examining historical and current issues. Therefore, I now view the popular narrative about Minnesota's past much more critically. I am interested in understanding Indigenous perspectives on both historical and present day issues. In particular, I am passionate about understanding what justice might look like in Minnesota. This has led to a deep interest in Minnesota's original peoples, the Dakota Oyate. Given my relationality to place, one might say that my involvement in the lives of Dakota people is one of necessity and responsibility. Hence, my experiences have deeply influenced my choosing this particular topic to research.

As can be ascertained from this brief biography on my relationality to the land and people, my relationship to the research topic is complex and multifaceted. Despite my critical perspective and connection to Dakota people, I remain thoroughly connected to my German ancestry as well. The point of noting these historical and biographical elements goes beyond a mere exercise of my sociological imagination. Rather, it is to acknowledge that they have inevitably played a role in the present research. First, they shaped the choosing of the topic itself. Second, they have influenced the overall methodological approach I will soon note. Finally, this complex relationality has invariably affected the manner in which I proceeded through the analysis portion of this research. Thus, it is important for the reader to keep this in mind.

#### *Purposive Sampling of Discourse Documents: Phase I of the Data Collection*

In order to accomplish an in-depth frame analysis or micro-discourse analysis (Johnston 1995), the methodology for this study contained two key elements or phases.

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<sup>3</sup> See the Discussion section at the end of Chapter 4 for an elaboration on this.



This two phase approach has been successful in multiple studies of framing dynamics by William Carroll and Robert Ratner (1996a; 1996b). For the first phase, information was collected from a variety of data sources in order to analyze public information on the interpretive frames of both Dakota people and the state of Minnesota regarding the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. This included print and electronic primary sources, pamphlets, on site video scripts, historical displays or trail markers, and documents presented on respective websites. This aspect of the analysis fulfilled the need for an examination of written or documented discourse (Johnston 1995). It is important to note how these sources of discourse were selected with respect to both Dakota people and the state of Minnesota.

The study used a purposive sampling method. The focus of the study was to delineate the frames and framing dynamics connected to the disputed meanings of the area which were most directly represented by the Historic Fort Snelling, Fort Snelling State Park, and by members of the Dakota Oyate. Therefore, a purposive sample was an appropriate method. This sampling technique allowed access to the very specific and narrow target populations, which is one of the key strengths of purposive sampling (Neuman 2009:90-91). In this way, it provided a vital technique for reaching key informants for the present research study.

The methods for purposively sampling data sources on the state of Minnesota's interpretive frames were as follows. Discourse documents were sampled on site both at Fort Snelling State Park and the Historic Fort Snelling. The state park along with the historical site represent key interpretive sites for understanding the ways that the area is framed by the state of Minnesota (Westerman and White 2012:211-222; Waziyatawin

2008). Given their institutional standing as a state park and historical site, both of which are key interpretive public organizations, they represent the dominant discourses and interpretations of the area. This is exemplified by the fact that both the historic fort and the state park have public school children from all over the state taking regular tours to learn about the importance of the area (Fort Snelling State Park 2014a; Historic Fort Snelling 2014a, 2014p). Data sources such as historical displays, visitor information pamphlets, and program flyers from both locations were purposively sampled. In addition to sampling this information from Fort Snelling State Park and Historic Fort Snelling, the websites for the state park and historical fort were also purposively sampled. This data represented important sources of discourse for the frame analysis.

The data was initially screened to discern whether or not it included interpretive frames of the area based on the definitions of the key framing concepts noted. The research questions guiding the study were used as a compass to decide what discourse documents were to be selected for further analysis. The sources of data which included interpretive frames and framing dynamics outlined in the research questions were further analyzed.

In a similar fashion, Dakota sources were purposively sampled. In order to understand distinctly Dakota perspectives, the data sources sampled were required to include information originating from Dakota tribal members. This was an important criterion given how much has been written about Dakota people by non-Dakota people. After initial searches three sources of discourse were purposively sampled.

The first purposive sample was of a website called the Bdote Memory Map (2007a). This website includes information the Minnesota Humanities Center put

together in collaboration with multiple Dakota people with the intention of making Dakota views of the area called Bdote available to the public (Minnesota Humanities Center 2014). This website offers multiple videos of interviews with Dakota people regarding their view of the area, written documents, and also suggestions of books that are authored by Dakota people. Given the challenges of finding the voice of Indigenous peoples, this website, as a collaboration of multiple Dakota people, was the closest parallel to the websites sampled for the state of Minnesota.

In addition, two Dakota authored books dealing with the area were also purposively sampled. The first book, *What Does Justice Look Like*, by Angela Waziyatawin Wilson (2008) deals specifically with Dakota interpretations of Minnesota, its history and its landscape. The second book, *Mni Sota Makoce* by Gwen Westerman and Bruce White (2012) offers a plethora of Dakota perspectives on their homeland in Minnesota based on landmark research that was done with Dakota people across North America. In fact, the content for the book by Westerman and White (2012) comes from a multitude of interviews with Dakota people from all over the United States and Canada. Each of these books served to represent a variety of Dakota voices on the meaning of the area similar to that of samples from Fort Snelling State Park and Historic Fort Snelling.

There were multiple reasons for including both the website and the two Dakota authored books for the first phase of the research. First, because there appears to be a dispute over how the area is framed and non-Dakota Minnesotan's perspective are publicly held to be the most legitimate account (Waziyatawin 2008:71-95), there is insufficient inclusion of Dakota people's understanding of the area at the historical fort and state park. Fort Snelling State Park and Historic Fort Snelling represent valuable

sources of discourse on the side of Minnesota, but are more limited in their representation of the perspectives of Dakota people. Therefore, it was necessary to find a similarly public source of discourse that more directly represented Dakota people's perspectives. The website for the Bdote Memory Map (2007), like those for Fort Snelling State Park (2014) and Historic Fort Snelling (2014), offers information that is available to the public. Further, the Dakota authored books which dealt specifically with the area were the closest parallel to displays and documents at Fort Snelling State Park and Historic Fort Snelling. In sum, these sources were accessible for the present research and yet, they represented key discourse sources for understanding interpretive frames and the framing processes taking place.

*Phase I Data Analysis: What Do the Documents Reveal?*

The analysis of discourse documents from phase one of the research contained multiple systematic steps. Overall, the analysis was conducted to look for, examine, and describe the frames and framing dynamics that were present in the discourse. The frame analysis followed some elements of the basic process laid out by Norman Denzin (1989) in his case study of discerning interpretive meanings within cultural texts. In the first part of the analysis, each source of data was subjected to multiple readings in order to delineate any potential interpretive frames, framing strategies, and framing processes.

Once discourse documents were identified as containing important framing dynamics, the documents were subjected to further analysis. This part of the analysis followed an open coding process (Strauss and Corbin 1990). The documents were analyzed and coded by paragraph. The coding followed the process of first labeling a potential framing phenomena and then naming the categories after which the details of

the categories were elaborated upon (Strauss and Corbin 1990). The discourse documents were all subjected to multiple rounds of coding during which memos were used as a process for developing the emerging frames and framing dynamics.

As a final measure of the frame analysis, a micro-discourse analysis (Johnston 1995) was done on the data that proved most salient to the research. This aspect of the analysis used the five core principles of micro-discourse analysis (Johnston 1995) to further analyze the data. First, the discourse was examined holistically in order to decipher the meaning of the frames represented in the context of the text as a whole. Next, the situation in which the discourse was created was considered along with the role of the author in relation to the text. As a fourth measure, the practical intention of the author regarding what was being communicated was noted. Finally, potential discursive cues were considered (Johnston 1995). Although this type of analysis was tedious in its considerations, it served to ensure the empirical grounding of the findings.

As a whole, this outlines the process of frame analysis that was used in the present study. The sample data was subjected to multiple readings, openly coded for frames and framing dynamics, and then subjected to further scrutiny in order to accomplish an empirically grounded frame analysis. Each of these steps served to ensure both validity and reliability in the analysis process.

#### *Spoken Text and Interviewing, Sampling with Purpose: Phase II of the Data Collection*

The second phase of the research was used to supplement discourse documents sampled in phase one. Despite the impression that it may have taken place latter to that of phase one, the second phase of analysis was actually interspersed with phase one. The decision to combine, in terms of sequencing, phase one and two of the data collection and

analysis was made in order to add another layer of depth to the study. At the recommendation of my thesis committee, I decided to avoid doing these phases one after another at the risk that it might limit the scope of frames and framing dynamics found. By interspersing phases one and two of the data collection and analysis, it allowed the initial phases of data analysis to enrich later phases. This allowed for a more in-depth look at discourse documents as well as the formation of more quality questions for the interviews in phase two.

Phase two consisted of in-depth interviews with Fort Snelling State Park staff, Historic Fort Snelling staff, and various Dakota people. Respondents were asked a series of predetermined open-ended questions<sup>4</sup> in addition to pertinent follow up questions. The questions used in the interviews evolved<sup>5</sup> over time as the initial phases of analysis proceeded. This served to clarify any interpretive frames or framing processes that were found during early phases of the initial sampling of discourse documents. Various elements affected the selection processes for interviews.

The goal of the interviews was to get a reasonable number of interviewees representing the Fort Snelling State Park, Historic Fort Snelling, and Dakota people. The purpose was to clarify and enhance understanding of the frames and framing dynamics that began to appear in the discourse documents for phase one of the study. The sample in this phase consisted of a total of nine interviews which ranged from roughly twenty minutes to over three hours. I used purposive sampling to contact potential research participants. First, I attempted to locate and purposively sample Fort Snelling State Park

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix B for list of Interview Questions.

<sup>5</sup> Questions in Appendix B offer a general list of Interview Questions. Overtime, questions were written specifically for particular interviews. Spontaneous follow up questions were also used when necessary to prod for further information.

staff members, Historic Fort Snelling staff members, and Dakota people that had knowledge about the various meanings of the area today. In the case of Dakota people, it was challenging to reach a wide variety of people to participate in the study through purposive sampling alone which resulted in some of the limitations of the study<sup>6</sup>.

Two key staff members from Fort Snelling State Park were interviewed. The interviews took place at Fort Snelling State Park, one in an office and one near the memorial for the Dakota people imprisoned in the area in 1863. The length of the interviews ranged from sixty to seventy five minutes. The staff's positions included the Park Manager and an Interpretive Naturalist who was the predominant person in charge of Dakota focused programming. For the purpose of elaborating on the frames and framing dynamics found in phase one discourse documents related to the park, this provided a sufficient sampling of state park staff members.

For Historic Fort Snelling, one staff member who is the Program Specialist on site was interviewed. The interview took place at the Historic Fort Snelling interpretive building in a conference room. The interview lasted approximately seventy minutes. Efforts to interview individuals further up in the organizational hierarchy of the Minnesota Historical Society fell short. I attempted to contact another key person connected to the historical fort, but received no reply. I attempted to contact them via general public directories for the Minnesota Historical Society. For this type of research project, the IRB limits the ways in which researchers are able to contact potential participants in order to protect those participants for a variety of reasons. One particular limitation imposed for this purpose is the near prohibition of snowball sampling. Potential participants had to be contacted via public contact information and I could not

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<sup>6</sup> See chapter seven for a more thorough discussion of the study's limitations.

ask for contact information for others from individuals who agreed to participate in the study. These limitations did not allow for further contacts at Historic Fort Snelling.

A total of six Dakota people were interviewed for this phase of the study. These interviews happened in several locations including people's homes, public parks, and at the annual Mankato Powwow honoring the thirty eight Dakota people executed in 1862. The length of these interviews ranged from twenty five minutes to over three hours. The sample consisted of a range of tribal members. Their ages ranged from young adults to elders. Some held PhD's while others had no higher education in terms of Western schooling. The sample also included two known spiritual leaders, both of whom requested not to be named. Despite the small sample of Dakota people, the frames and framing dynamics that were found largely coincided with those present in phase one discourse documents. Although it would not be feasible or possible to fully capture what the diverse group of Dakota tribal member's thinks on the topic; this sample offers vital data for the purpose of the study at hand. Given the time constraints placed on the study corresponding to institutional requirements for the researcher's degree program, only a limited number of interviews could take place.

After connecting with individuals who agreed to be interviewed via email or personal conversation, times for the interviews were arranged. They were scheduled during a time and at a place that was as convenient as possible for the participants. As noted, the interviews were scheduled in participant's offices, homes, and at the annual Mankato powwow according to interviewee's preferences. The interviews were semi-structured in order to allow for a more natural flow to the conversation. This allowed for the type of meaning rich data (Johnston 1995) necessary for the study to arise more



naturally. As a researcher, I attempted to clearly note my interest in each individual's perspective with a level of respect and mutual reciprocity (Smith 2012; Tobias and Luginaah 2013). Therefore, I allowed all participants to ask me questions if they wished as well. I also paid special attention to Dakota cultural norms, values, and protocols during interviews with Dakota participants.

The semi-structured, open flow format of the interviews provided data that fits with the definition of spoken discourse (Johnston 1995). It offered a key element of the overall expression of each group's cognitive schema or interpretive frames. All but one of the interviews were recorded using an audio recording device. After the interviews took place, I worked to transcribe the interviews verbatim. In the case of the unrecorded interview, I took substantial field notes immediately after our conversation. These transcripts and field notes were then subjected to the same frame analysis process as the textual discourse for phase one of the research.

#### *Phase II Data Analysis: What Do You Mean When You Say That?*

Phase two of the data analysis followed the overall process outlined in phase one. A key part of the transcription process involved documenting key factors including situational factors, roles of the participants, and nonverbal cues (Johnston 1995) which were also considered in the analysis. The transcripts and field notes were subjected to multiple readings in order to delineate any potential interpretive frames, framing strategies, and framing processes. Then they were analyzed and openly coded by paragraph. The open coding followed the process of first labeling potential framing phenomena, then discovering and naming these categories, and finally developing the details of these categories (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Through this process of open

coding, the transcripts and field notes were examined for interpretive frames and framing processes as outlined by the research questions.

The final aspect of the analysis was a micro-discourse analysis (Johnston 1995). In this phase, I examined the discourse based on five core principles (Johnston 1995). The transcripts and field notes were examined holistically in order to decipher the meaning of the frames represented in the context of the text as a whole. Then the situation in which the interview took place was considered along with the role of the interviewee in relation to the discourse. As a fourth measure, the practical intention of the interviewee regarding what was being communicated was considered. Lastly, the nonverbal discursive cues were recalled and taken into consideration (Johnston 1995).

After the frames and framing dynamics were identified through successive analysis of phase one and two discourse documents, they were integrated into a single manuscript. This manuscript was then analyzed in order to combine similar frames and framing dynamics into a more integrated whole. All the while, textual connections to the original discourses were maintained through a heavy use of quotes that helped to support the frames and dynamics being developed in a grounded way (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Through the process of successive memoing and analysis, this manuscript was transformed into the results of the study.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Contesting Definitions**

#### **What Is This Place?**

This chapter delineates the complex layers of meaning given to the area where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers converge. The findings are organized according to the order of the original research questions. The first question asks: what are the interpretive frames for the area where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet on the part of the state of Minnesota and the Dakota people?

Upon examining the various ways that the area known as Fort Snelling and/or Bdote is understood, three major frames have come to dominate the discourses sampled. These three major, or master, frames include a historical site frame, a Dakota place frame, and a state park frame. At first glance, it may seem that both the historic site frame and the state park frame are simply labels of institutions on the landscape as Historic Fort Snelling and the Fort Snelling State Park are located on the landscape. However, the frames corresponding to these institutions, along with the Dakota place master frame, represent distinct ways of understanding what meanings the area holds. These meanings are intertwined and connected at various points, creating a matrix of implications interwoven with various other framing dynamics which serve to complete the mental schemata for understanding this particular place. By understanding these major frameworks, it is possible to comprehend the disputes over its meaning and what should be done with this place.

## A Historical Site Master Frame

The first frame is the historical site master frame. This master frame is predominately based in the discourse of the Minnesota Historical Society and Historic Fort Snelling. Although its borders are mutable as it is enmeshed with the other major frames of the area, this master frame rests heavily on Euro-American values and ways of thinking. Despite the fact that the framework of Dakota people is by far the oldest of the land, various elements of the Dakota framework can be understood as a response to the historical site master frame. This particular framework holds precedence over the area at large due to the fact that its primary proponent, the Minnesota Historical Society, holds great legitimacy among Minnesotans (Program Specialist Interview; Waziyatawin 2008). Therefore, it is the most appropriate master frame to start with.

To understand the details of this master frame, it is necessary to discuss its core and the smaller sub-frames that compose it. While exploring the details of this frame, it is useful to keep in mind that the Historic Fort Snelling, which is the monumental symbol of this master frame, is actually a rebuilt replica that is replete with actors representing the respective year 1827. For a critical discussion of this and other factors, please see the discussion section at the end of this chapter. For now, it is necessary to describe the elements that compose this master frame according to the data that was sampled.

### *A historically important site (sub) frame*

According to the historical site master frame, the area is primarily significant in terms of the role it has played throughout history. This frame tells a story of the area that is comprised of a large amount of “historically significant” events. The historical frame sometimes begins with a brief mention of the area as being important to Dakota people in

the past. However, the overall focus is not on Dakota people and their history in the area. After a brief mention of Dakota people, the discourse related to this frame quickly proceeds to emphasize the role the area played in the expansion of the United States. This central story, or frame, usually begins with the point that the fort was at one time the farthest United States military outpost.

As part of a policy of westward expansion into American Indian lands, Fort Snelling was intended to secure the area of the upper Mississippi river for the United States. (Historic Fort Snelling Visitor Center Video).

Thus, the beginning of the area's historical significance very quickly comes to revolve around the role of the fort in establishing a military presence for the United States, eventually leading to Minnesota statehood. The primary focus of this frame is, therefore, the important role the area played historically in United States and Minnesota state history. Within this overall context, the area is celebrated as having many stories that are historically significant.

After denoting the period when the Historical Fort originated, other stories are mentioned as historical stepping stones to the grand narrative of the area. First, a brief period dealing with the Dakota people in the late 1800's is mentioned. This typically revolves around the U.S. – Dakota War of 1862. The fort's role in the Civil War is also a major focus of historical events in this time period. Additional stories are frequently highlighted such as those about Dred and Harriet Scott, a famous African American couple who struggled for freedom in the North. This usually connects to further talk of slavery and its historical connection to the fort. The role of the fort in WWI and WWII are also accentuated, serving to further emphasize the area's role in United States military operations.

Built in the early 1820s, Historic Fort Snelling is a great place to learn about military history from before the Civil War through World War II, fur trade history, slavery in Minnesota, the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862, and much more! (Historic Fort Snelling 2014a).

However, in the bulk of discourse documents, all of these smaller stories are peripheral to the primary story of the fort from the late 1820's perspective.

There is additional evidence to support this understanding of the overall framing of the area. According to the Historic Fort Snelling website managed by the Minnesota Historical Society, the significance of the area can be grouped into the following categories. It begins with American Indian history, which broadly focuses on archaeological evidence of Indigenous peoples living in the area. The next significant era is the time of the U.S. Indian Agency from 1820 – 1853, which tells the stories in a way that revolves around advancing Minnesota statehood. This time period itself is a part of the overall Expansionist Era from 1805 - 1858 that cements the importance of the area's role in the expansion of the United States. The website proceeds with a discussion of the military history at Fort Snelling which includes the Civil War, the U.S. – Dakota War of 1862, the Spanish-American War, the Philippine-American War and WWII (Historic Fort Snelling 2014c, 2014d, 2014e, 2014f, 2014g, 2014h, 2014i, 2014j, 2014k, 2014l, 2014m).

Events held at the actual Historic Fort Snelling site also relate to this primary frame of the area as a historically important site. The themed weekends at the historical fort include:

- WWII Weekend. “Step back into the 1940's with re-enactors, a USO-style show, equipment demos, an obstacle course and crafts.”
- Independence Day celebration. “Celebrate the Fourth 1800's style with cannon salutes, a military dress parade, fife and drum music, historic games, rousing speeches and more.”

- Civil War weekend. “See Civil War re-enactors, military drills, and weapons displays. Learn about the fort and slavery, the U.S. Dakota war of 1862 and Civil War events of 1864.”
- Minnesota and the First World War. “Learn about Minnesota’s role in the Great War and see what life was like for Minnesotans during this crucial era”.
- Friends of Fort Snelling Upper Post Tours. “Explore the area known as the Upper Post and hear about the history of the Fort and tis importance to the state’s history.”
- CSI Fort Snelling. “Guests participate in a Murder Mystery and can enjoy a beer in a period tavern.”  
(Historic Fort Snelling 2014o).

Overall, this master frame exemplifies the story of progress that is fundamental in the discourse documents sampled in connection with the Historic Fort Snelling and the Minnesota Historical Society. The notion of the area as historically significant in the role it played in the formation of the state represents a substantial act of framing the meaning of this place. However, there is also another important sub-frame that composes what I have referred to as the historical site master frame.

*A place of many meanings (sub) frame*

Another aspect of the historical site master frame that is present in both Historic Fort Snelling and Fort Snelling State Park discourse is that the area is a place of many stories. The many stories sub-frame has a narrative based on the history of the area as a place where people and rivers have always come together. From this point, the framework goes on to show how this continues to be the case today which provides the justification to tell the stories of many people who have found meaning in the area. At first, the many stories notion seems to be inviting to a multitude of interpretive frames.

Today, the fort exists as a symbol, one of pride and strength to some, to others, one of struggle and imprisonment. Overlooking the confluence of MN’s two great rivers, the fort has stood witness to the diverse communities of people who lived

here and the challenges they faced. Some unique to their time and place, others still familiar today. (Historic Fort Snelling Visitor Center Video).

The junction of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers is a place of major social, cultural, and historical significance to all people inhabiting the region, a place whose history evokes both pride and pain. (U.S-Dakota War 2014b).

This is a major framework that is promoted from within the historical site frame. It proclaims that an area such as the Historic Fort Snelling has many meanings to many people. Notably, the idea is a rather recent and intentional reframing of the area. This change represents a change at the fort itself, but also a larger change among historians in the U.S. (Program Specialist Interview). Based on the data collected, the exact intention of this change could not be assumed. However, Indigenous people have been critical of the approach as a way of absorbing Indigenous perspectives while holding them subordinate to the Euro-American meta-narrative of history (LaDuke 1999; Waziyatawin 2008). At the Historic Fort Snelling, the many meanings sub-frame is used as the overarching position of the Minnesota Historical Society on the area. This many meanings framework allows the historic site staff to tell many different stories and assert that they are all equally valid and important. Such stories proclaim to include a vast array of interpretations of the area.

However, there is a noteworthy flaw with this discourse. Although the approach sounds good on paper, so to speak, it is problematic given the skewed representation on the ground. It is true that a lot of lip service is paid to the idea that the area is historically significant because it represents many things to many peoples. However, these competing, or conflicting, stories do not hold equal weight in how they are represented. The evidence suggests that one set of stories is held in higher esteem. For example, consider that in an analysis of the discourse documents on site including videos, displays



and pamphlets, less than 15% of them even mentioned Dakota people's perspective on the area. Upon examination, the primary framework represented on site is the idea of the area as a historically important site for its role in the expansion of the United States. Again, the historical site master frame is largely derived from the historical fort itself. As noted, the primary message emphasizes the stories of the fort in 1827 and the importance of the fort to the United States military over time which expresses a distinctly Euro-American understanding of the area. Within the actual Historic Fort Snelling, these stories were found to comprise over 86% of the discourse documents sampled.

According to one Dakota interviewee, the many meanings sub-frame is one of the worst approaches because it belittles the Dakota perspective as only one of many and therefore, treats the "imperialist" American narrative as equal to Dakota perspectives (Waziyatawin Interview). Waziyatawin argued that this approach is an intentional attempt at cooptation by acknowledging yet simultaneously subordinating Dakota people's experiences and perspectives (Waziyatawin Interview). This issue was brought up with a Program Specialist at the Historic Fort Snelling, to which he replied:

It definitely is Eurocentric on the whole. There have been efforts to poke holes in that to show different things... I can see why individuals think that. I can see how some people would come away with that idea... I think it's something that we need to be aware of. That what we're doing, that there are people that feel this way; that it is a celebration of European American, Eurocentric values, ideas and history. (Program Specialist Interview).

As this quote divulges, a strong element of the historical site frame is this celebration of a one-sided version of the past. In this framing, the history of westward expansion is emphasized in an idealized and nostalgic fashion (Program Specialist Interview). This can be clearly seen in the various programs offered at the Historic Fort Snelling site, which is replete with actors dressed in garb from 1827. Yet, as the many

meanings sub-frame reveals, the official claim is that the fort represents many things to many people. This gives the notion that the area holds all meanings in a way that is equal. Nevertheless, data indicates that the focus is actually on the meta-narrative of American progress rather than a neutral assessment of what life would have been like in this historical period for various peoples, including the Dakota. This nostalgic attitude was emphasized during the interview as a central part of the historical site master frame.

There is another meaning for the site; they want to appreciate what they have and think about what was life like almost 200 years ago and think about “boy look how far we’ve come”. Which isn’t really, historically, I don’t think that’s necessarily always a responsible way to think about the past. But, most people like to think of it in those ways – how hard it was back then for people. (Program Specialist Interview).

Arguably, the analysis of discourse documents indicates that the historical site master frame broadly overlooks the actual implications of Westward expansion for Minnesota’s original inhabitants. However, the Minnesota Historical Society continues to present a portrayal of the area as having many meanings which it claims to be representing. This sub-frame is of supreme importance in understanding the complexity of framing dynamics that institutional actors are using in the overall historical site master frame. In addition to the layers of complexity that this master frame begins to expose, the following two master frames reveal an even more dynamic framing of place.

#### A Dakota Place Master Frame

The Dakota place master frame is the oldest framing of the place where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet. I say this because Dakota people were and continue to be Minnesota’s Indigenous peoples. With this in mind, the most fitting introduction to the Dakota place frame comes from a Dakota person:

From my perspective, what I would say is that if you take a broad view of history first of all, over thousands of years, Dakota people's relationship with that place is the story. We're the original people. We've been here for thousands of years. Our connection with that place runs deeper than any other human population on the face of the earth. That's the primary story. The story of how we interacted with that site, how we prayed, how we understood the spiritual beings at that site. All of those things are extremely important. How then we were dispossessed from that land. How genocide was perpetrated at that site. And how we continued to be denied access to that place of importance to our people. That's the primary story and when you talk about Minnesota and the creation of Minnesota as a state, the primary story is how it was wrested away from the original people. How it came to be occupied by colonizers, by settlers. That's the story. (Waziyatawin Interview).

The Dakota place frame rests on the premise that Dakota people were the original inhabitants of the place where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet. Given their status as the Indigenous people of that place, it is often argued that their story is the primary narrative within which other stories take place. It is important to note that the terminology used should not give the impression that there is a singular Dakota perspective on the area. Rather, I chose the wording as a way to distinguish from the understanding of the area as primarily a Dakota place from the other master frames described. Within the Dakota place frame there are smaller sub-frames that contextualize the meaning of the area today based both on historical events and present day significance. The present portrayal represents the various meanings that the Dakota people and discourses that were sampled contained. Therefore, the Dakota place master frame is a shared understanding of place that is comprised of multiple perspectives coming from Dakota people.

#### *A place of Dakota genesis (sub) frame*

The first key frame that helps to compose the Dakota place master frame is the understanding of the area as the place of the Dakota genesis story (Bdote Memory Map

2007b<sup>7</sup>). It should be noted that this idea was found in all discourse documents as well as all of the interviews conducted for this research. According to Dakota oral history, the place where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet is the site where the Bdewakantuwan Dakota Oyate were created (Westerman and White 2012:16-22<sup>8</sup>). The area is often called Bdote which means the confluence to two rivers (Waziyatawin Interview). It is the site of their genesis as a people. It was from that place where the various bands of the Dakota nation spread out over the earth. Therefore, it is considered Maka Cokiya Kin or the center of the earth to the Dakota (Bdote Memory Map 2007b, 2007c).

Given this extremely significant meaning, the area is held in the highest regard among many Dakota people today. For Dakota people, the fact that their creation story took place in this area is not merely a historically significant factor. It is a meaning, or frame, that is still held central to Dakota people today which is literally rooted in centuries of cultural history. This frame was clearly expressed in all of the Dakota sources sampled for this study from websites to books and interviews. It remains one of the most prominent aspects of the Dakota place master frame today.

It is here that we have the genesis of the Dakota people. (Chris Mato Nunpa, Bdote Memory Map 2007b).

We are told that we were brought here to this land from the stars to the place where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet. This place known as Bdote is our place of genesis. (Westerman and White 2012:15).

It is the site of the Dakota creation and it has a lot of significance for me personally. (Sisokaduta, Bdote Memory Map 2007c).

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<sup>7</sup> The Bdote Memory Map represents a collective effort by various Dakota people to make Dakota stories of Bdote available to the public. As such, it contains information from multiple Dakota people.

<sup>8</sup> The book *Mni Sota Makoce* represents stories collected from Dakota people all over the United States and Canada. As such it is a unique and unequalled collection of Dakota stories.

When I learned more about our Dakota history and our stories, one of the first stories that I heard was that when we came to be as a people, we were placed at Bdote. Where the Minnesota and the Mississippi rivers meet. I've thought about that a lot since then. What does it mean to become a people? I think there are others who have those same kinds of creation stories but they don't think of them as creation stories. When we came to this place, Bdote, we became Dakota. That's as far back as anybody can remember. (Gwen Westerman Interview).

For our people, this is the center of everything. When the people came up the river, they must have felt that because they landed at the center of our world. (Dave Larsen, Bdote Memory Map 2007b).

Based on the connection to the site as a place of Dakota people's genesis, the area is also described as wakan (Bdote Memory Map 2007c; Redwing Thomas Interview; Sisoka Duta Interview). This is a significant aspect of the framing of the area as a Dakota place. Often times, the Dakota word wakan is translated as sacred. Although it is true that the core of this frame is essentially that the area is sacred, a more nuanced understanding of the word offers a clearer picture. According to language specialist Albert White Hat Sr. (2012), the word wakan carries more meaning than simply sacred. Based on oral tradition, the meaning of the word wakan has three components. First, it is something that has energy or potential. Second, it is something that is both creative and destructive in its potential. Finally, something that is wakan has the ability to give life and take life (White Hat 2012:31). In addition to the general translation of sacred, the word wakan also has these three characteristics.

Interconnected with the Dakota place master frame is the understanding that the area is wakan. It is wakan because it is the site of genesis and also because the area has deep spiritual significance to Dakota culture (Bdote Memory Map 2007c; Westerman and White 2012:16-22, 211-222). The land itself is full of ecological and biological wonder. It can both give life and take life. Out of this potential, the area came to be the site of

creation of the Dakota people. It is also a place where specific spiritual beings are said to reside, the place of historical burials, and an area where particular ceremonies are required to happen (Bdote Memory Map 2007c; Westerman and White 2012:211-222; Sisoka Duta Interview). Therefore, the area is wakan and powerful to Dakota people.

The land there is the site of our genesis and our genocide. The place that gave birth to our Oyate is the sacred ground; we consider it wakan. (Waziyatawin 2008:103).

That place is special because that's where our ancestors were, our way of life was there...It's just special. In our language we'd say its wakan. (Redwing Thomas Interview).

There's a vortex energy there, that's why, and the Dakota Nation held it sacred. (Westerman and White 2012:187).

To Dakota people, it's a vortex of power. It is a spot where our nation was made but it's also a spot where genocide was perpetrated against our people at Fort Snelling. (Ethan Neerdaels, Bdote Memory Map 2007c).

#### *A place of Dakota genocide (sub) frame*

It is a spot where our nation was made but it's also a spot where genocide was perpetrated against our people at Fort Snelling. (Ethan Neerdaels, Bdote Memory Map 2007c).

This is another significant aspect of the Dakota place master frame. The genocide frame rests on specific historical events that took place in Minnesota. Some examples of this include a statement made by Governor Alexander Ramsey that Dakota people should be “exterminated or driven forever beyond the borders” (Ramsey 1862), the fact that there was a price of \$200 placed on the scalps of dead Dakota people and also the Dakota Expulsion Act of 1863 (Waziyatawin 2008; Wingerd 2010:327-338). It is important to note that according to the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the events that took place in Minnesota between the settlers and the Dakota people fit the description of genocide (Bdote Memory Map 2007c;

Waziyatawin 2008:37-62). Additionally, it is often argued that the use of Fort Snelling as a concentration camp during the winter of 1862-63 is the clearest representation of the genocide perpetrated against the Dakota people (Bdote Memory Map 2007c). Therefore, the area also represents the genocide of Dakota people.

As Dakota people, we have two powerful interpretations of the site where Fort Snelling sits. We have the natural landscape that is important as the site of the Bdewakantunwan Dakota creation story relayed in Chapter 1 and we have the man-made landscape that is one of absolute oppression. As Jim Anderson from the Bdote community has noted, the land there is the site of our genesis and our genocide. The place that gave birth to our Oyate is the sacred ground; we consider it wakan. Yet, with the concentration camp and hanging of our leaders, it was also the site of one of the most egregious crimes that human beings can perpetrate on one another, that of genocide and ethnic cleansing. (Waziyatawin 2008:103).

#### *A colonial icon (sub) frame*

Fort Snelling is a symbol for all the icons of imperialism and colonialism that currently mark our landscape. Fort Snelling is a symbol for the ideology that supports the subjugation and oppression of Peoples. Fort Snelling is a symbol of dominance imposed on the landscape. (Waziyatawin 2008:113).

Another important sub-frame that is connected to the Dakota place master frame is the colonial icon frame. This sub-frame is the most direct response to the various aspects of the historical site master frame that can be elicited out of the Dakota place master frame. Overall, the framework is intimately connected to the understanding that the area is indicative of the continual colonization of Dakota people (Waziyatawin 2008). The frame is founded on two key notions. First, the idea that the area represents the site of the Dakota people's genesis. Second, the area also represents the most poignant example of the ethnic cleansing policies that were perpetrated against Dakota people, making the fort a symbol of Dakota genocide (Bdote Memory Map 2007c; Waziyatawin 2008). Given the fact that the Historic Fort Snelling remains on the land, the area has come to symbolize the continual colonization of Dakota people today. The way in which

the history of the fort is celebrated is a key part of the iconic nature of the area. As

Angela Waziyatawin Wilson states:

I definitely believe it is Minnesota's first monumental icon of American Imperialism. It was designed to subjugate Indigenous people, subjugate Indigenous land and make way for white folks to come through. That's an act of colonial violence and the fact that it is celebrated everyday remains a problem... we talked about it as an invaded space, as an occupied space, as colonial space and another kind of colonial violence that continues right up to the present day. So that they understood that colonization is not something that happened in the 19th century but that colonization is something that we experience on a daily basis. (Waziyatawin Interview).

This frame is specifically directed at the Historic Fort Snelling. It represents a key aspect of the overall way the area is understood from the context of the Dakota place master frame. As a physical representation of colonization both past and present, the fort has come to be an icon of American imperialism and colonization. This way of understanding the area as symbolic of the continual colonization of Dakota people today is expressed by other Dakota people as well.

It represents the colonization and genocide of our people. Every time I go past Fort Snelling I have to think about how our people were imprisoned at the concentration camp there and how they were forced to surrender their sacred objects and they were burned in a pile and we were force marched there in November when it was cold and people died along the way. When they were imprisoned there, the women were attacked by the soldiers. And lots of people died... I think about that and how we were loaded on steamboats and forced down the Mississippi to Crow Creek. That's what I think about every time I go by Fort Snelling and when people go there they are celebrating this frontier lifestyle. (Sisoka Duta Interview).

Again, a very sick twisted way of doing this. What a way to break a people. To turn the place that is their Eden into their instrument of torture. Really the psychological trauma of that, we have never recovered from and probably never will as long as this colonial institution is in place. (Angela Cavender-Wilson, Bdote Memory Map 2007c).



## A State Park Master Frame

The state park master frame is the third major framework that interprets the area from a schema that is heavily reliant on the designation of the area as an actual state park. This master frame contains two primary frameworks that help to designate the meaning of the area. The first is an ecological framework in which the area is given meaning in relation to the ecological and biological qualities it contains. Taken on a social level, the state park frame holds the area as having many valid stories similar to that which is found in the historical site frame. However, the implications of this place of many meanings frame are qualitatively different within the state park framework. A third and final sub-frame exists within this master frame regarding the connection of the area to the Dakota people. This is a unique element that is held under the broad umbrella of the many meanings approach taken by the park.

### *The ecological (sub) frame*

The ecological frame is a primary aspect of the overall state park master frame. It is deeply connected to the overall designation of the area as a state park and can clearly be derived from the management of the area by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The overall focus of this sub-frame is defining the meaning of the area based on its ecologically significant aspects. Institutional social actors use a variety of aspects, from the rivers to the wildlife, in order to promote this sub-frame. The frame holds the area as significant for its natural landscape. The ecological sub-frame was discerned from a variety of discourse documents.

The ecological perspective is represented in a multitude of ways through the Fort Snelling State Park interpretive center, its website, park pamphlets, and on its trail

markers. Notably, the Fort Snelling State Park Map highlights the wildlife in the area and points out the forested river bottom. There is also special mentioning of diverse wildlife that can be seen in the area. Many of the interpretive programs offered by the state park involve programs conducted by naturalists with a focus on geology, wildlife, vegetation, and water resources. There are also pamphlets for bird watching and checklists for various types of trees and shrubs present in the park. A significant portion of the displays within the Thomas Savage Visitor Center are focused on biological and geological wonders within the park. All of these discourse documents come together to paint a portrait of the area as a natural wonder worth exploration.

Overall, there is not a lot of complexity to the ecological sub-frame. Nevertheless, it represents a very significant portion of what gives meaning to the state park master frame as a whole. Given the nature of the area as a state park run by the DNR of Minnesota, this frame is not a surprising find. Many discourse elements present in connection with Fort Snelling State Park combine to reinforce the secondary framework of the area as being ecologically significant. However, there is some further complexity to the master frame when other sub-frames are considered.

#### *A place of multiple meanings (sub) frame*

The notion of the area having multiple meanings is another primary sub-frame that makes up the state park master frame. The multiple meanings frame within the master frame of the state park does not hold any one perspective as supreme, but proclaims a neutrality and inclusiveness towards all perspectives. This was exemplified in the interview with the Fort Snelling State Park Manager:

It means the land is an important place to all of us. And good things happened here and bad things happened here. They're all significant... We are experts on

this land and some of the things that happened here. And that's the story we try to tell. We try to tell it in a neutral way, in a way that represents a variety of stories. One of the themes in the master plan for Fort Snelling State Park is "People and Rivers coming together" and that's true in the 1800's, in the middle of the 1800's, its true in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and its true in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. People and rivers do come together on this spot. (Larry Peterson Interview).

There are a variety of elements central to the state park framework that this statement alludes to. First, it clearly denotes the presence of the multiple meanings sub-frame and exemplifies the way in which it is used at the state park. Additionally, it reveals how the ecological frame is also central. As Mr. Peterson notes, "people and rivers do come together on this spot" (Larry Peterson Interview). The ecological frame and story of the land is intimately tied to the stories of the people on the land in this framework. In this way, the multiple meanings sub-frame comes to make up a significant portion of this overall master frame.

Although a similar frame was mentioned in the context of the historical site framework, the multiple meanings notion has a different quality within the overall state park master frame. Similar to the historical site frame, the area is understood as having many meanings to many people, all of which are valid. However, contrary to the way the historical site master frame uses this idea, the state park master frame uses it with a much more critical tone. Within the state park master frame, the multiple stories and meanings are given greater validity in comparison with the overall notion of the area as a state park. There are various examples that can help to illustrate this point.

First, the multiple meanings sub-frame also includes important historical events as a part of it. However, in contrast to the historical site master frame, historically significant events for the United States do not take precedence over other events such as those significant to the Dakota people. This can be shown by the significant inclusion of

various Dakota meanings within the multiple meanings sub-frame. Certainly, the story of Westward expansion still does consist of part of the multiple meanings that the state park master frame includes.

It means something in the history of our country in terms of Zebulon Pike landing here and signing a treaty that he didn't particularly have the authority to sign or negotiate. A treaty that was changed and revamped and diminished over a number of years to the point that it really wasn't much of a treaty. But at the same time, that was the first opening salvo in the Twin Cities becoming a major metropolitan area. So I'm living on land that was somehow included in the United States by that treaty. (Larry Peterson Interview).

From this quote, it becomes clear that stories of historically significant events for the founding of the United States and the state of Minnesota are included in a more critical fashion within the state park master frame. Perhaps this is due to the fact that they do not have as vested of an interest in these narratives as the Minnesota Historical Society. Regardless of the reason, the state park frame holds the multiple meanings sub-frame in a more equitable fashion, often including a greater diversity of meanings.

Another example of the difference between how the state park master frame and historical site master frame approach the issue of many meanings deals with how Dakota people are represented. The meanings regarding the Dakota people are given much greater significance and can actually be seen to stand on their own within the park's approach. This is contrary to the way the historical site frame represents these stories as only a minor part in the greater historical narrative of the United States. The state park master frame holds the Dakota stories as a key aspect of the value of the area as a state park. In fact, Dakota people and their history in the area are mentioned in roughly 55% of the displays in Fort Snelling State Park while only around 14% of the displays at the

Historic Fort Snelling mention Dakota people.<sup>9</sup> From these percentages alone, it is clear to see that the many meanings approach is used differently in both places.

The next significant element that is present in the state park's multiple meanings sub-frame is the emphasis on the area as the place of a former concentration camp. Fort Snelling State Park has openly accepted the term concentration camp for what took place during the winter of 1862-63 when Dakota people were held in the area before being forcefully removed from the state. This is in sharp contrast to the historical site framework that is predominantly held by the Historic Fort Snelling. The historical fort has displays where some mention it as an internment camp while others call it a concentration camp. Given the significance of this wording to the overall Dakota frame of the area, this represents a stark difference between the multiple meanings approach that is used both in the historical site framework and the state park framework.

Fort Snelling State Park at the Thomas Savage Visitor Center; we use the term concentration camp. Not everybody does. The interpretive community at DNR parks and trails, early on, chose that term to use in the interpretive material here in the visitor center. What I know about the camp that occurred here in the winter of 1862-63, seems like a pretty descriptive term to me for what happened here. (Larry Peterson Interview).

In fact, the use of terms like concentration camp to describe historically significant events for the area is indicative of a larger trend within the state park master frame which stretches beyond the mere inclusion of multiple meanings. Just as the state park master frame contains an ecological sub-frame and a multiple meanings sub-frame, it also includes a unique sub-frame of the area as a Dakota place.

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<sup>9</sup> These figures are based on multiple visits, recording and counting displays with content mentioning Dakota people.

*A Dakota place (sub) frame*

Within the overall context of the state park framework, the area is also framed as a distinctly Dakota place. Separate, yet ultimately derived from the Dakota place master frame, this sub-frame can help to explain the heavy inclusion of Dakota perspectives at the state park itself. This sub-frame understands the area as a Dakota place both past and present, which is part of why it is uniquely situated in the many stories told within the state park master frame. Whereas the historical site master frame mentions the Dakota framework as one among a great many regarding the area, the state park master frame holds the Dakota framework as more central to the area's overall understanding due to its indisputable connection to the area. This special focus can be seen in a variety of ways such as the inclusion of Dakota authored displays in the Thomas Savage Visitor Center, the memorial on the park land for the Dakota people imprisoned there, and through the various interpretive programs that seek to explore the areas meaning as a Dakota place.

Many of the interpretive programs that portray the area as a Dakota place both past and present are led by a seasonal naturalist at the state park. As an interview with the naturalist revealed, Dakota meanings are held as a major focus in these programs.

Connecting that back to where the memorial is, where the memorial or the concentration camp used to be, it's probably one of the biggest things to interpret in this park. Because it so monumental... We also talk about what the Bdote means... Some people say that this is their origin spot. That this is place where the first Dakota person came out of the Earth. (Amie Durenberger Interview).

As the interview reveals, Dakota meanings are held in high regard among the programs and displays at the state park. Further, the video that is shown at the state park's interpretive center also includes Dakota perspectives:

For the Dakota people (Dakota man speaking), this place is where the world began. Here where two rivers meet. Here Ina our mother the earth, gave birth to

our ancestral grandmother and grandfather. The land is Wakan, sacred. For the Dakota this was Eden. (Thomas Savage Visitor Center Film).

In fact, the park staff are also willing to talk about some of the meanings that the Dakota people have for the area today, which include the area as a site of ethnic cleansing, genocide, and continued colonization.

When I come to the memorial at the end, that's when I like to talk about it [Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in relation to Dakota people]. So I give people the history, let them know the tragic things that did happen here and then have a discussion about it... I like to talk about the word first, like what is the definition of genocide. Can we take these events that we learned about here in the park and apply that definition? I usually bring up the UN convention that had those five standards... we like to expand past the people and into the animals and nature and talk about how colonization affected the entire area. (Amie Durenberger Interview).

Overall, these examples serve to illustrate why I have concluded that the state park master frame contains a unique Dakota place sub-frame that is separate from its multiple meanings sub-frame. In short, it is precisely because Dakota perspectives are given such precedence within the state park itself. As with the other two master frames, the various frameworks that compose the state park master frame give meaning to the area, but they also carry within them implicit ideas of what should be done with the area.

### Discussion

Before moving on to the framing processes and dynamics found in connection with these three master frames, there are various critical points I would like to discuss. First, it is important to note that the preceding analysis attempts to point out the master frames present in the data in an objective manner. I have done my best to portray the mental schemata's that were communicated through the spoken and written discourse documents. However, as a social scientist, I understand that to claim a totally objective interpretation of data is misleading. My relationality to this topic and the groups

connected to it invariably affects my analysis of the data, as I noted in chapter three. Based on that relationality, I feel that there is a moral imperative to critically discuss some of the ideas presented in these master frames.

The following discussion derives not only from my relationality to the topic, but also from my graduate level training as a sociologist. As a sociologist, I see the social world and its arrangements as created by people in interaction. These social arrangements invariably consist of differing degrees of inequality within a given society. In examining the United States in particular, it is clear that there exists a tragic history between the government of the United States, the Euro-American citizens and people Indigenous to North America. This general situation is also the case for Dakota people from Minnesota. Therefore, Dakota people represent a subordinated minority group in the state of Minnesota. On the other hand, both the Historic Fort Snelling run by the Minnesota Historical Society and Fort Snelling State Park are institutions that represent dominant groups in Minnesota. Given the dominant status of these institutions and the subordinated status of the Dakota Nation as an ethnic minority group, my sociological mindfulness (Schwalbe 2007) has trained me to be critical of the historical fort and state park as representatives of powerful social groups. Hence, the following discussion proceeds from this line of academic thinking.

Overall, the brunt of my criticism falls on the historical site master frame. The reason for this is essentially two-fold. First, the historical site master frame contains multiple elements that suggest it is both artificial and one-sided despite the claim that it represents a diversity of perspectives. Secondly, Dakota people and their representative discourse documents were the most critical of the historical site master frame. Again, as



a trained social scientist, I am aware of and agree with the argument that it is often those underprivileged or minority groups that have the clearest picture of the inequalities and injustices within a society (Collins 1991; Schwalbe 2007). Therefore, my criticisms of this master frame stem from my relationship to various Dakota people as well as my tendency of having “strong objectivity” (Harding 1992:577) as a sociologist.

As a first point of evaluation, it is important to understand the grounding of the historical site master frame. Specifically, the fact that the historical site frame is largely dominated by a nostalgic (Program Specialist Interview) sense of life in the late 1820’s necessitates a mentioning of how this relates to the seriousness of the frame as a whole. To understand how this influences the master frame, it is useful to understand why the Historic Fort Snelling is simultaneously celebrated and criticized for its nostalgic simulation of life in 1827 (Program Specialist Interview; Wazyatawin 2008). It should be pointed out that what takes place at the historical fort site is literally a simulation. The fort itself is a rebuilt replica of the actual Fort Snelling in the 1820’s. Further, there are actors dressed in costume that pretend to be people living in the year 1827 ([www.historicfortsnelling.org](http://www.historicfortsnelling.org)). Therefore, the historic fort, which is central to the master frame overall, was literally recreated to give off a particular impression as to the importance of the area.

This is a significant factor as it relates to the notion of simulacra (Baudrillard 1983), which refers to a copy of an original that no longer exists and has therefore, become “hyperreal”. Our current period is particularly characterized by simulations of places and events. This is precisely the case with the current portrayal of Fort Snelling. The historical fort is a rebuilt copy replete with actors, and it is used to simulate what life

was like at the fort in 1827. As a simulacra, Historic Fort Snelling literally represents something that does not actually exist. Further, it rests on something that may have never actually existed in the way it is portrayed. This is significant because much of the historical site master frame rests on the meaning making processes of enactment that are involved in this nostalgic production that is known as the Historic Fort Snelling. This should be kept in mind when examining the details of this master frame because it introduces a sort of arbitrariness or artificiality to the meanings held within the frame. In fact, this sort of artificiality was one of the major points of criticism aimed at the historical fort by Dakota people interviewed and it was also acknowledged as problematic during my interview with the Program Specialist.

In addition to the marked artificiality of the historical site master frame's core symbol, one must note the observable one-sidedness of the frame as well. The dominance of the 1827 representations speaks to another point of criticism. The historical site master frame seems to entirely overlook the importance of the area in contemporary times. Rather, its contemporary meaning is wrapped up solely in its historical significance. Whether it actually promotes a real diversity of perspectives or not is beside the point on this issue. By framing the area's importance as cemented in what it *was*, the historical site master frame effectively avoids any conversation of what the area *is* today. Hence, this approach marginalizes Dakota voices that argue for the significance of the area to them today by promoting an idea that its only importance is in the role it played in our state's history.

Further, the meta-narrative of our history represented by the historical site master frame overlooks nearly all of the negative aspects that were involved in the creation of

the country and state. Thus, it overlooks the stories of subjugated people (including the Dakota) in favor of the idealized story of America's past. This frame idealizes 'frontier days' and 'colonial times' in the classical 'rugged individualistic' manner that is common in the U.S, which serves to further reinforce the notion of the area as simulacrum (Baudrillard 1983) or artificial hyper-reality. Again, it could be argued that the simulations present at Historic Fort Snelling do not represent a reality of today *or* one of the past. Given that they overlook negative aspects of the past in favor of a nostalgic representation of the area as historically significant, the representations are both one-sided and artificial. This is of grave concern considering the fact that the historical site master frame rests so heavily on these stories.

Finally, the many meanings sub-frame of the Minnesota Historical Society deserves critique. Recall that according to some Dakota people (Waziyatawin 2008), the many meanings sub-frame is one of the worst approaches because it treats the Dakota perspective as only one of many. At first glance this may appear like a legitimate attempt at diversifying the sites representations. However, this tendency effectively implies that the American story of progress, which has foundations in notions of manifest destiny (Westerman and White 2012:136-140), is somehow equal to the Dakota people's interpretations of history. Given the imperialistic violence implicit in the American frontier narrative, some Dakota see this as a way of legitimizing such colonial violence (Bdote Memory Map 2007; Waziyatawin 2008). The framework altogether overlooks the continual negative repercussions of what happened at the fort for Dakota people. Most importantly, it does not acknowledge in any way that colonialism is still happening in the state nor how whites have benefited from the situation. Therefore, this approach is better

seen as a sort of cooptation by acknowledging yet simultaneously subordinating Dakota people's experiences and perspectives.

This chapter has moved from an objective presentation of the data that comprise three master frames to a critical evaluation of the dominant discourse embodied in the historical site master frame. The strong objectivity (Harding 1992) used to critically examine the dominant discourse of the area briefly denotes the presence of inequality within the frame contests taking place. This critical evaluation will now recede into the background as the following two chapters return to a more direct presentation of additional data.

## **Chapter V**

### **What Should Be Done With This Place?**

Based on the analysis of interpretive frames within the data, other important framing processes and dynamics were found. These relate to the second set of questions driving the research, which asked: Are there any core strategic (diagnostic, prognostic and motivational) frames being used? What, if any, frame alignment processes (frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension, and frame transformation) are taking place? If present, do these factors help to describe the elements composing this dispute? These questions represent further investigation into the composition of the overall master frames present in the area. There were various key findings in relation to the second set of research questions that serve to further illuminate this complex situation.

Overall, there were not as many strategic and frame alignment processes being used as was initially assumed. This may be due, in part, to the relevance of these terms to the study of social movements. In the case of understanding place, these concepts do not apply as readily to the meaning making techniques people use. Nevertheless, there were significant variations in diagnostic and prognostic framing elements. The use of these strategic processes had a strong correlation to the overall master frame in which they were embedded. Therefore, the results for the second set of research questions will be presented under the same master frame headings that were previously noted.

## A Historical Site Master Frame: Diagnostic and Prognostic Frames

### *Diagnostic framing: the problem of staying in 1827.*

The first diagnostic frame relates to the issues surrounding the fact that the Historic Fort Snelling and the interpreters at the actual fort are all intended to represent the year 1827. It was noted earlier that this was seen as problematic by others, particularly Dakota people. However, this is significant in that it is coming from institutional actors within Historic Fort Snelling. As such, they have proclaimed this representation as problematic in terms of the structure of the physical space that is the historical fort, the appearance of interpreters who are dressed in 1820's garb, and the information that they are trained to enact (Program Specialist Interview). Again, this results in the most prominent frame being represented at the actual fort as that of a significant historical site revolving around the role of the fort and its occupants in the 1820's. According to one interview, this is seen as problematic by various Minnesota Historical Society staff members.

An interview with a Program Specialist from the Historic Fort Snelling revealed that interpreters have recently been given more flexibility in their topics of conversation. In fact, the Program Specialist noted that they are encouraged to go outside of the year 1827 in their conversations with visitors as a way to encourage multiple perspectives. Nevertheless, as a researcher who made repeated visits to the fort throughout the summer of 2014 and intentionally prodded interpretive staff to test this claim, it was only on a rare occasion that anyone mentioned issues outside of the 1820's frame and even rarer that the conversation included perspectives of Dakota people. Hence, the sort of boundedness to

1827 that exists severely limits the frame representations that are present at the historical fort. The Program Specialist confirmed this as an ongoing problem.

There's an inherent challenge with the site itself because of the aesthetic, the fact that you're inside a fort and there are people in costume around, many of them dressed like soldiers, many of them dressed like European American civilians. I think that can be a challenge too because there are certain expectations that people have when they see that when they come here. (Program Specialist Interview).

This diagnostic frame is something that the historical fort and the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) have received considerable criticism for as proof that their attempt at representing many meanings is empty. This was clearly acknowledged as problematic during the interview with the Program Specialist. The significance of this issue also makes it a source of various other diagnostic and prognostic frames.

*Diagnostic framing: the lack of resources.*

An additional diagnostic frame that was noted during an interview with a Program Specialist from Historic Fort Snelling was the lack of resources available to make substantial changes. Throughout the interview, the staff member noted that various staff members both at the Historic Fort Snelling and within the Minnesota Historical Society were in agreement with the need for change toward a more inclusive approach to other stories about the meaning of the area and the significance it holds beyond the traditional Euro-American narrative. The Program Specialist mentioned the lack of resources as an inherent problem when it comes to making such changes. The organization has a limited number of resources and in the current social structure, historical sites are vying to not lose the funding they have. Obviously, this issue becomes problematic when significant changes are being called for at these sites.

*Diagnostic framing: the problem of actually getting everyone a voice.*

A unique diagnostic framing issue discovered in the historical site master frame relates to the problem that arises in letting everyone have a voice. Despite the claim of representing many meanings (i.e.: the many meanings sub-frame), this is also the source of a diagnostic frame. This issue is complex for multiple reasons. First, Historic Fort Snelling attempts to be a place that tells the many stories of people and the meanings they give to the area. The fort is also a historical site managed by the Minnesota Historical Society. Generally speaking, historical sites and societies have done the job of interpretation, leaving alternate perspectives by the wayside. However, this attitude is beginning to slowly change (Program Specialist Interview). This is the reason for the inclusion of the many meanings frame within the historical site master frame. The history of historical societies has created a situation in which the inclusion of many perspectives is met with multiple institutional barriers. This is the problem expressed in an interview with the Historic Fort Snelling Program Specialist.

This diagnostic framing issue is not so much about including various perspectives; rather it is about the institutional barriers faced when attempting to do so from within the Minnesota Historical Society. Based on the interview, there has been an increasing attitude of openness to multiple perspectives within the institution. It is seen as problematic that greater changes have not yet occurred.

I would like to see the site become a place where those kinds of discussions can take place. Where, regardless of your feelings, you can have a voice and you can be represented and you can talk about it. I think that for a lot of museums and historic sites, that's scary. That's a hard thing for lots of places to do... I think that for a lot of historic sites that have a similar situation, I think that it's hard to buck the trend of what has always been done; who is the dominant voice that was represented. Since many museums and historic sites grew out of the old boosterism attitude that this is something we're proud of and this is something we



want to preserve. (Program Specialist Interview).

*Diagnostic framing: the lack of diversity among staff.*

A final diagnostic framing issue that was noted during the interview with the Historic Fort Snelling Program Specialist was the problem of little diversity among the staff. This presents a particular problem when the staff are by and large from a Euro-American descent. Given that the master frame of the area celebrates the historical significance of the area from a very Euro-American perspective, there are few challenges coming from a staff with little diversity. Therefore, within the institution itself, there are few advocates for change that are coming from a minority racial group. This makes it particularly challenging to argue for the inclusion of multiple perspectives when the historical site staff are largely homogenous in terms of their racial and ethnic backgrounds. This was directly acknowledged during the interview with the Program Specialist.

Our staff isn't very diverse, so we have to do outreach and we have to try to encourage people to come, people of color, and to be on staff. There's a lot of work to be done in terms of diversity both staff-wise and programmatically. We have a long way to go. (Program Specialist Interview).

*Prognostic framing: the need for going beyond the story of militarism and Westward expansion.*

An important prognostic frame that arose out of the conversation about the limitations of the historical fort's representations was the acknowledgement that the fort needs to go beyond stories of American militarism and Westward expansion. This strategic frame also arose during the interview with the Historic Fort Snelling Program Specialist. It should be noted that it was not entirely clear as to whether this particular strategic frame was shared among the upper echelons of the Minnesota Historical

Society. During the interview, it was indicated that MHS is actively trying to make changes that would allow them to expand the programming content.

Yeah, yeah, the story of the military, the story of the Westward expansion, that kind of thing. We're looking into whether there are other ways that we can do programs. (Program Specialist Interview).

Conclusions about the prevalence of this particular strategic frame could not be drawn due to severe limitations in the interview sample size of people representing the Minnesota Historical Society and Historic Fort Snelling. Nevertheless, it was a clear prognostic frame found during the various phases of the discourse analysis.

#### A Dakota Place Master Frame: Diagnostic and Prognostic Frames

##### *Diagnostic framing: the problem of renaming place.*

This first diagnostic frame portrays a key problem that is related in many ways to the overall dispute taking place in all its levels of complexity. Although, this particular strategic frame is itself, simple, it is problematic in that the area where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet was renamed. The Dakota word for the area is Bdote. Today, it is commonly called Fort Snelling. A key part of the idea behind why this is so problematic is understanding the importance of naming an area. Through giving a place a name, that place is given a meaning that is couched in values and beliefs (Basso 1996). The act of renaming an area is therefore a deliberate way at changing those meanings. This is, by and large, what framing is all about (Goffman 1974). In the case of the Dakota place master frame, the general fact that the area itself was renamed represents a highly significant problem because it is indicative of the overall struggle for Dakota people as a minority group in the state of Minnesota to gain recognition in the very land of their genesis (Bdote Memory Map 2007c; Waziyatawin 2008). In this sense, the renaming of

place is tied to the continual colonial presence of Dakota people's "conquerors" and represents yet another act of colonial violence (Waziyatawin 2008). Hence, the renaming of the area to that of Fort Snelling is considered highly problematic not only on the surface, but also in the deeper sense of what it so poignantly represents.

*Diagnostic framing: our stories have been erased.*

One major diagnostic frame that arose in various interviews and discourse documents was the issue of Dakota stories being erased from the landscape. This is tightly woven with the phenomena of renaming and literally recreating the meaning of a particular place, which the previous diagnostic frame denotes. The argument proceeds that the institutions controlling the area have by and large erased Dakota people from the landscape both literally and metaphorically via the deletion of their stories. Although there is some inclusion of Dakota perspectives at the two major institutions controlling the area, various Dakota people still feel that their culture and stories have been intentionally erased from the area. Hence, a major diagnostic frame present within the Dakota place master frame is the problem of Dakota voices not being represented in the area.

We were erased from this landscape historically and culturally. (Gwen Westerman Interview).

Because Dakota people's voices, our perspectives, our tribal resolutions, none of that matters to the state institutions. We are the expendable population, still today. (Waziyatawin Interview).

I think they're getting a version of it [the Dakota story]. It's a really watered down version of it. Do I feel it's doing justice to the representation or interpretation of our history? I don't think so. (Redwing Thomas Interview).

You're not letting us tell our side of the story and if you do, then they form special committees and those committees get to tell the story. It's usually some kind of anthropologist or historian, who's not Dakota, who looks at all the facts

and then writes the story as they see fit. Let the Dakota people tell their own story. (Sisoka Duta Interview).

This dismissal of Indigenous perspectives is symptomatic of the relationship of the colonizer to the colonized. Colonial domination can be maintained only if the history of the subjugated is denied and that of the colonizer elevated and glorified. (Waziyatawin 2008:220).

There are various elements to the diagnostic frame dealing with the issue of the Dakota story not being told. First, the stories which are present are diluted. Various Dakota people noted that the few stories told are very watered down in terms of how they portray the suffering Dakota people faced and continue to face in relation to the area (Redwing Thomas Interview; Sisoka Duta Interview; Waziyatawin Interview). In other words, they claimed that the portrayals which did include Dakota perspectives often times minimized the amount of suffering incurred by Dakota people both past and present. Based on my analysis, this is an accurate representation of the Historic Fort Snelling's inclusion of Dakota stories and perspectives. However, the Fort Snelling State Park does seem to take on a more critical perspective which was also acknowledged by some Dakota people that were interviewed. Nevertheless, there was a general consensus that both institutions have contributed to the overall expunging of Dakota people from the landscape in their tendency to offer more or less watered down versions of what happened.

Another important criticism that is part of this diagnostic frame is the argument that when stories are told about Dakota people they are told in past tense. In other words, the perspectives included paint a mental schema of Dakota people as something of the past and they entirely overlook Dakota issues with the area today.

If you look at the signage, nowhere on the signage does it say anything about the Dakota people unless there might be a special site, like Pilot Knob Hill and it says

“oh the Dakota people used to live here”. Whenever you see something it’s always in past tense. It’s not like “this is still a special place to Dakota people... We don’t have a church structure or somewhere we can point to and say that’s our sacred building don’t touch it. These sites are our sacred buildings. You go to Bdote, that’s special to us; that’s where the creation story happened, that’s sacred, that’s our church. Allow us to tell the story of that place and then you can put your own sign up somewhere else telling your story of how you came here and met our people in 17- whatever. (Sisoka Duta Interview).

This quote eloquently states one of the most striking findings within this study: when we are talking about the Dakota people and their relationship to this place (and Minnesota in general), it is always assumed to be “over” or “in the past” and no longer relevant to the present. However, the Dakota people and their relationship to place is very much alive today. It is relevant not only in the way that the past is represented, but also in how those events continue to shape their relationship to their homelands today. The dimensions of this relationship are complex and characterized by the variety of sub-frames represented with the Dakota place master frame. Nevertheless, the point is that they are still here and this is an issue of today, not yesterday. The portrayal of the Dakota people and their relationship to place as something of the past is perhaps one of the greatest dehumanizing acts that continues to take place in Minnesota. Therefore, the erasing of Dakota stories is seen as the continuation of the policies enacted in 1862 – 63 which claimed the Dakota or “Sioux Indian” should be “exterminated or forever driven beyond the borders of the state” (Governor Alexander Ramsey 1862). In this sense, the present diagnostic frame carries significant weight among Dakota communities.

*Diagnostic frame: the suppression and minimization of Dakota voices.*

The following diagnostic frame is very much interwoven with the previous notion that the way Dakota stories have been erased is highly problematic. However, this strategic frame warrants separate mention because it is uniquely directed at the many

meanings approach within the historical site master frame. Accordingly, a major problem with the historical site framing and its recent many meanings approach is that it has directly led to the suppression and minimization of Dakota peoples' perspectives. There are two important elements that need to be understood when discussing this diagnostic framing.

First, the Minnesota Historical Society has systematically suppressed Dakota perspectives on Minnesota state history since its inception (Waziyatawin 2008). According to the interview with Waziyatawin, she has been trying for some time (as both an academically and culturally educated Dakota woman) to have critical Dakota perspectives at least represented by the Minnesota Historical Society. Yet, she argues that her requests have been all but ignored (2014). This argument is not so hard to understand when considering the nature of the relationship between the state of Minnesota, the Minnesota Historical Society and Dakota people, in general. Given that Dakota people represent a subordinated group in the state of Minnesota and the Historical Society tells the story of the dominant group, it is not surprising that Dakota voices would not be included in their interpretations. In sum, the first part of this problem has to do with the historical suppression of Dakota perspectives by the Minnesota Historical Society as a state institution.

I think, from what I can tell, the Minnesota Historical Society spent decades really suppressing the story of violence perpetrated against Dakota people. They obviously focus on violence that Dakota people perpetrated against apparently innocent white settlers. But they did not focus on the violence that settlers perpetrated against Dakota people. (Waziyatawin Interview).

A second dimension to this diagnostic frame has to do with the recent switch made by the Minnesota Historical Society and therefore Historic Fort Snelling towards

the many meanings approach. The diversity of perspectives framework that has come to dominate a considerable portion of the historical site master frame is seen as problematic by some Dakota people for one primary reason. Within the many meanings framework, it is implicit that all meanings are equal. It assumes that stories about “discovery” and “manifest destiny” common in Euro-American history are equally valid to those of genocide common among American Indian perspectives (Westerman and White 2012:133-140). This is problematic from the perspective of the Dakota place master frame because it belittles the story of suffering that the Dakota people have undergone by saying it is somehow equal to the story of triumph that Euro-American Minnesotans tell. Further, the focus on the history of the area as a multi-cultural meeting place glosses over the painful realities that Dakota people faced and continue to face today. This framework entirely overlooks the larger narrative that Dakota people have told about the land they call home for centuries before the arrival of European immigrants.

In emphasizing communication and interaction, this proposal glosses over the genocidal role the fort played in 1862-63 and reaffirms the benign narrative also espoused by literature produced at Historic Fort Snelling. (Waziyatawin 2008:100).

Their [MHS] latest tactic is to take a diversity of perspectives approach. So, they want to be balanced, fair, and all inclusive. They want to include as many different perspectives as they can and then call that history. One thing you learn as a historian, in graduate programs about history, is that history is all about interpretation and it's all about the framework. It's how you frame the issue, frame the topic. In validating every perspective, they are taking a very clear position. Their framework is that the story of Manifest Destiny is just as valid, in fact I would say they privilege that over any other story, and that Dakota peoples' experience is just a small part of the larger story. When they take that position, it does nothing but perpetuate the status quo. It's just the same old thing in different packaging as far as I'm concerned. (Waziyatawin Interview).

*Prognostic framing: the stories need to be told.*

An obvious, albeit vital, strategic frame connected to the Dakota place master frame in the previous strategic frames is the argument that the Dakota stories must be told in the area. There are multiple elements to this prognostic frame, making it a significant part of the present analysis. The strategic frame was present during several interviews and came to be clearly noted by various Dakota people, Fort Snelling State Park staff, and Historic Fort Snelling staff. Hence, it is a central prognostic frame that intersects with all three master frames. This is likely due to the many or multiple meanings frames that exist both within the state park and historical site master frames.

Within the Dakota place master frame, this strategic frame argues that Dakota stories must be told about the area. This prognostic frame came up in multiple interviews with Dakota people and was a key argument for what needs to happen in the area. Although there were variations on what stories should be told in the area, there was a consensus on the fact that Dakota voices and perspectives need to be better represented in the area. This argument was directed at both Fort Snelling State Park and Historic Fort Snelling. However, most Dakota people in the sample were much more critical of the historical fort, particularly the Minnesota Historical Society, and its lack of inclusion of Dakota perspectives. All the same, the core argument remained that Dakota stories must be more present.

History, we have to tell our side of history, of who we are. Until that's done, nothing is going to change. History will be told and we'll be just viewed as Indians. (Dakota Elder Interview).

It should change [what stories are told]. But I also don't think it should be candy coated or watered down. It should be nitty gritty brutal honesty. Exactly what it is and exactly what it was. (Redwing Thomas Interview).



Notably, within the state park master frame this prognostic frame is held in a slightly different light. Given that Fort Snelling State Park already attempts to integrate the Dakota perspective on place into their overall narrative, this particular strategic frame is used to argue for the need to increase that inclusion. In interviews with Fort Snelling State Park staff, interviewees clearly noted that they understood the value of telling the Dakota story of the area, particularly the parts that challenge the Euro-American meta-narrative of Minnesota history. In this sense, the state park takes a much more critical approach. Therefore, within the state park master frame it was clear that this prognostic frame was present in park staff's desire to include critical Dakota perspectives even more in their displays and programming.

I think a state park is a good thing. It would be a poor choice to have this be a place where there are no markings or no sort of information of what happened here. Of course there could be different kinds... I'd love to get to a point where I can talk to visitors about the simple fact that living on this land, you are benefiting from genocide. Which is a very sensitive thing. I'm still shaping it, still working on that. (Amie Durenberger Interview).

On the other hand, within the historical site master frame, this prognostic framing was expressed in yet another way. Based on an interview with the Historic Fort Snelling Program Specialist, both the historical fort and the Minnesota Historical Society are actively trying to include more of a Dakota perspective in their discourse. Contrary to Fort Snelling State Park, the historical fort is primarily interested in furthering the many meanings or many interpretations approach. Rather than intentionally including critical Dakota perspectives which might challenge the historical site master frame as a whole, the historical fort seems to be more interested in telling Dakota stories in a manufactured or neutral way. There is at least some discussion behind closed doors about including more voices and perspectives, which includes the need to include Dakota stories of place.

I do think that it is safe to say that throughout, that everybody would like, I mean from the ground here, our costume interpreters to Steve Elliot in the director's chair and the Board, I think everybody would like to see the fort become a vibrant, more inclusive, more relevant place. I think that would be fair to say. (Program Specialist Interview).

Although this diagnostic frame is listed under the Dakota place master frame because it is clearly the origin point of it, the overall findings indicate that it is present in varying forms throughout each of the master frames. Before moving on, it should be noted that there was also one unique suggestion on how this might be achieved in a truly balanced way.

One solution that was brought up during an interview with some Dakota folks was to put up a Dakota run museum on site at the Historic Fort Snelling. The idea would be to put the museum in one of the multiple unused buildings on site. This notion arose because the Minnesota Historical Society is currently working on proposals for how to use these unused spaces. The creation of such a museum would allow for Dakota people to tell their own story and it would ensure that their perspectives on the area would be better represented. This was a unique solution that came up within the overall prognostic frame to include more Dakota perspectives.

We've looked at those buildings and thought wouldn't it be wonderful if one of them were a museum for Dakota people. In fact, we're going to take that up with the director of the Minnesota Historical Society because the Ojibwe have a museum at Mille Lacs that's part of the MHS, but there's no Dakota museum. (Gwen Westerman Interview).

The Minnesota Historical Society should create a Holocaust museum in Minnesota dedicated to educating the public about the genocide perpetrated against Dakota people. It would be an important reparative gesture. (Waziyatawin 2008:105).

*Diagnostic framing: misunderstanding the core problem.*

Perhaps one of the most unique diagnostic frames arose out of an interview with a Dakota elder who wished to remain anonymous. It is important to note that this particular diagnostic frame only arose in this one interview. This brings up valid questions as to whether or not this perspective can really be considered a shared interpersonal framing dynamic or if it is just this particular individual's perspective. In reply, I suggest that the following should be strongly considered. First, Dakota cultural traditions hold elders in high esteem which often implies that their perspectives are shared, or at a minimum respected, by the community at large. Additionally, the specific elder interviewed was recommended by a variety of Dakota people as someone with a significant amount of Dakota cultural understanding and therefore, his perspective was confirmed to be one that is considered valuable by various Dakota people. Given these circumstances, I felt it was necessary to include this perspective in the results despite the fact that the framing dynamic only arose in one instance.

This particular interview was perhaps one of the richest in its abundance of information shared that often went far beyond what was sought with interview questions. After being asked about what problems he saw with the various disputes over the area where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet, this Dakota elder gave an interesting reply. It was explained that one of the core issues was actually the misunderstanding of what the true issues were. He noted that many people, myself included, were focusing on issues around various sacred lands and what should be done with them. This focus was mistaken. Instead, the true problem was why all people were straying from their original instructions. The point made by this Dakota elder carries within it elements of frame

transformation. Rather than accepting the various preceding diagnostic frames as primary, this individual expressed a qualitatively different core problem. In order to delineate the connections between this frame transformation of the core problem to other framing processes, further details need to be explained.

According to this Dakota elder, all people came to earth with the instructions to work together. Different peoples had different traditions that were all meant to enrich one another. He said the true issue that needs to be understood is how Dakota people became “Indians”. In other words, how they came to be treated as less than human. According to him, this was a core problem that needed to be addressed before issues revolving around sacred lands, because it is still an issue today.

They couldn't look at us as equal or as people. They had to destroy us. They had to treat us as non-people. We weren't people, we were almost as animals. We had to be controlled or killed off. (Dakota Elder Interview).

Based on this diagnostic frame, the problem is the way Dakota people were thought of as Indians, and somehow less than human. This elder said that it is important to ask how and why Dakota people were dehumanized as Indians and removed from the state, and why we all are not following our original instructions to work together? Hence, this diagnostic frame argues for a revision of what questions are the most important to ask and answer. This point also ties into the identity framing that will be discussed later in the chapter. For now it is sufficient to note that he felt this was a core problem that needed to be addressed, which has various connections to prognostic frames that also arose.

A key problem embedded in the diagnostic frame noted by this Dakota elder relates to Dakota cultural traditions. Historically, when Dakota people were first

dehumanized and treated as “Indians” in the state of Minnesota, there was also a strong push to acculturate and assimilate them into the newly arrived Euro-American way of life (Bdote Memory Map 2007c; Dakota Elder Interview; Wilson 2005). Although the dynamics of this process are beyond the reaches of the present study, it is necessary to note that one of the effects of these assimilation practices has been the near loss of the Dakota language and cultural practices today. This was an important connection that was pointed out during the interview. Therefore, the implication is that before issues of land can be dealt with, Dakota people must first reclaim their identities and cultural practices. Only then will they be prepared to deal with other problems facing their people. It is this point that subtly embeds this transformed diagnostic frame, dealing primarily with identity, within the larger Dakota place master frame and its strategic framing processes.

*Prognostic framing: dealing with core cultural problems first.*

A prognostic frame that was apparent in a variety of interviews dealt with the need to address core problems within Dakota communities before dealing with issues of sacred lands and who is controlling them. These core issues revolved around keeping Dakota culture and identity intact for the coming generations. Often times, this took on the form of continued cultural and language training for younger people. According to the Dakota people that highlighted this need, maintaining Dakota cultural identity serves as a basis by which other issues can then be addressed in an appropriate manner. In understanding the Dakota language and culture, Dakota people are able to embody Dakota values<sup>10</sup> when addressing other problems facing their communities. Based on interviews, this is a key part of healing for Dakota people today. Given the fact that Dakota language and culture has literally had a war waged against it, it is in need of

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix A for a list of Dakota cultural values as explained by the Dakota elder.

immediate efforts to keep it alive. Therefore, multiple Dakota people expressed the importance of these efforts as the first solution that requires focus.

We have to heal our hearts. Our hearts have to be healed in order to speak Dakota. You have to look at yourself and find out if your heart is healed. There's a lot of work to be done. We haven't started yet. Because we don't know where to start. (Dakota Elder Interview).

I understand that we're all human, we're all people. I don't believe that my race is above another and I don't believe that my race is below another. I believe it's all one equal field. On the other hand, I need my people to be aware first before I worry about the world... I want my people to be aware of their language, I want my people to be aware of their beautiful history, their culture. I want my own people to know that we're more than beads and feathers on the weekend, you know what I mean. That we're more than just powwow. We descend from some of the most beautiful ancestors ever to walk this earth. We descend from that. (Redwing Thomas Interview).

I know the reason I'm here is to help with this Dakota language. That's what I was put here for, to learn the language and help others learn it. To pass that on to the next generation. Our language tells us who we are and our language is based upon our way of life; if we can learn our language, it's the key to living our way of life. If we do that it will connect us back to our relatives and that's everything all around us... If we can learn that language then we can see these places are special, they're sacred. When you say sacred, it's Wakan, which means life and that's where life is; at these places. (Sisoka Duta Interview).

I think that there's ongoing efforts amongst Dakota people to train the next generation to continue the struggle and that we aren't going away. The issue is not going to go away. Our claim to that place is not going to go away. It will continue. We know it's going to be a long struggle. (Wazyatawin Interview).

#### *A place of Dakota genesis (sub) frame*

##### *Diagnostic framing: the issue of institutions controlling Dakota sacred lands.*

The problem of state run institutions controlling Dakota sacred lands is central to the Dakota place master frame. This includes both the Historic Fort Snelling which is run by the Minnesota Historical Society and the Fort Snelling State Park run by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Because the area is a Dakota place and has been understood as such by Dakota people for centuries before European immigrants

arrived on the banks of the Mississippi, the Dakota people interviewed and the discourse documents sampled indicate that the area belongs under Dakota control. Hence, having other institutions control the area is highly problematic to Dakota people in this study.

Their [MHS and DNR] interest in self-preservation as an entity and their interest regarding their control over that site prevents them from actually engaging in acts of justice. Anything less than that [returning the lands to Dakota control] is about colonial oversight and their maintenance of control and power over Dakota sacred sites and historic sites. (Waziyatawin Interview).

There are multiple elements connected to this diagnostic frame. The first part of this issue deals in general with the fact that there is any sort of development on what is considered sacred land to the Dakota people.

The issue of development on sacred lands is connected to a variety of frameworks with the Dakota place master frame including the importance of the area as a place of genesis and its power or the fact that it is wakan. Because the land is sacred, it is a problem that it is developed and that white Minnesotans do not acknowledge the Dakota understanding of the land. The land not only needs to be protected, but white Minnesotans also need to acknowledge and respect the Dakota understanding of the area as sacred. It is also problematic that the site is protected for its role in colonizing Dakota people rather than for its importance to Dakota people (Westerman and White 2012:211-222).

I don't think that they [state park] should exist at that site. I think that it should all be Dakota people. I don't think the site should be open for people, I think it should be a place for Dakota people to come to pray and honor our ancestors, to teach our youth about the sacredness of that site. I don't think it should be a recreational spot for white Minnesotans. So I think they need to get the hell out of there. (Waziyatawin Interview).

In addition to the problem of development on sacred land, another issue arises in relation to the fact that the area is considered sacred. As a sacred site, there are certain

cultural events that must take place according to Dakota traditions (Bdote Memory Map 2007c; Sisoka Duta Interview; Westerman and White 2012:211-222). Because the area where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet is wakan and sacred to Dakota people, it is an important place for cultural ceremonies to be held. This relates to the power that the area has as well as to the fact that it is the site of their creation or genesis. There are a variety of ceremonies that are prescribed to be held in the area according to Dakota spiritual traditions. However, because of the state park and Historic Fort Snelling, Dakota people do not have the ability to hold these ceremonies as they used to. Although Fort Snelling State Park has openly stated that Dakota people are welcome to the park and to do ceremonies at the park without paying an admission fee, the nature of the area as a state park prevents Dakota people from having the necessary privacy to complete many of their ceremonies.

Like Bdote, yeah I can go down there right now and use the park. But, say if we wanted to go down there and have ceremonies down there, we have to worry about people walking by; hikers, bikers, somebody wants to come by and take out their phone and start making a video to put on YouTube or Facebook; we have to worry about all that stuff. (Sisoka Duta Interview).

The inability to conduct spiritual ceremonies freely is a significant problem among Dakota people related to the overall diagnostic frame which problematizes institutions controlling these lands. The site of Bdote is historically and culturally significant in ways that require Dakota people to take care of the land. Part of their caretaking role is to conduct specific ceremonies in the area. Therefore, their inability to do so is a significant part of the overall diagnostic frames within the Dakota place master frame.

When we ask them to acknowledge that we were here first and set aside time for us to do these things [ceremonies], they don't want to do it. They say they keep it



under the idea that we have to keep it open to everyone for equality. That's not really equal...How is that fair to us [Dakota people]? (Sisoka Duta Interview).

*Prognostic framing: allowing there to be a space for spiritual reverence and ceremonies.*

One key strategic frame that is connected to the areas significance is the prognostic frame that argues for a need to allow spiritual ceremonies and acts of reverence related to place to happen in the area. This is a key argument made by various Dakota people interviewed and in the discourse documents sampled given the area's cultural significance to them. This strategic frame was also found in interviews with Fort Snelling State Park employees. However, it was not present in any sampling done of Historic Fort Snelling discourse documents or in interviews with employees. This was not surprising given the clear difference in Dakota representation at these two distinct institutions which control portions of the land. This exemplifies one of several inter-frame disputes that will be analyzed in further detail in the final section of this chapter.

*Prognostic framing: the area should be returned to Dakota people.*

The current and perhaps most significant prognostic frame argues that the land should simply be returned to the Dakota people. This strategic framing was prevalent in various discourse documents sampled and in some interviews. The solution to return Dakota lands takes on various elements depending on which Dakota person one talks to.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, the overall point of the strategic frame argues that the land should be returned to Dakota people because of its cultural, spiritual, historical, and present day significance to them.

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<sup>11</sup> This comment is made in reference to an interview with a Dakota person who had spent significant time interviewing and talking to Dakota people from all over. During the interview it was noted that there was a wide range of ideas on what form land return should most appropriately take when it comes to Dakota sacred sites like Bdote.

I think that has to be a place where we can reconnect with mother earth and we have to take away that place of fighting and killing and military presence and let our spiritual leaders, our elders, let them come and be comfortable and let them make decisions about what should be done with that land. So far, nobody has taken the effort to find who these people are and then invite them down. We should bring a group and let them decide among themselves. (David Larsen, Bdote Memory Map 2007c).

It should just be turned over to the Dakota people. If it could be returned to our control that would be great. I don't know what the process for that would be... If there would be a council or group of elders or spiritual leaders that would be appointed to oversee it, that would be good. We would control what happens there, the whole use of the land. We've been here for millennia, it's my personal belief that this is where we were created. (Sisoka Duta Interview).

If we think deeply about this issue, we would prefer the land unburdened by the weight of a U.S. fort, a land returned to its original pristine condition, and a land under Dakota care that we could use for Dakota purposes. (Waziyatawin 2008:104-105).

It must be noted that there is an implicit problem within this prognostic frame. As noted, an argument that is commonly made among various Dakota people is to return the land to Dakota people because of its significance. However, this solution is fraught with limitations and obstacles. One major problem with this solution is that there exists no single unified Dakota tribe.<sup>12</sup> This presents a huge problem when arguing that the area should be returned to Dakota people.

In a perfect world, it would be nice if that could be returned to somehow. But, who is it going to be returned to? Who? There is no unified Minnesota Dakota tribe, community, people, or nation. Who's going to take care of it or decide what happens to it. In a perfect world, Dakota people could say this is what should happen to the reconstructed fort or the state park. (Gwen Westerman Interview).

Despite the ideal of having the area returned, this notion is not plausible if there is no single group to receive it. The descendants of the original Dakota from Minnesota are scattered throughout the United States and Canada due to their ancestors forced exile

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<sup>12</sup> This issue was noted in multiple interviews and is also based on the researcher's familiarity with Dakota culture.

from Minnesota. Therefore, as the prognostic frame of returning the land to the Dakota people was noted in multiple interviews, so were the problems related to whom the land would actually be returned.

*A colonial icon (sub) frame*

*Diagnostic framing: the problem of continual colonization and the celebration of colonial icons.*

This diagnostic frame has several interwoven elements worth noting. First, the continual imposition of Western culture on Dakota people is seen as highly problematic from the Dakota place master framework. Further, the fact that this is openly celebrated is also problematic. This issue of diagnostic framing is most closely linked to the frame of the area as a colonial icon, referring specifically to the Historic Fort Snelling. The celebrations that are common around Fort Snelling often celebrate narratives of westward expansion, frontier days, and American militarism while diminishing or overlooking Dakota stories of loss and suffering. In this way, the frame of this area as a celebration of Euro-American history is highly problematized in the colonial icon frame.

So what you have is this bizarre twisted story that doesn't make sense. Where on the one hand, yeah, some people call this genocide while on the other, but look, you can bake pies here. You can have little girls running around with bonnets and gingham dresses and playing ring around the rosy and isn't that beautiful, isn't that sweet. *You can't condemn genocide on the one hand and then celebrate all that was gained from genocide on the other.* [Emphasis added] (Waziyatawin Interview).

Rather than examining the fort as an army post for the United States military that presaged the invasion and colonization of Dakota lands and the extermination and ethnic cleansing of Dakota people, they depict the fort as a benign presence in Minnesota that helped tame some kind of wilderness. (Waziyatawin 2008:101-102).

Considering the fort as representative of the continual colonization of Dakota people helps to reveal the other dimensions of this diagnostic frame. The next problem that arises relates to the celebration of the Historic Fort Snelling as implied in the previous quote. Based on the idea of the fort as representative of colonialism and the great suffering caused by it from the Dakota perspective, it is highly problematic that there is such a celebratory atmosphere at the Historic Fort Snelling.

When we walked into the Historic Fort that Friday morning, I thought, “This is an amusement park”. There were re-enactors, there was a little store, there were children running and playing, everything was well manicured. Very different from the outside where they’re trying to restore the natural planting around that area. But it was like an amusement park. All of the horrible things I had that had happened there to us as Dakota people, they weren’t there for me. (Gwen Westerman Interview).

Fort Snelling not only refrains from mentioning the concentration camp, hangings, genocide, and ethnic cleansing, thereby denying that history; it also actively promotes a *celebratory* narrative. For example, Historic Fort Snelling encourages tourism not to teach people about the dangers of white supremacy or colonialism, but to offer a place where white people can fulfill white fantasies. Interpreters dressed up in 1820s period costumes *nostalgically* relive a *mythic past* they help create while visitors to the site can walk away believing once again in the wholesomeness of manifest destiny ideology and American frontier settlement. [Emphasis added] (Waziyatawin 2008:106-107).

There are clearly layers of dimension to this issue. The first dimension is the fact that the actual fort is by and large a replica of the original. This is problematic in two core ways. For one, visitors to the Historical Fort Snelling are relatively unaware of the fact that it is not even the original fort aside from two guard towers. The fort was in such disrepair in the 1960’s that it required near total restoration (Historic Fort Snelling 2014n). Hence, the actual Historic Fort Snelling has long since fallen to the ground. Another source of frustration for Dakota people is that the state of Minnesota continues to invest in this colonial icon (Waziyatawin 2008). The fact that money is continually

invested in maintaining such a controversial historical site adds insult to injury for some Dakota people.

First of all, it's not even really the Historic Fort. The *real* fort *crumbled* and was run down. There is only a tiny part of it that is the real fort and then they built a *replica* of the fort. I don't call it Historic Fort Snelling, it's like Replica of Fort Snelling. I guess *that's the controversy* for me. It's like why do we need Fort Snelling there? People always think of it as Historic Fort Snelling, but *they don't even know* that it was rebuilt. *It's a replica*. It's like you're trying to preserve this romanticized past of frontier life that the Europeans came here and built this fort and brought civilization and all these great things to what we call Bdoté. To them it's like something great that Fort Snelling represents, this manifest destiny that they're bringing progress. [Emphasis added] (Sisoka Duta Interview).

I don't know how long Minnesotans will continue to invest in that icon. Some of the most avid supporters are veterans, people who are invested in the military, the American armed forces, American imperialism. That population is probably not going to change their minds about the fort. Again, the one thing I know for sure is that the fort will crumble, it will come down eventually, and eventually there will be a generation of Minnesotans that does not want to invest the millions of dollars in upkeep to keep that symbol alive. (Waziyatawin Interview).

A final dimension to the issue of the Historic Fort Snelling being celebrated is the fact that such celebration almost entirely overlooks the suffering Dakota people faced at the fort. This dimension connects directly to the framing of the area and the actual Fort Snelling itself as a site of genocide for Dakota people. For Dakota people, they did not just face some challenges at Fort Snelling, it is literally a site of a concentration camp where their ancestors were held before being forcefully removed from the state. Because it was the site of a concentration camp for Dakota people, the area plays a key role in the criteria of genocide that were met. It is highly problematic that any sort of celebratory atmosphere could exist at such a site.

It's like you don't even know what you're celebrating. Would they celebrate at one of the concentration camps in Germany? You can even have birthday parties at Fort Snelling. Nobody would have a birthday party at Auschwitz. They wouldn't make light of that at all. But yet, *here in America we can celebrate these things*, the colonization and genocide of Dakota people or other Indian people

because nobody knows what happened. They don't realize that these places are where we were wiped out. Now that's where Fort Snelling sits. [Emphasis added] (Sisoka Duta Interview).

The Fort Snelling literature makes no mention of the fort as an outpost of American imperialism that served as a harbinger of the establishment of American military dominance in the Dakota homeland of Minisota Makoce. (Waziyatawin 2008:100-101).

*Prognostic framing: the solution to decolonize and remove iconic markers.*

The overall proposed solution to this issue is to decolonize<sup>13</sup> on a variety of levels. First and foremost, it is argued that the destruction of these colonial icons must take place. This aspect is best represented in the campaign to take down the fort. This prognostic framing has been spearheaded by Waziyatawin along with other Dakota activists. Given the history of the fort as a site of genocide and ethnic cleansing as well as its representation as an icon of American imperialism, this group of Dakota people advocate that the fort should be taken down. According to Waziyatawin's book *What Does Justice Look Like*, the fort needs to be taken down and white Minnesotans need to restore the site to pristine condition and return the land to Dakota people (2008:109).

If we similarly invest in the demolition of Fort Snelling as a symbol of the Dakota reclamation of our homeland, then when we take down the fort, we will be setting ourselves on a new course of history, a course toward liberation. (Waziyatawin 2008:112).

However, this is just a small part of the larger decolonization process advocated by various Dakota peoples. Other key efforts include a decolonization of the thinking process of both Dakota people and non-native Minnesotans. This is connected to the need for telling the story from a Dakota perspective and including the various elements of the Dakota place master frame. The process of decolonization also includes the reclamation

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<sup>13</sup> See Waziyatawin's *What Does Justice Look Like* (2008) for a thorough discussion on decolonization in Minnesota.

of Dakota culture and language by Dakota people as well as various other elements that will be elaborated upon in the context of the most relevant frames.

When violence and nastiness of the imperial business is unmasked, we must question the morality of continuing to celebrate Minnesota's imperial and colonial icons. With that unmasking, not only do we realize that we cannot celebrate those icons, we also realize we must pursue a campaign to "take down the fort," both literally and metaphorically. While this phrase applies most tangibly to historic Fort Snelling, the site of the Dakota concentration camp during the winter of 1862-63, it also applies to all monuments, institutions, place names, and texts that continue to celebrate the perpetrators of genocide or the institutions and systems that facilitated the implementation of genocidal and unjust policies. (Waziyatawin 2008:11-12).

*Prognostic framing: preserve the fort as a reminder and tell the whole story.*

One strategic frame used by some Dakota people that was found in various discourse documents was the idea that the fort should be preserved. Various Dakota people from the discourse documents and interviews argued that the Historic Fort Snelling should remain on the land in order to serve as a reminder of the tragedies that happened there, including the genocide and ethnic cleansing of Dakota people. A key part of this prognostic frame is the argument that the full story needs to be told of Dakota people's suffering if the fort is to remain. Thus, this prognostic frame is interwoven with the strategic frame that argues for the full story of the area to be told.

Sometimes getting rid of things doesn't have the effect that you want. For example, sometimes books may have been written in the 1800's which were disparaging to Indian people. But to get rid of them shows more about the author than anything. If there's a racist book out there written in the 1800's, why would we want to get rid of it when it shows what the attitudes of the people in the 1800's were. Do you want to hide that? I don't understand that logic because you can never get rid of anything. So if you get rid of Fort Snelling because it was a symbol of colonialism, then it's no longer a symbol of colonialism. Colonialism still existed at the time. Gosh if you're feeling hurt by that, I think maybe you better work on yourself and get some healing [Laughter]. (Walter Labatte Interview, U.S. - Dakota War 2014a).

I think that if anything, it should be preserved. But along with that you need to tell the whole story because it would serve as a memorial to the people that were there and kept there as they were being exiled out of the state of Minnesota. I see it in very much the same way that you would look at a cemetery. You put up a beautiful monument to remember your loved ones and when you go there you think about them. You think good things about them, or you remember them. There isn't anything real good to remember about that place at the internment camp, but it's still a memorial that needs to be maintained and kept there. (Elden Lawrence Interview, U.S. - Dakota War 2014a).

### A State Park Master Frame: Diagnostic and Prognostic Frames

*Diagnostic framing: the problem of lumping all the institutions together.*

One important issue that was mentioned in interviews with Fort Snelling State Park staff was the problem of people lumping various institutions together. For example, frustration was expressed with the situation of so many people lumping the Historical Fort Snelling site together with the Fort Snelling State Park and just calling it "Fort Snelling". This can be particularly challenging when people are making criticisms of representations at "Fort Snelling". In one interview, it was specifically requested that this research underscore that there is not a generic place that we can understand as Fort Snelling, but rather a variety of sites run by different institutions.

But help them to understand the difference between the areas out here. We are not Historic Fort Snelling, we are not the Minnesota Historical Society. We work with them on a daily basis and respect their professionalism and their commitment as well. We're different. We're DNR. We're Fort Snelling State Park. People shouldn't lump everybody together in this big banner called 'Fort Snelling' because there are lots of layers to that onion. I guess that's the one thing I want to leave you with. ... Understand where you are when you're making judgments about this thing you're calling 'Fort Snelling', understand a little about the land and what happened where and which pieces mean what. That's my personal frustration. That people don't do their homework and they try to lump everything into a big ball that becomes meaningless unless you know which piece you're talking about. (Larry Peterson Interview).



As this research has helped to reveal, what we commonly call “Fort Snelling” is indeed an area of great complexity. It is divided by major institutions that have dominion over the landscape and it is also even more divided in terms of the meanings it holds for various people. Hence, this point was well made and should be taken into consideration for anyone interested in the area.

*Prognostic framing: understand the complexity of the area.*

As the above quote so clearly states, the solution to this problem is to understand the complexity of the area commonly referred to as Fort Snelling. This is, of course, one of the primary objectives of the present research. It is important to understand the diversity of meanings, institutions, and peoples that intersect in this special place. It is useful to clearly identify what aspect of the meanings and institutions that promote them are seen as problematic. Therefore, it is necessary to know “which piece you’re talking about” (Larry Peterson Interview). Although this may seem obvious, it was an important diagnostic and prognostic framing set that arose early on and continually reappeared throughout the research.

*A place of multiple meanings (sub) frame*

*Diagnostic framing: a problem of insufficient collaboration.*

Another key issue that arose in interviews with state park employees was the problem of collaboration with Dakota people. Despite the fact that the state park has an ongoing history of collaboration with Dakota people, some felt that more collaboration would be beneficial. This issue is deeply connected to the park’s many stories frame. As previously noted, the state park’s many stories approach is much more inclusive to the Dakota people’s narratives and meanings than Historic Fort Snelling is. Again, this can

be seen in sheer numbers whereas 55% of Fort Snelling State Park's displays and markers include Dakota perspectives while only 14% of the Historic Fort Snellings displays and markers do. Interestingly, various displays at the state park were actually authored by Dakota people. Further, content from programs dealing with Dakota people are also checked by Dakota people before being run. Nevertheless, park employees maintain that there still is not enough collaboration.

I would just love to see a better cooperation; a more closely knit connection between the Dakota people and the state park. (Amie Durenberger Interview).

*Prognostic framing: the need for closer collaboration.*

Of course, the simplest and most direct response to the issue of collaboration is to have more collaboration. This is a solution that is actively, although gradually, being pursued by Fort Snelling State Park staff. It is an important prognostic frame within the present research because it is central to the parks overall long term goals (Larry Peterson Interview). Again, the park does try to remain open and in communication with Dakota visitors to the area. Dakota people are welcomed and given a space to do their ceremonies when possible. Although this situation is not ideal for Dakota people (see diagnostic frames in the Dakota place master frame), it is a goal that the park is actively working towards.

## Chapter VI

### Frame Disputes and Contested Meanings

This section corresponds to the third and final set of questions that drove the research: Is there a frame dispute taking place? If so, what are the dimensions of the frame dispute in terms of framing contests and counterframings? What are the implications of these frames for the identity of those involved in terms of the concepts of protagonists, antagonists, victims, supporting cast and audiences? These questions represent the last and most captivating aspect of the study. For clarity purposes, the findings to these questions will be organized under the broad sections of inter-frame disputes over the meaning of the area, inter-frame disputes over prognostic frames, intra-frame disputes within the master frames, and finally a section on the identity roles that were evident.

#### Inter-Frame Disputes: Contesting What The Area Means

##### *Dispute over whether the area is primarily a state park or a Dakota place*

This particular dispute is taking place between those using the Dakota place master frame and those using the state park master frame. The core issue of this dispute is over who has control of the land and the way it is defined. Essentially, it amounts to a frame contest (Boykoff 1999; Ryan 1991) over who controls the definition of the area. As the present research indicates, the power to define a place is significant in terms of how we understand both the past and the present as well as in how a given place can be used.

That is powerful; to define what kind of place it is. Is it a Dakota place or is it a state park? If it's a state park, that's how it's defined as a state park. That carries a lot of weight with its definition; this is public land that can be used by anybody. At the state park, there's no special place for the Dakota people. (Sisoka Duta Interview).

As this remark indicates, the power of defining a place is significant beyond merely what it is called. Much more is at stake in the power to define a place. In the instance of where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet, the frame contest over the disputed meaning of the area is significant in its implications for Dakota people and greater Minnesotans.

Many proponents of the Dakota master frame argue that the area is first and foremost a Dakota place. A multitude of historical and cultural factors, which were noted in the details of the master frame, come to play in this argument. On the other hand, institutional actors within the state park also claim to have a broad definition of the area. Each of these definitions of place represent significant indexes that carry with them a plethora of implications for how the area is to be used. Given the difference between the prognostic frames on land use within these two master frames, this frame contest represents a substantial point of dispute.

*Dispute over the way the historic fort is remembered and represented*

This frame dispute exists between proponents of the historical site and the Dakota place master frames. There are various dimensions to this dispute. First, the way in which the area is represented by the Minnesota Historical Society is disputed. Further, the apparent intentional overlooking of Dakota grievances over this issue carries with it important dimensions of counterframing that were noted in the literature review. Each of these factors are useful to note in understanding the dimensions of this frame dispute.

As noted in the historical site master frame, the area is given two core meanings. First and foremost, it is a place of historical significance. Second, it is a site that represents many things to many people. Despite the many meanings approach by MHS, the core frame or story that is told about the area is how Fort Snelling was of great import to the foundation of the state of Minnesota. This story is celebrated today as a primary meaning attached to the fort. It remains to be the overall tone of the Historic Fort Snelling despite the fact that diagnostic frames both within the historical site and Dakota place master frames noted this as problematic given the tragedies that took place in the area. Dakota people in the sample take issue with this point.

It's like you're trying to preserve this romanticized past of frontier life that the Europeans came here and built this fort and brought civilization and all these great things to what we call Bdote. To them it's like something great that Fort Snelling represents, this manifest destiny that they're bringing progress. But to us, it doesn't represent that at all. It represents the colonization and genocide of our people. (Sisoka Duta Interview).

So, I took the tour with her [Historical Fort Staff] and she said her position was that it's a complex site, it's a complex story and can't easily be told, and it's more than just Dakota people, it's more than just the internment camp, (she didn't say concentration camp). It's more than all of that and it's our job to help tell all of the stories so we aren't biased toward Dakota people. And I told her at the time, I said, there's one narrative that could be told at this site that encompasses all of those things, all of the things you cover, and that's the story of American imperialism. It would explain the invasion of Dakota land, the violation of treaties, the treatment of Dakota people, opening up the flood gates for white invasion. It would explain it being the launching pad for other military expeditions in other places at other times, and it would explain all of the 20th century interpretation that you've done here. It would encompass everything. It's a narrative that allows for a coherent and logical explanation of everything that has happened here. That's pretty easy, that's pretty simple, and it's not a complex story at all... You can't celebrate manifest destiny and then condemn what happened to the poor Indigenous people. Those stories don't make sense together. (Wazyatawin Interview).

For proponents of the Dakota place master frame, it is a highly problematic idea that the fort can both be celebrated and remembered as a site of genocide at the same

time. Therefore, the Dakota place master frame understands the fort as a representative of a dark and painful past that contained genocide, ethnic cleansing and forced removals. The central issue of the dispute at hand is over how the Historic Fort Snelling is remembered and represented today. Despite Dakota people demanding that the truth of Fort Snelling be told, the Minnesota Historical Society maintains its claim that the fort has many meanings and the Dakota perspective as noted is only one of them. In this way, the historical site master frame maintains the dominance of the Euro-American meta-narrative of “progress”. Because those proponents of the historical site master frame represent a socially dominant group based on the present and on historical race inequalities within the United States, this frame dispute also contains elements that can be described as counterframing.

Counterframing arises when a group’s frame is being contested or counterframed, often by another group with greater social dominance or power (Benford and Hunt 1992; Zuo and Benford 1995). In the present frame dispute over how Fort Snelling is represented today, it is clear that those proponents of the historical site frame are actively counterframing Dakota people’s push to have the area reframed. Essentially, it appears that the many meanings approach taken by the Minnesota Historical Society is the tool by which this counterframing is taking place. This factor adds yet another significant layer to the complexity of this issue. For the purpose of the present research, it is sufficient to note that this frame dispute is taking place. There does appear to be empirical support for the argument that the Minnesota Historical Society, as a dominant social group, is actively counterframing Dakota people’s attempts to have the area re-interpreted in a way that is critical of stories centered in Euro-American values.

*Dispute over the use of the term concentration camp or internment camp*

Another noteworthy inter-frame dispute exists regarding the present framing of a historical event. In the winter of 1862-1863, Dakota people were held at Fort Snelling before being removed from the state of Minnesota per orders from the Governor. Officially, this was known as the Dakota Expulsion Act of 1863. According to discourses sampled representing the Dakota people and their perspectives, this was a highly oppressive experience. All Dakota people sampled through interviews and secondary discourses considered Fort Snelling to be a prison camp at that time. In fact, in 1997 the Indian Affairs Council decided that the Fort Snelling camp, which had been formerly called an “internment” camp, qualified to be labeled a “concentration” camp (Larry Peterson Interview; Waziyatawin 2008). This change of frames represented a significant victory for people championing the argument that what happened to Dakota people in Minnesota constituted genocide. It also represents an extraordinarily substantial change of meanings given the cultural weight carried by each of these terms. However, this very issue represents an ongoing major dispute over how the area should be understood between the three master frames elicited in this study.

Interestingly, both Fort Snelling State Park as an institution (which includes its employees) and the Dakota people represented in the sample use the term concentration camp over internment camp. This was clearly noted in interviews with Fort Snelling State Park staff and Dakota people as well as their corresponding discourse documents. Nevertheless, Historic Fort Snelling still by and large uses the term internment camp on the few displays that even mention Dakota people. This difference represents a major point of dispute between those professing the Dakota place master frame and those

backing the historical site master frame. According to interviews with Fort Snelling State Park employees, the park and its staff choose to use the term concentration camp based on the request of the Indian Affairs Council and that to them, it seems to be the appropriate term. Yet, this view does not seem to be shared among those responsible for programmatic content at the Historic Fort Snelling.

We use the term concentration camp. Not everybody does. The interpretive community at DNR parks and trails, early on, chose that term to use in the interpretive material here in the visitor center... There are people that argue that one word or the other should be used exclusively and I'm not...or... I don't choose sides with that. I choose which word we want to use here in our park and we use concentration camp. (Larry Peterson Interview).

In contrast to genocide where I've never had a visitor say this wasn't genocide, I have had visitors with views very strong one way or another for the use of concentration camp and internment camp. It's super complicated. To my understanding, internment means a place that they were meant to be held at and then moved. Concentration camp has some more, again using the word extermination, efforts to it. Kind of a plot to diminish numbers a little bit... From my experiences, more Dakota people think it's a concentration camp and more non-natives think it's an internment camp. That's a generalization but that's been my personal experience. I talk about one reason that I prefer to call it a concentration camp, which is that the BIA officially recognizes it as a concentration camp...which is a huge thing. It is also good to remember that this is not my story, this is not my experience, it's not my relatives experience; so an individual that this is an experience of their family, they have more of a right to claim what it should be called... For me overall, it is an issue of respect. And if the people who were involved in the situation believe and think and feel that this was a concentration camp, I respect that and their right to call it that. (Amie Durenberger Interview, Fort Snelling State Park).

When you look at the concentration camp historic sites in Europe, you cannot avoid the discussion. It's right there. But places like Fort Snelling have so many threads of stories in history, so many different perspectives, that make that [actually using the term concentration camp instead of internment camp] challenging. (Program Specialist Interview, Historic Fort Snelling).

One of the two concentration camps here in Minnesota, one in Mankato and one was also here in Fort Snelling. This was for 1700 women, children and elders. Here at this place, hundreds of people were killed during the cold winter of 1862-63... People wonder why I'm using the word 'killed'. I'm using it because I'm referring to one of the five criteria of the genocide convention of 1948 [The UN genocide convention]. In there, it states that to deliberately inflict conditions of



life upon a group calculated to bring about the destruction of that group in whole or in part and that's what happened here [Fort Snelling]. (Chris Mato Nunpa, Bdote Memory Map 2007c).

Referring to the Minnesota Historical Society refusal to use the term concentration camp:

The institution continues to refrain from using accurate terminology to describe the crimes against humanity perpetrated upon the Dakota, and it continues to present a benign narrative of Euro-American invasion and settlement. In essence, the MHS remains opposed to describing aspects of Minnesota's history that cast a dark shadow on the Wasicu settlers who have called our lands their home. Unless Dakota people were in complete control of such a facility, it is highly unlikely that the MHS would tell the shameful truth of Minnesota's history of genocide at that site. (Waziyatawin 2008:105).

Another element that is connected to the way that the past of the area is defined relates to disputes over how the fort was actually used in that period. Some white Minnesotans claim that the fort was used in that period for the protection of Dakota people (U.S. – Dakota War 2014a). This argument is used as reasoning for not using the term concentration camp. The notion is that Dakota people were somehow forcefully marched there, held there, and then expelled from their homelands for their own good. In response to the idea that Dakota people were force marched to Fort Snelling as a concentration camp:

The Indians taken to Fort Snelling were not forced marched. It took about seven days to travel that, maybe a hundred and forty miles, twenty miles a day. That's not a great distance to travel and there was food along the way. (John Labatte, U.S.-Dakota War 2014a).

However, critical Dakota voices are quick to dispel such notions as a way of rationalizing the treatment of Dakota people and justifying the system of white privilege that remains in the state today.

Fort Snelling did not protect Dakota people. Rather, it served to concentrate and subjugate our population as Minnesotans prepared to remove us from our

homeland. (Waziyatawin 2008:46).

In sum, this remains as a provocative and dynamic part of the dispute over how the area is framed both presently and historically.

### Inter-Frame Disputes Over Prognostic Frames

#### *Dispute over land access for Dakota ceremonial use*

Central to the dispute regarding the overall framing of the area is a disagreement over prognostic frames dealing with the use of the land. The first inter-frame dispute exists between the Dakota place master frame and the state park master frame.

Specifically, there is a dispute over the exact nature of what free ceremonial use should look like on state park controlled land. Proponents of both master frames hold the need for Dakota people to freely use the area for ceremonies as a key prognostic frame.

Therefore, the difference between how Dakota people and the Fort Snelling State Park conceptualize this strategic frame requires elaboration.

Within the Dakota place master frame, this prognostic frame takes on a decidedly different approach than it does in the state park master frame. Multiple Dakota interviewees expressed a desire to have a greater access to the area in a way that is totally free from outside institutional controls. They have expressed a desire to visit the area freely and conduct their requisite ceremonies without interruption. However, as noted earlier, part of the problem that Dakota people see is that the area remains under the control of the state park. It is at this point where a dispute reveals itself.

Fort Snelling State Park and its employees agree with the prognostic frame that claims the area needs to be open for use for Dakota spiritual purposes. This was evident in both its discourse documents and interviews with the park staff. However, park staff

see their role as facilitating the use of the land for spiritual purposes while simultaneously allowing other visitors to also appreciate the park. Contrary to the Dakota perspective which values free use independent of any institutional oversight, the institutional actors of the state park view its oversight as beneficial for all parties involved. It is this point that is contented and is a source of dispute between Dakota people and the state park.

I as a park manager recognize there is a sacred site here and I do my best to facilitate people who are coming here for spiritual reasons, for quiet prayer, for reflection for whatever they'd like to do. In that instance, we don't apply park permits. If you're here for a spiritual reason to hold a ceremony, you get in free and I make sure that happens. We do our best to, for example, no photography at the women's march. We do our best to help with that. (Larry Peterson Interview, Park Manager).

To their credit, the state park and the DNR folks sought out educated voices, critical voices and people who understood the history, who grew up in the oral tradition, who understood the stories, the bad things that happened there and understood it as a place of genesis. They included that within their interpretive framework. I respect that. At the same time, it's another entity that has jurisdiction or control over what should be Dakota land. There are always conflicts, every time I visit that site I encounter the stop sign where you're supposed to check in to the office and get permission. They are familiar enough with our political stance that they don't demand that we get a permit anymore, but they still want us to stop and ask permission. I won't do that. Every time I go there, I put a note on my windshield that says 1805 Treaty. They haven't given me a ticket yet. But it's that feeling, the reminder that we're trespassing, that this is not a place that we can freely come and go. Even to go and pray, even to go and honor our ancestors or to visit that site or to bring youth or elders to pay their respects to what happened there. To just experience being there. I don't like that. (Waziyatawin Interview).

Interestingly, there was a possible way to mend this divergence and achieve what this prognostic frame seeks that was recommended in an interview. The idea was offered to allow Dakota people exclusive access to the park during certain times of the year. This would enable them to do the ceremonies that they need to while offering privacy as well. According to the interviewee, this has been done at other sacred sites for Indigenous peoples in the United States.

What about setting aside a certain time period to say this is set aside for Dakota use. This is a time where we invite all Dakota people to come back to Bdote and have ceremonies. We acknowledge that Dakota people were here first and this place is special to them and they should be granted exclusive right to use this place at this time of year. It's been done other places. (Sisoka Duta Interview).

As of yet, this approach has not been seriously considered by the state park. This issue represents a significant inter-frame dispute between the Dakota place master frame and the state park master frame in and of itself. However, it also alludes to a larger strategic frame dispute between the two master frames.

*Dispute between maintaining the state park and returning the land to Dakota people*

Corresponding to the dispute over the exact nature of land use is the dispute over who actually “owns” or controls the land where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet. This dispute goes beyond the mere issues over access to the land for ceremonies which includes various disputes over details, timing, and privacy. In fact, this disagreement is best understood as being implicitly held within the overall frame contest between the Dakota place master frame and the state park master frame. Most importantly, it deals not only with who defines the land, but also with who ultimately controls it. It is important to flesh out the details of this dispute in order to explore its complexity and connection to broader issues.

On the side of the state park, the issue is framed such that the park's dominion over the land is a positive thing. According to park officials, the state park's presence in the area ensures several factors. First, it ensures that the area is protected from further development and pollution. Second, it maintains an open environment where all people can come and enjoy the many things that the area has to offer including hiking and biking trails, canoeing and camping. Finally, the park maintains that its presence in the area

ensures that the stories of what happened in the area are told. This is their role as interpreters of the landscape. Despite the fact that various Dakota people agree with the need for the stories of the past to be accurately told (which, institutionally speaking, the state park is doing a much better job of compared to the historical site), various prognostic frames from within the Dakota place master frame argue for the return of the land and for Dakota people to tell those stories.

According to some Dakota people's arguments, the area should be returned to Dakota people. The dominion of the state park over the area represents a much broader issue of the continual harm done to Dakota people at the hands of the state of Minnesota. Given that the area is literally the site of the Dakota genesis story, it represents one of the most important places in the world to them as a people. Therefore, the arguments from within the Dakota place master frame proclaim that in a just world, that area in particular should be fully returned to Dakota people.

I think that for me it represents the place of, obviously, genesis and genocide, but it also represents the contemporary conflict or contestation over place, over existence or the right to exist and interact with place in the 21st century context. (Waziyatawin Interview).

Overall, this dispute is framed in much larger terms than just telling Dakota stories, having free access for ceremonial use, or returning the land. Based on arguments from within the Dakota place master frame, this is a dispute dealing with the right to exist as a nation and as a people. It deals with their most intimate cultural values, identities and connections to place. Therefore, it is an extraordinarily significant source of dispute today. In connection with this inter-frame dispute, there is a related dispute over the area where the Historic Fort Snelling site sits.

*Dispute over maintaining the historic fort or taking it down*

Another substantial and complex dispute exists between prognostic framing elements of the historical site master frame and the Dakota place master frame. Specifically, there is a prognostic framing dispute between whether the Historic Fort Snelling should be continually maintained or taken down once and for all. This dispute is significant because it represents a major source of discord between proponents of these two master frames. Depending on the course of action taken, it also has great implications for the appearance and meaning of the area where the rivers meet. Adding to the complexity of the dispute, the issue is also a source of intra-frame disputes over these prognostic frames on the side of the Dakota place master frame. Before delving into that, this particular inter-frame dispute must be elaborated upon.

By and large, members of the Minnesota Historical Society and staff at the Historic Fort Snelling site proclaim that the fort should remain. This is a key prognostic frame within the historical site master frame. Although it may seem insignificant given that the fort already stands, there is more below the surface of this apparent structural issue. In order to maintain the fort throughout time, substantial amounts of money must be spent. The Historic Fort Snelling as an outdoor landmark is continually battered by harsh Minnesota weather, from severe thunderstorms and high humidity in the summer to freezing rain, snow and below zero temperatures in the winter. Needless to say, the upkeep of this historical landmark is rather expensive. In order to maintain the Historic Fort Snelling, significant amounts of tax payer money are spent every so many years. Since its rebuilding in the 1960's, millions of dollars have been spent restoring and maintaining the fort that stands today. In fact, the Minnesota governor elicited \$500,000

dollars for Fort Snelling in 2014 alone (Governor's 2014 Capital Budget Recommendations). Hence, the implications for maintaining the fort are significant both literally in terms of tax payer dollars and metaphorically in terms of cultural meanings.

Various proponents of the Dakota place frame take issue with the maintenance of the fort for multiple reasons. First, its maintenance represents a continual investment in what the fort represents for Dakota people; a place of genocide, ethnic cleansing and forced removal. In other words, the fort is a colonial icon. Second, the fact that a military fort still stands on the place of the Dakota genesis story is also highly problematic. As a Dakota sacred site, all things having to do with violence and militarism should be far removed from that particular area. Therefore, some Dakota people advocate that the fort should be taken down once and for all. According to proponents of this prognostic frame, taking down the fort would be a crucial step in restorative justice in the state (Wazyatawin 2008). It is important to note that not all Dakota people agree with this prognostic framing, which further complicates the issue. This will be further analyzed in the discussion on intra-frame disputes. For the time being, the point is that this dispute represents a major frame dispute between advocates of the historical site master frame and many supporters of the Dakota place master frame. The dispute is bursting with literal and metaphorical implications about the values of Minnesota as a whole. Hence, it is one of the most significant frame disputes revealed through the present research.

#### Intra-Frame Disputes: A Deeper Look Within

Before proceeding to the discussion of disputes within the three master frames noted in this study, a word of caution is due. The purpose of exploring intra-frame disputes within the current research is by no means intended to create conflicts between

proponents of the various perspectives elicited. Rather, it is intended to more accurately portray what is in reality an enormously diverse set of social actors. For clarity purposes, this study necessitates that these often diverse groups of individuals be lumped together in a semi-coherent manner. Nevertheless, it is useful to remain mindful that these groups represent conglomerations of diverse human beings. Thus, the following is intended to capture that diversity as represented by the data sampled.

*Disputes within the historical site master frame*

Given the time constraints on this research study and the lack of response from potential interviewees within the Minnesota Historical Society, the complexity of intra-frame disputes that likely exists between institutional actors that ultimately support the historical site master frame was not adequately captured. However, based on the interview that did take place with a Historic Fort Snelling staff member, it is clear that intra-frame disputes do exist within these two major organizations that promote the historical site master frame. It is worthwhile to mention some of these allusions in order to paint a more complex and accurate picture of the historical site master frame.

Based on an interview with a Program Specialist at the Historic Fort Snelling, there have been significant intra-frame disputes regarding the historical site master frame coming from within the Minnesota Historical Society. There are several factors that were mentioned in connection with these disputes. First and foremost, it should be pointed out that the historical site master frame which is largely championed by the Minnesota Historical Society has been the most outwardly contested framework by proponents of the Dakota place master frame. This is due to several factors including its management of the Historic Fort Snelling which is itself a contested place, the site's lack of inclusion of



Dakota perspectives and the institution's tendency to favor ideologies rooted in manifest destiny types of historical narratives. Over time, the contested nature of the frames used by the historical site have caused various disputes between proponents of the historical site master frame.

Accordingly, the interviewee from Historic Fort Snelling noted that there have been significant staffing changes in the past several years in connection with intra-frame disputes over how the area should be represented. Unfortunately, the exact nature of these disputes was not clearly explained for various reasons; however, the overall discussion alluded to multiple key factors that are important to this research. The Program Specialist I interviewed acknowledged that there are disputes taking place in the field of history itself on how the past should be represented. There is a current push to include a diversity of perspectives, which is uncommon. Historical societies in general have previously only told the story of the conquerors, so to speak (Program Specialist Interview). This has certainly been the case of the Minnesota Historical Society and its treatment of Fort Snelling, for which it has received much criticism. Based on these factors, it was mentioned that there continue to be more people arguing for a diversity of perspectives within MHS. Nevertheless, change has come slowly and met resistance along the way. Again, the nature of this resistance and the complex dynamics that are likely taking place were not described in detail. Suffice it to say that there do seem to be significant intra-frame disputes taking place in regards to the historical site master frame, particularly within the Minnesota Historical Society.

One important conclusion that can be drawn from these allusions to intra-frame disputes within the organization of the Minnesota Historical Society, and therefore

Historic Fort Snelling is that these organizations are not monolithic entities. This is a significant finding for this subsection of the research because it reveals the complexity that exists in something that is ordinarily thought of as a one-sided or a single perspective type of organization. Clearly, there does exist a more robust diversity of perspectives with the institutional actors behind the scenes regardless of the monolithic image painted for the public. Nevertheless, the degree to which intra-frame disputes exist cannot be precisely captured from the present data.

*Disputes within the Dakota place master frame*

To begin, it is important to note that today, as well as in the past, the Dakota Oyate (Nation) has represented a large and diverse group of people. Since their creation, the Dakota Nation has been composed of multiple bands and family groups (Westerman and White 2012). Despite their overall connectivity, there is no one single Dakota voice, nor has there ever been. The use of terminology such as the Dakota place master frame can give the impression that there is such a thing as a singular Dakota perspective. However, this terminology is used in an effort to distinguish this master frame from the other two master frames that hold the area in question as meaningful. At this point, it is important to repeat that there are many sub-frames within the Dakota place master frame as well as a great many perspectives that are likely not present in the sample. Therefore, this section is meant to acknowledge that, within the Dakota place master frame, there are various perspectives on the area. It is in this context of simultaneous diversity and connection that intra-frame disputes within the Dakota Nation are explored.

With this in mind, it is useful to point out that I was told of this complexity during several of the interviews conducted with Dakota people. As multiple people noted, there

is no such thing as a “Dakota perspective” on the issue. To think in this way would be naïve to say the least. What is important to note is that there are likely a great many frameworks that Dakota people use for understanding the important area where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet. Fortunately, I was afforded an opportunity to do an interview with a Dakota person who had recently spent several years collecting stories from Dakota people all over the country and in Canada about Dakota people’s connection to Minnesota. I was told that in these interviews there were a multitude of discussions about Fort Snelling, and there was a great diversity of opinions expressed. By and large, it seems that a good number of Dakota people share many of the frames apparent in the Dakota place master frame as I have presented it. However, a great diversity exists in their notions of appropriate prognostic frames in particular. Although I was not given the opportunity to expand my sample to such a great degree, it was helpful to be aware of this during the analysis process of this research. Therefore, the intra-frame disputes that follow represent only a small number of those that exist which could be found in the data collected.

*Dispute over what stories should be told and where.*

One prominent dispute in prognostic framing arose out of ideas about what stories should be told about the area and on site, particularly at the Historic Fort Snelling. Based on interviews and other discourses sampled, there were two primary perspectives on this within the Dakota place master frame. Although there was agreement on the need for Dakota stories to be told, there was disagreement on what other stories should be told and where.

In the first perspective, it was recommended that *all* stories be told at the Historic Fort Snelling. In this prognostic frame, there was a clear demand that Dakota stories actually be told and be told accurately. However, it was also pointed out that other stories of the meaning of the area are equally valid. This was similar to some of the many or multiple meanings approaches found in both the historical site and state park master frames. The primary difference was that Dakota stories should be told and noted as those that were there first. Also, they should not be held in a subjugated position to the stories of manifest destiny implied by many of the historical site frame's approach to telling history. In this prognostic frame, the solution was to tell everyone's stories of the area, *including* Dakota people's stories.

The more stories we have about this place the fuller picture we will have about the role that it has played throughout all of our experiences. (Dakota Interviewee<sup>14</sup>).

It was the recommendation that telling everyone's stories at the historical fort was the best plan of action which came to be the heart of the disagreement between the two prognostic frames. According to this particular prognostic frame, erasing other stories would be nothing short of doing to others what has been done to Dakota people for well over a century.

According to the second perspective, it was argued that other stories of the area should either be told within the context of the Dakota master frame or otherwise removed all together. This perspective proved to be much more critical of the common theme celebrating American progress that was woven throughout the historical site master frame. Based on this prognostic framing, it was claimed that because the area is first and foremost a Dakota place, that the Dakota master frame should be the primary one told in

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<sup>14</sup> Interviewees are kept anonymous in this section out of respect for the potential sensitivity of the topic.

the area. It is important to note that it was not recommended to erase other stories. However, it was argued that those other stories should be told in a different location rather than on the site of the Dakota genesis and genocide. To continue to tell non-Dakota stories in the area, which too often belittle Dakota voices, simply continues acts of violence perpetrated against the Dakota people.

Each of these prognostic frames rested in the Dakota place master frame, made use of similar arguments for why Dakota stories should be told, and held that narrative as the original one of that place. However, there was a clear dispute between these two prognostic frames regarding what, if any, other stories should be told in the area. In fact, this dispute carries over in important ways to what should be done with the historical fort itself.

*To keep the fort or not to keep the fort, that is the question.*

Within the Dakota place master frame, there are two contesting perspectives on what should be done with the actual Historic Fort Snelling. Similar to the previous intra-frame dispute, each prognostic frame makes use of the Dakota place master frame and its components for its reasoning. Nevertheless, the end result of each argument is very different.

According to the first prognostic frame, the historical fort should be kept where it is. This argument, however, is replete with a series of requirements for this to happen. First, the truth about Dakota people, their stories of origins in the area, and the genocide perpetrated against them must be told. Second, the state of Minnesota and white citizens need to acknowledge what has been done and vow to never repeat such violence. With these conditions met, proponents of this prognostic frame argue that the fort should

remain standing in the area as a proof of the atrocities that occurred. In fact, they fear that removing the fort runs the risk that Minnesota's dark past will be forever erased from our collective memories. Hence, the argument is to keep the fort in order to make sure it is remembered.

My personal belief is no, leave it there. That's proof that everything we say happened did happen. At the same time it is heart wrenching to think of what my ancestors have gone through there. (Dakota Interviewee<sup>15</sup>).

On the other hand, various Dakota people proposed a different prognostic frame. According to this perspective, the fort should be torn down. Similar to the previous prognostic framing, this solution claims that Dakota stories must be told and the horrific events of the past must be remembered and never forgotten. However, this prognostic framework holds that keeping the fort where it is only perpetrates further cultural violence against the Dakota people. This argument follows multiple points. First, the area is still the site of the Dakota creation story. Therefore, having a military fort that was used to colonize, assimilate, and eventually exterminate and/or remove Dakota people on site is a disgrace of the highest order. Second, because of the history of the fort, keeping it on Dakota sacred lands adds insult to injury as it is a continual reminder of Dakota peoples' subordinate position on their sacred homelands. Finally, part of the idea behind removing the fort is that it would be a concrete way for Minnesotans to show their intentions to change. Proponents of this prognostic frame are disgusted with empty gestures towards reconciliation, while at the same time colonial narratives continue to dominate the landscape. In other words, removing the fort would be a real act of restorative justice.

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<sup>15</sup> See footnote on page 114.

If we similarly invest in the demolition of Fort Snelling as a symbol of the Dakota reclamation of our homeland, then when we take down the fort, we will be setting ourselves on a new course of history, a course toward liberation. (Waziyatawin 2008:112).

Herein lies a significant disagreement between Dakota people who share the overall Dakota place master frame. Despite similarities in wanting to tell the Dakota side of history and restoring justice to the present day, there is a noteworthy disagreement on what should be done with the Historic Fort Snelling building. To add yet another layer to these disputes, a final factor comes to play in the prognostic frames coming out of the Dakota place master frame.

*The land should be returned, but to whom?*

The following issue represents not so much an intra-frame dispute as it does a challenge to the prognostic frames of the Dakota place master frame. It was expressed by multiple people that the fact that the place where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet is the Dakota site of genesis necessitates that the land be returned to Dakota people. In fact, it was suggested almost unanimously among those interviewed and within discourse documents that the area should be returned to Dakota people. Despite agreement on this, there are important layers that should be delineated in order to understand the complexity of the prognostic frame.

The first layer involves notions about the possibility of the land actually being returned. Although it was agreed that the land should be returned given its enormous cultural significance, there was a wide array of perspectives on whether or not this was a realistic expectation. Some Dakota people said that this was an ideal, yet they acknowledged it would likely never happen. Others mentioned that it would be nice but maybe not ideal given the complexity of making it happen. Yet others demanded that it

should happen, and that to think otherwise is merely a type of internalized oppression caused by trauma from over a century of colonial violence perpetrated against Dakota people.

Relaying a discussion with a Dakota leader about supporting the campaign to take down Fort Snelling, a Dakota person said:

I said I don't understand why you oppose the take down the fort campaign. If you could have anything in the world, what would you want at that site if you didn't have to worry about who was going to say no or why they were going to do, what would you want to see at the Fort Snelling site. He said, "I'd like to see it returned to the way it was". But I said that's what I want. But he had taken a political position against the take the fort campaign because in his mind it was unrealistic. It was something that you can't, as a Dakota person, you can't hope for, you can't expect, you can't ask for, you can't demand, because it will never happen and it's unrealistic. (Dakota Interviewee<sup>16</sup>).

What have we come to normalize in our lives, what have we come to accept with such complacency? What does that say about our commitment to our homeland and our willingness to make things right and to make a better life for our children and grandchildren? (Dakota Interviewee).

Hence, one level of complexity exists within the various notions that Dakota people have on the actual possibility of the land being returned.

The next layer to this issue is representative of the complexity of the Dakota Nation itself. As mentioned, there is no one single Dakota voice or group of Dakota people to represent the whole Nation. Adding to the fact that the Dakota Nation has always been comprised of many smaller bands and families, modern day tribal governments installed by the United States government do not generally follow Dakota cultural protocols for selecting appropriate leaders. So the problem is that even if the land were returned, given the lack of traditional Dakota leadership, it is not clear who should receive and take control of the land. This issue was noted multiple times as a potential

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<sup>16</sup> See page 114 regarding anonymity.



point of dispute in the future. Due to cultural changes brought on by colonization, ethnic cleansing and forced removal, traditional Dakota leadership structures have all but disappeared. This presents a significant problem when a place as meaningful as Bdote would require management by those very types of traditional leaders.

*Disputes within the state park master frame*

Based on the data collected, there appeared to be no significant intra-frame disputes coming from within the state park master frame. With the proponents of the master frame, the Fort Snelling State Park staff, there was general agreement on the various frames and framing processes. Overall, proponents of the state park master frame took a very intentional approach to working with Dakota people in order to include their perspectives. As an institution, it was clear that they made the greatest effort to collaborate with and respect Dakota voices. Internally, staff members seemed to agree with this approach as well as the notion that maintaining the state park was a good thing. Although this was a point of inter-frame dispute, it was not a source of dispute from within the master frame. Therefore, there is little to report here.

**Identity Roles And Disputed Meanings**

The identity roles implied within the three master frames found add a final layer to this complex dispute over the meaning of where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet. The original research question dealing with identity roles identified protagonists, antagonists, victims, supporting cast and audiences as possible identities to be found in the data. However, after multiple readings during the analysis phase, it became clear that supporting cast did not seem to be descriptive of how the various proponents of these three master frames expressed the identity of others. Further, the identity of audiences

was only briefly present in one instance. This may be because of the somewhat neutral nature of these two types of identities. On the other hand, there were various instances where framing of groups of people into the identity categories of protagonists, antagonists and victims took place. Given that the dispute over meaning in the area remains a hot issue, it is logical that these would be the primary identity roles present. Of importance to the overall story is the way in which these roles are expressed in each of the master frames.

*Identities within the historical site master frame*

There were various identity roles that came out of the data collected that corresponded to the historical site master frame. Notably, these identities were somewhat complex and often shifting depending on the nature of the interview question or the type of discourse document being analyzed. This might speak to the overall inconsistency within the historical site master frame as to exactly what role its proponents and others play in this frame dispute. The most significant and obvious identities were attributed to members of the historical site staff, the Minnesota Historical Society staff, Dakota people, and site visitors in general.

To begin, members of the Minnesota Historical Society and Historic Fort Snelling staff were clearly portrayed as protagonists in the historical site master frame. Generally speaking, these individuals were framed as well intentioned folks who treated everybody's stories equally and attempted to accurately represent those stories at the Historic Fort Snelling site. This was implied in discourse documents and confirmed in the interview with the Program Specialist at the historic fort. In spite of diagnostic frames noting there was more work to be done, proponents of the historical site master frame

were nonetheless seen as protagonists who offered a framework that was the most objective and balanced. This notion carried implications for Dakota people and site visitors.

Based on the interview done with a Historic Fort Snelling staff person, there are mixed perspectives as to the identity role of Dakota people in this dispute. It was repeatedly pointed out during the interview that Dakota people who offer a critical perspective on the historical fort and present day representations on site *should* be listened to by Minnesota Historical Society staff. It was also highlighted that the organization has made attempts to be more inclusive of multiple perspectives, part of their many meanings sub-frame. Nevertheless, it was also clear that the most critical of Dakota voices were, at times, framed with antagonistic identity roles. Although this was not the case with the particular staff interviewed, the fact that it has been in the past and might still be a way that some staff portray the identity roles of critical Dakota people was alluded to. It was emphasized, however, that this notion has undergone significant changes recently and has been part of general staff changes within the Minnesota Historical Society. Yet, it was admitted that there is a long way to go in changing the organizational structure of the Historical Society which has contributed to the notion that voices in opposition to its “objective” framing of history are antagonists.

A final identity role implied in the historical site master frame relates to visitors to the historical site. In the context of this framework, visitors fell into the role of audiences. They were not seen as being either protagonists or antagonists in the frame disputes taking place. Similar to the neutral tone of the frame and the proponents of the historical

site frame, so too were visitors to the site described as neutral audiences who were interested in the area for many different reasons.

*Identities within the Dakota place master frame*

Within the Dakota place master frame, the identity roles that came up were fairly uniform. However, it is important to note that not all interviews nor discourse documents contained clear framing of identity. Nevertheless, those that did were fairly clear and often times overlapped with what other proponents of the Dakota place master frame were saying. Given the highly contested nature of the frame dispute taking place, those proponents of the Dakota place master frame clearly held to the notion that one cannot be neutral on a moving train. In other words, the fact that the area represents a site of genocide, colonization and ethnic cleansing implies that all people within the state are implicated in playing a role in those things whether or not they intend to. Simply claiming neutrality or ignorance was generally thought of as inexcusable.

Based on the Dakota place master frame, Dakota people were either thought of as protagonists or victims or both. Often times, when discussing the current framing of the area and efforts to change the way that it is understood today, Dakota people were framed as having the role of protagonists. Of course, this is because it is their cause, therefore they support it. When referring to both their historical and present day treatment, all too often colored by severe inequality, Dakota people often view themselves as victims. This is connected to their subordinate position as a racial minority group in the present day United States. This is also connected to the policies of genocide, ethnic cleansing and forced removal that Dakota people have faced in Minnesota. Although Dakota people

were the only victims in this master frame, they were not necessarily the only protagonists.

Interestingly, white Minnesotans were frequently given multiple identity roles. On the one hand, they were seen as antagonists by the proponents of the Dakota place master frame. This is likely due to the power differential between the groups and the fact that white Minnesotans do not usually concern<sup>17</sup> themselves with Dakota people's issues such as the present one regarding Bdote/Fort Snelling. However, Dakota people interviewed and those in discourse documents sampled made it very clear that white Minnesotans could at any time become allies and therefore, change their role to protagonists. In fact, this was often highly encouraged by those interviewed. Generally speaking, proponents of the Dakota place master frame hope for white Minnesotans to become educated on these issues and then to become allies in what various Dakota people see as a fight for justice.<sup>18</sup> However, the identity roles expressed become further complicated when discussing the major institutions controlling the area.

Although it was clear that both the Historic Fort Snelling and the Fort Snelling State Park were also seen as potential sites for protagonists to emerge, the antagonistic framing of these institutions was stronger and more complex than that of white Minnesotans in general. By and large, members of the Historic Fort Snelling and Minnesota Historical Society were given clear antagonistic identity roles. In fact, there were no Dakota people interviewed nor elements present in Dakota authored discourse documents that did not give these individuals antagonistic identity roles. This may be due

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<sup>17</sup> Their ability to decide whether or not to involve themselves with these issues is a direct result of their privilege in the racial hierarchy.

<sup>18</sup> The notion of fighting for justice may represent a significant act of both frame amplification and frame extension (research question 2), however, the current data did not provide adequate evidence to reach such a conclusion.

to several factors including the fact that the fort is still on site and managed by these people, the general disagreements between Indigenous peoples and historical societies, and the continual refusal of the Minnesota Historical Society to include Dakota perspectives. Additionally, visitors to the historical fort were also given antagonistic identity roles. This was related to the dispute over how the history of the fort can be celebrated while at the same time paying true homage to the suffering incurred by Dakota people. Hence, to visit the site and celebrate the historical site master frame gives one an antagonist identity by default. Because members of these organizations were framed the most antagonistically, they were also seen as those with the most power and potential to become helpful protagonists. For members of the Fort Snelling State Park, things were framed rather differently.

Members of Fort Snelling State Park were more often framed as protagonists in this issue. For the most part, this was because of their continual cooperation with Dakota people and the fact that they are making clear efforts to include Dakota perspectives in their interpretive materials.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, their identity is not that simple either. Because the state park maintains institutional control over a Dakota sacred site, they are also seen as antagonists. In this regard, Dakota people expressed a mix of notions about the role the state park played in the dispute. On one hand, it is thought of as a positive thing that they include critical Dakota perspectives and allow free access to the park for ceremonial purposes. On the other hand, some would prefer that the park return the land because of its cultural significance or at a minimum set aside time for only Dakota people to use it. Hence, members of the park too have multiple identity roles within the Dakota place master frame.

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<sup>19</sup> See statistics on page 59.

As a final note, it is useful to revisit a particular diagnostic frame concerning the core problem facing the Dakota people. Recall the interview with the Dakota elder which resulted in a unique but important diagnostic framing of the core problem facing Dakota people today. In the interview with the respected elder, it was expressed that the real problem is how Dakota people came to be considered “Indians” and therefore, as less than human. During the interview, the elder said that it is important to understand when, how, and why this happened in Minnesota. He also said it is important to ask why Dakota people were removed from being involved in the building of the state of Minnesota. From his perspective, the relations between white people and the Dakota were not bad or negative at first. So he questions where it went wrong. He said we must ask when and why people suddenly began to view the Dakota as less than human. This discussion is important in that it adds a layer of complexity to the identity of Dakota people from within the Dakota place master frame.

There are several implications regarding identity framing that can be drawn from this interview. First, it was mentioned that Dakota people continue to be considered as “Indians” or less than human by a majority of the non-native population. This takes place through various processes connected to the construction of racial categories in our society. It is also related to the tendency to think of Dakota people as “Indians” and to think of Indians as having a forlorn history. As such, it not only paints Dakota people as somehow less than human or animalistic, but also portrays them as a thing of the past. This was also noted as a critical issue related to the historical site master frame. However, the expressed concerns related to this identity framing do not end with non-native people.

The second problematic aspect of this that was noted is the tendency of Dakota people themselves to deny their own identities because of the stigma connected to “being Indian”. This came to be a particularly interesting element which adds another layer of complexity to identity framings within the Dakota place master frame. In a sense, this may represent a sort of internalized oppression or internalized racism (Pyke and Dang 2003). However, such conclusions are beyond the reaches of the present study. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to make mention of these complexities as they have revealed themselves in the data.

*Identities within the state park master frame*

The state park master frame has a less complex array of identity roles as compared to the other two master frames. By and large, the park itself appears to be less engaged in an outright dispute over the meaning of the area. As noted, they attempt to include Dakota voices and for the most part, there is consensus that they are doing an acceptable job of that. Therefore, proponents of the state park master frame did not indicate much by way of antagonistic or antagonistic identity frames. Nevertheless, they did clearly indicate who they thought to be identified as victims in the situation.

Based on interviews with state park staff, it was clear that there was much more sympathy to the Dakota place master frame. Generally speaking, those championing the state park master frame noted the validity of the Dakota place master frame and attempted to include it as a smaller sub-frame within the state park context. Based on this framing, Dakota people were primarily seen as victims of state violence both historically and presently. In fact, the state park even includes interpretive programming that discusses issues of colonization and its effect on Dakota people with park visitors.



Despite the inclusion of critical programming, the park does *not* share the framing with Dakota people of the Historic Fort Snelling and Minnesota Historical Society staff as antagonists. This may be due to their need to work closely with the historical site.

However, this conclusion could not be drawn from the data. Overall, the most significant part of the identity roles within the state park master frame is that it is much simpler than the other two and Dakota people are actively framed as victims in the situation.

### Unravelling The Complexity: A Conclusive Word

In the previous three chapters, the complexity of meanings relating to the area where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet has been unraveled. We have examined the details of the major frames about the area in chapter four, the presence of diagnostic and prognostic frames within each of the three master frames in chapter five, and the explicit and implicit conflicts between and within frames in this chapter. This has revealed a world of complexity around the area most commonly known as Fort Snelling in St. Paul Minnesota. By now, it should be clear that what is often thought of as a monolithic place is, in reality, an area bursting with frame disputes and contested meanings. Now that the myriad of meanings and framing disputes has been unraveled, it is necessary to weave them back into the theoretical framework of this research in order to reveal what conclusions linger within.

## Chapter VII

### Dealing With The Complexity: Weaving The Pieces Together

The level of analysis that has resulted from the processes laid out in the chapter on methodology has painted a multifaceted and, at times, a nearly incomprehensible image of the dynamics taking place around the area where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet. In many ways, this area truly is a place where meanings and rivers converge. On the other hand, it is also an area where people and their frames diverge. This complexly interwoven set of framing process and dynamics at the heart of the frame dispute over contested meanings is precisely what this study has sought to illuminate. In order that the reader may be left with a sense of coherence, it is important that the complex pieces presented in the previous chapters be woven back into the whole that they truly are.

To begin, it will be helpful to connect this level of analysis back to the contents of the literature review of chapter two. The conceptual basis of this research is first and foremost grounded in symbolic interactionism. It rests on the notion that meaning is central to the social world (Blumer 1969) and that those meanings are a result of social processes (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Based on these primary notions, the present study has sought to investigate the meaning making processes involved in connection with one particular place: Fort Snelling. I use this term because it is, as of today, the most commonly used framework for the area where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet. Yet as this research has shown, the area is overflowing with meanings above and beyond those implied by the historical fort. Given this factor, additional concepts beyond those

offered by interactionism were needed to analyze exactly how meanings related to this place.

*The Value and Logic of the Framing Perspective*

Framing theory came to provide the most useful conceptual basis with which to analyze the meaning(s) and the disputes over those meanings that were taking place at the area around Fort Snelling. Goffman's basic understanding of a frame as a "schemata of interpretation" which allows individuals "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" situations and occurrences in their lives (1974:21) provided an exact definition of what I sought to examine with regard to the area. Specifically, I was interested in the meanings that the area held for people and what exactly was being disputed. Because there were more than just meanings or frames of the area – there were clearly disputes taking place – additional concepts were sought. Fortunately, many who developed Goffman's original ideas on frames ended up providing just what was needed.

The plethora of researchers that took Goffman's ideas into the realm of social movements as a way to develop an interactionally based view of group mobilization created a vast amount of new concepts in connection with the original idea of frames. What came to be known as the framing approach to social movements provides a unique perspective that offers insight into how individual social actors frame or negotiate interpretive meanings of situations. One key aspect of this approach is the way the ideas have been extended into the realm of disputed meanings (Benford and Hunt 1992; Boykoff 1999; Ryan 1991; Zuo and Benford 1995). It was for these reasons that the framing perspective, despite its usual application to social movements, appeared to be an appropriate theoretical framework with which to examine the situation at Fort Snelling.

Although the framing perspective can ultimately be argued as a logical conceptual framework, it does present limitations. First and foremost, the issue arises as to whether framing theory – developed from the study of social movements – can accurately be applied to framing activities with non-social movement actors. However, given the focus of the theory on mental schemata and the processes connected to negotiating and disputing these meanings between groups of social actors, the theory proved to be fitting. Because I attempted to use such a variety of framing theory concepts, as outlined in chapter two, there were some issues that did arise regarding the limits of applying the theory to the data collected.

Most notable, there were a series of concepts that I expected to be present but did not significantly appear in the data. The first of which is motivational framing, referring to an attempt to “call to action” potential movement participants (Snow and Benford 1988:201). Given that the primary groups of social actors endorsing the three master frames were not social movements, it logically follows that such a key concept to the study of social movements would not be present. At this point, it is useful to remind the reader of the key groups in the study which came to be the Dakota people as an Indigenous Nation, Historic Fort Snelling and its staff (which is run by the Minnesota Historical Society) as institutional actors, and the Fort Snelling State Park and its staff as institutional actors. Hence, the social actors that negotiated the master frames noted are clearly not social movement actors.

However, it should be noted that there is a present day group of people which is connected to and arising out of the Dakota Nation that is a social movement. This movement focuses on decolonization efforts in a variety of ways and does in fact, deal

with Fort Snelling as a key issue. There is a “Take Down the Fort” campaign that is a significant part of this social movement (Wazyatawin 2008). Nonetheless, the purpose of this study was to document the meanings that Dakota people in general held of the area. Because this social movement for decolonization only represents a small fraction of the Dakota Nation, it was not given special focus. Hence, there was a prognostic frame dealing with taking the Historic Fort Snelling down, but only because that was something found within multiple discourse documents and interviews. So again, none of the groups in the study were best thought of as social movements. This led to further concepts outlined in chapter two to ultimately be unnecessary.

In an attempt to not artificially impose theoretical categories on the data, several other concepts did not prove to be present enough to warrant mention in the results. From the second research question noted in chapter 2, the concepts of frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension, and frame transformation (Snow et al. 1986) were largely missing from the data analyzed. Despite brief mention in chapter four of some of these processes as possibly taking place, they were not found to be substantially present in the data collected. This is likely the case for two primary reasons. First, the Historic Fort Snelling and Fort Snelling State Park represent institutional actors rather than social movement actors. Thus, it follows that such concepts would simply not apply. Second, as noted, the social movement for decolonization that is promoted by a relatively small group of Dakota people was not the primary source for sampling. Although some members of this group were interviewed and some of the discourse documents included, the framing dynamics noted in chapter four were those found to exist on a broader intersubjective level within the Dakota community. What little mention of these concepts

that there was, related to the Dakota place master frame. Nevertheless, these concepts were not found to be significantly present and therefore, are not part of the major results of the research.

As can be seen from this discussion, framing theory has come to have some limitations in its usefulness to the present study. Although the notion of frames and framing processes that arose out of the study of social movements did prove helpful, various concepts that were originally thought to be present simply were not found. This is likely a result of their specific connection to the actions and negotiations of social movement actors in particular. Despite its limitations, the theory has proved to be useful to the present analysis overall.

### *Major Conclusions*

The major conclusions of the study correspond to the interpretive frames and framing dynamics that are present in the area where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet. There are various dimensions to the findings. The first relates to the discovery of three broad frames of the area. The second relates to the key dimensions of the frame disputes that are taking place. Finally, the study has revealed illuminating evidence that the groups representing these master frames are far from monolithic.

There are three master frames that correspond to the area. The first master frame is the historical site framework. This master frame portrays the area as predominantly important because of its historical significance. Much of this significance revolves around Historic Fort Snelling's substantial contributions to Minnesota statehood and its role as a center for military operations up until WWII. This master frame maintains that many

people have many different meanings and stories related to the area; nevertheless, they are held as secondary to the overall framework of the site as historically significant.

The second master frame is the Dakota place framework. This represents the oldest framing of the area where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet by the area's Indigenous people. The area is understood as the site of the Dakota people's genesis while the subsequent events between the Dakota Nation and the state of Minnesota are understood as evidence of genocide perpetrated on the Dakota people. In a broad sense, the other master frames are seen as small brushstrokes to the overall portrait of the area as a distinctly Dakota place since time immemorial. Based on the Dakota place master frame, the area is a place of both profound joy and deep sorrow. The fact that this sacred site remains under the control of Minnesota state institutions is a significant source of dispute between the Dakota place master frame and other master frames.

The final master frame is the state park framework. This frame sees the area first and foremost as a state park that needs preservation. The reasons for its preservation include its ecological uniqueness, its historical significance and the meaning it has for Dakota people. Hence, the general notion within the state park master frame is that the area is a place where rivers and meanings come together. The state park sees its role as protecting the area and telling the stories of those who find it significant. Overall, the state park master frame has more in common with the Dakota place master frame as its proponents intentionally attempt to include this perspective in their programming. This master frame maintains that the area is unique for many reasons and is therefore worth preserving.

As with any frame or mental schemata, these three master frames invariably include notions regarding how people should act (Buechler 2011; Goffman 1974) towards the area itself. Such an understanding helps to explain the many diagnostic and prognostic frames that were discovered within each of the master frames. In order to sum up the various meanings of the area, it is necessary to briefly note the problems and solutions corresponding to these broad meanings.

According to the historical site master frame, there are a variety of issues connected to the area. Based on the interview with a Program Specialist, some staff within the Historic Fort Snelling and Minnesota Historical Society acknowledge that staying in the retrospective year of 1827 is problematic in the way that it overlooks so many other perspectives on the area. They realize that the meta-narrative of American militarism, which is celebrated at the fort, is a limited way of viewing the areas importance. However, the lack of resources both financially and in terms of diversity in the Minnesota Historical Society's staff present further problems when attempting to address these issues. Institutional actors promoting the historical site master frame claim that their diversity of perspectives approach is a sincere attempt to deal with this issue. Yet, some Dakota people see it as a new form of the same tactics that ultimately lead to the suppression of Dakota voices.

Multiple diagnostic and prognostic framing dynamics found with the Dakota place master frame arose in response to the historical site master frame. For example, it is highly problematized that Dakota people have not only been literally erased from Minnesota's landscape (or at least this was attempted by the genocidal and ethnic cleansing policies of the past), but they have also been metaphorically erased through the



deletion, manufacturing, or suppression of their stories about the area they call Bdote. Hence, there is a great push by social actors that support this master frame to have Dakota stories included, valued, and told in earnest. Another key issue that has arisen is that Dakota people need to continue to reclaim their identities and revitalize their language and culture. This is connected to the need for access to their sacred sites. As the site of the Dakota genesis story, having state institutions control the area of Bdote is seen as highly problematic. Proponents of the Dakota place master frame often argue for the total return of the land back to Dakota people, or at a minimum, a reassessment of how they can be given greater access to the area for spiritual purposes without state institutional oversight. For Dakota people, these issues speak to the continual problem of colonization and subjugation on their homelands.

Finally, the institutional actors that support the state park master frame also have their own notions of what is problematic about the area and what solutions might exist. Given that the Fort Snelling State Park exists in very close proximity to the Historic Fort Snelling site, they are often lumped together when people speak of “Fort Snelling” both in general conversation and in news sources (Larry Peterson Interview). However, institutional actors from the state park master frame see this as particularly problematic. They argue that the state park and historical site need to be distinguished. One aspect of this prognostic frame is that they maintain two separate, but connected, pieces of land in the area. Additionally, they approach their programming rather differently. Based on the present data, this seems to be an appropriate argument given that the stories told and the level of representation of Dakota perspectives at both sites is clearly different. The state park includes far more of the elements connected to the Dakota place master frame and

openly acknowledges a number Dakota people's grievances regarding the area. The state park master frame also includes prognostic framing regarding the need for even greater collaboration with the Dakota people. Hence, the institutional actors and their master frame hold a distinct set of diagnostic and prognostic frames compared to that of the two previous master frames.

Despite these generalizations about the area's three master frames and the dynamics present within them, there is a substantial amount of diversity between their proponents. Although the master frames correspond respectively to the Historic Fort Snelling and Minnesota Historical Society staff, members of the Dakota Nation, and Fort Snelling State Park staff, the social actors that hold a stake in these master frames are far from representative of three monolithic groups. In addition to disputes *between* these groups, there is a notable amount of disagreement regarding the key problems and solutions related to the area *within* these groups. The manner in which this study illuminates intra-frame disputes over diagnostic and prognostic framings of the area serves to reveal the degree of complexity that is involved in the frame disputes taking place.

There are various intra-frame disputes within each master frame. In the historical site master frame, there were multiple allusions to disputes within the Minnesota Historical Society over how a diversity of perspectives should be represented at the Historic Fort Snelling site and to what extent critical Dakota perspectives should be represented. The implication is that those critical Dakota voices continue to be seen as subordinate to the overall historical narrative that ultimately celebrates what the Dakota consider an act of genocide. However, this is not a stable conclusion given the limitations

on interviews with members promoting this master frame. Suffice it to say that there seems to be individuals in the organization that continue to oppose openly admitting the historical use of genocidal policies given the implications this would have for the state overall.

The Dakota place master frame also contains several intra-frame disputes. There were notable disagreements as to whether or not non-Dakota stories should also be represented at the site of their genesis. Some people argued that non-Dakota stories should be told somewhere other than the site of Dakota people's genesis while others maintained that this type of action would be too similar to what is being done to Dakota people's stories today. Another significant source of disagreement is over whether the Historic Fort Snelling should remain as a reminder of Minnesota's genocidal past or be torn down. Various Dakota people have argued that the fort should remain so long as the truth of what it actually represents is told. Yet others maintain that it should be removed altogether if any sort of justice is to be served. Finally, there were also numerous mentions of challenges facing the prognostic frame supporting the return of the land to Dakota people since a homogenous group does not actually exist.

Despite the clear indication of intra-frame disputes in the previous two master frames, the state park master frame did not appear to contain any significant intra-frame disputes. Overall, the state park master frame seems to be coherently represented among those proponents of it. Nevertheless, each master frame did maintain notions of the identities that various social actors had in relation to the frame itself.

There were often very different perspectives on the identities of social actors within each of the master frames. Within the historical site master frame, there were a

series of complex and shifting identity roles that arose that appears to reflect some of the inconsistency present within this framework as a whole. Understandably, most members of the Minnesota Historical Society and the Historic Fort Snelling staff were seen as well intentioned protagonists. In regard to Dakota people, there was a mixed notion of whether they were potential allies or antagonists depending on how critical they were of the historical site master frame. This is a significant finding given that the historical site master frame does not include critical Dakota perspectives and those that challenged this were portrayed antagonistically at times. Finally, visitors to the site were primarily framed as audiences.

The Dakota place master frame offers nearly opposite identity roles to that of the historical site master frame. Overall, it was clear that no one was neutral in this situation given the highly contested nature of the frame dispute taking place and the very real, often deadly, consequences it has had for Dakota people in the past up until today. Because the area represents a site of genocide, colonization, and ethnic cleansing (Wazyatawin 2008) it is understood that all people within the state are implicated in playing a role in those things whether or not they intend to be. Reasonably, Dakota people were either thought of as protagonists or victims, or both. Interestingly, white Minnesotans were frequently given multiple identity roles ranging from antagonists to potential protagonists. In regard to the institutional actors controlling their sacred site, Dakota people often framed both the Historic Fort Snelling and the Fort Snelling State Park staff as potential protagonists although they were ultimately viewed as antagonists given their current relationship to the Dakota homelands. The degree to which they were seen as antagonistic varied quite strongly with the Historic Fort Snelling and Minnesota

Historical Society staff framed as the most antagonistic and the Fort Snelling State Park staff as much less antagonistic. In terms of who represents the Dakota perspective the most, Fort Snelling State Park staff were clearly distinguished as protagonists in this regard. Hence, identity role framing with the Dakota place master frame is complex and multi-faceted.

The state park master frame has a considerably less complex array of identity roles. It should be noted again that the park itself appears to be less engaged in an outright dispute over the meaning of the area. As noted, they attempt to include Dakota voices and for the most part, there is consensus that they are doing an acceptable job of that. This master frame primarily held Dakota people as victims of state violence both historically and presently. Nevertheless, the state park staff do *not* share the framing of Historic Fort Snelling and the Minnesota Historical Society staff as antagonists. Rather, they argue that those institutional actors are doing the best job they can. Overall, the identity roles framed in the state park master frame were simpler and not as prominent compared to the other two master frames.

In examining all of these substantial factors about frames, framing processes, identities and disputes, it is clear that there is a divisive contest over the meaning of the area. This research has provided an in-depth glimpse of the degree to which the area continues to be a significant source of frame disputes and contested meaning. The frame disputes and contests over meaning have clear historical connections to the subjugation of Dakota people by the incoming settlers who founded the state of Minnesota. They also denote the resiliency of a group of Indigenous people that refuse to give up their connection to their homelands and the place of their genesis. The meaning of the area is

highly disputed along with the ideas over what should be done with it in order to ensure equality and justice. In any case, it has become clear that nowhere in the state does there exist a place that is simply just Fort Snelling or Bdote.

### *Suggestions for Future Research*

The present research has been an exploratory journey into previously uncharted territory within the discipline of sociology. Its major contribution has been to examine the specific meanings and dynamics connected to a sense of place through the use of framing concepts out of social movement theory. In this regard, the study was innovative, groundbreaking, and significant in the findings it elicited. It has also opened up vistas of future research to be conducted. However, the trek into new territory was not without its limitations. As with any research, there were multiple limitations connected to this project. Before discussing the possibilities that this project has unlocked, I would like to take a moment to note the limitations of the study.

First and foremost, one of the most prominent limitations in the study has to do with the very nature of the research itself. In particular, attempting to reproduce people's interpretive frameworks (mental schemas) is an extraordinarily messy and complex process. It is an undertaking that is not for the faint of intellect or heart due to the immense challenges it represents in the analysis phases of research. It is arguable that no matter how well it is done, there will always be more; another facet or connection to be made, something that was overly simplified or not stated complexly enough, something that could be refuted, or just something that was mistakenly framed. With this in mind, the systematic methods used in the discourse analysis of this study were intended to keep

the findings grounded in the data as much as possible. Nevertheless, it remains as a challenge and valid limitation to the present findings.

Additionally, the time requirements for completion of project – which were a result of institutional requirements for an academic program – also represent a limitation on the research for various reasons. The most obvious is that it only allowed for so much time to be spent on gathering sample data, getting interviews, and analyzing the data. More specifically, the entire project needed to be completed within the two year framework of the graduate program. This included the proposal for the research, the process of getting approval by the Internal Review Board, the research itself and the analysis in addition to the programs graduate coursework. These time based challenges resulted in some other limitations to the overall study.

Based on the nature of the sample, in terms of size and type, the results are not generalizable beyond the sample itself. This is a larger issue in connection with ethnographic data. For this study, the sample size in terms of the interviews was relatively small. Part of this was a result of the minimal time and resources allocated to a graduate student for thesis research. This challenge played out in two noteworthy ways.

First, the interview sample size for Historic Fort Snelling and the Minnesota Historical Society was embarrassingly small with a total of one interview. This was due in part to the time limitations of the overall research. However, I was also met with the greatest lack of response for interviews with staff members from these two agencies. Based on my experiences, the institutions represent more challenging organizations to work with compared to that of Fort Snelling State Park. This may have been due to

various unknowable factors; nevertheless, the low number of interviews for these institutions represents a limitation of the study.

Further, there is an important limitation to note with regard to the sampling of Dakota people as well. Overall, it is nearly impossible to appropriately sample Dakota people given their diversity and the reach of their population across the U.S. and Canada as a result of their forced removal from Minnesota. One mistake made by researchers working with Indigenous populations is their naiveté towards them as homogenous groups. Based on interviews and personal contacts, it is clear that the Dakota Oyate represent a diverse, yet connected, group of peoples. This has been the case since their creation and continues to be the case today. Hence, there is no such thing as a “Dakota perspective” on this overall frame dispute. This is also an important limitation in the study. The frames and framing dynamics that were found can only be given validity in terms of the sample that was collected for the research.

Despite the limitations of this project, the substantial findings that were revealed have opened up new possibilities for future research. In a broad sense, this study has uniquely shown how framing theory concepts can help to illuminate meaning making processes outside the study of social movements. In the present study, framing theory provided conceptual tools to explore and describe the actions of social actors from within two different institutions as well as those from an Indigenous population. This implication opens up conjectural avenues for future research by providing innovative ways of applying an already useful theoretical framework.

In addition to the broad implications, there are promising avenues of future study that relate to the specific topic. For one, there is much work that could be done to further



investigate the degree of intra-frame disputes that are likely present within the Minnesota Historical Society. MHS has received significant criticism for its representation of Fort Snelling and its suppression of Dakota voices. Based on the interview conducted in this study, this criticism has caused some upheaval within the organization. Further research in the area might help to reveal the complexity of frame disputes between institutional actors that are either present or who were past staff members within the Minnesota Historical Society. Such research might serve to explain why, based on my research, it seems that there is a desire to change the frame represented at the Historic Fort Snelling site while actual changes do not appear to be very momentous on the ground.

Further, more work could be done with the Dakota people. Given that the Dakota Nation represents a very large, dispersed, and heterogeneous group, sampling more people would almost assuredly reveal an even more complex picture of the Dakota place master frame and the framing dynamics related to it. Researchers could also integrate a greater diversity of Dakota people in terms of those living traditionally and those living less traditionally. Also, given the fact that this frame represents a historically subjugated one in the state of Minnesota, it is likely the most difficult to capture accurately. Future research might seek to not only expand the size of interviews in the sample, but to do a series of multiple interviews with participants over time. It takes time to develop close relationships with people in general and close relationships are particularly important to Dakota culture. By developing close relationships over time with the appropriate level of reciprocity, it might be possible to understand the depth of the Dakota place master frame much more fully. Given that this frame is the oldest currently known, it is likely that it

contains depths which can only be revealed over the long haul. For those interested minds that are passionate about justice, this would be a worthy endeavor.

Upon examination, these two paths would likely be the most fruitful in expanding on the present research. The Minnesota Historical Society represented the least penetrable group in the study. Yet, there were clear indications of further complexity that could not be conclusively found based on the present data. Additionally, the Dakota people hold the oldest known frame of the area. Given their diversity as a group in conjunction with the history of the master frame, there is likely much more to learn about the social actors that comprise this complex perspective. In an effort to further the findings of the present study, these two paths represent some of the most promising avenues for future researchers.

## APPENDIX A

The Dakota elder that was interviewed for this project shared a considerable amount of cultural teachings with me during the interview and the subsequent times that we've met. One particularly important piece of information he shared had to do with traditional Dakota cultural values. He asked that these values be shared, so that people understand what it means to be Dakota. To him, this is a key way to dispel the stereotypical notions that are a result of Dakota people being mistakenly called "Indians". It is his hope that sharing these values will be beneficial for both Dakota people and non-Dakota people alike by helping people to follow their original instructions to work together. The seven primary Dakota values that were relayed to me are as follows:

1. Woinina (Silence). "Silence has a different meaning to Dakota people. To develop who you are. Silence means that you are strong inside. It's part of us. The first, most important one when you're young. We don't have to yell or scream. Practice to teach as an example."
2. Wowacinya (Dependability). "You're dependable to yourself. You take control of yourself, your health, your mentality, and your spirituality. Kids will look at you and want to be like you, lead by example."
3. Wowaohoda (Respectful). "Be respectful to yourself. Be sure of yourself, you should be able to look at yourself in the mirror with confidence. It's in the way you carry yourself, and the way you talk. Kids will look at you and want to be like you this way."
4. Wowaokiya (Helpfulness). "Be helpful to yourself in all ways. Always help yourself first to make sure you're well in every way possible. People will see this in you and want to be helpful to themselves. Be a good example."
5. Wowaunsida (Compassion). "Be good to yourself. Don't talk negative about yourself. Pat yourself on the back, comb your hair and feel good about yourself. Kids will see this in you and want to be like you."
6. Wobdehedic'iya (Positive). "Nowadays, it's cool to be negative. Being cool means you're doing negative things. Walk in a positive way, talk in a positive way, because people can see and feel it."
7. Wowaditika (Bravery). "Being brave doesn't mean you go out in the cold without a coat on, being brave means you have to be all of the above. Notice the first one (Silent) and the last one (Bravery)."

These seven values are a recipe for Dakota people to live by. It is the list of their original instructions.

## APPENDIX B

### Interview Questions

#### **Dakota Tribal Members**

Can you talk a little bit about when you first learned about the area of Bdote and Fort Snelling?

Describe what the area means for you and for Dakota people today?

Describe what you think are the main disagreements over the meaning of the area?

Based on the dispute over the meanings of the area, can you describe any particular understanding of the area that you think is correct?

Can you explain what, if any, difference you see between the Historic Fort Snelling and Fort Snelling State Park?

Fort Snelling State Park claims to tell the stories of many different people who hold the area as meaningful. How well do you think they are doing this?

Can you explain what about the re-fortification of the fort is problematic?

Do you think Minnesotans have chosen to continue participating in the ongoing colonization of Minnesota's original peoples when you consider their actions at Fort Snelling? If so, how?

Could you describe what problems you currently see at the historic site and the state park?

Describe what you think the solutions would be in dealing with Fort Snelling State Park and the Historic Fort Snelling?

Tell me what you think should be done with both the area of the state park and the historical fort site?

Are there any present movements that you know of which are trying to reframe the way the area is understood by Minnesotans? If so, can you describe what they are doing and what they are trying to achieve?

Explain what role(s) you see white Minnesotans playing in the dispute over the area?

What roles do you see Dakota people playing in the dispute over the area?

Can you explain how you think the power to define the area is either equal or unequal?

Both in terms of the state park and the historical fort.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

### **State Park Employee's**

What is your affiliation? (If applicable) i.e. Fort Snelling State Park, Minnesota Historical Society, Dakota Nation?

Where did you grow up?

How do you understand the meaning of the area where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet?

Can you explain any specific meanings that this place has for you?

How do you understand the history of this specific area?

Describe any thoughts and feelings that come to mind when you think of this history?

As you worked to develop your programs, what meanings for this area do you try to include

How do try represent them?

Can you talk a little bit about each of the interpretive programs you are running this summer and what they seek to communicate to park goers? Including nature based programs.

Describe any other ways that you are familiar with regarding how this area is understood by other people or groups?

What do you think of these perspectives?

Based on your understanding of the history of the area and your awareness of other ways that this place is understood, can you describe any particular understanding of the area that you think is correct?

According to your perspective, can you describe the role that the state of Minnesota/ Dakota people/ Non-Dakota people of Minnesota play in this perspective?

Tell me what you know about groups who disagree regarding the meaning of this area?

Can you explain any disagreement that you are aware of over the meaning of the area?

Do you think the Park is doing a good job of representing all the various meanings of this area right now?

Can you explain how you think that the power to define this area is either equal or unequal?

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

### **Historic Fort Snelling Employee's**

What is your name (if applicable)?

What is your affiliation? (If applicable) i.e. Fort Snelling State Park, Minnesota Historical Society, Dakota Nation?

Where did you grow up?

Explain your understanding of the meaning of this area where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet?

Can you explain any specific meanings that this place has for you and your organization?

As you work to develop your programs, what meanings do you try to include and how do you try to represent them?

Describe any other ways that you are familiar with regarding how this area is understood by other people or groups?

What do you think of these perspectives?

Can you explain any disagreements that you are aware of over the meaning of the area?

Some Dakota people say that MHS's taking a diversity of perspectives approach and trying to represent a fair and balanced story is another way of suppressing the Dakota perspective. Here is a quote from an Interview: "In validating every perspective, they are taking a very clear position. Their framework is that the story of Manifest Destiny is just as valid, in fact I would say they privilege that over any other story, and that Dakota peoples experience is just a small part of the larger story." Describe what you think of this?

Based on your understanding of the history of the area and your awareness of other ways that this place is understood, can you describe any particular understanding of the area that you think is correct?

According to your perspective, can you describe the role that the state of Minnesota/ Dakota people/ Non-Dakota people of Minnesota play in this perspective?

Can you explain how you think that the power to define this area is either equal or unequal?

Describe how you think MHS is or is not doing a good job of representing the meaning of this area right now?

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

## APPENDIX C

### Interviewees

Larry Peterson Interview. June 5<sup>th</sup> 2014. Fort Snelling State Park Manager.

Amie Durenberger Interview. June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2014. Fort Snelling State Park Interpretive Staff.

Amie is the primary staff person that does interpretive programs dealing with Dakota topics relevant to the area.

Waziyatawin Interview. June 27<sup>th</sup> 2014. Wahpetunwan Dakota woman from Pezihutazizi

Otunwe (Yellow Medicine Village). Author, scholar and activist.

Program Specialist Interview. August 19<sup>th</sup> 2014. Historic Fort Snelling Program

Specialist. This individual has elected to not be named.

Sisoka Duta Interview. August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2014. Dakota man originally from the Lake Traverse

Reservation in Sisseton, South Dakota. Dakota language instructor.

Gwen Westerman Interview. September 12<sup>th</sup> 2014. Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota woman

originally from Kansas and Oklahoma. Author, scholar and instructor.

Redwing Thomas Interview. September 21<sup>st</sup> 2014. Dakota man from Santee Nebraska.

Dakota language instructor.

Dakota Elder Interview. 2014. This individual has elected to remain anonymous.

Dakota Spiritual Leader Interview. 2014. This individual has elected to remain

anonymous.



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