PARTICIPATORY VIDEO FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT
IN REMOTE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

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This research is based on the Fogo Process which used film to bridge
communication between a group of remote Newfoundland fishing communities and
government policy makers and politicians in the late 1960’s. The research expands the
scope of the Fogo Process by integrating principles from participatory video, a
development strategy used to build local capacity around socio-economic issues,
participatory action research and advances in video technology.

This thesis is an investigation of the role of participatory video as a tool to
influence government policy making. The research is set within the context of a group of
five remote Aboriginal communities in northwestern Ontario, Canada. These
communities, collectively know as Keewaytinook-Okimakanak (KO), were part of a
federal pilot program to encourage innovative broadband infrastructure development
across the country. These communities represent a rare research environment because
prior to the introduction of broadband services, they were minimally serviced in terms of telecommunications, with one telephone available for all the communities needs.

The research was initially made possible because of the need for program evaluation data. Video was used to gather testimonial stories in support of KO’s Smart Program evaluation report. Video was chosen because it was felt by the evaluation team and KO leadership that Industry Canada, the primary funding agency, could make a more informed assessment if the data was contextualized through the provision of real life accounts and experiences with broadband. Very few Canadians have ever visited communities such as these and the impact that broadband was having on health care, education and community development required a communication mechanism beyond conventional evaluation approaches.

Local leadership quickly realized the potential of video to link their needs with policy makers located thousands of kilometers away. Research continued into the development and dissemination of locally produced videos in the service of policy needs. During the course of the initial video productions, I provided training workshops in the communities thereby creating a critical mass of people who could produce their own video media and, in turn, teach others.

After the collaborative production of twenty two videos, and numerous others produced independently by former trainees, the research culminated in the production of *Turning the Corner*. This was a 17 minute video produced in cooperation with the Privy Council of Canada’s Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat and KO leadership. The purpose of the video was to relay the message that bottom-up planning and funding strategies were essential to the success of broadband expansion across Canada’s Northern Aboriginal
communities. This message was based on the lessons and experience of the KO communities where broadband had transformed community life from telehealth applications and internet assisted education to overcoming isolation and community development. The video made real the need for local planning and initiative to be brought into the planning process for broadband infrastructure through a series of screenings to senior policy makers in the nation’s capital, Ottawa.
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Dissertation work, like participatory video production, is a collaborative activity. It would be contrary to the arguments contained in this thesis if I were to accept all the credit for the work herein. I consider the following individuals, to varying degrees, to be my research partners.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This thesis tells the story of how video was used to influence the federal policy making process for a group of Canada’s remote Aboriginal communities. Participatory video (PV) is a development process used to build local capacity around issues and produce media materials for communication. Audiences for these materials tend to be policy makers and funding agencies that control development programs and projects. PV has also been used for communication between disenfranchised groups facing similar challenges in an effort to build consensus and mobilize action for change.

The research described in this thesis has its roots in the Fogo Process: a film based initiative that began with Canada’s National Film Board (NFB) in the late 1960s. Under the Challenge for Change program (Snowden, 1998), documentary filmmakers were encouraged to utilize the medium to explore and illuminate socio-economic issues facing Canadians. One such undertaking took place on Fogo Island which was comprised of ten fishing villages off the northeastern coast of Newfoundland. At the time, the fishery was in severe decline and prospects for the Islander’s were bleak. With no meaningful consultation, the federal and provincial governments decided that the solution to this economic decline was to relocate the Islanders to mainland communities where employment in the mining sector was available.

NFB producers visited Fogo Island with the intent of capturing a disappearing way of life on film. What emerged was a process, guided by filmmaker Colin Lowe and
Memorial university extensionist Donald Snowden that used film to develop a collective vision, a collective voice, and strategies for Fogo’s economic renewal. This iterative process, which became known as the “Fogo Process”, involved local stakeholders in the production of documentary style vignettes that showed the Islanders’ unique way of life, their cultural history and connections to the island, the fishery and their ideas for what was needed to build their economy and stay on Fogo as productive, self-directed Canadians.

The Fogo films were not documentaries in the conventional sense, in that they were not the result of a director or producer’s vision. Instead, as the films were produced, over 500 screenings were shown to the communities and their feedback was solicited. In essence, the communities were the films’ editors and they could change and contribute content so that it more accurately represented their vision for Fogo.

These edited films were then screened to senior policy makers and politicians in the nation’s capitol, Ottawa and the capital of Newfoundland, St. John. Senior government decision-makers were now presented with a richer, contextualized understanding of the policy-related needs of the Islanders. Filmed responses from Ottawa and St. John were produced in turn and the result was the beginning of a film-assisted dialogue between government and the people of Fogo Island. This dialogue resulted in real policy initiatives that had previously not been considered: low interest loans for the building of long liners that could fish in deeper waters and the development of a fisherman’s cooperative both of which allowed Fogo Islanders to remain competitive with international fisheries while remaining at home.
Building on the Fogo Process, throughout the 1970s and 1980s development practitioners began using video as a way of developing collective visions around issues and to communicate with funders and potential funders of development projects (Iglauer, 1984), (Nair, 1994) and (Nemeth, 1993). This approach became known as participatory video (PV) and was increasingly feasible with the advent of analogue video tape. PV continues to be a recognized development and engagement tool. The advent of digital video technologies combined with broadband access has made PV easier and the resulting media more readily accessible.

The current research builds directly on the Fogo Process and is further informed by the field of PV. Fogo was the first recorded attempt to use film in a reflexive way, allowing the subjects to steer the production and then use the media materials to bridge communication with policy makers. PV practitioners went on to apply these lessons in a number development environments and in the process, developed methods that emphasized collaboration and local mobilization (Pal, 1997), (Pieroni, 2003) (Resolute Bay Hunter and Trappers Organization, 1997). PV placed less emphasis on what was being communicated in favour of how participants worked together to understand their problems and seek out solutions; video was not the goal.

This research was informed by an understanding of how changes in digital video and the new digital environment have expanded the potential of PV and the Fogo Process: cost, efficiency, portability, ease of use, and technical ubiquity has transformed the medium. The medium’s capacity to enhance the policy making process now exists in a way that is faster, more sophisticated, more easily accessible and potentially more democratic in it’s representation of local issues.
Research Context

In 1999, a group of five Aboriginal communities in Northwestern Ontario – known collectively as Keewaytinook-Okimakanak (KO) or Northern Chiefs – won a competition hosted by Industry Canada to participate in a demonstration project to bring broadband services to remote and rural communities across Canada. In less than five years these communities, inaccessible by road and infrastructurally destitute, have managed to harness information communication technologies (ICTs) to significantly improve the delivery of healthcare, education and economic development assistance to their community members. The introduction of broadband has resulted in a virtual “leap-frog” of technological sophistication. For example, where five years ago the community of Keewaywin had one battery operated phone to serve its entire population including administrative offices, health care and the school, today its youth are actively engaged in the design of their own web-pages while doctors in Thunder Bay diagnose the sick through a sophisticated telehealth network.

How do policy-makers assess change in places they have never seen and lack the simplest points of cultural reference? How can meaningful policy evaluation take place when the policy-makers base judgments of success or failure on conventional questionnaires and surveys that marginalize the geographical and cultural context for a distinct segment of the Canadian population? How can they measure the change in attitude and understand the long-term impact broadband has had on feelings of isolation? Can policy and program evaluation be done effectively in these places with the limited range of tools presently being used? Unfortunately, the history of assessing the success or
failure of policy initiatives in Canada’s northern Aboriginal communities continues to be rather conventional and largely blind to drastic differences in cultural and geo-political contexts.

This thesis outlines how participatory video (PV), framed within the larger context of existing ICT infrastructure in these communities, can be used to facilitate meaningful exchange around policy decisions. The underlying goal of this research is to develop and assess a new methodology for linking remote Aboriginal communities to policy makers, so I partnered the PV process with the pre-existing policy evaluation of a program already in place known as Smart Communities. The Smart Communities program was a federally funded competitive initiative to provide demonstration sites for broadband connectivity in communities across Canada. Communities of all sizes were invited to submit proposals and business plans for funding. Each province was awarded one demonstration site and in the national Aboriginal category, KO was selected. In 1999, approximately $5 Million of broadband funding was awarded to the Keewaytinook-Okimakanak tribal council which represents five communities in Northwestern Ontario: North Spirit Lake, Keewaywin, Poplar Hill, Deer Lake and Fort Severn. A sixth community, McDowell Lake, remains closed for the majority of the year. These funds were matched by an additional $5 million from the communities and from many other sources. As of 2000 approximately 2,800 people live in the Keewaytinook-Okimakanak communities. Deer Lake is the largest community in the region with a total population of 850. There are 314 people living in North Spirit Lake, 316 people in Poplar Hill, 470 people in Fort Severn and 539 people in Keewaywin. (DIAND, 2005) Figure 1.1 shows the geographic location of the KO communities.
Keewaytinook-Okimakanak is a non-political chief’s council that advises and assists their member First Nations in the Sioux Lookout district of Northwestern Ontario. The Chiefs of the member First Nations that form the Board of Directors direct the organization. K-Net Services, the Internet service provider (ISP) of the Northern Chiefs Council develops and maintains K-Net which is a broadband network.

K-Net is an Aboriginal network that provides broadband connectivity to the KO communities and to a rapidly growing number of communities across Canada’s North. Beaton and Fiddler (2004) called it “a regional information technology and content development organization that supports and manages First Nation telecom initiatives.
across the region by delivering a variety of broadband services and developing electronic indigenous applications.” (Beaton and Fiddler, 2004)

KO First Nations are members of Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN). They are small, remote, fly-in communities that have struggled for decades with the practical consequences of institutionalized isolation. Hospital and high school access requires air travel – with the exception of a 10-week period when vehicles can travel along the winter road. Most homes are within walking distance of local services such as education, health and administration buildings. Communities share demographic characteristics. Almost 25% of the total population is under the age of 10 years. An additional 25% are between the ages of 10 and 19 years of age. Less than four percent of the total population is age 60 or older. Over eighty percent of the adult population is unemployed” (Ramirez, 2000: 7).

High school completion rates in the KO communities are low, particularly for those 45 years of age or older. Forestry and mining activities are rapidly expanding into traditional territories and tourism is a seasonal mainstay for the area. (KONCC, 1999: 5)

The five case study communities are spatially isolated with vehicle access available only between January and March when the winter roads are open. During the rest of the year they are accessible only by small passenger planes and float planes. This remoteness and spatial isolation is significant. The implications of broadband access and new communication tools can have more dramatic impact than if the same initiative were launched in communities in Southern Ontario. The communities’ lack of voice in the policy-making process is also compounded by their small size. Populations fluctuate due largely to migration to and from urban areas and other communities.

The problem addressed in the current research was one of communication of needs between these remote Aboriginal communities and the government bodies, funding agencies and policy makers, both bureaucratic and political, whose decisions routinely
affect the communities’ economic, social and physical health. More specifically, it is the lack of effective communication tools that would allow these communities to concisely deliver their policy needs, by demonstrating positive and negative impacts to policy makers in a collective voice that has given rise to this research. In the case of KO communities the impact of ICT introduction marked a cultural shift wherein high speed internet access became available overnight. Although the network infrastructure was largely developed locally, the Smart programme itself -funding mechanisms, reporting and accounting criteria, evaluation procedures- was originally developed for urban/rural contexts. Therefore, the need for new tools to communicate remote Aboriginal context was heightened because these conventional tools were unable to accurately capture changes on the ground.

Conventional evaluation approaches allow us to measure the short-term impacts of ICTs in these remote Aboriginal communities through simple quantitative measures such as the number of homes connected and related demographic data on its use. In the mid-term, conventional approaches can make some inroads into the understanding of certain benefits such as health-care savings and improved services. But what about the long-term impacts? How do conventional evaluation methods help to understand the long term, frequently non-quantifiable impacts of technology on remote Aboriginal communities?

The need for alternative evaluation tools in remote Aboriginal communities is underscored by three significant realities: (1) Traditional social science based evaluation tools, such as surveys and questionnaires, have proven less effective in these remote Aboriginal communities because they tend to capture static elements but are unable to
capture dimensions of the policy initiative that escape standardized measure such as
effective use (Gurstein, 2003); (2) policy makers in urban centers have little or no
comprehension of the reality of life on the ground in these communities, therefore they
expect to apply a standard of conformity to evaluation, and policy implementation in
general, that is largely inappropriate to remote Aboriginal communities and; (3) the
extractive nature of conventional evaluation processes negates input from the
communities by favouring decision-making processes that do little to factor in cultural
differences compounded by geographic isolation and socio-economic
disenfranchisement.

While the complexity of human social systems limits numerically accurate
predictions about program outcomes, understanding the local context of implementation,
people’s plans and hopes do have a role in the process. What is needed then is a way to
demonstrate policy impacts in a way that contextualizes the reality of what has been done
in the community by the community; a method that can measure the change in “attitude”
at the community level that has resulted from the rapid introduction of ICTs into
infrastructure-barren communities. Participatory video, especially given the recent
advances in digital technology, provides a vital new approach in the evaluation tool-box
that can help policy makers better understand the impacts of their funding decisions in
remote Aboriginal communities. Video has the potential to allow the communities
themselves to construct and deliver messages directly to the policy-makers, an access
which they have been historically denied. (A.F.N., 2004)

The changes witnessed in these communities as a direct result of connectivity
have been profound. The communities have harnessed ICTs to significantly improve the
delivery of health care through remote diagnostic technologies and video conferencing with medical professionals in urban centers (Ramirez et al., 2003). An innovative internet high-school program allows young people to remain in the community to complete grade ten through online correspondence where in the past they had no choice but to leave the community for urban schools for ten months a year starting in ninth grade. The management of band affairs and correspondence with government agencies has been transformed as a result of instant electronic communication. A new generation of ‘cyber-youth’ has embraced internet technology in a literal leap-frog of technological advancement that has brought segments of these communities into the information age almost overnight. These changes have had a marked impact on community dynamics and attitudes beyond that which can be measured by conventional evaluation approaches. However ICTs themselves, in particular digital video, may represent a way of filling this information gap.

The Smart evaluation tried to understand the impact of connectivity in remote Aboriginal communities with an emphasis on lessons learned and successes and challenges overcome in order to improve the delivery of similar policy initiatives in the future. Key to the Smart program was the underlying principle of bottom-up planning and implementation. Simply put, organizations such as K-Net were charged with the responsibility of making the Network work with minimal interference or assistance from the sponsoring agency, Industry Canada. Therefore, the Smart project and its evaluation represented an ideal policy environment in which to develop new tools for evaluation: in this case, participatory video.
Industry Canada had not stipulated detailed requirements for the format or substance of the Smart evaluation. In the KO case, evaluation was done as a structured process throughout the program’s tenure. (Pers. Comm. Ramirez, 2006). In 2004, the Smart program ended and evaluation results of the connectivity experience in KO communities were needed to determine success and draw lessons for future initiatives.

This research focuses on developing new tools to enhance the evaluation process and thereby the policy making process in order to provide policy makers with a better understanding of the local impacts of their decisions while simultaneously allowing the communities themselves to become active participants in the policy process by giving them the tools to tell their own stories.

Research Problem/Research Question and Objectives

The problem to be addressed is one of communication needs between remote Aboriginal communities and the government bodies, funding agencies and policy makers, both bureaucratic and political, whose decisions routinely affect the economic, social and physical health of these communities. More specifically, it is the lack of effective communication methods and tools that would allow these communities to improve the delivery of policy impacts to policy makers, in a collective voice, that has given rise to this research proposal. These conditions gave rise to the research question:

How does participatory video influence remote Aboriginal communities’ to change their relationships with policy-makers?

The research question addresses a key term that requires a brief discussion in order to operationalize it. The concept of ‘influence’ can be interpreted in many ways. Here it is
restricted to the understanding of how video product and processes motivate action within a framework of policy impacts. Underlying this action is the potential of video to facilitate better and deeper communication between remote Aboriginal communities and policy makers.

The following objectives were identified to answer the research question. The research objectives were developed in response to conditions witnessed through preliminary field investigations.

Objective 1: Explore the conditions under which of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), in particular video can be engaged to develop capacity in Aboriginal communities.

Objective 2: Identify the processes that Aboriginal communities develop and engage in order to produce communication materials to build capacity.

Objective 3: Explore how access to and use of ICTs and new media tools change the self-perception of remote Aboriginal communities.

Objective 4: Investigate how access and control of ICTs and new media tools change relationships between remote Aboriginal communities and policy makers.
Objective 5: Explore how policy makers identify the significance of new media tools and products to change their relationship with remote Aboriginal communities.

Justification for the Research

This research is important for several theoretical and practical reasons:

- Remote Aboriginal communities are a part of Canada. As such they are entitled to equitable and fair levels of consultation when it comes to policy that affects them. These communities are among the most disenfranchised in the country, therefore new tools and approaches that bring their voices into the policy making arena are needed.

- Participatory video has been developing for over three decades. The literature on its application is disproportionately focused on process. Process is important for several reasons around local capacity building. But how the videos are used, in particular how they function within and influence policy decision-making systems has been underreported in the literature.

- The rapid global ubiquity of ICTs in recent years, in particular digital video, has profound implications for the way individuals and groups communicate with one another and for the self-perception of disenfranchised groups in the context of the dominant culture represented by mass media. This in turn has implications for the way they contribute to policy-making processes.

- The KO communities have witnessed rapid access to ICTs from a single pay phone to service an entire community, to broadband access in a matter of months.
Changes resulting from this rapidly introduced technology have implications for nearly all aspects of community life, including youth, health care, education, program access, administrative efficiency and economic development. The lessons learned from this research will serve to the improve understanding of the impacts of ICTs on other remote Aboriginal communities as broadband infrastructure extends across Canada’s Northern boreal, near arctic and arctic regions.

**Methodology**

This research methodology adopted a constructivist epistemology. Constructivism holds that knowledge changes as it moves from research subject to researcher. Therefore a reflexive approach that involves the participation of the research subject is needed to understand certain situations and address certain problems. A participatory action research (PAR) methodology was engaged in collaboration with the research partners.

Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with policy makers and interviews with community stakeholders. The field research yielded considerable participant observation reporting. The literature informed my understanding of both of these data sources. Coding was done using the constant comparative method (CCM) which draws patterns from the iterative evaluation of categories and subject matter in the field data.
Outline of This Dissertation

This dissertation is comprised of six chapters in addition to Chapter One - Introduction. Chapters describing the research environment and the significant research events that took place as well as a chapter detailing the research findings were included. The nature of the research environment, the research problem and the PAR methodological approach determined the structure of the report.

Chapter Two: Literature review

Chapter Two builds a theoretical foundation upon which the research is based. The research is framed by a conceptual framework which weaves together the literature from policy making, communication for development, ICTs, and participatory video in a remote Aboriginal communities’ context. The literature review reflects the interdisciplinary nature of this work by drawing from seemingly disparate fields of endeavor to frame the research problem.

Chapter Three: Research Context

The constructivist epistemology of the research was reliant upon a reflexive, cooperative understanding of the research environment. Furthermore, the conditions under which the research was conducted were created in part by the research itself. Therefore, a detailed account of the significant research events and training that took place is included in this chapter. Experiential learning cycles were used to frame and analyze the significant research events drawing abstract conceptualizations that inform the subsequent event.
Chapter Four: Methodology

This chapter describes the ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods used in this research. Participatory action research (PAR) was used within a constructivist epistemology. The ontology is the intersection between technology, the policy making environment and remote Aboriginal communities. The relationship among these is described in considerable detail because it is their interconnectedness that defines the research environment. The PV process is also detailed followed by a listing of the research objectives coupled with the specific methods used to address them.

Chapter Five: Research Findings

Chapter five is structured according to the research objectives. Data from stakeholder interviews and participant observation reporting is compiled in order respond to the objectives. The discussion is also informed by the literature.

Chapter Six: Discussion

Chapter six presents patterns of results and analyses for their relevance to the research problem. Fields of analysis are based on the intersecting bodies of literature discussed in Chapter two. The implications of the research are categorized according to research objectives.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

The final chapter draws conclusions about the distinct contribution that this dissertation makes to knowledge. The research problem is revisited in light of the previous chapters.
Implications of the research are divided between theory and practice. Finally the future of PV in remote Aboriginal communities is discussed followed by a listing of the tangible contributions of the research.

**Delimitations of Scope**

This research is predicated on an understanding of the video image, popularized globally through television, and its profound impacts on the self perception of remote Aboriginal communities. The ability by First Nations to harness this medium is key to their ability to communicate with policy-makers while, at the same time, legitimizing an evaporating cultural identity.

The research is bounded, spatially and temporally, to the design and implementation of PV in the five KO communities and related research with federal government stakeholders. This work does not seek to measure any changes in policy or funding due to time constraints. However the implications of policy change are an undeniable aspect of the research and evidence of this change is included: measurement of these kinds of results will be considered a topic for further study.

The time frame of the research was limited to the beginning of the participatory video work in late 2003 and ending with interviewee feedback gathered in late 2005. Communities and stakeholders that engaged PV have only just begun to produce additional video materials. A comprehensive understanding of the full potential of this medium in the hands of remote Aboriginal communities will take years to become evident. As such, this work is delineated as ‘further research’. Geographically, the research was constrained to northwestern Ontario because of practical and funding
limitations. These are considered to be among the most disenfranchised Aboriginal communities in Canada. A comparative study with less remote or wealthier Aboriginal communities may have yielded a richer understanding of the condition in which PV might flourish.

The availability of other research environments was also limiting in that we cannot compare how video might have worked in different policy arenas. Industry Canada was the primary source of policy maker participants in this study. If the research had also attempted to address policy initiatives by other federal departments, it might have revealed a different organizational culture, more or less receptive to PV interventions. Furthermore, the research took place during the tenure of a single federal Liberal party regime. Shortly after the research ended the federal government came under the leadership of the federal Conservative party. It is unknown how the implications of the research findings may have been altered but section 2.5 does suggest that a more conservative planning paradigm limits interactive policy making.

Similarly, the availability of community participants was largely determined by their affiliation with ICTs. Had the policy focus of this research been, for example, culture or natural resource management, it is likely that different community members would have come forward possibly resulting in different levels of participation and different types of PV applications.

Summary

This chapter laid the foundations for the thesis. It introduced the research problem and research questions along with a description of the research environment. Then the
research was justified, the methodology was briefly described and justified, the report was outlined and limitations were described.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The application of video as a policy tool in aid of remote Aboriginal communities is complex and cannot be addressed by any individual discipline. Therefore, a review of the literature must go beyond identifying a dearth of research in the subject area. It must simultaneously provide a reason for the research and the research strategy while providing a rationale for the selection of the particular disciplines. Therefore, this literature review is presented as a conceptual framework that bridges several disciplines, the apex of which represents a rationale for the research.

In the early 1950s, Eric Trist developed the concept of socio-technical systems while studying the English coal mining industry, where mechanization had actually decreased worker productivity. (Trist, 1981) He proposed that systems of production have both technical and human/social aspects that are interconnected. Within these interconnections, Trist maintained, it was more than individual elements that determine system performance. “No one can force change on anyone else. It has to be experienced. Unless we invent ways where the paradigm shifts can be experienced by large numbers of people, then change will remain a myth.” (Trist in: Weisbord, 2000) A socio-technical system refers to the interaction between social systems, made up of people, behaviours, communication, power hierarchies and technical systems which consist of the physical arrangements of production such as the sequence of machinery and the way it is ordered to achieve its end.
The objective of socio-technical systems design is joint optimization, so that the results of both sub-systems are positive; that is, the tasks are effectively accomplished and the social relationships and commitment are maintained. The socio-technical system is also open to the environment and must manage the boundary between the system and the environment; for example, adequate information flow must be available to understand the changing demands of the environment. (Farkas, 2004)

The literature presented in this chapter bridges the technical and the social in order to frame the research. ICTs, video and policy making arrangements represent the technical aspects of the system while individual and group stakeholders such as Aboriginal communities and policy makers represent the social aspects of the system.

Friedmann (1987) argues that the evolution of theory in Western democratic policy development paradigms is marked by a gradual shift away from prescriptive approaches toward lateral, interactive policy development that fosters citizen engagement. This evolution has been recursive, with each new model borrowing from previously institutionalized policy development models. This state of flux between policy development approaches represents an opportunity for the use of new policy instruments at the service of citizen engagement. Key to meaningful citizen engagement in policy processes is an understanding of the communicative profile of policy-making paradigms which this chapter will explore.

Because the research is interdisciplinary, the analysis of the literature provided herein provides a broad understanding of the different fields of endeavor. It is not a comprehensive review of any one body of literature. Instead it seeks to make sense of the overlaps that exist between them in order to frame the current research. Second, by examining this literature, a dearth of investigation was identified that encouraged the
research to go forward. These two elements are inextricably linked to the research approach which seeks to address real-world research problems after having sufficient understanding of the research environment and research participants, in order to formulate appropriate research questions and strategies.

**Converging Disciplines**

Video applications have the potential to break down communication barriers and allow remote Aboriginal communities to develop audible, collective visions regarding their own policy needs. This chapter will frame the convergence of policy development approaches, development communication and technology to argue that the time for the use of participatory video for policy development has arrived.

The application of participatory video to address the policy-related, socio-economic problems facing remote Aboriginal communities and the ability of broadband connectivity to help remedy them, sits at the apex of several seemingly divergent fields of endeavor. The challenge in locating the work contained herein lies, not in the rigor of any one particular field of study, but rather in the common ground found where they overlap. As each discipline is narrowed to focus on this work, the overlaps delineate a distinct location for this work in the literature. Common ground is explored in each field of literature with each field being made up of several sub-fields. The five main bodies of literature are about the following:

1. The Fogo Process
2. Video technology
3. Participatory Video
4. Communication for Development

5. Policy Development

This chapter is not a comprehensive review of any single body of literature. It is the interaction between these fields that supports this research.

Primarily, this research extends the Fogo Process into the digital age and therefore this subject is considered first by providing a historical context for the study. The latter chapters of this thesis describe the application of video in the service of policy making for remote Aboriginal communities just as the Fogo Process used film for similar ends in remote Newfoundland. In the years since the Fogo Process, the field of participatory video has emerged as a form of communication for development used mainly for building capacity around local issues. These sections (participatory video and communication for development) are considered after the following discussion about the implications of digital technology and video because it is the evolution of ICTs that have made the research applications described herein possible.

The second body of literature is about technology. The broad field of ICTs will be narrowed to focus on their development applications. From here we consider not only the specifics of digital video, broadband and streaming video but also lessons from media studies about how these tools can be utilized to maximize the efficacy of the message. Whether used for inter-community communication or for relaying messages to government decision makers, how the message is crafted plays an increasingly important role in our understanding of its overall efficacy. The potential for new media as a tool to transform the way remote indigenous populations communicate with their governments
relies heavily on understanding the technological as well as the theoretical underpinnings of message making.

Participatory video and communication for development are considered in the next sections. I review the evolution of communication for development internationally, starting from the field of participatory video. Participatory video has been applied in a myriad of development environments. The focus will be on its use in the field of policy-making, starting with the Fogo Process in Newfoundland in the late 1960s and illustrating the need for a new methodological approach similar to the research that I conducted in northwestern Ontario’s Sioux Lookout Zone.

The fifth field of literature starts with a broad examination of policy-making in Canada. For the purposes of this research, policy that impacts or is directly targeted at remote Aboriginal communities is particularly relevant and is explored in Chapter Five: Research Findings where the discussion provides context for the existing research environment. Consultation and engagement is key when dealing with people from places for which most policy-makers have no cultural, social, economic or geographical point of reference. For this reason, the literature around interactive policy-making and its importance to disenfranchised communities is included in this section.

Policy planning theory has evolved toward interactivity fostering legitimate citizen engagement in its processes. This shift toward interactivity is illustrated using Friedmann’s (1987) planning paradigms. The manner in which governments communicate to the public around policy decision-making is also considered. Neils Röling (1993) challenged agricultural extension science by questioning the conventional top-down communication patterns of traditional extension approaches. According to
Röling, governments communicate policy information to the public depending on the nature of the information they wish to extract, build upon or disseminate. Interactive policy development then, requires a mode of communication that fosters citizen engagement; what Röling calls *facilitative communication* or *facilitative platform processes*. Both Röling and Friedmann point to a move toward interactivity but what of the tools to promote citizen engagement? Advances in information communication technologies (ICTs) offer the potential to facilitate this shift. Video has become an accessible tool that can be utilized for two-way communication between remote Aboriginal communities and policy makers. At the same time, it provides a platform for developing local collective visions around policy related issues thereby contributing to the convergence toward interactive policy development. The convergence of these five fields is shown in Figure 2.1 which maps the subject matter in support of this research: the potential to expand upon (1) the Fogo Process is made possible by (2) changes in technology which led to (3) participatory video in the 1970s and 1980’s which, along with the Fogo Process and this research, is a form of (4) communication for development which seeks to influence (5) the policy making process in the context of remote Aboriginal communities. Using Friedmann’s (1987) policy and planning paradigms, Röling’s (1993) communication for development typologies, and recent advances in communication technologies, I frame a discussion that identifies the need for a more interactive and iterative approach to policy development for marginalized, remote Aboriginal communities.
The criteria for selecting this literature are based on the specific circumstances of this study and the methodology adopted which are inextricably linked, as Chapter Four - Methodology will illustrate. More specifically, these fields were chosen because of:

- Their relevance to the research question and research objectives.
- Their suitability in providing key elements of a framework within which the research could be generalized.
- The relationships that exist between them, in the form of theoretical overlap, that are previously unexplored and help situate the research.

Figure 2.1: Bodies of Literature
Video represents an opportunity for Aboriginal communities to affect how policy decisions impact them before, during and after the policy development process. More importantly perhaps, video provides a tool for greater understanding and community mobilization, at the local level, with respect to specific policy related issues. The rapidly accelerating improvement in communication technologies, their existing and potential role in improving the interactivity of policy-making as well as the very changes in the policy making process come together to support specific methodologies for the use of video in and for remote Aboriginal communities laid out in Chapter Four: Methodology.

The Fogo Process

In the late 1960s, as part of the National Film Board’s “Challenge for Change” program, Memorial University extension professor Don Snowden partnered with producer Colin Lowe to produce a series of films about the communities on Fogo Island. These films quickly took on a life of their own as community members realized the value of the medium to develop consensus around local social and economic issues and help mobilize action toward their remediation through locally developed strategies. Film also allowed the communities to vocalize their concerns in a medium that could be used to deliver the message to policy makers and politicians who had little or no understanding of the reality of life in these remote fishing villages. Finally, policy makers were able to respond in kind as well as through the development of locally tailored policy delivery mechanisms. This iterative process, which sought ongoing input from community members through a series of public screenings, became known as the Fogo Process.
The deliberate use of audio-visual technology, in this case film, as a tool for policy change and community development began in 1967 with Donald Snowden’s work on the fishing communities of Fogo Island off the coast of Newfoundland. In conjunction with National Film Board (NFB) of Canada producer Colin Low and the communities themselves, they produced a series of documentary films about the islander’s struggles in the face of a rapidly declining fishery. “They felt that what the islanders had to say was more important than what they could put together as outsiders. So they interviewed them, but didn’t use any hidden cameras and they did their best to put people at ease. They never shot without permission and, most importantly, they gave the interviewees the chance to view the footage and to remove whatever they felt was inaccurate.”(Burnett, 1991:55)

Snowden realized that the island’s ten communities were experiencing similar problems. A declining fishery resulted in high rates of unemployment to which the government responded with proposals to relocate entire villages to mainland mining communities where there were jobs. The people of Fogo, for the most part, did not want to leave. Instead they hoped for alternatives to resettlement and a possible revitalization of their fishery. (Dewitt, 1969) Snowden embarked on the production of a series of documentary films intended to showcase the unique and disappearing way of life on the islands. The films quickly became something more than an exercise in documentation. The film’s subject, that is the people of Fogo, became increasingly involved in the film making process. Snowden provided community access to unfinished films and solicited feedback as well as allowing participants to modify or change their statements. Films
were repeatedly screened publicly and this iterative process went on until a general consensus about the film’s message was reached.

There were two significant outcomes of the production of these films. First, communities began to organize. The films served as a lightning rod that galvanized action toward the development of local solutions. Second, an edited compilation was sent to the Minister of Fisheries with the explicit intent of creating a communication conduit between the people of Fogo and the government agency charged with their well-being. The Minister replied in kind, through the use of film and the Fogo Process was born. The results were impressive. Community organizations identified a need and the “fishermen formed an island-wide producers’ co-operative which handled and processed large catches, enabling them to keep their profits on their island. Unemployment of able-bodied men disappeared, and the government directed their efforts into helping people to stay.” (Huber, 1999: 6) Indeed, the very funding for the co-operative came from the Ministry of Fisheries.

One of the key successes of the Fogo Process was its ability foster open discussion among the islanders. Fogo residents were excited about being on film and the film screenings often generated lively discussion. The films broke down the traditional barriers that existed on the island when residents saw that, despite religious, geographical and other differences, they shared common perspectives on the economic circumstances of the island.” (Sinding, 1997: 25)

The Fogo Process marks the first attempt to use documentary film making techniques to effect direct policy intervention at the local community level. Through the films, the people of Fogo Island began to see that each village on the island was
experiencing similar problems and became aware of the need for community organization. The films were also used to bring distant politicians face-to-face (or face to screen) with the voices and visions of people they seldom heard. Government policies and action were changed, the people of Fogo began to organize, and the history of the island changed forever. (Richardson, 1999: 1) Fogo islanders were encouraged to examine what they were going through both as they were filmed and afterwards. They became viewers and producers of images. This forced them to deal with problems that they had perhaps thought about before but had never really confronted.

Snowden (1984) laid out several principles upon which he saw successful implementation of video for community development. Most important of these, for the purposes of this research, was the concept of vertical learning, wherein the videotaped product is used to bridge communication gaps between communities and higher tiers of government authority. In this way, communication links are established and individuals who normally have not been able to talk to each other are able to do so and to learn from each other. This interchange, Snowden referred to as, exchange learning.

Video erodes our intellectual and social isolation. It provides a platform for encounter with people facing similar problems, similar obstacles and perhaps having similar social goals or objectives. Consequently there is an emerging growth in the potential for video communication to be used by groups with common interests, at national and international levels. (Hall, 1991: 44)

It is videos unique ability to facilitate dialogue between disparate groups that lies at the heart of the Fogo Process.
Video Technology

Fogo was the first attempt to turn film directly into a policy instrument. Filmed messages conveyed the islanders “concerns to the government which threatened the island with resettlement. In the end, the films succeeded in overturning this decision in favour of the cooperative fishery.” (Sinding, 1997: 25) While participatory video has grown considerably in popularity with the advent of video camcorders, its adoption has been ad-hoc at best. Video has become increasingly popular due to one primary advantage it has over film: convenience. Unlike film, video does not need to be sent away for processing in a laboratory but can be played back immediately. Also videotape records sound whereas film required a separate audio recorder that had to be synchronized with the film in a laboratory. Finally, the advent of affordable digital video technologies allows for the production of broadcast-quality sound and images as well as on-site editing using personal computer editing stations. (Burnett, 1991)

The evolution and propagation of ICT has transformed the world of communication by shrinking space and time, impacting everything from global economics, telecommunications, media, research and politics. “With the number of different initiatives in the technical, industrial, legal and political realms, it is not easy to predict where all this activity is leading and what a stabilized technological environment might look like.” (De Kerckhove, 1995: 57) The remoteness of rural communities, their comparative lack of technological infrastructure and the absence of a singular representative voice all point to the need for movement toward embracing ICT because of its promise to shrink time and space, improve communication and provide access to information.
Historically, we see the evolution of communication technologies developing in unison with the prevailing policy development paradigm of the day. Under *social reform*, with its emphasis on disseminative information transfer, citizen access to communication technology was inconsequential to policy makers. (Friedmann, 1987) The telegraph and telephone did not encourage citizens to engage in the policy process as they were sparsely situated in rural communities. The newspaper served as the primary communication conduit for government to inform the populace about what was going to happen. The shift to *policy analysis* (PA) coincides with the widespread availability of radio, and later television. PA communicates to the populace in order to “sell” its policy decisions and limits feedback to gauging how the public perceives the message, not policy content. What better place for this advertising job than the passive learning environment offered by television? The advent of digital video and the internet corresponds ideally with *social learning* and the presents shift toward governance and stakeholder participation in the policy process.

McLuhan (1965: 9) suggests that every new medium creates a new environment. His now-famous statement “the medium is the message” suggests that it is not the technology itself that matters, but what we do with it that has meaning or message. What we do with it alters our relation to one another and ourselves. “With such rapid advances in communication technology and know-how, the age of telecommunication for rural development may already be upon us. Solar-powered microwave links, fax machines, and satellite links, are increasingly reaching into rural areas of the world, offering the possibility of breaking their traditional isolation.” (Fraser and Villet, 1994: 7) Indeed, if rural communities are encouraged to use video, some meaning must be made of the
medium or “environment” itself. That meaning will come from the development of process models or methodologies.

Over the last thirty years, video equipment (cameras, players and editing stations) have become cheaper, lighter, less fragile and smaller. Picture and sound quality have improved the craft of filming. Digital video is among the latest innovations that have reached the level of “widespread affordability”. Digital video allows for computerized editing, making editing simpler, more flexible and less linear. “Sequences can be exchanged and copied without loss. Sound and picture can easily be separated and exchanged and copied without quality degradation. Subtitling becomes easier and cheaper and people without editing experience can participate in the editing process.” (Huber, 1999: 9)

A project can have its focus on the process of production or on the actual product (the video itself) or on both. A dichotomy between process and product is counterproductive since in many participatory video projects both aspects are important. Community change may come or be hoped to come as a result of interactive video projects but more certainly some level of transformative learning will result from stakeholder participation in the actual process.

Video bridges the vast gap of illiteracy, making it not just a more potent medium but an even more logical one in many areas. Although generally not as analytical as the print media, it creates vivid, strong and often lasting impressions. It conveys a powerful sense of intimacy and of immediacy. It forces us to make comparisons and to question values that we may previously have taken for granted or considered as unchallengeable. It often asks us to consider who and what we are, and why we do what we do. It encourages us to examine more closely the forces that control our lives and determine our livelihoods. (Hall, 1991: 191)
To make video effective, it has to be placed in the context of a social learning process and this requires quite a different approach than that of the traditional video crew. Facilitators as well as community members must learn how to use the medium to understand and clearly articulate a set of problems while at the same time deepening their collective understanding around the issue.

Beyond a certain point, the image is nothing more than a vehicle for and of communication, and though the image may form part of a larger process model, there is something very fleeting about the way in which images communicate meaning. The video screen is after all neither a simple reflection of the reality it depicts nor a window onto that reality. It is a highly aestheticized, if not partially closed, frame, which must be used if it is to be effective. But that use must have a measure of authority to it; the question is, how is that authority to be achieved? (Burnett, 1991: 59)

I propose that this authority be best achieved through the development and diligent application of participatory video research methodologies.

Protz (1991) foreshadowed the digital revolution by crediting the proliferation of analogue video technology as “the single greatest factor for increasing participation in and “affecting changes in alternative communication and development communication practices. “This spread of video technology to grass roots groups in developing countries means that more people are participating in video production for their own purposes than ever before.” (Protz, 1991; 38)

**Participatory Video**

Since the 1970s participatory video has seen many applications all over the world. But these applications have been contextually defined and seek immediate, local change. Since they were scattered and irregularly documented, it is difficult to identify a trend in
their development. While I do not discount the value participatory video has had in Third World development, particularly at the micro scale, it is limited by a lack of methodological structure. Despite missing the opportunity to learn from each other’s valuable experiences, practitioners argue that a flexible and culturally sensitive approach like participatory video precludes standardized, deterministic performance guidelines. (Huber, 2001) Participatory video practitioners have consistently denied the value of generalizable methodologies or process models. Snowden (1984), on the other hand, emphasized the importance of “process over product”.

Existing and emergent video recording and editing technologies offer remote Aboriginal communities a unique way of participating in their own development. The use of participatory video has grown considerably in popularity since the Fogo Process as video technology becomes cheaper, more portable and more reliable. Participatory video is, however, by its very nature, a fluid, contextually defined process used by facilitators to address site specific concerns across a broad range of social, ecological and economic issues. As such, participatory video has been applied in a myriad of development circumstances in many different ways. Participatory video communication may be defined as

a mediated process of decision-making which directly involves rural (and remote) people (particularly, but not necessarily, more disadvantaged groups therein) in discerning and prioritizing their own problems and finding the information and resources needed to solve these problems. Participatory video communication is a process wherein people themselves understand the video project methodology and process and control the content of the video productions. In this sense, the main objective of participatory video communication is not to produce media materials per se, but to use a process of media production to empower people with the confidence, skills and information they need to tackle their own issues.” (Shaw and Robertson, 1997: 26)
This approach provides groups with the tools necessary to articulate their experience and intentions around community specific issues to each other and to policy-makers.

The question of why the collective construction of video process-driven projects should be used to (1) facilitate communication between rural and remote Aboriginal communities and policy makers and (2) improve local or site-specific understanding around specific policy related issues is significant. This question underlies the work set forth in this paper. But before this question is answered, it must be framed conceptually and theoretically in order to provide context and ensure methodological rigor. This work will describe a framework that seeks to establish a pattern of convergence between advances in communication technologies, communication for development and the shift toward interactive policy development.

Gibb (1961) wrote about the importance of facilitative communication in organizations. The training environment should: (1) be descriptive as opposed to evaluative; (2) be collaborative toward problem-solving; (3) foster spontaneity and honesty; (3) promote empathy between participants; (4) promote a spirit of equality versus a hierarchical structure; (5) and is provisional in that judgment is withheld in favour of reflexive learning approaches. (Gibb, 1961: 91)
White (2003) lays out the conditions which practitioners should be aware of when engaging participatory video. The ideal communication climate for participatory video feedback described in Figure 2.2 is characterized by a balanced interaction action, situation, opportunity and interpersonal interactions within a communication environment that is marked by transformative learning.

Figure 2.2: Communication Climate for Participatory Video

(White, 2003; 90)

In Aboriginal communities, as in any traditional culture, the form and content of interpersonal communication between different groups take place within defined parameters. “Barriers exist between old and young, rich and poor, upper-caste and lower-
caste and so on. Video can mediate between groups and help to start a
dialogue.” (CENDIT 1991: 7)

The single greatest factor affecting changes in alternative
communication and development communication practices
appears to be the increase in participation as a result of the
proliferation of small format video technology in the Third
World. This spread of video technology to grass roots groups in
developing countries means that more people are participating in
video production for their own purposes than ever before. (Protz,
1991: 36)

Protz (1991:37) identifies six main reasons why a group chooses to produce its
own video materials: (1) Using video to train facilitators; (2) Using video to promote
local action. Videos that highlight successful initiatives in order to encourage other
people to participate in the same activity by acting as a catalyst; (3) Using video to raise
awareness with similar groups. A group may want to document the work it does or
express its concerns so that other people who do similar work will also realize the value
of what they do and organize around it; (4) Video expression of grievances to authorities.
Such tapes have a very powerful communication potential because they relay the emotion
involved in an issue in a form that is far more personal than would be possible in a
written report or document; (5) Using video to reinforce existing projects and initiatives.
Video documents can be used to profile successful initiatives and thereby lend
recognition and status to the people responsible for these activities. This is an important
element for reflection and also helps to ensure that positive initiatives continue: (6) Video
documentaries and video report. Group events can be documented and reported via the
video medium. Video documentation can also be used to reveal indigenous knowledge
and practices. This can have a two-fold impact. First, it gives a higher status to the
knowledge people are already using to grapple with their daily problems. Second, it
allows people to articulate this knowledge to “scientific experts” in a way that is far more comprehensive than are interviews and more traditional types of data collection. Using video this way can better integrate people’s valuable knowledge into practical solutions combined with scientific knowledge.

Chavez et al. (2004) point out that video does not always need to be up to broadcast specifications.

It need not be shot on expensive equipment or be the standard 25 minute length needed to fill a half hour television slot. Purpose should determine the production values, cost and length. Thousands of images are woven together to tell a story, and the blending of music, images, and text in video can vividly portray the culture of a community. Video production guided by community-based participatory research (CBPR) principles can be a means of engaging community members, building partnerships, and strengthening community ownership. Thus participatory video-making acts as a bridge between multiple communities, invigorating partnerships and implementing creative collaborations. Applying principles of CBPR to video-making means: (a) engaging stakeholders; (b) soliciting funding and informed consent; (c) creation of shared ownership; (d) building cross-cultural collaborations; (e) writing the script together, and; (f) putting it all together – editing and music selection. (Chavez et al., 2004: 395)

This interpretation of CBPR is well suited to this research because it seeks to integrate community input into the production process and allows for flexibility in terms of what types of videos are considered appropriate. This flexibility is of particular value given the emergent nature of the research design.

CBPR is a collaborative approach to research that equitably involves community members, organizational representatives, and researchers as partners in all aspects of the research process. Partners contribute unique strengths and shared responsibilities to
enhance understanding of a given phenomenon and integrate the knowledge gained with action to improve the health and well-being of community members. CBPR addresses locally identified issues, is community owned, and is used to promote health and social change. Visual arts and music offer tools for research, teaching, and practice in the field of health promotion and health education. “The cultural diversity, personal sensitivity, and passion that characterizes some of the arts resonate with some key principles and commitments of health promotion, such as the need to foster a high level of community participation by involving participants in all aspects of community assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation, and the emphasis on humor and fun as essential healthy components of our work.” (Chavez et al., 2004: 396)

Schulz (1998) identifies eight principles of Community-Based Participatory Research: (1) Local relevance and attention to the social, economic, and cultural conditions that influence health status. (2) Developing, implementing, and evaluating plans of action that benefit the community. (3) Enhancing community capacity. (4) Having partners involved in major phases of the research process. Doing research that strengthens collaboration among partners. (5) Projects are conducted via open communication. (6) Research is produced, interpreted, and disseminated to community members in clear, useful, and respectful language. (7) Joint agreement on access and location of data. Participants are consulted about submission of materials and invited to collaborate as co-authors. (8) Research adheres to human participants review process, rules, and regulations. (Schulz, 1998: 44)

Using CBPR in video-making offers an opportunity for multiple authorship and the inclusion of diverse images and voices. Video can document and represent people, places, and issues in innovative ways that strive to balance power differentials.
between, for example, researchers, institutions, and community perspectives. Video can be a way of documenting findings and disseminating results for educational purposes and to influence policy. Furthermore, through the creation of video participants who have not been involved historically in the research and intervention process have the opportunity to literally be “in the picture” expressing their contributions and assets as well as their concerns. Video-making can enhance a research process by bringing credibility to the content of what is said, enabling community members to speak out and have their message heard. (Chavez et al., 2004: 397)

Shaw and Robertson (1997) identify eight approaches that participatory video can take: (1) *Group Work Applications*: social group work and community development; cultural democracy; development and education. (2) *Bringing Groups Together*: interview in-groups; street interviews; interviewing other groups; video letters; capacity building for divergent groups. (3) *Information Gathering & Consultation*: recording for feedback within the group; edited statements; recording events; planned documentary. (4) *Celebrating Achievements & Oral History*: workshop interviews; archiving and documenting events; oral history. (5) *Exploration & Raising Awareness*: interviews; shot-by-shot documentary; planned documentaries. (6) *Developing Group Identity*: edited statements; shot-by-shot drama / documentary; storytelling; video diaries. (7) *Exploring an Issue*: interviews; edited questions; edited statements; opinionated shot-by-shot. (8) *Getting a Message Across*: video interviews / discussions / statements; promotional tape; video newsletter; educational tape. This typology helps us to understand and categorize the types of videos being produced in association with a given PV project.

A relevant concern I identified with participatory video is whether emphasis should be on the process or the product. Participatory video is one method to achieve the goal of participatory community development. In participatory video projects the process of communication is the focus (Sinding, 1997). Rodriguez (1994) distinguishes video
products, which emphasize the creation of meaningful product, from video process, which emphasizes knowledge exchange within or between communities. “Whereas in the former, community members are regarded as information sources by a communication expert producing a video, in the latter, the community expert works alongside community members to produce a meaningful message. The communication process is typically emphasized by developers who aim to create conditions in which participants recognize their own abilities to the social context in which they live. The process of editing raises awareness of the power maintained by commercial television and film enterprises.”

(Rodriguez, 1994 as cited in Sinding, 1997: 29)

Distinguishing between video process and video product is complicated as explained by White (2003).

The traditions of video as we experience them through commercial television, have produced a firm mindset about the medium, even in countries that only recently have had access to TV. In some cases exposure to video a la videocassettes for home viewing has preceded broadcast television but the videos played are those produced in “TV” quality and mode. The prospect of having technological tools - small cameras, simple editing systems, video monitors - available for ‘hands-on’ use presents a totally new video concept. (White, 2003: 64)

Participatory video has placed particular emphasis on process, frequently at the expense of product. Practitioners quickly realized that: (1) people were able to come together, overcome differences and develop a collective vision when engaged in making a video and; (2) participatory video product would never be able to compete with mass media due to lack of production resources and training. Therefore, the primary purpose of participatory video was to “promote self/other respect, a sense of belonging, a feeling of importance, a claim to identity; to enter into a dialogue with group members and reflect
on interpersonal interaction and; to define goals and outline courses of action for self-
development”. (White, 2003: 65) In practice, it was, and largely remains, irrelevant
whether or not the video product was instrumental in realizing any of these goals.

Transactional communication is a dialogue wherein sender and receiver interact
over a period of time, to arrive at shared meanings. This implies that the communicating
parties are ‘tuning in’ to each other in an ongoing interaction with constantly shifting
roles of ‘sending’ or ‘receiving’ (Nair and White, 1994). This understanding of meaning
has profound impacts for the potential of participatory video. Gumucio-Dagrón (2004)
suggests that participatory video practitioners and proponents look to the growing impact
that alternative media has had on socio-economic and environmental issues especially for
the poor and disenfranchised. “Video has been considered by many the ‘poor relative’ of
film and television industries and has been perceived as a marginal attempt to compete
with commercial networks.” (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001: 56) This perception no doubt is
what feeds participatory video’s emphasis on process over product. But he goes on to
state that independent filmmakers and video makers have managed to build over the
years a strong alternative to the emptiness of commercial television, thus creating not
only alternative ways of producing and distributing film and video but also contributing
with a different content and aesthetics. The innovative uses of alternative and
independent video can be categorized in three distinct perspectives, whereby (a) the
process before the video product is essential, (b) the video product is the objective, and
(3) the emphasis is on the process after the video product is completed, meaning the way
the video is distributed and screened.” (Gumucio-Dagrón, 2004; 57-58)
The increasing acceptability of product-oriented participatory video projects is due in large part to shifts in public perception about what a video production should look like. In order for participatory video to move beyond local boundaries, it must incorporate these lessons into its methodological tool box. The emergence and growing legitimacy of alternative media means that participatory video may have a new audience when coupled with an expanding internet which provides a global audience. Indeed, this new ‘low-budget’ aesthetic helps to contribute to the perceived legitimacy of participatory video content; both by those who view it as well as those who produce it.

Media is described as facilitating communication across lines of political difference. “Media play a particularly important role in shaping impersonal perceptions, and impersonal perceptions in turn, play a particularly important role in shaping political judgments (Mutz, 2003: 356). Turkle’s (2001:178) investigation into the development of cyber-culture reveals lessons about the power of the video image.

Many people spend most of their day alone at the screen of a television or a computer. Meanwhile, social beings that we are, we are trying (as Marshall McLuhan said) to retribalize. The video image has, in fact, changed the way we perceive ourselves individually and politically. Because our self is shaped by our relationship with others, the experiences we have with others accounts for the kind of person we become. However, self-concept or one’s image of self is who a person ‘thinks they are’ and is not necessarily the real self that others see. (Turkle, 2001: 178)

The medium of video has particular resonance for Aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal culture is very visual and the video allows people to communicate in a way that is different than written reports and even e-mail. (Pers. Comm. Yesno, 2004) The ease with which video applications help overcome issues of literacy as well as providing a voice in the political arena was documented by the Resolute Bay Hunter and Trappers Association
Both hunter and trapper organizations favoured the use of video recording equipment over audio recorders. Inuit not only communicate through their words, but also by their facial expressions, hand gestures, etc. Video equipment was used not only to record interviews with elders and hunters, but to film polar bears and other animals in their natural habitat in different seasons corresponding to the Inuit calendar. Thus footage would then be taken back to elders and hunters in the community for comment, explanation and narration. In this way, Inuit elders were able to participate more directly and effectively in the project than would otherwise be the case.

The act of seeing ourselves on the screen – exposed, warts and all – ought to turn us into nervous wrecks. Instead, once the initial shock is past, the process usually works the other way. It strengthens our sense of self; emphasizes our sense of dignity… it seems to create identity where none existed. From identity it is only a step to self-respect, a quality which has been defined as the willingness to accept responsibility for one’s own life. Often that willingness is the foundation on which consensus for social change can be built.” (Gwyn, 1972: 2 as cited in Sinding, 1991: 25)

Video communication is also cited as an effective tool for research, teaching, and practice in the field of health promotion and health education. Chavez et al (2004) found that a common thread exists between the promotion of cultural diversity, personal sensitivity, and passion that characterizes some of the arts. This “resonates with some key principles and commitments of health promotion, such as the need to foster a high level of community participation by involving participants in all aspects of community assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation, and the emphasis on humor and fun as essential healthy components of our work.” (Chavez, V. et al, 2004: 396)

Video communication has played an important role in the way people perceive themselves as well as their place in the world. It has the potential to “enlighten them to
the possibility of achieving socio-political objectives that may not previously have been conceived of or have appeared possible. Equally, video and television communication and the commercial forces that manipulate them have played a horrific role in corrupting social values, promoting violent individualism and fostering unrealistic expectations. “ (Hall, 1991: 186) However, “grass-roots production makes the members of the production process more critical of professional media, less receptive to its message and generally more media literate as the technical process becomes mystified. People become more aware of mainstream media construction and mainstream values. (Protz, M. 1991)

One factor that gives video communication more potential strength than any other media currently in popular use is its power to humanize. It is arguably an agent for face-to-face encounters. It enables its audiences, in what is generally an intimate atmosphere, to closely observe another place, another person or another lifestyle. It enables audiences, logistically more easily than film does, to see the facial expressions, the eye movements, the rhythm of breathing and conversation, the gestures, and to hear the timbre, the emotion and the tension in the recorded subject. An audience can quickly, often reliably, form an opinion or impression of a filmed or videoed subject. (Hall, 1991: 188)

In Table 2.1 Huber (1999) outlines the key differences between a participatory video based methodology and a traditional documentary film.
Table 2.1: Documentary Production or Participatory Video

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who shoots the video?</th>
<th>Documentary</th>
<th>Participatory Video</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Film maker/directorwriter</td>
<td>Community/stakeholders and the video facilitator together (collective authors and directors)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who writes the script?</td>
<td>Film maker</td>
<td>No script or jointly formulated script</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who decides on content?</td>
<td>Film maker</td>
<td>Community/stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is the audience?</td>
<td>Undetermined (mass) audience</td>
<td>Determined audience, direct addressing of the audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is feedback expected?</td>
<td>Not necessarily, may stimulate thought in the audience</td>
<td>Yes, definitely; people are empowered to act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process or product?</td>
<td>Product oriented</td>
<td>Process and/or product oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underlying paradigm?</td>
<td>Monism, objectivity</td>
<td>Pluralism, subjectivity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Huber, 1999: 11)

**Communication and Learning**

There are two generally accepted definitions of communication. “The first sees it as a process by which A sends a message to B upon which it has some effect. The second sees it as a negotiation and exchange of meaning, in which messages, people-in-cultures and ‘reality’ interact so as to enable meaning to be produced.” (O'Sullivan, 1983: 42) It is the goal of the first definition to determine who says what to whom, how they said it and what impact it had upon them. Mackay (1972) argues that the intention to communicate is overlooked here, making this approach to communication facile. “A geologist can extract a lot of information from a rock, but the rock does not communicate because it has no intention, nor power of choice.”(MacKay, 1972) An example of this prescriptive approach was Shannon and Weaver’s (1949) *Communication Theory*, an
attempt to extend information theory beyond engineering into human communication as outlined in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.4: Communication Theory Model

(Shannon and Weaver, 1949)

Although it has received considerable criticism, this model has been largely adopted for its utilitarian ability to disseminate information to what are assumed to be passive recipients.

It implies that the receiver is passive, and at the mercy of the previous stages in the process, and thus fails to account for other influences upon the effect of the message and the receiver. It emphasizes the skills, techniques and processes of communication, and is therefore favoured by professionals in the media. It does not address itself to the meaning of the message, nor to the social context or relationship of the people involved. It is a mechanistic, rather than a semiotic or social model.(O'Sullivan, 1983: 44)

The second definition is based upon a relationship between two or more players in order for communication to result in meaning, either intended or understood. This iterative approach to communication lies at the heart of participatory communication and, by extension, participatory video and this research. *Participatory Development Communication* is a two-way, dynamic interaction between “grass roots” receivers and
the “information source, mediated by development communicators, which facilitates participation of the “target group” in the process of development. (Nair, 1987: 37)

Mass communication in the service of development was first conceived as a way of modernizing and “humanizing” middle-eastern countries in the early 1950s. Daniel Lerner, a political Scientist at MIT published *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*. In it he proposed “a typology of attitudes toward ‘development’, which as the title suggests, was a process of transition from a ‘traditional’ state to a ‘modernized’ state. The West provided the only possible model for modernization, thanks to the presence in Western culture of empathy, defined as the psychic mobility proper to the modern personality, which had enabled Western people to shake off the yoke of passivity and fatalism.” (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1998: 35)

Rogers (1962) would build on this model in his book *The Diffusion of Innovations* in which he identified development as a means to achieving higher per-capita income through modernization. “This implied strategies for research and action, typologies of target populations and the stages through which they had to pass. Peasants were divided, for example, into ‘innovators’, ‘early adopters’, ‘early majority’, ‘late majority’ and ‘laggards’.” (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1998: 37 ) This paternalistic tradition toward development was problematic for number of reasons; least significant of which was the blatant disregard for local input when defining what constituted ‘development’.

While this may have been the pervasive attitude toward development among practitioners of the day, it was by no means universally accepted. Freire’s seminal book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972) signified a break from conventional top-down approaches toward communication in the context of development.
In particular Freire was concerned with praxis – action that is informed and linked to values. Dialogue was not just about deepening understanding; it was a part of making a difference in the world. Dialogue in itself is a cooperative activity involving respect. The process is important and can be seen as enhancing community and building social capital and to leading us to act in ways that make for justice and human flourishing. (Smith, 2005: 18)

Freire’s most well known contribution is the concept of conscientization – “developing consciousness, but consciousness that is understood to have the power to transform reality”. (Taylor, 1993: 52)

Similarly, Habermas (1971) differentiates human knowledge into three general cognitive categories that build toward a critical consciousness. Work knowledge or technical knowledge refers to the way one manipulates one’s environment, practical knowledge refers to human social interaction and emancipatory knowledge refers to “self–knowledge” or self-reflection. These categories determine what we interpret as knowledge. These areas are called knowledge constitutive, in that they “determine the mode of discovering knowledge and whether knowledge claims can be warranted. These areas define cognitive interests or learning domains and are grounded in different aspects of social existence – work, interaction and power.” (Purcell, E. 2002)

Technical knowledge is derived from empirical scientific methodologies. Its principles do not change. Water flows downstream in any culture. “The criterion of effective control of reality direct what is or is not appropriate action. The empirical-analytic sciences using hypothetical-deductive theories characterize this domain.” (Purcell, 2002) Technical knowledge is instrumental in that it is used to construct, engineer and design. “Faculty working in the sciences, engineering, agriculture, trades and technologies tend to see themselves as working with instrumental knowledge.
Consequently, they focus on pedagogies appropriate to this kind of knowledge, neglecting those appropriate to the other aspects of knowledge in their field.” (Habermas 1987: 333) This distinction is significant. Cranton (2000), writing on Habermas points out that a combination of all domains of knowledge are essential for emancipation as opposed to the sole reliance upon instrumental rationality which she claims, “produces a vision of an administered, totally reified world in which means-end rationality and domination are merged.” (Cranton, 2000: 3)

The practical domain refers to Habermas’ theory that social interaction is organized through a system of *communicative action*. “Social knowledge is governed by binding consensual norms, which define reciprocal expectations about behaviour between individuals. Social norms can be related to empirical or analytical propositions, but their validity is grounded *only in the intersubjectivity of the mutual understanding of intentions.*” (Cranton, 2000: 4) Practical knowledge is interpretive in that it varies from individual to individual, group to group and culture to culture. Communicative action seeks to make sense of these differences to better understand our place in the larger society. Habermas (1984: 86) refers to the concept of communicative action as “the interaction of at least two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relationships (whether by verbal or by extra verbal means). The actors seek to reach an understanding about the action situation and their plans of action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement.” We use communicative knowledge “to understand each other and the social norms and systems within which we live—to develop and maintain educational systems, create governments, build social assistance
programs, work toward human rights and justice and understand our history.” (Cranton, 2000: 3)

Emancipatory knowledge refers to the personal, subjective knowledge of self that is acquired through critical self-reflection thereby leading to personal empowerment. Emancipatory or critical knowledge deconstructs, analyzes and reconstructs the facts, meanings and theories about the world. An individual who critically questions her values engages in a subjective activity unique to her. Through emancipatory knowledge we free ourselves from the constraints of uncritically assimilated assumptions. We are able to challenge the influence of media and advertising, question our leaders and politicians, see how our personal background may have led us to hold discriminatory views and realize how a self-concept derived from childhood experiences may limit our choices and achievements.” (Cranton, 2000: 3)

In this domain “knowledge is attained through perspective transformation by the critical scrutinization of techno-rational subsystems and the tendency of technocracy to subvert opposing political and ethical points of view.” (Alvesson, 2000: 125) Table 2.2 helps link knowledge types to their appropriate research methods.

Table 2.2: Knowledge Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Human Interest</th>
<th>Kind of Knowledge</th>
<th>Research Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>Positivistic Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(prediction)</td>
<td>(causal explanation)</td>
<td>(empirical-analytic methods)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Interpretive Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(interpretation &amp; understanding)</td>
<td>(understanding)</td>
<td>(hermeneutic methods)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emancipatory</td>
<td>Emancipation</td>
<td>Critical Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(criticism and liberation)</td>
<td>(reflection)</td>
<td>(critical theory methods)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Purcell, 2002: 3)

Unlike Karl Marx or Paulo Freire, Habermas makes no predictions about the outcomes of emancipation. Marx clearly stated that a “transformed consciousness” should lead to the abolition of private property. (Marx & Engels, 1969) Freire, in his
Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) refers the concept of “conscientization” which he says should be used to lead both the oppressors and the oppressed to new world views thereby transforming society into a more socio-economically equitable place. “Habermas encourages the intertwining of technical and practical knowledge combined with critical self-reflection to achieve emancipatory knowledge. There is a close relationship between all three varieties of cognitive interest and all three are necessary for an equitable individual and social existence.”(Alvesson, 2000: 125) What individuals, groups, cultures and societies choose to do with this emancipatory knowledge is up to them. Habermas severs the concepts of critical self-reflection and emancipation from particular political ideologies or courses of action.

Communication technology projects, as with most development projects, will rarely succeed without prior commitment to change in the sector by substantial political forces. In earlier, more naïve times, communication enthusiasts had hoped that their awesome technologies might somehow circumvent current political interests. By changing the organization and speed of information distribution, they argued, the distribution of power and societies could also be changed. However, four decades of experience have taught us that the technologies, awesome as they may be, are under the control of those interests. The information that is to be transmitted and the feedback that will be heard are defined by those who control the hardware. (Hornik, 1988: 24)

In doing so, he provides a theoretical approach to learning that truly acknowledges the contribution of the learners by giving them the ultimate freedom: to do whatever they choose with their new critical awareness.

**Communication for Development**

The term ‘communication for development’ describes communication strategies that seek to educate and change behaviours in the service of social and economic
development. The term has evolved to reflect way that development approaches have changed over the decades. The terms ‘development communication’ and ‘development support communication’ were used to describe more prescriptive approaches that favoured behavioural changes that were identified by development ‘experts’.

‘Communication for development’ reflects a shift toward integrative communication approaches while ‘communication for social and environmental change’ goes even further describing an approach that questions the conventional definitions of development that are tied to economic growth.

Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (1998) define Communication for Development as:

> the use of communication processes, techniques and media to help people towards a full awareness of their situation and their options for change, to resolve conflicts, to work towards consensus, to help people plan actions for change and sustainable development, to help people acquire the knowledge and skills they need to improve their condition and that of society, and to improve the effectiveness of institutions.” (Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada, 1998: 63)

Unlike journalism, where the emphasis is on news, Beltrán (Gumucio-Dagron, 2004) points out that communication for development is “a tool for enhancing people’s education for the betterment of their lives... The development communicator struggles for a change in behaviour, so people can succeed in overcoming underdevelopment, injustice and authoritarianism.” (Beltrán interviewed in Gumucio-Dagrón, 2004)

India’s Centre for Development of Instructional Technology (CENDIT: 1991) defines development to be “a process by which people generate increasing control over their own lives. To be developed is to be able to reflect on one’s environment, critically analyze it and co-operate to solve problems collectively and transform one’s environment. There is no universal development model, but a whole spectrum of
alternative development paths.” Communication for Development is most generally understood as “the integration of strategic communication in development projects.” (Hornik, 1988: 40) Communications strategies have been typically employed to help improve the successful adaptation of development projects. But as I will illustrate in the following section with Röling’s (1993) concept of participatory platform processes, project success is contingent on changing behaviour, not merely disseminating information.

Meaningful communication is about getting information out to particular audiences, listening to their feedback, and responding appropriately. Whether discussing a development project or broader economic reforms — from health, education or rural development to private sector development, financial reform or judicial reform — the idea is to build consensus through raising public understanding and generating well-informed dialogue among stakeholders.” (Hornik, 1988: 40)

Participatory communication has been defined as a mediated process of decision-making which directly involves rural people (particularly those who are more disadvantaged) in discerning and prioritizing their own problems and finding the information and resources needed to solve these problems. Participatory communication is a process wherein people themselves control not only the media decision-making process and the content of media productions, but also the means of media production and the resulting media materials. In this sense, the main objective of participatory communication is not to produce media materials per se, but to use a process of media production to empower people with the confidence, skills and information they need to tackle their own issues and to provide them with the media tools necessary to articulate their experience and intentions. (Protz, 1991: 27)

Participatory development communication goes a step further toward local engagement. Nair & White (1987: 37) define it as” a two-way, dynamic interaction, between ‘grass roots’ receivers and the ‘information’ source, mediated by development
communicators, which facilitates participation of the ‘target group’ in the process of development.

Communication for development has its roots in top-down prescriptive approaches designed to disseminate information and practices that the proponent organization had deemed valid.

The field of development communication has come a long way since its beginnings in the 1950s. Back then, it was mainly associated with a systems model of communication, functioning as ‘a science to produce effective messages’ as an add-on to agricultural extension programs, and was conceived primarily as a tool of top-down development programs. These days, however, it is more theoretically diversified and strategically nuanced. It has become an umbrella term for a wide range of communication programs and research. (Waisbord, 2000: 22)

This top-down approach did not foster understanding beyond the immediate goals of the project or intervention nor did it engage local participation in the development of the message.

The production of some isolated piece of material, whether a radio program, or a video, or a leaflet, usually resulted in stand-alone items. As such they made little impact, for it is now proven that communication is most effective when it is based on qualitative research with the intended audiences, and on a strategy that uses different media and channels in a coordinated way. (Fraser and Estrada-Restrepo, 1998: 47)

Erskine Childers, through the Development Support Communication Service (DSCS) of United Nations steered communication for development strategies and thinking to a more facilitative platform. “Childers’ was active in the field of development communication at the same time that early resistance to diffusion began to appear in Latin America and elsewhere.” (Rogers, 2005: 43) He went on to develop a six-point plan to encourage the United Nations to get more involved in bottom-up communication
strategies and to encourage the organization to speak to people in ways that they could understand and feel comfortable entering into dialogue with.

Childers’ plan focused on (1) encouraging broad public motivation to address development challenges; (2) ensuring that local project staff could communicate in one voice; (3) using media materials to help government agencies to coordinate with one another and to cooperate in the eventual management of aid projects independent of foreign bureaucracies; (4) providing adequate resources and training to field personnel so that they could provide their own micro-communications programs; (5) disseminating relevant applied research from universities and other institutions as well communicating the findings of the UN back to these institutions in order to build problem solving capacity at an international level and; (5) integrating communications strategies directly into project plans and budgets. (Rogers, 2005)

Leeuwis (2004) distinguishes between different forms of communicative intervention and positions them in terms of a hierarchy. (1) Strategies, such as advisory communication, conflict management, policy generation and horizontal knowledge exchange refer to the wider intervention objective. Within each strategy, (2) functions are defined according to the intervention’s communicative sub-goals. Examples of functions include raising awareness, training and the exploration of views and issues. The facilitators or planners of a communication strategy will adopt a certain (3) approach which simply places the basic planning philosophy according to its place in the spectrum between interventionist or interactive. (4) Methodologies are pre-defined procedures which use several methods. (5) Methods, such as a workshop or group discussion, are the way media are used with the context a given activity but are not necessarily part of a
specific methodology. (6) Tools and techniques are ways of employing a method such as in a diagnostic manner or a persuasive manner. (7) “Mass, interpersonal, and hybrid media are basic devises that help to combine different communication channels for the ‘transportation’ and exchange of textual, visual, auditive tactile and/or olfactory signals. Hence, different media can be used in the context of methods and methodologies” (Leeuwis, 2004: 210)

An example of utilizing culturally appropriate communication strategies comes from Nepal where in the early 1980s approximately 45 000 children per year were dying due to dehydration related to diarrhea. A communicative intervention was undertaken that relied largely on visual media such as stickers, pictures painted on umbrellas and clothing, posters, and comic books as well as training and cooperation with local healers to address rehydration therapy.

The song was performed by a popular singer and accompanied by several messages on how to mix the solution at home. Part of the radio message's appeal however was the announcement that it was up to the audience to help with this; an invitation for people to join in and spread the knowledge of ORS to save children's lives… many of the best ideas for the promotion of Nun Chini Pani came from the public themselves. (McBean, 1998)

The Nepal case highlights the importance of using communication channels that are appropriate to the message, the recipients, the socio-economic environment and the physical environment. “An appreciation of the communication channels unique to each message can help the communicator design a more innovative and cost effective strategy. Each issue is likely to have its own particular communication route and set of carriers.” (McBean, 1998)
Earlier development approaches assumed that “experts” had the correct answers and that indigenous knowledge was of little or no value. Shirley White (2003) identifies nine conditions that are necessary for participatory development to work effectively.

- Commitment by development planners and donors to human resource development.
- Understanding the cultural aspects of the community.
- A critical mass of interested people in the community.
- Competent facilitators willing and capable of enabling others.
- Training programs for building competencies, participatory planning and action.
- Full interactive participation in defining, prioritizing and implementing development programs.
- Institutionalizing mechanisms to ensure sustainability: coalition building; setting education and training facilities; establishing a resource base for continued development; creating linkages to advisors, resource providers, governmental bodies, and neighbouring communities.
- Withdrawal of outside facilitators, when projects are completed.
- Provision of ongoing guidance and consultation to communities as needed.

The most important outcomes of participatory communication are “the presence of local people in decision-making, project design and implementation as well as evaluation. The people must come through the process with newly acquired skills and a sense of being in control.” (White, 2003: 39)

Participatory communication brings a new perspective to the information needs of communities thereby creating
a mediated process of decision-making which involves the rural poor directly in discerning and prioritizing their own problems and finding the information and resources needed to solve these problems… it reinforces their existing indigenous knowledge and incorporates this knowledge into the development process in a way that is culturally sound. Small-format video with its flexibility, immediacy, low running cost and widespread availability lends itself to decentralized participatory utilization. (CENDIT, 1991: 16)

Participatory communication for development begins with the premise that all people have a right to voice their views and become active partners in the development processes which impact upon their lives. As such, it is both a process and a product.

Waisbord (2005) identifies five key elements integral to the process of development communication.

(1) The centrality of power wherein communication strategies emphasize the importance of local empowerment by gaining knowledge about specific issues. (2) The integration of ‘top-down’ government strategies and initiatives with ‘bottom-up’ planning processes that emphasize participatory and local planning approaches to problem solving. (3) A ‘tool-kit’ approach acknowledges that having access to a wide variety of communication methods and mediums increases the likelihood of success because of the multiple facets and needs of development. (4) The combination of interpersonal communication with multimedia activities suggests that communication for development approaches should, regardless of the medium, stimulate local dialogue and exchange around the ideas being presented. And (5) incorporating of approaches that focus on individual as well as environmental factors to understand how behaviour changes. (Waisbord, 2005: 21)

Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (1998) categorizes the functions of communication for development as being social, educational or institutional. Social communication promotes dialogue in communities as well as “reflection participatory situation analysis, consensus building, decision-making and planning of actions for change and
development. In essence it is the process of mobilizing people and communities, and helping them to gain the insights and confidence needed to tackle their problems.”

(Fraser, and Estrada-Restrepo, 1998: 63) Mass media and traditional media both play an important role in this function.

Educational communication is used to help people acquire the knowledge and skills they need to be able to put change and development decisions into action. It takes educational content from specialists and presents it in various media forms, particularly using audio-visual technology, to help people understand, learn and remember. It is an essential element in training programs at all levels. (Fraser and Estrada-Restrepo, 1998: 63)

At the institutional level

communication for development creates the flows of information inside and between all the partners involved in a development action, including government departments, NGOs, and the communities. The aim is to improve coordination and management by creating a common understanding among the various partners of the projects objectives, activities and progress. (Fraser and Estrada-Restrepo, 1998: 63)

Waisbord (2003) identifies the types of communication strategies according to their theoretical underpinnings and their objectives to produce a cross section of approaches from social marketing as the most prescriptive and rights based communication as the most locally empowering. The evolution from social marketing to rights based communication follows a trend toward community engagement in the planning and development of communication strategies. Social mobilization and media advocacy are developed by outsiders who seek to improve local conditions through media exposure but do not place an emphasis on local input into the design of the media materials or communication strategies. Communication for social change and participatory media integrate local ideas into communication planning strategies.
Policy Making

Policy has been defined as a “set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where these decisions should, in principle, be within the power of these actors to achieve”. (Jenkins, 1978: 15) It is a “course of action or inaction chosen by public authorities to address a given problem or interrelated set of problems.” (Pal, 1987: 4) “Public policy is the broad framework of ideas and values within which decisions are taken and action, or inaction, is pursued by governments in relation to some issue or problem.” (Brooks, 1989: 16) Simply put, public policy can be described as government decisions and/or actions or inaction taken in response to a problem or set of problems within its jurisdiction.

“Policy instruments are the means by which services are provided and regulations enforced. The government has at its disposal a vast array of tools to ensure that citizen needs and wants are satisfied.” (Baxter-Moore, 1987: 336) These range from laws and regulations to expenditures, taxes and privatization. Supporting the development of new, interactive, tools to improve the democratization of policy development through citizen participation is the intent of this work.

The participation of citizens in the policy process has multiple objectives: “providing an opportunity for citizens to make policy demands, allowing governments to obtain social knowledge based on the experience of individuals and communities or contributing to community development.” (Phillips, 2002: 20) Increased citizen engagement, as opposed to mere citizen consultation, in policy processes marks a shift
from government to governance. Where traditional top-down approaches emphasize control and uniformity, (horizontal) governance recognizes that “governments alone may not have the capacity, knowledge or legitimacy to solve complex policy problems in a diverse society. “ (Phillips, 2002: 4)

“The dominant model of local politics, which fit the political landscape of the 1940s-1970s, vested decision making authority solely with governmental leadership; citizens voted and governors governed.” (Gates, 1999: 519) The local government owned the public agenda, setting priorities and choosing when and how to act. Citizen participation meant voting for political leaders who were assumed to be acting in the public’s best interests.

Gates (1999) cites four contextual shifts that have made the old model of government inadequate for present-day community management. (1) Society’s problems are increasingly becoming the responsibility of local and regional communities. (2) A continuing trend of fewer and fewer public dollars available to deal with society’s critical issues. (3) Power has become more widely and thinly distributed within the community. (4) The demographic composition of communities has become increasingly diverse, with a concomitant increase in the potential for polarization. The result of these shifts is that community problem solvers now face the challenges that were once the responsibility of higher tiers of government. Governance means that the private sector, the non-profit sector, and individual citizens must help, both in allocating resources and deciding how public dollars should be used to address critical issues. “Given the explosion of information technology in recent years, citizens now feel they have enough information to be directly involved in the resolution of issues and expect to be so.” (Gates, 1999: 522)
In the old model, citizen participation was seen as a way of sanctioning policy-making decisions. “The new model of politics needs to be one where citizens are engaged at the initial stages of the policy-making processes. Governmental leaders must go to neighborhoods, find out what people think, find out their needs and concerns and then develop a plan based in response to that proactive input.” (Gates, 1999: 523) This model for government calls on leaders to bridge communication between constituencies and interest groups.

Pluralism is a key value underlying policy-making decisions in Canada. “Pluralism suggests that there is an ongoing competition among shifting groups in society who all attempt to influence the policy-maker to create public policy that favours their interests.” (Dahl, 1961) “While there does seem to be some basis to the organizational focus of pluralism in that people band together into groups around common interests, these groups tend to be patently unequal in resources.” (Inwood, 1999) “The flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent.” (Schattschneider, 1976: 4) The ramifications of pluralism for remote and disparate rural communities are clear. Without an audible, collective voice, they remain subject to urban-biased policy decisions or simply inadequate programs that are not based on knowledge of their context.

The most important lesson from community building is that better, more sustainable answers are revealed when people whose lives will be impacted are involved at every step; from involvement on framing issues, interpreting data, discussing options and finalizing recommendations. (Blackwell & Colmenar, 1999: 492-4) The extent to which policy planning approaches integrate local input is identified by Friedmann’s
(1987) five policy and planning development paradigms (Table 2.3). Two, social reform and policy analysis, are based on a conservative political ideology and commute knowledge to action under the auspices of societal guidance. Three others, social learning, social mobilization, and radical planning operate under a radical political ideology and view praxis as facilitating social transformation. Because they base planning on different assumptions, each model relies on a different set of policy instruments to achieve its goals. Social learning, described in bold type, represents the ideal policy making environment for participatory video.

Table 2.3: Summary of Friedmann’s Planning Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Model</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Reform</td>
<td>Top down approach; institutionalizes planning to make state action more effective; state can be mediating and authoritative; planning as scientific endeavor; preserve and improve capitalism and status quo power structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Analysis</td>
<td>Analytical, technocratic; decisions based on science and “hard” facts; serves existing centers of power; best solutions can be identified using scientific theories and mathematical techniques as opposed to politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Learning</td>
<td>Knowledge emerges from an ongoing dialectical process; theory is enriched with lessons drawn from experience then applied; the scientifically correct way to effect change is through an iterative process of social experimentation; social transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Mobilization</td>
<td>Direct collective action from below; class struggle; social transformation; ideology of the dispossessed; Marxism, utopianism; scientific analysis in the form of social learning emphasized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical Planning</td>
<td>Confrontational; oppositional approach to transforming existing power relations; dogmatic; revolutionary; not open to negotiation or concession</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Friedmann, 1987)
Röling’s (1994) work in natural resource management yields three distinct functions of communication relevant to the use of video in rural community development. Understanding how governments use communication tools in the planning process is integral to the development of methodologies for the use of video in rural and remote policy development. Röling’s functions illuminate levels of interactivity in, and provide context for, the use of video in each of Friedmann’s (1987) planning paradigms described in the next section. *Transfer of technology* refers to the traditional top-down way that extension has transmitted messages from researchers to farmers. “For many years, communication professionals focused on transfer of technology, including the diffusion of innovations. That is, they basically took the perspective of the bio-physical scientist and became professionals in promoting the utilization of scientific knowledge.” (Röling, 1994: 5) Policy implementation (PI) communication, according to Röling, is used to foster policy acceptance. Lastly, Röling describes facilitative platform processes as giving a voice to different stakeholders where negotiation among different parties can take place. “If we believe in only one absolute truth, disagreement can only mean negation. If there are multiple realities, disagreement means negotiation, accommodation, learning and the ability to reconstruct someone else’s reality.” (Röling, 1994: 4)

Video can be used to affect policy in each model, but because of these fundamental differences in approach, video applications would look very different in each planning model (Figure: 2.4). To understand the role that video might play within the policy instrumentation of each planning paradigm we must understand the role of policy communication therein. The relationship between policy planning and modes of communicating policy information forms the foundation for understanding what role
communication technologies such as video can play in the policy development process (Figure 2.5).

Table 2.4: The Role of Video in Friedmann’s Planning Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Model</th>
<th>Role of Video in Policy Communication Strategy</th>
<th>Video Medium</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Reform</td>
<td>Video as a tool; Used to disseminate information about policy decisions already made; Instructional; transfer of technology; one way information transfer; non-consultative.</td>
<td>Television (disseminative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Analysis</td>
<td>Video as a tool and possibly a non-consultative process; Used to disseminate information about policy decisions already made. Instructional; top down transfer of technology; may be used by policy technicians to extract “data” to help guide policy decisions.</td>
<td>Video used reflexively to determine most pallatable message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Learning</td>
<td><strong>Video as a tool and, more importantly, as a process; as a tool can be used to affect policy, media and the status quo; can be used as a process to improve community insight into policy related problems and how to affect change locally</strong></td>
<td>Video and iterative video-based processes for lateral policy making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Mobilization</td>
<td>Video for transformative emancipation either as tool or process; learning is ideologically driven but can remain iterative; minimal value in affecting policy change</td>
<td>Participatory Video limited by ideological criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical Planning</td>
<td>Video as a tool only; used to record and disseminate ideologically driven versions of social realities; used to affect change; non-iterative in its use of dispossessed as subjects; instructional; one-way, top-down, transfer of information</td>
<td>Television (disseminative)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.5: Communication Approaches of Planning Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Model</th>
<th>Rölings’ Communication Typology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Reform</td>
<td>1. Dissemination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Policy Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Analysis</td>
<td>1. Policy Implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Dissemination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Facilitative Communication (restricted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Learning</td>
<td>1. <strong>Facilitative Communication</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. <strong>Policy Implementation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. <strong>Dissemination</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Mobilization</td>
<td>1. Policy Implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Dissemination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Facilitative Communication (restricted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical Planning</td>
<td>1. Dissemination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Policy Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chambers (2005) represents an overview of citizen participation with roles and relationships through a series of ladders. “Ladders unpack participation and show that the same word can be used for different activities and relationships.” (Chambers, 2005: 105)

In table 2.6 we see different types of participatory engagement translate into objectives, roles, actions and ultimately ownership.
Table 2.6: Roles and Relationships of Citizen Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Outsiders’ Objectives</th>
<th>Outsiders’ Role</th>
<th>Local People’s Role</th>
<th>Outsiders’ Actions</th>
<th>Local People’s Actions</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totalitarian</td>
<td>State political</td>
<td>Dictator</td>
<td>Slave</td>
<td>Command</td>
<td>Comply</td>
<td>Outsider’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>Cosmetic legitimization</td>
<td>Manipulator</td>
<td>Puppet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extractive</td>
<td>Obtain local knowledge for better planning</td>
<td>Researcher/planner</td>
<td>Informant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induced</td>
<td>Gain action through material incentives</td>
<td>Employer</td>
<td>Worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultative/Instrumental</td>
<td>Improve effectiveness and efficiency</td>
<td>Rational Economist</td>
<td>Collaborator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>Share responsibility</td>
<td>Co-equal partner</td>
<td>Co-equal partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformative</td>
<td>Facilitate sustainable development by local people</td>
<td>Facilitator/catalyst</td>
<td>Analyst/actor/agent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Mobilizing</td>
<td>Support spontaneous action</td>
<td>Supporter</td>
<td>Owner Controller</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Initiate</td>
<td>Local People’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Chambers, R. 2005: 106)

While planning is being adopted by regimes that make decisions based on policy analysis and social reform, communities can move policy making into the realm of social learning where decisions are based on consultation, in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders. The rapid technological advancement of Information Communication Technology (ICT), specifically digital video, means that communities have a new way of talking to policy-makers.
Interactive Policy Development

The characteristics of remote Aboriginal communities and the extent to which they differ from one another is a key reason why prescriptive policy implementation does not adequately serve their needs. Differences in remoteness, socio-economic composition, culture, ecological surroundings and even the relative strength of individual personalities or stakeholders make it clear that the present policy development and delivery approach is not working to the benefit of rural communities. Paehlke (1990: 35), referring to environmental policy states that, “more democracy is needed since elected officials and senior administrators are not necessarily protectors of the public interest. What is needed is transparency and democratic consultation in the policy development and delivery arena.” Nowhere is this need more obvious than in remote areas where access to consultation is even more difficult due to remoteness and rural-urban cultural differences. Until more interactive approaches are adopted, rural communities will remain limited partners, subjects of urban policy decision-makers rather than objects steering their own course. “Sparsely populated and spatially isolated, rural communities lack the range and depth of resources available to their urban counterparts to deal with these changes. In addition, they are often excluded from consideration by government programs and policies that are written primarily with an urban focus”. (Sumner, 2001: 1). Remote Aboriginal communities frequently lack the lexicon of bureaucratic, academic and policy-related terminologies preventing their meaningful contribution to the process thereby further disenfranchising them.

Interactive policy development marks a shift away from bureaucracy-based policy making toward integrating community input into the process,
its needs, its capacities and ultimately its own control over both
its resources and its destiny. Community needs, even
communities themselves, should not however be categorized as a
homogenous single entity. By invoking a basic principle of
control and accountability it maintains that the control over an
action should rest with the people who will bear its
consequences. (Korten, 1986: 19)

According to Woekurm (2000) interactive policy development requires a paradigm shift
based on four theoretical considerations. (1) Self-referentiality refers to the way that an
organization, such as a rural community, has its own way of perceiving itself and its
environment. Integration of this principle at the regional, provincial and federal levels is
key if policy development is to begin reflecting the needs of the actual communities they
purport to serve. (2) Instrumentalism argues that a community’s environment is perceived
as a unity that can be influenced. The community itself, through effective communication
with higher tiers of government, can effect the changes that they themselves deem
necessary. (3) Communication as an agent of change, not merely of transmission of
information, is essential to rural communities. Rural communities, in communicating
with outside powers, effect and construct change through that very process of interaction.
It is not simply a transmission of stated needs but an active engagement that produces
change. If we think of a community as an entity that seeks change, the next logical step
is to change (4) the attitude of how that community’s governance structure seeks change.
Again, open two-way communication between the community and higher tiers of
government will contribute to a positive approach to finding the best route to desired
change. These four principles have the potential to effect profound change in the way
policy is developed and delivered to rural communities. What matters “is not merely a
better registration of the opinions of individual citizens (elections, referenda or tele-
voting) but rather the process of opinion-forming itself, for which, again, dialogue forms
the foundation” (Woekurm, 2000: 20).

In order for policy-making to become more of a community-building process,
lessons from community building need to be aggregated, analyzed and then applied. It is
these insights and lessons that should then be incorporated into the policy-making process
itself. “The most important lesson from community building is that better, more
sustainable answers are revealed when people whose lives will be impacted are involved
at every step; from involvement on framing issues, interpreting data, discussing options
and finalizing recommendations.” (Blackwell & Colmenar, 1999: 492-4) “As with other
aspects of public administration, the trends toward decentralization, downsizing and
devolution of responsibilities to the private sector and not-for-profit community groups
means that in many instances the traditional governmental role of policy implementation
is being taken over by non-governmental actors. A major premise of this approach is that
government should arrange for the provision of services, but not deliver those services
itself.” (Inwood, 1999: 221)

The traditional understanding of the role of research in policy making is re-
interpreted in the (RAPID) research and policy in development (RAPID) framework.
(ODI, 2006) This model questions certain assumptions about policy making, suggesting
that the relationships between evidence, the political context, the links between policy
makers and other stakeholders and external factors are more interrelated then the
prevailing wisdom suggests. RAPID was developed in order to better utilize evidence in
policy in an international development context.
The following key themes were identified as emerging from the literature and will be used to frame the discussion in Chapter Six – Analysis and Interpretation.

- The Fogo Process proved that film – and by consequence video – could be used to facilitate communication between remote disenfranchised communities and policy makers. The messages produced through the Fogo Process provided contextualized qualitative information to policy makers that changed their understanding of the communities and the issues they faced. Film was used in turn to deliver messages from policy makers back to the communities to create a
dialogue that resulted in actual policy initiatives that addressed some of the socio-economic problems on Fogo Island as they were understood by local stakeholders.

- The Fogo Process was highly dependent on the expertise of filmmakers. Film production is a technically challenging and labour intensive process. To ensure that local voices were conveyed accurately, facilitators screened the films to the communities and allowed for revisions and additional input that more accurately reflected the local vision and needs.

- In addition to the production of 22 films, the Fogo Process revealed how film could be used to bring people together around common issues. The community screenings got people talking and developing their ideas for economic rejuvenation. The integration of community feedback into subsequent productions helped develop this collective vision which lies at the heart of the Fogo Process.

- The reliance on outside expertise meant that the Fogo Process was ultimately finite. As long as the Islanders were dependent on professional filmmakers to construct and deliver their messages to policy makers, their own capacity to control the medium for their own ends was limited both temporally and financially to the involvement of the National Film Board.
• Although they may appear outwardly similar, the difference between participatory video production and conventional documentary film production is significantly different. A documentary film or video seeks to tell a fact based story, most often in the interest of exposing the issue to the general public. However, a documentary conforms to the conventions of mainstream film production wherein a director steers the message according to his or her own particular interpretation of the subject matter. Participatory video is pluralistic because it incorporates local input into the planning and production processes as well as soliciting and incorporating feedback into the production.

• The evolution of the video capture technology from film to analogue videotape to digital video has expanded the potential for the Fogo Process to be used in myriad policy development settings. The ubiquity, ease-of-use and high quality of digital video allows the Fogo Process to be taken to its next logical manifestation: training community members to produce their own videos.

• The evolution in video technology also has implications for traditional applications of participatory video. Whereas in the past, participatory video emphasized collaboration around process in order to build consensus and capacity around a given issue, the advent of digital video means that participants can harness the technology much more quickly and begin producing their own media to communicate their needs to policy makers and to groups in similar circumstances.
• Involvement in the production process allows participants to shift their understanding of media as well as their understanding of themselves in a larger context in what Freire (1970) referred to as conscientisization and Habermas (1987) called emancipatory learning. The act of PV production necessitates collaboration around production and around content development or message-making. This collaboration leads to transactional communication (Nair and White, 1994) which leads to shared meaning and the construction of collective strategies to address local problems. Furthermore, by producing their own videos, communities seize control of the medium and are then able to shape it to address their own needs without the presence of outside facilitators.

• The field of communication for development has evolved from prescriptive approaches that encourage behavioural change based on outsider ‘expertise’ to a more participatory approach that fosters local input and integrates local knowledge into planning and communication strategies. In the context of discussing participatory video projects, White (2003) identified nine conditions for what she terms ‘participatory development’. The conditions relevant to the current research in remote Aboriginal communities are: cultural understanding; a critical mass of participants; capable facilitators; training and; collaborative planning of projects and strategies. In the larger context of communication for development projects, Waisbord (2005) emphasizes the importance of local understanding of the issues being addressed as well as the need to integrate local,
bottom-up planning approaches with the top-down approaches found in governments and large development organizations.

- Mcluhan (1988) helps us to understand the implications of the video medium in a larger, cultural context. Retribalization explains how the technology helps disparate groups who are underrepresented in the mass media make sense of their existence, in the face of a culturally fragmented society, by creating a collective identity through communication. Turkle (1995) explains how new digital technologies, driven by the internet, allow individuals to control their perception by others through a form of image reconstruction. The video medium, as reflected in film and television, has proven that it has the power to render invisible entire cultural realities (Ross, 2006). Access and control of the medium should then have the opposite affect: the power to legitimize disenfranchised cultures and change collective and individual self perception.

- Shultz et al. (1998) identified the principles of community based participatory research (CBPR) seven of which helped shape the current research: (1) Local relevance and attention to the social, economic, and cultural conditions that influence health status. (2) Developing, implementing, and evaluating plans of action that benefit the community. (3) Enhancing community capacity. (4) Having partners involved in major phases of the research process. Doing research that strengthens collaboration among partners. (5) Projects are conducted via open communication. (6) Research is produced, interpreted, and disseminated to
community members in clear, useful, and respectful language. (7) Joint agreement on access and location of data. Participants are consulted about submission of materials and invited to collaborate as co-authors. Participatory video projects should be guided Community Based Participatory Research (CPBR) as defined by Chavez et al. (2004) wherein video serves as a bridge between multiple groups thereby strengthening relationships and fostering community ownership.

Applying principles of CBPR to video-making requires: (a) engaging stakeholders; (b) soliciting funding and informed consent; (c) creation of shared ownership; (d) building cross-cultural collaborations; (e) writing the script together, and; (f) putting it all together – editing and music selection. (Chavez et al., 2004: 395)

- Shaw and Robertson (1997) identified eight approaches that participatory video can take: (1) Group Work Applications; (2) Bringing Groups Together; (3) Information Gathering & Consultation; (4) Celebrating Achievements & Oral History; (5) Exploration & Raising Awareness; (6) Developing Group Identity; (7) Exploring an Issue and; (8) Getting a Message Across. This typology helps us to understand and categorize the types of videos being produced in association with the current research. All of the videos produced utilized a collaborative approach characterized by iterative consultation with research participants. Most of the videos were produced in order to raise awareness around certain policy-related issues while others served to develop group identity and explore local issues. Later videos, produced by community members themselves celebrated
local tradition and culture. Ultimately, all the videos were an attempt to communicate something, either to policy makers or other Aboriginal communities.

- Utilizing the typology set forth by Shaw and Robertson (1997) reveals that the videos produced during the course of the current research were focused on process as well as product. Gumucio-Dagrón (2004) argues that the dual emphasis on process and product has emerged as a result of a new aesthetic in the collective cultural perception of video made possible by the rapid advancements in digital video technology. The Fogo Process pioneered a new reflexive process that brought the Islanders into the filmmaking process through the filmmaker’s expertise to produce professional documentary films. Subsequent PV projects (White, 2003) emphasized the importance of video production to foster processes of collaboration, exchange, lateral learning and the development of strategies and solutions. The current research merges these two elements which are no longer disparate because of the accessibility of the technology which has led to the hands on production, as a result of training component of the research, of high quality video at the community level.

- Policy conditions or the planning paradigm of the day, will determine the nature and function of video within a given intervention. In order for participatory video to work in a meaningful, reflexive manner, the conditions described in a
social Learning paradigm (Friedmann, 1987) must exist at the planning level where the project is being conducted.

This literature review provides two key elements necessary for this research to proceed. First, it provides a conceptual framework. Figure 2.7 lays out the literature in a way that demonstrates how the fields described in Figure 2.1 interact. Here we see that the relationship between these elements is more complex and nuanced. The current research is based on novel application of the Fogo Process which is a tool for communication for development. The current research uses advances in video technology and lessons from participatory video to re-invent the Fogo Process. The integration of lessons from policy development clarifies the conditions under which video can be used to influence policy decision-making.
• Evolved from prescriptive to collaborative.
• Fosters local input into message making and program design.
• Encourages the use of culturally appropriate media and strategies.

• Influenced policy through film-based communication.
• Integrated local voices and plans into message.
• Facilitator reliant; technically inaccessible; collaboration limited.

• Emphasizes the importance of the production process to develop local capacity.
• Participants trained to use video and collaborate around issues.
• Conditions determine local success.

• Policy making paradigms determine the extent to which community based communication strategies can influence the policy making process.

• Advances in technology permit new applications and more accessibility.
• Exposure and control of media affects self perception of marginalized communities.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

Introduction to the Methodological Approach

The participatory action research methodology presented in this chapter draws from the situations, conditions and relationships uncovered during the research process and described in detail in Chapter Four: Research Context. As this chapter will illuminate, the research methodology cannot be divorced from the research environment. They are, according to a participatory inquiry paradigm, inseparable and interdependent.

This chapter is divided into four sections:

- The first section explains the ontological underpinnings of the research methodology. The previous chapter is synthesized and a portrait of the research environment based on its component parts and how they interact is presented. This is a description of the ‘lay of the land’ and informs the approach taken in the following section on the epistemology of the research.

- The second section focuses on the epistemology of this research which refers, simply, to the theoretical foundations upon which the methodology was built. A participatory inquiry paradigm is used to frame participatory action research (PAR) which was developed in response to the ontology and the research objectives.

- In the third section, Methods, I describe the specific research gathering techniques and strategies that were employed. Participant observation (PO) was used throughout the research period to seek out the meaning of the interventions
(research events) for the groups being studied (remote Aboriginal communities, policy makers etc.) and from each of the many different perspectives within these groups. PO is ideally suited to the epistemological framework described above because it emphasizes how and why action changes practice and relationships. Interviews were conducted with research participants and stakeholders from government and remote Aboriginal communities. Data analysis was done using the constant comparative method (CCM) to code the data from the of interview responses.

- The final section I review each of the five research objectives of this thesis and how which methods were used to address them.

Ontology

Ontology refers to the nature of the research elements that are knowable. Key to understanding the nature of this reality is the determination of relationships between the entities contained therein - be they people, institution or systems –and how we make sense of them.

Ontology is an explicit specification of a conceptualization. The term is borrowed from philosophy, where ontology is a systematic account of existence…Ontology is not a discipline which exists separately and independently from all the other scientific disciplines and also from other branches of philosophy. Rather, ontology derives the general structure of the world; it obtains the structure of the world as it really is from knowledge embodied in other disciplines. (Gruber, 1993: 33)

The ontology of this research is composed of three environments: (1) remote Aboriginal communities; (2) policy makers and the federal policy making arena and; (3) the technological environment which consists of the ICT infrastructure already in place in
Northwestern Ontario as well as the conditions arising from the application of participatory video in the aforementioned communities and policy arenas. The relationship between the researcher and the researcher environment is described as transactional. Knowing as described by Heron and Reason (1997) is subjective–objective in that it “presupposes mutual participative awareness. It presupposes participation through meeting and dialogue in a culture of shared art, language, shared values norms and beliefs.” (Heron and Reason, 1996: 278)

Remote Aboriginal Communities

Aboriginal communities in northwestern Ontario are in a state of ongoing social crisis. The complex interplay of this cultural crisis combined with a disproportionately large percentage of youth -which has resulted in a significant generation gap - characterizes the social environment into which broadband was introduced. Questions of cultural identity and language haunt communities where youth have embraced broadband technology and whose acute exposure to dominant cultural trends has skipped a generation in unison with the integration of ICTs into the community. As Kerchkove (2001) points out, we have yet to understand the long-term implications of this technological acceleration on society and the literature surrounding it is emergent and frequently contradictory. So how are we to make sense of similar changes in an Aboriginal environment underscored by profound cultural, social and economic crises?

Aboriginal communities are human systems whose nature and identity are defined by a myriad of social, economic, cultural and geographical factors. As such, understanding the impacts of new media and policy tools on these places is a complicated exploration in a murky environment. Traditional disciplinary approaches applied to these
areas, such as geography, sociology or anthropology are unable to adequately address the research question set forth here because of its interdisciplinary nature.

From early anthropological enquiries to resource exploration on traditional Aboriginal territories, the history of Aboriginal research is marked by a paternalistic and extractive legacy. Research in and on Aboriginal communities, be it academic, government-funded or for-profit has typically been non-consultative and almost exclusively to the benefit of anybody but the research subjects. “Academics come up here, do their research, then leave. They don’t so much as send us a copy of their thesis. It’s just another example of the way first nation’s people continue to be exploited in the interests of white people from the South.” (Pers. Comm., Beaton, 2004). From an academic’s perspective, the relationship between knowledge and community may appear less than abstract, “for indigenous peoples, universities are regarded as rather elite institutions which reproduce themselves through various systems of privilege.” (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999:129) Trust or more specifically, building trust between the researcher and the research participants and re-defining that very relationship by building rapport became an overriding objective of the research methodology.

Any discussion of research involving Aboriginal people in Canada should incorporate the lessons of the past. Given the history of the way research has been conducted, it comes as no surprise that outside researchers are frequently viewed through a lens of mistrust, fear and hidden agendas. Native researcher Tuhiwai-Smith (1999:10) writes that

the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, ‘research’ is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary. When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it
stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, and it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful. The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world’s colonized peoples.

Any research methodology applied to Aboriginal peoples, directly or otherwise, then, must first consider this history and it’s still potent perception. In developing the research methodology laid out in this chapter, I identified six guiding principles intended to minimize issues of mistrust.

1. The research goals and objectives must be transparent to the participants.

2. The development of the research methodology would itself be iterative in nature and developed collaboratively, in order to allow input from participants and subsequent modifications based on local understanding of the research issues.

3. Access to the research findings, its dissemination and publication, would be open.

4. Every effort would be made to involve local participants, who were informed of the research goals and objectives, in gathering data.

5. Wherever possible, local participants would be trained in various aspects of conducting research with the goal of helping build capacity and skills beyond the existing research project.

6. The research itself, would address real-world problems facing Aboriginal communities.

Stringer (1996:15) defines community action research as “a collaborative approach to inquiry or investigation that provides people with the means to take systemic action to
resolve specific problems.” The methodology laid out here is emergent in its design. In addition to giving voice to the research subjects, this reflexive approach also provided skills and expertise as a function of the methodology.

These approaches not only enable communities but also enable indigenous researchers to work as researchers within their own communities. Community action approaches assume that people know and can reflect on their own lives, have questions and priorities of their own, have skills and sensitivities which can enhance (or undermine) any community-based projects. (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999: 127)

Mention should also be made regarding issues of consent to participate in research. Given the possibility of encountering the above described perceptions of academic research and researchers, it was essential to go beyond standard protocols for procuring consent. This was of particular significance when dealing with communities where; (1) a researcher may be perceived as an authority figure; (2) with whom participation was perceived as mandatory and; (3) whose final reporting may result in negative repercussions for the community in the form of decreased funding for one or a number of programs.

Learning is as much a process of developing trust and respect as it is a process of acquiring knowledge; in fact it determines the quality of the knowledge acquired”. (Wilde, 2003: 192) Securing trust was paramount as was an approach for ensuring honest, ongoing participation. In traditional Aboriginal communities “consent is not so much given for a project or specific set of questions, but for a person, for their

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credibility. Consent indicates trust and the assumption is that trust will not only be reciprocated but constantly negotiated – a dynamic relationship rather than a static decision. The quality of the interaction is more important than ticking boxes or answering closed questions.’(Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999: 136)

The Policy Making Environment

In order to understand the potential impact that new media can have on policy it is essential that policy-making processes are examined. However, the reality of policy-making in Canada, as encountered while undertaking the research, differs greatly from the theoretical models set forth in the literature. These differences will be examined with the intent of demystifying policy-making influences and identifying ways of using new media therein. Chapter Two – Literature Review contains a detailed section outlining the policy making process and the different paradigms under which federal policy can be developed. As well, considerable attention is paid to the ways in which video functions as a communication tool within these planning paradigms. Alternatively, the purpose of this section is to describe the policy making environment that I encountered, its players, institutions and organizational character in order to illuminate how and why I developed the research epistemology the way I did.

The following organizations and government agencies, in combination, formed the policy environment:
• K-Net, the Internet Service provider for the Keewaytinook-Okimakanak communities as well as an expanding network of Aboriginal communities across Northern Ontario, Northern Quebec and Northern Manitoba.

• The Keewaytinook-Okimakanak (KO) tribal council. KO is responsible for the civil administration of Fort Severn, Deer Lake, Keewaywin, Poplar Hill and North Spirit Lake First Nations communities.

• Industry Canada’s Fed-Nor division whose mandate is regional economic development in Northern Ontario. Fed-Nor was also responsible for facilitating the development of the Smart Communities proposal with the Keewaytinook-Okimakanak tribal council.

• Industry Canada’s Smart Communities program and Industry Canada’s National Satellite Initiative who carried on the connectivity programs developed through Smart

• Industry Canada’s First Nations SchoolNet Program charged with the delivery and implementation of Internet assisted education curriculum to remote first Nations.

• Health Canada’s Telehealth program responsible for funding the telehealth infrastructure to the KO communities.
• The Government of Canada’s Privy Council Office, Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat. The Privy Council initiated the production of Turning the Corner, a community based video that was used to disseminate the lessons from the KO experience with broadband to senior politicians and bureaucrats.

• The elected and bureaucratic officials of the First Nations communities of Fort Severn, Deer Lake, Keewaywin, Poplar Hill and North Spirit Lake First Nations.

K-Net succeeded in securing the Smart Communities funding which allowed for connectivity into the five KO communities. K-Net coordinated this infrastructure with the communities themselves and sought additional funding from government partners like Industry Canada’s National Satellite Initiative. This funding was combined with Health Canada and Industry Canada’s SchoolNet, that contributed additional funding to support telehealth and the Keewaytinook-Okimakanak Internet High School (KiHS) to the five communities.

Feedback was sought through the research and delivered to the policy making partners including the Privy Council of Canada. The Privy Council, in turn, set future trans-departmental Federal policy directives utilizing feedback from the communities and policy-making partners based on participatory video products.

The policy-making environment was made possible by a degree of interactivity that stemmed, initially, from the Smart Communities mandate which fostered community based approaches for the implementation of broadband infrastructure. This approach
extended into the evaluation process where this research begins thereby allowing for the introduction of participatory video processes as a means to gather feedback.

This policy-making environment is one of community organizations, government agencies and political bodies. These are organizations with rules, procedures and mandates. They are also organizations staffed by individuals whose beliefs and attitudes toward Aboriginal communities and community-based policy making may differ greatly. Without the presence of key individuals who fostered interactivity as an applied principle, it is unlikely that the research environment would have taken shape the way it did. Furthermore, the relationships among these individuals, their ability to cooperate, share common visions and act upon these in official capacities represents a much richer and complex policy-making environment than what is described here. Ultimately, as applied here within a policy making context, this research is about influencing people – decision-makers who formulate policy from the community level to the federal partisan level.

_Bridging Communication Gaps with ICT (Video)_

It is not the ICTs themselves – broadband, computers, video-conference units, video cameras etc. – that form the third pillar of this ontology. Rather it is the socio-technical system and its communication bridges that nurture the relationships, both institutional and individual. Referring to rural telecommunications infrastructure Andrew and Petkov (2003) state that “the development and usage of telecommunications infrastructure cannot be fully understood and planned without similar understanding of the relationships between individual societies and infrastructure. Clearly, the
development of telecommunications infrastructure is a very complex process, which involves and affects people, organizations and institutions at all levels.” (Andrew, 2003: 82)

ICT is an emerging field. Efforts to understand its medium and long term impacts, particularly in remote areas are, despite predictive efforts, are characterized by uncertainty. Iterative methodological approaches have been selected specifically to mitigate the impacts of this shortcoming. ICT in Canada’s remote Aboriginal communities represents a new and unique learning environment. This research is framed within a constructivist paradigm that allows lessons-learned to emerge from the research, but also pre-shaped by the review of the literature, rather than applying rigid disciplinary hypotheses that restrict this process because of this uncertainty.

ICTs facilitated the building of new relationships and better understanding in two important ways. First, digital video, the technological front end of the participatory video process, allowed the various policy-making partners to perceive each other in a richer way. Specifically, it provided context to government policy makers about the reality of conditions in remote Aboriginal communities and at the local level, bureaucrats became accessible and thus, demystified, through the recorded image. Second, the broadband infrastructure that was already in place allowed for the rapid production and dissemination of videos. Streaming video, in particular, allowed participants to revise and contribute to the editing process remotely. It also meant that videos could be seen by senior bureaucrats within days, and frequently within hours, of being produced. ICTs, in particular video applications combined with broadband, helped create the context whereby the Fogo Process could be applied in a new and innovative way.
Epistemology: Participatory Action Research

In Chapter Two – Literature Review, the literature was organized by field and presented as a conceptual framework in support of this research. The five principal components of the subject matter anchor the methodological strategy set forth in this chapter. The methodology adopted a constructivist approach and used a participatory action inquiry paradigm to steer the research. This approach was determined to be the most appropriate research paradigm within which the study of the previous key ontological elements – which previously had never been analyzed collectively - should be undertaken. Guba (1990: 17) defines a paradigm as “a set of beliefs that guide actions, whether of the everyday garden variety or action taken in connection with a disciplined inquiry.” Where objectivism sees knowledge as truthful facts about objects or phenomena that can be uncovered by the application of scientific method, “constructivism defines knowledge and being ‘constructed’ through complex social processes as individuals interact with each other and their environment. Knowledge is not seen as truths about an external reality but rather as the negotiated understanding that individuals and communities use to make sense of their worlds and to take effective action” (Gujit, 2002: 9).

Constructivism provides a foundation upon which to address the methodology for this multi-faceted research. The research environment is complex and necessitates an inductive theory-building strategy derived from the researcher’s experience on the ground. But constructivism, in and of itself, does not illuminate the various key elements of the research in order to produce viable academic research findings. Rather it serves
primarily as a guiding theoretical philosophy. Reason (1998) introduces the concept of a participatory world view which he characterizes as the most appropriate and effective research approach with which to deal with real world problems. Methodologically this requires four ways of knowing to ensure valid and useful research: experiential, presentational, propositional and practical. Participatory action research (PAR) then is used to “work with people who are disadvantaged or oppressed as a way to help them solve practical problems and also reclaim their capacity to create their own knowledge”. (Reason, 1998: 43).

The research involved approximately eight months working both with remote Aboriginal communities and with senior policy makers in Ottawa. Participatory Action Research (PAR) provided a methodological framework that brings together investigation, education, and action at the community level to allow people to address specific concerns. In this case, PAR was engaged to address the power gap between Aboriginal communities and the policy makers who determine the nature and extent of their ICT access. PAR is based on the belief that people can understand and solve their own problems and plan actions to achieve their own vision for themselves and their communities.

Participatory action research (PAR) is about affecting change through the research process. PAR acknowledges inherent societal inequalities and seeks to demystify the role of the researcher as ‘expert’ or somehow elevated from the community in which the research is being conducted. Within the PAR paradigm, the researcher serves the role of facilitator. “The researcher’s function is to serve as a resource to those being studied – typically, disadvantaged groups – as an opportunity for them to act effectively in their
own interest. The disadvantaged subjects define their problems, define the remedies
desired, and take the lead in designing the research that will help them realize their aims.”
(Babbie, 2001: 288). The research described herein followed these fundamental tenets of
PAR by: (1) allowing the communities (through the Keewaytinook-Okimakanak Tribal
Council) to define the topic of the videos to be produced such as Telehealth, Internet
assisted education and economic development; (2) giving voice, through video, to local
stakeholders whose experiences determined the successes, failures and future needs
regarding broadband application in their communities; (3) providing expertise through a
production training so that community members could conduct similar research on their
own in the future and; (3) collaborating with community representatives and frequently
following their lead in deciding how and when the videos would be used.

Wotton et al. (1997) characterize PAR as: (1) involving the participation of
ordinary and disenfranchised people in problem solving; (2) being educational for both
researchers and participants who analyze the causes of problems through collective
discussion and interaction; (3) including collective action for social change; (4) providing
a direct link between research and action; (5) ensuring participants are creative actors in
the process, not the subjects or objects of research. At its core, PAR is about power. It
seeks to bring the research process back to the people to help them create new knowledge
about the factors that influence their lives, develop ways to learn and share the new
knowledge, and plan actions to produce a more equitable world. As such, PAR provides
an ideal research approach to address the use of video to seek a more equitable approach
to policy evaluation for Northwestern Ontario’s Aboriginal communities.
The “validity of ‘science’, as a body of knowledge and as a rigorous set of practices and intellectual endeavour is being challenged by ‘other ways of knowing’, which give greater weight to a broader canvas of experience, self-reflection, and indigenous traditions of learning and conceptualization.” (Jiggins, 1994: 3) In the context of introducing new technologies aimed at delivering certain essential services to remote Aboriginal communities, this aspect of PAR is especially relevant. The methodology is predicated by the inability of traditional program evaluation models to accurately measure change because they cannot grasp a ‘foreign’ socio-cultural context. As the field research progressed, video was applied in numerous policy-making contexts as means of expanding the way that interactive policy making can be conducted.

PAR necessitates an iterative re-interpretation of the research design because the research has actually had a hand in configuring the research environment itself. “Participation and collaboration are essential components of any system of inquiry, as any change cannot be effected without the full involvement of all stakeholders, and the adequate representation of their views and perspectives.” (Pretty, 1995; 17)

Ways of researching need to be developed that combine ‘finding out’ about complex and dynamic situations with ‘taking action’ to improve them, in such a way that the actors and beneficiaries of the ‘action research’ are intimately involved as participants in the whole process. (Sriskandarajah, 1991 in: Pretty, 1995: 17)

PAR is an “approach to improving social practice by changing it and learning from the consequences of change. It is also contingent on local participation which involves a continuing spiral of planning, implementation, observing, reflecting and then re-planning.” (Wadsworth, 1997: 79) This iterative approach describes the research herein. In particular, an exploratory change was initiated, data was collected on what happened,
followed by reflection and the development of improved plans of action as described in

*Chapter Three: Research Context.*

**Methods: The Methodology in Action**

*Interviews*

Structured and semi-structured interviews with policy makers provided data for understanding the implications of video for interactive policy making. Informal interviews and focus groups conducted in person and through teleconferencing developed with key community representatives from the five KO communities provided data for the generalization of lessons learned in an Aboriginal communities’ context.

Interviewees were selected through *nonprobability sampling* because of the complexity of the research environment and the extended temporal period under which it was undertaken. Availability was also a factor. Remote Aboriginal communities are logistically difficult and expensive to access; therefore scheduling participants was a challenge. Policy-makers, while relatively easier to gain access to, are not members of a uniform group from which probability sampling could be used. More specifically, *purposive sampling* and *informant sampling* were used to gather feedback on the efficacy of video in the policy making context. Informant sampling relies on a representative of a group to provide information and speak for the group while purposive sampling was used to select participants based on their knowledge of the research subject matter. (Babbie, 2001: 178-181) *Appendix Two* contains a copy of the questionnaire used for policy maker interviews.
Participant Observation

Participant observation (PO) involves the researcher immersing himself in the research environment. In PO the researcher negotiates his or her role according to the level of participation from neutral observer to active partner with the research subjects. In this case, I was a participant in that: (1) through the participatory video intervention I helped to shape the research environment; (2) I provided input and expertise into the production of video messages and; (3) I was actively involved in the cross-dissemination of videos among local stakeholders and between local stakeholders and policy makers. All interactions with research participants were predicated by full disclosure of my role as a researcher as well as the purpose and status of the research being undertaken.

PO was a preferred method because of the complex and frequently shifting research environment. PO emphasizes intersubjectivity and empathy.” (Bruyn, 1966) This naturalistic approach assumes that prescriptive efforts to model the wide array of individual and institutional interactions to research is futile since there are no realistic expectations that a model could help in generalizing the findings. Rather an approach such as PO was chosen because it allows the researcher to move back and forth between the policy environments, Aboriginal communities and institutional settings without having to shift research methods.

Zelditch (1962) identifies four elements that characterize the phenomenological approach to PO: awareness of time; awareness of the physical environment; awareness of contrasting experiences and; awareness of social openings and barriers. These elements helped guide my PO experiences in the field and were integrated accordingly into the field research. As outlined in the Research Objectives of this study, the type of feedback
needed was as diverse as the research subjects and their respective environments. This approach made it possible to make sense of the different perspectives on participatory video from policy makers to community-based stakeholders.

*Video Production and Distribution*

Video production and distribution are a sub-set of the methods described herein (PAR and Interviews). In essence, this was the operational phase of the research: the research events or interventions that had to happen in order for the research itself to take place. *Chapter Four – Research Context* contains a detailed description of these events. This section describes the content of the video product, which stakeholders they were shown to and how feedback was gathered. The videos described here do not include productions that community members produced subsequent to the training and research. For a complete description of these productions please see *Appendix 1: Outcomes of the Research* and for a discussion of their impacts please see *Chapter 5 – Research Findings*. The following section describes the methods used to address each research objective.

During the initial community visits a training component was included in order to provide community members with basic production skills that they could build upon in order to begin developing their own videos. This consisted of an applied learning workshop in each community wherein the participants produced a video about a subject relevant to their community. In three of the five communities these videos were screened to the larger community in a public space. Participants were subsequently interviewed about this experience through semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions.
The impetus for the use of video was to gather testimonial evidence in support of the Keewaytinook-Okimakanak Smart Communities program evaluation. Interviews with key stakeholders in the communities were video taped then edited into rudimentary documentary vignettes on how broadband was being used for Telehealth, Internet Assisted Education, Economic Development and their experiences around the implementation of broadband infrastructure. In support of the evaluation report, these videos consisted entirely of voices from the communities such as Community Telehealth Coordinators, Band Counselors, mental health workers, technicians and students. These videos were included as a compendium to the evaluation report and later made available online by K-Net and KO as a way of communicating lessons learned to policy makers and other Aboriginal communities that did not have internet access.

The Smart Communities evaluation videos led to the demand by KO leadership and government partners for a more comprehensive video material. I conducted additional interviews with policy makers and KO representatives. These interviews were then combined with the existing footage from the communities and edited together into a 40 minute video titled The K-Net Story which described the successes and challenges encountered in the implementation of broadband from both the federal bureaucratic perspective and from the communities’ perspective. Viewers could now identify differences and common ground between community stakeholders and policy makers. This video was used primarily to influence policy-makers to extend funding for the broadband infrastructure by showing the changes that Telehealth and KiHS had brought to the communities along with new economic development opportunities and access to global markets. The video was directed toward other Aboriginal communities to
demystify the bureaucratic processes involved in accessing the Internet and to demonstrate the aforementioned benefits. This dissemination process was driven by KO and K-Net.

In December of 2004 K-Net and KO hosted an international conference in Sioux Lookout, Ontario aimed at spreading the success of connectivity to Aboriginal communities in other parts of the world. Production workshop participants from the communities collaborated with the researcher to produce short vignettes about their individual communities’ experiences with connectivity. They conducted interviews which were edited with existing footage to produce five vignettes which served as focal points of discussion with conference participants. These videos were screened during the conference and made available online afterward.

I produced two videos as information and educational materials for KO to promote Telehealth and Internet Assisted education to other remote Aboriginal communities as well as to stimulate participation in these programs in their own communities. Screenings were then held in the communities by KO community liaisons for health care and education. The videos, produced from existing footage, featured community members talking about these subjects. They have been disseminated to the communities as DVDs and are available online as streaming video.

Turning the Corner: Re-thinking Broadband in Canada’s North was produced for the explicit purpose of influencing senior Federal Bureaucrats and Politicians. This video was produced as a collaborative effort between the Privy Council of Canada’s Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat and KO. Privy Council members had viewed several of the previous community-based productions and supported the development of a seventeen minute
video that could be used to provide complimentary video material and factual data about the impacts of broadband in remote Aboriginal communities. The stated purpose of this video was to argue in favour of reconsidering the way that broadband infrastructure to the North is funded and to foster the transition from a top-down approach to a community based model where local stakeholders are involved in the planning and role out of broadband similar to KO’s Smart Communities strategy. The video was distributed to federal officials through DVD mailings and via streaming video. More significantly, a series of screenings were held at Industry Canada’s offices in Ottawa that were attended by Privy Council members, the Federal Minister of Northern Economic Development and over thirty senior government officials.

All of the interviews that were conducted on video were made available online and in their entirety to ensure that no participant’s words were edited out of context. These interviews along with all the videos described herein can be viewed at http://Smart.knet.ca/fednor_video_list.html. Table 4.1 summarizes these videos, their target audiences, their means of dissemination and the way that feedback was later gathered to determine their impacts. Appendix one lists all the research related videos that were produced. I cite different means of dissemination to illustrate how video can be incorporated into different communication strategies. CDs for example lend themselves to a combination of text (written reports) with supportive video. DVDs and video tape provide an exclusive medium that contain only video materials. Community screenings provide access to community members who lack the technology to access the videos. Streaming video allows for global distribution and access to any interested parties.
Table 3.1: Summary of Participatory Videos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Video</th>
<th>Means of Dissemination</th>
<th>Primary Viewers</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Training Videos</td>
<td>Community screenings; DVD, streaming video</td>
<td>Community members</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart Communities Evaluation Testimonials</td>
<td>CD-ROM</td>
<td>Program evaluators; Government representatives</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-Net Story</td>
<td>CD, DVD, Streaming Video</td>
<td>Government Representatives; other Aboriginal communities</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart Conference Community Profiles</td>
<td>Streaming Video</td>
<td>International audience</td>
<td>Not Gathered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telehealth</td>
<td>DVD, Streaming Video</td>
<td>Government Representatives; other Aboriginal communities</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KiHS</td>
<td>DVD, Streaming Video</td>
<td>Government Representatives; other Aboriginal communities</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning the Corner</td>
<td>DVD, Streaming Video</td>
<td>Politicians; Privy Council Members; Government Representatives; other Aboriginal communities</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Coding

Purposive sampling refers to selection of interviewees based on their knowledge of a subject or the purpose of the study being conducted. (Babbie, 2001: 179) Twenty-two purposive interviews were conducted with policy-makers and community stakeholders after the primary field research was done. Approximately seventy-five interviews were conducted throughout the course of the research in the service of participatory video productions. The data derived from both sets of interviews were coded using a methodology which involved the derivation of categories through analysis of existing literature and comparison with the interviewee responses. In essence, the
categories emerged from the data and the literature. This approach was selected in favour of applying a pre-existing coda scheme for the simple reason that the research was interdisciplinary and took place in a previously unexplored situation.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) refer to this approach to coding as the constant comparative method (CCM) of qualitative analysis. It was developed as an alternative to existing, prescriptive approaches to coding qualitative data. “In contrast to analytical induction, the constant comparative method is concerned with generating and plausibly suggesting (but not provisionally testing) many categories, properties, and hypotheses about general problems.” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 104). The research objectives provided a preliminary set of categories within which responses could be coded. The CCM allowed new categories to emerge thus helping to generate theory around the initial research question and research subject(s). These categories will frame the discussion in Chapter Six – Analysis and Interpretation.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe four stages of CCM: (1) comparing incidents applicable to each category; (2) integrating categories and their properties; (3) delimiting the theory and; (4) writing the theory. (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 105-115) Table 3.2 contains a brief explanation of each stage as well as the specific corresponding research actions that were undertaken. The first two stages were particularly useful helping analyze the data because of their aggregative approaches. Stages three and four proved less useful because the delimitation of theory as well as its construction requires a less procedural approach. As such, these latter stages were used as guiding principles in developing theoretical insights rather than prescriptive guidelines.
Table 3.2: CCM Stages and Corresponding Research Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCM Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Research Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Comparing</td>
<td>“while coding an incident for a category, compare it with the previous incidents in the same and different groups coded in the same category” (Glaser, 1967)</td>
<td>Participant observation recording revealed patterns in the way that participatory video functioned in terms of production and instrumentally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incidents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Integrating</td>
<td>“the comparison of incidents with properties of the category that resulted from initial comparison of incidents” (Glaser, 1967)</td>
<td>Comparison of research incidents with one another identified patterns of response among the stakeholders. Interviews confirmed or helped dismiss some of these patterns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>categories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Delimiting</td>
<td>“theory solidifies as categories are modified, irrelevant properties are discarded, logic is clarified… reduction is achieved through the identification of commonalities among categories and incidents” (Glaser, 1967)</td>
<td>Transcribed interviews and field notes were initially categorized according to their relationship to the research objectives. Further analysis based on stages one and two revealed unanticipated categories which were synthesized to form the theoretical contribution of this work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Writing</td>
<td>“the analytic framework forms systematic, substantive theory that can be generalized for others” (Glaser, 1967)</td>
<td>Please see Chapter Six – Analysis and Interpretation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Questions and Objectives

As initially stated, there are three principal components of this subject matter: policy-making, remote Aboriginal communities and ICTs. The specific interdisciplinary nature of the subject matter combined with the iterative research methodology implies that the design and implementation of this research was inherently emergent. The research question and objectives listed below were accordingly emergent and they evolved as the research moved forward. As new facets of the research environment presented themselves, they helped steer the methodology.
In this section I re-visit the research question and objectives within the context of the methodology used to address them. Key to the constructivist approach is an acknowledgement that no single research question can guide the research without being modified as the researcher uncovers layers of previously hidden reality. In the previous chapter *The Research Environment*, I detailed the significant events related to the research and the lessons learned associated with each. Below I describe the methodological strategies or actions used to address each research.

**Research Question:** How does participatory video change relationships between remote Aboriginal communities and policy-makers.

Collectively, the objectives seek to describe the implications of ICTs, specifically video, as a tool for interactive policy making. The conditions required for participants (from the community level up to and including policy-makers) to view the use of video, not merely for the delivery of a pre-determined media product, but as a catalyst for community capacity building and interactive policy development was also explored. The implications of locally directed media on the self-perception of Aboriginal communities in relation to the larger dominant culture and policy-makers whose decisions rarely take into account the reality of life in these communities is particularly significant.

**Objective 1:** Explore the conditions under which of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), in particular video can be engaged to develop capacity in Aboriginal communities.
The majority of data gathered to address *Objective One* comes directly from PO during my experience in the field. Meeting this objective required a detailed understanding of the day-to-day machinations of how video was being used in the communities to address policy issues and to develop collective messages. For this reason, the bulk of the data comes from telling the story as witnessed in the communities, post-visit interactions with community members as well as tracking new and ongoing applications of video to address policy related issues. Experiential Learning Cycles (see *Chapter Four - Research Context*) were used to chart the learning because of their value in tracking change from one event to the next. Where possible patterns were drawn from the learning cycles and then analyzed.

*Objective 2:*  
Identify the processes that Aboriginal communities develop and engage in order to produce communication materials to build capacity.

As in the first Objective, experiential learning cycles proved valuable because of its utility in analyzing similar, yet evolving, events and tracking progress from one to the next. In addition to PO based reporting, it was necessary to conduct interviews with participant stakeholders to more accurately identify processes that I, as an outside researcher, may have not been privy to. Interviews with community members who took the production training workshops and who, either proceeded to develop their own media materials or did not, helped reveal the strategies that they developed, the support they needed and the actions they took to initiate production. Despite familiarity with the researcher, trust was still an issue because, in some cases, it was months later when the interviews were conducted. This delay was intentional because of the nature of the
research objective as it would not be realistic to expect an immediate embracing of the technology and PV processes. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Guiding questions were asked but the interviewee was encouraged to relay the answers in the format of a story or narrative wherever possible in order to minimize the perceived authority of the researcher.

Objective 3: Explore how access to and control of ICTs and new media tools change the self-perception of remote Aboriginal communities.

This objective, in particular, was highly dependent on feedback from community participants. While the literature on new media and its relationship to self-identity is discussed in Chapter Two – Literature Review as well as in Chapter Six – Analysis and Interpretation, it was nevertheless essential to gather feedback from community members themselves. The abstract nature of this objective was a challenge due to the practical difficulty of asking individuals to assess the way they think of themselves and their situation as the result of a particular intervention or series of interventions. Therefore, semi-structured interviews relying heavily on open-ended questions were employed. Again, issues of trust in the researcher were identified as a being potentially problematic, given the nature of the questioning. The interviewees selected to respond to this objective were therefore selected from the participants who had a deeper level of understanding of the relationship between media representation and disenfranchisement and/or who had followed up on the training to produce videos in or about their communities.

Objective 4: Investigate how access and control of ICTs and new media tools change relationships between remote Aboriginal communities and policy makers.
Objective 5: Explore how policy makers identify the significance of new media tools and products to change their relationship with remote Aboriginal communities.

The data in response to Objective Four came primarily from policy makers and government representatives for reasons associated with the power differential between that group and remote Aboriginal communities. Community members were able to speak to a changed perception in their understanding of the role of policy makers but they were unable to characterize changes in the relationship because they did not have access to the policy making processes that were inaccessible to them. Ultimately, it is up to government representatives to change their relationship with remote Aboriginal communities in the policy making process. Therefore, validity lies in their characterization of this change and role of video in bringing this change about.

Semi-structured formal interviews were directed at key policy-makers. The interviews were based on a questionnaire but participants were encouraged to expand the breadth of feedback through open ended questions. This group of interviewees could be roughly divided into two groups: those who had been directly involved in the efforts to bring broadband to the Keewaytinook-Okimakanak communities and those who were charged with expanding broadband infrastructure in Canada’s North but had no particular knowledge of remote Aboriginal communities. Of the former group, there were individuals involved directly in ICT infrastructure investments and those who promoted secondary programs such as Telehealth and Internet assisted education. The latter group consisted primarily of senior bureaucrats who controlled funding and steered program delivery.
Table 3.3 summarizes the relationship between the research objectives, the methods used to address them and stakeholders consulted for feedback. Data synthesis of all the objectives was informed by the literature as revealed in the following chapter.

Table 3.3: Summary of Methodological Approach to Meet Research Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Data Gathering Method(s)</th>
<th>Stakeholder Interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Participant Observer Reporting, Semi-Structured Interviews.</td>
<td>Community Members Interim Agency Members (K-Net, KO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Participant Observer Reporting Semi-Structured Informal Interviews.</td>
<td>Community Members Interim Agency Members (K-Net, KO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Semi-Structured Informal Interviews.</td>
<td>Community Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 &amp; 5</td>
<td>Semi-Structured Formal Interviews.</td>
<td>Policy Makers Bureaucrats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH CONTEXT

This chapter explains the research environment or the situational context behind this thesis. First, a brief review of the state of Aboriginal policy in Canada is provided for historical context. The relationship between me as the researcher and the research environment is explored because of the PAR nature of the work. Experiential learning cycles are used to frame the significant research events that took place in the KO communities, Ottawa, Sioux Lookout and Balmertown.

Aboriginal Policy in Canada

Remote Aboriginal communities are not the subjects of “remote policy” exclusively. Similarly, Aboriginal communities may have some policy initiatives directed at them but they are developed within the broader framework of federal and provincial policy directives. Broader policy decisions, intended to be uniformly applied to the larger population, often have unintended consequences for Aboriginal communities due to fundamental inequities in the policy process. Government departments may also develop contrasting policies and programs which further challenge remote Aboriginal participation in the process.

A distinction should be drawn between Aboriginal policy –policies directed at Aboriginal people- and policy initiatives that effect affect First Nation people but are not necessarily directed at them exclusively. “Prior to the patriation of the Canadian
Constitution in 1982, most federal policies were directed toward ‘Indians’ by virtue of the Indian Act, excluding the Métis and Inuit; after patriation Indian, Métis and Inuit were collectively referred to as ‘Aboriginal’ within Section 35. (Dubois, 234) The funding of Indian organizations which began in the 1960s enabled the government to address Indian and non-Indian concerns regarding the socio-economic conditions. “By funding Indian organizations, thereby ensuring that self-regulation as a policy instrument, the need government to employ overtly interventionist policies is alleviated.” (Dubois, 235) Two principle policy documents that characterize Aboriginal policy in the latter half of the 20th Century: the 1969 White Paper on Indian Policy and the 1997 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

The discussion of Aboriginal rights, and what these rights might encompass, remained a thorny political question throughout the 1960s. In the minutes of the 1968 consultation meetings on the Indian Act, Indian leaders requested constitutional protection for their Aboriginal and treaty rights. These demands were totally dismissed in Trudeau’s White Paper on Indian policy. In 1969, the federal government released the White Paper which was promoted as a turning point in Aboriginal-federal relations. Doerr (1972) claims that the paper was a consciously designed “strategic political technique devised to dupe First Nations leadership into believing they were playing an active role in Indian policy formation.”

Chrétien (1969) envisioned the formation of federal Aboriginal policy as an ongoing, unpredictable process that required the engagement of First Nations people before meaningful change would come about. Referring to the consultations that led to his authoring the White Paper on Indian Policy he wrote,
By stimulating political reactions they helped develop greater involvement by the Indian people in their own affairs, strengthened their determination to achieve political power and sharpened the dialogue not only within the Indian community but between Indian leaders and the Federal Government. In essence, then we are deliberately furthering an evolutionary process of provincial and Indian inter-involvement by promoting contacts at every opportunity at all levels of government, at the same time recognizing the truth of the matter – that progress will take place in different ways at different times. (Chrétien, 1969)

Leslie (2004) interprets the historical legacy of the White Paper by claiming that the new policy was

straight nineteenth-century Indian assimilation: the concept of Aboriginal rights was denied, treaty rights would be terminated, land claims would be adjudicated by a Claims Commissioner, Indian Status was to be eliminated, Indian reserve land tenure revised, and the operations of the Indian Department brought to a close within five years. (Leslie, 2004; 22)

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP, 1997) was a federal policy document intended to illuminate the needs of First Nations peoples and to chart the future of related policy directives. RCAP adopted an incremental approach that built on past policy platforms addressing Aboriginal issues. It claimed that “any review of contemporary events and discourse related to Aboriginal policy has to be conducted in light of what occurred earlier between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies and governments.” (RCAP 1997:2) Dubois (2003: 241) interprets this incremental approach unfavorably by stating that

the incremental approach places a high value on reaching agreement by achieving consensus and that the best way to approach policy development is to allow the past to inform current and future policy directions… It would appear that the overall objectives of the federal government with respect to Indian policy have remained the same since 1969. Since the government employs an incremental approach to policymaking,
it can be concluded that the statements of policy objectives in the 1969 White Paper continues to guide current Indian policy.

The vast majority of writing on Aboriginal policy development in Canada falls into one of two camps. The first is by apologists who frame the efforts of the federal government as well intentioned but misguided. The second by urban, sometimes Aboriginal, academics who unintentionally perpetuate the victim mythology by focusing exclusively on the injustices of the past and present. There has yet to develop a critical mass of literature that seeks to analyze the policy developments of the past fifty years within a framework of serious policy analysis. (Pers. Comm. Walmark, 2006)

The notion of Aboriginal rights was not on the government’s policy radar screen in the late 1940s or 1950s. The idea that a particular group in society should have special rights because they were the first arrivals was anathema to mainstream thinking… During the 1950s, every effort was made by government officials to head off the discussion of Native rights at consultation meetings, even if that meant predetermining the agenda, the shape of the negotiating table, Aboriginal seating arrangements and altering post-facto the minutes of the actual meeting. (Leslie, 2004: 17)

During World War Two, young Aboriginal men were recruited into the military by missionaries and the federal government and were promised that in exchange for their collective service, conditions on reserves would be ameliorated and the treaty rights would be honoured. So Aboriginal men fought and died alongside other Canadians but when they returned none of these promises were kept. This betrayal, combined with the poverty they had grown up with in reserves and the suffering they endured under the forced residential schools program led to the beginnings of Aboriginal self-advocacy in Canada. The National Indian Brotherhood made up largely of veterans began to demand rights on behalf of their people and eventually gained the right to vote under Prime
Minister Diefenbaker in 1960. Meanwhile the government was becoming staffed with white veterans who had fought alongside Aboriginals and empathized with their plight. So a dialogue was begun that continues to this day. (Pers. Comm. Walmark, 2006)

Dubois (2003) asserts that the current development of Aboriginal policy is based on a paternalistic federal tradition that dates back to colonization. “We cannot assume that the federal government will adequately interpret their policy objectives for us. This erroneous assumption limits our capacity to facilitate pro-active change. Castellano (1999:96) states that “without a political-historical analysis of the genesis of present distress, Aboriginal people are caught in self-blame.” Indeed, one only need take the words of former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien (1998) to understand that federal policy making environment favours the status quo: “Aboriginal people must organize themselves and speak to Canadians in a way that all Canadians understand.” Any discussion of Aboriginal policy in Canada should be framed in a historical context to understand how past policies resulted in the removal Aboriginal peoples from “their lands and economic resources, their cultures and languages, and the social and political institutions through which they took care of their own.” (Castellano 1999:96)

The role of the mass media in mainstream Canadian society frequently serves the political demands of the population and as such, it has become instrumental in the shaping of Canadian public policy. First Nation communities have, traditionally, not been able to rely on the mass media to highlight their concerns due to lack of public interest. Remote Aboriginal communities have been additionally disenfranchised by the media because of their geographic isolation and lack of communication tools to disseminate their concerns.
A lack of broad understanding of the issues throughout the general public and a lack of interest in the mainstream media still renders public sentiment a tool that is only rarely of use to First Nations. The courts were no help as it was illegal for First Nations individuals to raise funds for land claims until relatively recently. Since gaining the capacity to fight the government with its own tools, First Nations often have been successful at convincing the courts to see the justice of their cause. But these successes come agonizingly slowly against governments that insist on hard line negotiations, protracted litigation, and forcing important cases to the highest court. For many First Nations, who lack the resources or capacity to fight a lengthy legal battle, the courts system remains an inaccessible tool as well. (A.F.N., 2004)

**The Researcher and the Research Environment**

The researcher, particularly in participatory action research, plays a significant role in shaping the research environment. In this case I introduced participatory video to a pre-existing set of relationships. This intervention, in fact, changed the nature of these relationships thus changing the research environment itself. The research process began with a guiding question about the potential of video to influence the policy-making process. Building on the Fogo Process, the question, “Can video be used to inform the policy-making process for disenfranchised rural communities?” marked a starting point in the inquiry process. The selection of the question, indeed, the research project itself was heavily influenced by my own professional experiences as a filmmaker as well as the research directive of my own PhD program - Rural Studies – whose mandate is *sustainable rural communities*.

The next phase of the research process was based on the decision to conduct an applied study as opposed to a theoretical study which would have concentrated exclusively on drawing lessons from the experiences and research of others. The choice
of applied research necessitated a research environment – a real world context - in which to ask the question. As detailed in the previous chapter, the research environment that was eventually selected was a complex weave of communities, NGOs, Government agencies, ICT infrastructure and individuals.

The selection of the Keewaytinook-Okimakanak communities and their experience with federal policy making through the Smart Communities Demonstration program and beyond represented an ideal research environment. The following criteria were used to identify this as the research subject/environment:

1. The researcher’s accessibility to key stakeholders, both governmental and community based, whose input could shape the policy making process as it pertained to connectivity in remoter Aboriginal communities.

2. The appropriateness of the research environment and subject matter for the application of participatory video processes. In other words the research process would only address subjects pertaining to community-based policy development.

3. The feasibility of the research being done within a reasonable timeline both in terms of my degree and the Smart deadline.

This research took place within an existing series of events around the Smart demonstration project in the Keewaytinook-Okimakanak communities. Temporally, it began in the service of the Smart evaluation and lasted for an additional two years during which time the role of video in the service of policy development expanded into unexpected areas.
This research was made up of a series of events – interventions wherein the researcher interacted with the research subjects to create conditions that had not previously existed. These events took place at different times in different locations with different stakeholders and research participants. A method to draw patterns from these events and to synthesize their implications in the service of the research objectives was therefore needed. Experiential learning cycles were used as a way to iteratively track patterns and draw lessons in service of the research objectives. In essence, learning cycles provided a model for learning in the context of ongoing research.

Kolb (1984) suggests that “learning is a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience”. Kolb created his model out of four elements: concrete experience, observation and reflection, the formation of abstract concepts and
testing in new situations. This cycle is referred to as the experiential learning cycle (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2: Experiential Learning Cycles

(Adapted from Kolb, 1984)

The learning process, according to Kolb’s cycle, often begins with a person carrying out a particular action and then seeing the effect of the action in this situation. Following this, the second step is to understand these effects in the particular instance so that if the same action were taken in the same circumstances it would be possible to anticipate what would follow from the action. (Kolb and Fry, 1975). “Generalizing may involve actions over a range of circumstances to gain experience beyond the particular instance and suggest the general principle. Understanding the general principle does not imply, in this sequence, an ability to express the principle in a symbolic medium, that is, the ability to put it into words. It implies only the ability to see a connection between the action and effects over a range of circumstances” (Coleman, 1976: 52) Once the general
principle is understood, the next step is to apply it through action or a concrete experience in a new circumstance that is within the realm of generalization as the previous circumstance or cycle.

In single-loop learning reflection is directed toward making a given strategy more effective. Double-loop learning, in contrast, involves questioning the role of the framing and learning systems which underlie actual goals or strategies… the former involves routines and a preset plan while the latter is more creative and reflexive. Reflection here is more fundamental: the basic assumptions behind ideas or policies are confronted… hypotheses are publicly tested… processes are disconfirmable and not self-seeking. (Argyris, 1982:103-4)

Figure 4.3: Single Loop Learning

Argyris questions the validity of the single-loop learning cycle by introducing a double-loop learning cycle. “He argues that double-loop learning is necessary if practitioners and organizations are to make informed decisions in rapidly changing and often uncertain contexts”. (Smith, 2001: 5) Learning cycles are characterized by three key components: 1) Governing variables are those dimensions that people are trying to
keep within acceptable limits. Any action is likely to impact upon a number of such variables so any situation can trigger a trade-off among governing variables; 2) Action strategies are the moves and plans used by people to keep their governing values within the acceptable range; 3) Consequences are what happens as the result of an action. These can be both intended – those that the actor believes will result – and unintended. Those consequences can be for the self, and/or for others (Anderson, 1997). What differentiates a single-loop learning cycle from a double-loop learning cycle is the stage at which iterative reflection takes place. Single-loop and double-loop learning are represented in Figures 4.3 and 4.4.

Figure 4.4: Double-Loop Learning

![Double-Loop Learning Diagram](image)

(Argyris as cited in Smith, 2001)

Most institutions are very resistant to double-loop learning, as this involves the questioning of, and possible changes in, the wider values and procedures under which they operate. For organizations to become learning organizations, they must ensure that people became aware of their own processes of learning from both mistakes and successes. (Pretty, 1995: 194)

Pretty (1995) identifies four stages that a group must go through before working effectively on a development activity: 1. forming when disparate individuals come
together around a stated purpose; 2. storming occurs as group members become more familiar with one another, personal values can be challenges, roles and responsibilities are taken on and the group’s objectives become more defined; 3. norming refers to the way group members become familiar with each other and comfortable with group specific behaviours; 4. and performing is where the most action and learning takes place as the team now has a life of its own, members are confident and trust each other and are willing to take significant risks. “As the group members begin to understand their roles in relation one another and establish a shared vision or goal, they will develop a clearly discernable identity and group-specific norms of behaviour.” (Pretty, 1995: 194)

An Experiential Learning Framework

I introduced Kolb’s theory of learning cycles as a means by which significant research events could be interpreted. In this section I will detail these events in the context of this framework to provide the reader with a comprehensive understanding of the research environment. I have chosen this approach because it was the research investigation itself –the training, the production and screening of videos and the integration of policy makers- that made the actual research environment possible. The term ‘research environment’ refers not to the Aboriginal communities and policy-making arenas where the field research was conducted, but of the conditions in which the research was conducted, the specific interactions of the participants and the changes that came about as a result of this particular participatory action research intervention.

Kolb’s theory is a constructivist theory of learning based on the way that knowledge is constructed in real world situations. It contains four distinct stages: (1)
concrete experience; (2) observation and reflection; (3) the formation of abstract concepts and; (4) testing in new situation. Seen as a cycle, step four feeds into a new version of step one in a new environment and repeats. The term environment is not restricted to a new place, time or set of conditions but can also refer to a change in perception of a similar situation based on previous encounters and analyses.

The learning cycle can begin at any one of the four points and it should be approached as a continuous spiral. However, the learning process often begins with a person carrying out a particular action and then seeing the effect of the action in this situation. The second step is to understand these effects in the particular instance so that if the same action was taken in the same circumstances it would be possible to anticipate what would follow from the action. In this pattern the third step would be to understand the general principle under which the particular instance falls. When the general principle is understood, the last step is its application through action in a new circumstance within the range of generalization. (Kolb and Fry, 1975).

Coleman (1976) explains that generalizing may involve actions over a range of circumstances to gain experience beyond the particular instance and suggest the general principle. ”Understanding the general principle does not imply, in this sequence, an ability to express the principle in a symbolic medium, that is, the ability to put it into words. It implies only the ability to see a connection between the actions and effects over a range of circumstances.” Knowledge is then drawn from the observation of these connections by identifying patterns. Learning, according to Kolb (1984), is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. “The application of the research methodology results in learning, which relates not only to the area of application, but also the framework of ideas and concepts, and to the methodology itself. (Hamilton, 1995 as cited in Honkonnu, 2001:40)
In order to understand research that adopts a PAR perspective it is essential that we go beyond methodology and analytical interpretations. Because it is the action itself that creates the research environment, an explanation of the significant research events must be detailed in some form. In the following section I will relate the significant research events within a framework of successive experiential learning cycles.

The Research Events

The opportunity to conduct the research described herein arose from a series of contracts in which I utilized participatory video to link remote Aboriginal communities with federal policy makers. The first such assignment was in service of a program evaluation for Industry Canada’s Smart Communities project. The team hired to conduct this evaluation required a method of assessing medium and long–term impacts to compliment the feedback to questionnaires and surveys in the five Keewaytinook-Okimakanak communities where Smart had been operating for three years and was prepared to sunset. Video was chosen as a way of gathering stories about the impacts of broadband in the communities around four specific topics: (1) health care; (2) education; (3) economic development and; (4) network development. Vignettes were produced based on video interviews that I conducted while in the communities and disseminated as part of the evaluation report.

The Smart project provided the opportunity to travel to these communities and conduct approximately eighty interviews with a broad range of community members ranging from Chiefs to technicians to elders and youth. During these visits to the communities, a video production training component was integrated into my duties there.
The rationale behind this training component, true to a participatory action research approach, was to leave behind skills which could be built upon to further build capacity in these places. In particular, it was hoped that the production training would, in the future, lead to video projects that address policy related issues, strengthen cultural identity and provide more community members with marketable media skills. 

The videos produced for the Smart Communities evaluation, in addition to providing valuable context for the quantitative data, revealed a number of unanticipated outcomes that standard evaluation protocols would have overlooked. Local leadership, in the form of the Keewaytinook-Okimakanak tribal council and K-Net, along with federal representatives from Industry Canada working in the field, realized the potential of video to communicate the realities of life in these communities with the end goal of securing additional funding for expanded ICT infrastructure. This realization that video could provide a deeper understanding of ICTs in the communities rather than a one dimensional disseminative product led to additional funding for more participatory video productions and product.

The field research consisted of interviewing stakeholders from the communities and government, delivering video production training, producing participatory and semi-participatory videos and facilitating the delivery, back and forth, of these videos from policy makers to community stakeholders, as outlined by the research objectives. I have chosen to relay these experiences chronologically although the specific generalizations arising from each event may not necessarily feed into the proceeding event. Therefore, the reflections and abstractions following each event will be categorized according to
their impact on a particular aspect of the research such as ‘training’ or ‘stakeholder engagement’.

North Spirit Lake (August, 2003)

As an outside researcher, it was decided that an escort familiar with community dynamics would be present during my visits. The KO community liaison provided introductions and actively participated in the interviews by asking some questions and providing translations where necessary.

The first community visit consisted primarily of gathering interviews on video. An open two-day video production training session was held for community members. Participation in the workshops consisted of between eight and ten community members comprised of E-Centre (the local ICT administration and services facility) staff and youth between the ages of 18 and 28. Some older community members also attended but there were no elders present. Video recording was done with a single, stationary camera and interviews were conducted from a prepared questionnaire. The training workshop was product-oriented and resulted in the collective production a short video titled *Lights Out at the E-centre*. This video, conceived of, shot and edited on the second day of training, was intended to raise awareness about the frustration the community experiences with an unreliable electricity source.

Integration, as an outsider, into the community was difficult and I soon realized this to be false expectation with little more than a week in each community. It quickly became apparent that a formal structure, both toward training and interviewing had to be modified, if not entirely abandoned.
Unclear expectations between myself and the community liaison led to minor conflict. It was not until the production of the first video that ‘buy-in’ was achieved. Prior to this event, which occurred on the last day in North Spirit Lake, there was little belief or understanding, by the community liaison, of the intent of the proposed research. I was almost entirely reliant upon the liaison for every aspect of my interactions with the community members in the first few days. By the end of the week, I had developed working relationships with E-centre staff and health clinic staff.

I approached the initial training workshop in a prescriptive manner. Handouts were prepared, theory was delivered and technical information was disseminated rigidly. Participants had very little interest in learning material for which they saw no practical or personal application. This approach was quickly discarded in favour of an experiential learning approach. I adopted the role of ‘guide’ and led them through the technology and details of production after a collective exercise wherein they identified and then ratified a topic of concern, agreed on the video’s intent and drafted a treatment and script for it’s execution. All the participants had some exposure to every aspect of production. Participants would direct or produce one scene, then move to the next as a camera operator or sound technician. Editing decisions were made collaboratively after production was completed.

Interviews on the impacts of ICTs focused heavily on health care, education and economic development. This initial set of questions was prepared by me, having never visited these communities before, and the Smart evaluation team. As such they were largely closed with little opportunity for open-ended interviewee input beyond a closing question which solicited ‘any additional comments’ they would care to add. Interviewees
were largely unprepared for these interviews in that they did not understand their purpose until they read the ethical clearance form and were briefed by myself or the community liaison. This led to responses that I would characterize as ‘safe’. The majority of respondents seemed wary of giving the ‘wrong answer’. My response, at the time, was to include more personal questions in the interview which had little or no bearing on the ICTs and their applications in the hopes that the subjects would feel more comfortable providing more honest responses. This approach met with modest success.

The use of a ‘guide’ that is, someone who can introduce the researcher to the community facilitated community access considerably. Insufficient effort was devoted to building a relationship between me and the community liaison – we met the day before my first trip and had only spoken briefly on the phone prior to that. Consequently, the purpose of the research was not fully explained to him that in turn, led to early difficulties.

Interviews should not be framed in a question and answer format. Instead, guiding questions or ‘points of interest’ should be woven into a semi-formal interview / conversation with more reliance on open-ended questions. Interviews were formally produced using professional lighting scenarios. This resulted in noticeable discomfort to the interviewee. Thereafter, less formal interview productions styles were pursued. It was observed that natural lighting and informal settings tended to put the interviewee more at ease. This had an added benefit later on, in that policy makers were revealed that they were able to distinguish this footage from standard corporate videos or news broadcasts because of its realistic feel.
Extended pauses in dialogue, particularly among the elders, should not be misconstrued as an inability to answer a question. Conversational patterns in these Oji-Cree communities differ greatly from my own cultural expectations. This difference was compounded by mistrust when dealing with an outside researcher. As the interviewer, it was incumbent upon me to conform to these norms and be patient. The results were richer, more comprehensive responses to the questions. Frequently responses were given as a story, which proved particularly valuable for later video productions.

More effort was needed to inform the research participants beforehand of the scope and purpose of my research. It became necessary to dispel misconceptions that the outcome of my work might impact them negatively to ensure honest and thoughtful responses.

Video production training was less effective when delivered prescriptively. The need for a more integrated teaching style was evident from the increased participation witnessed from day one to day two of the workshops. The collective production of a video was particularly significant in that it broke down communication barriers and galvanized the group into action.

Integration into a foreign culture is a complex and largely unpredictable process. Expectations based on theory and the literature surrounding this must be minimized. Initial dependence on a ‘guide’ is highly advisable as is the need to nurture a relationship with this individual(s) before the research begins.
Keewaywin (August, 2003)

The second community visit took place immediately following the research trip to North Spirit Lake. Both Keewaywin and North Spirit Lake are Oji-Cree communities and are similar in size, geography, demographic and cultural composition. Keewaywin differed from North Spirit Lake in that it is a relatively new community formed only thirteen years earlier by a small group that had broken off from the much larger community of Sandy Lake. Keewaywin’s band council and Chief were, at the time, heavily influenced by a vocal Christian Fundamentalist cohort made up of the community’s elders. This resulted in a clearly visible rift between young and old, particularly around the issue of ICT infrastructure and the perceived encroachment of mass media and its impact on youth.

Interviews were again facilitated by the community liaison and conducted in largely the same manner as in North Spirit Lake. Upon reviewing the footage from North Spirit Lake, it was apparent that a less ‘produced’ approach was preferable. This resulted in considerably less formal interview locations and a more open-ended approach to the questions.

Production training was conducted over a three-day period due in part to a larger group of ten participants and the realization, after North Spirit Lake, that more time was needed to achieve the workshop objectives of basic technical proficiency and the collective production of at least one video. The workshop resulted in the production of a vignette about two local artists entitled Painter and Musician. A local musician, featured in the video, contributed an original soundtrack. Initial efforts to develop a collective video resulted in a treatment for a Fogo-like video that would attempt to bridge
differences between Christian influenced elders and youth. The subject of recreational activities and their role in preventing the abuse of ‘home brew’, a regional alcoholic concoction on this alcohol free community was eagerly pursued by the workshop participants. However, the intervention of the community liaison and a community member who would later become Chief, resulted in the production of the Painter and Musician video instead. Specifically, they cited concerns over conflicts that might arise as a result of such a controversial topic. Furthermore, it was pointed out that I, as a researcher, may be perceived as an outside ‘agitator’ by facilitating the production of such a video. Since I could not be present to assist in engaging a micro-Fogo Process around this issue I decided that the best course of action would be to assist in the production of the above mentioned video with the primary goal being the production training.

The video was screened to the community as a social event at the community centre. A workshop participant introduced the video and described the training that had been undertaken. The video was well-received by elders and youth alike. Another participant and I held an open, informal discussion with the audience afterward. Comments focused primarily on the local aspects of the production, in particular, excitement around community members being featured in a ‘movie’ and the opportunity to view their community from a different perspective; that of the camera’s lens. This led to the realization that more effort should be made to capture environmental surroundings, buildings, forests, lakes and other site specific features. Seeing themselves and their homes on the screen led to a certain form of legitimization which I believe is directly related to the influence and reach of the medium in their lives and self-perception.
Participatory video facilitators must be particularly sensitive to power dynamics present in the communities they visit. Engaging the Fogo Process at the micro-level cannot be done hurriedly or without a commitment to see it to its natural conclusion. Considerable efforts should be made to understand local culture and norms before promoting a strategy that may be divisive and leave participants with little or no recourse after you have left the community.

Initial PV projects, particularly when the facilitator’s time in the community is short, should focus on training and production competence, exposure to as many forms of video product and purpose and the production of ‘safe’ videos that can be embraced by divergent community members.

Every opportunity to involve local expertise in the videos, be it production or content oriented should be pursued. Local musicians, artists, singers, poets etc. should be sought out for their potential contributions. Local involvement, at this level, stimulates community interest, collective and individual self-actualization through the simple act of being reflected in this new medium.

Community screenings have the potential to generate interest in the topic addressed and momentum toward future projects. Where appropriate and whenever possible, PV products should be screened to the community at large. Obvious exceptions include videos of controversial nature that may result in conflict. In these cases, a facilitation strategy should be pursued in collaboration with community stakeholders.

Despite the addition of another day to the training workshops, several participants still required additional hands-on experience. The need to integrate the Smart productions
with workshop training became necessary to develop, more fully, local production skills and capacity.

*Fort Severn (October, 2003)*

A period of nearly six weeks passed between the visit to Keewaywin and the next community visit which took place in Fort Severn, the most northerly community in Ontario. In the interim an extensive review of the video footage was possible as well as the generation of drafts of Smart evaluation vignettes.

Fort Severn, a 400 year old settlement, is the only Keewaytinook-Okimakanak community that is predominantly Cree. It is also the most remote of the five communities, situated on the Western shore of Hudson Bay. Because of its geographic remoteness and perhaps due to cultural differences, Fort Severn is considered to be more self reliant than the other KO communities. Subsistence hunting and fishing is more widely practiced and because travel to populated areas is so expensive, the majority of non-perishable supplies arrive on a barge that comes once a year in the Spring.

A new approach to the training and interview gathering was adopted in Fort Severn. Rather than divide my time in the community between interview gathering and workshop training, a mutually beneficial approach was adopted. After an extensive briefing about the purpose and goals of the research and Smart evaluation, participants were asked to produce the interviews with their own community members. The same approach to the previous community productions was undertaken with participants receiving hands-on exposure to every facet of production.

In addition to interview production, the workshop also focused on the production of a collectively realized video about the community. *Trout Logic* was a short, visual
narrative video set to music with no spoken words. It was composed of a number of community members engaged in traditional fishing practices with an emphasis on passing these traditions from elders to youth. The video was embraced by community members and remains on the Fort Severn web page at the time of this writing.

Experiences in both Fort Severn and Keewaywin emphasized the importance of community screenings and the way the videos themselves should be produced. An increasing reliance on workshop participants to be actively engaged in the production of interviews along with the community-based vignette meant that skills development was more thorough and, perhaps more importantly, buy-in from the community was more easily attained. The provision of footage from and around Fort Severn was particularly important to the larger community. The opportunity to see themselves and their surroundings through the television screen created a great deal of excitement and pride. Moreover, that the subject matter addressed local concerns or celebrated some aspect of the community stimulated additional participation and support from unlikely sources such as elders.

An additional, unanticipated outcome of the inclusion of local footage inter-cut with interviews was that outside viewers were given a much richer understanding of life in these communities, its peoples and their customs, its geography and remoteness. This was of value not only for keeping viewers attention but also for providing much needed context to the words and numbers. In short, it gave them a sense of the reality of life in a
fly-in Aboriginal community and that context, in turn, helped inform policy-discussions related to local needs and aspirations.

As a result of providing new roles for workshop participants, the liaison’s importance was considerably diminished. While in the past he was active in the interview scenarios because of his familiarity with community members, the decision to hand over this task to community members themselves meant that he was no longer needed in this capacity. Interviews became much less formal and respondents participated more openly. This was due, I believe, to the fact that they were being interviewed by people that they had long standing relationships with and trusted. An added benefit of this approach was that participants not only developed production and interview skills but they became familiar with the intent of my work in the community as well as with the purpose of the Smart evaluation.

It was evident that wherever possible, workshop participants should be given the opportunity to engage in any larger projects in which the facilitator might be engaged. In Fort Severn, transferring evaluation video production responsibilities to community members significantly increased skills development and general production competency as well as providing rare insight into the machinations of policy development when they saw the video footage that they had taken inter-cut with the footage of policy makers.

Policy makers and Aboriginal community members alike respond with greater interest to visually rich productions. Participatory video producers should endeavor to include relevant cutaway footage in their videos. Fort Severners, for example, are particularly proud of the rugged beauty of their home on the shores of Hudson Bay. Local footage in conjunction with a community screening galvanized participants and
interviewees around the project thereby increasing local participation in and understanding of the Smart program evaluation.

The community screening of video productions that highlight local culture and geography play a significant role in broadening people’s understanding of the potential applications for video. As a result of the visit to Fort Severn, video was used extensively to document traditional cultural practices.

An additional unexpected outcome was the application of video in the service of territorial boundary disputes. After my initial visit, several expeditions, led by one of the original workshop participants, have documented, through video, Aboriginal use of the land. Hunting trips, elder retreats and healing journeys have all been video taped and therefore remain as a permanent living document of Cree land use in what is likely to become disputed territory as resource exploration expands into the area.

*Poplar Hill (February, 2004)*

Poplar Hill is the only exclusively Ojibwa community in the Keewaytinook-Okimakanak tribal jurisdiction. Although not nearly as remote as Fort Severn, it is the most culturally isolated of the five communities. The presence of a Mennonite missionary school some five hundred meters across the lake for the better part of the last century meant that youth were not moved great distances to receive an education. This school was abandoned in the 1970s and was burned to the ground by community members several years later.

Just prior to my visit to Poplar Hill, the KO community liaison fell ill and was unable to continue assisting me in the communities. Concerns were raised about my
ability to gather the necessary evaluation data and conduct training because, in the words of a former teacher there, “Poplar Hill is a highly dysfunctional place”. Indeed these concerns were not without merit. Rather than venture into this unknown environment alone, it was decided that K-Net’s multimedia trainer, a former workshop participant, would accompany me. It was thought that his Aboriginal status would assist in garnering cooperation from the community.

Once in Poplar Hill the challenges were formidable. The E-centre, which had served as the host location for previous training workshops, was seldom used and the staff was largely absent. This made the organization of workshops next to impossible. Despite advanced notice of our arrival and a detailed description of our intent and goals, cooperation was not forthcoming. It became common to hear the interrogative “when are you leaving?” within the first minute of any verbal exchange.

Training workshops were abandoned and we devoted our efforts to gathering video interviews. All interviewees who were originally from Poplar Hill were non-communicative despite several efforts to modify the questioning to encourage participation. Rarely were we able to get anybody to agree to an interview and when they did, they seldom appeared at the specified time and place. Interviews with medical staff, teachers and residents not originally from Poplar Hill went considerably better. Nevertheless, 14 interviews, of varying length and quality of detail, were gathered.

Subsequent to this visit, numerous reliable sources commented on my experience in Poplar Hill as not uncommon. Not possessing a background in cultural anthropology, I accepted their descriptions of Poplar Hill as legitimate. In particular, Poplar Hill was described as culturally isolationist and its citizens characterized by a collective form of
non-verbal communication when dealing with outsiders. At the time, it was also suffering from myriad social problems, especially those associated with youth such as substance abuse, delinquency and suicide.

I will paraphrase a phenomenon specific to Poplar Hill that was described to me by a member of the band council. The presence of the Mennonite school meant that in the past there was very little outward migration of youth during the school year. When the school closed, youth were transported to urban centres for an entire school year. Many committed suicide or encountered drugs, alcohol and crime. The overall impact, as it is across Canada’s North, was devastating. The youth in Poplar Hill today are the children of this first wave of youth who were shipped out for school. The resulting social and psychological damage has meant that today, Poplar Hill’s youth are largely cared for by their grandparents who were never forced out of the community. These grandparents are naturally concerned for the well-being of their grandchildren and as a result, do not encourage their participation in the education system because of what they saw happen to their own children. This mistrust extends itself to ICTs such as the internet which is seen as a conduit for the spread of the dominant culture into their community.

It is not surprising, therefore, that participation in either the workshops of interview gathering, was severely limited. In retrospect, I believe that engaging a local champion, in the form of a school teacher for example, would have resulted in, at the very least, some level of participation in the workshops. If the Fort Severn experience of having the trainees conduct and produce the interviews, then I think this success would have extended to interviewee participation.
An unanticipated outcome of my time in Poplar Hill was the opportunity to train and begin mentoring Cal Kenny, K-Net’s multimedia producer and my guide on this trip. At the time of this writing, Mr. Kenny has produced several videos of increasingly sophisticated style and whose substance has been exclusively the betterment of socio-economic conditions for the KO communities. Indeed, this may have been the most valuable trip as far as capacity building is concerned since Mr. Kenny has gone onto train and mentor other Aboriginal youth and has presented his work at academic and government organized conferences as well as having his work screened around the world. A more detailed account Mr. Kenny’s work is contained in Appendix Three.

A strategy is needed to engage community champions and participants in communities that have been flagged as ‘problematic’. The importance of a community friendly liaison must be underscored and efforts to secure such a person can make the difference between a successful intervention and an unsuccessful one.

Deer Lake (March, 2004)

The visit to Deer Lake was conducted immediately following the intervention in Poplar Hill. The original community liaison for this research was still unavailable as was my liaison for Poplar Hill. Therefore it was decided that I would travel into the community alone. At the time of my arrival, Deer Lake was mired in political strife. Allegations of band council corruption meant that all administrative functions within the community were at a standstill; councilors were unavailable and offices were closed including the E-centre from where training workshops were to be held.
E-centre staff, which I had relied upon to assist in organizing the workshops, had not been into work for several days at the time of my arrival and therefore production workshops were not conducted. Instead the training focused on E-centre staff with the intent of providing skills so that they in turn could train others. The production of a community based video was not undertaken because of concerns that video cameras in Deer Lake could exacerbate an already volatile situation.

Despite my best efforts, no community official would speak with me on camera with the exception of the education coordinator who granted an interview while the community school burnt to the ground. Instead, I focused my efforts on health care providers and community members in general who proved to be more than obliging to discuss the impacts broadband had had on their community.

While it may appear that the research environments represented by Deer Lake, and to a lesser extent, Poplar Hill were inordinately challenging, in fact, they were slightly more extreme versions of what I had encountered in the three previous communities. Canada’s remote Aboriginal communities are, generally speaking, infrastructurally indigent and their members exist under a legacy of colonialism and dependency. As such, it is incumbent upon any researcher, especially a PAR practitioner, to accept these conditions and move forward. Additional time in all the communities would have improved all facets of the research.

The concept of ‘Indian Time’ which was initially explained to me by the community liaison prior to my first visit to North Spirit Lake was particularly relevant in Deer Lake and Poplar Hill. ‘Indian Time’ is an expression used to refer to the pace and speed of response when dealing with outsiders. Indeed, given the high rate of
unemployment, geographical remoteness and increased reliance on the local environment for sustenance, it is hardly surprising that community affairs are conducted according to local timelines and not those of the dominant, outside world.

The Deer Lake experience revealed the true essence of constructivist research. Despite the grounded approach, I, as a researcher, entered the community with certain expectations and measures for ‘success.’ Workshops would be conducted according to the lessons learned from previous communities. Interviews would build upon the insight gained from speaking to prominent community members elsewhere. And a collectively produced video would galvanize the community around a particular issue. In reality, nothing worked out as planned and therein lies an important lesson. I was encumbered by a belief that remote Aboriginal communities were largely homogenous. While they may retain certain demographic similarities such as size, employment rates and population-age distributions, in fact they differ considerably from one another. Local cultures may vary widely according to environment, history, individual leadership and tribal affiliation. Researchers must be aware that the combination and influence of each of these factors differs from community to community. Like all complex human systems, they are unknowable entities in that trying to generalize lessons from one local experience to another is ultimately a futile exercise. Rather generalizations should be framed within an iterative research methodology.

The repetition of research procedures inevitably leads to expectations regarding outcomes but maintaining a reflexive methodological approach is paramount. Research goals and objectives should not be confused with the need for methodological replicability. Because human social systems can differ so widely, understanding them
demands analytical flexibility. The researcher should adopt the fundamental assumption that communities can never be ‘known’; instead the researcher must adopt an approach which accepts that understanding is an ongoing and never ending process. The research goals can and should be addressed despite a dramatic change in the research environment.

_SiouxFoot Town (March, 2004)_

By the time that the final intervention in Deer Lake took place it was apparent that video had taken on a broader role beyond that of an evaluation tool. A series of vignettes had been produced, by me, from the existing footage and formed part of an interim case study report entitled, _Harnessing ICTs: A Canadian First Nations Experience_. The videos, along with the report were distributed globally through the Institute of Connectivity of the Americas (ICA) a division of IDRC. The feedback pertaining to the video component of this report focused on the importance of having Aboriginals speak for themselves outside of the realm of report-driven text. Viewers stressed the value of seeing and hearing the impact of ICTs in the words and faces of the people directly impacted by them. This context was even more important given the chronic lack of representation that remote Aboriginal communities encounter on an ongoing basis.

In addition to gathering feedback from the communities where the Smart program was rolled out, it became apparent that there were numerous other stakeholders involved from outside the five KO communities. Two trips were made to northwestern Ontario to gather interviews and feedback from Aboriginal and government officials, health care professionals and educators who were charged with the responsibility of delivering Smart and broadband assisted programs and who had witnessed the impacts of connectivity first
hand. The primary sources for these interviews were located in Balmertown, Ontario where KO administrative offices are located and Sioux Lookout, Ontario, the service hub community where the K-Net offices are located.

In Sioux Lookout, additional training workshops were held in conjunction with an international conference about ICT expansion in Canada’s North. The conference relied heavily upon production of videos designed to tell the story of ICTs in the KO communities. In addition to broadcasting the videos already produced, a series of five new videos focusing on each community were produced and broadcast via K-Net’s streaming server during the conference and to online attendees around the world. Much of this video content was gathered by community member workshop participants after my initial visits.

Because the interviews I conducted were on video and intended for use in participatory video projects, I was accompanied by K-Net’s Director. This proved to be both a blessing and a challenge as he was familiar with all the scheduled interviewees and their involvement with Smart and associated programs such telehealth and internet assisted education, but he was also largely responsible for securing the funding for my research. As the funder and the chief advocate of connectivity in remote first nations, he sought to steer the interviewee responses in favour of all aspects of broadband. Perhaps this was motivated by a desire to balance the moderate responses received in the communities. Nevertheless, it became necessary to redefine his role in the interview process in order to ensure respondents felt free to provide balanced accounts of their experiences with broadband.
Participatory video projects call for the inclusion of as many relevant stakeholders as time and budget will allow. The participation of interim officials who operate between the communities, and the policy decision-makers, helped to provide a deeper understanding of the impacts of broadband in these remote places.

Engaging funders in the PV process may be problematic due to common misconceptions around the purpose and methods of using video. Video is widely accepted as a product-driven technology; a means to an end. The desire to exert creative or content control is strong, particularly among novices. Funders want the product that they expect and seek to ensure that production meets these goals. Involving the funder(s) in the participatory video process exposes them to the possibility of video as a tool for capacity building. It means opening their eyes to the unknowable vastness of unanticipated outcomes when the shift in understanding comes. I term this phenomenon, simply as ‘buy-in’: a trust in the process and the facilitator based on tangible results and first hand exposure to the methodology.

Ottawa 1 (May, 2004)

As stated in the conceptual framework and Methodology chapters, the Fogo Process underscores the participatory video approach undertaken by this research. The Fogo Process seeks to close the gap in communication between disenfranchised remote Aboriginal communities and the urban policy-makers who have a sizeable role in steering their course. Therefore, it was necessary to incorporate the opinions and reflections of relevant policy-makers into the PV process.
In Ottawa, Sudbury and Thunder Bay I was given access to mid-level and senior government officials who reflected on the videos from the communities and then added their own perspective to the expansion of Broadband in remote Aboriginal communities. Interviews were again conducted and were semi-structured with an emphasis on open-ended responses.

Interviewees were asked to comment on the role of ICTs in remote Aboriginal communities as well as the impact that the PV productions have had and may have in the future on policy related decision making. By this time, the demand for video product, by the communities and their representative agencies, was growing. Participatory video productions were becoming increasingly popular, not only as a form of advocacy, but as a means of providing bureaucrats, politicians and other Aboriginal communities with contextualized information and data.

Prior to being interviewed, bureaucrats were asked to view one or several of the videos pertaining to their policy specialization. For example, Health Canada officials screened community videos about telehealth while Industry Canada representatives saw video about network infrastructure and economic development. It was following these screenings that the true potential of this participatory video for policy change approach was first seen. Interviewees claimed that the videos allowed them and their staff access to places and people that they serve but have never met or visited. Furthermore, the videos were credited with helping to overcome bureaucratic inertia by humanizing what had been essentially theoretical, policy work based on quantitative data analysis. Bureaucrats, especially mid-level bureaucrats charged with the responsibility of rolling out program initiatives, are very rarely afforded the opportunity to travel to remote Aboriginal
communities. Seeing and hearing the people that were the subjects of their policy-making efforts, brought the process out of the abstract realm and into the real world. Furthermore, it illuminated issues, mostly related to remoteness and living conditions, of which they had been largely unaware.

The addition of bureaucratic voices to subsequent video productions changed the scope and impact of the videos. While in the past they had been composed of largely Aboriginal voices from the communities, including the voices and images of Assistant Deputy Ministers, Director Generals and Senior Policy Analysts meant that the videos now had legitimacy beyond a local advocacy tool or a means of improving program evaluation. Community members could now see their own images juxtaposed with those of the most senior policy makers in the country. Furthermore, they were exposed to the people and the processes of policy-making which they had been kept from the in the past. In the final analysis, this change in perception may have had a greater impact on the role of capacity building than the delivery of training workshops.

The potential role of video in providing context to policy makers around issues affecting remote Aboriginal communities is considerable. Technocratic prejudices can be quickly overcome when confronted with an alternate interpretation, by the actual program recipients in their own words, of what is happening on the ground. This research has only begun to scratch the surface of this potential.

Urban based bureaucrats are frequently aware of the power of video to capture hearts and minds. In short, they can be media savvy. This is not the same as understanding the participatory video process. Sparse community productions which do not rely on sophisticated production techniques such as back-lighting, and special effects
generate a perception of authenticity. Furthermore, subsequent viewings of videos in which policy makers saw themselves juxtaposed with community members lent further legitimacy to the process and ensured a higher bureaucratic level of ‘buy-in’.

Ottawa 2 (April, 2005)

During the course of the research nineteen videos (Appendix One) were produced and disseminated. Audiences included policy-makers, politicians, government staff and other Aboriginal communities. Videos were distributed via the internet as streaming video as well as by DVD and CD-Rom.

As the field research drew to a close in late 2005, K-Net was contacted by the Privy Council Office of Canada’s Aboriginal Secretariat. The Privy Council is charged with broad ranging powers to steer Federal policy across Departments. The experience in Northwestern Ontario had led them to identify broadband connectivity for remote first nations as a policy priority. Privy members had viewed several of the videos already produced as well visited Sioux Lookout to get a better understanding of the impact of broadband. It was at this time that I was commissioned by the Privy Council to produce a video, from existing community-based footage, that told the story of connectivity in the KO communities with an emphasis on expanding connectivity among Canada’s northern remote Aboriginal communities. The video was a collaborative effort with a Privy Council representative, K-Net and local stakeholders. As such, despite being commissioned by a policy-making authority, the production retained the core principles of collective message-making keeping it true to the participatory video model.
This video titled *Turning the Corner: Rethinking Broadband in Canada’s North* was screened to a cross departmentally selected group of senior bureaucrats and politicians all of whom played a role in the policy development for broadband connectivity in remote Aboriginal communities. The thesis of this video was that, based on the KO experiences with connectivity, federal funding approaches to connectivity in the North should be restructured to accommodate bottom-up planning approaches and minimize redundancy for more effective service delivery.

The Keewaytinook-Okimakanak tribal council and K-Net found the videos useful for a number of reasons including, education, capacity-building and raising awareness. But perhaps the single most valuable impact of video, as has already been mentioned, was the medium’s ability to transcend geographical and cultural barriers and provide senior Federal policy-makers with stories and context about the profound impacts of ICT infrastructure in remote Aboriginal communities.

This event revealed the significance of the video(s) as an organizing structure. Several policy makers disclosed that a video differed from a report in that it could be viewed collectively and the groups were able to discuss the issues raised while it was equally fresh in all the viewers’ minds. Also, since the audience was composed of stakeholders whose have the influence and/or authority over decisions pertaining to connectivity policy on remote Aboriginal communities, the discussion went immediately to the pragmatic aspects of achieving change within the federal system.

Again, the importance of community footage was noted because, as suspected, for the majority of those in attendance, knowledge of conditions on remote Aboriginal communities was not based on first hand experience. The inclusion factual data on-screen
in the form of scrolling text and figures helped legitimize the video to an audience that was suspect of purely ‘qualitative’ data.

This event marked the temporal end of the research intervention phase. A number of policy-related videos and interventions had been conducted subsequent to this experience. For a detailed description of these please see Appendix Three: Outcomes of the Research.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCRETE EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Spirit Lake:</td>
<td>Formal training led to a classroom environment not conducive to learning. Video interviews over-produced and artificial. Community liaison non-supportive and saw no value in the work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Gathering evaluation material</td>
<td>Training materials modified for clarity but classroom approach to learning still very formal. A completed video was produced by the community which led the community liaison to change his attitude toward the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Severn:</td>
<td>Training became “hands-on” with minimal theory or classroom-type learning. Learning took place more quickly and was characterized by greater motivation. A less formal and less technical approach to interviews was adopted. Community participants became interviewers a part of the training which led to more honest and open interviews. Community video produced and community liaison considerably more supportive despite his reduced role in production.</td>
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<td>Keewaywin:</td>
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<td>Smart Communities Evaluation:</td>
<td>First use of the video footage in a policy-related document. Community members saw themselves telling their own story. Other communities began to express more interest in the training and interviews. Funding agencies and K-Net began to understand the value of video beyond product and as part of a process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Gathering evaluation material</td>
<td>Liaison was K-Net Director. Interviews became a focused attempt to extract very specific story. Liaison very focused on product and insistent that interviewees provide the “correct” answer. Involving Liaison in the editing process helped lead to a better understanding of process over product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sioux Lookout:</td>
<td>Funding agency saw the value of video as a direct result of ICA cd-rom. Requested a very specific product. Discussions led to an acceptance that the nature of the product will be determined by the subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Community based video production and training</td>
<td>Funding agency saw the value of video as a direct result of ICA cd-rom. Requested a very specific product. Discussions led to an acceptance that the nature of the product will be determined by the subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fed-Nor Video:</td>
<td>Funding agency saw the value of video as a direct result of ICA cd-rom. Requested a very specific product. Discussions led to an acceptance that the nature of the product will be determined by the subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottawa-Fogo:</td>
<td>This marks the first step toward significant participation of senior policy makers in the process. In progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Gathering evaluation material</td>
<td>Community differed from previous experiences in that minimal utilization of Smart services was seen outside of tele-health. Infrastructure not maintained and little value placed on it. A history of political strife had impacted the staffing of E-centres. Offers a number of valuable lessons in the need for effective implementation procedures. Liaison absent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer Lake:</td>
<td>Community in political turmoil at the time of visit. Minimal interviews available. Training was conducted in an informal setting, similar to Ft. Severn. Participants encouraged to capture video and be part of the process. Participants have continued to capture and produce video. First introduction the concept of process to trainees led to greater mobilization. Liaison absent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Videos:</td>
<td>Videos used to showcase the Smart experience in each community. To be produced in partnership with community members. Marks the first distribution of community produced media to other communities and funding agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart Virtual Conference.</td>
<td>Videos used to showcase the Smart experience in each community. To be produced in partnership with community members. Marks the first distribution of community produced media to other communities and funding agencies.</td>
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CHAPTER FIVE
RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter lays out the data gathered in support of the research objectives. Participatory action research is based on inductive principles of inquiry wherein data is collected in order to negotiate a problem statement and measures to address it.

The initial data are used to determine the key variables as perceived by those being studied, and hypotheses about relationships among the variables are similarly derived from the data collected. Continuing data collection yields refined understanding and, in turn, sharpens the focus of the data.”

(Babbie, 2001: 285)

Data in support of the research objectives comes from three sources: (1) interviews with key informants; (2) the literature and; (3) the researcher’s observations from the field. The rest of this chapter describes the evidence according to the research objectives which derive from the following research question:

*How does participatory video empower remote Aboriginal communities to change relationships with policy-makers?*

**Objective 1**

*Explore the conditions under which Participatory Video can be used to develop capacity in Aboriginal communities.*

The identification of conditions under which video could be used locally to build capacity around policy related issues required evidence from participant observation (PO) research, interviews with community members engaged in video production processes
and lessons from the literature on participatory video. The following conditions
determined the level of success of participatory video interventions in the five KO
communities: (1) leadership; (2) a supportive communication climate and; (3) access to
technology.

_Leadership_

Institutional acceptance of new approaches to gathering qualitative data for
program evaluation was instrumental to the adoption of participatory video as a policy
tool. Organizational attitude had to be open and flexible to new methods. At the
community level, KO and K-Net, or more accurately, key individuals of influence
therein, realized the potential of video early on in the research. Of particular importance
was their realization that video had significant potential for capacity building, not only as
a means to an end but as a process in and of itself. In other words, they understood that
the very act of community members engaged in the production of media was an integral
aspect of the way video could be used to affect change. Video as a product remains an
important way of communicating the policy needs of remote Aboriginal communities.
However, the presence of local people with the skills and knowledge to produce
collective messages means that future video productions will represent community
concerns and not rely on the presence of an outside “expert”.

The presence of federal representatives who adopted the Smart Communities’
principle of community based planning also played an important role. They actively
participated in the PV process by providing interviews and by encouraging colleagues to
contribute to the process.
At the community level, Chiefs band counselors and employees helped determine whether video production would succeed or fail. In one community for example, the manager of the local E-centre had been active in the implementation of the network and was eager to share her experiences with other remote Aboriginal communities. Her willingness to share these lessons combined with a personal drive to better conditions in the community led her to articulate her message by encouraging local participation in the production of a video about the lack of reliability of electricity in the community. In another community a group of youth collaborated to share stories about traditional practices and their importance to local culture and identity. A third example saw one individual continue to produce policy related videos for KO and K-Net in the service of health care and education. Conversely, lack of local leadership, characterized by an isolationist attitude and mistrust of outsiders had a negative impact on local participation in the PV process as witnessed in two of the research communities. A community champion need not be a person of authority in the community though some formal affiliation with KO or K-Net did appear to determine the extent to which community champions took on video production responsibilities.

Communication Climate

White (2003) describes a creative communication climate as one under which participatory video can flourish (Figure 5.1). It is characterized by the absence of personal rejection, threats or performance pressures that releases individuals and enables them to take risks and chances with their own capabilities. “The first step toward this creative climate is building relationships of mutual trust, support, and respect. Such
relationships free the person to leave their defenses behind and launch out to inquire, learn, and apply their knowledge.” (White, 2003: 89) A supportive communication climate was a key element of the learning environment established, albeit iteratively, in some of the KO communities. Initially, video technology was seen as daunting to participants who had never picked up a camera or a microphone. The learning environment needed to be open, non-judgmental and facilitative.

Access to Technology

A video camera and digital editing station were provided to each community by K-Net. The extent to which the technology was subsequently used depended largely on the hereto mentioned conditions. However, it is unclear that any post-research productions would have been undertaken without access to this production equipment or a place to disseminate them such as the Internet. Furthermore, the role of key individuals in the communities should not be underestimated. Individuals who were able to grasp the potential of video, both technically and conceptually, were integral to the development of local video production.

Objective 2

Identify the processes Aboriginal communities engage in to produce communication materials to build capacity.

The identification of processes was based largely on participant observation reporting. In addition, interviews revealed the importance community screenings to the
development of capacity. Capacity is fundamentally about a communities’ resilience in the face of change and is defined as “the ways and means needed to do what has to be done… Community capacity building is based on the premise that community sustainability can be improved over and it is reflected in the people, economy, environment, culture, attitude and appearance of the community.” (Frank, 1999: 18) The following processes were largely recurrent from community to community although not identical in the way they occurred. Certain process –video productions, training and community screenings- were not witnessed in every community and are therefore described as occurring periodically. Again, local leadership appeared to be the determining factor in this delineation.

**Training**

Training workshops that resulted in the highest level of participation and post-research video usage were those that adopted a rapid, applied learning component. Participants made the most of the technology when they were using it and, based on interview feedback, benefited only slightly, if at all, from any theoretical instruction.

Participation in the training workshops was open to all community members. However, the way that this was communicated to the community was a factor in determining who attended. In communities where training opportunities were announced well in advance, community leadership was typically strong and advocated for new skills development which resulted in higher levels of participation. The training aspect of the research was perceived as a skills development initiative resulting in the vast majority of participants being between the ages of 16 and 30. Older participants typically held a
position of authority and had been engaged in ICT development in the community such as E-centre managers.

*Video Productions*

The applied aspect of the training workshops involved having participants help in the gathering of evaluation footage as well as the collective production of a video about an issue of concern in their community. The latter, according to participant feedback, was instrumental in: (1) achieving a practical understanding of the potential and limitations of video as a way of communicating the complexity of issues facing their communities and; (2) stimulating additional productions.

*Community Screenings*

The screening of locally produced videos to the community was a significant process because of the interest and feedback that they generated. People were excited about seeing themselves and their communities represented through the medium of television. Community members favoured videos, or segments of videos, that highlighted the positive aspects of their communities. This feedback steered subsequent productions. Moreover, this excitement fed back to the participant producers who in turn sought out future production possibilities and acted on them. In communities where leadership did not foster or encourage PV or screening the results were the opposite: little or no interest in video as a process or a tool to communicate their needs.
Integration

The process by which an outside researcher integrates into the community is a determinant process in the future use of video as a tool for change. In this case, a community liaison, familiar with the communities and leadership accompanied me to three of the five communities. His efforts to bridge gaps of mistrust and suspicion cannot be understated in terms of their importance to the adoption of PV in the communities as well as the participation of interviewees. There was significant more community participation and acceptance in these three communities than in the communities he was not able to attend. The community liaison was also able to communicate the purpose and community-based approach of the research to community leadership. Having this message coming from a trusted source in their own language helped facilitate the research, and thereby the continued use of video in the communities.

The process by which I conducted the research, reflexively in collaboration with communities as research partners, played a significant role in determining whether video would have a future among the participants. The approaches to training and interviews for example, were modified from community to community based on lessons learned from previous experiences.

Buy-In

Buy-in refers to the shift in understanding from perceiving video as product based endeavour to seeing it as a process for local capacity building. This transformation was most important at the interim agency level. Attitudes toward video changed as representatives from KO and K-Net began seeing local efforts incorporating local voices
through a collective process resulting in a product that could be viewed globally. Where in the past it was seen as an outsider-dependent, extractive process or a task that would be contracted out to ‘professionals’; it was now seen as another tool that could be to affect social and policy change from a community centered perspective

**Objective 3**

*Investigate how participatory video and ICTs change the self-perception of remote Aboriginal communities.*

Initially, the realm of self-perception that this objective was intended to illuminate was the way that remote Aboriginal communities’ thought about themselves may have shifted as a result of their participation in and exposure to, participatory video as related to their role as the subjects of policy making. Some of the feedback from the community representatives supported this belief. One senior community representative stated, with respect to local ownership of the technology and processes, that it was only once these conditions were satisfied that real development could occur. “It’s about building capacity and creating a voice for our people and these videos are a way of doing that.” Reflections from young community champions who had participated in the process from the beginning revealed the impact of the videos on people in the communities. “It would have been good to videotape the reactions of the people in Ottawa as they watched the video (Turning the Corner) and then to play those reactions back to the people in the communities. I think that would have made a big difference around here.” This statement
supports the idea that video is a legitimate form of communicating with policy makers, in the eyes of community members.

Feedback also indicates that video is a particularly useful means of communication for remote Aboriginal communities. Video had some value in mitigating concerns around trust and it seemed to be a more culturally appropriate way of facilitating communication than reports, policy papers or even corporate style video productions. Respondents indicated that video was able to convey messages in a way that reports could not. Being involved in production and having input into the final product assured community members that their messages were being delivered intact and as intended. Moreover, videos relayed intangible elements such as emotions, feelings and reactions that respondents felt gave them a better understanding of policy makers and government representatives in a medium that was more culturally appropriate than written reports.

It’s a visual and oral culture so video fits in really well with us up here. And now video is easy to use so more people can share their voices and be heard...Seeing the actual policy people on video is the best substitute for meeting them in person so that means we get a little closer to trusting them. (NAN Economic Development Representative)

As previously mentioned, the videos were produced in a low-tech style that were perceived as being more genuine than conventional productions and it was clear that the wide diversity of voices captured extended this legitimacy. “There’s no bullshit in there – you can see that people are reacting and talking openly and that it’s not rehearsed. If you watch a fancy video, with lots of special effects then it loses its value… it’s just like another report or formal mechanism to deliver the government line.” (Senior Policy Analyst, Industry Canada)
Geographic isolation combined with exposure to mass media has had a profound impact on self perception, especially among youth. Ross (2006) spent decades traveling throughout Northwestern Ontario as a crown attorney and he observes that “it may be that these children who have pieced together a borrowed culture from television shows they watch see their parents as embarrassing anachronisms who can’t even speak English and who ‘only know how to fish, trap and hunt’. (Ross, 2006:138)

Indeed, this was validated by the respondents in comments such as this one: “My honest feeling is that all this exposure to the Internet and Television is ruining our youth. There’s nothing on there that represents the life they’re living up here.” (Community Member, Fort Severn First Nation)

The simple act of witnessing something through the television screen seems to have a profound impact on the way we perceive its legitimacy. Conversely, in the case of Aboriginal youth living in remote Aboriginal communities who seldom see any media representation of their actual lives or communities, the data suggests that this may lead to a default de-legitimization of their culture and hence their own self-perception. One respondent commented that “people here want to see stories about themselves and other people like them. Like my daughter eh, what’s TV got to do with her life in Fort Severn?” (E-Centre Employee, Fort Severn First Nation)

The influence of mass media on cultures that lack any meaningful representation therein has implications for more than individual and collective self-perception. Ross (2006:40), writing about Aboriginals in the criminal justice system, explains that mass media has helped shaped an erroneous understanding of white urban
culture. This misrepresentation has in turn led to increased encounters with the justice system by Aboriginal youth.

I believe, however, that television is doing something even more profound to these children, and I am referring here to its McLuhanesque impact on Native culture. It is not only the plot lines which ‘teach’; of even greater influence is the fact that they implicitly teach what whites have learned as the proper ways to relate to ourselves and to each other. Our television cannot help but teach our fundamental rules: it shows us expressing our emotions, talking out our griefs and sorrows, expressing our worries and concerns to all who might wish to hear them (and to many who don’t), constantly offering advice and criticism, demonstrating anger and hostility, defining ourselves as individuals first and member of groups second. Those Indian children (and there are thousands) who spend their pre-school years parked all day in front of a television set are learning quite simply, to be us. Then, when they go to school, they see the same kind of conduct from their white teachers. They see it from their white nurses and doctors and from white lawyers, judges, police and probation officers. The only people they do not see act in such ways are their parents and elders.

(Ross, 2006: 140)

Conversely, the use of video to produce positive, realistic depictions of community life seemed to have the opposite effect of which Ross (2006) writes. Video representation of people in similar conditions to themselves had implications for inter-community cooperation by instilling a sense of heritage and cultural pride.

They know that it’s worth preserving and when they see somebody taking an interest in it, like making a video about it, that’s something that feeds back into the community and the way they think about themselves. They know it’s just a video but at the same time they also know that there’s something about that that makes it important to other people. (K-Net employee)

One community respondent, a mother of four, whose own children had encountered difficulties in and outside of the community realized the importance of
cultural representation for young people as a real way of steering them away from such hardships.

It’s important for the youth to see other people like themselves. Because, up here, if you have a problem, it’s good to know that there’s other people out there like you. These are small communities so sometimes knowing that and seeing the other stories from the other communities lets you know that its not just you.

It would seem that the very act of being seen on the television or computer screen, in and of itself, is a tool for cultural legitimization among young people.

It instills a certain pride in the people in the communities to see people like them being represented on the video. I’m not sure what it is about the screen, television or computer, but people feel excited seeing it and knowing that other people are seeing it.

(Community Member, North Spirit Lake)

The knowledge that their voices were being heard by policy makers through video had the potential to change local understanding about their potential input into the planning process. However, the ongoing production of videos featuring local people and places seems to have had an unexpected outcome with respect to self perception.

When we were producing that video about the power going off… when we looked at it afterward with the other people from the community, the first thing they started asking was can we make more videos… I think they liked seeing their own home on the screen.

(E-Centre Manager)

On a more fundamental level, the act of seeing themselves and others like them represented through the format of video was described as a form of legitimization of themselves as a community and the issues they deal with on a daily basis. In reference to a community-produced video one respondent commented that video might actually
have more influence on policy makers because of the stark nature of the challenges they face on a daily basis.

In Fort Severn we’ve been having a lot of problems with the school and we want to make a video about that… because if we can show a story of people talking about their own story and show footage of the empty houses and hear about people liquidating everything so they can move to a place where the schools not dangerous to their kids then it might mean a lot more then some report somewhere… *(E-Centre Employee, Fort Severn First Nation)*

Subsequent to the training workshops, videos from the communities reveals a rapidly developing sophistication with respect to the mediums policy applications as well as additional local productions.

Video is malleable. When I’m producing a video up here about traditional ways or I’m producing a video about telehealth, I’ll tell the story differently because the audience is different. But somebody who’s not from up here can still watch the traditional baby powder video and still understand it... *(K-Net employee)*

One of the training workshop participants was already in the pre-production stage of a feature length film in which he wanted to tell a traditional local story in a format that could be accessible to mainstream audiences.

I’ve started working on a story that I want to make into a low-budget horror movie that’s kind of like the Blair Witch Project. It’s about a traditional legend up here and how this group of kids in the bush that comes across this ghost spirit… I’ve got the story and now I’m working on the script. I want to shoot it here (Keewaywin) and use local people as actors. *(Community Member, Keewaywin First Nation)*

Self-perception is more than just an abstracted notion related to identity; it has real and profound impacts on people’s lives. In the case of remote Aboriginal communities who seldom see themselves represented in the mass media, much less
represented in a positive or accurate manner, the impacts are even greater. The data indicates that media representation through ICTs, in particular that which is communicated through video, does have an impact on the way that remote Aboriginal communities see themselves. It would seem that young people are especially vulnerable to the effects of mass media as revealed by responses from all age groups.

While I was in Fort Severn gathering footage with workshop trainees we had the opportunity to capture a young girl of approximately eight years with her mother and grandmother, cleaning a recently killed moose in a teepee. When we asked permission to shoot footage of this event, the girl and her grandmother welcomed us in and gladly responded to questions as they went about the task of preparing the carcass. However, it was the girl’s mother who, in her own words, was “embarrassed” being video taped with bloody hands. It occurred to me that this young girl would soon have access to as much Western-urban mass media that she wanted. I wondered how she would make sense of her own life’s experiences, her home, her family, her friends and her community in the face of that exposure. The answer seemed to be in her mother’s reaction to our cameras. While the child’s grandmother had lived her entire life in the community with no access to mass media (except for the previous three years), the girl’s mother had gone to residential schools and was aware of urban attitudes toward what they were doing in that teepee, thus her shame at being video taped. As the data in support of Objective Three suggests, seeing one’s life experience represented through the same instruments as those used by the mass media, the most powerful cultural entity in the world, translates into a kind of equal footing. When this eight year old girl is able
to choose between Hollywood and locally produced media, she may also see the choice of her way of life as a legitimate option.

**Objective 4**

*Explore how policy makers identify the significance of new media tools and products to change their relationship with remote Aboriginal communities.*

Objective four seeks to uncover how policy makers interpret the potential of video and participatory video processes. This objective is addressed through the provision of responses gathered through, semi-structured interviews. Policy makers and federal bureaucrats were asked a number of open-ended questions designed to improve understanding of how exposure to, and participation in, the KO videos may have changed their perception of remote Aboriginal communities in relation to ICT policy and its applications such as telehealth and KiHS.

The categories of responses that emerged are: (1) video provides highly valuable *context* for policy-makers about remote Aboriginal communities; (2) videos have the potential to *influence* policy-makers thereby shifting the direction of federal policy; (3) videos can be used to *inform* and galvanize federal staff working in the service of Aboriginal communities who might not otherwise have the opportunity to visit these places or meet their inhabitants; (4) videos are a legitimate and effective way of providing *qualitative data* for policy-making processes; (5) videos can serve as an *organizing structure* or event around which senior bureaucrats and politicians can form
policy directives and influence other policy-makers. The following sub-sections describe these categories in more detail.

Context

Originally, testimonial videos were simply clips or ‘talking heads’ of community members discussing their experiences with broadband in support of the Smart Evaluation report (2004). Upon screening these videos back to the participants and other stakeholders via streaming video, their feedback indicated a strong desire to include more background footage of the communities and community members doing the work that they were talking about on screen. People wanted to see what the interview subjects were talking about and where they were because they felt that a richer depiction of the subject matter was needed; if videos should provide context, then that context should be as full and accurate as possible. This led to the inclusion of insert shots and cutaways – footage of the communities, and footage designed to illustrate what they were talking about such as Telehealth being used on an elderly patient. The inclusion of this kind of footage in subsequent productions, in addition to making the videos more dynamic and interesting, provided context for the viewers. This key characteristic of the medium allows viewers to better understand what the interviewees mean by seeing the conditions in which they live and work. Remoteness is one aspect of life in these communities that policy makers rarely grasp.

If you can relate, to a senior manager for example, what has been spent and what difference its making… then it brings added value in the form of deeper understanding to bureaucrats who may have never experienced traveling to these remote Aboriginal communities. It is very difficult sitting in an office in downtown Ottawa to understand what the eventual outcome of your
decision means at the local level….For instance there was that very interesting cut of the young man who has his diploma on the wall then you look out the window at the teepee… That stays in your mind. It contextualizes the importance of education in these remote places.

Federal Program Director
Industry Canada

Beyond the simple fact of geographic isolation was the unseen reality of people having no choice but to function in these remote Aboriginal communities. Health care accessibility, for example, is something that these communities struggle with on a daily basis. In the words of a senior federal manager speaking about the way that video helped make this a reality:

The isolation, in terms of the health care, that message was very strong. People were talking about what it actually meant to have to travel like that just to get a basic diagnosis and the impact that had on them and their families. The big impact for me was the young people. The fact that they now have a choice to stay in their community and what that means for their future and the future of their community and culture. To me, it was much more evident that they were isolated and lacked facilities by seeing it on the video then I ever could from reading a report.

Manager and Research Analyst
Industry Canada

Responses to the videos also revealed a bureaucratic reality: there simply were not the resources available to bring enough federal government representatives to northwestern Ontario to actually see, with their own eyes, what remoteness actually means. Video based communication bridges were seen as a way of addressing this shortcoming.

There’s a bureaucratic barrier that doesn’t allow us to travel to these remote areas. If you don’t have, in your mind, a hands-on experience, face to face with the people doing the work in remote or rural areas, then you don’t have a concept of what it’s like. You’ve got to have something to provide us in Ottawa with a feel for what’s going on. If you can’t make the visit, you’ve got to think of other ways of doing it. And so we’ve got to think of
other ways of communicating what’s happening on the ground. Videos, especially the way you’ve produced them in conjunction with the communities, really can go a long way in filling that gap.

Senior Program Officer
Industry Canada

Video, with its ability to convey human experiences through stories, helped to humanize the struggles of remote Aboriginal communities. In essence, the power of the story, the feedback indicated, was to capture the human element of policy impacts that might be lost in a conventional report. A policy analyst, in response to a video that showed how internet assisted education allowed students to remain in their communities, connected to a traditional lifestyle, stated:

The story of the young man from Ft. Severn who gets to stay in the community combined with the images of life in that region really touched me and put a humanity to the importance of internet high school… its telling the story and achieving that resonance that is at the core of the challenge…I think video can really help to drive home the geographical isolation faced by these communities.

Policy Analyst
Industry Canada

The importance of context was also revealed in the way that viewers gained a deeper appreciation of the conditions in these communities and the significant efforts that local people had made in developing broadband infrastructure and using it to meet their own, self-identified needs. Context allowed the viewer to see things in a way that a report cannot. In particular, the videos included considerable factual data, presented graphically on screen by scrolling text. This combination of data and stories lent credibility to the videos where a traditional corporate video or documentary would be dismissed because of its inherent production bias.
I think that videos have that ability to give life to the numbers and get people to sit down and discuss whether something is an issue or not. And they also have the ability to help people understand better. I’ll give you an example, as I’m looking at that last video (Turning the Corner), there’s fundamental shift in understanding going on… looking at the long shot of the tower combined with the voice-over, it occurred to me that it’s not just connecting the school – and for years we’ve been talking about not just connecting the schools but also making links with the band office, I mean that talk was always there – but, it was the picture that really said to me, ‘holy shit’ anybody can get access. And I’m not really sure how to explain that, because it’s not like I didn’t know that by running a wire from the school, you could connect the band office or the health clinic. So as a result, we’re now talking about connecting whole communities when we bring in Schoolnet and the program itself, as of last week reports to Broadband, because of this video.

Federal Program Director
Industry Canada

The collective approach to production -having community members themselves involved in the interviews and video capture- strengthened this sense of credibility. Policy makers were told about this approach to production and as a result, they understood that the videos were not the outcome of one person’s (a director or producer) interpretation and manipulation of the media.

It’s incredibly important to gather local perspectives in a country as vast as Canada. Consultation of this nature leads to stability. It gives communities a say in the way policy will be rolled out as opposed to the “dump and run approach which we now know simply doesn’t work. The video allows these remote Aboriginal communities to engage in a systematic process of consultation without having to live in the world of the bureaucrat or the politician.

Senior Policy Officer
Industry Canada

Similarly, policy makers understood the bias that government representatives could bring to the interpretation of remote Aboriginal communities. The knowledge that the videos
were from and of the communities seemed to mitigate these effects by bringing distant voices and perspectives into the policy dialogue.

When a bureaucrat visits an Aboriginal community they come with their own pre-conceived notions and ideas and often, because they don’t stay very long or they only see the surface, the broken down trucks all over the place, they don’t get the whole story. What these videos allow the communities to do is construct the image that they see of themselves and, in a way it’s actually much more honest.

Federal Program Officer
Industry Canada

The influence that context brings to the policy decision making process was observed to be most effective—in terms of producing meaningful dialogue— at senior levels the government structure.

At the senior levels, the higher up you go, the more focused and targeted it has to be in terms of messaging. The messaging was very useful in contextualizing it as well as providing key numeric data in the form of bullets to reinforce the human story. That targeted focus really speaks to senior levels of government. .. *Turning the Corner* has brought a greater level of awareness about what the broadband program has meant to Aboriginal communities. And the challenge of measuring impact has been shown in that there it has already touched, significantly, the lives of those people but we still can’t measure it.

Manager and Research Analyst
Industry Canada

Context was also revealed to play a role on a much more fundamental level. The videos humanized people and conditions in way that technocratic policy reports fall short. The ability to see and hear people who are seldom seen or heard from allowed remote Aboriginal communities to express their concerns in the policy arena. With respect to senior policy makers who seldom have access to the remote Aboriginal communities that they serve, the impact of video can be significant.

The big difference between the video and a report is that we’re getting the reality; we’re getting the stories from the
communities themselves. It’s them telling us how broadband and skills development is changing their own lives. With the video we can see the actual people, it’s coming from their own mouths, and that’s what helps sell it, that’s the quality of it. That’s the measure and how we use these videos as a measuring tool or an indicator of how this is benefiting the communities. Who better to convince the rest of Canada’s Aboriginal peoples that this is the best thing to do than their own people. They’re not going to trust us. They welcome us into their communities but is the trust there? No.

Federal Program Officer
Industry Canada

Whereas initial videos were produced in the service of the Smart Communities program evaluation and subsequent productions focused on education and message building, it was not until later in the research that research partners began to see the potential of video to influence policy makers. This occurred because of the feedback and demand for more videos from the policy makers themselves who had identified a dearth of information about ICT policy impacts in remote Aboriginal communities. Ultimately the power of video to influence the policy making process depended on accessing senior policy makers who understood, and were in the position to argue for, ICT access as a basic infrastructural duty of the federal government that should be applied uniformly to all Canadians.

It’s their faces, it’s their hearts, it’s their spirit that’s deep inside them that you need to actually see and hear. These people are crying out for help, they want the same basic services that rest of Canada takes for granted. And why don’t they have them. It’s all we’re really talking about here. They just want to be treated like the rest of Canada. And I believe it’s because the rest of Canada is not aware of the reality of these remote Aboriginal communities. These videos bring that reality to people who wouldn’t otherwise have a clue about those realities. You can’t do that on paper because the numbers are not available. How do you measure the social impact of what’s happening in the communities with Broadband right now. You can’t measure it
until you see their faces and the words that are coming out of their mouths, visually. You need to see it visually. You need to look at these people and let them speak and let them tell their story. That’s what changes minds.

Senior Program Officer
Industry Canada

_Influence_

The question of the influence of the videos on policy makers is a question of proof. Did policy makers believe that the videos made a difference in the way policy was developed regarding ICT infrastructure in remote Aboriginal communities? On an interpersonal level the data suggests that people were sufficiently moved by the videos to motivate action within the bureaucracy. The following comment speaks to the impact of video as a medium to inform the policy making process by virtue of the medium’s accessibility.

The video was an ‘awakening’. Bureaucrats have so much information coming at us, a lot of which is very impressive but you forget. If you’re seeing it on a video, it stays in your subconscious longer. It may be that these videos and images are touching you and that’s significant. I mean, I read significant documents all the time but it goes out of my mind as I read the next significant thing, I keep shifting several times a day… and I think the video has much more lasting power. The video in my mind has more lasting impact than a report. Maybe it’s the concentration factor as well… It’ll take me three hours to make my way through a fifty page report… but a video can take you through the concept in fifteen minutes and add a human dimension that the report cannot.

Federal Program Director
Industry Canada

In terms of video’s utility as a tool to facilitate the measurement of policy impacts the following statement clearly indicates that bringing the voices of remote Aboriginal
peoples into the policy dialogue plays an important role in the absence of reliable statistical data.

Turning the Corner has brought a greater level of awareness about what the broadband program has meant to Aboriginal communities. And the challenge of measuring impact has been shown in that there it has already touched, significantly, the lives of those people but we still can’t measure it.

Program Manager, Industry Canada

In addition to being screened for federal bureaucrats, the videos were also shown to senior portfolio politicians. Feedback indicated that video could influence these senior decision makers thereby helping to establish policy directives beyond the technocratic level.

A lot of the senior bureaucrats don’t have a feel for what the hell is actually going on. It’s the politicians that are making things happen, as opposed to the bureaucrats, which is the way it should be. If you left it in the hands of the bureaucrats to make decisions, then you’d never get anywhere because there is too much risk in taking the lead. So your video has, I know, changed minds, at the political level… Our Program is set to sunset in March 2006. There’s no fucking way it’s going to sunset. That’s because of the interest and positive feedback that has been generated at the political level and from the Aboriginal communities in the form of these videos and other materials.

Senior Program Officer, Industry Canada

More specifically, this feedback had implications for basic assumptions about the way policy is made.

The base of most of the little policy decisions are based on some sort of technocratic advice and numbers. But the biggest and most important ones are definitely more responsive to circumstances and the political environment and the air and the colour of the sky… As soon as the story is told about how one community succeeded, by the community, to the policy maker, I
believe the technocrats will realize that they made the right decision.

Senior Program Specialist
International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Contrary to the literature (Brooks, 1997; Pal, 1987) it would seem that senior policy decision making frequently circumvents the bureaucracy/technocracy when it comes to forming objectives. In this case, it becomes the task of the bureaucracy/technocracy to implement these objectives through various forms of analysis and program development.

Video allows you to feel more connected to these people… it feels like you know them. And policy-making and the decisions surrounding it, at all levels, is about relationships and trust… Somebody, at some point, has to come up with the numbers for any policy initiative. The thing is that numbers are value driven and can be used to make pretty much any case you want. The power of these videos is changing the key minds that make the high-level decisions, before numbers are even factored in. The video helps make the value decision in the first place.

Policy Analyst
Industry Canada

The way that video was used to affect policy change is recalls the discussion around Röling’s facilitative platform processes (FPP). Feedback indicates that community based approaches to communication for development can work in a Canadian federal policy development model despite the fact that this is an unconventional approach.

It’s very difficult to bring policy makers, who always have choices between soft decisions and hard decisions; the hard decision is always made on evidence and numbers. Making decisions of, what I call touchy feely info, is an uphill battle. The testimonials are key to determining if something is important, but not how the investment will be rolled out. It helps to frame the decision making information and help formulate a vision and develop indicators… it’s a macro tool. In a typical policy making case, you do the following: 1) do an analysis; 2) make your policy decision and ; 3) you use communications to enhance your key messages and; 4) you develop your product. In this particular case, because of the lack of hard evidence and data, we ended up doing a communication tool to bring to the attention of people the importance of the case or the potential of the case in the keys
areas of interest to them like health, education, economic development. Now, has it crystallized opinions or has it influenced people’s opinions or helped them make the proper linkages that these are important factors to consider? Yes. But it’s not a conventional use of communications. We went backwards, which is certainly not the traditional approach to communication tools in policy. Typically we use media to communicate that a policy decision has been made and how it will work; maybe not backwards but a new way.

Senior Advisor, Privy Council Office
Government of Canada

One of the principle drawbacks of video also seems to be one its strengths. Despite its limitations in terms of delivering comprehensive, complex and nuanced information in favour of story based evidence it may help minimize, erroneous or politicized interpretations by ensuring that the videos have been produced in collaboration with the policy subjects. In short, there can be little question about credibility when the message is presented honestly and openly.

The video format, especially when done in participation with the communities is a very effective way of escorting data to the people who make the big decisions. A report can be written a number of different ways and interpreted in just as many ways. The video ensures that the local message is interpreted correctly because it is their voice and their stories. This technology, the way you are applying it, is made in heaven for us. It is a 21st century mode of creating capacity.

Senior Policy Officer
Assembly of First Nations

In addition to influencing senior policy makers, the videos were also used to create a critical mass of support for renewed ICT infrastructure in remote Aboriginal communities across federal departments

The reason I use the videos is that it gets the message out to other federal departments. The message that the video sends to them is that there are communities already out there doing it and with your help we can expand it. Whether it’s the delivery of justice
services, social services, health services whatever, the
government needs to believe that it will work and what better
way to illustrate that with these real life stories. Hearing it from
the people themselves wins over their hearts and minds and it
helps them make the decisions that they need to make.
Senior Program Officer
Industry Canada

Beyond the realm of Canadian policy, the videos were used to influence other Aboriginal
communities nationally and internationally. It was beyond the scope of this study to
measure the impact of these changes but some interview respondents did provide an
indication of this potential.

In my experience in dealing with Aboriginal communities, never
has ICT infrastructure been a priority. These are places with such
fundamental issues to deal with like clean water, youth crises,
health care, and economic development. What the videos did was
show other communities how ICTs can help remediate some of
these heavier issues. In that sense, I think they’ve been, and
continue to be, very successful. Not only, nationally, but
internationally, the media has been used in other countries to
show indigenous communities what can be done and how it was
done.
National Program Manager
Health Canada

The potential of participatory video to link the human aspect of policy needs with the
people who determine how that policy will be shaped and implemented was perhaps the
most significant ‘proof’ of the influence of this tool.

This video has changed criteria for decision-making. It’s not just
our staff here but when I show it to other departments, I know
there is a change. I can see it in their eyes and the way they talk
about the importance of connectivity in Aboriginal communities
afterward. It finally clicks. They understand. The work that I do
with PCO (Privy Council Office), with first nation ministers,
nine federal departments and six Aboriginal organizations…once
they see the videos and then sit back and actually understand
why it’s important. I’ve seen it happen. Stories coming from real
people not numbers. We don’t have the numbers but we know
that it’s benefiting them so this tool has been invaluable… When
people see that video, and I watch their faces… you can believe that this will change agendas. It’s turning on a light. These senior bureaucrats don’t see the reality of even places like Sioux Lookout which isn’t even a remote community. I’ve had 26 years of experience in the government and 12 years working on cross departmental partnerships and I can tell you that this is changing policy.

Senior Program Officer
Industry Canada

The influence of video was not only manifested through content but through participant engagement in the process itself. Again, the process of buy-in proved integral and marked a turning point in the way that policy makers perceived video.

Given the human dimension and the way that the tool was used, at the politician and policy-maker level, there is a new understanding, by those who’ve seen it, and more so by those who’ve participated in the video… there has been a critical, event – turning point in how they can relate to video as an enabler of change for health care and education and how this tool can be used to advance the agenda… I think that’s the merit of this tool… I can tell you that in December 2005, there will be a major announcement around broadband funding in remote Aboriginal communities. That announcement can be directly linked to the video and it’s effectiveness in changing a handful of minds at a crucial time. That’s a fact.

Senior Advisor, Privy Council Office
Government of Canada

Informing

An unexpected use of the video materials was their instrumental application to educate and inform mid-level bureaucrats and federal staff about conditions on remote Aboriginal communities. By witnessing the impacts ICT were having, particularly in the service of health care and education, federal employees were able to connect their work to actual human beings and places that they would likely never see first hand.

Until I showed this video to my own staff here, they didn’t understand why they were doing what they were doing in any
meaningful way. The video brought the humanity and the need for connectivity right to their desks here in Ottawa. Not everybody has the opportunity of going to Sioux Lookout. Video could be used as a tool to educate staff about the realities of remote Aboriginal communities. Realistically, you’re never going to be able to ship people from Ottawa in large numbers up to remote Aboriginal communities to get a first hand experience of what that reality is like. That type of tool could be very useful as a program is developed and as people are examining a program or policy that is going to have an impact on remote Aboriginal communities…

Senior Program Officer
Industry Canada

In addition to serving its intended purpose as a communication tool in the service of policy development, video was also being used to compensate for a lack of communication with other Aboriginal communities.

These videos also have the potential to show other Aboriginal communities what some Aboriginal communities are doing. It’s a useful communication tool for other Aboriginal communities are doing with technology.

Senior Program Officer
Industry Canada

The videos also served to inform other Aboriginal communities about the value of ICTs and community based strategies for their implementation.

These tools can be used to share stories of success from one Aboriginal community to another. They can then build a common vision, around these tools, to move toward self-directed change in the future. That’s what a video like this can do for Aboriginal people… more so than for federal policy makers. It serves as a galvanization of the vision.

Federal Program Director
Industry Canada

ICT policy in Northwestern Ontario is not the sole responsibility of any one federal department. Because of the lack of any single advocate-department bureaucrats face the challenge of generalizing their message. An additional unexpected application was using video materials to influence policy-makers cross-departmentally.
These videos, especially the most recent one, help me because I’m responsible for developing partnerships across all levels. So my job is to bring programs and first nations together. Not only do these videos raise awareness among my colleagues, but across all Federal and Provincial levels. It gives them a picture of the reality our people are facing. I’m an Aboriginal person myself so I see both sides of the coin. Aboriginal communities across Canada need to understand the benefit of Broadband and ICT skills and development training are going to do for them socially and economically. Because most of these people don’t see the picture yet. What the video is doing is to help them see and realize those benefits. My job of working with ADMs and DGs… when we show them this video it helps us get buy-in from every Federal department. The video tells the story of social, economic, health impacts that everyone can understand. That’s absolutely necessary to have a medium like this to get cross-departmental cooperation at the most senior levels.

Senior Program Officer
Industry Canada

The Role of Qualitative Data

The role of qualitative data in the policy making process underpins the very assumptions of this research. Video was initially used in the Smart Communities evaluation to supplement participant feedback. The way that video was used in this study was largely to relay qualitative experiences between cultures. However, with the production of Turning the Corner, the value of integrating of supportive quantitative data was realized.

Where there is a lack of quantitative data, you need new tools to show or demonstrate your case. Video testimonials are more powerful than traditional written testimonials. In a written testimonial you don’t see or hear the person, you don’t get the context and it’s very hard to visualize who’s saying what. That’s the beauty of the video, is that it contextualizes the person the, the area, and you can use it to give added dimensions to a testimonial that can’t be contained in a written network… It’s a matter of changing the whole mindset to have a different tool applied to the evaluation toolbox in the federal government. I think if people understand the need for tools to evaluate within the context of a different culture they will accept these tools. Just
because oral tradition is stronger in these cultures and we can use new tools it doesn’t preclude collecting data where we can. And that information will always be needed, but to have an additional tool to provide a different way… getting it accepted as a legitimate tool is the challenge. With any type of change there are always those visionaries that will adopt it early on, and others, set in their ways, that require more persuasion.

Federal Program Manager,
Industry Canada

Respondent feedback also indicated that there is a potential to use qualitative, story-based communication approaches like these videos to help shape policy objectives early in the development process. This seemed especially true in situations, similar to the KO experience, where there is lack of quantitative data to accurately assess certain types of impacts that are excluded in conventional evaluation approaches.

The difference between qualitative and quantitative is that when you’re starting off with initiatives, often you don’t have the numbers, which are often very hard to come by so what we use is stories… Quite often the numbers resonate more if there’s a human story to go along with it… it’s difficult often to go with just the numbers… a document does inform you but quite often you don’t have the numbers until you’re well into the program, so we need to fill that gap… My experience has been that you don’t need a whole bunch of numbers… you need some but you need a method to capture the other information… quite often, it’s only the big, roll-out numbers that are important.

Federal Program Director
Industry Canada

The desire to have this type of qualitative data spoke to a frustration on the part of policy makers to act on what they knew was needed but which had not been captured by more conventional approaches to policy making.

We all support the ideas of intangibles. It’s the intangibles that really reflect how the program has hit the ground. The videos are a valuable tool for that.

Senior Program Specialist
International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
In the absence of quantitative data, videos served as a vehicle for the delivery of messages that told the story as it was unfolding.

Data is extremely important to us. But because we’re dealing with the internet and connectivity we need to have the programs in place for some time before we can begin to measure indicators in remote First Nations. And many of the indicators don’t even exist yet. This is all new and what we need to get across to the federal government and the general public, is that we need time to measure these programs and services and what broadband is doing for Aboriginal communities. So we have to get the message across somehow… they want numbers and we don’t have them to give. The qualitative always outweighs the numbers in dealing with these programs. Measurements are measurements and they can be interpreted differently.

Senior Program Officer
Industry Canada

Ultimately, qualitative data is compiled in order to communicate messages that may otherwise defy quantification. The feedback suggests that the way these messages get communicated to senior policy makers can affect the ways policies are developed.

It’s really important that people in Ottawa travel to these communities to see for themselves what’s actually going on. But they don’t. In the video I found the clips helped, and I’m a visual person, combined with facts had a tremendous impact. There are so many issues that simply cannot be addressed quantitatively. Its one thing to measure the cost of flights and wage hours lost due to medical travel, but how do you measure the human impact that it has on an elder, or a family or a community. These stories need to be shared in a different way. And just because they don’t have an economic factor, doesn’t mean that they shouldn’t be considered in program development.

Federal Program Manager,
Industry Canada

Organizing Structure

This research set out to understand the potential of video as a communication tool in the service of interactive policy development. It quickly emerged that, in addition to being a
way to tell a message, video served another important function: it brought people


together. Videos create events where people collectively view a collectively produced

message. The fact that people are in the same room immediately afterward is significant

in that the message is equally fresh in the viewer’s mind and they are present to discuss

the issues raised in the video.

We use them as a promotion vehicle as well. You bring other

people in to discuss the issues as well. In the case of video, it

seems we’ve gone beyond the norm in terms of promoting it… I
can’t put my finger on it, but video communicates things
differently… I’m not sure how you capture that, but they become
events… and I talk about an event. We had a minister coming in
to the office. Well we’ve never had the minister coming in here
for anything… ever… or any other Minister dropping in, ever.
So there’s that video being of such significance, policy wise, that
we’ve got Ministers coming in who are interested in it. We’ve

got Privy Council Office now who’s interested in having a
screening. The video can create an event, where things happen,
that cannot be created through paper alone.

Federal Program Director
Industry Canada

A particularly frank respondent noted the power of video based media to bring senior

policy makers and politicians into the discussion.

The fact that Minister (Comuzzi) came on his own, then
following that he sends his chief of staff. That scared the shit of
the senior bureaucrats. I mean they were impressed but they were
also frightened. They were asking themselves how these people
from Northern Ontario managed to get this Minister in here.
That’s never fucken happened here. Never, in the twelve years
that this program’s been running that was the first time the
politician has been in our office. Just the fact that they’re starting
to prepare this memorandum to cabinet is a result of the Minister
coming and the Minister came because of the video and its
message.

Senior Program Officer
Industry Canada
Equally candid was the understanding that video is a novel way of presenting information. The feedback suggests that the dynamic and interesting nature of the medium may serve to generate interest simply because of its accessibility and the lack of effort required to engage it.

These organizing events seem to function to circumvent certain time consuming bureaucratic processes. Furthermore, their utility as supplements to formal presentations was observed. It’s an unbelievable amount of work to get a memorandum to cabinet and it’s a very, very complex process. The video can be used to convince people faster as a supplement to the presentation.

Federal Program Director
Industry Canada

The importance of screening videos to groups as opposed to disseminating them through the streaming video or on DVDs made a difference to its overall impact.

For the video to be most effective, I find that it has to be screened in an event. Some sort of facilitation is necessary to really get people to understand. I know the video was screened to the Aboriginal Round Table at the request of a Privy Council Office representative.

Policy Analyst
Industry Canada

Timing and proper facilitation of the video event was identified as being imperative to its successful application in the policy arena. Without an advocate, individual or agency, pushing the agenda, it is unlikely these videos would have had the impact that they did.

The video has the power to bring people together to help build a common vision. Any communication product has a purpose. This particular one had a crucial role at a particular point in time and I think it served it’s intended purpose to steer policy by crystallizing a message to some very key players. That’s what it did.

Senior Advisor
Privy Council Office
Proper selection of audience members, not only individuals, but also understanding the organizational relationships between those present had implications for the dialogue that followed.

The goal is to get it in the right hands at the right time and being there to answer further questions. That’s what’s great about having a video. That’s how it impacted us at that meeting with the Minister. It’s important to put the video on an agenda because you can’t be sure that they’re going to play it if you hand them a DVD.

Federal Program Manager, Industry Canada

Objective 5

Investigate how participatory video changes relationships between remote Aboriginal communities and urban policy makers.

This objective seeks to characterize the change in relationships that resulted from the research data gathered in support of Objective Three and Objective Four. The evidence in support of these changes is based on participant observation reporting combined with an examination of this data.

First, community stakeholders who engaged in the PV process and who regularly screened the videos were able to gain a better understanding of their potential role in the planning process. By seeing themselves and fellow community members speaking about their concerns in the same format and alongside (through editing) policy makers translated into a perceived legitimacy; a belief that their voices were being heard and
being considered. Evidence of this is the continued (post-research) production of videos addressing remote Aboriginal policy needs by KO and K-Net.

Second, policy makers gained a more contextualized understanding of remote Aboriginal communities and the issues that concern them. Videos give voice and humanize a segment of the Canadian constituency that is rarely seen or heard from. From the perspective of the federal bureaucrat, the video format, in and of itself, also added legitimacy and power to these voices. Video created a communication conduit between remote Aboriginal communities and federal policy makers that had not previously existed. Furthermore, the speed and efficiency with which these messages can be produced marks a significant departure from the Fogo Process and later PV efforts by shrinking space and time.

Third, the demystification of both stakeholder groups marked a significant change in their relationship. Video humanized what had previously been the purview of technocratic reporting. Policymakers were seeing real people in real settings telling them what they needed from them. In turn, community members were able to see and hear real people, not disembodied authority figures, and felt more comfortable expressing themselves.

Summary

Describing a change in relationships between groups requires an understanding of the key elements that define perceptions of each other and the processes set forth in the research. This chapter laid out the evidence, gathered from the field, in support of the research objectives and key themes that emerged from this evidence described. The next
chapter, *Analysis and Interpretation* will synthesize this data and link it to the literature presented in chapter two, *Literature Review*.

Figure 5.1 summarizes the findings described in a practical context. It provides a basic template for other researchers and practitioners to follow and build upon. This summary is divided into three sections; (1) the pre-production phase or before the participatory video project field work begins wherein researchers attempt to identify conditions and individuals that will help the process in the following stages; (2) the production phase which is comprised of the actual field work and; (3) post production when the videos are engaged to serve their intended purpose which in the case of this research, was to influence the policy making process. The diagram is a linear representation of the processes developed in this dissertation. The contents therein should be understood according to the reflexive approach laid out throughout this research. Different conditions may result in a different tailoring of this approach.
Figure 5.1: Process for Conducting Participatory Video based on Current Findings

**Phase One**

Identify local **leadership** and **policy allies** and engage them in a **collaborative** effort to identify the **goals** of the project.

Determine the **communication climate** in the communities and the governing structure (policy arena) where you will be working; are they receptive to **qualitative data**; do they have a **contextual** understanding of the communities?

**Phase Two**

Develop a strategy to **integrate** into the community based on **local conditions**; build **trust**; **demystify** the process.

Continue to engage **leadership** in the production processes to facilitate **buy-in**.

Ensure **training** and **technology** is **accessible** and flexible to local needs and norms; produce videos about **local issues**.

**Screen** all videos to the larger community; build in a **feedback loop** to **integrate** local ideas and opinions.

**Phase Three**

Ensure videos provide **context** for information that was previously unavailable.

**Disseminate** videos with the intent of building a **critical mass** of on-side policy-makers.

Use the videos, in **collaboration** with policy allies, to hold **organizing events**.

Gather **feedback** to determine what works in terms of generating **influence, informing, contextualizing**.

Understand the local policy cultures attitudes and steer productions accordingly; how is **qualitative data** perceived?
CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This purpose of this chapter is to draw patterns and analyses from the research according to their implications for the literature from Chapter Two. The literature is, once again, conceptualized here in order to help locate the discussion. The current research is a novel application of the Fogo Process which, in this case, uses it as a tool for communication for development that uses advances in technology and lessons from participatory video by introducing a training component and utilizing advances in technology to influence policy development in the context of remote Aboriginal communities.

Figure 6.1: Relationships between Literatures
**Objective 1**

*Determine the conditions under which Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), in particular video can be used to develop capacity in Aboriginal communities.*

The literature informing objective one is drawn from the fields of participatory video and communication for development. White (2003), building on the trend away from top-down approaches to participatory development identifies nine general conditions necessary for a project to succeed that emphasize the need for local capacity building. These conditions describe human, institutional and procedural elements necessary for participatory video to work including consideration of local culture, community champions, appropriate training, and long term sustainability of projects and their outcomes.

Shaw (1997) describes the need for a non-hierarchical approach to training that demystifies the technology and production process by encouraging collaboration and hands-on learning at the onset of workshops. This echoes Freire’s (1972) call for praxis, “action that is informed and linked to values” that signaled an ongoing change in the field of communication for development toward the integration of local voices into development planning. Rogers (2005) describes the critical work of Childers with the United Nations as well as Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada’s (1998) work on the functions of communication for development which also emphasized the importance of local input into the content and planning of communication strategies as fundamental aspects of capacity building. The literature supported the analysis of the data gathered from the fieldwork and from interviews.
Leadership

Leadership, both institutionally and at the local level meant that the research could go forward, both in terms of funding and participation from community members and policy makers. The presence of and participation by senior policy-makers in the PV process and their facilitation in the videos’ dissemination meant that it was taken seriously, or at least treated seriously, by other bureaucrats and even politicians. Leadership tended to be the privy of those who “get it”. In other words, some degree of understanding the power of the medium to communicate combined with a commitment to community-based policy planning and a personal drive to improve conditions in remote Aboriginal communities.

At the community level, leadership was most often taken on by a ‘local champion’ as opposed to a designated person of authority such as a chief or band council member. The local champion was usually technically sophisticated (usually as a result of being employed in the service of ICT implementation), an active, driven member of their community and had some interest in media or video.

Perhaps the single most important aspect of leadership was seen at the mid-organizational level. K-Net, KO’s Internet Service Provider has been mandated into the role of a default civil service with respect to all things ICT related. In particular, they played a key role in the development and delivery of telehealth and KiHS. The presence of a small group of visionary, highly driven group of people who understood the need to provide contextualized, locally produced messages to policy-makers facilitated this research and its outcomes immeasurably.
Training

The initial strategy toward the community training workshops was a combination of theory and applied learning. Participants responded more enthusiastically to applied modes of learning so the workshops were routinely modified in favour of hands-on learning. Facilitative learning approaches were also quickly adopted with little or no emphasis on the role of the ‘expert’. Rather than explain the function, purpose and limitations of the technology before handing it over to the participants, they were given the equipment almost immediately after a brief introduction. This approach helped demystify the technology and it was more engaging.

Video production is a collaborative process. Participants were given the opportunity, in turn, to learn every aspect of production. Again, this approach circumvented the delineation of roles which, in the traditional production approach, are inherently hierarchical: the sound technician defers to the camera operator who in turn defers to the line producer who in turn defers to the director who is ultimately responsible to the executive producer. This approach, in addition to being more practical in sparsely populated communities where technical expertise was non-existent, contributed to the collective vision of the videos that were eventually produced.

Workshops were initially a two day event in which participants were given a crash course in production culminating in shooting and editing a video about the community. This approach quickly developed into having the participants engaged in production for up to a week producing the video testimonials for the Smart Communities evaluation in addition to a community video.
Training workshops were open to all interested community members. However, participation levels varied considerably. This, I assert, was due to a combination of local leadership and the nature of the way the community was informed about the workshops.

Integration

The way that the researcher or PV facilitator was integrated in the community had a profound determining factor on the success of PV within a given community. Remote Aboriginal communities are isolated and frequently xenophobic in their perception of so-called ‘outside experts’. Under the leadership of KO and K-Net, a community liaison escorted me into three of the communities. When he was not available, I was escorted by a KO or K-Net employee. The liaison was instrumental in helping explain my purpose and objectives, frequently in the native language.

Trust

Trust, according to Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) represents perhaps the single most important factor defining the relationship between Aboriginal communities and outsiders such as researchers and government representatives. Trust was recurrent theme in the feedback data as well as in the literature. Two aspects of trust emerged from the research as a significant element underlying the implementation of PV.

Trust between the Aboriginal community research participants and the PV facilitator and in this case the researcher was integral. Trust ensured that community members would participate openly in training workshops and that interviewees believed that their words would not be misconstrued or misused. At the workshop level, trust was
gained through an open, non-judgmental approach to learning and production processes. By taking the time to produce a community-based video, participants were not only able to see the fruits of their labour but they saw that the medium could be used to communicate a local message in a way that could be universally understood.

Interviewees participated more openly and their responses were more comprehensive when the purpose and eventual application of the videos were explained to them. Mistrust is perhaps the single most defining characteristic of the relationships between remote Aboriginal communities and outside experts or federal representatives. Trust was strengthened when people began to see themselves in the videos and they understood that the PV process was being used to further their communities’ interests. The more they saw of the videos, the more open subsequent interviews tended to be. Furthermore, exposure, through video, to policy-makers who were committed to improving conditions in remote Aboriginal communities and were willing to engage in the PV process along with community members demystified their role and humanized them. Feedback indicates that continued, iterative exposure through video results, not necessarily in trust, but less mistrust of the federal bureaucrat’s intentions.

**Objective 2**

*Identify the processes that Aboriginal communities develop and engage in order to produce communication materials to build capacity.*

The lessons from Fogo (Huber, 1999) identified the need for meaningful exchange of information, not only between policy maker and citizens but between
communication facilitators and their clients. What Snowden (1984) defined as exchange learning – lateral communication at the local level that leads to learning – is further supported by Röling’s (1993) facilitative platform processes and Habermas’ typology of knowledge (Purcell, 2002) which peaks at emancipatory learning. The Fogo Process pioneered the practice of community access to the editing process through consultation and repeated screening of films to the communities being represented.

The literature indicates that, fundamentally, processes that lead to increased local capacity are those that escort participants through a form of transformation in understanding or what Freire (1972) referred to as conscientization. These processes served to change the way research participants thought about themselves, the policy process and their ability to act effectively within it. Participant observation reporting from the field reinforces the validity of these processes for building local capacity.

**Screenings**

Community screenings of the videos generated acceptance of the PV process. Seeing their fellow community members on the television screen combined with the knowledge that it was community members (mostly youth) who had shot the videos was a key determinant of the success of PV. The videos instilled pride in two ways. First, seeing themselves, their communities and their environment instilled a collective self-pride. This is inferred from the high frequency with which community members came forth after the screening to make suggestions on how the video could have been better – particularly when they thought the video had not captured something accurately. They also suggested future local video projects on topics of concern to the community. Second,
the simple fact that it was local youth who had produced the videos—a message in the television format—was a great source of pride and a significant addition to the Fogo Process. Local pride is a significant element in determining PV conditions because it contributed to the ongoing production of other videos by workshop participants.

*Buy-In*

Röling’s (1994) three functions of communication described in *Chapter Two: Literature Review* help us to frame this shift in how initial perceptions of video are seen as a product with their primary functions being the one-way dissemination of information. As they begin to witness the integration of local voices in a collaborative production, video becomes a more complex tool characterized by Röling’s’ facilitative platform processes.

Buy-in refers to the acceptance of the PV processes predicated by a transformative understanding of its potential based on the first hand witnessing of its impacts. Buy-in was achieved at the community participant level through the applied nature of the training which allowed people to understand, on a tactile level, how the process worked. Locally, exposure to the videos in which interviewees and the communities were featured promoted excitement around future applications. This excitement combined with feedback from policy makers led to a broader acceptance of the use of video as a way to communicate policy related needs. Non-policy videos that focused on traditional practices or had an education purpose also fostered acceptance, particularly since they were being produced locally and promoted a local perspective.
Similarly, participants from the policy arena initially understood that their interviews would be used in the production of a typical documentary video. Repeated exposure to the videos, particularly their use as an organizing structure or event, led policy makers to see the PV process as potentially more meaningful than a subjective documentary product.

Again, as in the previously described field of trust, it was buy-in at the mid-organizational level that had the most significant impact. Individuals whose positions necessitate bridging the policy arena and communities’ needs already understood the importance of transactional communication – wherein the sender and receiver of the message interact through video to arrive at a common understanding of problems and solution. These individuals knew that certain individuals within the federal government were willing and able to affect change through policy and they understood the need within the policy making structure for communication materials that would help them convince others to build capacity for change. Furthermore, buy-in by these mid-level organization representatives helped ensure a degree of acceptance and trust for the PV work at the community level.

**Collaboration**

Collaboration among individuals was another key determinant of the success or failure of PV for policy. Collaboration between individuals from different organizations based on a similar or co-dependent mandate helped foster a culture of acceptance for PV.
At the community level, collaboration, a foundational principle of PV itself, helped the learning process in the workshops as well as in the production of collective messages about the policy related needs and conditions in the communities.

**Objective 3**

_Determine how access to and control of ICTs and new media tools change the self-perception of remote Aboriginal communities._

Self-perception, the way we see ourselves and understand our place in the world, is a difficult concept to chart. It exists on many levels and is influenced by a multitude of factors. Turkle’s (1995) work on the impact of ICTs on the individual’s self perception reveals the emergence of the ‘cyber self’ characterized by the increasing ability of ICT users to portray themselves as they wish to be seen and not necessarily as they see themselves. This concept has implications for the way that video can be used in remote Aboriginal communities with respect to cultural identity.

According to McLuhan (1987) certain media and technologies, particularly those that serve to speed up the exchange of information, will fragment the natural tribal structure of human culture. Paradoxically, technologies that further increase the speed of this exchange can serve to facilitate a process he refers to as _retribalization_. The use of certain ICTs, such as video and the Internet, help shape identity by communicating a constructed image of the self, be it individual or collective, to others. When that message is received by similar groups or individuals and a process of exchange around similar, defining issues occurs it is a form of retribalization. This concept speaks to an innate human desire to be and share with others similar to ourselves.
In northwestern Ontario, inter community capacity and collective mobilization is a challenge where Aboriginal communities are separated by hundreds of kilometers of Boreal forest and muskeg. At the policy level, the similarities between communities seem clear; inadequate health care, poverty, educational needs, etc. Participatory video, in the context of this research, facilitated the development of a collective vision around these issues thereby spurring a form of retribalization through the development of a collective vision of how ICT policy could be modified to more appropriately address local needs.

The power of media representation to affect individual and collective self-perception is well documented in the literature. McLuhan’s (1988) concept of retribalization speaks to the fundamental need of humanity to seek familiarity and how technology is used to achieve this end in a tribally fragmented society. The implications for remote Aboriginal communities, particularly given the nature of their relocation at the hands of government are clear: video technology is allowing them to share challenges, common visions and communicate with one another.

Upon seeing themselves and their neighbors projected on screen, Fogo residents gained a broader perspective of what others thought and how they were being represented. (Richardson, 1999) Burnett (1991) suggests that seeing oneself through the lens of a camera allows the subject to see his or herself as others see them. Turkle (1995) writing about self-representation through ICTs, builds on this idea by asserting that communication technologies allow users to project to others a constructed image of themselves that may or may not be accurate.

Data gathered from the field also supports this objective. Aboriginal participants responded that seeing themselves and others like them engaged in similar
struggles in similar places changed the way that they thought about themselves simply by virtue of being captured and addressed through video production. Video representation essentially legitimized the challenges they faced and the ways they went about addressing them. This sense of ‘legitimization’ echoes McLuhan’s (1965) reference to the medium’s ability to overshadow the content being communicated therein. Furthermore, feedback suggests that visual media may have a particular resonance for Aboriginal culture which is steeped in a rich history of story telling.

The nature and content of the videos produced in the workshops was significant because of their impact on local acceptance of the medium and perception of its value for affecting change. Shaw (1997) identified eight types of videos produced as an outcome of a PV project: (1) group work applications; (2) bringing groups together; (3) information gathering and consultation; (4) celebrating achievements and oral history; (5) exploration and raising awareness; (6) developing group identity; (7) exploring an issue; (8) getting a message across. In the KO experience, the delineation of videos was less rigid. Rather they tended to fall into more than one category with overlapping goals.

The first groups of videos produced within the workshop setting and then screened to the communities, were activist in that they attempted to raise awareness, outside of the community, of problems facing the community. These videos tried to get a message across in the hopes of affecting change while simultaneously citing specific examples of the problem and ways that it could be improved. Essentially, the participants were engaging in community-based or bottom-up, problem solving in the policy arena.

The second group of videos focused on some aspect of the local culture that the participants wanted to make more widely known. In Keewaywin, a number of the
participants were also members of a music group and the group chose to produce a short documentary highlighting the local arts community. Discussions leading to this decision revealed a desire, on behalf of the community, to have their artistic talent showcased to the outside world. Specifically, they believed that there was talent in the communities that deserved a larger market or audience. Video, it was agreed, seemed to be an ideal way to communicate this message.

Community profile videos produced for an international ICT symposium expressed a clear desire to have these places portrayed in a positive light despite the presence of chronic social maladies and lack of infrastructure parity with the larger Canadian society. Much of the footage gathered for these videos was done independently of the PV facilitator’s presence in the community. Feedback indicated that local producers understood the importance of the medium to affect change by exposing conditions in their communities but they also felt a responsibility to the community to portray these places in a positive light. Consequently, elders were interviewed in long-narrative format and supporting footage highlighted the natural beauty of the surrounding environment and their interconnectedness with it. These productions differed considerably from those which I directly facilitated. They tended to be longer, slower and tailored to a local audience.

Videos produced subsequent to the field research are varied in style and approach and far too numerous to discuss at length here. For a listing and description please see Appendix Three: Outcomes of the Research. Briefly though, these videos bridge the policy-change objectives of the videos produced in the research phase with an educational component directed back at the communities. Telehealth expansion for
example, required that all 24 chiefs of the expanded network sign terms of agreement with Health Canada to secure funding and infrastructure. Locally produced videos were used to disseminate messages about the advantages and practical necessities of having telehealth in their communities.

Local culture and conditions and individual dynamics influenced the nature and subject of the videos that were produced in the community. The extent to which participants were related to band council members or other influential community members is not known. However, PV recordings indicate that they formed a substantial, likely a majority, of the workshop participants. It is likely that this composition of participants affected the energy and direction of the workshops and video productions. However, a more comprehensive recruitment strategy would likely have revealed community issues and inequities that were not explored.

**Objective 4**

_Determine how access and control of ICTs and new media tools change relationships between remote Aboriginal communities and policy makers._

The Fogo Process built communication linkages between federal and provincial policy makers and islanders that did not previously exist. (Burnett, 1991; Huber, 1999) The relationship between the communities of Fogo and policy makers changed because local voices were brought into the policy making process through film. The Fogo Process gave the islanders access to the production process—through public screening and
feedback- but it did not give them control over the medium. Film is a cumbersome and labour-intensive production process that relies heavily on specialized technical expertise.

The following three decades saw the evolution of participatory video coincide with the improvement and accessibility of video recording technologies. (Protz, 1991) Control and access of ICT, in particular video, by local, disenfranchised groups is an inherently democratic process provided that governing structures allow these voices to be heard and considered (White, 2003). Mutz (2003: 178) asserts that media such as video plays “a particularly important role in shaping political judgments” because of its ability to influence and change perceptions. It is this change in perceptions that lies at the heart of video’s ability to change relationships between remote Aboriginal communities and policy makers.

The data indicates that video based messaging conveys contextualized information to policy makers that expands their understanding of policy issues. This expanded understanding was derived from the input of local stakeholders in the communities through video. Respondents were able to articulate the power of video as its ability to humanize the message and tell a story in a way that reports could not.

Two conditions were identified as being integral to the acceptance of video into the policy process: the level of interactivity present at the various levels of government encountered throughout the research and; the extent to which institutional and individual partnerships fostered the exchange of information through video.

Interactive policy making refers to an approach to policy decision making that is inclusive of the policy subjects by emphasizing meaningful consultation, negotiation and exchange. (Korten, 1986; Woekurm, 2000) The level of interactivity is the degree to
which these factors were present in the policy making environment. Interactivity had an impact on the way that subsequent decisions based on the information, among other sources, that the video presented. However, that determination does not fall within the scope of this study. Rather, interactivity as a determinant of PV’s efficacy refers to the extent to which federal representatives considered the videos a valid source of data to inform policy making decisions. The data suggests that, to varying degrees, contextualized video messaging did make a difference to their understanding of the issues. This speaks directly to the policy making environment in which the interviewees finds themselves or the practical philosophical underpinnings that guide their own policy related decision-making.

The need for interagency partnerships is an extension of the previously identified condition, collaboration. The initial focus of the research was to determine the value of video as an influencing factor in the policy making process. Several videos were produced and led to the production of Turning the Corner in which Privy Council of Canada officials played an integral role in developing. Privy Council along with the PMO steer federal policy across departments. Just as the restructuring of funding for ICTs for Canada’s remote Aboriginal communities –the overriding message of Turning the Corner- required federal departments and agencies to work together to meet the larger policy initiatives established by Privy Council, so was their cooperation needed to ensure that the videos had participation from a broad range of federal representatives.
Objective 5

Explore how policy makers identify the significance of new media tools and products to change their relationship with remote Aboriginal communities.

Two key themes emerged that had implications for the way in which policy makers understood and either accepted, or did not accept, video documentation as a tool in the policy decision-making process: the role of qualitative data and the way that videos were presented to policy makers. The RAPID framework (ODI, 2006) was developed in order to better understand how evidence is used in policy in an international development context. It suggests that the policy making environment is less linear than conventional interpretations suggest, and thus is more open to external factors and influenced by informal linkages and relationships. Friedmann (1987) categorizes policy planning according to the degree to which local voices are incorporated into the process with social learning being the most suitable for the incorporation of participatory video as a form of stakeholder engagement. While the prevailing policy planning paradigm in Canada’s federal departments could not be classified as such, social learning did characterize the policy approach of key individuals therein.

Figure 6.2 places policy making approaches within the context of Röling’s communication functions. The results are telling. Social Reform and Radical Planning function on the same communicative plane despite the opposed philosophical underpinnings of their policy development approaches. As we move up the arc, past Policy Analysis and Social Mobilization, we see that Social Learning provides the most fertile ground for the use of facilitative communication around policy issues.
Qualitative Data

The policy making environment had implications for the way that qualitative data was considered. Quantitative data on the impacts of ICTs in remote Aboriginal communities was sparse and frequently non-existent. The provision of qualitative data beyond short term outcomes was equally difficult to obtain in the case of the Smart Communities evaluation. Video was used as a way of gathering qualitative data in an effort to provide the funding agency with a portrait of the impacts as perceived by the community members themselves.

The findings reveal little or no questioning of the value of qualitative data being presented in a video format. However there exists varying degrees of its acceptance, ranging from its wholesale acceptance as an effective tool for data gathering and policy
informing, to its perception as a way of providing a snap-shot of a situation for educational purposes.

Qualitative data did however, have different impacts at different levels of the bureaucratic-political structure. At the most senior levels including federally elected politicians and high ranking bureaucrats, video messaging served to change hearts and minds. It is at this level that video perhaps has the most policy related influence. Technocrats, the mid-level bureaucracy, are responsible for the details of policy development and implementation and there is no doubt that quantitative data and quantifiable qualitative data play an important role in effective policy implementation. So it comes as no surprise that their perception of video is relegated to a basic educational function. Senior policy makers on the other hand, while admittedly influenced by the quantitative must also be acutely aware of the public-political implications of their actions or inaction. Video, at this level then, seems to have more influence.

Video as an Organizing Structure

Interviewees repeatedly referred to the importance of group screenings of the videos as a way of promoting the ‘connectivity message’. The data indicated that videos play an important role as an organizing structure around which dialogue occurs and transactional communication can take place. The length and ease of access of the video format means that people can watch it together and enter into dialogue immediately afterward. By having representatives from different departments and agencies together, they can discuss their interpretation of the video’s message as opposed to focusing on their own organizational oriented agenda.
Witnessing these events first hand and comparing the interview of attendees as compared with interviewees who were not present but watched the videos in a closed environment revealed a heightened belief in the video’s ability to affect change and influence policy makers. When pressed for possible explanations, interviewees were less certain but they did indicate that a collective interpretation brought people together more quickly. Underlying this message were repeated statements testifying to the significance of community voices in the videos and the authentic feel of the video which, upon further questioning, they attributed to its ‘non-corporate style’. In essence, the videos communicated voices and images and to a lesser extent numbers. They were also keenly aware that the video was not any one person’s vision but rather a representation of a group of people who depended on the people present to make informed decisions about their communities’ future.

**Contributions of this Research to the Literature**

**The Fogo Process**

In the literature, the Fogo Process is described as a the first documented attempt to use visual media (film) as a way of bringing local messages to policy-makers and vice versa with the explicit intent of influencing the policy making process through better communication (Snowden, 1988; Burnett, 1991). However, the Fogo Process, because it used film, was heavily reliant on the expertise of producers and outside facilitators who helped produce the films and took them to policy makers then repeated the process and brought films back to the islanders. This lack of technical accessibility limited the extent
to which Islanders could collaborate and contribute to the messages being produced on
their behalf.

The current research affirms the validity of using video (film) to influence the
policy making process. Interview feedback indicated that the videos that were produced,
in particular *Turning the Corner*, did influence the policy decision-making process at
senior bureaucratic and political levels.

The current research goes on to build on the Fogo Process by utilizing digital
video production technologies, and Internet based dissemination methods such as
streaming video. These technological advances also allowed the video production process
to be more collaborative and allow for more local control of media technologies. This
was made possible by the ubiquity of the technology itself as well as the inclusion of a
training component during the field work.

Absent from the literature on the Fogo Process are descriptions of specific steps
or methodologies that the facilitators engaged in to produce the Fogo films. The current
research identifies procedures and principles by which videos are produced and can be
used to influence policy makers such as community-researcher integration, the
identification of local leadership, strategies for local training programs and building trust.
These findings are further supported when considered in the light of Röling’s (1993)
facilitative platform processes and Freire’s (1972) concept of conscientisization; both of
which support, in principle, the iterative approach to building local communication
strategies with and for the communities being served.

*Participatory Video*
Participatory video has been used in myriad development scenarios emphasizing the importance of the production process to develop local capacity wherein participants are frequently trained to use video and collaborate around issues to develop consensus and enable further mobilization. This emphasis on process, although not explicit in the literature, is I believe an indirect outcome of the technical limitations of analogue video tape and the lack of affordable dissemination methods available prior to the widespread availability of digital video and the Internet (Protz, 1991).

The current research has been described, in part, as participatory video throughout this dissertation. In fact, the current research builds on the lessons of participatory video. In particular, the training and production component of the research followed the principles of participatory video that emphasize participant collaboration, equity, lateral decision-making and galvanization around collectively identified issues. (White, 2003; Chavez et al., 2004; Bery, 2003) However, the current research goes a step further by integrating into participatory video, digital technologies and all their advantages of production and dissemination with a core principle of the Fogo Process: that the video itself has the power to influence decision-makers.

The literature has largely ignored prescriptive approaches to participatory video projects because of the wide variation of development environments. Participatory video practitioners are guided by a set of principles and can choose from a number of tools depending on the development circumstances in which they find themselves. (White, 2003; Shaw, 1997) The current research, operating within the context of remote Aboriginal communities, has identified a number of conditions and processes (buy-in, engagement of local leadership, community screenings) that could be used to guide
similar projects in the future. While traditional participatory video approaches tended to acquiesce to local conditions, the current research develops a more proactive approach to help foster ideal conditions from the beginning of a participatory video project. (Figure 5.1)

**Communication for Development**

The current research expands commonly held notions of how video media is produced and what purpose it serves. The difference between passive communication and active communication is the degree of exchange between listener and communicator. (O’Sullivan, 1983; MacKay, 1972; Shannon and Weaver, 1949) Like the difference between a documentary film and a participatory video (Huber, 1989) the extent to which local voices are integrated into the process and product determines the extent to which videos can be considered reasonable representations of local views around a subject.

The concept of buy-in, wherein participants’ understanding shifts by witnessing or going through the production process themselves, is a significant finding of this research. The ability to see video as a reflexive process as opposed to a static communication tool is fundamental to its continued application after the researcher/facilitator has moved on. This finding is supported by Habermas’ (1987) concept of emancipatory learning, wherein the learner develops a critical understanding, not only of the subject matter but his or her relationship to it as well.

The evolution of communication for development approaches is marked by a gradual shift away from prescriptive approaches toward the adoption of collaborative strategies that consider local conditions, knowledge and culture. The current research is based in these principles of locally developed communication strategies which are based
on the assumption that the more local people know about an issue, the better they will be able to facilitate its communication to similar groups and to decision makers. In the case of the Keewaytinook-Okimakanak communities, a production training component in the research was included specifically to foster this kind of bottom-up communication initiative.

Communication for development is a way of communicating issues of importance to disenfranchised groups and communities; but in the world of international development, the issues themselves continue to be identified by experts from government and NGOs. The change toward collaboration has been restricted to the development of communication strategies and not necessarily the content contained therein.

The current research developed local capacity to produce and disseminate locally tailored messages for change without the presence of an outside expert. Evidence of this lies in the production of additional issue-related videos by Keewaytinook-Okimakanak subsequent to the termination of the field research. (Appendix Three: Outcomes of the Research.) Furthermore, the need for culturally appropriate communication materials as cited in the literature (Fraser and Estrada-Restrepo, 1998; McBean, 1998) has implications for the current research; video was understood by research participants as an effective and appropriate method of communicating policy related needs.

**Video Technology**

The evolution of video media, from film to analogue video tape to digital video and streaming video represents a pillar of the current research. Without these technological advances most of the innovation that this dissertation describes would not have been possible without considerably more time, resources and funding. The ubiquity
and accessibility of digital video technology allowed me to extend the Fogo Process by adding a rapid training component as well as permitting a relatively inexpensive means of video dissemination via streaming video on the Internet, DVDs and CD-ROMs. The actual production process was also streamlined considerably with some videos being produced, edited and screened before the community in a matter of a few days.

Similarly, the implication of digital video for participatory video allowed me to go beyond conventional approaches that focused on process to produce media that was reasonably sophisticated and conveyed an effective message to the target audience of federal policy makers as described by Gumucio-Dagrón (2004).

The ongoing production of additional videos by Keewaytinook-Okimakanak (Appendix Three) both by individuals and at an organizational level (K-Net, Telehealth, KIHS), were unanticipated outcomes of the current research. This was made possible by partnering digital technologies with new strategies for participatory video production (White, 2003; Shaw, 1997). The production of videos that celebrate and explore local indigenous culture and traditions (Traditional Baby Powder, 2004; Traditional Burial Grounds, 2003) play an important role in the development of common cultural identity in geographically remote and sparse Aboriginal communities. This identity is grounded in issues of self perception as reflected through the global lens of the television (Ross, 2006) and computer screen (Turkle, 1995).

Access and control of media production that looks like and sounds like mass media also has implications for the self-perception of remote Aboriginal communities and, by extension, other marginalized groups who lack mainstream media representation (McLuhan, 1965; McLuhan, 1987). Self-perception, within the context of this research is
significant because it frames the way remote Aboriginal communities see themselves in the policy-making process. Historical and current marginalization, by government and mass media has combined to create a feeling of powerlessness in remote Aboriginal communities. Controlling their own self-image, reflected in the way they are perceived by policy makers, empowers them to begin participating in the policy making process; a type of access that mainstream Canadian groups take for granted.

**Policy Making**

The literature frequently attempts to define processes and procedures that governments engage in to formulate and implement policy in the technocratic tradition (Baxter-Moore, 1987; Pal, 1987). The policy making environment that I encountered in the course of this research was characterized by one key element that technocrats seldom acknowledge; the human element. Policy makers, be they mid-level bureaucrats, managers, directors or politicians, are human beings susceptible to influence from any number of externalities. Ultimately, this research was about the ability to convey locally developed messages through video to policy makers to influence their opinion about a policy related issue in the hopes that this would result in actual policy shifts. Policy makers can, and do, frequently act based on their personal knowledge of an issue as well as making decisions using quantitative data analysis. In this case, the videos brought contextualized information into the halls of government. The extent to which qualitative data was considered a valid form of evidence determined the extent to which video could influence outcomes.
Friedmann (1987) details the historical evolution five policy making paradigms. This research concludes that the extent to which iterative communication is fostered in the policy making process determines the extent to which community based communication strategies can influence the policy making process. Interactive policy making (Woekurm, 2000) may or may not be the paradigm of choice of a given government but its official absence does not preclude individual policy makers from subscribing to its core principles of egalitarianism and bottom-up planning. This autonomy to act, particularly by senior policy makers, had profound implications for the way video was used to steer ICT policy; it meant that if you got the message to the right people at the right time, it could change government policy.

Of particular relevance is the finding that the way videos are disseminated, in particular, the application of an organizing structure or event, can generate more influence by virtue of presenting to a collective audience simultaneously in a venue that fosters dialogue and further action. The literature surrounding the Fogo process makes no mention of how the videos were disseminated other then that they were eventually shown to Newfoundland’s Minister of Fisheries and the Premiere of the day (Burnett, 2003; Snowden, 1988). The current research builds on the Fogo process by providing explicit evidence in support of dissemination strategies that target policy makers collectively to create capacity around a particular issue.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter is comprised of three sections. The first provides a discussion around conclusions about the research and explores their implications for improving our understanding of the research problem. This is followed by a discussion of the implications of this work for future research for the future of PV in northwestern Ontario’s remote Aboriginal communities. The final section draws recommendations for future research.

Revisiting the Research Problem

The question and objectives that guided this research were exploratory. The work sought to understand socio-political and policy conditions, relationships, issues of self-perception and processes within a research environment that, although defined by certain parameters, could only be understood reflexively. The research problem was predicated by the lack of meaningful consultation with remote Aboriginal communities with respect to policy making. In practical terms, the research was an exploration of the potential of video and PV processes to help shape ICT policy initiatives in a group of remote Aboriginal communities by facilitating an approach for the production and delivery of collective, community based messages to federal decision-makers.

Policy making is a highly complex process: it occurs in a multitude of different ways, it is influenced by an unknowable number of factors and it takes place at different
levels of the political-bureaucratic structure. This research was about exploring the potential of video, as a medium and as a process, to influence this process. Ultimately, video, in the context of this research, was about shifting policy makers understanding; about changing the minds of individual people. Because the policy making arena is a human-social environment, understanding relationships is integral to understandings how video influences the policy process. Video was used as communication conduit to improve understanding between individuals and groups; to change relationships.

Policy conditions or the planning paradigm of the day, determine the nature and function of video within a given intervention. In order for participatory video to work in a meaningful, reflexive manner, the conditions described in a social learning (Friedmann, 1987) paradigm must exist at the planning level where the PV project is being conducted. Furthermore, these conditions must exist if video is to be used as a legitimate source of qualitative data in the bureaucratic-political arena. These conditions need not exist as a clearly defined organizational mandate as long as there is present a critical mass of individuals who are guided by principles of a social learning policy planning paradigm.

At the community level, PV success is also determined by conditions and key individuals. Local leadership is a key determinant of it successful integration and use. The need to build capacity, by providing the skills to repeat and expand on the application of video was consistent with a participatory action research approach. Moreover, the resulting video productions expanded the understanding of how and why remote Aboriginal communities use the medium in the absence of specific research initiative or associated intervention.
Opportunities exist for new approaches to policy development as a result of new digital media, specifically in the context of Canada’s remote Aboriginal communities. Building on the Fogo Process, a new approach to participatory video that integrates the efficiencies of digital media increases accessibility and the potential for dissemination, was developed. This research illustrated how participatory video can be (and has been used) as an effective tool in the service of interactive policy making. The integration of lessons from the Fogo Process with the process based approach of traditional participatory video strategies represents a new and more effective way of using video in the policy making/consultation process. Several themes emerged and they are useful to the understanding the potential of PV in future applications. They are: (1) the need to identify community champions who understand the process and see its value in a broader context; (2) tailoring the training component to the local culture; (3) the importance of a community liaison; (4) developing innovative ways to help policy makers understand the value of the process and get “buy-in” beyond a media product; (5) how to use video to provide an organizing structure around which policy makers engage in a form of dialogue about policy strategies informed by community based messages.

Video, strictly defined, is nothing more than a tool to capture images and sounds and play them back. The evolution of this medium from motion picture film through analogue video to today’s ubiquitous digital technologies is more significant. This research could not have taken place the way it did without the flexibility, portability and reproducibility of digital video. The efficiency which characterized production, the relative technical ease of training workshops, the level of sophistication available in the message tailoring through editing, and the speed with which videos could be
disseminated via the internet and feedback gathered, would not have been possible a mere five years ago.

Digital video, with its increasing accessibility, has the potential to change the way disenfranchised groups participate in the democratic process. The Fogo Process could not have happened without the resources and expertise of Canada’s National Film Board because of the technical demands of film. This resulted in a natural end-point for the communities involved: screenings and feedback. Ultimately it was the filmmaker who made the final decision about the films. Digital video extends the Fogo Process into the community by putting the technology into their hands thereby giving them control of the medium.

Interactive policy making, is at its core about the fundamental democratic principle that people should have a say in the way that government decisions that affect them are made and the belief that their informed input into the process makes for better policy. The extent to which these beliefs characterized the federal policy environment encountered in this research varied. Planning paradigms as described by Friedmann (1987) can shift from government to government and from year to year. The research reveals that the individual plays a larger role in the policy making process than the literature suggests. Individuals who believe in the principles of community based policy planning can impact the way decisions are made despite a bureaucracy that stresses the paramount value of quantitative data. This is particularly true of the senior bureaucracy and the political branch. Video, like the mass media, perhaps because of the mass media seems to have most influence at this level.
The integration of traditional PV processes that emphasize process over product with lessons from the mass media and media studies opens up a new avenue for the application of video in the service of policy making. The technology allows for more sophisticated story telling. This translates into a more human representation of the policy subjects’ needs to the policy makers. Perhaps it is the medium’s ability to evoke empathy by seeing others as they are and not as prescriptively interpreted statistics in a report.

Training and community involvement through production, screenings and feedback that is valued is supported in the literature (White, 2003) but the power to tell effective, universally understood stories has been undervalued in the field of participatory video.

Policy development is a complicated and frequently opaque process. The goings-on behind the closed doors of government, departments and funding agencies are generally kept a mystery to the public. What influence personal politics, party politics, special interests, capital and corruption may have is virtually unknowable to anyone but the key players. As such, new approaches to policy development are needed to ensure transparency of process, especially as they apply to remote areas. In remote areas, the challenge is to increase the quantity and accessibility of information, to ensure its exchange in appropriate ways, and to elicit more information in order to guide development planning.

**Participatory Video in the Keewaytinook-Okimakanak Communities**

This research involved the development of a participatory video approach that was instrumentally driven by the research environment. The research environment was, in part, defined by the research intervention itself. This paradox was well suited to a
constructivist research methodology that emphasized an iterative learning approach combined with an acceptance of the role of the researcher and research subjects as interactive partners in setting the research agenda.

In addition to understanding the practical and theoretical implications of PV in remote Aboriginal communities the research was guided by a more esoteric assumption: that a PV process resulting in locally produced videos and accelerated by an Internet driven dissemination strategy would have an impact on the self-perception of communities who lack any meaningful representation in the mass media. The interview data this subject supports the assumption. To a lesser extent, the literature suggests that control of media representation has an impact on the way that distinct groups may see themselves in the larger society. The research findings support this assumption more strongly by citing the production of videos celebrating local culture and tradition.

The data also suggests that an awareness of community voices being considered in the federal government, in a medium that they understood and indeed helped produce, shifted the self perception of remote Aboriginal communities from policy object to policy subject (Woekurm, 2000); from passive recipient to the perception that their voices and opinions could influence policy thereby changing the way services are delivered to their communities.

Participatory action research is about affecting positive change through collaborative research and the application of capacity building strategies to empower disenfranchised groups with the practical skills to continue the process of change according to their own agenda. Change is integral to PAR. This research affected the following changes:
• An improved understanding of the conditions, abilities and needs of remote Aboriginal communities by federal policy makers.

• An actual shift in the funding strategy for ICT infrastructure in Northern Canada.

• Increased capacity and video production skills in the Keewaytinook-Okimakanak communities.

• The production of videos for policy change, education, cultural celebration and traditional customs preservation.

• A richer understanding of the potential of video in the service of policy by policy makers, remote Aboriginal communities and their representative organizations.

The literature has barely explored the impact of videos produced subsequent to PV interventions. This is a significant outcome of the research but it is not a stated objective. Appendix Three lists and describe the videos produced after the research intervention. From Fogo to present applications in developing countries, PV has relied on the facilitation of an expert, typically from academia or a development organization. The fact that videos are being produced without the presence of a facilitator, intervener
funding or as part of a larger development program is significant. Much like the way KO communities harnessed ICTs for health care and education, it represents a significant contribution to our understanding of the medium’s development potential in Canada’s disparate remote Aboriginal communities.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The following recommendations for further research are drawn from the research findings and analysis.

- Future research should incorporate methodologies that integrate a collaborative approach toward the research subject(s) especially when they are marginalized groups as in the case of remote Aboriginal communities. In this research I chose participatory action research because of the real world subject matter and the emergent nature of the research problem. Future researchers are strongly encouraged to consider the importance of building local capacity through the research process as opposed to relying solely on the expectation that their research findings will eventually lead to improved conditions.

- The current research was limited geographically to the Keewaytinook-Okimakanak communities of northwestern Ontario and organizationally to their relationships with their representative organizations and federal agencies charged with
the delivery of ICT related services. Future research into the role
of video as tool for community based policy development should
build on the lessons detailed in this thesis by applying them in
different community and policy scenarios in order to refine
which findings contained herein can be generalized elsewhere.

- Subsequent to the end of this research, additional videos have
  been produced in the KO communities and by their
  representative agencies. This scenario represents a rare and
  valuable research environment that bears additional study. In less
  than five years communities have been introduced to
  communication technologies and have begun harnessing them in
  a way that has taken decades in the larger developed world.
  Future research should explore how these individuals and groups
  use video to educate, advocate and celebrate their culture. Such
  research would also have implications for understanding how
  exposure to and control of video media affects the self-
  perception of Canada’s most marginalized peoples.

- During the course of this research I developed a number of
  strategies and guiding principles designed to help understand
  how participatory video functions in remote Aboriginal
  communities. These lessons should be further synthesized
through additional research and developed into a manual or user’s guide for future practitioners based on Figure 5.1.

- In this dissertation, I argue that locally produced videos can be brought into the policy making process to influence key decision makers thereby shifting the course of government policy. Underpinning this assertion is the way that qualitative data is perceived by policy makers. The research findings indicate both that it does have a role when partnered with substantiating quantitative data and also has a role in and of itself. Both scenarios should be explored further in order deepen our comprehension of how video works to change minds and broaden understanding of underrepresented, disenfranchised communities. This research should be framed within an analysis of interactive policy making and evidence based learning for policy development.

**Concluding Remarks**

The successful application of video-based evidence in the policy-making process can have profound impacts for disenfranchised remote Aboriginal communities. Increasingly, these places are underrepresented or misinterpreted in the mainstream media. Mass media is well known to exert considerable policy influence in Western democracies, frequently setting the policy agenda through its considerable
communications network. But as the populace becomes increasingly urban, so does the media’s focus. In Canada this translates into a steady stream of alarmist documentaries rarely matched with examples of accomplishments. ICT applications, in particular, the ability of First Nations to construct their own video media, provides remote Aboriginal communities access to the same tools as their urban counterparts. While these productions will likely never achieve the power to influence that mainstream media has, the ability to disseminate these messages via the internet does provide access to a globally diffuse audience. Research and development of strategies that target key audiences such as bureaucrats, politicians and media outlets are needed for the expansion of video in the policy arena.

Despite its limitations in relaying complex and multi-layered quantitative information, video-based message making has the potential to change the way policy-makers learn about the impacts of their funding and programs. Context, often overlooked especially when addressing the needs of remote Aboriginal communities, provides a different perspective, perhaps even a deeper perspective, on the reality of living in these rarely traveled to regions. Participatory video represents an untapped potential for educating urban bureaucrats and politicians about policy needs in remote regions.

The processes involved in the collective construction of video, at the community level, also have important implications for the way communities and local organizations learn and address policy-related issues. Participatory video is inherently collaborative. Productions require a dialectic approach where, negotiation, understanding and galvanization result in increased levels of social capacity in dealing with government decision-makers. The leadership in these communities knows and has access to all the
data needed for policy-makers to appreciate the urgency for telehealth or internet assisted education, but they tend to be unable to permeate the bureaucracy and have their message heard. Furthermore, the reality of the policy-making process is that, despite all the models and theoretically based strategies for its development, it remains heavily influenced by the personal interpretation of this quantitative data. Participatory video for policy challenges the fundamental assumptions of policy-making for remote Aboriginal communities by introducing a new process into the programming, planning and evaluation tool boxes; a process that bridges communication gaps in the service of local development by humanizing data; a process that the policy-makers listen to every day when it is done by mass media.

As broadband infrastructure expands into remote Aboriginal communities, people become increasingly exposed to Western mainstream media originating in large urban centres. The Internet promises to open the World to remote Aboriginal communities. The danger of this exposure is the wholesale saturation of a uniquely urban-centric way of life and the erosion of traditional ways. Youth, the early adopters of this technology, are especially vulnerable to this ongoing global-cultural homogenization. Participatory video projects when combined with effective production training are resulting in the proliferation of images, voices and sounds from Canada’s North. More and more, young people are seeing representations of their life experience, their communities and their culture along side and as legitimate as, images from New York City, Hollywood and Toronto.

Participatory video in policy and planning is a multi-stakeholder process that can provide evidentiary learning beyond the groups and individuals directly involved, both in
and outside of the policy making and policy delivery environments. Video overcomes illiteracy of the written word and, as important, overcomes the lexicon of bureaucrats whose meaning, calculations and nuances are frequently impenetrable. This accessibility means that video can be used to educate and influence the larger society thereby broadening awareness of issues in remote Aboriginal communities and increasing the capacity for social mobilization.
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# Appendix One: List of Research Related Videos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Video Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Turning the Corner: Managing Health Care and Education in Canada’s Remote Aboriginal Communities</em></td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>17:42</td>
<td><a href="http://Smart.knet.ca/fednor_video_list.html">http://Smart.knet.ca/fednor_video_list.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The K-Net Story: Visions For the Future</em></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>3:10</td>
<td><a href="http://Smart.knet.ca/fednor_video_list.html">http://Smart.knet.ca/fednor_video_list.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Connectivity in Kuh-Ke-Nah Communities: Fort Severn.</em></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>4:04</td>
<td><a href="http://Smart.knet.ca/international/">http://Smart.knet.ca/international/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities: Keewaywin</td>
<td></td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Connectivity in Kuh-Ke-Nah Communities: Deer Lake</strong></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4:56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connectivity in Kuh-Ke-Nah Communities: Poplar Hill</strong></td>
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<td>2:09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2004</td>
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Appendix Two: Sample Questionnaires

The Questions are designed to:

1. Determine the efficacy of video in program evaluation by
   a. Understanding the impact it has had to provide context
   b. Its ability to foster new communication conduits between Aboriginal communities and policy makers
   c. Its impact on demystifying the way in which policy decisions are made and the people who make them…

2. Qualitatively measure the impacts that video has had in the communities with respect to:
   a. Changes in self perception
   b. Increased comfort in engaging the technology and therefore the medium
   c. Change in attitude toward future engagements with policy makers and government agencies

3. Solicit from participants:
   a. Shortcomings
   b. Suggestions for improvement in term of engagement with community members
   c. Operational improvements
   d. Input to make future endeavors more culturally appropriate

4. Provide data to help, partially, meet Objectives 3, 4, & 5.

Questionnaire: Policy Makers

Before the interview begins, I will re-iterate the research objectives that are being fulfilled with this information and provide a brief backdrop to the research to bring the interviewee up to speed.

*Objective 4: Determine how access and control of ICTs and new media tools change relationships between remote Aboriginal communities and urban policy-makers.*

*Objective 5: Explore how policy-makers identify the significance of new media and products to change their relationships with remote Aboriginal communities.*

The interviews will be **semi-structured** with **open-ended** responses solicited in order to ensure openness and completeness of response. Response/data analysis will focus on the identification of trends or an established variation in respondents’ answers to the research questions. Also, responses will be mined for significant quotes that will assist in telling the story of the research findings.
Tell me about the importance of qualitative data when measuring the success of a particular program or policy?

Is qualitative data measured differently or is it considered more or less valuable than quantitative data? Why? Why not?

Have you ever been to a remote, fly-in Aboriginal community? If so, can you describe whether or not it is important that policy-makers have a better understanding of the conditions in these communities? If not, why?

Do you feel that it is important to have a better understanding of the reality of life in these communities before police decisions are made that impact them?

What would be the best way to understand policy impacts in remote Aboriginal communities? Second best? Third best?

Do you have confidence in traditional evaluation approaches to tell the “whole story” of policy impacts in remote Aboriginal communities? Why? Why not?

What is the value of having access to videos and other new media materials about policy-related issues that are produced by people in remote Aboriginal communities.

Do you agree that new media can be used to build new tools for program and policy evaluation? If so, how? If not, why?

Please describe the potential of these tools based on the videos you have seen about connectivity and its impacts in the Keewaytinook Okimakanak communities?

Did the videos you watched change your perception of remote Aboriginal communities? Did the videos influence what criteria you will consider in making future decisions that impact remote Aboriginal communities?

Given the rapid acceleration of ICT technology combined with its decreasing cost, what potential do you see for the integration of these tools into mainstream policy-making approaches for remote Aboriginal communities?
Appendix Three: Outcomes of the Research

CTC Telehealth Information Video (18:00)
Part 1: Overview of the community-based Keewaytinook Okimakanak Telehealth initiative
Part 2: Introducing and Supporting Telehealth in First Nations
Part 3: Sample Consult Session
Part 4: The Roles and Responsibilities of the First Nation CTCs
Part 5: Public Health Education

http://knews.knet.ca/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=1602

RICTA: Research on ICTs with Aboriginal Communities Video (5:53)
(2005) An exploration of research issues being developed in collaboration between academics, government researchers, Aboriginal researchers and KO communities

http://www.ricta.ca/

Dark Cabin
(2006) A low budget feature film being shot in Keewaywin First Nation. The film is based on traditional spiritual teachings told in the conventional style of the horror genre.

http://bluemason.myknet.org/modules.php?set_albumName=album09&op=modload&name=gallery&file=index&include=view_album.php

James Bay Treaty #9 Commemoration Video (2:02)
(2005) On July 12, the Chiefs of Nishnawbe Aski Nation gathered in Mishkeegogamang Ojibway Nation to celebrate the 100 year anniversary of the signing of Treaty Number 9.

http://treatyninecommemoration.on.ca/index.php/news/webcasts

Opening of the Northern Indigenous Community Satellite Network (3:33)
(2005) Tells the story of the opening of the northern network through interviews with local experts and footage of the change taking place as a result of connectivity.
Ancestral Village (6:02)
(2004) In living and collective memory, there have always been people living at Weeshinagoo Beaverstone, or castoreum, River) junction with the Atchigo Siipi (Sachigo River). Regularly used transportation routes once linked families south to Kitchenuhmay Koosib (Big Trout Lake), west to Shammattawa on the God’s River in northern Manitoba, and east to Weenusk. The outlines of traditional circular shelters, dating back to the late 1800's, remain visible amid a youthful growth of poplar several hundred metres from the river bank.

http://fortsevern.firstnation.ca/washaho/

Pelican Falls Science and Technology Camp (6:02)
(2005) An educational video that promotes Indigenous knowledge as it pertains to science and technology. Developed to promote science and technology learning among First Nations students.

http://sreaming.knet.ca/pelican_falls/sci-tech_intro_300k.wmv
http://sreaming.knet.ca/pelican_falls/ida_kenny_300k.wmv

KiHS (5:08)
(2004) This video promotes Internet assisted education as a way to improve curriculum delivery to remote first nation students. Interviews with teachers, students and community leadership detail the successes in the KO communities so that other communities can understand this Internet assisted education model

http://kihs.knet.ca/index.php?module=ContentExpress&file=index&func=display&ceid=76&meid=31

(2004) Interviews conducted at the Eagle Lake First Nation Residential School Family Wellness Gathering were edited together with stories of survivors. The video is a celebration of survival and healing.

Riverbank Graves (4:18)
(2004) The distribution of our ancestors graves attest to our connection with the Weeshinagoo territory. On the banks of the Weeshinago Siipi (Beaverstone River) are located five graves, two of which (Beardy family infants) have begun to collapse with the riverbank. Remains of Anglican grave fences are evident. Back from the bank edge are three graves adjacent to one another. There is the grave of an infant (Henry Bluecoat's daughter) in a small grave with a fence still standing. In the middle is Cornelius Thomas, year of death unknown after a drowning accident on the Pasquathai (Thorne) River. The last grave is that of Emily Crowe (mother of Elizabeth and Joe Crowe’s father's first wife). These five riverbank graves were restored for identification during the 2003 Elders Trip.

http://fortsevern.firstnation.ca/washaho/

Our Land Use (5:04)
(2004) Life on the land has always meant use of the fish and game resources to sustain resident families. Men remain at “hunter ready” during most of each day. Net fishing is always productive during certain times of the year. Favourite locations include those upstream on the Weeshinagoo Siipi (Beaverstone River), and at Seh geh tah gun Siipi (meaning “river of the place where fish traps are built each year”), entering the Sachigo River from the south downstream of Weeshinagoo. During the 2003 Elders’ Trip, Lucy and Elijah Stoney set their net regularly, starting with Lucy’s set just downstream of Dirty Knee Rapids at the group’s first campsite on the Weeshinagoo Siipi. Their nets, and those of Joe Crowe and Stanley Thomas, always supplied enough fish to satisfy the group. Men were always at the ready for large game as the work of the trip proceeded.

http://fortsevern.firstnation.ca/washaho/

Poplar Hill: Our Children our Community (3:31)
(2004) Documenting and exploring the impact that broadband is having on the youth of Poplar Hill First Nation. Includes interviews with band councilors, educators, parents and youth.

http://calkenny.myknet.org/index.php?module=ContentExpress&func=display&ceid=14

Pelican Falls Students Wilderness Adventure (5:59)
(2004) This video follows a group of First Nations youth as they participate in a traditional dogsled and winter camping outbound journey with community elders.
Paddling to Washaho: A Healing Journey (40:00)
(2004) Fort Severn Chief and Council worked with their community elders and youth to support their nine day wilderness canoe trip from Beaver Lake back to their community and homes. Two elders and eighteen young people worked together to complete this trip of living off the land, harvesting wild game each day. The group hunted and fished along the journey. They made it back to Fort Severn late last night after a long day of paddling.

Chapters:
- Plane Ride from Fort Severn to Beaver Lake (2:35)
- At Beaver Lake - Cooking Caribou (2:26)
- Beaver Lake Gravesite - Prayer by Edna Thomas (2:36)
- Adelaide Koostachin - Cooking Pike (2:51)
- Beaver River - Morning Rapids (2:30)
- Lunch Break – Duck Soup (2:21)
- Afternoon Rapids (1:00)
- River Bank (1:45)
- Jason Metatawabin - Cleaning a goose (0:51)
- Fishing Grounds (4:26)
- Goose Hunt (0:42)
- Traditional Baby Powder (3:33)
- Clearing the Way (1:15)
- Layover Day – A Morning of Dry Clothes (4:05)
- Pike Logic (3:06)
- Evening Campfire (0:43)
- The Second Last Campsite (4:36)
- Mystic Morning (3:42)

http://fortsevern.firstnation.ca/index.php?module=ContentExpress&func=display&ceid=46
Appendix Four: K-Net News Article about Turning the Corner Video

(Source: http://knews.knet.ca/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=1426&P ORSTNUKESID=ce98ee3b97c1a4da6f39ce0f9b2f5a2a)

Turning the Corner video shown to more than 40 government officials in Ottawa
Posted by: Brian Beaton brian.beaton@knet.ca on Tuesday, June 28, 2005 - 09:45 AM

On Friday, June 3 George Ferreira, Carl Seibel and Brian Beaton travelled to Ottawa to meet with representatives from different federal government departments and First Nation organizations to showcase the new video production, "Turning the Corner - Effective use of broadband in Canada's North". Representatives from the Assembly of First Nations, the Aboriginal Peoples Congress along with officials from Industry Canada (FedNor, Aboriginal Business Canada, First Nations SchoolNet, Computers for Schools, National Satellite Initiative, BRAND, etc), Heritage Canada, Human Resources Skills Development, Health Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs, Privy Council and Treasury Board gathered in Ottawa. Connected to the session via video conference were Regional Management Organization offices in La Ronge Saskatchewan, Sydney Nova Scotia and Thunder Bay and Balmerton in Ontario. Over forty people participated in the two sessions that were offered throughout the morning. FedNor's Minister of State Joe Comuzzi dropped by to meet everyone and endorse the work that Keewaytinook Okimakanak and his team are doing in northwestern Ontario.

Everyone viewed the video and discussed the use of broadband to affect the necessary changes required in programs and policy that are affecting and influencing the present situations and issues affecting remote and rural communities across Canada.

All the video material produced by Keewaytinook Okimakanak is available on-line for everyone's access. We can send over additional DVD copies of the various material that is posted on-line (much better quality) if we have your mailing address. The following list of on-line material might be of interest to everyone
1. DVD - video production “Turning the Corner – Using Broadband Effectively in Canada’s North”. The content of the DVD is available online at (May 2005) http://streaming.knet.ca/turning_the_corner_high.wmv


6. KIHS information video http://streaming.knet.ca/KiHS/KiHS_300k.wmv


8. DVD video entitled “The K-Net Story … Weaving the Networked Economy in Kuhkenah First Nation Communities” … (Dec 2004)
   - Economic Development 2:36 - http://streaming.knet.ca/fednor/economic_300k.wmv
   - Partnerships 9:51 - http://streaming.knet.ca/fednor/partnerships_300k.wmv
   - Building the Network 2:36 - http://streaming.knet.ca/fednor/network_300k.wmv
   - Education 5:58 - http://streaming.knet.ca/fednor/education_300k.wmv
   - Health 3:29 - http://streaming.knet.ca/fednor/health_300k.wmv
   - Visions for the Future - http://streaming.knet.ca/fednor/future_visions_300k.wmv

9. The Case Studies produced for the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas (ICA) entitled “Harnessing ICTs: A Canadian First Nations’ Experience” (December 2003) – http://Smart.knet.ca/kuhkenah_flash.html (contains videos for each case study listed below)– contains the PDF files along with video footage for five case studies including:
   * K-Net Network Development -

10. If you go to the K-Net news archives at http://knews.knet.ca and do a SEARCH (on the left hand column) for the word video ... you will get a list of the various video products that have been produced for distribution.
Appendix Five: Article about K-Net Story Video

Canadian Aboriginals Lead World in Community Networking Innovations

Articles / Native American and Alaskan Native Tools
Date: Jan 06, 2005 - 02:44 PM

The K-Net Story: Community ICT Development Work

Brian Beaton  Keewaytinook Okimakanak (K-Net)
brian.beaton@knet.ca

The Kuhkenah Network (K-Net) provides information and communication technologies (ICTs), telecommunication infrastructure and application support in First Nation communities across a vast, remote region of north-western Ontario as well as in other remote regions in Canada. This private telecommunications network supports the development of online applications that combine video, voice and data services requiring broadband and high-speed connectivity solutions. K-Net is a program of Keewaytinook Okimakanak (KO), a First Nations tribal council established by the leaderships of Deer Lake, Fort Severn, Keewaywin, McDowell Lake, North Spirit Lake and Poplar Hill bands to provide a variety of second level support services for their communities. Kuhkenah is an Oji-Cree term for everyone, everywhere.<O:P></O:P>

The KO First Nation communities are part of Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), located in northern Ontario across an area roughly the size of France includes a total population of approximately 25,000 people. The majority of this population is Aboriginal and lives in remote communities with 300-900 inhabitants. For most of these communities, the only year-round access into or out of their area is by small airplane.

The accompanying video provides a brief overview of some of the work that has gone into building and sustaining the regional network that supports local community based networks (CBNs). The video was produced by members of the K-Net team working in partnership with George Ferreira, a PhD candidate at the University of Guelph who is completing his thesis work using video material as a medium to present evaluation documentation as well as influence policy and program development (Ferreira, 2004).

This video was created as part of a larger collection of video material that is being used for a variety of applications. On a Saturday morning in
December, we went for a drive around my community of Sioux Lookout and spent time to talk about our work, our partners and our understanding about how these networks can develop and why they are important in remote and rural communities. In the video there is a scene where the base of the new 7.3 metre satellite earth station is being built. Today that satellite dish is operational and the pictures and the video story documenting the construction of this infrastructure are now on-line at http://tech.knet.ca/photos/satellite.

The production of these videos resulted in several other significant multi-media presentations being produced and shared on-line. The resulting work and presentations are helping others around the world understand the potential and the possibilities for these types of local ICT developments in their own communities. One important product of this work was a multi-media presentation that was produced with the Institute for Connectivity of Americas (http://icamericas.net) and other partners and presented at the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva. The entire presentation is available on-line at http://Smart.knet.ca/kuhkenah_flash.html and consists of a collection of case studies that include an Introduction to K-Net and four specialized case studies covering Network Development, Education, Health and Economic Development, along with accompanying video material for each chapter of the production.

Community vision and need have been the driving forces behind K-Net’s development. The results impact local communities and the entire region’s health, education and economic opportunities. These video productions provide an explanation of the network’s history, some of the key players, partners and accomplishments to date. The videos and accompanying print material demonstrate how First Nations people are finding ways to harness these new technologies to strengthen and support the entire community, including their traditions, language and cultural heritage.

The KO First Nation communities have experienced an impressive amount of development in a relatively short time period. Two of the communities have gone from having one phone for 400 people four years ago, to accessing broadband services from individual homes today. This rapid development of K-Net’s technical infrastructure and services, and its impact on local health, education, and economic development is introduced in these videos. The K-Net experience and the stories from the communities and the people involved in this work demonstrate how local needs and demands can drive technology and network infrastructure development.
References Cited


This article comes from Lone Eagle Consulting [http://lone-eagles.knet.ca/](http://lone-eagles.knet.ca/)