



# Take Three: Filming Three Participatory Videos with displaced Indigenous People from Little Saskatchewan First Nation and Lake St. Martin First Nation

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**Abstract:** Participatory video research methods were applied to engage members from two flood-impacted Indigenous communities in telling their film stories. The process and product outcomes for three films were assessed by eight indicators of community participation in the filming process as well as by seven measures regarding the films' outreach for social change. These fifteen indicators are not limited to First Nations or displacement but are broad general categories that can be easily applied to any film story and can be objectively checked by viewing the credits in the film for director, videographer, editor, the narrator, etc., as well as YouTube views and publication dates. The indicators show that community members were able to engage in all the film-making process, except for hands-on editing, with the resulting film showing compelling visible evidence of their suffering due to the long displacement and flood. Digital stories from elders, youth and women over the seven years of displacement created awareness about the injustice of targeting their Indigenous communities with diverted flood waters and provoked social change. Each successive film documenting another few years of displacement will be continued as they have requested we train youth to film the issues that arise as they resettle. These indicators signal that the process and product outcomes are better than that for journal paper writing and meet the benchmark for qualitative academic research and participatory action research.

**Keywords:** *Participatory video, decolonizing research, participatory action research, third cinema*

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## INTRODUCTION

The ability of participatory video (PV) research to create social change has increased dramatically with the information communication technology revolution (Mitchell & De Lange, 2011; Mitchell & de Lange, 2012; Mistry, Bignante, & Berardi, 2016; MacDonald, Ford, Willox, & Mitchell, 2015). The participatory video involves a group or community in creating their film to explore their issues and tell their own story as experts of their own reality (Smillie, 2017; Whiting, Symon, Roby, & Chamakiotis, 2018). This paper investigates whether PV research is an effective tool to engage the community and foster social change through analyzing three PV research films undertaken with two flood-impacted communities in Manitoba, Canada. These Indigenous communities experienced more than seven years of displacement after being evacuated due to the 2011 "super flood". These films were a research engagement and communication strategy regarding health, environment and social impacts of the floods and displacement with the communities (Martin, Thompson, Ballard, & Linton, 2017; Thompson & Ballard, 2014). But were these films effective? These films were judged by process and product indicators based on criteria for PV. Members of two communities told

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their stories of suffering through three films focused on three different periods of their lengthy seven-year displacement: 1) shortly after the flood in the first and second year; 2) in the middle (year three to five) during the long waiting period; and 3) just before they returned in the sixth and seventh year. The three films are profiled briefly below:

### ***Flooding Hope***

The Lake St. Martin Story by (Ballard, Klatt, & Thompson, 2012) follows community members journey through the emergency evacuation and displacement shortly after the flood (2011-2012). This film made people aware of how these communities were flooded by the government diverting water away from urban centers and cottages. After this sacrifice, these displaced people were confronted by a racist backlash from non-Indigenous people due to a lack of information about their plight.

### ***Wounded Spirit***

Forced Evacuation of Little Saskatchewan First Nation by (Ballard, Klatt, Martin, & Thompson, 2016) explores Elders' reality in the midst of their displacement, after the forced evacuation of more than half the LSFN people between 2011 and 2016, when there were still no homes built to return to. Not only the people who were displaced suffered but also the others that chose to stay back anguished in their overcrowded and often moldy homes, without adequate services in the ghost town of a community that remained.

### ***Name Your Baby Mooskaahn: Flooding out Youth from Little Saskatchewan First Nation***

Name your Baby Mooskaahn by Sumner, Thompson, Martin, Suzuki, and Ballard (2018) documents LSFN youth's experience of displacement prior to returning to a home that was a distant memory after seven years. This long period away made up most of the formative years of so many youths. These youth discuss how they grew up really fast away from their community and sometimes away from family. Many who were displaced as children were coming back to LSFN with their children into ready to move (RTM) houses. That these RTM houses could have been delivered immediately in 2011 or 2012 to let these youth experience their childhood around family and community members in LSFN is a point of consternation brought up in the film.

In these films, interviews with flood-impacted elders, women, and youth allow viewers to see the impacts of displacement and flooding through the eyes of the most vulnerable. This paper first starts with the 2011 flood background providing the context of this long displacement and explaining how floodwater was rerouted to overflow the banks of Lake St. Martin and impact the First Nation community members there. The literature review tells, not only about PVs components and historical origins in Canada's remote communities, but also discusses the place of PV in the broader area of participatory action research and decolonizing methodologies. Then the method is discussed regarding measuring the research process of PV, in terms of engagement, and also the product, in terms of social change and impact.

This paper is the first to appraise both the critical engagement aspects of the process (Millán & Frediani, 2014) and consider measuring the PV product's social change, impact and whether it meets the benchmark for qualitative research and participatory action research (Chevalier & Buckles, 2013). A dual assessment of PV process and product has never been jointly analyzed. However, a strategic analysis, by SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats), was undertaken for a process for many PV films from six countries-United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Greece, Germany and Lithuania (VISTA, 2011).

In addition, MacDonald et al. (2015) in-depth interviews with seven youth, regarding PV, considered mainly process but also by, asking youth about the educational value of their film for other communities, touched on the social change aspect of the product. Other research surveys or interviews regarding PV have focused on educational outcomes specific to the subject matter or health outcomes seeing PV as an intervention to shift behaviour (Millán & Frediani, 2014).

### ***The Communities Impacted by 2011 Flood***

Two communities, Lake St. Martin First Nation (LSMFN) and Little Saskatchewan First Nation (LSFN), had the most evacuees of the many communities impacted by Manitoba's 2011 "super flood". These two communities are located slightly over 200 km northwest of Winnipeg as shown in Figure 1, downstream from the Fairford Water Control Structure. Lake St. Martin First Nation has a population of 2,811 (Government of Canada, 2018a) and LSFN's population is 1,305 (Government of Canada, 2018b). All the people residing in LSMFN and LSFN were ordered to

evacuate in 2011 after the water was diverted to their Lake.

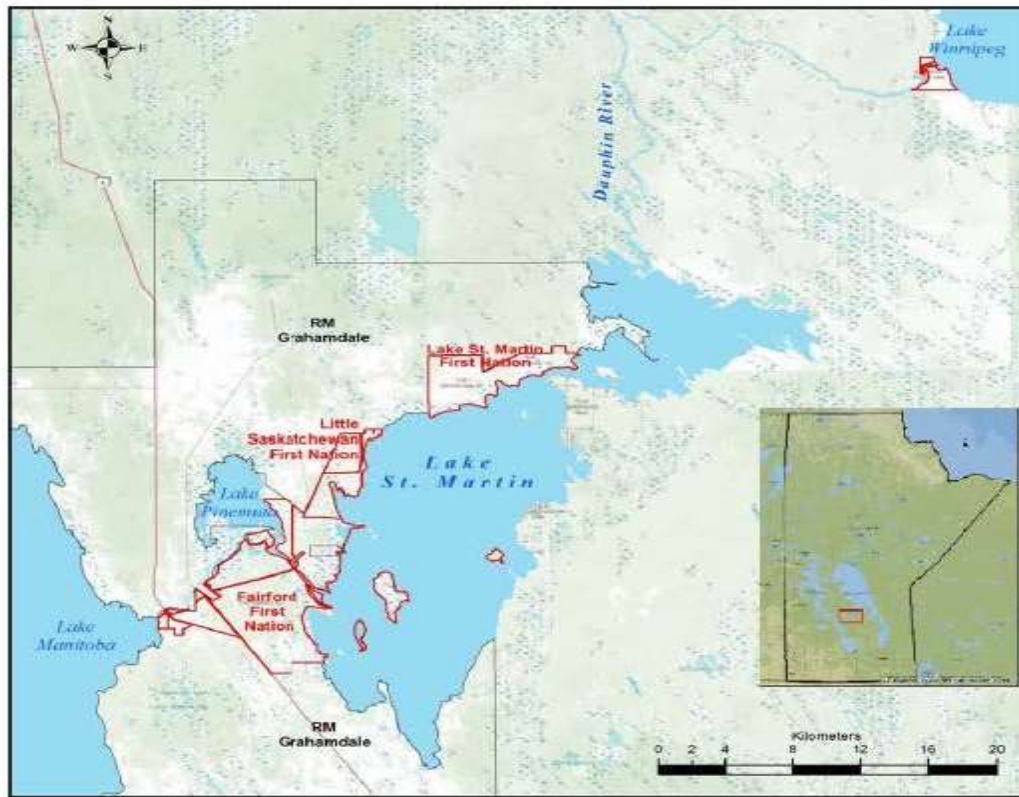


Figure 1 Map Locating Lake St. Martin First Nation and Little Saskatchewan First Nation in Manitoba, Canada

The 2011 floodwater was purposely deflected by the government to the shores of Lake St. Martin, onto the doorsteps of LSM and LSFN homes, forcing their emergency evacuation in May of 2011 (KGS Group & AECOM, 2011). The LSMFN reserve, which was the ancestral home to Anishinaabe people prior to colonization, became uninhabitable, (Thompson, 2015; Sawatsuk, Darmawijaya, Ratchusanti, & Phaokrueng, 2018) with every house and piece of infrastructure in need of replacement (Government of Canada, 2018c). As well, LSFN's beautiful beaches and lake properties, including their church, LSFN government office, and most houses were ruined by water damage (Government of Canada, 2018c; Ballard et al., 2016; Martin et al., 2017). The evacuation order by the province was compulsory but many refused to leave, wanting to protect their homes and reinforce dikes. After seven years of displacement, in 2018, were people able to resettle in LSFN and LSMFN, after a legal settlement was reached in 2017 (APTN, 2017). This settlement finally enabled the rebuilding of homes and other infrastructure on higher ground (Government of Canada, 2018c). The flooding of Indigenous communities around Lake St. Martin was not a force of nature but a Manitoba government directive to save provincial lands, by flooding federal reserve land where Indigenous people live (KGS Group & AECOM, 2011; Thompson, 2015). A calculated economic decision was made by the Province, to prevent major costly impacts to large urban centers, including Brandon, Portage la Prairie, and Winnipeg, by sending the floodwater to Lake St. Martin, which became a reservoir for this water (KGS Group & AECOM, 2011). As a result, the high waters in the Assiniboine watershed were rerouted through the Lake Manitoba watershed to end up in Lake St. Martin, through man-made channels and control structures at Portage and Fairford. Redirecting water to the many First Nation homes in the Lake St. Martin basin showed no regard to the many social, environmental and economic impacts to people living there (Ballard et al., 2012; Ballard & Thompson, 2013; Thompson & Ballard, 2014; Taher, Shrestha, Rahman, & Khalid, 2016). The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2008) recognizes that displacing Indigenous people by force has severe impacts on their distinct cultures, health, and livelihoods. Human rights and UNDRIP were breached.

Shifting the flood impacts Indigenous communities displaced people with an ancient connection to the land and place-based cultural traditions (Thompson & Ballard, 2014). Land's importance to Indigenous people is much higher than to non-Indigenous people, with the risk of land destruction to Indigenous Peoples associated with traumatic

levels of dysfunction and psychological distress, similar to an immediate family member dying (OSullivan & Handal, 1988). OSullivan and Handal (1988) found that Indigenous communities, after displacement, experienced increased morbidity, mortality and dependency as well as a crisis of cultural identity and innovation resistance. Health effects of displacement are more debilitating when the entire community is affected, and an un-natural man-made occurrence caused the disaster (OSullivan & Handal, 1988; Martin et al., 2017), which is the unjust situation for both LSMFN and LSFN.

## LITERATURE REVIEW OF PARTICIPATORY VIDEO IN PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AND DECOLONIZATION

Participatory video research enables those impacted by an issue to collect research on film, with academics working alongside (Thompson, 2015). To facilitate the process of storytelling, the academic researchers at times play different roles, sometimes deploying the camera or undertaking the technical aspects, as needed with community members engaging in all aspects of the film-making (Millán & Frediani, 2014; Whiting et al., 2018; Walsh, 2016; A. H. Chowdhury, Hambly Odame, & Hauser, 2010). This type of academic research is designed to empower community participants to reflect on their situation through the iterative process of video storytelling and research (Mistry et al., 2016). By engaging in the different stages (e.g. preproduction, production and postproduction tasks) and roles (editor, the narrator, expert, interviewer, filmmaker, director, etc.), the participants build capacity and work through the issues to arrive at a deeper understanding (MacDonald et al., 2015). The participatory video has been found to increase individual and community levels of self-esteem, communication capacity and creativity (Witteveen & Lie, 2009).

Participatory video (PV) aims to transform roles in research to disrupt the hierarchical power relations of an academic researcher being in complete control of research on subjects (Mistry et al., 2016). The power dynamics in research are: “possibly exploitative because we observe, analyze and represent the lives of others” (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013). The traditional academic researcher, as the sole person to decide who and what is being studied, does not ensure benefit to the community (Cunsolo Willox et al., 2013; Walsh, 2016). This lack of control and benefit explains why First Nations claim “they are researched to death” (Hendry, 2007). While trying to be different, paradoxically, the PV research approach could still reinforce power imbalances if self-expression or empowerment cannot occur, due to the researcher’s effect or to the community-level group dynamics (Walsh, 2016).

Not only in traditional research but also film-making there is a hierarchy that marginalizes most people from telling and editing their own story (Millán & Frediani, 2014). In film-making, the director, and/or film-makers determine what, who and how a story is told, edited and marketed. Other videos (e.g., training, documentary, art, entertainment) do not engage people in the film-making aspect of their story (A. Chowdhury, Odame, Thompson, & Hauser, 2015). Like the academic researchers, the film-maker decides what, when, who and how to film to serve their market audience. However, in the 1960s, ‘participation’ by ‘subject-participants’ became prominent, spearheaded by feminist researchers and film-makers, radical film collectives, as well as film activists in the Global South (Dagron, 2009). Fuelled by the emancipatory and Freirian ideologies prominent in Latin and South America (Dagron, 2009; Freire, 1970), the Third Cinema movement emerged from Argentina. The male/white/Western film-maker model representing the ‘other’ was questioned endeavouring to provoke social change in the audience watching the film (Millán & Frediani, 2014). This Third Cinema movement for representative film-makers towards social change happened around the same time Canada applied film-making to research for development with the PV movement.

### *History of Participatory Video*

Participatory video (PV) is part of the Canadian film-making legacy, that started in the 1960s, to amplify the voices of rural people (Smillie, 2017). Don Snowden pioneered PV on Fogo Island, a small fishing community in the Canadian province of Newfoundland. PV was used by fishermen to build alliances between fishing villages and to send a unified message to the far away federal capital city of Ottawa about rural poverty. Through videos, local people lobbied and informed bureaucrats and politicians who never ventured to these remote areas to take a good look at issues faced by real people in small rural communities. Seeing videos resulted in policy-makers hearing their message, whereas other methods, such as letters and reports, did not. The adage “seeing is believing” applies to PV, as what we see has a higher truth value, which brings us to accept the reality of stories (Thompson, 2015). As rural poverty arises from a lack of political power and misguided policy (Smillie, 2017), PV built Fogos social capital, through creating bonds between



the fishing communities in Newfoundland and building “bridges” to people in power in Ottawa (Thompson & Ballard, 2014). Since Fogo Island, PV has engaged marginalized people all around the world to make research films to share their stories (Smillie, 2017) considering how this participatory action research (PAR) can make a difference.

### ***Participatory Action Research and Participatory video***

Participatory video (PV) is considered one of many research strategies of PAR. Reason and Bradbury (2001) describe how PAR is rooted in partnering and building relationships with the subject-participant to understand and improve their struggles: “Grounded in lived experience, developed in partnership, addresses significant problems, works with (rather than simply studies) people, develops new ways of seeing/interpreting the world (i.e. theory), and leaves infrastructure in its wake.”

The participatory video combines the four essential elements of PAR, namely: participation, action, research, and social change for social justice. Community members engage in a film process to tell their story through a systematic research process that results in action for social change (Chevalier & Buckles, 2013). By including the participants in the research decision-making throughout the process, PAR is a democratic knowledge production process (Chevalier & Buckles, 2013). Research participants are key in developing the research strategy from the beginning stages of determining the research focus and study approach to the final stage of dissemination.

Freire (1970) preached about the need for a collective process of reflection and introspection regarding images and representation to uncover the hegemonic order that marginalizes and exploits poor people (Liebenberg, 2018). This research offers a way to deconstruct socio-economic and political relations. Freire (1970) identified three levels of consciousness, which PV and PAR should help people ascend the levels. At the magical or first level, people accept the status quo without any resistance. At the naive or second level, people interpret their situation as unfair and corrupt but unchangeable and so may engage in horizontal or lateral violence, blaming their peers for the social reality of their lives. At the critical consciousness or third level, people become aware of the structures maintaining oppression and, also, of the ways in which their behaviours contribute to maintaining these oppressive systems. This critical consciousness is required in order to facilitate meaningful change based on informed action combining theory and practice (Freire, 1970; Liebenberg, 2018). This critical change is required to decolonize society and research.

### ***Decolonizing Research***

‘Decolonizing research’ requires deconstructing power dynamics as well as engaging with the rich oral histories and cultural practices of Indigenous communities (Smith, 2007). Indigenous peoples’ stories provide lived experiences, always embedded in their culture, values, and world-view (Hendry, 2007), and reveal their struggles with the injustices of colonial power. Hendry (2007) explains how stories make meaning of lived experiences, writing:

“Through telling our lives, we engage in the act of meaning making. This is a sacred act. Stories are what makes us human. ...We are our narratives. They are not something that can be outside ourselves because they are what give shape to us, what gives meaning.”

The lived experiences of Indigenous people, as told in stories and video, provides an opportunity for awareness, reflection, and transformation. Story-based methods, also called narrative research, are considered beneficial, respectful strategies for research with Indigenous communities. Hendry (2007) defines narrative research as “providing a method for sharing stories, giving voice to those traditionally marginalized, and providing a less exploitative research method than other modes”. However, Hendry (2007) cautions that narrative research can further marginalize individuals and communities, allowing non-Indigenous researchers free reign for their views, if not undertaken with great sensitivity.

The process of PV offers a tool to wrestle narrative research from the academic-elite to provide a ‘site of communion’ (Hendry, 2007), which is particularly important when working with Indigenous partners and collaborators (Cunsolo Willox et al., 2013). For communion to occur, people have to be engaged with the tools and teachings to apply their Indigenous research methods and approaches. Smith (2007) wrote about the need for building the capacity of Indigenous community members for Indigenous research: An important task of indigenous research in “becoming” a community of researchers is about capacity building, developing and mentoring researchers, and creating the space and support for new approaches to research and new examinations of indigenous research.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research explored whether PV was effective in engaging the community in eight different aspects of the film process. Binomial (yes/no) indicators were applied to assess community members' engagement in each stage of video making. The eight were adapted from the five critical aspects of PV identified by [Boni, López-Fogués, Millán, and Belda-Miquel \(2017\)](#); [Millán and Frediani \(2014\)](#) to be: 1) diagnosis of the issues; 2) planning the video including storyboarding and roles; 3) production; 4) curation/editing with editing software to stitch the audiovisual narrative together; 5) sharing video. These process indicators are modified to the following discrete engagement roles: 1) Directing-did community members decide roles, questions, and storyline development?; 2) Acting-were community members the primary expert voice in the film?; 3) Filming-did community members wield the camera?; 4) Editing-did community members physically edit with software?; 5) Curating-did community members decide the shots be included?; 6) Cultural control-did community members control language, music, and artforms?; 7) Sharing-did initial previews with the larger community result in changes to the video?; and, 8) Dissemination-were community members using video at workshops? Another seven binomial indicators were applied to measure the effectiveness of the product, which were based on available statistics and covered the three product aspects of PAR, namely action, research and social change ([Chevalier & Buckles, 2013](#)). Four aspects are easy to gauge outreach, namely: number of views, Public Access URL, whether there is a DVD distributor, and which came first-journal papers or film publishing.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Both the PV engagement process by the community and the indicators for the product had positive results for the three films according to Table 1. The community engagement process carried through most stages, with only the technical aspects of editing the film missing.

Table 1 shows the widespread community engagement for each of the discrete jobs required for film-making, except for hands-on editing. The community members were very keen to participate in their story by video, while reports or paper-writing, received little or no community engagement or feedback. Dr. Myrle Ballard, a Lake St. Martin First Nation community member who grew up in LSMFN and had family in both communities, led the film as co-director, co-scriptwriter, singer and co-videographer in the first two films. Isobel Sumner from Little Saskatchewan community also played many participant and leadership roles in *Wounded Spirit*, but then stepped up to coordinate the process for *Name your baby Mooskaahn*, taking on every role, including co-director, the narrator, singer, co-editor, etc. except for hands-on-editing. Although we did have film workshops, these films took time with, a few community members working full-time coordinating input, direction, interviews, and feedback for the different drafts over many months.

These three films each had more than a dozen community members speaking about their impacts from the flood and detailing the suffering and stress caused by displacement. With a qualitative research paradigm, the depth and breadth of the people are more important than the number with eight to 12 interviews considered sufficient to explore a community perspective ([Creswell, 2017](#)). This PV research, thus, met or exceeded the research standard for PAR, or any qualitative research, both by the interviews exceeding 12 but also by the depth and breadth covered. In reviewing and editing the video footage, if some themes were missed the community members sought further interviews until all the important issues were addressed by the films. A team of community members was engaged in each aspect of filming, except the technical aspect of editing. Editing with the computer software was one area that community members, although solicited to do so, did not seem to feel competent to undertake. As a professional videographer, who was also a graduate student, was employed to add drone footage and artistry and assist with editing, community members preferred to direct him to edit, rather than edit themselves. By having a student who was a master of the complexity of professional editing software, the film gained production value and much time was saved without having to deal with the learning curve of learning editing software. More education on editing, using an easier editing software program and longer editing workshops possibly would have removed the barriers for community members to engage in editing.

Table 1 *Ig-Nobel Prize and Nobel Prize*

Indicators applied to both Films	Flooding Hope	Wounded Spirit	Name your baby Mooskaahn
<b>Process outcome</b>			
Direct: Community members decided on research issues, questions, roles, interviews, and storyline.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Act: Community people are the expert voice on the issue.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Film: Community members videotaped film.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Edit: Community members edited video hands-on with software.	No	No	No
Curate: Community members decided on video edits, having final say.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cultural control: Community control of representation, music, art, language	Yes	Yes	Yes
Share: Community feedback resulted in changes to video.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Disseminate: Community members show at workshops and conferences.	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Product outcomes</b>			
The publication date of video compared to paper publications	Yes	Yes	Yes
Views according to YouTube (Since January 12, 2019)	Yes 12,496	Yes 3,543	Yes 25
Public Access through YouTube or Vimeo:	Yes. <a href="#">YouTube &amp; YouTube</a>	Yes <a href="#">YouTube</a>	Yes <a href="#">YouTube</a>
DVD Distributor	Yes	No	In process
Meets qualitative research standards: Depth & breadth (in these films > 12 people were interviewed)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Outreach: Meetings, conferences	Yes	Yes	Yes
Outcomes: Resulted in social change	Yes. Protests. On-line petition. Movement.	Yes. Health Care provisioning change.	Yes. Film course planned for LSFN youth in 2019

Flooding Hope documented the unfolding emergency and flood impacts, rather than providing a retrospective in a docu-drama style. This film was shot and released very quickly to give the community more power to negotiate their new community location and compensation. This video shifted public opinion, with the Winnipeg Free Press covering the film and providing its YouTube link on two different occasions, which garnered a lot of other media about the issue, including national media. Flooding Hope has had more than 12,000 views in early January 2019 on YouTube in addition to airing in many film festivals all over the world. As well, many Winnipeg secondary students saw this film as part of a special education program for reconciliation.

When first released, this film was a rallying cry for the Idle no more movement. Chief Theresa Spence, in a CBC radio interview, stated that hearing about the issues shown in the film at the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Chiefs' meeting was the final straw that led her to start a hunger strike for First Nation justice in 2012 (Spence, 2012). Flooding Hope had been shown at the AFN Chiefs' meeting in Ottawa, after which chiefs from across Canada marched to the federal parliament building to protest the many injustices to First Nation people (Spence, 2012). In Flooding Hope,

Elders and other people tell their true stories of hardship. The community members were traumatized from witnessing the destruction of their land. Displaced in temporary housing, Elders were unsure of the future of their community and if they would ever return home or die before then. Their lamentation revealed deep pain and suffering, which *Flooding Hope* matched with powerful and artful visuals. In screenings, community members would introduce the film and would cry answering questions and telling their stories, along with many people in the audience.

*Wounded Spirit* documented the health impacts of the long displacement of LSFN faced by Elders, from 2011 up until 2016 when the Elders still had no return date. This film, too, had thousands of views, with DVD copies used in classrooms and rented out at libraries. The focus on the health impacts of the flood and displacement led to this video is being the centerpiece of a full-day workshop with 30 Interlake health workers, including nurses, doctors, directors, emergency care workers discussing health impacts with the flood and displacement victims. The film provided a way to start an open dialogue about ethics, health provisioning and health impacts with health professionals who had little awareness or false ideas about how the 2011 flood impacted the First Nations people from Lake St. Martin. This dialogue led to a re-evaluation of the Interlake Health District procedures, programs to meet the ethical framework for these flood-impacted communities.

*Name your baby Mooskaahn* was only recently released and so its impact is less certain. However, a day-long film release workshop at the school gym in LSFN brought 50 people from the community out to discuss next steps. Upon request, a week-long workshop on filming and editing in summer 2019 with the University of Manitoba at LSFN will research the issues that are arising with their rebuilt community changed forever by an emergency channel that reroutes the water through Lake St. Martin.

The antagonist identified in all the films was the provincial government that diverted water to target their beloved ancestral territory. Then, to pile insult on the injury, the province played no role to ensure adequate supports were available for the displaced community, but a negative role in rejecting LSMFN choices for replacement reserve locations and dictating where they lived. Each PV repeated the story of not being “taken care of” by the government, with new examples, even though rerouting the flood to Lake St. Martin saving the province billions. The evacuees endured racism and poverty, living in the city in temporary housing for seven years after their communities were sacrificed to save Winnipeg. By pointing this out, the films helped to create space for awareness and transformation with this visible evidence of injustice and people’s suffering.

Community members held the artistic license in the films. The community members wanted to represent their culture as both Indigenous and Christian, not allowing drumming sound or drumming visuals in all the films. Local songwriters were featured in all the films with some songs and interviews being in Anishinaabe. Several social events, including jigging events, treaty days and baseball games, as community members wanted to show the rich cultural activities. Also, artwork, including beadwork, moccasins, and star-blanket quilts, were showcased.

These PV films were very effective at advocacy, education, and negotiation with community members sharing the YouTube links and DVDs widely. The films were shown at community meetings, conferences, and workshops, as well as film festivals around the world to reach everyone, including the young and the illiterate. The sharing platform on YouTube provided a way to reach a wide audience to change the views of the general public quickly. Publishing through internet sharing platforms had many benefits over publishing in journal articles. The internet allowed the timely publishing of research to disrupt myths and change public opinion while the story was unfolding, which journal articles did not. These video platforms made this research accessible to everyone, including youth and illiterate people around the world, immediately upon uploading by the author. Publishing on YouTube and DVD for two of the three films occurred a year prior to publishing academic papers on the same subject with the same interviews. As well, the third PV was published on YouTube prior to any paper published in the future. In addition to getting the word out faster than journals, the videos reach was much larger. The films’ uptake was higher by at least an order of magnitude beyond the journal papers covering the same issues and stemming from the same research interviews. Most papers were downloaded a few hundred times, but not in the thousands as the films were, and the paper citation numbers remain modest with [Ballard \(2012\)](#) at 15 times, [Ballard and Thompson \(2013\)](#) at six times, [Thompson and Ballard \(2014\)](#) at five times, [Thompson \(2015\)](#) at three times, and [Martin et al. \(2017\)](#) up until December 2018. With the uptake of journal papers limited to a few people in academia, films provide a larger and more diverse audience. These films are accessible to everyone with a computer for free, whereas although these journal articles about the 2011 flood impacts are mostly available in open access journals, two articles are not.



## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Research with two flood impacted communities showed the power of PV to unleash social change and decolonize research. The images and words were stirring, revealing their lived experience of displacement, racism and poverty, which helped to incite social change. Participatory video is a unique research method, providing both a process and product, to create social change and empowerment. This paper was the first to assess whether the goals of both community engagement and an effective product are obtained by PV. These fifteen indicators are not limited to First Nations or displacement but are broad general categories that can be easily applied to any film story. The credits in the film for the director, videographer, editor, the narrator, etc., as well as YouTube views and publication dates provide objective indicators to be easily analyzed for any PV that show strong engagement and outreach for these three films. And clearly, community members want more videos having invited us back in June 2019 to do a PV summer with youth for a week.

The results for the 15 participatory video research indicators demonstrate that these three films were successful at both the process and product levels. Community members engaged in most aspects of PV. The product of these films received many views and achieved results by engaging both the public, as well as policymakers to serve an important research and communication function. The testimonials by community members and visuals of flood damage to homes and shorelines provided solid evidence to boost their negotiating power for compensation by both communities (Thompson, Klatt, & Oyegunle, 2015; Martin et al., 2017). However, these videos had limited impact on the many government decisions against community interests taken, such as the relocation of the LSMFN reserve and locating a 23 km Lake St. Martin emergency channel. The provincial government imposed their will against the community's demands, with the limited public uprising. Sadly, public awareness does not always result in pressure on government and action.

Regarding outreach, the video had many benefits over journal articles. The timely publishing of research through video was a key benefit to change public opinion while the story was unfolding in the media, With videorecorders being readily accessible through cell phones, as well as internet sharing platforms, the film is very accessible to the marginalized, illiterate and poor. Video can easily be created by cellphones and uploaded to YouTube, Facebook and other sharing platforms, which are both accessible and comprehensible to people of all ages and levels of literacy. Video footage allows transcription for journal papers and books but also can be published rapidly and readily as a film. Oppositely, journal papers are the domain of the academic elite, in terms of both who writes and accesses journal papers. This research substantiates that PV research has much more potential to impact policy and public opinion over forms of research that spawn only journal papers.

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